

80th ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



irish jesuits international

ijio

1945-2025



MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS

May I extend my warmest congratulations to Irish Jesuits International as you mark eighty years of dedicated service and profound commitment to justice and human dignity. Traoslaím libh.

For the past eight decades, Irish Jesuits International has stood in compassionate solidarity with countless marginalised and disadvantaged communities across the globe, bringing a message of hope and mutual respect inspired by the enduring values of your Ignatian tradition. This, as I know, placed them on occasion as targets of State and non-State violence.

The themes of your 80th anniversary event, which is focused on your contemporary and projected work, focuses on such important issues as gender-responsive education, climate justice and sustainable livelihoods. They are a powerful reflection of your continued commitment to both the dignity of the person and the very future of our shared, vulnerable planet, and its sustainability of an ecologically responsible way of life, with justice and an equality of participation in life-defining decisions.

In 2025 we are sadly living in an era when our interacting crises are casting a dark shadow over the world. In so many regions we are witnessing the devastating consequences of war and conflict, the scourge of hunger and famine, deepening inequality, while those least responsible for climate change are subjected to its most horrific effects.

On global hunger, the figures are alarming and worrying. 282 million members of our global family face acute hunger, while in Africa, the continent of the young, over 1 billion people struggle to afford a basic healthy diet, with 20 percent of the population undernourished.



Unfortunately, the values of equality, transformation for justice and inclusion are now under the greatest threat in decades. The recent disabling of aid to those most in need will push millions further into hunger, disease, and displacement, hitting the most vulnerable hardest.

However, the work of Irish Jesuits and other denominations who have worked with the poor is a testament to what can be achieved when people come together in the spirit of generosity, concern and global citizenship, in solidarity with members of our shared global family. Their contribution to projects of literacy, cooperation and gender have

been transformative. They are a profound exemplar of compassion in action and a powerful reminder of our shared humanity. It is work that has never been more vital.

It is work, too, that embodies that great ethical insight, an appeal to all humanity, which the late Pope Francis often spoke of, that 'too often we participate in the globalization of indifference. May we strive instead to live in global solidarity.'

In your education, advocacy, and humanitarian outreach, you have given expression to the values of justice, dignity, and hope, to that global solidarity that must lie at the heart of a truly global citizenship.

The work of Jesuits, I can personally attest, has been often distorted and that distortion made available as fuel for extreme examples defining as oligarchical experienced versions of power.

May I take this opportunity to recall those for whom I often recall as friends which was a great privilege, whose commitment to justice cost them their lives. I think particularly of the events of 16 November 1989 at the Universidad Centroamericana in El Salvador, when six Jesuits – Ignacio Ellacuría, Segundo Montes, Ignacio Martín-Baró, Juan Ramón Moreno Pardo, Amando López, and Joaquín López y López – alongside Julia Elba Ramos and her young daughter Celina, were brutally murdered, targeted for their courageous advocacy for the poor and for daring to speak the truth, of human rights.

When visiting El Salvador in 1982, along with my friend, the late Sally O'Neill, I had the privilege of meeting Ignacio Ellacuría and Segundo Montes in San Salvador, along with their colleague Jon Sobrino, also one of Central America's best-known theologians.

The Jesuits of El Salvador held close links with Ireland. Ignacio Ellacuría undertook his tertianship and Joaquín López studied theology in Ireland. When Ellacuría and Sobrino visited Ireland in the mid-1980s, they spoke movingly of the deep injustices they witnessed daily in El Salvador, providing a

detailed account of the grave human rights abuses and political situation in the country.

They will be long remembered for their deeply felt and passionately argued philosophy which contributed so much to the development of new paradigms for Latin America's poor, and their legacy remains an enduring inspiration for all those who seek to construct a better, more just world.

May I also take the opportunity of repeating my tribute to your late colleague, Fr. Donal Doyle, who sadly passed away recently. Fr. Doyle was a figure of great distinction and enduring influence within the Irish community in Japan, and indeed far beyond. His passing will be keenly felt by all who had the privilege to have known him, to work alongside him, and to benefit from his wisdom, his enduring compassion, and his life-long commitment to the values of education, justice, and spiritual reflection.

On this, for you a milestone anniversary, may I express my heartfelt gratitude to all the members, past and present, of Irish Jesuits who have offered their selfless services over the past 80 years.

May I wish Irish Jesuits International success in your endeavours, and I wish you patience, endurance and success with the positive changes that are so necessary for the years to come. May you have every blessing with your efforts to create a more equitable, just, and fair future for all, built on fulfilment, in its most comprehensive, inclusive sense, and critically respectful of diversity.

Arís mo bhuíochas libh uilig agus guím gach rath oraibh don todhchaí.

