

An Interpretation and a Raincheck on GC 35's Call to Develop International and Interprovincial Collaboration

Fr Frank Brennan SJ*

Boston College
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1. Why is GC 35 calling for us to develop international and interprovincial collaboration?

Let's start by considering one of the great intractable challenges of our Age: climate change. We know we will not get to first base in addressing this challenge unless there is a high degree of collaboration amongst the world's scientists. Even if there be a consensus on the science, we know that individuals countries cannot go it alone in seeking to reduce the globe's carbon footprint. We need global networks and collaboration of a very high order. The 2009 Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change poignantly highlighted the need for greater collaboration across disciplines and between the academy and governments if we are to shape the future for a more humane, just, sustainable globe. Even well-educated global citizens are confused about the best way forward. If we are to find and apply answers for the good of the planet we need to consider: What is the science? What is the economics? What is the politics? What is the correct ethical approach? What are the key theological insights? We would always expect and hope to find Jesuits involved in wrestling with these questions – perhaps only a handful, but hopefully Jesuits who are learned, reflective, connected, networking, and collaborative. We would be surprised if there were not any Jesuits in attendance at an event like the Copenhagen Summit. Even if we are not there doing much of the heavy lifting, we can act as the canary down the mineshaft. All Jesuits and our apostolic partners delight in the realisation and expectation that persons with an Ignatian disposition will be found at every frontier of human inquiry and challenge.

One of the Jesuits who attended the Summit at the Bella Center at Copenhagen was the Belgian theologian Jacques Haers SJ. As the world confronted the pending gloom that the national leaders were not going to reach significant agreement, he rode the train home to Belgium and tapped some reflections on his computer, then transmitting them to the international Jesuit network on the Internet – a veritable case study in the possibilities of collaboration. It was as if we were there. We shared a platform for

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discourse and inquiry, delighting that one of ours was present, wrestling with the faith and justice dimension of one of the great global challenges. Haers wrote:

There is an important role for religions, although they were but little present at COP15, i.e. in the Bella Center and amidst the negotiations. There have been, of course, some remarkable religious events outside of the Bella Center, and I think especially of Rowan Williams' sermon in Copenhagen's cathedral. Religions touch the capacity to face truth and reality (particularly when it has become difficult to face these, as is the case with global climate change), they are spaces for visions and hope, they are intimately connected to cosmologies and worldviews and, therefore, also to nature itself, they use methodologies of discernment that are more holistic than scientific, economic, military, etc. perspectives, they pay attention to the voices of broken people and broken creatures, they can mobilize and motivate people. There is a great need for these religious voices, also amongst politicians and leaders who are facing the current challenges. Leadership at this level and at this moment requires a worldwide perspective and a strong rootedness in constructive and pro-active values.

During his train journey, Jacques Haers SJ went on to offer this reflection on the possibility for Jesuit collaboration:

I also come home with ideas about the role of the Jesuits and the Ignatian Family. They have a worldwide presence, a universal scope and reach at many levels that they can efficiently interconnect: presence in the field, academic research in universities, the capacity to build local and international institutions (as the Jesuit Refugee Service), possibilities to advocate at political level and in political institutions, a spirituality in which common apostolic discernment plays an important role, influence in the media of communication, etc. To have received these capacities is at this moment of history a very precious gift and puts the Ignatian Family and the Jesuits at a "kairos" in which they can commit wholeheartedly and, in doing so, rediscover who they are.

We Jesuits and members of the Ignatian family readily concede that most of the world's intellectuals are no longer people of faith. There are now more intellectual disciplines than when the Catholic Church was so dominant in Europe. Jesuits are no longer chaplains at court. Power is exercised more through parliaments than royal courts. There are fewer Jesuits than there were at the time of the Second Vatican Council. The modern Society of Jesus is defined by and committed to the faith that does justice. Jesuits are now called to build the bridges and to work at the frontiers of faith, knowledge and justice.

Many intelligent people committed to intellectual tasks now think that these tasks are best performed without consideration of religious belief, tradition or authority. Reflecting on how these tasks can be performed and enhanced in conformity with religious belief, tradition and authority is central to our work as individuals committed to the Jesuit mission to the world and to the Church. And we can't do it on our own. We need to be in dialogue with others and to work with them. If we are not collaborating with others and forming networks, we must be failing to provide the links between the Church and the World which has always been a distinctive aspect of Jesuit identity and mission.

In his homily for the Easter vigil, Pope Benedict XVI reflected on the paschal candle producing light and warmth by burning itself up. Then he added:

[T]he candle, has its origin in the work of bees. So the whole of creation plays its part. In the candle, creation becomes a bearer of light. But in the mind of the Fathers, the candle also in some sense contains a silent reference to the Church. The cooperation of the living community of believers in the Church in some way resembles the activity of bees. It builds up the community of light. So the candle serves as a summons to us to become involved in the community of the Church, whose *raison d'être* is to let the light of Christ shine upon the world.

