

JESUIT LIFE & MISSION TODAY

The Decrees of the
31st–35th General Congregations
of the Society of Jesus



INSTITUTE FOR
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DECREE 1

INTRODUCTION

1/ 1. In accepting the voluntary resignation of Father Pedro Arrupe, who spent himself tirelessly for 18 years shaping the Society's apostolate and inspiring its spiritual life, the 33rd General Congregation was conscious of living through a time of special grace and importance in our history. His moving decision followed by the joyful election of Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach encouraged us from the outset to embark on our work with firm convictions of hope and continuity.^{2/} 2. We have borne in mind the significant events that have marked the life of the Church and the Society in the years following the Second Vatican Council. In the light of the Church's teaching and the exhortations addressed to us by recent Popes, considering the needs of our times and the postulates sent by our fellow Jesuits, we have wished to verify, specify more accurately, and confirm the orientations given by General Congregations 31 and 32.

3/ 3. While examining the state of the Society and reflecting more deeply on our experience, the limitations and constraints of our religious life and apostolic labors became evident. Returning to our Ignatian sources, the desire to offer ourselves to the greater service of Christ our Lord grew within us. And in our docility to the action of the Spirit, we have wanted to share with the whole Society the results of our deliberations.

4/ 4. We believe there is more need at the moment to put into practice what has already been asked of us than to produce extensive declarations or new decrees. For "love shows itself in deeds rather than in words."¹ Accordingly General Congregation 33 wanted to take up only those questions that seemed more urgent, together with some specific matters entrusted to it.

5/ 5. As it began its deliberations, the Congregation took note of the need for greater unity among us, the unity which comes from the Spirit of Jesus and which should express itself in brotherly love and a vision shared by all Jesuits of the Society's mission today for the glory of the Father

¹ SpEx, 230

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A. Life in the Church

6/ 6. Seeking to lead a life worthy of the vocation to which we have been called,¹ the Society commits itself again to serving the Church in her teaching, life, and worship, and helping here to offer to the world “all that she herself is, all that she believes.”² In the spirit of St. Ignatius, we wish to show our commitment “not less but rather more in good works than in words,”³ for the edification of those with whom we work, so that we may become more generous servants of the people God has gathered for the world’s salvation.⁴

7/ 7. The General Congregation therefore recalls with gratitude that from its very beginning the Society has existed “to serve the Lord alone and the Church, His spouse, under the Roman Pontiff.”⁵ Now, in a spirit of faith, our Society confirms again the traditional bond of love and service which united it with the Roman Pontiff. We wish to respond to his desires expressed on various occasions and to carry out his missions. At the same time we intend to cooperate with the College of Bishops in its service of the Gospel.

8/ 8. So many Jesuits in our day are bearing witness to this fidelity toward the Church and the Roman Pontiff; in all parts of the world they are fulfilling with constancy the missions entrusted to them, and some indeed are suffering persecution, even in prisons or internment camps. We are not unaware that recently our fidelity under certain circumstances has not been perfect and has caused concern to those who exercise pastoral office. Accordingly, we seriously urge all members of the Society, for the good of the whole Church, to consider how we may grow in that obedience which is profoundly rooted in both truth and love.⁶ Looking to our future life and apostolate, we wish to encourage

¹Eph. 4, 1.

²DV, 8.

³*Cons.* 637.

⁴LG, 9, 48.

⁵FI, 1.

⁶Fr. Arrupe, *The Local Superior: His Apostolic Mission*, 18-21 (AR XVIII, 565-567).

all to foster a truly Ignatian readiness for active collaboration with the Supreme Pontiff and all who share pastoral office with him. The General Congregation is conscious of the difficulties and tensions which often accompany the apostolate in today's world. Accordingly, to find solutions in so serious a matter, it asks Father General to promote further studies enabling him to help and guide Jesuits in teaching doctrine and in their pastoral activity. He should also provide that, in a way suited to our times, the "Rules for Thinking with the Church"⁷ be applied in the light of the Second Vatican Council. Finally, let the entire Society seek to incorporate itself more and more vigorously and creatively in the life of the Church so that we may experience and live its mystery within ourselves.⁸ Thus we may be indeed for the people of God servants of the joy of the Lord.⁹

B. Life in the Spirit

9/ 9. We will be better able to serve the Church, the better we learn through experience to hear the Holy Spirit, since "we believe that the same Holy Spirit present in Christ our Lord and in the Church instructs and guides us in the salvation of our souls."¹⁰