Beir beannacht,



Michael D. Higgins, Uachtarán na hÉireann
President of Ireland



Shane Daly SJ was appointed Provincial of the Irish Jesuit Province in 2023. Before joining the Jesuits at the age of 35, he taught young offenders and vulnerable children.

A LEGACY OF SERVICE, SOLIDARITY, AND HOPE

– Shane Daly SJ

Shane opened celebrations to mark such a huge occasion for IJI and our supporters and friends. He spoke of how appropriate it was that the conference was held in Milltown Park, where IJI was created 80 years ago to serve and support the work and needs of the Jesuits rebuilding the Hong Kong mission after WWII and support the emerging mission in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia, today).

"The generosity, commitment, resilience, and faith of our Jesuit missionaries and lay colleagues has borne much fruit...walking with the excluded, journeying with youth, and caring for our common home" all of which were at the heart of our work, Shane shared.

"Our gratitude and appreciation go to the men and women involved in these works of service both in the past and today." He added, "in Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis' encyclical on fraternity and social friendship, he notes that we are called to "a love without borders... taking an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies."

Today, at a time when dark clouds of conflict gather over our world, this generosity is more needed than ever, giving hope that we can build a very different world built on fraternity and friendship.

In closing Shane gave a special mention to those who stayed at home to run raffles, cake sales and concerts in parishes and communities raising critical funds for our development and emergency responses. "It was less glamorous and adventurous but made so much possible." Shane added, "to that end we remember Tom Martin SJ, the first IJI Director from 1945 to 1972."

Shane commended the IJI team – John Guiney SJ, the present IJI Director, Emer, Tim, Yanira, Joe, Amanda, Jim and Rutsuko – remembering Rosaleen who has just began her retirement, for their commitment to building a just, livable and humane world.



John has been IJI's Director for 17 years, and prior to this, he spent 25 years in East Africa.

Photo: John K Guiney SJ and Mary Carroll, former volunteer teacher in Zambia

A NEW MISSION OF SOLIDARITY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT – John K Guiney SJ

John spoke about the huge celebratory milestone for IJI, founded on solidarity and partnership. John's address highlighted the ecclesial demographic shift to a Global South Leadership in our Church. With the centre of Christianity shifting significantly to the Global South (Africa, Asia, Latin America), "we now recognize that mission is no longer 'from the West to the rest' but increasingly from everywhere to everywhere."

Shifting from a focus of spiritual or economic progress, "the full well-being of individuals and communities" needs to be integral to our work "ensuring they can live in their cultures with dignity, freedom, and justice."

John shared how 'Care of Our Common Home' calls us into a key partnership today. Late Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*, urges individuals, communities and governments to take action against environmental degradation and climate change. "Everyone, regardless of background

or belief, is called to participate in the stewardship of the Earth" and work together to right the wrongs and build a future home inclusive of all creation.

John concluded his talk on the huge importance of healing the impacts and memories of a colonial past, to building bridges through dialogue and understanding, being agents of Christ's peace, promoting non-violence, interreligious dialogue and mutual respect to **cultivate fraternity and social friendship to not only address conflict but to prevent it.**

Scan the QR code to read John's speech in full:





Nicola Brennan is Ireland's Ambassador to Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Seychelles and Comoros. She has been 30 years within the Dept of Foreign Affairs as part of the Irish Aid team. She has worked closely with our fellow Jesuit, late Michael J Kelly SJ, and hosted so many of the annual Irish Aid Fr Michael Kelly Lectures on HIV & AIDs.

IRISH AID & MISEAN CARA: PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT – Nicola Brennan

Nicola's keynote address was an important segment to our 80th conference reflecting on how mission paved the way for Irish international development, building on our history of struggle for our own independence as a nation, our history of poverty, our history of hunger, our history of emigration and our history of resilience.

"This is what Irish Aid stands for and over the past 50 years Ireland's overseas development programme has grown – not only in money terms but also in its impact and relevance – and it is now central to Ireland's foreign policy and global engagement...But while Ireland was looking outwards and fulfilling its international obligations it was Irish missionaries who paved the way for the Irish Aid programme."

Nicola reminded us of Ronan Murphy's book 'Inside Irish Aid: The Impulse to Help', as former Director General of Irish Aid, where he shared that it was Irish missionaries who sparked the interest Ireland takes in the developing

world. His book shares, 'Ireland had a huge advantage when it started out, in that **the missionary tradition had built up a real connection with Africa in particular, which resonated with the Irish public**'.

Nicola added, "In each country I have worked in, I have been consistently inspired by the Irish missionaries I have met. In fact, it was missionaries that initially inspired me to work in development and the developing world. I think the story of Irish missionaries helped me to relate to the outside world – to see beyond Ireland. As Mary McAleese said 'missionaries helped us to be citizens of the world'.

Scan the QR code to read Nicola's keynote speech in full:





Leonard Chiti SJ is Provincial of the Jesuit Southern Africa Province, covering 9 countries. Prior to this, he was Zambia Malawi Jesuit Provincial, Coordinator of the Global Ignatian Advocacy Network (GIAN) and Director of Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR).

NEW MODELS OF SOLIDARITY

– Leonard Chiti SJ

Leonard's address spoke of the future of international development and the importance of building partnerships, breaking away from parental models of charity to models of real and tangible solidarity.

Leonard warmly shared his Irish connections that shaped him into the person he is today – "I am deeply indebted to the Irish Jesuits who introduced me to the Society of Jesus... **Colm O'Riordan SJ** was one of the first Jesuits to arrive in Northern Rhodesia in the later 1950s and was the **first Jesuit I met...Des O'Brien SJ was like a father-figure to me** when I was involved in youth programmes at college and **John Dooley SJ introduced me to the Spiritual Exercises**, in particular the Principle and Foundation, which remains a key meditation in my life even up to today...**Jerry O'Connell SJ...helped me make up my mind about joining the Jesuits**, whilst **Michael J Kelly SJ was a source of personal inspiration** throughout the many years I knew him, both as lecturer at the University of Zambia, and

as a companion...**Joe Dargan SJ...was my Tertian Master** at Manresa Retreat Centre in Dublin. **John Guiney SJ and Murt Curry SJ held my hand** when I assumed the role of Director at JCTR by linking (*with*) Misesan Cara...who provided the much-needed financial support to grow the centre and enabled it to play a significant role in the development of Zambia. Finally, **Leonard Moloney SJ journeyed with me as a fellow Major Superior**, as we were both appointed in the same year. So, you can see the ties between us run deep."

Scan the QR code to read Leonard's speech in full:





Mrs. Rose Goodstadt and her family have supported Missionaries in China and Hong Kong for over a century. She studied Social Sciences & Public Administration in New York and Oxford. She returned to Hong Kong in 1961 and devoted her life to serving the community. Rose was Deputy Director of the Social Welfare Department and Head of the Hospital Services Department. She collaborated with many NGOs and was more of a trailblazer and social reformer than a typical civil servant.

IRISH JESUITS IN HONG KONG

– Mrs Rose Goodstadt

Rose's speech gave attendees a heartfelt and remarkable insight into the history of Hong Kong's development and the amazing legacy of Irishmen who were called to live out the life of Jesus and support vulnerable communities in the Far-East.

"It was the end of WWII, the end of four years of brutal Japanese occupation. The city was badly bombed, and a million people had fled or been deported. The remaining 600,000, traumatised, injured and starving, struggled to rebuild their lives, together with those returning from their exile. Their urgent task was to find food and shelter and to avoid epidemics like cholera. TB and polio were rampant, but even rudimentary medical care was lacking."

Amid such hardship, these missionaries from the Emerald Isle found themselves in brutally hot & humid weather, squashed in on all sides by big pushing crowds, struggling to grasp one of the most difficult languages in the world.

Rose's reflection focused on the human element to these remarkable Irish men who in a foreign land found home and connection from outreach and care for vulnerable communities to positions of influence designing policy and governance founded on Christian values.

"I like to think that a city, rich or poor, must have a moral framework to develop. I believe that the Irish Jesuits' 80 years of Christian education, promotion of human values, spiritual guidance, personal examples and long years of warm friendship gave the city its true value – its soul"

You can read Rose's speech in full:





Tony O'Riordan SJ served with Jesuit Refugee Service [JRS] in South Sudan and Syria from 2018 to 2024. In South Sudan, he was Project Director in Maban, one of the world's most remote refugee camps. He also held the position of JRS Country Director in Syria, where he was present during the devastating earthquakes of February 2023. Today, Tony continues his work with JRS Ireland, accompanying those seeking international protection in Ireland.

Read Tony's speech in full

WORK IN CRISIS – Tony O'Riordan SJ

Tony's speech opened informing listeners that while IJ was marking such an incredible milestone, another beloved institution was turning 80 – *Thomas the Tank Engine*!

"From his humble beginnings as a railway-themed children's book, Thomas has become a global sensation on TV, teaching generations of children valuable lessons about friendship, responsibility, morality, perseverance, and resilience" Tony explained, "He continues to captivate young minds, evolving through animation and social media to embark on new adventures"

"What I find most enchanting about the story of Thomas the Tank Engine isn't its corporate success or its dominance in the toy and merchandise markets" Tony adds, "Rather, it's the heartwarming origin story. It all began with a father caring for his sick son, who was bedridden with measles. To comfort his child, the father and son imagined an animated railway engine, creating this wonderful

story long before it became marketable or monetized. It was a beautiful moment of a father's love and a child's imagination coming together"

Tony spoke of the importance of stories and the human element to our work as men and women for others. While data, reports, and measurable impact are necessary, he stressed that stories and human connection are central to IJ's work

"At the heart of everything in mission, is people and individuals, like us, with stories," he said. These stories, Tony shared, have not only informed his work but transformed him personally.

"They witnessed to me, accompanied me, and made me a better person and missionary" He explains, "while I hope I contributed to their growth, I know I returned enriched and perhaps a better human being and disciple"



Martha Phiri is the Acting Deputy Director of Jesuit Center for Ecology and Development (JCED) where climate justice and action go hand in hand. Her work with JCED focuses on restoring eco-systems, reforestation, training smallholder farmers in climate smart agriculture and green business, producing eco-stoves and responding to natural disasters such as flash floods and cyclones which are becoming ever more prominent in Malawi.

Read Martha's speech in full

CLIMATE JUSTICE IN MALAWI – Martha Phiri

Martha closed our conference with not only celebratory words of encouragement but an impassioned call to action for IJI's future and its continued partnership with JCED which embodies the mission of Laudato Si in caring for our common home.

"Our late Pope Francis urges us to listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" Martha said, "emphasizing that true development must prioritize the dignity, stories, and struggles of the marginalized. This invitation reflects that very principle—it is a reminder that **our work is not just about projects or programs; it is about people, their stories, and their resilience in the face of adversity**".

Outlining the amazing projects tackling issues such as food insecurity, deforestation and strengthening livelihoods, Martha spoke of the impact real solidarity has made to lives of vulnerable communities in Malawi. "Irish Jesuit International has been a beacon of

hope and a pillar of strength for JCED for over a decade" she said, "The commitment to supporting the most marginalized communities in Malawi has been both inspiring and transformative. Through our partnership, we have been able to address some of the most pressing challenges faced by vulnerable communities, particularly in the areas of food security, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience"

Martha concluded her talk by looking to the future and the need to scale up climate resilience projects, engagement with youth and advocacy founded on solidarity and climate justice.

"As we celebrate this incredible milestone, let us also renew our commitment to working together to create a more just, equitable, and sustainable world! JCED looks forward to further collaborations and mutual plans that will continue to bring positive change to the lives of many. **Thank you, zikomo**"

This Back to School Season, *You can change a life*

As the new school year begins, children across the world are eager to learn, but for many living in poverty and in refugee settlements or camps, that hope is out of reach.

Your Back to School Gift will give them the chance to learn, grow, and dream. From a warm meal that fuels a day of classes, to training the teachers who will inspire the next generation, **your support changes lives.**



€200

Educate a Child

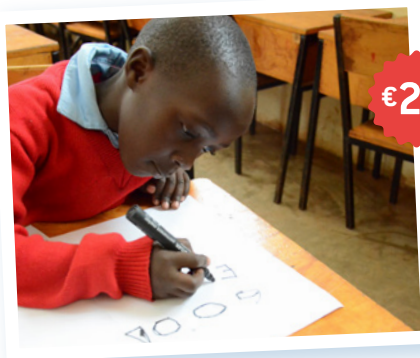
Your gift will support a vulnerable child in Kenya or Nigeria to receive a **primary education, medical support, counselling, and school meals** for one school term. Your gift gives them the foundation for a brighter future.



€30

Bowl of Porridge

In South Sudan, this meal is often a student's only source of nourishment. With soaring food prices, many arrive hungry and unable to concentrate, some faint during class. Your gift feeds them for a month so their minds can flourish.



€20

School Kit

In one of Uganda's largest refugee settlements, your gift will give a child pens, copybooks, and a backpack — essential tools for learning and staying in school, especially for girls striving for a brighter future.



€1500

Teacher Training

In rural South Sudan, most teachers have no formal qualifications. Your gift will train a graduate to Diploma level, giving them the skills to inspire and educate an entire community for generations to come.

How to give your Back to School Gift



Visit us online at www.iji.ie/gifts



Call us on **01 836 6509**



Scan **QR Code**





Irish Jesuits International

20 Upper Gardiner Street, Dublin 1

D01 E9F3

Tel. +353 1 836 6509

Email: reception@iji.ie

www.iji.ie



IrishJesuitsInternational



@irishjesuitsint.bsky.social



@irishjesuitsinternational



Irish Jesuits International



www.linkedin.com/company/irish-jesuits-international