We are all willing worker bees contributing to the development of the candle which burns itself out to bring light and warmth to the dark, cold aspects of our world. There are fewer able-bodied, abled-minded Jesuits. There are more demands for international co-operation and co-operation across sectors, especially between the intellectual and social dimensions of our ministries. We have a heightened sense of the calling of all persons involved in Jesuit works and ministries.

In 2006, Father Paul Locatelli SJ was appointed the first Secretary for Higher Education by Fr General Kolvenbach. Paul was keen to see greater networking and cooperation between the social and intellectual apostolates of the Society of Jesus. In 2007, he conducted a survey of our institutions of higher learning to identify the principal challenges. Having attended GC 35, he then set in train the conference held in Mexico in 2010 entitled “Networking Jesuit Higher Education for the Globalising World: Shaping the Future for a Humane, Just, Sustainable Globe”. Participants were asked to consider four frontier challenges: theology, science and culture; markets, inequality and poverty; ecology and sustainability; and human rights and civic responsibility. These frontier challenges had been identified by conducting an exhaustive survey of faculty members in Jesuit institutes of higher learning. A month after the conference, Father Locatelli was struck down with cancer. He then died in July 2010. In January this year, Father General Adolfo Nicolas visited the Australian province. He told a meeting of Jesuits and our collaborators:

When we had the meeting in Mexico of Jesuit universities the idea and the concern for creating meaningful networks was strongly raised, and I know that it's being followed up. There is going to be a meeting in Boston to apply the same visions and the same perspectives. So my hope is that this is coming to fruition, but the specifics require professional thinking, and I think you're more equipped than I am.

He insisted on the need for cooperation:

Therefore, the question is how can we enter and how can we cooperate? That's why a meeting like this gives me so much comfort because it is a question of cooperation. The problems of the world are far beyond what any group can manage - hunger, poverty, unemployment, injustice, ecological destruction, all these things are far beyond what a group of Jesuits can do, but maybe together, networking with many others who have the same power, maybe Buddhists, maybe Hindus, maybe Moslems with the same heart, maybe we can cooperate to make our world a little more human, a little

more like God wants the world to be.

Gone are the days, if they ever were, when individual Jesuits, isolated provinces, or discrete apostolates could go it alone. We need to collaborate and network, and we want to.

This is not just a pragmatic decision for Jesuits confronting ageing and diminishment as a universal body. It is an imperative for engagement at the intellectual frontiers of life. In his recent essay *A Catholic Modernity?*, Charles Taylor suggests:

In modern, secularist culture there are mingled together both the authentic developments of the Gospel, of an incarnational mode of life, and also a closing off to God that negates the Gospel. The notion is that modern culture, in breaking with the structures and beliefs of Christendom, also carried certain facets of Christian life further than they were ever taken or could have been taken within Christendom. In relation to the earlier forms of Christian culture, we have to face the humbling realisation that the breakout was a necessary condition of the development.

Unless we are networking and collaborating, we will fail to reap the fruits of the breakout and we will ghettoise our thinking and effectiveness both in the world and in the Church.

2. What do we mean by networking and collaboration? What are the key characteristics of Jesuit networking and collaboration?

Back in 1970, Fr Arrupe called for theological reflection on “humanism, freedom, mass culture, economic development, and violence”. In 1975, the 32nd General Congregation added to the list of intellectual tasks confronting the whole Society of Jesus saying, “We cannot be excused from making the most rigorous possible political and social analysis of our situation.”¹ In 1983, the 33rd Congregation reaffirming the importance of the intellectual apostolate, said, “Research in theology and philosophy, in all other sciences and in every branch of human culture is likewise essential if Jesuits are to help the Church understand the contemporary world and speak to it the Word of Salvation.”² No intellectual discipline is exempt; none is irrelevant. While we would never abandon strong intellectual commitment to theology and philosophy, we would always welcome academic excellence within the network of Jesuit apostolic partners whether it be in fine arts or in nuclear physics.

In 1995, the 34th Congregation supplemented even further the 1970 list of Fr Arrupe and called for theological reflection also on “the contemporary understanding of the promotion of justice, including inculturation and interreligious dialogue”.³ In 2003, Fr Kolvenbach communicated to the Society a list of key apostolic preferences for the Society. He said that “the situation of our world, with the hot issues humanity faces, and the expectations of the Church concerning the Society, call also, on the part of the

¹ GC32, D4, n.44

² GC33, D1, n.45

³ GC34, D16, n.7

Provinces and the Conferences of Major Superiors, for a specific commitment to the directly intellectual apostolate”. Then at GC35 in 2008, the Jesuits were anxious to respond to the gracious invitation to collaboration extended them by Pope Benedict XVI; but they were also anxious to expand their horizons beyond harmonious relations with the Holy See, embracing evocative images of bridges and frontiers to describe the contemporary mission of the Society.