10/ 10. In recent years a renewed consciousness concerning our religious life has been felt throughout the Society. The decrees of GC 31 (8, 13–17, 19) and GC 32 (2, 4, 11) as well as the writings of Father Arrupe have developed a spiritual doctrine at once profoundly rooted in the Gospel and our tradition and yet one which responds to the challenges of our times. This renewal manifests itself especially in the new impetus given to the Spiritual Exercises and to apostolic discernment. The commitment to faith and to justice, the service to the poor, and especially the willingness to share their life, have been an invitation to the whole Society to embrace a more evangelical way of life.

11/ We also recognize deficiencies in the way we have lived our commitment. These difficulties are frequently due to overwork, to a kind of monotony in our religious life, to a lack of spiritual vitality within our communities—all of which impoverish our encounter with God. This means we must continually renew our efforts if we are to enter more deeply into the meaning of our life as Jesuits: men totally committed to the glory of God and the service of others.¹¹

12/ 11. As a consequence, the General Congregation invites all Jesuits to strive, personally and communally, toward an even greater integration of our

⁷ SpEx, 352–370.

⁸ SpEx, 104.

⁹ 2 Cor. 1, 24.

¹⁰ SpEx, 365.

¹¹ FI, 1.

spiritual life and apostolate. Following the example of St. Ignatius, a Jesuit's life is rooted in the experience of God who, through Jesus Christ and in the Church, calls us, unites us to one another, and sends us forth. The Eucharist is the privileged place where we celebrate this reality. Only to the extent that he is united to God so that he be "led gladly by the divine hand,"¹² is a Jesuit "a man on a mission." In this way, he will learn to find God in all things, the God who is present in this world and its struggle between good and evil, between faith and unbelief, between the yearning for justice and peace and the growing reality of injustice and strife. But we cannot achieve this familiarity with God unless we set aside a regular time for personal prayer.

13/ 12. If we are to hear and respond to the call of God in this kind of world, then we must have a discerning attitude. For us Jesuits the way of discernment involves: the examination of conscience, prayer and brotherly dialogue within our communities, and the openness to superiors that facilitates obedience.

14/ 13. We cannot attain this discerning attitude without self-abnegation. Sign of our joy at the approach of the Kingdom¹³ and result of a progressive identification with Christ, who "emptied himself being born in the likeness of man,"¹⁴ this abnegation is required by the Spiritual Exercises: to divest ourselves of "self-love, self-will, and self-interest."¹⁵ It is only through detachment from all we have and are, that we can receive all from God in faith and give ourselves wholly to others in love. Without such an attitude we cannot present ourselves as interiorly free enough for the authentic service of Him who calls us.

15/ Today our interior liberty will show itself in:

- a greater availability on the part of the whole Society as well as the individual Jesuit which will enable us to respond, in obedience, to the cultural differences and changes in our modern world;
- a rhythm of life which allows us to maintain our commitment to the world and still gives us space for solitude and silence, as well as for necessary relaxation and joyous celebration within our communities;
- a self-transcendence rejecting that individualism which inhibits integration into community life, necessary both for the expression and support of our faith.

16/ 14. The Society possesses a spirituality which gives us the way to live day by day as companions of Jesus. That way has been clearly spelled out in the book-

¹² *Cons.* 813.

¹³ Mt. 13, 44.

¹⁴ Phil. 2, 7.

¹⁵ SpEx, 189.

lets *Readings from the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Jesuit Religious Life*.¹⁶ The 33rd General Congregation is convinced that the reading and practical application of these excerpts will greatly help toward the renewal we seek and give us that “hope which does not deceive” as we face the demands of our time.

C. Life in Common with the Coadjutor Brothers

17/ 15. We do not serve the Lord and the Church as isolated individuals but rather as men who have offered their lives to follow Christ “by living and dying in the Lord with and in this Society”¹⁷ as its members. The kind of body St. Ignatius envisioned can hardly exist if all of its members do not share fully in its life.

18/ 16. With regard to the brothers, we wish to remind everyone that throughout the Society’s history they have provided a witness to the gospel in their religious lives and made a great contribution to its apostolate through their hard work. In recent times the lives of the brothers have become more adapted to modern conditions: more appropriate formation has been arranged, the range of apostolates has been widened, and the equality of all companions as brothers together is better lived.

