

STUDIES

in the Spirituality of Jesuits

Jesuit Spiritualities and the Struggle for Social Justice



A Letter on the Problematic, to Phil Land
from Bill Connolly

A Reply about the Problematic
from Phil Land

A Reply to Phil Land: Afterthoughts
from Bill Connolly

Published by the American Assistancy Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality,
especially for American Jesuits working out their aggiornamento
in the spirit of Vatican Council II

THE AMERICAN ASSISTANCY SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

consists of a group of Jesuits from various provinces who are listed below. The members were appointed by the Fathers Provincial of the United States. The purpose of the Seminar is to study topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and to communicate the results to the members of the Assistancy. The hope is that this will lead to further discussion among all American Jesuits--in private, or in small groups, or in community meetings. All this is done in the spirit of Vatican Council II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original charismatic inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the changed circumstances of modern times. The members of the Seminar welcome reactions or comments in regard to the topics they publish.

To achieve these purposes, especially amid today's pluralistic cultures, the Seminar must focus its direct attention sharply, frankly, and specifically on the problems, interests, and opportunities of the Jesuits of the United States. However, many of these interests are common also to Jesuits of other regions, or to other priests, religious men or women, or lay men or women. Hence the studies of the Seminar, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

THE MEMBERS OF THE SEMINAR ARE:

Michael J. Buckley, S.J., Jesuit School of Theology, 1735 Le Roy Avenue, Berkeley, California 94709. 415-841-8804

William J. Connolly, S.J., Center for Religious Development, 42 Kirkland Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138. 617-547-4122

David L. Fleming, S.J., Ministry Training Services, 3001 S. Federal Blvd., P.O.Box 1114, Denver, Colorado 80236. 303-922-6358

George E. Ganss, S.J., Chairman of the Assistancy Seminar and Editor of its *Studies*. His address is: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, Fusz Memorial, 3700 West Pine Blvd., St. Louis, Missouri 63108. 314-652-5737

James J. Gill, S.J., c/o Youville Hospital, 1575 Cambridge St., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138. 617-495-2042

Robert F. Harvanek, S.J., Loyola University, 6525 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, Illinois 60626. 312-274-3000

Philip S. Land, S.J., Center of Concern, 3700 13th Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017. 202-635-2757

Daniel F. X. Meenan, S.J., Editor of the *Review for Religious* and Secretary of the Assistancy Seminar, Fusz Memorial, 3700 West Pine Blvd., St. Louis, Missouri 63108. 314-652-3700

Ladislav Orsy, S.J., Catholic University of America, Department of Canon Law, P.O. Box 63, Washington, D.C. 20064. 202-635-5665

John W. Padberg, S.J., Weston School of Theology, 3 Phillips Place, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138. 617-492-1960

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Fusz Memorial, St. Louis University
3700 West Pine Boulevard
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Editor's Foreword

An Invitation to State Your Views on the Problematic

The Assistancy Seminar has long been exploring the question: What can be done to further the understanding, acceptance, and implementation of Decree 4 on faith and justice which was issued by the 32nd General Congregation in 1975? Since that date, there has been among Jesuits a manifest increase of interest in social justice and of activities promoting the welfare of deprived persons or groups. A few striking examples, now well publicized in the secular press, are the cases of Father Rutilio Grande and the Jesuits in El Salvador, or of the U. S. Jesuits in Honduras. Noteworthy, too, the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, from its offices respectively in Portland, Oregon, Cleveland, Ohio, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania has been placing annually more than 200 men and women in social works for poor and oppressed peoples such as American Indians in Alaska or Arizona, blacks of the Midwest, or Cuban refugees on the east coast. Other examples can be found in abundance by paging through past issues of *National Jesuit News*, or the *S. J. News and Features* sent out from the S. J. Press and Information Office in Rome, or the newsletters sent out on occasions by Jesuit Missions, Incorporated, or similar releases.

Yet it is only natural, too, that more than a few Jesuits have doubts or difficulties pertaining to Decree 4. These are the Jesuits on whom Fathers William J. Connolly and Philip S. Land focus their special attention in the essays found in our present issue of these *Studies*.

During the discussions in the Seminar on the first drafts of these essays, this phenomenon surfaced: The problematic is different for different Jesuits. If individuals are to be helped and met "where they are," various formulations of the problematic must be proposed and explored and corresponding solutions attempted.

Hence came consensus that the two drafts should be published in the form of a dialogue. Father Connolly was to write a letter setting up the problematic as he saw it. Father Land was to treat that problematic and any others he deemed important. Then Fr. Connolly was to take Fr. Land's ideas and express his own afterthoughts.

In the Seminar a further consensus arose: It would be beneficial

to invite our readers to send in their own reactions, in such a way that each would formulate the problematic as he sees it in his own life, and how he thinks it can be handled. The letters should be signed, and may be sent directly to one of the two authors or to the present editor.

Just how these reactions will be handled depends on what will come in. Probably a procedure will be used similar to that typical of a subcommittee in a general congregation. It receives a collection of postulata which partially or wholly overlap, repeat, or contradict one another, and seem at first to be a only confused mass. But the subcommittee studies the mass, finds the chief ideas for either one or several main positions, and finally describes the problematic in one organized presentation which can receive study from the congregation as a whole. This procedure leads eventually to detection of the main problem or problems and better solutions.

Why have we used the term "problematic" rather than "problem"? The dictionary distinctions between the two words are so subtle that they escape almost as soon as they are grasped; and rightly or wrongly, many nowadays use the two terms interchangeably. But our reasons for choosing "problematic" are perhaps best given by two descriptive definitions which were proffered in humor, whether or not the lexicographers will ever agree with them: "A problem is what something really is, and a problematic is what I think it is."

If these definitions be accepted, discovery of problematic is a step toward identifying the real problems. And our present invitation seeks especially this: What do *you think* the problem or problems to be?

George E. Ganss, S.J., Chairman
The American Assistancy Seminar

JESUIT SPIRITUALITIES AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

AUTHOR'S PREFATORY NOTE: THE PROBLEMATIC

by

William J. Connolly, S.J.
Center for Religious Development
42 Kirkland Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

When the 32nd General Congregation declared that the struggle for justice in the world is a constitutive element of the Jesuit mission, it was making no abrupt commitment. Many Jesuits had already made the struggle for justice a key element of their personal mission. Nor was it simply avowing its support for those engaged in social action. It was setting out to establish the search for justice as a determining element in the choices Jesuits make concerning their ministries and the way they live.

The declarations of general congregations, however, do not change Jesuit lives, or give new dimensions to existing ministries, or initiate vital new ministries. Will the Jesuit "man in the street" become a knowledgeable and determined seeker after social justice? This is a question the Congregation could not answer. It is the crucial question it left with us. The basic life attitudes of individual Jesuits and the decisions that flow from those attitudes will determine the reality or unreality of the Society's commitment to social justice.

There is always a gap between official proposals and the development of the attitudes they propose. Each Jesuit's experience is his most reliable guide for determining whether the gap between the Congregation's declarations on the quest for justice and the attitudes of the Jesuits he meets and talks to is broad or narrow, shallow and likely to be readily filled or deep and hard to remedy. There are indications in my own Jesuit environment that the gap is wide and deep, and that it will prove hard to fill if it can be filled at all.

On one side of the gap is the Jesuit who may pay serious attention to his relationship with God, his interpersonal relationships, and his

work, but little attention to the societal effects of his life and work. On the other side is the proposal that his life and work take on a societal dimension. How does this man come to live an integrated spiritual life that includes the societal dimension and may even be transformed by it?

My purpose in writing the following letter to my colleague Phil Land stems from the recent experience which spiritual directors and other pastoral workers have had with conversion, the process of becoming pronouncedly more open to the action of God. Can reflection on the conversion process, as they have heard people describe it and as they have sometimes experienced it in themselves, help us to understand how the gap can be filled? I believe that it can and that it can also help us to facilitate the filling of the gap.

One of the major elements in the conversion process is the person's initial reaction to the proposal that he should live a fuller gospel life. It is through this reaction that the proposal--in this case the Congregation's commitment to societal justice--engages him. If no reaction occurs, he remains out of contact with the proposal--except, perhaps, on a purely rational level. The fact that it has been made may reside in his mind in somewhat the same way that the fact that the second Council of Constantinople took place resides in his mind. But it does not affect his life.

It is essential to the conversion process that the person's reaction remain alive in him. It does not much matter what the reaction is. It may be confusion, resentment, or dismay. If, whatever it is, the reaction is not stifled by torpor, presuppositions, or distractions, development can take place. This is why a spiritual director will help a person to pay attention to his reactions to a particular aspect of the gospel message even when the reactions are anything but enthusiastic. If the reaction not only remains alive but also enters the person's contemplative dialogue with God, development very likely will take place. If, however, the reaction does not remain alive, no development can take place.

It is important, then, that Jesuit reactions be voiced. Giving them expression helps keep them alive and may develop them. In addition,

hearing other people's reactions can help us to recognize our own and encourage us to express them.