At the commencement of GC 35, Pope Benedict wrote to Fr Kolvenbach saying that it is indispensable “that the life of the members of the Society of Jesus, as also their doctrinal research, be always animated by a true spirit of faith and communion in ‘humble fidelity to the teachings of the Magisterium’”.⁴ He conceded, “Certainly this is not a simple undertaking, especially when called to announce the Gospel in very different social and cultural contexts and when having to deal with different mentalities.” Benedict called for “total adherence to Catholic doctrine, in particular on those neuralgic points which today are strongly attacked by secular culture”. He itemised “the relationship between Christ and religions; some aspects of the theology of liberation; and various points of sexual morality, especially as regards the indissolubility of marriage and the pastoral care of homosexual persons”. When meeting with all the Congregation delegates at the end of proceedings six weeks later, he had cause to restate his desire that the Jesuits “renew your interest in the promotion and defence of the Catholic doctrine ‘particularly in the neuralgic points strongly attacked today by secular culture’”.⁵ Benedict was keen to tie the intellectual commitment of Jesuits, especially in regard to theological research, to the “characteristic fourth vow of obedience to the Successor of Peter” which only some Jesuits are invited to take. Benedict suggested that this vow “not only implies readiness to be sent on mission to faraway lands” but also “to love and serve the Vicar of Christ on earth with that effective and affective devotion that must make of you his precious and irreplaceable collaborators in his service of the universal Church.”⁶

In part, Benedict was inviting us to man the Church barricades. But the liberating aspect of his address was his language of frontiers and bridges, reaffirming that this is central to the Pontiff’s perspective on the Jesuit mission:

As my predecessors have said to you on various occasions, the Church needs you, relies on you and continues to turn to you with trust, particularly to reach those physical and spiritual places which others do not reach or have difficulty in reaching. Paul VI’s words remain engraved on your hearts: “Wherever in the Church, even in the most difficult and extreme fields, at the crossroads of ideologies, in the social trenches, there has been and there is confrontation between the burning exigencies of man and the perennial message of the Gospel, here also there have been, and there are, Jesuits” (*Address to the 32nd General Congregation of the Jesuits*, 3 December 1974; *ORE*, 12 December, n. 2, p. 4.).

⁴ Letter of Benedict XVI to P H Kolvenbach SJ, 10 January 2008

⁵ Address of Pope Benedict XVI to the 35th Congregation, 21 February 2008, n.6

⁶ Address of Pope Benedict XVI to the 35th Congregation, 21 February 2008, n.7

At the end of GC35, the delegates finalised an introductory decree as a response to the “invitation of the Holy Father”. Professing a better understanding of why Pope Benedict was stressing the Church’s reliance on the Jesuits’ responsibility for formation in theology, spirituality and mission, the delegates affirmed that “fidelity demands serious and rigorous research in the theological field and in dialogue with the contemporary world, cultures and religions”.⁷ Aware of the importance of the intellectual apostolate and seeking to respond to the mission as outlined by the Pope (including attention to the neuralgic points), the Congregation noted that “To be missioned to this work at the new frontiers of our times always requires that we also be rooted at the very heart of the Church.” They thought that “This tension, specific to the Ignatian charism, opens the way to true creative fidelity.”⁸

The Congregation delegates then obliquely addressed, having wrestled with, the tensions raised between intellectual freedom, autonomy and creativity exercised at the frontiers and by the building of bridges on the one hand and effective and affective devotion to the Pope asking for consolidation and support at the centre in repelling the effects of the secular culture over the so-called “neuralgic points”. The decree “Challenges to our Mission Today” is subtitled “Sent to the Frontiers”. The decree starts by reaffirming the Jesuit mission as the service of faith. The integrating principle of that mission is “the inseparable link between faith and the promotion of the justice of the Kingdom”.⁹ The previous Congregation had seen that inculturation and dialogue were essential elements now for the Jesuit way of proceeding in mission.¹⁰ The 35th Congregation noted the new context for mission as outlined by Benedict XVI:

Your Congregation is being held during a period of great social, economic and political change; of conspicuous ethical, cultural and environmental problems, of conflicts of all kinds; yet also of more intense communication between peoples, of new possibilities for knowledge and dialogue, of profound aspirations for peace.

Rapidity of change, globalisation, and the new media were singled out for attention. Benedict urged Jesuits to be the “invaluable and irreplaceable collaborators in his service for the universal Church” and emphasised the need for our institutions to maintain “a clear and explicit identity” so that the goal of our apostolic activity was ‘neither ambiguous nor obscure’ and so that many others might share our ideals joining us effectively and enthusiastically collaborating in our commitment to serve God and others.

