

# Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities in Asia Pacific

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With the changing landscape both of the Jesuits and of Asia Pacific societies, and the diversity of our educational conditions, languages, cultures, religions and local struggles, how can our institutions of higher learning cooperate to make an effective contribution to the one, global Jesuit mission? I have been asked to speak to this desire for greater collaboration among us in the context of General Congregation 36.

## **Mission and Governance**

How we understand our mission should decide how we organise ourselves. The Jesuit mission is to serve the *'Missio Dei'*. This mission is clearly given in the Formula of the Institute, the final version of which dates back to 1550.

*[Each Jesuit should] keep what follows in mind: He is a member of a Society founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the defence and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine, by means of public preaching, lectures, and any other ministrations whatsoever of the word of God and further by means of the Spiritual Exercises, the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity and the spiritual consolation of Christ's faithful through hearing confessions and administering the other sacraments.*

*Moreover, he should show himself ready to reconcile the estranged, compassionately assist and serve those who are in prisons or hospitals and, indeed, to perform any other works of charity, according to what will seem expedient for the glory of God and the common good.*

It was John O'Malley, if I am not mistaken, who neatly summarised this statement of mission as referring first, to ministries of the Word, second, ministries that help people to interiorise the Word and third, ministries that put the Word into practice.

Our mission determines our structure. From the very beginning, as we read in the Deliberations of the First Companions which took place over some months at the beginning of 1539, it was decided that, because the nature of their mission threatened to scatter the first companions in all directions, they would not break up "a society united in God".<sup>1</sup> From its earliest days then, discernment about the mission has always guided the discernment about the way the Society is organised and governed. The mission of the Society does not change, even though it may be given new expression in each age and the circumstances in which it is exercised can change greatly over time.

As our mission is renewed, so also should our governance structures be renewed. So the Society has regularly reviewed and identified principles and measures by which its governance arrangements can better serve its mission in the context of the time.

Fr General Arrupe was clearly prophetic when he spoke to GC31 fifty years ago (October 1966) about the changes and challenges to this mission evident in his time:

*“Let us look at the world of today and tomorrow, a world at each moment more interconnected, in the way that time and again many phenomena have a universal reach ... Many of the current problems affect and preoccupy the whole of mankind. This should be our first question: Where are these problems located? And the next will be: What apostolic activity and what engagement could resolve them?”<sup>ii</sup>*

### **General Congregations**

We are now already in General Congregation 36, as Fr Provincial Sunu reminded us last night, preparing for the plenary session in October. The last five General Congregations were special, since they took up the task of redefining Jesuit mission following the Second Vatican Council. GC31 proposed means for greater interprovincial cooperation, through meetings of provincials in geographic and linguistic groupings, to meet the challenges to our mission that extend beyond a single province. GC32 of course issued the lapidary definition of our mission as the pursuit of a faith that does justice. GC33 helped us emerge united from a time of crisis in relation with the Vatican. GC34 introduced the context of other cultures and religions, while GC35 spoke of “reconciliation with God, with the other and with creation”. We are still trying to implement in our communities and activities the call of GC35 to be “fires that light other fires” after St Alberto Hurtado’s example, to go to the “frontiers”, and to find the meaning of “universal mission”.

Most relevant for today’s discussion, GC35 explained that the six conferences are a “significant initiative in the governance structure of the Society” (GC35, D5, n 17). We often speak of “assistancies” but these are not a governance instrument and are not mentioned in the Constitutions. However, GC35 helpfully asserted a role for conferences, although it left some questions about their authority, a confusion that we may hope to clarify in GC36. You represent the institutions of higher learning within the Asia Pacific Conference. Your networking and cooperation with one another makes this conference more effective in serving our global mission.

GC35, D.2, n.20 claimed that “serving Christ’s mission today means paying special attention to its global context. This context requires us to act as a universal body with a universal mission, realising at the same time the radical diversity of our situations. It is as a worldwide community – and, simultaneously, as a network of local communities – that we seek to serve others across the world.” In GC36, hopefully, that instruction will be tweaked so that it may explain more clearly the networking role of conferences in serving universal mission.

### **Networks and ‘Horizontal’ Governance**

In our complex world and given modern communications, networks and horizontal linkages are increasingly important. Conferences operate largely as networks. Networks rely not so much on authority as on leadership and vision. Classically, the Society’s governance operates vertically, hierarchically. Ignatius after all, worked for the King. He lived in the Sixteenth Century and imagined governance according to his time. How can we integrate the vertical structures of the Society - General to provincials to local superiors and directors of works – with the horizontal cooperation that will give life to the networks promoted by conferences?

