Haitians Gather in Washington to Press for TPS

On June 3, 2009, about 300 members of the Haitian Coalition for TPS and the Haitian Citizen United Task Force, Inc. (www.allcitizen.org) travelled from South Florida to rally outside the White House to press the Obama Administration to extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Haitian immigrants. (Photo by Marcus Bleech)

Jesuit Schools, Parishes and Communities Join Catholic Campaign on Climate Change and Poverty

More than 70 Jesuit schools, parishes, communities and organizations across the nation committed themselves to an unprecedented campaign to help reduce climate change which disproportionately impacts the poor and vulnerable. As part of the Ignatian Peace Action, students from Jesuit schools, parishioners from Jesuit churches and Jesuit communities have committed to pray and act on climate change issues with a particular emphasis on mitigating the negative effects of climate change on the poor.

“The effects of climate change, such as those caused by natural disasters like flooding and droughts, have the greatest negative consequences for those who are the poorest,” said Fr. Jim Stormes (MAR), Secretary for Social and International Ministries for the Jesuit Conference. “And the potential solutions for reducing the changes we are making on the environment have costs associated with them that disproportionately impact those who are least able to take on the additional financial burden. When considering the possibilities to reduce climate change, the Church always tries to bring the voice of the poor to the discussion.”

In a poll released today by Zogby see Catholic Campaign on page 3

Catholics Urged to Work on Immigration Reform, Engage Others on Issue

By Carmen M. Hubbard
Catholic News Service

Organizers for a comprehensive immigration reform effort gathered on a regional basis for the first time in Greater Cincinnati to develop strategies, target lawmakers and help area Catholics keep the issue at the forefront.

“Most of us aren't impacted by immigration,” said Chris West, director of field operations for the Justice for Immigrants campaign of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“It is small groups who can get together to change things. There is that power. Immigration is bigger than us,” he told the audience during his presentation. “We encourage others to pray about the issue. When you lift it up to God, you engage people.”

The Justice for Immigrants campaign convened a regional Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform conference March 26-28 at a conference center in the northern Cincinnati suburb of Mason.

About 130 people, mostly from Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Illinois and West Virginia, attended to exchange ideas and learn skills such as participating in a letter campaign to their representatives in Congress to push for immigration reform.

The conference included presentations for parishioners to learn how to spread the Catholic message regarding immigration reform to others, Catholic social teaching and migration, as well as policies and political views.

“We as the Catholic Church must return to our Judeo-Christian values of how newcomers -- whether they're legal or illegal - see Reform on page 9
Kesicki Appointed New Provincial of the Chicago Province Jesuits

Fr. Timothy P. Kesicki, SJ, has been appointed by Fr. General Adolfo Nicolas, SJ, as the next provincial of the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus. Fr. Kesicki succeeds Fr. Edward W. Schmidt, SJ, who has served as provincial of the Chicago Province since 2003.

Fr. Kesicki adds this new position to his current responsibilities as provincial of the Detroit Province. In his letter of appointment, Fr. General Nicolas explains the significance of this dual leadership role, “Practically speaking, this means that the Detroit and Chicago Provinces should now move forward as if they were one province.”

It has been a privilege for me to serve the Chicago Province, and I feel fully confident that Fr. Kesicki will do a wonderful job,” says Fr. Schmidt. “I am grateful I can turn this leadership over to him. He’s going to do well bringing the Detroit Province and the Chicago Province together; fully caring for the men and the ministries of the province; fully appreciating our friends, colleagues, and benefactors; and fully able to bring all this together to find new ways to serve God’s people.”

After being ordained to the priesthood in 1994, Fr. Kesicki worked for a year at the Detroit Refugee Service in Adjumania, Uganda. He then went on to teach theology at Loyola High School in Detroit, Michigan, until 2000, when he was named president of St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland, Ohio. Fr. Kesicki began his term as provincial of the Detroit Province in the summer of 2008. “I look forward to working with Fr. Schmidt in the months ahead,” he says. “It is a time of great hope, a time of great enthusiasm, and a time of great promise for all the works in our provinces.”

For the past five years, the United States Jesuits have planned a realignment process that will streamline the Order by reducing the number of Jesuit provinces in the United States from ten to five. Fr. Kesicki’s appointment represents an important milestone in this process for the Midwest, where the existing Wisconsin, Chicago, and Detroit Provinces eventually will be combined into a single province.

“This realignment will happen in two phases,” says Fr. Schmidt, “with Chicago and Detroit coming together sooner before joining with Wisconsin. The next few years will be foundational for the future of our province and our ability to continue serving God’s people. I believe this will be a positive opportunity for us to grow in our mission to the frontiers. The needs of young people are particularly acute right now, and I know that Fr. Kesicki’s experience of leading a high school will be a great resource as we face the future.”

The realignment process is envisioned to be completed by 2021.

For a video message from Frs. Schmidt and Kesicki and media resources, please visit the Chicago Province website at www.jesuits-chi.org.

The Jesuit Conference has appointed Fr. Robert Ballecer (CFN) to the newly created position of Director of National Vocation Promotion for the Society of Jesus. Fr. Ballecer will join the Conference in Washington, D.C. in August.

With his extensive background in web-based technologies, Robert will bring a unique skill set to the Society’s vocation efforts, one that is required, and expected, by today’s tech-savvy young people,” said Fr. Thomas Smolich (CFN), president of the Jesuit Conference. “This is an important step in our work in the ‘vineyard of the Lord’ as we use these new technologies to help young men discern their calling to religious life.”

Ballecer’s responsibilities will include working with the ten U.S. Jesuit Provinces to implement the recommendations of “Weaving a New Net”, the document prepared by the Task Force on Vocations and approved by the Jesuit Conference Board last May. He will work to expand the Society’s presence on the internet and will coordinate and share best practices among the Province’s vocation promoters.

“I am excited to bring my background in multimedia technology and social networking to the efforts of finding innovative ways of attracting candidates who are called by the Spirit to join us,” said Ballecer. “Throughout history, Jesuits have been on the frontiers of communication and I look forward to helping reach today’s faithful men who are contemplating joining the Society.”

Ballecer entered the Society of Jesus in 1994 and was ordained in 2007. His assignments have included Loyola High School in Los Angeles, Most Holy Trinity Parish in San Jose and currently as Campus Minister at the Newman Center in Honolulu. Ballecer is the Director of The Center for Apostolic Technology, an apostolate of the California Province, located at the University Catholic Center in Honolulu, Hawaii.

A native of San Jose, Calif., Ballecer completed undergraduate degrees in Theology at Loyola Marymount University and in Philosophy at Loyola University of Chicago. He holds a Master of Divinity from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley.

The Task Force on Vocation’s report entitled “Weaving a New Net” can be found by visiting www.jesuits.org/AboutJesuitConference/Assistance/StrategicDiscernment.
New Secretary for Social and International Ministries for 2010 at the Jesuit Conference

The Jesuit Conference of the United States has appointed Fr. Thomas Greene (NOR) to the position of Secretary for Social and International Ministries for the Society of Jesus. Fr. Greene, a member of the New Orleans Province, will join the Jesuit Conference in Washington, D.C. in the summer of 2010. Greene will replace Fr. James Stormes, S.J., of the Maryland Province, who leaves the Jesuit Conference this month to hold both the Lo Schiavo and the Zabala chair at the University of San Francisco. John Kleiderer, policy director for the Jesuit Conference, will be the acting secretary until Greene joins the Conference next year.

"Tom's background in social research and his work on behalf of detained migrants and other displaced peoples makes him uniquely qualified to lead the Society's social and international ministries and to help guide our future endeavors," said Fr. Thomas Smolich, S.J., president of the Jesuit Conference. "As we continue our service of a faith that promotes justice for the world's marginalized, Tom's experience will bring a compelling and vital dimension to our advocacy efforts."

Currently a Research Fellow at the Jesuit Social Research Institute of Loyola University in New Orleans, Greene's new responsibilities at the Jesuit Conference will include coordinating and supporting the many social ministry works in the U.S. and networking with many of the international justice ministries of the Society. In addition, Greene and the staff participate in advocacy in both legislative and corporate arenas voicing the concerns of Jesuits and those they serve in Washington and other centers of public policy. They facilitate meetings with federal officials and Congress for Jesuit apostolates so that they can effectively convey their concerns when they come to the nation's capital.

Greene joins a staff that represents a Jesuit perspective on wide-ranging issues around key focus areas of immigration, domestic poverty, war and violence and Africa.

Greene entered the Society of Jesus in 1997 and was ordained in 2007. His assignments have included serving as the Super- vising Attorney for detained, unaccompanied minors at Catholic Charities of Galveston-Houston, as a volunteer attorney for asylum seekers from Bosnia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Guatemala at the Midwest Immigrant and Human Rights Center in Chicago and working with Jesuit Refugee Services and Jesuit Migration Service on immigration issues.

A native of New Orleans, Greene completed his Juris Doctorate in Civil Law at Loyola University in New Orleans and a Masters in Philosophy at Loyola University in Chicago. He holds a Master of Divinity from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley.

Continued from page 1

Catholic Campaign

International, 55% of the 1,100 U.S. Catholics polled agreed that climate change is a serious problem with two-thirds agreeing that while all of the causes of global warming may not yet be understood, action must be taken now to lessen its impact. 94% of those surveyed said they have or are willing to act on behalf of reducing global climate change and believe that doing so is consistent with their faith.

With the theme "Peace with Creation", this year's Ignatian PeaceAction supports and promotes the St. Francis Covenant to Protect Creation and the Poor, sponsored by the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change. Participants come from all sectors - from Christian Life Communities to Jesuit high schools, universities, parishes and from Jesuit communities. They have agreed to pray together for a more sustainable relationship with creation and for those impacted by changing climate, reflect on the Church's teaching about environmental stewardship and assess their lifestyles for ways to reduce their carbon footprint on the planet.