In Decree 2 *A Fire that Kindles other Fires: Rediscovering our Charism*, the Congregation considered our new context for mission in a global context suggesting

⁷ GC 35, D.1, n.7

⁸ GC 35, D.1, n.13

⁹ GC34, D2, n.14 and GC35, D3, n.2

¹⁰ GC34, D2, n.14-21 and GC35, D3, n.3

that we see ourselves and act simultaneously as a worldwide community and “as a network of local communities”.¹¹ We were urged to “collaborate at multiple levels”.¹²

The Congregation then set out in Decree 3 *Challenges to Our Mission Today: Sent to the Frontiers*, the language for our contemporary mission under the rubric of reconciliation: reconciliation with God, with one another, and with Creation. In relation to seeking reconciliation with each other they noted the good and bad effects of globalisation and said:¹³

The complexity of the problems we face and the richness of the opportunities offered demand that we build bridges between rich and poor, establishing advocacy links of mutual support between those who hold political power and those who find it difficult to voice their interests. Our intellectual apostolate provides an inestimable help in constructing these bridges, offering us new ways of understanding in depth the mechanisms and links among our present problems.

They further noted that the communications technologies “can be powerful instruments for building and supporting international networks in our advocacy”¹⁴. In relation to reconciliation with creation, the Congregation put a distinct challenge to those working in universities and research centres:¹⁵

This Congregation urges all Jesuits and all partners engaged in the same mission, particularly the universities and research centres, to promote studies and practices focusing on the causes of poverty and the question of the environment’s improvement. We should find ways in which our experiences with refugees and the displaced on one hand, and people who work for the protection of the environment on the other hand, could interact with those institutions, so that research results and advocacy have effective practical benefits for society and the environment. Advocacy and research should serve the poor and those who work for the protection of the environment.

The Congregation acknowledged the apostolic preferences which Fr Kolvenbach had previously adopted in consultation with the Conferences of major superiors: Africa, China, the intellectual apostolate, the inter-provincial houses in Rome and migration and refugees. While asking Fr Nicolas to review these preferences, the Congregation gave a specific endorsement to the need to strengthen and renew the intellectual apostolate:¹⁶

The intellectual apostolate has been a defining characteristic of the Society of Jesus from its beginning. Given the complex yet interrelated challenges that Jesuits face in every apostolic sector, GC 35 calls for a strengthening and renewal of this apostolate as a privileged means for the Society to respond adequately to the important intellectual contribution to which the Church calls us. Advanced studies for Jesuits must be encouraged and supported throughout formation.

¹¹ GC 35, D.2, n.20

¹² GC 35, D.2, n.21

¹³ GC 35, D.3, n.28

¹⁴ GC 35, D.3, n.29

¹⁵ GC 35, D.3, n.35

¹⁶ GC 35, D.3, n.39. It is interesting to note that footnote 4 of the document “Issues for the Ordinary Government of the Society of Jesus Studied at the 35th General Congregation” states, “The intellectual apostolate is another of the global preferences established by the GC35 Decree 3, n 39(iii).”

The Congregation asked us to strengthen and support our collaborators actively involved in the dialogues of life, action, religious experience and theological exchange and “to listen carefully to all, and to build bridges linking individuals and communities of goodwill.”¹⁷

Decree 5 on Governance spoke of the need for “growing apostolic networks” and “the ongoing apostolic formation of collaborators”.¹⁸ As Mark Raper SJ, President of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP) says:¹⁹

This decree speaks to the law that will undergird how the Society will go forward on international cooperation. From GC31 in 1966, when Arrupe made an impassioned plea to ‘break down the walls between the provinces’ until GC34, there was reference to ‘interprovincial cooperation’. GC34 begins to speak about supraprovincial cooperation, in other words, some type of common mission that does not simply arise within the separate provinces. GC35 says the Conference structures are not ‘mere instruments of inter-provincial coordination’ but rather oriented for mission.

As the nation-state is losing its currency as the conventional unit of governance, especially in regard to many transnational economic and cultural realities, so also, I suspect, we witness a diminishment in the province as the exclusive conventional unit of Society’s governance.

Decree 6 was dedicated to *Collaboration at the Heart of Mission* with the common aspiration of “apostolic companionship based on discernment and oriented towards service”.²⁰ The Congregation saw itself responding to the call in GC34 to foster cooperation with the laity in mission, noting that many Jesuit works “depend largely on the generous, loyal and skilled collaboration of women and men of diverse religious and humanistic convictions”.²¹ The Congregation thought that collaboration in mission called us “to a new and often challenging renewal of our ministries”.²² They posed three questions:²³

- What constitutes a Jesuit work, and how might it be sustained with other than Jesuits in leadership?
- What are the necessary elements of formation needed by Jesuits and others to ensure growth in the spirit and practice of our mission?
- What bonds might appropriately unite us as collaborators in mission who seek to serve together, with deepening affection, the mission given to the Society?