I write this letter to Phil Land in the hope that the sample reactions it contains will help other Jesuits to recognize their own, voice them, and allow them to enter their personal dialogue with God. No one can presume to speak for anyone else on the issues of faith and justice. But we can speak for ourselves. This is what I intend to do. In a postscript to Phil's article, I also intend to reflect on the dialectic that can operate in spiritual life if we take our reactions seriously enough to let them remain alive.

I have chosen the letter form as most appropriate to my purpose. The letter form encourages the writer to express the reactions and the attitudes of a moment. It speaks from within the moil. In the dialectic between the gospel and ourselves, moments deserve to be taken seriously. Through taking them seriously, one can come to a new and unexpected openness to God. It is my hope that the letter will help me and my readers to take seriously this moment that I believe many Jesuits as well as myself may be experiencing.

A LETTER ON THE PROBLEMATIC

FROM BILL CONNOLLY TO PHIL LAND

Dear Phil:

The vision is magnificent. Not only the vision of a world in which nations and social classes would be linked to one another by a thirst for mutual justice and a desire to banish want from the haughty place it holds in the present scheme of things. God's dream is there, too, in the social vision of the Church, the Isaian longing for a time and a condition in which the cobra will not be enemy to the child, the lion will be at peace with the flock, and men will no longer war on one another. But especially the vision that the Church is called to strive toward the fulfillment of the dreams, even though we will not experience that fulfillment in this life, and that this clearly appears as the spiritual core of her social teaching. And that call so directly and clearly reflects the exigencies of the Christian conscience confronted with want and injustice in the world that, as soon as I hear it, I recognize its intellectual rightness and authentically Christian ring.

However, I find to my consternation, that call is not gripping enough to change me or to enlarge the scope of my practical concerns. It asks that I have a passionate desire to help in the achievement of justice for people in places, cultures, economic and social situations that I do not know, have no deeply experienced affinity with, and will probably never understand. I do not have that desire. Expositions of the call to engage leave me inert. There is something monumental, superhuman, about this struggle the Church and the Society call us to engage in. The call overwhelms me, and I would rather not read or talk about it.

Let me explain further. I use the word passion deliberately. A deeply rooted parochialism is as resistant to change as any other deeply rooted attitude, and my experience tells me that only a contrary conviction passionately held can challenge this parochialism of mine with sufficient force to persuade me to expand my fundamental ways of seeing life, people,

and myself. And the ways of seeing life, people, and myself that this vision must change if it is to be effectual in me are fundamental.

I have had no great difficulty refraining from the purchase of Gallo wines. I have also been able to help Catholics in my city to recognize that a woman can be as competent a spiritual director as a man. But in the first case I had come, through discussion, to understand the value of the measure, and, since I do some of the purchasing for my house, I could easily implement it. The second fell within the scope of the work I do every day--the training of spiritual directors. That work constantly made evident the competence of women directors, often gave me personal experience of the arbitrariness with which that competence could be discounted, and formed a bond of collegueship and friendship with many women directors. Each of us can see the practical possibility of making an occasional casual contribution to a more just society, and more complex, energetic contributions when the issue is clear from our own experience, particularly when some of the people suffering injustice are colleagues and friends. But the measures that have to be taken to secure justice for an inequitably treated social group in an American city, for example, are far from casually accomplished. The root causes are often not easy to determine, and the people who would be benefited are not colleagues or friends. To do anything significant to implement the vision, then, I must have a passionate concern for people who, now at least, are abstractions to me.

Some Jesuits have extended the scope of their practical concerns by living in poor neighborhoods and learning something of the way of life of their neighbors by associating with them. Others have learned something of life in the Third World by spending a few months in its countries and thus coming to know something about their people. These expedients seem valuable and do increase knowledge; but strong, significant corporate movements to implement the Church's vision of social justice seldom seem to have resulted from them. There is increased understanding, but little observable change in Jesuit activity as a result.

The problem, then, remains: The forces that keep people oppressed are massive and complex, so massive and complex that, to approach them with any hope of contributing to significant results, I would need a

passionate concern--one that in my experience arises only in situations to which my major work or my living situation keeps me attentive, and on behalf of people with whom I have vital ties.

There is something else to be said about the effect of our work on our social attitudes. Sometimes Jesuit documents give me the impression that one of their basic assumptions is that their Jesuit public is unemployed, looking for something to do, or that their hearts are unemployed, waiting for a cause to inspire them. Like many other Jesuits I know, neither is the case with me. I see myself as vigorously engaged in the Church's life, particularly in the promotion of a live, aware relationship with the Lord that can enable others as well as myself to accept God's love and challenge in an integrated, vital way. The renewal taking place among the Christian people not only has to be, but is, a renewal of the heart. To be authentic it must at least begin to permeate through all a person's feelings and attitudes and draw him as a whole, vibrant person into the service of the gospel. Until that integration has made some headway there can be no persistent, interiorly authentic service of the gospel. The new integration has begun, but a great deal of fragmentation still remains in people's lives. Until a person can begin to be a gospel person to the neighbor he can see, how can he hope to be a gospel person to the dim throngs of neighbors he cannot see? It is on this level of integrative renewal that many Christians call Jesuits to work today. The urgency of that call keeps many of us fully employed, physically, psychically, and spiritually.

Thus, Phil, has arisen my reaction to the Congregation's commitment of the Society to the struggle for justice. Other Jesuits, working in ministries different from mine, may have different reactions. Other men working in the same ministry may have different reactions too. This is my own. I hope my articulation of it will encourage other Jesuits to articulate their own reactions to the Congregation's commitment, for their own benefit and that of other Jesuits.

A dialectic which begins with the Congregation's declarations and authentic Jesuit reactions to them (with the negative included), and which is then stimulated further by responses like those you will send--such a dialectic can have important implications for Jesuit spirituality. Hence

in another letter, to be written after I read your responses to this one, I hope to comment further on those implications.

Fraternally in Christ,

Bill Connolly

A REPLY ABOUT THE PROBLEMATIC, FROM PHIL LAND

by

Philip S. Land, S.J.
Center of Concern
3700 13th Street N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20017

Dear Bill:

Your letter well records the gist of our conversations. You and I have been asking whether Decree 4 of the 32nd General Congregation on Our Mission Today: the Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice is a dead duck for American Jesuits. We started our inquiry in the hope of furthering Jesuit acceptance of the Congregation, but also because rejection shoots right at the heart of Jesuit spirituality. Since my reply to you will be long, I shall use headings.

I. WHAT IS THE RESPONSE TO DECREE 4 ON FAITH AND JUSTICE?

As you see it, Bill, many Jesuits are bored by the decree, or puzzled by it. You believe that that boredom or bewilderment and consequent non-acceptance is bound up with a moment in the psychology of spirituality which these same Jesuits are going through.

Other psychological explanations have been added by other members of the Assistancy Seminar on Spirituality. One argues that American Jesuits do not reject the decree. Quite the contrary, they love its principles and are prepared to accord some priority to the promotion of justice. But their problem is: How to implement it? It seems so vast in implications that it is mindboggling. And to a few it seems to imply that we must abandon our schools for social activism.

For my part, while agreeing that the problem has its psychological side as well as up-to-now unresolved problems of implementation, I add still another explanation of resistance to the decree. This is a faith dimension. I believe that many Jesuits fail to respond to the challenge of justice because their value system pulls them altogether into the

interior and away from commitment of themselves to the secular task and engagement in the political realm. In effect, I do believe that despite Vatican II, among many of us traditional Catholics a certain dualism lingers on. This includes a reluctance to accept an Incarnational theology, which, while fully endorsing the secular, itself grows and learns from within the cultures of humankind and aids the Church to grow within them. It also precludes acceptance of another dimension of post-Vatican II theology. This is the reading of the signs of the times to discover in the movements and aspirations of our times where God wants us to go. Generations of Jesuits were taught to find that in an irrevocable statement of the divine will, as imaged forth in the natural law, which as a consequence of its origin is itself fixed and irrevocable. Starting on that basis, one is not likely to think of the institutions of one's society as challengeable. Nor is one prepared to accept the challenge that comes from those who believe that the signs of the times indicate that injustice is structurally and systemically fixed in our societies.

This setting out of the problems connected with acceptance of Decree 4 seems to require many tasks. We must explore the psychological aspects more deeply by asking questions like these: How are Jesuits responding to the decree? What are the sources of resistance which some feel within themselves? What further explanation is there for what you call the "subjective moment of the search for inwardness and self-knowledge"? What is to be said about the problems of implementation? Then, after probing further into the meaning of the decree, we must attempt some answer to all these questions.