The St. Francis Covenant to Protect Creation and the Poor campaign is directed by the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, a collaborative partnership of national Catholic organizations including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Jesuit Conference of the United States, Catholic Charities, USA, Catholic Relief Services and others.

As part of their PeaceAction activities, parishioners at St. Ignatius Loyola in New York cleaned up an urban garden lot in the South Bronx that is part of the Community Resource Center for the Developmentally Disabled. After their day of service, they will be joining fellow volunteers from St. Peter's College in Jersey City later in the day for Mass and an opportunity for prayer and to reflect on what their work means for the environment and how they are also working in service to the poor.

"In bringing together people for a day in care of creation and in service to the poor, we want to actively show that we are committing our collective efforts to raise awareness about environmental change in a practical way that also benefits those in our community who are the most at need," said Fr. Mark Hallinan (NYK), Assistant for Social Ministries at the New York province.

For the students at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., the Center for Service & Justice has started a year-long campaign calling on students and faculty to consider the simple ways that they can each individually make a difference and find ways to reduce their carbon footprint.

"At Creighton, we are working with facilities management on a sustainability awareness campaign targeting undergraduate dormitories and apartment residences along with offices campus-wide. Simple activities like walking to campus or riding a bike instead of driving, turning off computers and lights and even taking shorter showers - all of these small things can collectively make a big difference in the resources that we consume at our university," said Chadi El-Khoury, student coordinator at the Center for Service & Justice at Creighton University. "Though Americans make up just four percent of the world's population, we produce 25 percent of the carbon dioxide pollution from fossil-fuels. But this pollution doesn't just impact us; it affects everyone on the planet via the effects of global warming.

At the Church of the Gesu, a Jesuit parish in Milwaukee, Wis., during the Sunday and daily Masses in late April and early May, parishioners recited a novena for the environment. The church will culminate their PeaceAction activities with the Father Robert F. Purcell Peacemaker awards ceremony on May 3 when 11 students from local Catholic elementary, middle and high schools will receive recognition for their exemplarily efforts at being peacemakers and promoting peace.

Also in Milwaukee, volunteers from the Jesuit Volunteer Corps set out earlier this month to clean up the neighborhood around their urban location and participated in a prayer walk.

"All of these efforts across the nation at Jesuit schools, parishes and ministries reflect a true effort and commitment to be faithful stewards for the environment and to advocate on behalf of the poorest among us who are impacted the greatest by environmental change," said John Sealey, Assistant for Social and International Ministries at the Wisconsin province. "It is all of our combined efforts and our faith in action that is helping bring awareness to this issue."
Can Jesuits Make an Environmental Contribution?

By Al Fritsch, SJ

The 35th General Congregation recognized the environmental crisis and asked us “to appreciate more deeply our covenant with creation…” (GC 35, D 3, no. 26). By understanding this covenant we will undoubtedly enter more closely into Christ’s saving mission in a way never dreamed of by our spiritual or physical forebears. Along with the special encouragement by our Holy Father, we reconsider our mission to “go out to all the world” by including the threatened and endangered world. Being people who apply the principle of subsidiarity to our many works and problems, we discern whether environmental or “green” actions can be performed on many levels in our Jesuit activities.

As Jesuits, we discover a sizeable literature on practical ways to conserve energy, space, water and other resources. Most youth and members of our Society are on a fast learning curve to green conservationist efforts to recycle, install compact fluorescenters, lower heat in winter and raise the cooling thermostat in summer, practice water conservation, drive more energy efficient vehicles and eat less meat and resource intensive foods. With the current recession, many of us are reexamining our own personal practices and simplifying them in different ways.

I have worked on environmental issues since the first Earth Day in 1970. My thoughts have evolved over time and now I’m convinced that meaningful voluntary action by good-willed people is limited in scope. A true change of heart at a global level is needed by all God’s people. But, the fear is that opponents are numerous and powerful. Pope Benedict, who is leading this global change of heart, is being deliberately undercut in his ability to speak forcefully on these issues by a materialist media that wants to make him ineffective. Here we Jesuits as a Society are vowed to come to his defense—and we must in order to save our wounded Earth.

As a society, we Jesuits have the unique tool of discernment that can be applied on a global level in areas of the connected financial and environmental crises: on the question of the affluent haves and the starv- ing have-nots, on social and eco-justice and on the disaster capitalism that has allowed private corporations to be too big to fail—even though a thorough discernment may show that they have already failed. We need a Society undertaking.

The official Jesuit world mantra is: be patriotic and “shop till you drop.” Does the world economy have to be based on material consumption? Has this form of idolatry been organized into a system in which consumer materialism has been enthroned as a god? Doesn’t this excessive consumption and environmental pollution (resource needs, product manufacture, transport and disposal of wastes) go hand-in-hand? Are not purchases of the latest cars and appliances and construction of ever more spacious structures, a model of consumption leading to a catastrophe? Our kairos comes at a momentary reprieve due to an economic slowdown. What if western consumers are augmented by two billion plus Chinese, Indians and others and China returns to adding one new coal-fueled power plant every week? Carbon dioxide levels that have never really stopped rising will lead to serious global warming, even if all Jesuits and voluntary simplicity folks install a multitude of compact fluorescents. Can we turn the tide of a global consumption program of “Consume, baby, consume”? Our environmental mandate seems simple, so what holds the Society of Jesus back? While this is debatable, let’s consider whether the major problem is that we Jesuits are institutionally so dependent on the private economic sector—a private sector not devoid of major mismanagement and regulatory problems—that we cannot dare bite the hand that feeds us. So much depends on donations and the tuition-paying proponents of our material consumption-oriented economic system that we cannot risk the loss of donors. These may not be happy with the Society questioning our economic system. Rather, are we tempted to remain dutifully silent or to tweak this or that portion of today’s economic/ political/social system? Will we settle for a few new regulations and then back to spend, borrow and consume as usual?

We Jesuits must be bold enough to speak up for the poor—poor desperate people and poor threatened Earth. We must publicly condemn the enclosure of all areas of the commons (air, water, forest, wildlife, ocean, outer and silent space, air waves, etc.). We must call for and endorse the beginnings of a Third Way that is neither capitalist nor communist/socialist, that is neither overly localized (a homestead or hermitage) nor overly globalized (a small number of unregulated multi-national corporations). Today we need to speak up for the human family, global brothers and sisters. If we are truly pro-life we must not allow billionaires and millionaires to acquire, retain and expend what they think best (and undercut our democratic process) and stand by while the destitute have-nots must beg for the resources that truly belong to them to stay alive. Even if unpopular, for the sake of our people and Earth we must endorse a service—rather than a consumer-oriented economy. However, services such as education, health, communications and utilities require building and maintenance materials. We ought to denounce consumer credit for luxury items that take such a toll on world resources and the corporate systems pressing for these credit-based consumption patterns.

Surely some astute Jesuit confere will point out that I speak without the burden of institutional baggage. Partly true. This is precisely the advantage of some of us being outside the pale of educational institutions; maybe we have more freedom to think creatively, more mobility and versatility and less pressure from those pursuing more specialized professional pursuits. However, this call for environmental priorities as a Society is in keeping with Ignatius’ wish that we “travel to all parts of the world,” via Internet and via less baggage. Granted we are engaged in institutions such as poor parishes and federal prisons, but we may be freer to speak on certain subjects during our short allotted time. However, no matter who we are, as Christians who are bold enough to say “Abba, Father,” we ought to say with equal emphasis, “the current economic/political/social emperor has no clothes.”

Fr. Al Fritsch (CHG) conducts public interest research. He welcomes your critique of the second draft of his piece “Reclaiming the Commons” found at earthhealing.info.

“We Jesuits must be bold enough to speak up for the poor—poor desperate people and poor threatened Earth.”
We cannot prevent an individual’s faith, even they are free to interact also as religious. Beyond this, when people are living together, their religious convictions from influencing his/hersocial and political life. Not to speak of economic, life. Beyond this when people are living together, they are free to interact also as religious believers.

Interreligious dialogue can take place at different levels. There is an official level where representatives of religious institutions meet together. Such institutional contacts are useful and often have a symbolic value. These are not merely political negotiations, but can have an impact on attitudes. A second level of dialogue happens when followers of different religions meet together with the aim of getting to understand the beliefs of each other. Such sharing can lead to mutual understanding and appreciation and to the removal of ignorance and prejudice. There is an element of comparison here, though it need not be explicit. At the level of experts it becomes comparative theology. The faith of each religious tradition is taken seriously, but convergences and differences are noted objectively. Such studies have a scientific character about them and they are very useful for interreligious understanding. Personal belief in what is analysed and exposed is not a necessary factor here.

A third level of dialogue makes people encounter each other as believers. Belief normally involves the truth of what one believes in. People then speak of the “clash of absolutes.” The advaita (non-dual unity) of Hinduism, the strict monotheism of Islam and the Trinitarian vision of the Christians do not image God in the same way. Attempts at openness are often condemned as relativism. On the other hand, we have people like Swami Abhishiktananda (Henri Le Saux, O.S.B.), Raimon Panikkar and Fr. Aloysius Pieris (SRI), among many others, who speak of crossing borders and communicatio in sacris – sharing worship. Without elaborating, I suggest a possible approach. God alone is the Absolute. Given human, historical and cultural conditioning none of our understanding, even of revelation, is absolute. We cannot absolutize our affirmations regarding the Absolute. An apophatic tradition is present in all religions, though often we quietly ignore it. The Absolute is one and beyond all of us, but is the foundation of all out hesitant affirmations.