Our training in collaboration is to be experiential, “not only informing our understanding of ministry but moulding our identity as men for others who are also men with others.”²⁴ We are committed to fostering not only Jesuit works which are

¹⁷ GC 35, D. 3, n.22

¹⁸ GC 35, D.5, nn. 25,28

¹⁹ Personal communication from Fr Raper, 23 April 2012

²⁰ GC 35, D.6, note 1

²¹ GC 35, D.6, n.3

²² GC 35, D.6, n.8

²³ Ibid

²⁴ GC 35, D.6, n.16

“ultimately accountable to the General of the Society through appropriate lines of authority”, but also to Ignatian works which, though not under ultimate Jesuit control, intentionally seek God in all things, practicing Ignatian discernment, and engaging in dialogue with experience “evaluated through reflection, for the sake of action, and with openness, always, to evaluation”.²⁵

What are the challenges/pitfalls in promoting international networking? What are the consequences if we fail? – A Look Back at Mexico 2010

Let me be specific and anecdotal here. I am a Jesuit human rights lawyer. At home, even in a well developed country like Australia with a robust respect for the rule of law, I have more than enough to do. At the Mexico conference in 2010, I was part of the Human Rights and Civic Responsibility Group. We put forward a position statement for global cooperation of a universal mission on human rights and civic responsibility. Members of the group came from Nepal, Spain, Australia, USA, UK, Kenya, Philippines, India and Mexico. It was a very stimulating groups from various disciplines as well as nationalities, some Jesuit and some not.

Drawing on our international connectedness, we said we wanted to be better educators for justice and more effective actors countering injustice. We proposed the creation of the Ellacuria consortium:

- A consortium of thinkers on human rights
- A consortium of actors against human rights violations
- A consortium of human rights educators

We did not want to redesign the wheel. We acknowledged that there are many international human right actors. We wanted to be distinctively Ignatian and distinctively university based promoting a culture of peace in which rights might flourish.

We noted:

Our universities should be renowned for their just structures and investment practices. Jesuit universities should pride themselves on the equal participation of women in governance.

The language of human rights is attractive and accessible to persons of all cultures and nation states. Though there be no unanimity about the philosophical basis of human rights, they provide a way for protecting and enhancing the human dignity of persons facing adverse treatment. Within the Jesuit network, there are competent and passionate individuals, and well resourced institutions for educating about human rights and advocating and researching human rights violations. Institutions of higher learning are ideally suited to hosting a consortium of human rights practitioners and Jesuit apostolic partners from groups such as Jesuit Refugee Service.

²⁵ GC 35, D.6, nn.9-10

We thought the Center for Human Rights and International Justice here at Boston College would be the obvious centre to host the Ellacuria consortium. We thought that only a US based Jesuit work would have the resources to call an international group together, and that a US based consortium would need strong international networks if it were to be credible. Then we all went home and nothing happened. Why? No one took up the responsibility of further investigating this proposal. All participants in the workshop returned home to busy schedules, full commitments and a complex set of networks. I did not return to my daily work in Australia thinking, “If only we had an Ellacuria consortium up and running, I would be able to do so much more, we would be able to do so much more, I would be able to reflect more critically about my own situation, we would be able to network so much more effectively.” I have no doubt that an Ellacuria consortium would be a useful addition to the many and varied networks which already exist across disciplines, across apostolates, across university campuses, and across provinces in the Jesuit circle and Ignatian networks. But it is a question of priorities and determining who sets those priorities.

After this conference, we will once again return to our homes, our desks, and our laptops. We will have met fellow academics from diverse disciplines, different countries and ethnicities; we will return to work with people of different religions and none. We share a commitment to applying the life of the mind to our global reality. We need to maintain the communication, commit ourselves to some common tasks. The 2006 Taskforce on Globalisation and Marginalisation concluded:²⁶

We Jesuit apostolate partners together are blessed by our connectedness with each other, with the marginalised, and with the global actors. We are called to be bridge builders. With our personal vocations, our institutional apostolic bases, and our networks, we are well positioned to answer that call, bridging global chasms and local divisions. These bridges can be built only if we give all that is ours, and even our very selves to the task. In an age of globalisation and marginalisation, we still dare to pray for the coming of the Kingdom.

Our challenge in a globalised and marginalised world is not so much to think globally and act locally—we do that already. The new apostolic challenge is for all Jesuit apostolate partners to be adequately formed, networked, and missioned so that we can act globally and think locally.