One of the most stimulating addresses Pope Francis gave was in Bolivia in July 2015, when he met an assembly of popular movements, of networks. He made three points in his address:

1. Change is needed: “we want change, real change, structural change”
2. You (popular movements) are sowers of change.
3. The content of the change we seek together:
  - a. An economy at service of people

- b. Let us unite our peoples on the path of peace and justice
- c. Defend Mother Earth

He concluded, "...the future of humanity does not lie solely in the hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of peoples and in their ability to organise. It is in their hands, which can guide with humility and conviction this process of change".

Networks may require authorisation, certainly, but what they need most of all is shared vision. Having a clear vision and good leadership is what makes them move. Moreover they arise often in times of crisis, at times of widely perceived need, such as the crises of refugees, homelessness, natural disaster, mass illiteracy, high infant mortality, poverty, etc. In facing these challenges, leaders emerge who can offer improvisation and mobilise people to common action.

### **A Culture of Collaboration in Governance**

GC35 noted changing circumstances, including "the growth in collaboration with others" which demands "certain clarifications about how to exercise governance so that it (the Society of Jesus) might continue to be genuinely Ignatian". It is clear that collaboration with others can only progress if there is genuine collaboration among Jesuits, and I do not mean only among individuals. Our mission requires that collaboration be built at the organisational level as well - between institutions, communities, provinces, and conferences. Collaboration implies horizontal organisation.

The movement towards collaboration that is going on among Jesuit basic education institutions is most impressive for me. The secretariat for Basic Education called a meeting in Spain last year to:

1. Facilitate the dialogue between the education apostolate and the Ignatian spiritual tradition
2. Encourage dialogue among significant pedagogical trends and Ignatian pedagogy
3. Contribute to the pedagogical renewal of Jesuit education in the framework of a global network of Jesuit schools.

The framework for that global meeting on Jesuit basic education was the 1993 call of Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach for the "formation of men and women of conscience, competence and compassionate commitment". This call has influenced all levels of Jesuit education and is impressively adopted here by Sanata Dharma University and incorporated into its mission statement.

That ever-reliable source, Wikipedia, tells us that the Jesuits have founded and manage 324 secondary schools and 167 colleges and universities. Whatever about the precise accuracy of Wikipedia, it is undeniable that there is a significant number of Jesuit schools, and possibly an even larger number of "Ignatian" schools. Imagine if these institutions were more tightly networked for the common purpose of making an impact on educational policy worldwide!

Promoting this collaborative networking is surely what GC35 asked conferences to do. In Decree 6 (Collaboration at the Heart of Mission), conferences are urged to "find ways of promoting deeper deliberations about common apostolic priorities and the role of institutions, so as to facilitate greater collaboration in mission".

### **Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP)**

It may help if, at this point, I explain the planning undertaken at the level of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific. JCAP has an apostolic plan for 2014 to 2019, in line with our statutes, revised in 2008 following GC35, that state simply: "The purpose of JCAP is to clarify, focus and ensure implementation of the mission of the Society for Asia Pacific."

The JCAP apostolic plan has three sections – governance, formation of Jesuits and collaborators, and collaboration in apostolic activities.

In the area of Governance, our goal is “to streamline, modernise, synergise and make more flexible and collaborative the Society’s structures of governance in Asia Pacific”. This refers to the discernment about re-structuring of all provinces and regions called for by GC35 and helped by a methodology and guidelines promulgated by Fr General in September 2011. It also speaks of a priority that JCAP gives to building up the personnel, institutions and governance arrangements of the missions, namely Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Myanmar.

In the area of Formation and Leadership, the goal is “to prepare Jesuits and other clergy, religious and laity for mission through formation, studies and capacity building; to enhance leadership formation for Jesuits and lay partners; to promote succession planning for key leadership roles in the provinces, regions and JCAP”. This may sound like an obvious goal, but it is important that we state it. Formation resources are unevenly spread across our regions and provinces, and because of this the formation of Jesuits and other partners needs to be undertaken as a collaborative project at conference level. The Conference has a clear role in managing this cooperation.

Finally, the third area, Collaboration in Mission. Here our goal is “to promote universal mission, apostolic availability, creative co-operation and discernment in mission; to facilitate progress in the common apostolic priorities of **migration, reconciliation with creation and youth ministry**”. This is a rather large “catch all” category, but the three focus areas are clear. Their secretaries are active networkers, helped by informed working groups, who animate each of the priorities. In addition JCAP has around 15 coordination circles and networks comprising interested and qualified persons, your own AJCU circle being one of these.

### **The European Universities**

It will be surely interesting for you to know that a meeting similar to your own was held in Brussels in June this year. The rectors of 13 Jesuit universities in Europe and the Middle East reflected on the crisis of vision and solidarity in Europe covering, among other topics, Brexit, refugees, and the Ukraine war. They reported that they find public discourse polarised; they see widespread poverty, both economic and spiritual, a desert of religious feeling and a lack of capabilities to address the deepest human needs. Bottom line: people are really struggling. To this situation they too asked, as you do, “how do we respond to all of this?”