As a matter of fact, most religions, while affirming their own particular God-experience, acknowledge the fact of God reaching out to all peoples. The author of Gospel of John affirms a universal perspective when he says that “the true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world”. (Jn 1:9) Reflecting in the context of God’s covenants, Paul says: “God will render to every man according to his works…” For God shows no partiality” (Rom 2:6,11) In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna tells Arjuna: “In whatever way men approach me, in the same way they receive their reward” and “Even those who, devoted to other Gods, sacrifice filled with faith, even they sacrifice to me alone.” (4:11 and 9:23) The Qur’an states: “To each of you God has prescribed a Law and a Way. If God would have willed, He would have made you a single people. But God’s purpose is to test you in what he has given each of you, so strive in the pursuit of virtue, and know that you will all return to God (in the Hereafter), and He will resolve all the matters in which you disagree.” (5:48) The Sufi master Jalal ud-Din Rumi says: “Though the ways are various, the goal is one. Do you not see that there are many roads to the Kaaba?” Buddhism would look on all religions as “skilful means” or upaya.

When I meet another believer there is a hidden presence among us – the Absolute that both of us are searching. If both of us are open to listen to this Absolute, our differences become relativized. This is actually not relativism, but pluralism. In every dialogue at the level of faith there is a third interlocutor – the Absolute. Dialogue then becomes really a tri-logue – a three-way encounter. The Absolute is silent. The other too may start talking. But as they go deeper they too will be reduced to silent concentration on the Absolute, discovering a communion beyond words. Praying together then will not be a problem, even if it is only in silence. It is in the context of such a tri-logue that dialogue at other levels become truly significant for life. Otherwise they remain a mere balancing of forces, useful in their own way but not truly a dialogue of believers.

Fr. Michael Amaladoss (MDU), usually resides in Chennai where he directs the Institute for Dialogue with Cultures and Religions and is Professor of Theology at Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi. He held the Jesuit Chair at Georgetown University during the 2008-09 academic years.

**Commentary**

**Interreligious Dialogue**

**Dia-logue or Tri-logue? Restoring God to Dialogue**

By Michael Amaladoss, SJ

Social and political conflicts are prevalent in many parts of the world today. Some of these use religion as a prop so that they are experienced also as religious conflicts. One of the many methods of conflict resolution in such situations is dialogue between religious groups. Even if there were no conflicts, believers following different religious living together in the same socio-political context cannot ignore their religious identities and differences. Some sort of interreligious interaction becomes part of living together. Efforts to make religious identity strictly private, ignoring and even forbidding it in public life, in countries like France have not succeeded. A non-religious secular society is not possible. All that we can do is try to maintain the autonomy of common socio-political institutions from interference by religious institutions. We cannot prevent an individual’s faith convictions from influencing his/her social and political life. Beyond this when people are living together they are free to interact also as religious believers.

Interreligious dialogue can take place at different levels. There is an official level where representatives of religious institutions meet together. Such institutional contacts are useful and often have a symbolic value. These are not merely political negotiations, but can have an impact on attitudes. A second level of dialogue happens when followers of different religions meet together with the aim of getting to understand the beliefs of each other. Such sharing can lead to mutual understanding and appreciation and to the removal of ignorance and prejudice. There is an element of comparison here, though it need not be explicit. At the level of experts it becomes comparative theology. The faith of each religious tradition is taken seriously, but convergences and differences are noted objectively. Such studies have a scientific character about them and they are very useful for interreligious understanding. Personal belief in what is analysed and exposed is not a necessary factor here.

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Revealing & Healing Hidden Influences

Father Bonaventure Balige of the East Africa Province always envisioned himself teaching math or physics, until one day in a Loyola University Baltimore classroom he “discovered my call.” Ever since, he has worked to establish a network of training centers for psychological counselors in his native Tanzania where no such structures previously existed.

As part of his graduate studies in the United States, Balige was taking a pastoral counseling course that required each student undergo individual counseling. “I came in touch with myself,” he says and decided to pursue psychology further. “The influences of past experience or unfinished business are often hidden to us yet influence almost everything we do,” he adds.

While Tanzania had an existing medical model for mental illness based on a psychiatric approach, people searching for more routine counseling for day-to-day issues were turning to untrained individuals with little formal experience. “Social systems that people value are changing,” Balige says. “The pace of urbanization – moving from established family structures of farm life into town by themselves – affects a person’s psychological health,” he says.

According to Balige, the impact on society can be far reaching. “Tanzania has a lot of needs (poverty, water, education) and people feel psychology can wait,” says Balige. If often results in treating the symptoms rather than the underlying cause. Take, for example, the issue of official corruption where government and/or business leaders siphon millions of dollars from necessary projects. “Corruption and greed is about selfishness; they may have a void in themselves,” Balige points out. It is often a classic example of personal issues affecting the whole community.

That is why he cites the need for “wholeness living programs focused on human nature and raising awareness about the hidden influences in our decision making.” In the shadow of famed Mount Kilimanjaro, Balige is building the Loyola Wholeness Center in Moshi. He is also a founding member of the Tanzania Psychological Association (TAPA). NJN caught up with Father Balige during a recent trip to the United States for meetings at the American Psychological Association. His ministry to meet the unmet needs of his people is well underway.

His ministry is also strongly influenced by his vocation as a priest. “You can start as a spiritual director but easily wind up as a counselor,” Balige notes. “Wholeness is the treating the body, mind, soul, and spiritual being. You cannot separate psychology and faith as they are each part of the whole person.”

Jesuit Volunteer Corps Moving Forward with Merger Plans

By Kaitlyn McCarthy

Many currently know the Jesuit Volunteer Corps by its regional affiliations: East, Midwest, South, Southwest and International. However, Kevin O’Brien doesn’t want you to think about the JVC in compass points anymore. O’Brien, who was appointed the JVC’s first president in September 2008, has been busily preparing for its geographical merger, which takes place this summer.

“We’re moving toward becoming one organization that works for justice and peace,” said O’Brien.

The consolidation of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps into one entity officially occurs on July 1, 2009. Only JVC Northwest will not be affected by the consolidation as they’ve chosen to remain a regionally-run office. One of the main goals in consolidating the regions into one organization was to enable the JVC to focus more on the volunteer programs, and less on its day-to-day operations. “The big difference will be eliminating work duplication on the business side of JVC. It will give us more time to focus on the volunteers and on the programs they are working in,” commented O’Brien. “The JVC board is undergoing a planning process this fall where we will explore all aspects of the organization as we move forward. We felt that the priority was to consolidate the program as quickly as possible this year and operate much as we had been doing. While we see this as an opportunity to really look at what the JVC model should look like in the future, we have the advantage of building on a strong program.”

Since the merger is taking five independent organizations and placing them under one management structure, the transition process with the new national board and executive directors has been especially focused on keeping the local needs in the forefront of the decision making process. “The differences between serving in New Orleans and, say, New York will be taken into account when working with the volunteers and their placement agencies,” O’Brien assured. “We want to honor the traditions and gifts each region has brought to the new organization.”

O’Brien believes that the process that JVC is undergoing mirrors the Jesuits own self-reflection and discernment of their future coming out of General Congregation 35. “I think we are asking the same question, ‘What administrative and governance structures will best help us be of service moving forward?’”, said O’Brien. “We are a well-respected program whose organizational structure had not changed for many years and we found ourselves up against capacity limits that prevented us from expanding, not only in numbers, but also in looking for new ways we might serve.”

Allowing for more program focus couldn’t come at a better time for JVC. “Applications are way up from last year and we anticipate growth of four or five more domestic communities,” said O’Brien. “In this time of partnerships, we want to make ourselves more available to the Jesuits, and align JVC more clearly with the Society’s needs.”

From the point of view of the volunteers, they should not notice much difference in their day-to-day experience. Volunteers will still interact with program staff members much like they do now, from the interview process through orientation, retreats and the staff visits. The biggest change will be in placement process. Instead of applying regionally, one can now apply to JVC and a unified application process will help match a volunteer’s skills and interests with a placement site anywhere in JVC. “The advantage in this is not having the first decision volunteers have to make be about geography,” said O’Brien. “An applicant will still have the final decision about where he or she serves, but we hope to work with them to make better decisions about what is the best match for them by being able to consider all 300 or so possibilities.”

As the JVC continues to grow, O’Brien envisions several goals for the organization in the coming years, including expanding volunteer program locations, types of placements involving former volunteers in JVC’s mission to enable continued service and involvement and increasing resources and capacity for national fundraising.

O’Brien, a native of Omaha, Neb., is a graduate of Creighton University. He served for the past 10 years as the Director of Ignatian Partnerships for the Maryland Province Jesuits, where he developed programs in Ignatian formation for lay people, and partnership and service opportunities for lay and Jesuit colleagues. Prior to his time in Maryland, he was the director of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps South, where he also served as a Jesuit volunteer.

Since 1956, more than 12,000 Jesuit Volunteers have worked for and with the homeless, unemployed, refugees, people with AIDS, the elderly, street youth, abused women and children, the mentally ill and the developmentally disabled.

Kaitlyn McCarthy is the Communications Specialist for the Jesuit Conference in Washington, D.C.
A century of social comment
Editor reflects on America's mission

By Peter Feuerherd

As he directed America Magazine’s 100th anniversary special edition this past April, Fr. Drew Christiansen, (NYK), editor of the national Jesuit opinion journal, needed no more reminders of the weighty tradition he carries forward.

His office wall is adorned with a “Dream Team” of Jesuit priests who served as editors, including his immediate predecessor, Thomas Reese, a Californian known for his writings and television analysis on church issues; culture critic Richard Hunt; Joseph O’Hare, who after leaving America brought his administrative skills to the post of president at Fordham University; Thurston Davis, a powerful player in New York City church and politics, and John LaFarge, a pioneer advocate for racial justice.

“Christiansen, editor since 2005, notes, “I am brought here at a special time of history. It remains to be seen whether we measure up.”

These are particularly challenging times for publications, and America is no exception. A ministry of the U.S. Jesuit provinces, its midtown Manhattan office is literally home to many of its Jesuit staff, who come from all over the country and reside in the nine-story structure. They are assisted by lay colleagues as well.