How strong/relevant/necessary is this call? How seriously are we in responding to the call? – A Perspective from Downunder

Let me say a word about my own position as a Jesuit from the Australian province, a province typical of those marked by ageing and diminishment of Jesuits and renewed vision of mission possibilities born of a confident, joyful engagement in lay collaboration. Recently my provincial published a letter on Jesuit vocations in which he said:

²⁶ *Globalisation and Marginalisation: Our Global Apostolic Response*, Report of the Taskforce on Globalisation and Marginalisation, Social Justice Secretariat, Rome, 2006, pp. 34-5

Once or twice over the years I have been asked whether, if I were a young person today, I would enter religious life. At different times in our lives any of us may find ourselves unable to give an immediate 'yes' to such a question. Our hesitation may say more about current personal struggles or the state of the Church or the Society than about the validity of our way of life for young men today.

I caused alarm with some of my fellow Jesuits last year when I gave an interview to an Australian newspaper saying: "I wouldn't be a priest if I was 21 today. I am one of the last generations of Irish Catholics whose families made it professionally and were comfortable with the church. I love being a Jesuit but I can't honestly say I would join now. My religious faith has remained rock solid, but there are times when I feel really cheesed off with the institutional church, which sometimes treats its lay members and non-members in a too-patronising fashion."

When I joined the Jesuits, approximately 25 per cent of clerical religious in my country were 60 or over, with very few aged 75 or over. More than one-third (36.6%) were under the age of 40, with 9.8 per cent under 25 years. By 2009, only 10 per cent of clerical religious were under 40, with just 0.7 per cent aged under 25. That's an enormous challenge for a 21 year old. There are now half the number of Jesuits in my province as there were when I joined. Now aged 58, I am likely to always be one of the younger members of my province. This is the first year we have not received any new novices.

As I have said to my superiors, we need to see how a young man might discern that action of the Spirit in calling him to a group which is aged and diminished, though armed with a fine founding charism and recent documents which make for splendid reading in terms of collaborative mission, apostolic life and possibilities for networking. If I were contemplating priesthood or religious life aged 21 today and was attracted to the Australian Jesuits, I would need to consider some additional factors which were not relevant in 1975: I will be responsible in fraternal charity for a disproportionate number of my brothers who are retired and moving towards death; I will not be accompanied by a significant number of like-minded contemporaries; I will be expected to oversee corporate enterprises boasting the Ignatian charism with a reduced expectation that I will have a long working life largely dedicated just to learning, teaching or direct pastoral involvement. The Spirit may still be calling me but not in the same exciting and challenging way that the Spirit would have been calling the same young man had he turned 21 in 1975 rather than 2012. There may be a new exciting and challenging way in which the Spirit would be calling the rich young man. Collaboration and networking provide the promise of new possibilities. My friend and fellow Australian Mark Raper SJ who is an exemplary modern international Jesuit having been international director of JRS and now President of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP) observes: "By going deeper into this new reality of diminishment, quite inspiring examples of Jesuit life and ministry are also evident. Moreover, what was said in GC34 D21 #7 and #8 seems relevant to me:

‘The universality of the Society is to be presented to candidates ...’ and ‘The universality of the Society as a characteristic of our Ignatian charism is to be emphasized at each stage of formation...’” For the young Jesuit, even in a province facing ageing and diminishment, the world is his oyster – not as an escape from local realities but as an invitation to a full apostolic life.

My province is part of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific. Even when I come here to the other side of the world, I still see myself as an Australian Jesuit. I am not yet at the stage of describing myself as a member of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP). There are now only 142 Jesuits in my province but there are 1728 Jesuits in the JCAP which boasts 360 scholastics and 87 novices while in Australia we have only 7 scholastics and four novices.

Our Conference has secretariats for the intellectual apostolate and universities, education, Ignatian spirituality, inter-religious dialogue, reconciliation with creation, social apostolate, and social communication. Our Conference also has a number of peer groups which meet regularly: for Brothers, Ministry to Indigenous People, Novice Directors, Scholastics and Brothers in formation, Treasurers, and Vocation Promotion. Given the influx of new scholastics in Vietnam, Myanmar and East Timor as well as in Indonesia, Korea and the Philippines, a lot of interprovincial Conference efforts are being dedicated to resourcing formation in provinces where resources are short.

I am one of those Jesuits who ministers mostly in his own province, in his own country, and in his own culture. So I may not be the best person to offer a perspective on international networking and collaboration in action in my part of the world. I do see the incontrovertible case for it, but it is not a strong dimension of my Jesuit life; and I suspect that I am all the poorer for that. Suffice to say, I am available to go wherever my superiors might ask. But for a 15 month appointment as Director of JRS in East Timor a decade ago, I have been asked to labour almost exclusively in my Australian context. The risk is that my local expertise and connectedness will be non-transferable to an international context, especially in a region where cultures, religions, and social conditions are so diverse.