A. Some Sources of Psychological Resistance

In our conversations, Bill, you and I first took up the psychological resistance to Decree 4 which many experience within themselves. A number of interrelated problems surfaced. You yourself believe that dominating all is the moment of spirituality in which many Jesuits are living. But, as I said a moment ago, there are also other psychological factors to be looked at. I want to consider them first, as follows,

1. Documents Do Not Possess the Power to Change Men

There was a day when Jesuits were moved by clearly perceived principles to accept the conclusions implicit in them. Today our response is much more experiential. Each consults his own experience for an appropriate response. He meets a document's message (papal encyclicals, Father General's letters) dialogically. He will go half-way in encounter if the author of the document is prepared to do the same. But where he believes that his problems are not being consulted in the writing of or interpretation of a document, today's Jesuit tends to be turned off.

2. General Boredom

General boredom with the decree does seem to exist in some, and to spring from various causes. The decree is just *too* remote from the concerns and interests of many. Too remote, certainly, for that group of young Jesuits in formation whose director argues that, before trying to interest them in the decree, he would be doing well if he could at least pull them out of their self-absorption and their preoccupation with the problems of growing up in this newly begun life of a Jesuit. Enough, that director felt, if the scholastics succeeded in achieving some initial integration of themselves with the gospel call. Leave further integration with the social for another day.

3. Boredom for Another Reason

The 32nd Congregation's imperative call to justice comes on the heels of the no less exigent demand of the 31st Congregation that we take on the new apostolate against atheism. Many Jesuits burned their fingers on that. They accepted the challenge. They organized national committees to review our apostolates in the light of this new challenge. They met, discussed. But their war against atheism proved short-lived. It didn't get off the ground. Why?

Lack of Jesuit interest? Provincials unwilling to put money into it? Inability really to see how to integrate that call into our other ministries? For many, it just looked too big. One argued, let me stick to teaching philosophy. And isn't that teaching (and also our preaching)

already an effective weapon in the war against atheism? Having got burned once, these Jesuits ask: Why burn our fingers again over the 32nd Congregation's equally sweeping call to the even less understood mission of justice? Justice--what does that mean?

4. What Does "Justice" Mean?

That phrase indicates still another problem. Despite the admitted obscurity of the decree, "self-appointed interpreters," some feel, are trying their level best to impose their opinions. If this be so, Bill, we are once again driven back to painful past experience. Remember the violence of the debate inside the 31st Congregation as to whether the better means to further prayer in the Society was to retain the decree by which General Congregation IV in 1581 imposed an hour of formal prayer on all Jesuits, or to return to the legislation of Ignatius in *Constitutions* [582] which leaves more freedom to individuals to find what is spiritually more beneficial to their needs. One concern of many in that debate was that apostolates of proved value were at stake if the Congregation were to retain the law of 1581 without any modification. It is that same concern that is now felt by some with respect to the decree on faith and justice: Must acceptance of it mean abandonment of today's apostolates?

5. Resentment over the Decree

Threat from interpreters has just been mentioned. But even in the absence of interpreters, as one reads one can grow fearful of the decree's implications, anxious over the disturbance it may bring to one's psychological equilibrium, and as a consequence become resentful. Psychological equilibrium results from a sense of control over oneself and one's reality. It results in self-esteem, and in that sense of worth that helps toward producing efficacious action. That self-esteem is endangered when one is challenged as failing to measure up to some individual's or some community's norms.

And that is precisely what one can get out of his reading of the decree. He is challenged to live like poor people. But he does not. What's more, he may feel he cannot. So the General Congregation can only,

as he sees it, condemn him. He does not fit. The personal goals he may have worked out in retreats and with spiritual directors do not really measure up. Before, he was esteemed in his community and province. Now the decree brings only embarrassment. Naturally, this Jesuit resents an operation of the Congregation that so destroys his self-esteem.

6. Resentment over Consequent Alienation

Here, the hypothesis is that one would be prepared to accept the challenge of the decree if it were not for one thing. This is that acceptance of the decree will bring alienation from one's community and friends, and one resents this. If I choose in favor of challenging the injustices of the status quo, the privileges of the rich, of accepting a simpler life style, my closest companions will in all likelihood feel that I am condemning them insofar as they fail to follow me. They will view my identification with the concerns of the poor (worse if I am also living with the poor) as an implicit rebuke for their identification with the upper middle class who make up our schools and benefactors.

7. Identification with Social Activists?

If nothing else, that surely would bring alienation from my community. Is this what the decree requires--a return to the social activism of the sixties, an activism that in that case ended in exodus from the order?

B. The Psychology of Spirituality

This challenge, Bill, brings us to your problem, the psychological moment in the spirituality of many Jesuits today. You see this as a moment that is alien to the call of the decree on faith and justice to social commitment.

That moment, according to your description, is one of search for an adequate spirituality. For you it must ultimately integrate the doing of justice. But presently it draws Jesuits inwardly in the search for self-knowledge and encounter. It is this that makes the decree seem boring.

And it is this state of boredom which you find disastrous. For boredom leads to passive indifference to the decree. What you seek at this point is to elicit some reaction--any. It may be anxiety, or anger--even belligerence. That does not matter. What matters is that there be some initial sign of interest, then live response and dialogue leading to eventual conversion.

Boredom. Why, you ask, did the decree fail to evoke enthusiasm in these Jesuits (and even in yourself despite your conviction that the social must be a component of an integral spirituality)? In part the answer for you is that the document is too vast in vision, too sweeping and magnificent in scope to be an apt instrument for evoking such passion as moves to acceptance. Its proposals are too complex for easy embrace. How, for instance, can I psychologically feel the same concern for the deprived and dispossessed of distant continents that I feel for the poor here in Boston or the spiritually needy at my door who seek counsel?

How, where, will Jesuits achieve that passion for justice and the integration into their lives of the social dimension? As you see it, for many this will have to be achieved in and through encounter with Jesus in their interior. These--partly as a reaction to the excesses they saw in the activists of the sixties--feel compelled to go the route of "know thyself," of return to contemplation, of encounter with Christ in their interior. It is there that they will discover the Lord who puts the question, "Who do you say that I am?" Their invitation to the Lord is to join them at the hearth of their hearts. And, to come back to justice, you add two points. First, that many of these Jesuits do not possess enough self-security to be able to contemplate engagement in problems of justice having global dimensions. There is the prior job of developing their spiritual resources before they will feel prepared to reach out to the poor of Asia.

It is your hope that such Jesuits can be helped to go beyond a sincere if limited spirituality to one that integrates the social dimension, that engenders passion for justice. For in that interior encounter Christ can--if people let go--lead them out of their boredom into metanoia and vital involvement. The process may take years, but they can come to

realize that the engagement for faith and justice is where the Lord is.

C. The Problem Is One of Implementation

We shall be coming back to your psychological moment, Bill, as also to the other psychological obstacles reviewed above. But to round out our statement of obstacles, we need to add that of those who maintain that the problem is not one of acceptance but of implementation. Mainly this turns out to be a problem of the--negative--implications for our existing apostolates. Above all, the concern is expressed that the Congregation is asking us to abandon our areas of proved competence for a venture into the unknown and even into incompetence. Competence we have in the promotion of faith; that side of the decree gives no problem. But equally, it is not the side of the decree which the Congregation seemed to stress, but rather justice, where we have no proved competence. What do we Jesuits know about the complicated questions of justice in international trade, the multi-national corporations, the energy or food crises, what a new international order ought to look like? All of this is political. And that is not our forte.

Implicated in that question is another. Is the Congregation calling our educational system to commit suicide? Is the call one to a social activism that means the evacuation of our schools?

The activist is seen as one who interprets the decree as a call to meet the basic needs of humankind, confining the latter to socio-economic needs only. But "man does not live by bread alone." Our schools serve other human needs: the need for knowing, learning, acquisition of skills, competence, sciences, the preservation of the patrimony of human wisdom, need of the transcendental.

And, if one insists that Jesuits must give some priority to socio-economic needs, can we not do that through our schools--and, most precisely, through the development of humanism and of Christian life in the ways just indicated?

Finally, there are abroad disturbing interpretations of the decree which seem to require abandonment of efficiency in our apostolates in favor of what is deemed Christian witness to poverty. But are we called to abandon our cars and walk to work in solidarity with those who do not

possess cars? To take the Greyhound instead of the plane?

II. SOME ANSWERS TO THE PROBLEM

All our questions, Bill, psychological or implementational, turn on Decree 4 and its meaning. To answer them requires that we take a fresh look at the decree itself.

A. Decree 4 on Our Mission Today

Recall the charges made: (1) The decree is obscure; (2) it calls us away from our traditional competence in the proclamation of the faith to an area where we are incompetent--the politics of a just social order; and (3) from the decree it does not emerge clearly that work for justice must be founded on faith, that the interior "is the force from which must flow the exterior."

1. Obscurities in the Decree

It must be admitted that Decree 4 of the 32nd General Congregation does not make for easy reading. For that reason, its reading requires a certain empathy, a love for the Congregation's struggle to reconcile forces locked in difficult dialogue. On one side was a minority, strong, determined, tenacious in urging and protecting from obliteration the essentiality of our relationship to God.

On the other stood a majority which, without any intention of denying that essentiality of transcendence, sometimes gave to their demand for commitment to justice an expression of immanence that seemed to the minority to preclude adequate statement of the faith dimension. As a result, as the document passed over weeks from one stage of writing to another, first one side and then the other insisted on insertion of language that more adequately expressed its views. This results in a statement which appears never to complete a theme before taking up another, but that returns repetitiously, and without really any further clarification--indeed just the opposite.

But we must be careful here. Confusion of expression is one thing.

Confusion of ideas in quite another, And confusion of ideas there is not in the decree.

2. The Mainstream of the Doctrine on the Promotion of Justice

Read with some effort at empathy, the decree is seen to be part and parcel of a movement in the Church which, begun in Vatican II, reached tidal strength in the years in which we began our preparations for the 32nd General Congregation. Recall, for example, preliminary reports and the flood of postulata from Jesuits everywhere calling for a Jesuit commitment to justice.

In 1971 the Second Synod of Bishops produced its document on Justice in the World with its key declaration that "the doing of justice is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel." While not using that language, the Synod of 1974, concluded just before our Congregation began, confirmed the Church's commitment to justice, liberation, and the defence of rights.

Prior to the Synod of 1974, Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Letter of 1971 *On The Eightieth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum* had strongly endorsed Christian commitment to the struggle for justice. He even went so far as to insist that old-style social action no longer responds fully to the reality of the human situation, and therefore that it had to be supplemented by political action for justice.

Some Jesuits interpreted Paul's well-known reservations on the work of the Synod of 1971 as well as those on the Jesuit Congregation as a withdrawal from the convictions he himself had expressed in 1971, as well as from the views of the Synod of 1971. That this was not so has become definitively clear with Paul's own statement in December of 1975 on Evangelization (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*). Indeed it might be legitimate to ask whether the pope, reflecting further on the Jesuit decree, had not found there an echo of his own thoughts of 1971, and an impulse for him to take the even stronger position he would announce only short months after closure of the Jesuit Congregation. At any rate, long sections of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* echo in turn the Synod of '71 and the Jesuit decree. And if Paul refrains from using the word "constitutive," he does assert

that the doing of justice is "inseparable" from the preaching of the gospel. To demonstration of the implications of this he devotes a long section of his letter.

3. The Jesuits Enter the Stream

The equivalent in the Jesuit Decree 4 is: "The mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of the faith of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement" (sectional numbers 2 and 18^{*}). And more in the viewpoint of the Synod of 1971 on Justice in the World, "it will not be possible to bring Christ to men or to proclaim the gospel effectively unless a firm decision is taken to devote ourselves to the promotion of justice" (27).

We are told that Jesuits ought to be concerned about peoples' hopes (16), aspirations and needs (3), and interdependence (4-6), and that Jesuits "should help make the world other than it is" (30).

In addition, the call is made to achieve some degree of identification with the poor (18 and 48-50--a call repeated in the decree on poverty).

Then there are the five or six places where we are told that justice cannot be done unless the structures of injustice be removed (20, 26, 32, 40).

Returning to the decree's call on us to embrace both service of faith and the promotion of justice, it has disturbed some that the emphasis is not equally distributed between the two. Service of faith--"area of our traditional competence"--gets the short end of the stick. True, several paragraphs speak exclusively of this service. Thus, there are millions without faith calling to us (4, 5). We must renew our acceptance of Paul VI's call to war on atheism (19). Today we are especially challenged to the proclamation of the faith (55, 56). To these should be added Decree 5 on Inculturation of our evangelization.

* The references are to the numbers of sections as found in *Documents of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977).

Still, in bulk the decree turns around the promotion of justice.

Explanation of this focus has already been given. But central to that focus is the proclamation that justice is part and parcel of the service of faith.

It is true, as some have objected, that the authors are altogether nonchalant about explicating their decree. Perhaps, since they were only trying to insert the Society of Jesus into the mainstream of the Church's proclamation of this link between faith and justice, they felt no need to enter into further explanation. One could turn to theologians for that. And also, the Congregation's time was running out.

4. Does Justice Link to Faith?

This is not the place to investigate at length the link between faith and justice. But neither may we pass on without a word on the subject.

The document of the Synod of '71 on Justice in the World departed from the traditional encyclical approach to social questions and renewed the biblical line opened up by liberation theology in the Medellin statement on justice by the bishops of Latin America in 1969. According to that Synod, the Old and New Testaments agree on linking inseparably the righteousness or justice of the Lord's people with the Lord's own righteousness or justice. One cannot be right with the Lord if one is not prepared to bring justice to his people. By the same token, the righteousness, the justice one gives one's fellow men and women is the righteousness of God's covenanted love. Of the countless texts from the Old Testament evoked in support, none is so expressive as Isaiah's application of the builder's instruments of line and plummet to the building of the city of Shalom--of peace, of justice, of God's indwelling: "I will make justice the line and righteousness the plummet" (28:17).

In a monograph, *Theology of Justice*, published by the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace, the Synod's special expert, peritus, Juan Alfaro, S.J., of the Gregorian University, provides a synopsis of the best biblical work on the relation of evangelization and justice, drawing heavily from Dupont's *Les Beatitudes*, G. von Rad's *Old Testament Theology*, and E. Kasseman's studies of righteousness in St. Paul.¹

5. The Faith that Does Justice

Happily, at the moment of my writing, the volume of the Woodstock Theological Center, *The Faith That Does Justice*, has become available.² The entire volume is a rich commentary on our theme. Perhaps the most immediately applicable pieces, however, are John Donahue's "Biblical Perspectives on Justice," Avery Dulles' "The Meaning of Faith Considered in Relationship to Justice," and Richard Roach's "Tridentine Justification and Justice."

Both Dulles and Roach explicitly address themselves to the decree on faith and justice, though for both authors the frame of reference is much wider. Let me draw from them what I see as especially helpful in clarifying Decree 4 of the 32nd Congregation.

6. The Meaning of Faith

However you understand faith, Dulles makes explicitly clear, it must somehow respond to Vatican II's insistence that it be relevant to the human task of justice and the humanization of life. Nor is there the slightest taint of reductionism in this. Declaring his preference among definitions, Dulles opts for a faith combining three components: (1) conviction (born of a discernment of the total meaning and values disclosed by God in Jesus); (2) a commitment to that transcendental disclosure, which, Dulles adds, includes the fact that our God is not just a goal toward which history tends, but a God at work in our time and place; and (3) trust in the goodness and power of the God who so discloses himself and is at work in history.

Working with these components, Dulles discusses in order the illuministic or rational tradition of Catholics, the fiducial faith of Protestants, and the commitment to God at work for justice which liberation theology builds on and discovers in the signs of the times.

For our purpose we need consider only the first. Dulles accepts the legitimacy of illuministic faith which tends to contemplation of the object of faith. But he condemns it--and here he touches one of our problems--insofar as it tends to turn men and women into essentially

intellectual beings, whose chief end is contemplative (page 16).

For Dulles our present mode of participation in the Kingdom is neither the detached contemplation of a truth external to ourselves nor, to turn to Protestants, trust in a power totally external to the world we live in (p. 18). (People will not see this, Dulles adds, unless they have a commitment to loving service.) One other consequence drawn has again intimate links to still other problems posed earlier in this article. "Ordinarily Christian illumination is not to be found in withdrawal from worldly preoccupations but in situations of generous involvement and service" (p. 18). Still more, Christian contemplation is not opposed to action but is often best achieved in engagement--*simul in actione contemplativus*.

Dulles next takes up that branch of illuminist faith which is perhaps more familiar. This is the assent of the intellect to a determinate body of teaching as authoritatively taught. This moves in a framework of belief, obedience of the intellect, submission. Dulles has no difficulty with faith-formulations (though he considers such a limited notion of faith). Indeed authenticated formulas are invaluable. But the tendency is "for the believer to become so concerned with right belief that he ceases to see the religious significance of working for justice on earth" (p. 19). Salvation is now sought in the ecclesiastical sphere of sacred doctrine and worship rather than in the secular sphere of economic and political life. Again, Bill, these are ideas we must reflect on when we turn to our problems of accepting the decree.

True, concedes Dulles, the truths-to-be-assented-to may serve the cause of justice. Examples are the essential association of faith with charity; doctrines that call for action; the recognition that a faith divorced from justice will be dismissed as unauthentic (p. 21). Yet the social power of such truths is not comparable to that of biblical righteousness discussed above or of discernment with commitment.

Because it must discern, the Christian community must engage itself in a constant reading of the signs of the times in the light of the gospel (p. 22). And here Dulles brings us to the theology of liberation, a topic we need not enter for our purpose.

7. Reconciliation and Justice

Where Donahue began with Scripture and Dulles with faith, Roach works out from reconciliation, in his pages on "Tridentine Justification and Justice." This is the link which the Congregation explicitly provides for the Fourth Decree. The passage reads:

The mission of the Society of Jesus today is the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement. This is so because the reconciliation of men among themselves, which their reconciliation with God demands, must be based on justice (2).

Roach's account of the Congregation's reasoning is "that our reconciliation with God demands reconciliation between human persons, which in turn requires justice." Reconciliation with God is a faith dimension. But such turning to God cannot exist without conversion to our fellow men and women in justice--a theme reminiscent of the biblical righteousness discussed above.

Pursuing his exploration, Roach defines faith as intellectual assent to revealed truth. This faith ushers the faithful into the Lord's justification. But the latter cannot be had on the basis of faith alone. There is also the requirement of good works in salvation. So if salvation be "inside" us, it has nonetheless to manifest itself in deeds. There is another linkage of salvation and good works. This rests on the fact that God's plan of salvation is, properly speaking, his justice. The economy of salvation embraces the work the justified do and must do in this world (pp. 181-183). For the God who gives faith and who justifies has an order of justice he wants established in this world.

It is this, Roach contends, that the Congregation was saying, there being needed only the recognition that among good works is the doing of justice.

Roach presses his point by exploring the formal cause--that in a thing which makes it what it is--of justification. Such, says Trent, is "the justice of God, not the justice by which he is himself just, but the justice by which he makes us just"--and by which we are truly called and are just. What became obscured during centuries of theological debate over whether justification is truly inherent was the more important

question of what it is that inheres. Justification, to be sure. But what is that? Trent's answer is that it is the justice of God which we receive. And what does that mean? Whatever it means, it cannot, Roach reasons, "be reduced to only a state of personal or subjective being much like a disposition or virtue" (p. 185). For it is the justice of God, that justice which is the Lord's righteousness, and which makes the Lord of History want an order of justice to exist among the peoples of earth.

This brings us back to the biblical language which expresses this same theme. It was to a people in bondage that the Lord revealed himself in covenant. I will be your God. You will be my people. Through an endless succession of prophets God calls his people to stop their unjust ways and to build the city of peace.

Roach makes a further point. That justice of God by which he makes us just "ought to be in some measure the realizable form of the society informed by and forming such individuals" (p. 189). That could, I think, be paraphrased by saying that God is Lord not only over hearts but over the world, the cosmos, human history. His order is a just order. Roach uses slavery to exemplify his thought. In the day of its acceptance, slave and slave-holder were called to carry out their mutual obligations under the system. But as minds became better prepared to understand the injustice of the system, the call was different. It was to abolish this unjust structure, to change the social order, to institute God's order of justice.

It can be and is urged that this objectivization of God's justice will be the fruit of the virtues that come to birth in the justified. This can of course be so. But it will not be so where justification is given a purely personal and subjective interpretation. But even where justification is rightly seen as the objective gift of God's justice, this need not bring people to go beyond the nurturing of this gift within themselves. What people will have to see is that they betray the nature and intent of that gift, of "the form of justification," if they fail in commitment to bring that Justice of God to some degree of realization in a world of injustice.

One other point should be made, Where people have failed to appreciate

this objective element of justification, the unhappy consequence has been the conviction that social and civil institutions are something to be lived in, to be tempted by, and to be overcome through virtue, but not to be changed. Indeed to institutions was assigned the character of unchangeability, as somehow in the nature of things.

8. Justice Must be the Work of Faith

One other relationship between faith and justice pointed out in the decree on Our Mission Today requires brief notice. Faith-activity has two objects, the promotion of faith and the doing of justice as something inseparable from faith. We now shift our attention from this doing of justice, in order to ask: To what extent is the justice which we do informed by faith? Do we act out of faith? For some reason--to me unfathomable--one group of Jesuits maintains that the decree is weak on this score. Some even seem to presume that activist neo-Pelagians duped the rest of the Congregation into accepting an activity for justice devoid of the force that must flow from the interior.

One wonders just how carefully those making such charges have read the decree, for from the beginning to the conclusion, faith is insistently invoked as the source of our apostolate for justice (7 and 12). Here is one passage that recognizes encounter with Christ as the heart of our doing justice. "To promote justice, to proclaim the faith, and to lead to a personal encounter with Christ are the three inseparable elements that make up the whole of our apostolate" (51; see also 21, 23, and 12).

Other paragraphs call for conversion (28 and 32). Discernment of social activity must flow from faith (10, 45, 73, 74, 38, 57 and 58). The closing paragraph calls for "an interior life of prayer" (79 and 90). A favorite Jesuit theme, being contemplatives in action, appears briefly in one place (38) and is developed at length in another (57 and 58).

B. Answers about the Sources of Resistance

Besides objection to the alleged obscurity of the decree on Our Mission Today, there are those other objections which some make on psychological grounds. These have been mentioned earlier in this letter.

1. Return to the Social Activism of the Sixties?

The first objection is that somehow the Fourth Decree wants us all to be social activists. That returns us to the "horrors" of the sixties, to an activism that plunged some of our best into a mindless, unprepared frenzy of activity, bereft of serious social analysis, and neo-Pelagian in its indifference to the normal channels of grace.

There can be no question that many social activists of that epoch gave the social apostolate a bad name.

In the process many got burned out. Of these, some felt compelled to withdraw to the work of spiritual direction. Others left the Society. It should, however, be remembered that some of these had already begun their departure when they abandoned their work in the schools. Social activity was only a last-resort effort in the hope of reversing the process of departure.

But that failure of the sixties--there were also glorious successes--need not be reason for rejecting the call of the 32nd Congregation. First of all, the decree, it should go without saying, does not call to mindless activism. We have seen its insistence on being contemplatives in action. In the second place, if experiences of failure are allowed peremptorily to put an end to experiment and learning from living, all movements of reform or advancement in society and in the Church are precluded. There is no reason why we can't use the experience of the sixties to guide us in response to the call of the seventies.

2. We Got Burnt on Atheism

We need not repeat here the objections seen earlier, that either we were already engaged in the battle against atheism by teaching philosophy, theology, and other sciences; or that the call to combat atheism had a vastness about it that seemed impossible of comprehension, let alone of successful implementation.

But there is a lesson in reception of that decree applicable to the 32nd Congregation's *Our Mission Today*. For it was demonstrable that Jesuits across the world were doing a great deal to combat atheism.

Admittedly, they could have done it better if in more co-ordinated fashion and with more awareness of the variety of forms of atheism. So now for the call to justice. If one interprets it to mean that Jesuits have here been wholly derelict, one is unfair.

But there are two differences here between the two decrees. First, more Jesuits could claim that they were at grips with atheism than can claim engagement in the battle for justice. Second, in the case of the decree on atheism, some Jesuits argued that they could not figure out to what the decree really called them. But is it equally difficult to comprehend the call to justice? Surely justice and injustice are the hard facts of daily life. Injustices, patent injustices, are all around us--in our school, parish, Jesuit community, church, city, state, nation, or world. One quarter of the population of affluent America lives below the poverty line. False values are daily preached by the media. That one can comprehend the Congregation's call is attested by many communities in Jesuit high schools with their impressive workshops on the decree. And other individual Jesuits too have embraced it. Embarrassingly, for many of us there is question only of arriving at where our contemporaries in the secular and religious community have already arrived.

3. The Decree Bores--or Threatens

Under this common heading we can bring together a number of objections raised earlier. Here we include those novices for whom the decree is not interesting because they are too preoccupied with getting together their own act; that is, with achieving some initial integration of their new life. We include too those who feel threatened in their self-esteem by a decree that seems to upset the established patterns of self-acceptance on which they have secured their existence.

Sometimes when I encounter these objections I hark back to the days of annual visitation by Father Provincial. We assembled in chapel with a vague feeling of uneasiness. What was he going to take away from us this time? Cards? Television? The car? It is thus that some approach the decree on faith and justice, taken together with that on poverty. What is the Congregation bent on taking away from me?

What can be confidently asserted is that the fathers of the Congregation did not intend to scare the life out of their fellow Jesuits. The Congregation did want to challenge them, that certainly. But is there anything more challenging in the two decrees than in the call of the Exercises to the magis? To put it another way: Is the decree on faith and justice taken with that on poverty any more challenging than the call to the magis, with the sole difference of specification in the former?

Moreover, this is specification, as I have indicated above, of a direction which the Church had embraced before the General Congregation. Recall just two voices. "According to St. Paul," wrote the Synod of '71, "the whole of the Christian life is summed up in faith effecting that love and service of neighbor which involve the fulfillment of the demands of justice." Jesuit life may be more than that. But it surely cannot be less. The pope, who in that same year of 1971 wrote only a few months later in the same vein in his *Octogesima Adveniens*, legitimated the conclusions of the Congregation, if he did not precisely make them his own in his *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. "The Church . . . has the duty to proclaim the liberation of millions of human beings . . . , the duty to assist in the birth of this liberation, of giving witness to it, of ensuring that it is complete. This is not foreign to evangelization" (30; but see the entire section, 29-39).

One recalls here St. Ignatius' rules for "Thinking with the Church." That Church in the months both preceding and following the Congregation called Jesuits to a specification of the magis. The Congregation only ratified that call of the Church. Called under the banner of Christ to the magis, to destroy Christ's enemies, we accept the call to struggle for justice, for that is where Christ is to be found, himself engaged against the enemy oppressing his people.

In this light one wonders why novices, introduced as they are to the magis, to the call to fight under Christ's banner, to the Standard of the poor Christ in the Beatitudes, to the Third Degree of Humility, could possibly feel threatened by the Congregation's simple specification of those traditional statements of Jesuit vocation.

4. Let This Mind Be in You

In this same light, while sympathizing with the Jesuit who fears alienation from other Jesuits were he to accept the decree, one is bound to ask whether at bottom his presumed psychological problem is not really rather one of dubious values and mindset.

Christians, therefore Jesuits, are supposed to build self-esteem, not on what people think, but on what God thinks, to have that mind which was in Christ Jesus. All Jesuit spirituality calls us to the wisdom of the cross. That can have implications also for one's way of relating to his religious community. We used to have an expression for it. One had to act according to his lights--and this without judging others, for, one reasoned, perhaps they had not had the same light. Embracing the wisdom of the cross may entail being judged a troublemaker. But we were never led to suppose that the following of Christ would be painless, that the Lord's sword of division would not divide us from those we love. We were never taught that we should be left in tranquil and unchallenged possession of values, however and wherever derived. On the contrary, challenge to values and to mindsets is the normal work of prayer and annual retreats. From such sources is sought that indifference or detachment which is translated into today's language as "liberation." We are unfree people who need to be freed from attachment to the values of our society.

Liberation, detachment. One other word is operative here: Relinquishment, for this adds to indifference and detachment the note of voluntary choice. And it is to such that the two decrees call when they urge identification in some way with the poor.

The freeing of me and voluntary relinquishment are words that threaten indeed. But the fathers of the Congregation in holding out such goals did not intend to cause dismay. They did not expect that all of us would on reading the decrees move decisively to a 100% realization of them. They were on the contrary prepared to recognize that Jesuits would have different degrees of understanding and acceptance and different paces of achievement.

One could take from this consideration the assurance that he really need not disturb himself at all. No one, after all, is going to examine

him on his indifference, much less punish him. And that of course is so. The freeing of me is my own work, with the Lord's help. But we can be helped powerfully by the example of the already freed; and, once freed, we can join in creating the leaven that will free ever more fully all our communities.

C. Answers about the Jesuit Psychological Moment

This brings me, Bill, to your statement of the problem, one rather different from the psychological problems just seen. There is right now, as you see it, a moment in the lives of many Jesuits which explains their indifference to the decree. It is a moment in which these Jesuits feel impelled to first find out who they are before trying to concern themselves with the social problems of their day. In part this is reaction to excesses of the sixties. In part it is simply their discovery of their own lack of spiritual resources, from which derives an insecurity. But, you argue from your experience, given the right kind of spiritual direction, these can be led to discover Christ in their interior. Many, having done so, will rest content to experience the Lord in their heart. They are at peace.

But, and here again you appeal to your experience, with help these Jesuits can be brought to recognize also that where the Lord is is where the 32nd General Congregation indicates--in a world of the poor and needy, of victims of injustice. Your final judgment is that, unless a spirituality can go out to discover Christ among his people, it is, though a sincere one, not an integrated spirituality.

1. Yes and No

In responding to the previous problems, I have been able to find answers in the decrees themselves. I am not sure I can do so in the case of yours. Let me begin by saying how welcome your statement about the "moment" is. Let me next say that I am confident that directors like you can help people to "see with the mind's eye" victims of injustice beyond the doors of their souls and so bring them ultimately to encounter with Christ there where he is in the midst of his people.

But how many will end up out there, and not rather rest comfortably ensconced with Jesus in the interior of their hearts? There is also this. In final analysis you agree that Christ can be encountered in people, in their needs and aspirations in their search for liberation and justice. Why, then, should we not simply and directly begin there where Christ is at work with his people instead of proceeding indirectly? Why first accept even provisionally the limited spirituality of concentration on self-knowing, in the hopes that it will eventually lead to something more adequate?

I know that you will come back with your appeal to experience: For many Jesuits there is no other road to encounter with Christ in the poor and the victims of injustice than that of first achieving self-knowledge, self-assurance, and inner peace through first encountering Christ in their interior.

And if, eventually, skilled directors--like yourself--can guide these out of self-relationship to relate to the other who is Christ in the poor, the Congregation ought to be satisfied. Still, the direct route is that taken by Our Mission Today. In proof, to all the texts introduced above I add just one other: "We ourselves need to know how to meet Christ as he works in the world . . ." (23).

2. Rahner and Encounter

Karl Rahner has done some recent writing that touches intimately on this. He begins by asking: Who are the Anawim? These, Rahner says, are the meek, the humble, the loyal, the human--as slowly discovered in the Old and New Testaments. Oppressed and rendered incapable of realizing their human potential to the full, they are especially beloved by the Lord, their Creator who wonderfully forms the dignity of the human, their Restorer who in equally wonderful fashion reforms what he once created.

But they are reformed in a yet more wonderful and mysterious way. For Christ is with his poor in a special fashion, working with them in their oppression--even more, because they are oppressed. He is recreating them from within them and within their oppressed condition. They, the Anawim, are his people. From within their condition the Lord works to make them ever more his own.

And so to the question, "Who do you say that I am?" Rahner answers "Lord, you are brother of the poor." And to the question "Lord, where are you?" the German Jesuit discovers the answer in the scene of the Last Judgment. The cup of water you gave in my name you gave to me. You encountered Christ in the poor, the hungry, the imprisoned.

But does the Lord--and the Congregation (for this is charged)--intend to keep the poor poor, the prisoner imprisoned? No, God works from within the condition of the oppressed to work their radical and liberative transformation. The Anawim are to become more human out of the roots of their humanness; discovering, despite their condition of oppression, integral human development and communal wholeness. Though weak and vulnerable, they will find power in the Lord with them.³

I find it reassuring that a contemplative monk echoes the same views. In his recent *If The Eye Be Sound*,⁴ Thomas Cullinan, O.S.B., priest of Ampleforth Abbey, England, interprets Mary's Magnificat this way. When Mary proclaims that the Lord will pull down the mighty and exalt the poor and the weak she is not indulging in pious, wishful thinking. She is exclaiming in wonder "at the ways God would work within history" (p. 50)--in a history in which the poor would have a large role, history even that belongs to the poor once "they discover that it does" (ibid.).

Cullinan argues that we do not liberate the poor. It is rather they who free us "from being trapped by our society." Finally with Rahner to the question "Where is Christ?" his answer is that he is with his people (p. 59). Surely this is the sense of the decree on poverty. "Religious poverty still calls to the following of Christ poor . . . at work in Nazareth . . . identifying with the needy . . ." (4). This brings me to a final point. As Christ incarnates himself by identification with the Anawim, so does he call his followers to do the same. True, to repeat, we can encounter him also in our interior. That is indisputable and supremely important. But that does not substitute for this other encounter with him in and through his poor. And I wonder whether a procedure of initiating such encounter within oneself is not at best a second choice.

D. Answer to; The Problem is Implementation

Here, Bill, I take leave of you. I must now turn to those who pose a different type of problem. And with this we leave the realm of the subjective for that of the objective. Here we encounter those Jesuits who insist that the problem is not one of acceptance of the decree but of its implementation.

1. Give Up Our Schools?

What seems most to disturb in this case is the implication drawn that Our Mission Today calls for the abandonment of present ministries, especially our schools, in favor of social activism.

Just how this interpretation ever got abroad is not clear. But surely it is not in the decree itself. Here is the key paragraph (47):

The promotion of justice should not be for us merely one ministry among others. It should be a concern of our whole lives; an essential aspect of all our apostolic endeavors.

It could be said that all the rest of the decree on Our Mission Today could be read as an elaboration of that central text. What does it say? Does it say that we are to have henceforth a single ministry and that social? Surely it says something very different. The Congregation had a much better idea than to turn all our activities into social ministry. It was rather to give a social dimension to all that we are and all that we do. It is in that sense that one interprets another phrase of the decree: "the promotion of justice should not be for us merely one ministry among others." No, it should be an aspect of all our apostolic work. In this it parallels still another call of the Congregation which impacts upon our life witness: "Commitment to the men and women who live a life of hardship and who are victims of oppression cannot be that of a few Jesuits only."

2. Who Knows What Justice Is?

At this point the objection shifts ground somewhat. It proceeds to argue that the Congregation shifts us out of apostolates where we have established competence into those where we do not. What is the area of incompetence? Justice which requires social and economic analysis. We must first discover the problems of the poor (42) as well as "the social,

economic and political problems of our locality, our country, and the international community." This we must do in order to discover "how the gospel must be preached . . . and what role the Society must play . . . in the struggle for justice" (43). Even more distant from our competence, according to these Jesuits, is the second requirement. This is to realize that injustice and false values are imbedded in structures and that we are called "to work for the transformation of these structures . . ." (39).

How, these Jesuits felt justified in asking, can we ever make that social analysis and come to understand those structures? And if we ever comprehended all of this, how could we ever begin to transform the social and economic structures of our local societies let alone those at the national and international level?

It is indeed a formidable task. And therefore there is reason enough to believe that the General Congregation was not so foolish as to impose an impossible task. What the delegates were saying to us is that we must find God's will in a reading of the signs of the times. That in turn requires that we understand the movements of our day, the needs and aspirations of people, "the meaning of emerging history" to use a phrase of the Synod of 1971.

To bring therefore the reign of Christ not only in hearts but also in society, to go to the poor of Christ where they are, we must understand the role that structures play in enshrining values and in shaping the distribution of power which is a major explanation of poverty.

It can be expected of everyone at the level of a Jesuit's education that he have some comprehension of this. What the Congregation did not expect is that every Jesuit would be turned into an economist, expert in the intricacies of international trade and knowledgeable about world monetary movements. Our Mission Today is a corporate mission in which each and all will have responsibilities.

There is still another point in the decree that lends color to the belief that the Congregation threatens our existing ministries. This is the frequently repeated call to discernment. In over ten paragraphs, running from almost the beginning to the end of Our Mission Today, there is recognition of the need for discernment which will challenge existing

forms of apostolate (for example, in 9, 75, and 76). And discernment can be a time of uneasiness, disquiet, doubt. Discernment may well lead an individual or community to decide that some one or other of our apostolates does not witness to justice. If they further judge that these cannot be made to do so, they may feel compelled to substitute some other ministry more capable of giving gospel witness. Equally, discernment may suggest that more Jesuits should be engaged in social ministry. But such obviously need not mean the turning of social ministry into the unique apostolate of American Jesuits.

3. Can the Social Be a Dimension of All Apostolates?

How, many are asking, can the doing of justice be made a dimension of all our ministries? A whole article could and should be devoted to this. Suffice it here to give a hint of one or other line worth developing further. A first one is provided by recognizing what Paul VI states in his *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, that every Christian preaches the gospel through the witness of his or her life. Every Jesuit's life style witnesses or fails to witness to justice. It identifies him with or distances him from the poor.

A second possibility is rather similar. Everyone of us is willy-nilly part of his society. The Congregation asks whether we never feel challenged to criticize the values of our society. Have we been bought up? Co-opted? Do we ever discuss in any other than dilettante fashion these questions familiar to so many of our contemporaries?

Here surely is a significant social apostolate open to every Jesuit. Be he teacher of mathematics or chemistry, he can personally take his stand for justice and raise questions about social values in the light of the gospel.

This suggests also rich possibilities for educators. Suppose we could all think of our schools as faith communities. (Which does not mean religious enterprises, for the faith community can be engaged in utterly secular pursuits.) Suppose we could understand that everyone connected with the school is part of the educational endeavor. The teachers first. They (and the administrators and others as well) teach in the first place

by what they stand for. The two points just made for all Jesuits have obvious application here for teachers specifically. They teach justice through the curriculum either directly or indirectly. But they can carry it out perhaps just as well through retreats, their preaching and liturgy, and campus life.

Then the administrators. They too teach by attitude and life style. More specifically by their policies on admission and what students they seek to attract. Equally they form the justice of their educational community by their policies with respect to personnel, including the right to collective representation and to bargaining in some form or other. Financing the operation, together with fund-raising procedures, is still another area where education for justice is at stake in the educational enterprise.

Then there is the outreach of this faith community into the wider community beyond. Do we have any concern for the poor in our town? Are we affirmative toward minorities? Do we ever raise a voice alongside others demanding control of pollution and avoidance of strip-mining, red-lining, and the scores of injustices perpetrated systematically on the powerless? "Bread for the World" and similar causes offer opportunities to engage ourselves and students in causes of justice and aid to the poor. And it would not take too much imagination to extend the reach of the school beyond the local level to national and world levels--first through what we teach, and second by attitudes we instill, for example, on world solidarity and on stewardship over God's patrimony of the human race. But all of this is an area into which we cannot enter here. Suffice it to have given some indication of the possibility. Through workshops any Jesuit community can with some effort formulate its own agenda.

E. The Answer Is Lack of Motivation

In the introduction, Bill, I have already indicated my own conviction that, in the case of some Jesuits, what explains their indifference to Decree 4 is their theology. It is that century-old Catholic dualism which pits the temporal against the spiritual, which resists secular engagement. For this reason they reject the Congregation's legitimization

of engagement in the secular with its implications for some coming-to-grips with the political.

But as I have also indicated above, the Congregation has done no more than set us in the current of the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar theology. This is a theology of mandate to co-creativity, of finding God in the signs of the times, of "continuing the earthly task of the Savior" (Church and the Modern World, 26), of the works of liberation and the humanization of life as "becoming ends in themselves when raised to the level of charity" (Paul VI, Mission Sunday, 1970).

I do not pursue this. But only because I have already developed these themes in another publication. This is my essay on "Justice, Development, Liberation and the Exercises" which appeared in *Studies in the International Apostolate of Jesuits* (Vol. V, no. 1 [June, 1976]), published by Jesuit Missions, Inc. There I draw out the consequences for the social and political in Jesuit commitment from the Ignatian Retreat. I show that the *Exercises* can be read as response to the Council's invitation to decipher signs of the times as authentic indicators of God's presence and purpose. My reflections there bring me to see that from Foundation to Contemplation, from meditation on sin to that on Christ as Liberator and as himself living out the mandate of unfolding the Creator's work, the Exercises are a call to a discernment which categorically demands commitment to liberation, the humanization of life, justice.

Finally, I there express my conviction that, while Ignatius clearly recognizes that the cross relativizes all human activity, his *Exercises* nevertheless end in recognition that, if our hope be that of transcendental victory, it is also by that very fact hope for the here and now, for a new earth of justice and peace among all peoples.

F. The Answer Lies with the Provincials

A colleague on reading this proposed still another reason why so many American Jesuits are not taking the decree on faith and justice seriously. This is that the provincials themselves have failed to push it with any vigor. I don't know what to think about that. I do know at least one provincial who certainly cannot be faulted over failure on

this score. But it is worth noting that a two weeks' meeting of superiors was held in midsummer and no one thought it important enough to put on the agenda an inquiry into our commitment to the Congregation.

G. A Last Word

So, Bill, I come to the end. And I sit at my typewriter wondering how to conclude. As I do so my eye falls on a paragraph from the *The Church in the Modern World* (38). It begins "For God's Word, through whom all things were made, was Himself made flesh Thus he entered the world's history as a perfect man, taking that history up into Himself and summarizing it." The text proceeds by a Christology that puts Jesus squarely at the crossroads of our life and work. "The Lord is the goal of human history, the focal point of the longings of the human race, the joy of every heart and the answer to all its yearnings."

Somehow we must encounter that Christ where He is. But for the variety of reasons investigated in these pages, we are discouraged. It is at this point that the Council reminds us that God's Holy Spirit is a component of a Christian sociology. "Enlivened and united in His Spirit, we journey . . ." And that journey is, you and I hope, toward the goals of the 32nd General Congregation. "We journey toward the consummation of human history, one which fully accords with the counsel of God's love: 'To reestablish all things in Christ, both those in the heavens and those on earth.'"

Fraternally in Christ,

Phil Land

A REPLY OF BILL CONNOLLY TO PHIL LAND: AFTERTHOUGHTS

Dear Phil:

You are dealing with one of the most critical questions of our time. In order to understand, however, the lack of eagerness with which many of us are responding to it, it helps to remember that the question arises at a time when all questions of spirituality are in process of being reformulated. Spirituality, as an intellectual discipline busy with the formulation and resolution of spiritual issues on the rational level, has come to see itself ineffectual, and is trying to reform itself on the basis of Christian experience, an experience which has only begun to be articulated in contemporary terms.

Of course this is not the first time in Christian history that a revolution in and consequent reformulation of spirituality have occurred. This is a fact that can leave us feeling a little less odd in our uncertainties. The fourth, twelfth, thirteenth, sixteenth, and nineteenth centuries are the most obvious examples of periods that saw dramatic cultural change, upheavals in spirituality, and new formulations of spiritual life. In all these periods religious communities took a leading position both in the upheavals and in the development of new formulations, a position they are being asked to take again in our own time because, whether they want to be or not, they are looked to by the Christian people as the Church's specialists in spiritual life.

The realization that the cycle of revolution followed by reformulation has happened before can encourage us to look realistically at the changes that have occurred in Christians' attitudes to spiritual life in the last fifteen years, and also to begin to reformulate spiritual values on the basis of our experience. Whether or not the history of spirituality is enlisted to help us to understand our situation, however, it seems clear that personal reformulation is occurring, and that a more general, if tentative, reformulation is now becoming possible. The need for a societal dimension to spirituality thus comes at a time when all formulations of spirituality are being reworked. The inchoate character of present-day

spirituality contributes to our feeling that "there is already too much to do" when we are faced with the challenge of a societal dimension to spirituality. It also, however, provides an opportunity for us to develop a new spirituality that will include the societal as an integral dimension rather than an accretion added to already accepted formulations.

Other times, then, have had their own formulations of spirituality. What are some of the formulations that our experience is suggesting to us and that we can hope will contribute to an integrated spirituality that will include a societal dimension?

The "know thyself" imperative characteristic of much contemporary spirituality is no recent discovery. It has been influential in Christian spirituality since the early Christian centuries, and was inherited by them from the classical Greek moralists. The need for understanding of oneself and for awareness of what happens to oneself in the relationship with God was a commonplace of medieval spirituality. Nor was its prominence confined to reclusive thinkers. It is evident, for instance, in a writer as aware of and as involved in the public sphere as Catherine of Siena. Ignatius's insistence on self-awareness was neither original with him nor an instance of regression to monastic practices. Awareness of what is happening in oneself in the relationship with God can give way to self-absorption, which constitutes a retreat from relationship. The awareness of oneself in relationship can be absolutized so that a person seeks awareness for its own sake rather than for the sake of the relationship. Either of these possibilities could lead to a distorted, introspective spirituality. But in itself the need for a relational self-awareness is a constitutive element of traditional spirituality and, experience is showing us, an essential element of any realistic contemporary spirituality.

A second emphasis of much current spirituality is the contemplative attitude. This element too has a long and distinguished heritage in the Church. Scripture, when for over a thousand years it served as the immediate basis for the Church's preaching, was primarily a proclamation rather than a series of riddles to be solved or a collection of moral dicta. The word of God was meant literally to be heard--with the ears--

and responded to. God was seen as presenting himself to us and calling for reaction. A person could through the proclamation of the gospel and the homilies that expounded it listen to the Lord in the liturgy and look at him in popular religious art. The contemplative attitude fostered in current spirituality attempts to restore that attitude of dialogue--of listening, looking, and responding--that the religio-cultural environment in which people lived once encouraged. Without a contemplative attitude the God who presents himself to us tends to become another idea and can get lost among our thoughts. Jesus becomes the ideal person rather than the Lord who asks, "Who do you say that I am?" and expects an answer. It becomes impossible, for instance, to make the Exercises, because ideas cannot confront you and invite you to be with them in a struggle to bring salvation to the world. Only persons can do that.

A third element appearing in much contemporary spirituality is emphasis on the fact that redemption begins in a person's heart rather than in his thought or his behavior: He is redeemed from the inside out. The redeeming action of God does not generally begin by erasing his scars or straightening his kinks. It begins by changing his heart and then penetrating his thought and his activity. The person whose heart has been changed and continues to be changed may well continue to bear his scars upon him and to walk haltingly. He may continue even to the end of his life, to have an incomplete Christian vision and rheumatic spirituality. The indispensable process is the changing of his heart. Without it Christian thought becomes oblivious to divine and human reality and Christian behavior ceases to be influenced by experience. This indispensability of the change of heart is one of the principal reasons for the emphasis on personal prayer and the contemplative attitude in current spirituality. A prayer that attends to the action of God and His relationship with us keeps the heart receptive to change if it does not directly move it to change.

There is nothing in your advocacy of the societal dimension of spirituality to which I would take exception. In the ideal order this dimension should be fully present in the spiritual life of every Christian. Each of us should be aware of social injustice and committed to the struggle

to overcome it. But the only spirituality that works--that opens a person more fully to God and to life--is not a study of the ideal, but a development of one's experience of God and of life. That development begins with the person as he is, with all his failings, distortions, and limitations. It is comprised of both interior growth, which will include the development of both the contemplative attitude and relational self-knowledge, and a reach outward to others. Neither interior growth nor the outward reach is sufficient by itself. They are necessary to one another.

What happens to a person that enables him to open his life to the Lord of reality and put himself at His service? Whatever it is, it does not happen to me simply because I want it to happen. God has to draw me to it, and do so in accordance with, not in conflict with, my natural capacity for growth and the integration of my thought, my will, my affectivity. This development is not the same as an academic mastering of the theology of grace. It happens in my experience of life and of prayer, not simply in my reason. My lecture notes may change without any change taking place in me.

I change through experience. I come to experience God differently. He becomes a giver rather than a taskmaster, One who loves rather than One who burdens, One who has merited trust from me rather than suspicion and withdrawal. I come to experience myself differently. The emphases in my life change. What I care about and the ways I care undergo shifts, and I begin to see differently the people I know. I understand them better and accept them more readily as they are because God accepts both them and me.

This survey of the emphases that contemporary spiritual experience is giving to much current spirituality will help to explain why I suggest that it is important for our spirituality that Jesuits articulate whatever reactions they have to the Congregation's declarations on the search for justice. When a man expresses his reaction to a proposal to live the gospel more fully--and I take the Congregation's declarations on justice to be such a proposal--he is taking a step toward dialogue with the person who is making the proposal. Without that step, there can be no such dialogue. If he does take that step, the exercise of interior freedom

involved in taking it can lead him to a deepening interior dialogue with the Lord, a dialogue that can change his heart.

An example may help. An ordained Jesuit is asked by his provincial to accept a difficult parish assignment. He sees reasons for notifying the provincial that he should not take the assignment. His mother is not well. She depends on his visits, and the parish is far distant from her home. In addition, he has no experience with the ethnic group that makes up the majority of the parishioners. But he feels at first that aside from these reasons, he has no personal reaction to the request. After reflecting and talking to friends, however, he realizes that he does not want to accept the request because it would entail significant changes in his way of life. Admitting this to himself leads him to admit it also to God in contemplative prayer and to continue to admit it several times a week for some weeks. In that time he comes to recognize that he is afraid of the change that the assignment would entail and that he is angry that the assignment was proposed. When he admits these feelings to the Lord, lets himself remain aware of them, and then lets the Lord address them, he begins to feel less bound by them. The assignment can then begin to look more acceptable. He is beginning to be interiorly free enough to make a personal choice.

This is an example of the way a person can change through letting his reactions remain alive in him and submitting them to the Lord in prayer. We would not ordinarily refer to this change as conversion. Yet it is a change which makes the heart more open to the action of God, the person more free to respond to him.

It is by this process that the gap between the Congregation's commitment to the struggle for justice and our present attitudes can be filled. It may seem too simple to achieve such a momentous result. And of course the process as it occurs in a person never seems simple while it is going on. It can take a long time and may well include resistance, testing, moments and hours of contentment, clarity and confusion, anxiety, and joy. When the process can be looked back on, the change that has taken place may appear simple, but the process is rarely experienced as simple.

There is something else, too, in contemporary spirituality that has

a bearing on the Congregation's commitment to social justice. The distinctiveness of this factor can easily be lost in the variety of ways in which people grow spiritually, and perhaps in the variety of spiritualities we live today. There is an element in people's experience that leads to two distinct ways of living a spiritual life. This decisive element is their way of responding to Jesus. For some the dominant desire seems to be to have him come to them and bring them his peace. For others the dominant desire is to be with him where he is, and to let peace come from the authenticity of this companionship.

The Kingdom consideration provides us with our best articulation of this distinctive element. Do I want to be with him in his struggle, in his war, in his strife? There is an enormous variety of personal ways of being with him and each person has finally to articulate for himself the ways in which he wants him to be with him. The dividing line that distinguishes these two different spiritualities, however, seems to lie in the way we answer the question: Do I want him to be where I am, or do I want to be where he is?

Much more could be said, Phil, in this reflection on your article. I hope, though, that what I have said will help other Jesuits to reflect on it in their own way.

My best in the Lord,

Bill Connolly

FOOTNOTES

- 1 The monograph *Theology of Justice*, as well as the text of Justice in the World, is available in the United States at the Justice and Peace Center, 701 East Columbia Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45215.
- 2 *The Faith That Does Justice: Examining the Christian Sources for Social Change*, by Avery Dulles, William Dych, John Donahue, John Langan, David Hollenbach, Richard Roach, William Walsh. Edited by John C. Haughey. "Woodstock Studies 2." New York: Paulist Press, 1977.
- 3 This analysis of Rahner is found in a translation, by John Dijkstra, S.J., of Rahner's *Grundriss des Glaubens* (Freiburg-im-Breisgau: Herder, 1977). The translation appeared in the SELA Newsletter (Social Economic Life Asia), the monthly bulletin of the Executive Secretary for Socio-economic Life in Asia, published by the Bureau of Asian Affairs, 2067 Pedro Gil St., P. O. Box 4132, Santa Ana, Manila, Philippines.
- 4 *If the Eye Be Sound* (London: St. Paul Publications, 1975), p. 50.

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