Few sectors of the battered U.S. economy have been hit as hard as publications, now competing with the Internet for readers and valuable ad dollars. A number of big-city daily papers have folded, and others are threatened. Ironically, many commercial publications encountering problems are looking at alternative solutions, including the non-profit model historically embraced by Catholic publications, including America.

America’s circulation remains steady, at about 45,000, as it continues its tradition of social commentary with a must-read reputation among educated Catholics. Christiansen has guided the publication as it faces new continuing challenges, including an aging readership; postage increases; how to best utilize its website, and reconfiguring its board to include lay people as well as Jesuits. Planned initiatives include a web Spanish translation, a website catechesis for younger Catholics and spiritual seekers and a special list serve for scholarly exchange on Church issues.

As true with many other print entities, for America the Internet offers unlimited opportunity combined with a financial drag that few publications have been able to resolve.

“Young people aren’t interested in paying for anything off the web. It’s a challenge for the future,” says Christiansen, who points optimistically to the long tradition of Jesuit adaptation to new communication technologies, from the printing press to television.

As editor, Christiansen, a Staten Island native, continues to put his own stamp on the magazine. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1962, soon after graduation from St. Peter’s High School on Staten Island. Never having attended a Jesuit school, he became acquainted with the Society during a school retreat at Loyola House of Retreat in Morristown, N.J. He was attracted by the broad view of the world offered in Jesuit life.

It is something he has lived through his vocation. He earned his doctorate in religious social ethics from Yale and taught at Notre Dame and the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, Calif., with a focus on international development issues. Before coming to America as an associate editor, he worked as director for the U.S. bishops’ Office of International Justice and Peace, taking a particular interest in world trouble spots such as the Balkans and the Middle East.

Today, he remains a board member of Bethlehem University, a Christian Brothers institution devoted to the education of Palestinians.

While working for the bishops in the 1990s, he took regular trips to the Balkans and the Middle East on assignments, including places his lay colleagues, who were married with children, found difficult to visit. It was a case, he says with a chuckle, “of only celibates to the war zones.”

He brings this hard-edged international perspective to the pages of America. “We look at the Church as an international community,” he says, disdaining what he calls the “naval gazing” he finds in some U.S. Catholic circles who he describes as overly-absorbed in intramural church issues.

That doesn't mean that America doesn't delve into sensitive domestic concerns. For example, recent issues have analyzed Church doctrine on end-of-life care, questioning whether official pronouncements on highly publicized recent cases have promoted overly-aggressive medical treatment, particularly in the realm of nutrition and hydration.

Another article, that generated letters-to-the editor and a lively exchange on the America website, questioned pro-life political strategy in last year’s presidential election.

He would like to see the magazine continue that tradition of addressing both church and wider issues, particularly in an era of contentious change. Christiansen says America should be a vehicle for an elevated dialogue on contemporary concerns. He offers no quick sound bites, declining to appear on television talk panels, preferring that his writing speak for itself.

In a time when the web, talk radio and 24-hour cable news combine to create a cacophony of noise around public policy debates, he would like to see America continue as a haven of reasoned dialogue.

The magazine, he says, should be “a place open to sensitive issues, including those within the Church.” It should offer a forum where “there wouldn’t be sniping or condemnations of one side or another but where we would break the mold of setting policy by bumper sticker and sound bites and really focus an issue down to its core, where open thinking by Catholics could be accepted.”

Peter Feuerherd is the communications consultant for the New York Province of the Society of Jesus.

WEB RESOURCE

http://www.americamagazine.org/

America, a Jesuit magazine, was planned as the American counterpart of The Tablet of London, a respected Catholic weekly review. America is the only national Catholic weekly magazine in the United States.
The Greatest Generation of Jesuit University Presidents

By Stephen V. Sundborg, SJ

In March, Fr. William J. Sullivan, (WIS), after 34 years at Seattle University, returned home to the Wisconsin Province of Jesuits who first “missioned” him out West. He follows in the long line of Jesuit missionaries who were sent to do their work far afield often for decades and then called home for their final years when their work was done.

Sullivan served as president of Seattle University for 20 years and then—after being hobbled in walk but not in mind or spirit by a stroke—continued for another 12 years as chancellor, assisting me, his successor, as president. He purchased a law school, built the internationally acclaimed Chapel of St. Ignatius, righted our university’s listing ship and set it on its present course. Even to this day, twelve years after taking over the helm from him, I am frequently called “Fr. Sullivan” rather than “Fr. Sundborg.” I wish I could attribute the mistake to the fact that our names follow in immediate alphabetical sequence, but I can’t! As I reflect as a Jesuit university president on his accomplishments and his leave-taking, I see him as one of what I believe is the greatest generation of our Jesuit university presidents.

In the world of American Jesuit higher education we know the names Reinert, Raynor, Healy, Sallinger, Baumhart, O’Hare, Monan, Merrifield, Panuska, Mitchell, Casassa, Carter, Morrison, LoSchiavo, Clarke, Brooks, Yanetti, Coughlin, etc. This is the generation of presidents Sullivan belongs among: many of them have died, several are chancellors, some live in Jesuit senior care facilities, all of them are remembered by alumni and are commemorated in buildings, awards, endowed chairs, lecture series, or scholarships named for them on our campuses.

What characterizes this generation? They were all gracious, articulate, friendly leaders. They were larger than life, building their universities by the strength of their wills and the power of their personalities. They are the symbols of the heritage of their institutions, first citizens of their communities and now seen as their colleges’ old warhorses. The pre-email generation of presidents had a personal presence, a dominant status, and an individual influence which cannot in a new era be replicated.

In my view, they are an exceptional generation because they were at the helm when the battle for the shaping of contemporary Jesuit higher education in America was being waged and they won the territory our colleges and universities now hold and on which we now build.

• Assuming office after a long sequence of Jesuit presidents who turned over every six years under previous Jesuit custom, they often held sway for twenty years.

• They put in place the governance structures and recruited the boards which serve us so well today.

• Finding their universities in financial difficulties, they forced through balanced budgets and became prodigious fundraisers.

• In many instances they transformed more narrowly-focused Catholic colleges into universities enthusiastically embraced and supported by the civic community and region.

• Collectively they were a force to be reckoned with in the American Catholic Church and shared a prominence and influence with bishops. They were all “Vatican-II college presidents” knowing how to coalesce lay leadership around their own indomitable energy.

• They defined the place and purpose of Catholic higher education in American academia, culture, and religion, while animating their universities with the modern emphases of the mission of the Jesuits.

• They were all builders and modernizers of oftentimes ramshackle campuses but deserve to be better known for developing the academic quality, core curricula, scholarship, and new programs of their institutions.

• Above all they were friend-makers, winning by their warmth and graciousness a new cohort of supporters who are still committed to our Jesuit universities.

Like the generation who fought in the Second World War, this generation of Jesuit university presidents was called forth to serve a great cause and was given—or more often seized—the authority to make the crucial difference in institutions needing leadership. They were talented, Jesuit priests, but probably not more so than other generations. The time, the opportunity, the cause called them to be great and to take charge. They responded enthusiastically and courageously over decades. These men, sharing a common challenge, called forth, and supported the very best in each other. Fiercely competitive, they knew also how to be collaborative.

The times and challenges of Jesuit higher education in America have changed, calling for a new kind of leadership. Our enrollments are often two times what they were for these earlier presidents, our faculty and staff three times as large, our programs four times as many, our budgets five times greater, the expectations of everyone for higher education six times more and the sheer complexity of institutional operations immeasurably more.

We, the successors of the earlier generation of university presidents, welcome new realities, such as the impact of technology, diversity, globalization, governmental regulation, sustainability, due process, multiculturalism, participatory and consultative governance, the call for transparency, the measurement and assessment of educational outcomes, greater and more varied competition for resources and enrollments, students of an unimaginably different culture and a Catholic church of a different mindset and a changed attitude toward Catholic higher education. These factors, while enriching and improving our colleges, have made the role of the president of a Jesuit university today much more complicated and in many ways more constricted. There cannot be a generation of presidents today who can put their personal stamp on their universities in the way the earlier group did.

The men and women of WWII—known more broadly also as “the long civic generation”—was made great and was made civic by the cause of the war itself and by the space for the shaping of America which followed upon it. It too won the American “territory” we hold as a people though now it has become crowded and complex. So also the generation of presidents to which my predecessor, Fr. Sullivan, belongs was created by the challenge and the free space for action of their time. They rose to this great cause with confidence and filled the space with courage. I am in awe of how large-heartedly they responded and how enduringly transformative their presidency has proved to be. They should be recognized for the kind of Jesuit priestly presidents they were and honored by how we—a new generation of presidents—build vibrant, contemporary Jesuit universities on the ground they won for us.

Fr. Stephen V. Sundborg (ORE) is president of Seattle University.


(Photo by Chris Joseph Taylor)
MINISTRIES

Continued from page 1

Reform

- and natives (of America) can live together," said Jill Marie Gerschutz, migration policy director for the U.S. Jesuit Conference.

"We have respect for human dignity," she said. "The laws should not be confused with morality. Laws are not equivalent to morality. Sovereignty has limitations. We have a responsibility for ensuring the common good."

Kevin Appleby, director of the migration and refugee policy for the USCCB in Washington, discussed policies and gave a political overview of immigration reform.

"We are the most diverse church to help integrate groups of people throughout the world," he told the audience. "The Holy Father talked about immigration, saying, 'This is not a government issue.'"

Trying to find a solution to immigration reform, he said, "goes beyond our borders. ... We know more about immigration than anybody else. We have firsthand knowledge."

Appleby said the current federal immigration system is not only broken but also inconsistent when it comes to admitting immigrants who have relatives living in America.

The objectives of the Justice for Immigrants campaign include educating the public and Catholic community about migration and immigrants; creating a political will for positive immigration reform; enacting legislative and administrative reforms based on the bishops' principles; and organizing Catholic networks to help qualified immigrants obtain the benefits of the reforms.

"Our goal is to educate and arm supporters of the comprehensive immigration reform for the Ohio River valley region. This is a rich environment with Catholics and lawmakers," said Antonio Cube, the campaign's national manager.

During the conference delegates from different states met to develop strategies to take back to their parishes and dioceses. They also attended a variety of workshops, including one led by West and Todd Scribner, education coordinator with the USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services. The two discussed ways participants can educate fellow parishioners about immigration reform and how to organize within a diocese and parish.

"Our Catholic social teaching is central. We have to engage the media with a consistent message because we want to get our message out. We have to break down our audience," Scribner said.

"We need to get college students involved," he said. "This is a population that's more sympathetic than their parents who go to Mass every Sunday. We have an incredible network. We must show faith in action."

West encouraged conference participants to have clear action steps to take. "Presenting the problem is fine but people need to feel like [immigration issues] can be solved," he said.

Immigration attorney Susan Schreiber, who works for the Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc., known as CLINIC and also based in Washington, explained the complexities of the current federal immigration system.

For example, it can take an immigrant seeking a visa or "green card" from three years to as long as 20 years to get one, depending on the person's country of origin.

In addition, immigrants who have entered the U.S. illegally or remain in the country on an expired visa and return home for a family emergency could be banned from the United States when they try to re-enter, while waiting for a visa to be granted. The ban can be for a few years or 20 years or it can be permanent.

"Immigration in 2009 does not look like it did in 1980," Schreiber said. "It's more restrictive. They're increasing federal criminal charges that often overlap with being an undocumented citizen. A comprehensive immigration reform (effort) could resolve every problem."

"Trying to find a solution to immigration reform, he said, 'goes beyond our borders. ... We know more about immigration than anybody else. We have firsthand knowledge.'"

Would you support or oppose U.S. government assistance and trade policies that would create jobs abroad in order to prevent immigrants from coming here illegally to seek employment?

- support: 37%
- oppose: 57%

Would you support or oppose federal legislation to build a wall along the entire U.S.-Mexico border that is intended to stop illegal immigration?

- support: 38%
- oppose: 60%

Do you agree or disagree that the church has a moral obligation to help provide for the humanitarian needs of immigrants regardless of their legal status?

- agree: 75%
- disagree: 25%

Telephone survey conducted among 1,000 Catholic adults in the U.S. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.2 percentage points.
Fr. Rick Ganz is special counsel to the president at Marylhurst University, a private liberal arts university in Portland. He oversees Marylhurst’s long-term strategic planning process, teaches classes, supports the office of university ministry and enhances Marylhurst’s community presence.

Fr. Lee Kapfer, received the Distinguished Graduate Award for 2009 from St. Patrick Catholic School in Spokane. Kapfer is a member of the class of 1936 and was honored by the school in April at a special Mass and reception.

Fr. William Watson recently moved to Cincinnati. He successfully defended his doctoral dissertation at Catholic University and hopes to publish his dissertation, tentatively entitled: “Sacred Story: The Origins, Challenges and A New Method of Praying the Ignatian Examination of Conscience.”

Fr. Gary Smith won the Archbishop Edward T. O’Meara Award for “best article with a worldwide missionary theme” for Smith’s Company article: Lights in the Darkness, an excerpt of his book They Come Back Singing.

Fr. Roger Gillis was paid special recognition by the Seattle University College of Nursing for his diligence, care and expertise in advising students, particularly for those experiencing stress. He is an advisor at the university’s Bellarmine Advising Center.

Fr. Mike Bayard, the new director of Campus Ministry at Seattle University, will travel to Burundi in July for the International Meeting of Jesuit Alumni. Fr. General Adolfo Nicolas will address the conference.

Fr. Provincial Patrick Lee spent five days with Colombian Provincial Francisco de Roux and his assistant Fr. Alvaro Velez visiting Province works in Portland, Seattle and Spokane, including Jesuit High School, Gonzaga University, Seattle University, Seattle Prep and Bellarmine Prep.

Fr. Steve Sundborg has announced Seattle University had exceeded its six-year fundraising goal of $160 million. He reports the total represents $500,000 per week for the duration of the campaign. He expected to take a well-deserved 10-week sabbatical.

Fr. Chuck Peterson, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Bethel, Alaska was asked by parishioners to say a Mass in Latin. But before he did, Peterson and the parishioners studied to better understand the meaning of the Mass in Latin.

-- Pat Walsh

Fr. John Baumann received the 2009 Sister Margaret Cafferty Development of People award for his commitment and the elimination of poverty. This national award is given annually by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD).

For the next two years, Fr. Jim Stormes, of the Maryland province, will hold both the Lo Schiavo and the Zabala chair at the University of San Francisco.

Fr. Paul Fitzgerald, senior associate dean of Arts and Sciences at Santa Clara University will hold the William LeRoux Chair at Seattle University for the spring term before becoming the senior vice president at Fairfield University this summer.

Fr. Carl Hayn entered the Society in 1933 at 17, a year before he had graduated from Loyola High School. Since that time, Carl earned bachelor’s, master’s, licentiate, and doctoral degrees and finally, last October, he was given a Diploma (Diamond, mind you) from his High School.

After 44 years in a classroom at Brophy College Preparatory, Fr. Anton Renna has retired and taken up new residence at the Sacred Heart Jesuit Community in Los Gatos.

Fr. James V. Schall is Professor of Political Philosophy at Georgetown University. He is the author of many books and articles on social issues, spirituality, culture, and literature. His most recent publication being The Mind That Is Catholic: Philosophical and Political Essays which is now available from The Catholic University Press.

Fr. George Dennis of the Sacred Heart Jesuit Community is awaiting publication of his new book entitled The Tactical Constitutions of Leo VI. It is a military handbook, a set of instructions for general officers on how to conduct warfare, compiled by the Byzantine emperor Leo VI (866-912). He has put together the Greek Text, noted the variants in different manuscripts, done an English translation, appended some notes, a bibliography, glossary and index. The handbook contains chapters on ethical issues, battle formations, logistics, naval warfare, medical and religious aspects, responsibilities of the commander, military regulations and punishments, sieges, covert actions and other matters.

-- Leo J. Hombach SJ

Fr. Raymond H. Reis celebrated his 104th birthday on March 25. He is the oldest Jesuit priest in the world. A Jesuit brother in Mexico continues to be a year and a half older than Ray. Fr. Reis still manages to be first in line for dinner each evening at Jesuit Hall.

Fr. Brian J. Christopher was ordained to the priesthood in St. Francis Xavier (College) Church on June 13.

After serving for 24 years as the Dean of the School of Philosophy and Letters at Saint Louis University, Fr. Garth L. Hallett (NOR) is retiring from the position. Fr. Michael D. Barber has been appointed to assume the responsibilities and enjoy the perks of the office.

Top philosophers from around the world again have given high marks to graduate philosophy programs at Saint Louis University. The renowned Philosophical Gourmet Report ranks five of SLU’s graduate philosophy programs among the best in the English-speaking world. In the medieval philosophy area, the University was listed in the top tier with Oxford University in England, the University of Toronto and the University of Notre Dame.

Fr. David Meconi (CHG) pronounced his final vows at the College Church in St. Louis at the 10:00 pm Student liturgy on April 26. Dave currently is an assistant professor of Patristics at Saint Louis University. Fr. James H. Dahlinger pronounced his final vows on May 9 in the chapel at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York. Jim asked to transcribe to the New York Province after a decade of being on the LeMoyne faculty.

Loyola Press has published a new book by Fr. Paul Coutinho (ROM) entitled Just as You Are: Opening Your Life to the Infinite Love of God. Paul is professor of theology at Saint Louis University.

The Presidium team completed its visit to the Missouri Province during the week of May 5-8. Renewal of accreditation should be granted to the province in the fall once the training workshops have been completed.

Loyola Academy, the Nativity School in St. Louis, celebrated its 10th anniversary. A significant percentage of its graduates successfully matriculate from high school and many have already graduated from college.

The gathering of the New Ignatian Educators on February 7-9, 2009, marked the 18th year teachers who are not always new to the teaching profession, but are new to one of our high schools met in the Missouri Province. For the last 10 years this event has been co-sponsored by the Missouri and Wisconsin Provinces. With the 2009 event, a new relationship was forged with the participation of a group from Jesuit High-New Orleans.
Maryland


- In ordination news, Fr. Richard Curry was ordained to the diaconate at Holy Trinity Church in Washington, D.C., April 30. He will be ordained a priest Sunday, Sept. 13, at Holy Trinity. Mr. John Braverman will be ordained a priest with two other New York Jesuits, Mr. Brian Dunkle and Mr. Joseph Riordan, at the Alumni Memorial Chapel at Loyola College in Maryland on Saturday, June 13.

- Fr. Joseph Godfrey will go to Vietnam in July to teach philosophy to Vietnamese scholastics in the St. Joseph Scholasticate in Ho Chi Minh City. From August through December, Fr. Godfrey will visit professor of philosophy at Loyola University Chicago, teaching the graduate course in philosophical anthropology.

- Fr. Brendan Hurley will leave St. Ignatius Church, Baltimore, where he has been parochial vicar for five years, to go to Rome later this summer. He has been named one of the five spiritual directors at the North American College there. He will join another Maryland Jesuit, Fr. Brendan Lalley, who has been a spiritual director there for six years.

- The St. Aloysius Gonzaga Community has a new rector. Fr. Thomas P. Clifford, who is also pastor of the parish, Fr. Vincent J. Genovesi has been named rector of the Saint Joseph’s University Community. Fr. Tom Roach is the new rector for the Scranton Community.

- Fr. Mark Scalise produced a documentary about Havre de Grace, Md., which aired on Maryland Public Television in April. He produced the film with fellow Maryland Province Jesuit Fr. James Mayaik while they were visiting the town in the summer of 2006.

- Provincial James Shea has named Fr. Ronald J. Amiot (NEN) to the new position of Provincial Assistant for Health Care Planning. Fr. Shea also asked Fr. David Sauter to work full time on the province staff in his current position as Provincial Assistant for Schools.

-- Mary Tidghman

New England

- On February 20, the Jesuit Community at the College of the Holy Cross honored Fr. Vincent Lapomarosa on his 75th birthday and the 40th anniversary of his arrival at the school. Lapomarosa is professor of history, coordinator of Holocaust Collection, Jesuit community librarian and chaplain to the Knights of Columbus.


- On March 23, Fr. Joe Fennell celebrated his 98th birthday. Fr. Paul Holland, rector of the Jesuit community at Campion arranged the festivities attended by brother Jesuits and staff. Fr. Provincial Tom Regan attended the celebration and presented Fennell with a proclamation honoring him for being the first member of the New England Province of the Society to reach the age of 98.

- Fr. Paul Holland was pleased to announce that Campion Health Center was awarded honor roll status by U.S. News in their recent study, America’s Best Nursing Homes. Of the 15,000 facilities inspected in the United States, Campion was one of only 27 nursing home facilities to receive a perfect five stars in each of the four yardsticks the federal government applies to nursing homes: overall rating, health inspections, nurse staffing, and quality measures of individual care. Earlier this year, Campion Health Center received the highest Five Star quality rating from The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

- Fr. Bob VerBecke, pastor of St. Ignatius Church in Chestnut Hill and St Mary of the Angels in Roxbury as well as Jesuit Artist in Residence at Boston College, was the keynote speaker at the Biannual Encuentro for students from the Jesuit consortium of Universities “Universidad Ibero- Americana” which was held in Puebla, Mexico from March 30 through April 3. In this program, which includes theatrical presentations, dance, music, literature and photography, Fr VerBecke spoke about his work as a Jesuit chorographer and he also offered participants a number of dance workshops.

-- Alice Poltorick

New York

- Fr. Steven Schoenig (MIS) successfully defended his dissertation of the history of the pallium in the Middle Ages and received his doctorate in graduation ceremonies at Columbia University ion May 20th. The Jesuits at Xavier hosted Steve’s parents and many friends for a celebratory dinner on May 23rd. Steve will assume a teaching position at Saint Louis University in the autumn.

- Fr. William O’Malley’s newest book is Dare to Dream: Stories of 16 people Who Became Somebody. (Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame IN, 2009). The selections of people are intriguing as he shows how their dreams made them strong in different ways, yet all were anchored in the struggle to reach their own full potential.

- Fr. Hadi Sasmita (MAR) has been accepted at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA, to begin studies for a D. Min. in inter-religious dialogue. Hadi’s two years of priestly ministry at St. Anthony’s in Oceanside, NY, right after his ordination in 2007 have been happy ones for all. He served both the Hispanic community at the parish and the Indonesian community in Queens as well as fulfilling his regular duties at the parish. His dedication, selfless service and wonderful sense of humor will be sorely missed.

- The Downtown Buffalo Priest, Fr. John Starm, had a personal meeting with the Mayor of the City of Buffalo, the Hon. Byron Brown. The topic was “The natural potential of the city.” It was an hour well spent and we will wait to see what comes of it. John presented the Mayor with his book, Life is a Dance and not a Dress Rehearsal and with his booklet The Tim Rissett I knew in High School.

- Fr. James Dugan will make his definitive departure from Rome on July 15th and looks forward to his new assignment at Saint Ignatius Park Avenue. A grand farewell is planned for mid-June. Jim’s various assignments over the years in Rome included library supervision, at the Orientalate, the Gregorian and the Bibliicum and assorted other ministries too numerous to mention.

- Fr. John Cecere was the keynote speaker at a spirituality conference at Immaculata University, and he was warmly welcomed by many of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary who taught him in grade school in South Philadelphia. He was welcomed back as “one of their own.” Later in April, John traveled to St. Louis for a Jesuit Conference task force meeting on creating healthy Jesuit communities.

-- Louis T. Garaventa SJ

Province briefs for the New Orleans Province will return next issue.

For up-to-date information about happenings in the New Orleans province, please visit their web site at: http://www.norprov.org
Fr. General has appointed Fr. Tim Kesicki (DET) to succeed Fr. Ed Schmidt as the next provincial of the Chicago Province, stating, “Practically speaking, this means that the Detroit and Chicago Provinces should now move forward as if they were one Province.” Fr. Kesicki adds this new position to his current responsibilities as provincial of the Detroit Province, a role he assumed in 2008. To view a joint video message from Frs. Kesicki and Schmidt, please visit the Chicago Province website at www.jesuits-chi.org.

From May 6–8, the Province hosted a Communications Workshop for Jesuits in First Studies at Loyola University Chicago. The workshop addressed how to better recognize and share through various communications channels the stories of God’s engagement with the world and of the Church and the Society’s role in God’s work. Special thanks to all who attended, as well as to Fr. Ed Schmidt (who also presented) and Fr. Rick Millburn for assisting in the development of the program, and to Frs. Bob Thesing and Paul Mueller for coordinating and hosting. Thanks, also, to the Jesuits and lay collaborators at Jesuits institutions who were among the presenters: Fr. Paul Campbell and Joe Darepas (Loyola Press); Fr. Pat McGrath (Province office); Fr. Eric Knap and Mark Komaneczy (St. Xavier Church in Cincinnati); Drew Marquard (First Studies, Fordham University); Tim Freeman and Jeremy Langford (Province office); Marty McHugh (Company magazine); and Jenéne Francis (Province office). For a copy of the full program, please email jlangford@jesuits-chi.org.

Congratulations to Chicago Jesuit Academy, a full scholarship, Nativity-model middle school on the city’s West Side, for graduating its first class! All 15 members of the class of 2009 have earned admission to college prep high schools, including Loyola Academy, Saint Ignatius College Prep, and Christ the King Jesuit College Preparatory School. When they entered as fifth graders, students tested on average at a mid–third grade level in reading and math. As eighth graders, they test at a 10.5 grade level in the same subjects.

Fr. Michael Conley has been appointed by Francis Cardinal George, OMI, as the new pastor of St. Procopius Church on Chicago’s South Side. Fr. Conley assumes his new role after serving for two years as St. Procopius’s associate pastor.

Fr. Paul Campbell (NYK) and colleagues at Loyola Press have just launched a new website: www.ignatianSpirituality.com. The site aggregates Ignatian content and includes sections on prayer, spiritual direction, retreats, and making good decisions. Suggestions for growing the site’s content and audience are most welcome; please email contact@ignatianspirituality.com.

-- Jeremy Langford

FR. PHIL COOKE, Pastoral Minister on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. South Dakota, oversees the Manderson and Porcupine community parishes. Assisted this summer by Msgr. Joe Hoover and Chris Kral, he hopes to better understand a “rez-special” ecclesial dynamic. Possible responses include revamped catechetical outreach, a swimming program, and summer camp experiences. Hoover was overheard saying, “Welcome to the revolution!” Cooke also looks ahead to the Fall when he begins teaching at the Ogala Community College. Taking inspiration from Paulo Freire’s work, his class will focus on models of participatory action and methods of community organizing.

Former tertian Fr. Rick Deshaies (NEN) set aside his formation duties and returned to the Pine Ridge. He joined pastor Fr. Steve Standford (NEN) at Sacred Heart parish for Easter triduum and, in evenings at the Holy Rosary Jesuit community, fondly reminisced his tertian graces as newly arrived tertian Fr. Ted Gabrielli (CFG) settled in for his own. Gabrielli was in conversation, too, with vocation director Fr. Tom Lawler and his Omaha-area promoter, Fr. Paul Coelho. They were visiting the South Dakota missions with impressive candidates from Creighton and Marquette universities.

Lawler, Coelho, and crew had learned on the Rosebud Indian Reservation about Fr. John Hatcher’s “Icimani Ya Waste” (“the good road”) alcohol recovery program. Staffed and supported in a three-year commitment by the one-and-only off-site project of the Betty Ford Institute of Rancho Mirage, CA, Hatcher is able to address alcoholism on the Rosebud with comprehensive, family-focused outreach.

Hatcher was also reported a renaissance of parish life on the Rosebud. Fr. Tim Manatt, in particular, has defined statistics of recent years by enlivening baptismal and marital preparation programs with numerous new participants. Looking ahead, Hatcher is recruiting personnel to operate his new dental clinic and, through the members of his Board of Trustees – Cooke and Fr. Ray Bucko, Dave Matko, John Paul, George Wixenburg – will evaluate options for a Rosebud Nativity-model school.

Demontreville Jesuit Retreat House near St. Paul, MN, discovered an exact tally of 3,010 retreatants for each of the ‘07 and ‘08 seasons. Open 47 weekends each year, director Fr. Pat McCorkell is already wondering if ’09 will show a “three-peat”.

Congratulations to Marquette High and president Fr. Warren Saxman! The new $13.5 million Holy Companions chapel was rewarded in the state of Wisconsin as a community-friendly and architecturally innovative project.

-- Fr. Daniel Hendrickson SJ

The St. John’s Jesuit Community in Toledo, Ohio, will move to a new location this summer. The community has resided in a building attached to the school since the school reopened in the mid-1960s. The new location, about 4 miles from the school, is a house in a residential area. Joining the community this summer are Fr. Thomas Doyle and two regents. Fr. Tom Pipp will be on sabbatical next year.

Regency placements for the 2009-2010 school have been announced! Mr. Adam DeLee will teach at Christ the King Jesuit College Prep in Chicago. Mr. Ryan Duns will teach at the University of Detroit Jesuit High School. Mr. Lukas Laniauskas and Mr. Eric Styles (CHG) will teach at St. John’s Jesuit High School in Toledo, Ohio.