Despite the diminishment of my province, we have a significant international outreach which is now seen to be constitutive even for a province which enjoys the isolation of drawing its members from an island nation continent. I am reminded of our colourful ex-Prime Minister Paul Keating who once said:²⁷

When they were handing out continents, not many people got one. We did. We got a continent of our own, unbelievably. 20 million of us. We've got the great event of our time: the re-advent of China in its international guise. You know, the change from West to East in the world. This year, 66 per cent of world growth will come from the developing countries. A decade ago, that was 25.

²⁷ Paul Keating, *ABC Lateline*, 27 November 2011

The generations of Australian Jesuits before my own dedicated some of their best men to the establishment of the mission in Hazaribagh. My generation of Jesuits has been conspicuous in their service of the Jesuit Refugee Service. We have an internal province publication called *Jesuit Life* which carries the obituaries of recently deceased Jesuits as well as reflections from the living. It was pleasing for me to note in the context of this conference that the first five entries in the latest issue feature an Australian Vietnamese Jesuit who came to Australia as a refugee, reflecting on his tertianship experience in the Philippines before taking up an education appointment in East Timor, an Australian novice with Indian and Sri Lankan parentage reflecting on his recent visit to Pakistan, an Australian Chinese scholastic reflecting on his language study in Taiwan, an Australian Jesuit China scholar reflecting on his teaching experience here at Boston College, and a tribute to an Australian Jesuit based in Thailand working as Executive Director of UCAN the electronic Catholic News Agency for South East Asia. So there is a lot of offshore networking and collaboration going. We have a significant number of Australian Vietnamese Jesuits. I have often observed that they are very blessed to have Australian passports and an Asian identity – being able to travel freely and to be accepted as an integral part of the expanding Jesuit mission in South East Asia.

Last year the JCAP published a document entitled: “Forming a Contemplative in Action: A Profile of a Formed Jesuit for Asia Pacific”. It addresses three major questions – What does a formed Jesuit look like? What specific issues does initial formation need to address? What competencies a formed Jesuit for Asia Pacific needs to have mastered? The profile was prepared by six Jesuits from Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines and Australia. The Committee “stresses that the Profile is not intended as a one size fits all approach to Jesuit formation as the Society has always attracted a mix of personalities and our formation process aims to help a scholastic or brother in formation to recognise and affirm his unique talents, and to develop them further in the service of its apostolic mission”. The Committee notes: “Recognising that our Conference is more diverse than any other, with significant differences in language, culture and experience, the Committee acknowledged that the particularities of formational elements should appropriately be sorted out at the provincial or regional level.” This sort of initiative was unimaginable a generation ago.

Some have thought me to be the elephant in the room proclaiming the ageing and diminishment of the Society as a factor highly relevant to our considerations on networking. The facts are friendly. We should embrace them with faith. Geoff King an Australian Jesuit known to many of you is now ageing and diminishing. In the past I have found him to be a little shy without a lot of small talk. He now has motor neurone disease and he has set up a blog to share his journey and in appreciation of the prayers and support he is receiving internationally. You can see the blog at: <http://www.geoffreysj.com/about-me/>. You will see responses from many people including Adolfo Nicolas. This is a network built on personal relationships and

suffused with faith, hope and love. It is a profoundly Ignatian network which will grow as Geoff makes his journey from this life to the next.

At our last meeting in Rome preparing for the Mexico conference, Paul Locatelli was wracked with pain, lying on the floor. We did not know at the time that his body was shot through with pancreatic cancer. He raised himself from the floor declaring that his move to Rome and away from his beloved Santa Clara would be worthwhile if we could convince the university presidents to attend and then to return home to their campuses committed to doing something practical, networking for justice. As he used say, coming from Silicon Valley: “We must challenge the illusion of privilege and isolated individualism. We must bind ourselves emotionally and functionally to others and to the earth.”

At Mexico, Fr Nicolas put four challenges relevant to universities networking:

1. Creative ways of promoting depth of thought and imagination
2. Operational international networks that will address important issues touching faith, justice and ecology
3. Creative ways of sharing the fruits of research with the excluded
4. Renewed commitment to learned ministry which mediates between faith and culture

When we network within the Jesuit and Ignatian family, we bring various perspectives to bear. If we are to get our teeth into issues of acute injustice, we need to mix with both the decision makers and those affected by those decisions and who would never dream of being master. We must always be eyeballing both. Through effective networks, we or our apostolic partners can always eyeball both. If we do not, we risk becoming sanctimonious. Eyeballing both, looking for things which are unspoken, we might detect the tell tale signs of a faith that does justice, on the margins, in the tough times, with some of the unlikeliest characters. The Jesuit General Congregation put it like this:²⁸

The complexity of the problems we face and the richness of the opportunities offered demand that we build bridges between rich and poor, establishing advocacy links of mutual support between those who hold political power and those who find it difficult to voice their interests. Our intellectual apostolate provides an inestimable help in constructing these bridges, offering us new ways of understanding in depth the mechanisms and links among our present problems.