The rectors were moved by the desire to deepen the sense of Jesuit mission and identity across the higher education institutions. They discussed a proposal: “Higher Education for Social Transformation (HEST): A Kairos for Jesuit institutions!” The proposal was accepted. They agreed to link higher education institutions with social centres, and to address themes, such as migration and refugees, ecology, poverty and anthropology, that are of relevance to the Society, the Church and the European and Near East societies.

The project, they said, is a response to Father General’s letter to the whole Society “On the Global Economy” in which he calls Jesuits and lay collaborators to read the document *Promotio Iustitiae* #121.

I name just some of their proposals.

- We should leverage our commitment and reputations for sound research and for clear positions through direct advocacy.
- We should utilize our network of institutions to turn a spotlight on significant policies; to pressure for greater international cooperation in reforms that would make the lives of the poor more humane and just.
- Our professional schools should collaborate, in direct contact with the social reality and the capacity to impact change through faculty, student, and alumni action.

- They also propose to work together with the schools of philosophy and theology in this project.

Already you have a lot of experience of clusters of research in Asia Pacific institutions. For example, Ateneo de Manila has made an impressive beginning by gathering data on initiatives for the study of migration and forced displacement. Pat Falguera, the social apostolate delegate of the Philippine Province, reported on this at the JCAP migration network meeting early this year. He explained how there is a movement to bring together various initiatives in aid of migrants in the Philippine Province. This includes UGAT, which is on the ADMU campus; ADMU's Loyola School of Social Sciences and Professional School of Government; Loyola School of Theology's Migration Theology program; Xavier University; Ateneo Migration Center of Ateneo de Davao, Ateneo de Naga, Ateneo de Zamboanga and the Sta Maria Catholic School in Iloilo. A little more about UGAT, which collaborates with the Philippine Overseas Labor Office and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. Its new director, Earl Barreto SJ, runs courses on counselling and undertakes research and training. The course on financial literacy appears to have the most impact.

### **Sustainability of Life Conference**

Fr Joel mentioned last night the just concluded three-day JCAP sustainability conference that was also held here in Sanata Dharma University. It was a collaboration of the JCAP clusters of Reconciliation with Creation, Migration, Inter-Religious Dialogue, Higher Education (ie AJCU-AP), Basic Education, Spirituality and Formation. Indeed many of you or representatives from your institutions attended. All came together under the theme of Sustainability for Life. As Joel reported to us, the actual pursuit of "sustainability" was experienced variously among the poor, within families, in civil society organisations, in credit unions, in farmers' cooperatives, etc and examined against the backdrop of unsustainable models of development applied now in Asia.

It was noted that while the sustainability conference was a wonderful experience of the Jesuit Conference from below, what the pursuit of sustainability at this point needs is a home. Fr Joel asked "How can the insight, passion, resolve, and dedication to sustainability experienced in the sustainability conference find an institutional home – lest the commitment to sustainability itself not be sustained?"

"I believe," Joel told us, "the AJCU-AP ought offer itself to give this JCAP multi-sectoral apostolic movement towards sustainability a home. As universities we are *Jesuit* because we appropriate the Jesuit mission – the commitment to the faith, the promotion of justice, cultural sensitivity, inter-religious dialogue and reconciliation with creation."

"The Jesuit universities search or research for the theoretical and practical requirements of sustainability, instruct in this truth, and serve communities transformatively with urgency. Being university in this sense, in Fr Adolfo Nicolas' sense of *proyecto social*, is today only possible through the active collaboration of the university with apostolic partners in faith, in the pursuit of social justice, the strengthening of human communities, in inter-religious dialogue, and in genuine commitment for the renewal of our common home."

"In this context, AJCU-AP may wish to consider during this annual meeting whether it might offer itself as a home of the JCAP sustainability movement. The JCAP apostolic clusters rely on us for actual collaboration. Consider whether we can really welcome them home to our colleges and universities in solidarity and shared commitment."

### **A Home for Sustainability of Life Resolutions: A Proposal**

Between that conference and this meeting, a representative group met to consider what a “home” for the Sustainability of Life resolutions would involve, and thus what proposal could be offered to AJCU-AP. They came up with this formula: A proposed home implies an ongoing inter-institutional collaborative effort that would include:

1. A secretariat to drive it.
2. Three or four institutions that commit to engage in collaborative research and action. Participants from several of these were in the sustainability conference and proposed the following examples:
  - a. PSL (Pusat Studi Lingkungan - Center of Environmental Studies) at University of Sanata Dharma;
  - b. Mindanawoan & AGILA at Ateneo de Davao;
  - c. Environment and Social Science Center, based on the campus of Ateneo de Manila.
  - d. Loyola School of Theology, also at Ateneo de Manila;
3. A choice of two, three or four common themes for clusters of research eg water, community based economic initiatives, migration.