Mr. Drew Marquard will teach at Walsh Jesuit High School in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. Mr. Tim McCabe will be the development director for Loyola High School in Detroit. Mr. Michael Singbarse (CHG) will teach at St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland.

Fr. William Murphy (CHG) will be the next president of St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland, Ohio. He takes office on July 1, 2009. Fr. John Libena, the interim president, will return to his job as the dean of faculty.

Fr. Theodore (Ted) Monz (CHG) will be the treasurer for the Chicago and Detroit Provinces. Ted will begin his duties for the Detroit Province on July 1, 2009. He will begin his duties for the Chicago Province at a later date.

Fr. Jerome Ozbart will be the minister at the Biblicum in Jerusalem starting this summer.

From April 8-25, 2009, Fr. Tom Pipp and another St. John’s Jesuit (SJ) faculty member led a group of three students from SJ to Barcelona, Spain. The students were participating in an exchange program with a Jesuit school, El Colleig Dels Jesuïtes de Casp (Casp). While at Casp, the SJ students spent two weeks in classes in order to enhance skills in Spanish. In addition, the group made a trip to Manresa and Monserrat, took a walking tour of the Old City of Barcelona, and visited other significant cultural sites in Barcelona. Students from Loyola Academy in Wilmette and St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati also participated in the exchange.

Fr. Raymond Guiao pronounced final vows on May 31, 2009, at the chapel of St. Mary of the Assumption on the campus of St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland, Ohio.


-- John Moriconi SJ

WISCONSIN

CHICAGO

DETROIT
Catherine De Hueck Doherty: Essential Writings
David Meconi SJ, editor
Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y., 2009

Catherine de Hueck Doherty (1896-1985), a Russian-born aristocrat who has recently been proposed for canonization, emigrated to North America where she dedicated her life to spiritual renewal and what she called “the gospel without compromise.” Like her friend Dorothy Day, she found in Christ a spiritual path that joined love of God and neighbor. One of her early projects was the Harlem-based Friendship House, which attracted a young Thomas Merton. Later, with her husband, Eddie Doherty, she established Madonna House in Combermere, Ontario, a lay community that strives to emulate the spirit of the Holy Family. Though Roman Catholic, Catherine drew on her Russian roots and helped popularize the concept of Poustinia (the Christian or secular) that deal with some of the same issues.

Fr. Downey provides a statement on Jesuit identity, one shaped and crafted by the recent Decrees of the 35th General Congregation, and his work is presented not only historically but as adapted to the times and the culture in the Church today. Downey examines the Jesuits worldwide apostolic mission that they face today and that they will meet tomorrow.

Echos of a University Presidency
by J. Donald Monan SJ
Linden Lane Press, Chestnut Hill, Mass., 2009

As President of Boston College through an extraordinary 24-year tenure, J. Donald Monan, SJ, led the University from the brink of bankruptcy into the company of the nation’s academic leaders, a period of growth and revival hailed by the Boston Globe as “the Monan Renaissance.” A hands-on President both on campus and off, from the beginning he was and remained his own speechwriter. This volume gathers together, in Fr. Monan’s own words, the ideas and ideals, the motivations and sensitive appreciation of colleagues, through which, as Geoffrey Boisi writes in the Foreword, “Boston College found its authentic voice.”

Manual de la Teología para los Católicos de Hoy (Theology Guide for Today’s Catholic) is the most recent resource from Libros Liguori for men and women who are asking questions, including:

- Isn’t theology just for priests, brothers, and sisters?
- How can theology help me to be a better Catholic?
- Isn’t it enough to just read the Catechism of the Catholic Church?
- Why a book about theology for lay men and women?

Father Carl Haussmann, SJ, spent his life serving others, leading a life of asceticism and holiness as a Jesuit priest in the Philippines. He also wrote hundreds of letters to his devout German-American family detailing his calling. In this intimate biography, Father Carl’s niece, Cynthia Joy Hausmann, has translated an expansive collection of letters dating from her uncle’s youngest days. Through his letters, we meet a youngster who buys candy instead of putting his pennies in the church collection. Later, as a Jesuit student, he counsels his father not to take the day’s prevalent anti-German sentiment personally. As a compassionate missionary, Father Carl serves lepers on an isolated island. Finally, in World War II, this self-sacrificing man shares both the word of God and his meager rice ball with American soldiers imprisoned by the Japanese. Up to the hour of his death by starvation, Father Carl calms his family’s worries about the dangers besetting him. Clearly, Father Carl’s biography illustrates how letter writing is a personal endeavor: one that has been virtually lost among future generations, giving us a window into how deeply capable we can be in ministering to others.

Encounters with Karl Rahner; Remembrances of Rahner by Those who knew him
Edited & Translated by Andreas R. Batlogg SJ & Melvin E. Michalski
Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, Wisc., 2009

Understanding what theology is can help you in several ways: You’ll come to a deeper understanding of the Word of God, Jesus Christ. You’ll also have a resource to help you in your ministry as you serve the people of God and follow Jesus’ spirit. Manual de la teología para los católicos de hoy can also be a resource to help you understand what theology is and how theology is different from other disciplines (Christian or secular) that deal with some of the same issues.

Priest and Patriot: The Life and Letters of Father Carl Haussmann, SJ
Cynthia Lorraine
iUniverse Publications, 2009
Hardcover; 388pp; $34.95; ISBN: 978-0-5955-2687-1

Fr. Downey provides a statement on Jesuit identity, one shaped and crafted by the recent Decrees of the 35th General Congregation, and his work is presented not only historically but as adapted to the times and the culture in the Church today. Downey examines the Jesuits worldwide apostolic mission that they face today and that they will meet tomorrow.

Many scholarly books have been written on the Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner, but what was he like as a human being? How did his co-workers, his Jesuit colleagues, his students, his relatives and friends encounter him? This book, containing 28 interviews with those closest to him, reveals the human side of Karl Rahner. Yes, he was impatient, melancholy, overworked, but he also possessed a childlike curiosity, prayerful spirit, and gentle heart. His only goal was to serve the Church and help people be mindful of God. This book makes much that Karl Rahner wrote more intelligible and allows us to encounter him today in a new way, in the twentieth year of his anniversary of death (March 30, 1984).

Manual de la Teología para los Católicos de Hoy
Catria Lorraine
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Father Carl’s biography illustrates how letter writing is a personal endeavor: one that has been virtually lost among future generations, giving us a window into how deeply capable we can be in ministering to others.

Echoes of a University Presidency
by J. Donald Monan SJ
Loyola Press, Chicago, Ill., 2009

In Here’s My Heart, Here’s My Hand, veteran spiritual director William A. Barry, SJ, helps us understand how we can experience a special friendship with God and what effects that relationship with God will have on our lives. Nearly 20 of the finest previously published articles Fr. Barry has penned on the subject of friendship with God appear in this warmly written book. Although the selections are diverse in their overall themes—from changing our image of God to forgiving as Jesus forgives—each one shares the common thread of helping us see prayer as the way to a conscious relationship with God.
Former NJN Editor Remembered for a Lifetime of Service

By William J. Byron SJ

Don Clifford will best be remembered for his deep conviction that God is indeed impartial, and for his corresponding commitment to the promotion of interfaith understanding. Don’s consuming interest was inter-religious cooperation between Christians and Jews. Since God does indeed show no partiality, why can’t we—Christians and Jews—meet as equals, love one another as brothers and sisters? That was Don Clifford’s question; it was also his apostolic work. He was founder of the Jewish-Catholic Institute at St. Joseph’s University. How fitting it is that Don’s funeral happens to occur today, the day of Pope Benedict’s historic visit to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust remembrance center in Jerusalem.

Don created opportunities for spiritual exchange of great depth between Catholics and Jews. He never expected participants in inter-religious dialogue to abandon their religious convictions, only to expand their respect for, and understanding of, firmly-held views that were not their own. Don introduced his Catholic students to the Jewish roots of their Catholic tradition of social justice, just as he introduced his Jewish friends to the Catholic understanding of justice tempered by love.

Don Clifford had a great love of the Church and the Society of Jesus. He had a special love and loyalty for his alma mater on Hawk Hill, where his faith was nourished and his character formed, and where he later spent years teaching theology, encouraging students, fostering Catholic-Jewish understanding, and serving as chaplain to the women’s basketball team. He loved Coach Stephanie Gaitley and her teams; I used to kid Don by saying, “Blessed are you among women!” An­other chaplaincy to which he devoted energy and affection was pastoral service to the Religious of the Assumption at Ravenhill and later in Merion.

His love of the Society of Jesus took many forms, not least his service as editor of the National Jesuit News, a position in which he became better known nationally, as he himself grew better informed about the great work his fellow Jesuits were doing all across the country. Don was generous in his praise for Jesuits and gentle in his criticism; those characteristics—praise and gentleness—were part of who he was. Another Jesuit journalist, Peter Lippert, who entered the German Province in 1899, worked as a writer and radio commentator, and was a frequent contributor to Stim­men der Zeit, once remarked that “The Society of Jesus formally lives on its trust in each of its members. Each day in their life is a hundredfold appeal to their indepen­dence and energetic sense of duty; to their free good will, to their high-hearted love of Christ.” I think this description fits Don Clifford nicely. He was independent and energetic, whose intelligence was at the service of the church, whose love of Christ was evident, and whose sense of humor and good will were at the service of his broth­ers in the Society.

“Come to me, you all who labor and are burdened,” says Jesus in today’s gospel reading, “and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for yourselves.” Christ has called you home, Don—quietly, suddenly, unex­pectedly. May you now be at peace and rest in him; and may we—all of us—remain in companionship forever with you in faith and friendship.

“I always like to think of the plaza in front of the Church of the Gesu as a gathering place and not, as we usually use it, a parking lot. Yesterday the basketball team gathered there on the church steps. They had just come from the Kelly Fieldhouse to the right of the church and I caught them as I walked by. Their heads are hanging and it appears that they lost their game. But they will recover and be as strong as the columns under which they review their play.”

GEORGE BUR (MAR), PRESIDENT OF ST. JOSEPH’S PREP IN PHILADELPHIA, OBSERVES THE GOINGS-ON AROUND CAMPUS ON HIS BLOG THE SPIRIT BLOWS WHERE IT WILL BLOWSPRINTBLOWSWHEREITWILL.BLOGSPOT.COM.

“Lest anyone think that novice experiments are all glory and spirituality, it should be noted that while my high-minded reflections and deep emotions tend to be what makes its way into the cyber world, my days in the McKenna Center also include more than a little bit of manual labor. In a given day, I scrub pots and pans, haul buckets of ice down from Gonzaga High school, wipe tables, take out trash, move crates of food and any other job that needs to be done. This week, that included...rat removal. That’s right folks...those rats that fell victim to the astonishing array of snap-traps and poisons at our disposal became my job to handle.

There have been great and tender moments with my homeless brothers, but if that’s your only image, let me add another: me, rooting through a torn out section of wall, working with one of the night shelter men to dislodge the decomposing rodent from the wall, all culminating in my pulling the four-pound carcass out by its snake-like tail and depositing it in a garbage bag.

AMDG, indeed.”

MATTHEW SPOTTS (CHG) HIGHLIGHTS SOME OF THE MORE SCREAM-INDUCING PARTS OF HIS NOVICE EXPERIENCES IN HIS BLOG AND WHETHER THEN? I CANNOT SAY AT MATTHEWSPOTTNSJ.BLOGSPOT.COM.
Saints of God, come to their aid! 
Hasten to meet them, angels of the Lord! 
Receive their souls and present them to God the Most High. 
May Christ, who called you, take you to himself; 
may angels lead you to the bosom of Abraham.

--Rite of Christian Funerals

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. Francis P. Canavan SJ (NYK), 91, died on February 26, 2009 in the Bronx, NY. He was a Jesuit for 70 years and a priest for 58 years. Born in Manhattan, he entered the Society in 1939, was ordained in 1950 and took his final vows in 1956.

Fr. John Caulfield SJ (NEN), 96, died on February 13, 2009 at Campion Center in Weston, Mass. He was a Jesuit for 75 years and a priest for 65 years. Born in Woburn, Mass., he entered the Society in 1934, was ordained in 1944 and took his final vows in 1951.

Fr. J. Conlin SJ (MAR), 86, died March 10, 2009 in Merion Station, Pa. He was a Jesuit for 67 years and a priest for 54 years. Born in Philadelphia, he entered the Society in 1941, was ordained in 1954 and took his final vows in 1978.

Fr. Raymond Johnson SJ (NYK), 74, died on February 24, 2009 at Loyola Hall, Fordham University, Bronx, NY. He was a Jesuit for 56 years and a priest for 43 years. Born in Jersey City, N.J., he entered the Society in 1952, was ordained in 1965 and took his final vows in 1975.

Fr. John C. Hall SJ (MAR), 59, died on March 16, 2009. He was a Jesuit for 42 years and a priest for 31 years. Born in Baltimore, he entered the Society in 1966, was ordained in 1977 and took his final vows in 1982.

Fr. John Locke SJ (CHG), 76, died on March 18, 2009 in Kathmandu, Nepal. He was a Jesuit for 57 years, and he served in Nepal for 48 years. Born in Chicago, he entered the Society in 1951, was ordained in 1964 and took his final vows in 1970.

Fr. Donald Clifford SJ (MAR), 79, died on May 4, 2009 at his residence at Saint Joseph University. He was a Jesuit for 57 years and a priest for 46 years. Born in Philadelphia, he entered the Society in 1951, was ordained in 1962 and took his final vows in 1967.

Fr. James P. Higgins SJ (NYK), 54, died on January 20, 2009 in Syracuse, NY. He was a Jesuit for 33 years and a priest for 23 years. Born in Buffalo, N.Y., he entered the Society in 1975, was ordained in 1985 and took his final vows in 1997.

Fr. Joseph P. Logan SJ (MAR), 87, died on May 4, 2009 at Merion Station, Pa. He was a Jesuit for 63 years and a priest for 54 years. Born in Philadelphia, he entered the Society in 1945, was ordained in 1954 and took his final vows in 1957.
Travels with Tony

Personal Experiences in Colombia

In early May, Tony Jennings, research specialist for Social and International Ministries at the Jesuit Conference, had the opportunity to travel to Colombia with Jim Stormes (MAR), then secretary of Social and International Ministries, to meet with Colombia’s new provincial, visit the Colombian think tank Center for Research and Popular Education, also known as CINEP, and travel to the various apostolates and ministries of the Jesuits in Colombia. For Tony, this was his first trip out of the country with Social and International Ministries and he happened to depart just as the swine flu outbreak had hit and was making international travel even more challenging. Tony brings his unique insights and perspective to this travelogue. To read more about Tony’s adventures in Colombia, visit tonyycolombia.blogspot.com.

Day 1: BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

We arrived in Bogota at 9:30 PM where we’re greeted by a sea of airport employees. It was obvious, and disconcerting, to see that the concerns around swine flu have hit the country and precautionary measures are in place, with the faces of the airport employees shielded by surgical masks. And while the airport was swarming with guards, very few of them were actually armed. For me, this was a welcome surprise, as my theory is that the more armed, the more likely I am to get shot by someone with shortsightedness, as my theory is that the more armed, the more likely I am to get shot by someone with shortsightedness. I’ve been in experiences where the speaker will “over-verbalize” an issue and where all sides of a dilemma are addressed, at length, before a decision is made. Yet he convincingly stated his case in a mere 2 minutes.

For dinner I had a filling fried beef and rice dish. Afterwards, the Jesuit community regaled me with their peculiar fruit, the granadilla, which looked like a cross between a pear and a seed pod and opened up to mess of fish egg like seeds, which tasted sweet and peachy. I couldn’t understand why this fruit wasn’t more popular, or I would have trouble with my bowels.

Oh.

Day 3: BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

Today marked continued meetings with CINEP and the social ministry coordinator for Colombia. I keep waiting for my language skills to adjust to the circumstances. I’m in, i.e. Spanish, but if assimilating was easy I wouldn’t have more Spanish channels on my television back home than English ones.

Day 4: BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

Today, we journeyed all of 8 blocks to the Colombian Jesuit Curia to meet with the new Father Provincial of Colombia—Fr. Francisco “Pacho” De Roux. St. Pacho is famous throughout Colombia for his efforts on behalf of human rights. Twice the Jesuits of Colombia selected him, and twice he refused to become provincial in order to do NGO peace work instead. Needless to say, this was the person in Colombia I was most excited to meet!

His speaking style was a breath of fresh air. After some profuse thanks for our week and a generic repeat of what the CINEP people had already told us, he argued succinctly for the legalization of drugs and the creation of a pan-hemispheric nation that would encompass both North and South America. Now, it’s not what he said that was surprising; it was the way he said it. I’ve been in experiences where the speaker will “over-verbalize” an issue and where all sides of a dilemma are addressed, at length, before a decision is made. Yet he convincingly stated his case in a mere 2 minutes.

This was startling, to say the least.

Day 5: CALI-FEY Y ALEGRIA, COLOMBIA

Today we left the casa at 4 am to travel to Cali in the southwest. This was the trip I was most excited about: we would be visiting a y alegria school in the hill country that surrounds the town. Here, internally displaced refugees build their own houses out of stolen construction materials and garbage. The higher up the hill you go, the poorer its inhabitants and the more run down its buildings. The y alegria school was at the very top. Ideally, I just wanted someone to ogle my blue eyes like they were something different. My cousin served in Afghanistan, and he told me the Afghans call his “devil eyes.” I’d like to experience something akin to that.

The thunderstorm arrives the same time we do—a pleasant cool rain falls on us as we make our much gusted tour. The school is a series of brick buildings in varying conditions of decay—some are almost functional, while others have tarp roofs and no doors. The children are all very happy. For the most part I’m ignored while we are marched through, but the Afro-Colombian children all stop to stare. I tell myself it’s because of the blue eyes. Mission accomplished.

Day 6: BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

Thanks to the ridiculous flight schedules and early-rising sentiments of the Colombian people, I awoke today at 5 am for the third straight day. I can’t stand mornings. I’d claim to be “not a morning person” but the phrase understates my aversion to mornings. I am the exact polar opposite of a morning person. This made the ordeal awaiting me at the airport all that much more difficult to endure. We arrive at the airport at 6 a.m. and it’s already a zoo. Our flight isn’t until 10 a.m., but Fr. Mauricio insisted we get there 4 hours early to deal with the hassle. But nothing prepared me for the Colombian Emigration Experience, which kicked off with a trip to the “no tax” line, where our passport had to be stamped by a bureaucrat who does nothing but look at your passport to see which nationality you are. Apparently, Americans don’t pay travel tax in Colombia, but Colombians do. Way to encourage tourism.

Next we entered the first airline security check. Colombia has a problem with drug smuggling. Maybe you’ve heard that. Next we went through airport security, which involved the standard metal detector we know so well in this country. They were very quick about their business. I wish I could say “quick and thorough” to justify the trouble. It was fine though, there were plenty more security checks to come.

Next we went through the military checkpoint, where men with M-16s slung over their back stood at a long table and went through your belongings while asking you questions that sounded curiously like the one we’d heard about sharp knives. Liquids? Anything illegal? On and on they went while they rummaged through my things, again, distractedly and without concern. After we finished with the police, we were then pointed towards our gate, where our airline had ANOTHER round of security waiting for us. Unfortunately, this entire affair had only taken two hours so we had another two hours to sit around and wait for our plane. I shudder to think of the inconvenience if they typically DO need four hours. Lives would have been lost if I had to wait an hour in line to have my bag searched a fourth time.

Tony Jennings

Tony Jennings

Tony Jennings

Tony Jennings