We need to do the hard thinking and we need to be connected with decision makers and those most affected by those decisions. While we have been deliberating here in Boston, I received this feedback from David Holdcroft SJ, the Director of JRS South Africa. He wrote:

When we spoke 2 weeks ago I used the example of HEM the Higher Education at the Margins initiative of JRS and Jesuit Commons as a good example of collaboration of the kind that we need so much more of. It was an example of two significantly different organisational cultures coming together with a common purpose. My sense at the Denver conference was that the lay people -perhaps with less overall responsibility in, and ownership of, the equation had a much better innate grasp of this

²⁸ #28, GC35.3

initiative as an example of, an opportunity for, mission. But to me bringing together two aspects of the Jesuit world - one with resources financial and intellectual, the other with contact with marginalised communities in need, is a great example of the Jesuit mission at work. It is doing what the logic of the world says is impossible to do.

It is a work of the good spirit to own the diminishment and ageing of the Universal Society while acknowledging, nurturing, resourcing and embracing the young growth points. Jose Magadia thought my presentation about his and my part of the world “weary, sad and heavy”. I beg to differ.

Part the story of our corner of the world is “weary, sad and heavy”. But much of it is “alive, joyfilled and light”. We need to discern together across provinces and across sectors. Yes, we happily acknowledge ageing and diminishment but also new and fresh possibilities. Moving forward we take heart from Pope Benedict’s recommissioning of us to the frontiers and to the crossroads being an intelligent bridge between the Church and the World, recommissioning us to reach out with a preferential option for the poor motivated by a faith that does justice. But some of us are not so inspired by his repeated insistence on the need for our collaboration on what he regards as the neuralgic points of moral teaching.

The demands for future networking could be more systematised in the manner adopted by Decree 6 of General Congregation 35 distinguishing apostolic works associated with the Society of Jesus, networks within the Ignatian family and Ignatian community, and Ignatian inspired autonomous associations locally, regionally and nationally. We need to see how we can enhance existing networking, how we can set up new networks allowing us to achieve our universal mission, and how we can audit existing networks revising or even abolishing some of them which are not sufficiently mission focused and personally nurturing.

Let me conclude where I started – with a consideration of collaboration and networking on ecological questions. The entry on the JCAP website is a model for such collaboration and networking:

In August 2010, the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific laid out our strategy for achieving “Reconciliation with Creation” in three broad themes – our institutions and lifestyle; education programmes for young people, both lay people and scholastics; and the governance of natural resources.

Our work towards Reconciliation with Creation is supported by or executed in collaboration with other Jesuit organisations including:

- Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities in Asia Pacific, the network of Jesuit higher educational institutions and endeavours within the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific that supports and promotes Jesuit higher education in this region
- Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, an office in the Jesuit Curia in Rome that supports and encourages Jesuits and partners in their work for justice, peace and environmental care

- Global Ignatian Advocacy Networks, a set of theme-based networks set up under the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat at the end of 2008 to use advocacy as an instrument to foster the Society of Jesus' mission in the service of faith and justice
- Eco-Jesuit, a joint effort initiated by the Jesuit European Office and the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific to encourage communication and information sharing among Jesuits and friends working in the area of ecology

Our Environmental Way of Proceeding is rooted in our spirituality, which deepens our response to the challenge of achieving reconciliation with creation in the way we live.

This Jesuit network will not succeed where Copenhagen failed, but it is an incremental contribution to one of the great moral challenges of our Age. If the light of Christ is to shine at the frontiers and at the crossroads of our world, we worker bees in the Ignatian tradition need to be ever more willing to collaborate and network across all boundaries and categories. As GC 35 reminds us:²⁹

To respond today to the pressing needs of our complex and fragile world, many hands are surely needed. Collaboration in mission is the way we respond to this situation: it expresses our true identity as members of the Church, the complementarity of our diverse calls to holiness, our mutual responsibility for the mission of Christ, our desire to join people of good will in the service of the human family, and the coming of the Kingdom of God.

I return downunder grateful for this one next step we are taking to achieve the vision of those who have gone before us like Paul Locatelli, hopeful that ideas like an Ellacuria Consortium will come to fruition as a complement to the many networks already graced by the presence of worker bees formed in the Ignatian tradition.

²⁹ GC 35, D.6, n. 30