The orientation of all the clusters for research and action should be a response to *Laudato si'* and the practical application of the resolutions of the sustainability conference.

#### **Resolutions of the sustainability conference for the intellectual apostolate**

Your representatives at the sustainability conference this week will be able to tell you the many resolutions relevant to AJCU that issued from this gathering. They referred to manner of instruction, curriculum and to the consistency between what is taught and the way the campus is managed eg, green campuses, biodiversity, management of energy and waste.

They asked for inter-departmental, collaborative research for sustainability and for research that promotes sustainable energy. Your representatives also considered the outreach and service learning activities, asking that these emphasize programs that empower people. Your member universities and colleges engage young adults at a most meaningful period of their lives and have the capacity to mobilize and energize them for lives of service.

#### **Distinctive Contribution of Jesuit Universities and Colleges**

One key reflection for me during and since the sustainability conference concerns the distinctive contribution our institutions can make. I would see this as promoting a dialogue between the sacred and the secular. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, which gave us the terminology and language for the conference, are all secular goals, viz, end poverty and hunger, ensure health and well-being, provide education for all, empower women, provide clean water for all, care for oceans, marine resources, forests, ecosystems, biodiversity, make cities safe, reduce inequality ... and so forth. Our contribution, precisely because of our mission, is to promote the spiritual, sacred dimensions of these goals. Precisely because of who we are, we have a reason to promote this dialogue. At the conference, we heard remarkable, moving contributions from Muslim and Buddhist scholars. We considered the wisdoms of the indigenous peoples and their respect for the sacred. We were moved to consider the inner human mysteries that suffering, inequality and indeed plenty provoke.

#### **Assistance from AJCU**

I cannot conclude without saying a word about your cooperation in support of Timor-Leste and Myanmar, especially to thank you. While I am JCAP President, I am also privileged to be Superior of these two frontier missions and have accompanied them over the last six years as they take shape. Two fledgling institutions in Myanmar receive significant support from AJCU-AP: SAG in Taunggyi is helped greatly by Ateneo de Davao, while Campion Institute is assisted by the full time secondment

of a professor from Xavier University. In the past, Sanata Dharma has offered formation to Myanmar teachers and has indicated its readiness to continue this, and we witnessed last night the signing of an agreement between Sanata Dharma University and Instituto São João de Brito in Timor-Leste. There are many other cooperative activities across the AJCU network. Through gatherings such as this one, may you continue to strengthen your collaborative links.

### Conclusions

When Pope Francis presided at the Eucharist in the Church of the Gesù in Rome in 2014, he presented the recently canonized Peter Faber as a model, and encouraged us to live as Peter Faber did: *moved by great desires and a restlessness that are conditions for the gift of apostolic fruitfulness*. In addition, he raised some questions that subsequently Fr General Adolfo Nicolás proposed to us as a wider context or horizon for assessing our mission.

Fr Nicolás gave us an instrument for evaluating institutions and for determining the apostolic plan appropriate for each place: *“Do we have great visions and impulses? Are we also bold? Are our dreams grand, with a zeal that consumes us? or “Do we settle for mediocrity and stick to our fixed apostolic programs?”* As Fr Pedro Arrupe already noted fifty years ago, many of our contemporary challenges have an international reach. More than many other institutions, universities too, have an international reach. Bonded as you are in an association such as AJCU-AP, I can only encourage you to work together more closely, to develop structures and strategies for closer cooperation in serving the one common, shared mission, particularly in Asia Pacific.

Asia Pacific encompasses more than half the world’s population. It has always been the world’s cultural and religious melting pot, and now it is fast becoming the economic hub as well. All the world’s major religions have their origins in Asia (when the Middle East is included in the continent). We are in a unique position to promote collaboration at a time when, as Pope Francis prayed on returning from Poland recently, the world is “torn apart by conflicts and disagreements”.

Given the significant challenges to our mission today, we are called to reach out to the frontiers of our world and of the Gospel, to “reach to those geographic and spiritual places that others do not reach or find it difficult to reach”.<sup>iii</sup> In finding our way forward through networking and collaborating with others, we will be guided by His light shining in the face of the poor. The way of collaboration calls us to an inclusive dialogue, guides us to reconciliation among people long used to living in enmity, leads us to solidarity with popular movements and helps us to join with others in listening to the cry of the earth.

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<sup>i</sup> See *Deliberatio primorum Patrum*, Cons MHSJ, I, 7.

<sup>ii</sup> Discurso del P. General Arrupe sobre “Colaboración Interprovincial”, GC31, 14 octubre 1966.

<sup>iii</sup> Benedict XVI, Address to the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation.