



In all things to love and to serve

Irish Jesuit Missions Newsletter

Issue 21 – Summer 2017

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Vision

A just and humane world based on Gospel values and Ignatian Spirituality.

Mission

Irish Jesuit Missions supports Jesuit works in the service of poor and marginalised people, particularly in Africa and Asia.

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MAJIS Jesuit Farm in Akol Jal, South Sudan, provides the local population with training in sustainable agriculture and agroforestry

Caring for the Earth

So much of environmental justice work is oriented towards the future; moving from the present state of environmental decline, seeking to build a better world for present and future generations. I take hope from an article written by the late John Surrence SJ called *“The dream of an older Jesuit”*.¹ Confronted by the deeply troublesome extent of planetary scale ecological destruction, John expresses concern for the future:

“I worry that later on in this century, the children and grandchildren will find themselves living within a community of life here on Earth that has a compromised future, a future in which it will be increasingly difficult for them to live with hope, find meaning, and enjoy beauty.”

He points out that we are the first

generation to be fully aware of what is happening to the Earth, yet there is fragility in our knowing. Despite our awareness, we lack the evolutionary anchor and imagination to help us respond.

John shares his dream for the Society of Jesus, asking: *“what is the cathedral that we Jesuits are building in this century?”* He would be pleased with the renewed call for reconciliation with creation in the Decree on Mission from the 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus held in late 2016. Although brief, the focus reinforces Pope Francis’ message that environmental decline, social inequality and poverty are the same crisis, while reaffirming right relationships with creation as fundamental to a just relationship with each other, with God, and to the Jesuit

A Word from the Director

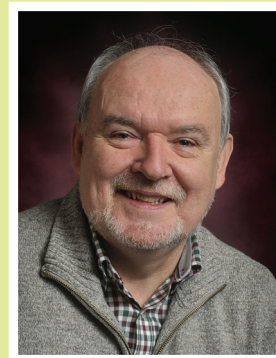
It has been a lovely summer in Ireland. We got some sun and rain intermittently leaving the countryside bedecked in rich green foliage, and gardens resplendent with colour. Farmers got hay saved and crops harvested. The atmosphere confirmed that it is good to be alive. During this season it is easy to recognise God's finger in the beauty of the natural world. We are blessed to live in a country of peace, open spaces and amidst the beauty of nature.

The first article in this newsletter speaks of protecting and promoting nature – our environment. Recognising and relishing the beauty of Mother Earth is the first step in helping us to protect it. As Pope Francis often says we owe this to our children, grandchildren and all of humanity. The call to plant fields of dreams for one another is universal and is accomplished in so many diverse ways. The educational dream planted for the girls and boys of Malawi by the Jesuits in the new Loyola Jesuit Secondary School is a wonderful example of giving hope to the next generation.

The discreet presence of the Jesuits in mainland China since the time of Matteo Ricci shows how time and patience among suffering brings about transformation and new hope, as shown in Fr John Lee's piece. Our new Provincial for Zambia-Malawi, Fr Leonard Chiti, writes about the ministry of bringing consolation to many who suffer deprivation, summarising the great work of the Jesuit project.

This message is a call for us all; to be good news for and with one another, and to give each other a reason to hope through our words and actions.

I wish to express my gratitude to you, friends of the Irish Jesuit Missions, for your encouragement, support and actions in helping us to be consolers of others in different lands and continents. Thank you.



mission. The Decree's call rightly identifies the crux of the problem (*"the flawed way societies and economies are organised"*, *"the current economic system with its predatory orientation"*), and names where transformation is required (*"the direction of development must be altered"*, *"a new way of producing and consuming, which puts God's creation at the centre"*, *"changing our personal and community lifestyles"*, *"remaining close to the vulnerable"*).

If we are to meaningfully respond to the complexity of these socio-ecological problems in scale, scope and interconnectedness, we need a radical social and economic transformation – but what should this transformation look like? How can we get there? Is there something unique that an Ignatian response can offer in helping us discern the path ahead? How can we translate our mission, outlined for us in the GC 36 Decree, into action?

Pope Francis frequently reminds us that while words may be full of good intentions, they are empty if inconsistent with our lifestyles. Personal lifestyles matter, yet courage and commitment must also translate to the political. Highlighted in *Laudato Si'*, education and action are essential at averting ecological and social injustice. Jesuit educational institutions, centres and ministries can play a central role in not only dreaming, but actively advocating

for a better future. However, John Surrence SJ believed that the challenge for the Society is *"soul-sized"*. Clearly, we need to *row into the deep* – a journey which will bring together all aspects of the Jesuit community.

"We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental."
Pope Francis, Laudato Si'

Dreaming a future where we live in harmony with each other and with the wider communion of creation will require us to balance our view of the world as a collection of means for meeting our needs, with the realisation that the whole Earth is a realm of moral and spiritual meaning. In John Surrence's dream, the great work of the Society of Jesus is located at the frontiers, discerning the universal good, working with others, making a religious response, transcending our paralysis to live with bravery, hope and conviction, *"embedding our passionate love of humanity within an equally passionate love of Earth and its web of Life."* Our common dream for the future rests on our common ground, the Earth.

Catherine Devitt is Environmental Justice Officer at Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice. www.jcjj.ie

¹The dream of an older Jesuit is available at: <http://www.ecojesuit.com/the-dream-of-an-older-jesuit/4505/>



Fr Leonard Chiti SJ meets Pope Francis at the GC 36 in Rome

My Vision in Africa for the Next Several Years

Fr Arturo Sosa has been quoting a lot from decrees passed at last year's General Congregation 36, which elected him as the 31st Superior General of the Society of Jesus. Clearly, he is indicating to many of us that he sees the implementation of GC 36 as one of his key mandates. Similarly, many of the appointments of key personnel he has made such as new Provincials were members of GC 36. It is like he wants people around him to help him put into practice GC 36 who are familiar with its teaching. So it seems to me that this will be a guiding principle in the way Fr Arturo governs the Society of Jesus in the next several years.

I was privileged to participate in last year's General Congregation. One of the striking moments of the event for me and of many others was obviously the visit of Pope Francis and his speech to GC 36. Most striking in his speech was his encouragement to Jesuits to insistently ask for consolation. I think this was a key moment for me in the whole congregation. Jesuits constantly review their lives to see the sources of consolations and move in that direction and identify sources of desolations and move away from them. However, it rarely occurs to many of us that we should actually consistently ask for consolation.

A Jesuit who recognises where both his consolations and desolations emanate from learns to not only to discern the will of God but to live according to his will. Jesuits seek to place themselves in God's hands to use them as God wills. Discerning the will of God was a hallmark of the first companions. In all their decisions in those early days they were guided by the desire to 'defend and propagate the faith and ...to help souls'.

In living out this vocation, they relied on the inspiration of God which they found repeatedly in the discernment of spirits, i.e. distinguishing between the movements

that come from God and those that do not; or those that lead to God and those that do not.

My hope and desire is that we can emulate the first companions by abandoning ourselves totally to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in our discernments and actions. They were 'poor and learned' and committed themselves to 'helping souls' wherever God sent them. They were consoled not only by realising that they were carrying out God's will but also by a sense of participating in the ministries of consolations. I think Jesuits have a special task of leading the people of God in ministries of consolations wherever they are and whatever the spirit tells them to do. That is what I hope I can contribute to, encouraging my brothers to rely totally on God's help and bring consolation to his people.

In Zambia and Malawi as is the case elsewhere on the continent many people long to be consoled by God. Many suffer deprivations of one kind or the other. Poverty, sickness, lack of access to basic human rights and poor governance are just a few of the many sources of suffering for many in our part of the world. Many Jesuits in both countries are devoted to helping millions of people experience God's consolation. Obviously this is as it should be.

I sincerely hope that the teaching of GC 36 will augment their efforts and inject new energies into their ministries and bring God's consolation to the people of God in these two countries. I hope to be part of a 'renewed' Society of Jesus taking after the first companions to minister to God's people as they address obstacles to living a fulfilled life.

Fr Leonard Chiti, SJ has been appointed the next Provincial of the Zambia-Malawi Province.

Dreaming the Future for the Chinese Province

Matteo Ricci was the great missionary to the East. He arrived in China in 1583 and proved to be a wonderful missionary linking the East to the West. The Jesuit presence in China has not always been easy. A reason for rejoicing today is that Jesuits continue to be a wonderful and effective presence amongst the people and young Chinese Jesuits grow in number.

China has always been a dream for the Society of Jesus from the very beginning of its foundation. There have been high and low tides in the past four centuries. With so many memories and stories, the Jesuits of the Chinese Province continue to make this dream alive in our life and mission today.

The Chinese Province responded to the new call from the 35th General Congregation in 2008 to commit itself more fully to the universal mission in China. After the challenges in the past decade, we are trying again to find ways to make this dream come true.

We realise that *how to be*, the quality of our presence is much more important than *what to do* in mainland China. We now want to follow the GC36 instruction to be aware of the wider aspects of discernment, networking and collaboration. Therefore, we Jesuits are spending quality time to be together for the strengthening of our friendship in the Lord, through which we can together discern the voice and the direction of the Holy Spirit.

The most wonderful thing about our efforts in China is that we do not have any visible institution. This prompts and leads us to be open to the need of Christ's mission and enables us to step out of our own predetermined or personal interests and take steps to respond to the real need of the people.

We are joining the people in their good work, being inspired by them and inspiring them to go deeper in encountering their neighbors and in loving God. It is always more consoling to see people getting closer to the Lord rather than to see ourselves making our own institutions successful. We do not need to raise our big 'IHS' logo in prominent places on the top of our buildings. On the contrary, we need to root Jesus in the heart of people.

Since we are making ourselves more available and flexible, we are able to connect and collaborate with many more people of good will. We want to *be* with others and to *walk* with others; we want to personally accompany them. However, we also need to face some challenges: 'The harvest is indeed plentiful, but labourers



are few.' We will spend more energy to share the Ignatian Way with more people, so that they may also follow in the footsteps of St Ignatius, never stopping to look for ways to give greater glory to God.

"It is always more consoling to see people getting closer to the Lord rather than to see ourselves making our own institutions successful"

I feel privileged and honored to be chosen to participate in this great mission. Together we want to share this grace and opportunity with more people and even with Jesuits, from near and from far, who may join this mission in various ways. Young Jesuits could spend some years in our province, allowing the rich Chinese culture to gradually make them into humbler instruments of the Lord. Lay collaborators can pray for us or financially help us to form more young Jesuits and collaborators.

I am convinced that God will be much pleased with our efforts if we work together to create spaces for more encounters in China: people with people, with God and with creation. May the Lord continue to inspire us to dream and to look for ways of making our dreams come true.

Fr John Lee SJ is Provincial of the Chinese Province of the Society of Jesus.

Planting a Field of Dreams for the Youth of Malawi

“One of the best ways to serve the present is to give hope for the future. Loyola Jesuit Secondary School will effectively serve the needs of the present youth who are the future hope of Malawi.”



These words of our former Jesuit Father General, Adolfo Nicolas, SJ, are both comforting and challenging. Comforting because they assure those of us associated with Loyola Jesuit Secondary School (LJSS) that we are in the right Jesuit apostolate. And challenging because they give us a well-defined task to dream of a future filled with hope in our new school in Kasungu, Malawi.

About a dozen years ago the Zambia-Malawi Jesuit Province began thinking about a new educational apostolate in Malawi. When some people heard of this possibility, they surmised that this would mean an all-boy's private school located in the capital to serve the few better-off families. But the process of Ignatian discernment resulted in a co-educational boarding school in a poor rural town where most of the youth don't attend school. And it is not a private school but a 'grant-aided' school where the salaries of teachers are paid by the Government, enabling fees to be low and thus more accessible to families of limited means.

LJSS opened for Form One (Grade Nine) in September 2015, with 61 girls and 62 boys. A good gender balance is a key element in our dreaming the future since educated women are essential for national development. A girl who has a chance for secondary school will marry later, have fewer children, ensure that her children go to school, and take part in community improvement.

When a large 25-hectare plot was secured for LJSS in Kasungu, the future dream for LJSS included excellent physical facilities to be staffed by well-prepared and dedicated staff. Thank God, we have been able to move toward realising that dream, through the help

of generous benefactors; Jesuit offices around the globe, Bishops' Conferences, Malawian government, foundations, and individual donors in Malawi and worldwide.

Central to our dream for the future, of course, is that our school would consistently prepare our learners with good Jesuit teaching. 'Forming women and men for and with others' is engraved over the entrance to the Administration Building. 'Ever to excel' is the motto on our logo – a constant reminder.

Two other elements raise questions that are real tests of our future. Firstly, can LJSS truly be the 'option for the poor' that we have talked about since early days of planning? We are dependent on Government funding for teachers, in a country faced with serious economic problems. Without adequate Government support, LJSS would have to raise tuition fees. What consequences would that have for the recruitment of girls and boys from poorer families?

And second, will LJSS be the 'green' school we say it desires to be? We built the school with soil-based bricks, and purchased all the furniture from a joinery using wood from sustainable tree plots. This is our commitment to avoid the deforestation that is causing climate change havoc in Malawi. Can we keep this green pledge in the future?

'Dreaming the future' for LJSS in Malawi requires plenty of work here in the present!

Fr Peter Henriot SJ is Director of Development at Loyola Secondary School, Kasungu, Malawi.

Mission News

● New Provincial Zambia-Malawi

This September, Fr Leonard Chiti will succeed Fr Emmanuel Mumba SJ as Provincial of the Zambia-Malawi Jesuits Province. Fr Chiti is the Director of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) in Lusaka, Zambia and the Coordinator of the Global Ignatian Advocacy Network, and is interested in ecological issues and global socioeconomic and political projects. We would like to congratulate him on his appointment.

● New personnel

There are two new staff members in the Irish Jesuits Missions. Programmes Manager Francis Flood has vast experience of development work in Africa, and has spent four years in South Sudan. His local knowledge will be invaluable as he collaborates with our overseas partners. He has taken over from Emer Kerrigan who is on maternity leave. Communications Officer Martina Madden's professional background includes fundraising for non-profit organisations and managing communications for EU research and development projects.

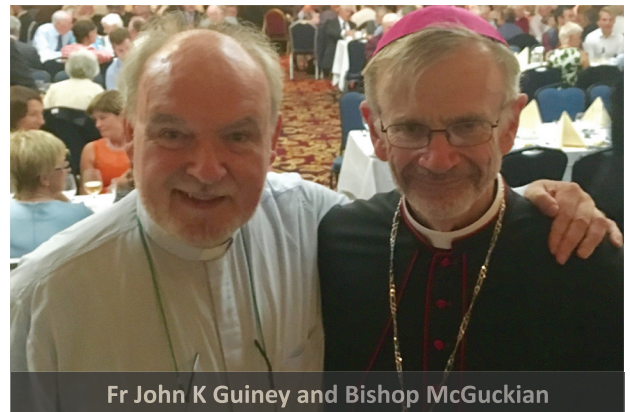
● Dublin teacher dared to dream

Dublin teacher Deirdre Ryan concluded her 18 months of volunteering in Xavier School, Cambodia. While there she taught children, teenagers and adults as well

as being involved in setting up a community centre and training courses for teachers. Deirdre put so much time and effort into her Cambodian adventure and made a difference to many lives. We would like to sincerely thank her and wish her all the best for her future.

● Ireland's first Jesuit Bishop

On June 9th, Pope Francis appointed Fr Alan McGuckian SJ as Ireland's first Jesuit bishop. Fr McGuckian was ordained Bishop of Raphoe on August 6th in the Cathedral of Ss Eunan and Columba in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. The new bishop is a keen Irish language speaker and has translated a biography of St Ignatius into Irish, as well as editing the Jesuit Irish language publication An Timire.



Fr John K Guiney and Bishop McGuckian

South Sudan Emergency Appeal

We urgently need your help to provide food, clean water and support to malnourished and distressed people who are victims of the ongoing conflict in one of the poorest countries in the world.

If you wish to make a donation with a **credit/debit** card, please contact: +353 (0) 1 836 6509

For donations online log onto: **www.jesuitmissions.ie**

If you would like to make a donation by cheque, please make it payable to 'Irish Jesuit Missions' and post to **Irish Jesuit Missions, 20 Upper Gardiner Street, Dublin D01E9F3**

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My choice to this donation is: (Please tick preferred box)

☐ South Sudan ☐ Refugees ☐ Area of greatest need

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