19/ 17. For its part the Congregation, while sharing the concern expressed in many parts of the world, once again proclaims and affirms the incalculable value of the brothers’ vocation, through which the Society develops its mission to the full. The Society needs the brothers, first of all for themselves and then for their labors, for the sake of both its communities and its apostolates. They share in the same religious commitment and take on work that is complementary to that characteristic of priests, thus effectively helping the Society to achieve its one and only goal.¹⁸ Being all members of the same body,¹⁹ we complete and enrich one another so that we can imitate the way of life offered by the Son of God to the disciples who followed him.²⁰ This is why the Congregation considers that the absence of brothers is a serious defect and that we cannot remain satisfied with the present situation.²¹

¹⁶ AR XVII, 625–626. [Editor’s note: These booklets are now available in the one booklet, *Jesuit Religious Life Today* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources), 1977.]

¹⁷ *Cons.* 51.

¹⁸ FI, 1: “according to the grace which the Holy Spirit has given to him and according to the particular grade of his own vocation”; *Cons.* 522.

¹⁹ *Cons.* 511; MI, Epp. XI, 438.

²⁰ LG, 44.

²¹ Fr. Arrupe, *Report of Father General on the State of the Society*, Sept. 27, 1978 (AR XVII, 451): *Meeting with Brothers* (AR XVII, 379 ff.).

20/ 18. We are aware of the difficulties that prevent the Society from receiving fresh vocations and that arise in part from present-day social and cultural conditions. While acknowledging the seriousness of these problems, we nevertheless believe they can be overcome provided that all of us—scholastics, brothers and priests—set about the implementation of the decrees of the last two General Congregations and take seriously their practical implications. Consequently the 33rd General Congregation directs that:

– Provincials, with the help of the brothers, should examine the situation in their provinces and take all possible steps to promote brothers' vocations. Everyone should take an active interest in this work.

– Apostolic communities with brothers, according to the directives of Decree 11 of GC 32, should be fostered as the most effective means of strengthening the sense of being part of one mission and of increasing the high regard we have for one another.

– Particular care should be taken with the spiritual, doctrinal, technical, and personal formation of the brothers in accordance with the directives of Decree 7, n. 7 of GC 31 and other norms of the Society.²²

21/ 19. Finally the Congregation openly declares that we must change our attitudes²³ so that our behavior toward one another in the Society is not ruled by human standards prevailing outside,²⁴ but by the example of Christ who came not to be served, but to serve.²⁵ Then we shall be able to welcome brothers into the Society, for they are indeed given to us by God.

D. Training for Mission

22/ 20. The very great difficulty and demands of our enterprise oblige us to give careful attention to questions of formation. In recent years formation has received a new thrust from the decrees of General Congregations 31 and 32, and from Father Arrupe's direction. The best way of maintaining progress along these lines will be the Society's resolute implementation and more thorough appropriation of the directives received, keeping in mind the Church's recommendations.²⁶ There should be faithful adherence to the General Norms for Jesuit studies and the Regional Orders which apply them; particular care should be taken to assure

²² Cf. also *Normae Generales de Studiis NN*, 1980, n. 58–65.

²³ GC 31, D. 7, n. 1.

²⁴ 1 Cor. 2, 23–25, 30; *Examen*, 101.

²⁵ Mk. 10, 45.

²⁶ John Paul II, *Allocution to the Fathers Provincial* (AR XVIII, 721 ff.) and *Homily to the Members of the 33rd General Congregation* (see pp. 465–470 below).

the integration of the spiritual, communitarian, intellectual and apostolic aspects of formation.

23/ 21. To be credible witnesses to the Gospel today and servants of the Church faithful to St. Ignatius's spirit, we need solid religious training, serious studies, and genuine integration into the apostolic body of the Society. Moreover the demands of our mission today touch not only the young men in formation, but all Jesuits, even the formed, who have to look for ways to meet these demands by pursuing their own "continuing formation."²⁷

24/ 22. The 33rd General Congregation asks Father General to continue to promote the quality of our formation, for both brothers and scholastics, particularly by giving help and encouragement to the *formatores* and by fostering widespread collaboration and the exchange of experiences in this area. It also earnestly invites all Jesuits to take to heart the task of attracting vocations to the Society, especially by prayer and the example of their lives as individuals and in community.

E. Life in Poverty

25/ 23. The Spirit of the Lord has called us to be free,²⁸ so that we can enter into full communion with our brothers and sisters and dedicate ourselves totally to the integral service of the human family. Such freedom, however, as we learn in the Spiritual Exercises, cannot be separated from poverty.²⁹ In fact, without poverty, such freedom cannot exist.

26/ 24. One of the decisions that this Congregation was obliged to make concerned the confirmation of Decree 12 of the 32nd General Congregation. The Congregation urges all superiors to promote both the spirit and the execution of this Decree, as well as Decree 18 of GC 31.^{FOR}

27/ 25. Changes in our administrative structures have helped us greatly in recent years to live a more authentic Ignatian poverty. In many instances, a greater equality among our communities in their manner of life has resulted, along with a more ready desire to share our material goods and to experience more fully the actual living conditions of the poor. Still we recognize we have not yet fully assimilated into our lives the profound implications of those decrees, nor have we always been led, under their inspiration, to the transformation of our personal and community lives, as well as of our apostolic activity, that they propose. We must therefore strive with new heart to become truly poor with Christ poor so that we can really be said "to preach in poverty."

²⁷ Fr. Delegate, *On Continuing Formation* (AR XVIII, 661 ff.).

²⁸ Rom. 8, 15.

²⁹ SpEx, 136–147.

28/ 26. The situation of the poor, who live today in a world where unjust structures force the greater part of the human family to exist in dehumanizing conditions, should be a constant reminder to us that God takes the part of the poor, according to that salvific design revealed in Jesus Christ who “came to proclaim the Good News to the poor.”³⁰ In recent years, the Church has summoned us to a greater solidarity with the poor and to more effective attempts to attack the very causes of mass poverty.

29/ 27. For these reasons, we urge every Jesuit to make these decrees part of his life by faithful observance of the norms they propose for our personal and communal lives which, in their modesty and even frugality, should offer a striking contrast to the spirit of “consumerism” that pervades so many societies. In sharing our goods with the poor, we should look first to those whose needs are greatest so that we do not remain untouched by their hardships and anxieties. In our apostolic works, we should try to combine a desire for evangelical simplicity with the necessary concern for efficiency. In our choice of ministries, the spirit of gratuity proper to our Institute should be carefully kept in mind so that “the exercise of those ministries which, according to our tradition, were provided gratuitously should not be abandoned too easily.”³¹

³⁰ Lk. 4, 18.

³¹ *Letter of the Cardinal Secretary of State to Father General*, May 2, 1975, pp. 396–397 above (AR XVI, 461).



PART II

SENT INTO TODAY'S WORLD

Introduction

30/ 28. The way of life we have described above is an essential condition, particularly today, if we are to identify ourselves with and follow the One who has been sent.¹ It is also an essential requirement if we are to work effectively for the fulfillment of His mission.²

31/ The General Congregation, recognizing that every Jesuit is identified as one who has been “sent” and at the same time wishing to respond to concerns expressed by the universal Society, has paid particular attention to the meaning of our mission today. We do not pretend to present a definitive exposition of this issue. Still, we have tried to reach a better understanding of what the Lord, through the mediation of the Church, has asked of us that we might give ourselves to this work without reserve and “that we might hear anew the call of Christ dying and rising in the anguish and aspirations of men and women.”³

32/ 29. The experience of the Society’s apostolic efforts in recent years, expressed in reports and postulates that have come to us from around the world, enables the 33rd General Congregation to address with both confidence and humility the topic of our mission today. We speak with confidence because we believe the options made by the 31st and 32nd General Congregations have been in conformity with the renewal inspired by the Second Vatican Council, the Synods of Bishops, and the teachings of recent Popes. We speak with humility because we recognize the difficulties of the task and our own failures to respond wholeheartedly as religious priests and brothers to the challenge of integral evangelization in our modern world.

33/ 30. First we review briefly how we have carried out our mission as expressed by the 32nd General Congregation: “to engage, under the standard of the Cross, in the crucial struggle of our times: the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes.”⁴ We then look at the challenge of the modern world in the light of the calls addressed to the Society by recent Popes which help us to

¹ Fr. Arrupe, *Letter on Apostolic Availability* (AR XVII, 140).

² GC 32, D. 4, n. 13.

³ GC 32, D. 4, n. 19.

⁴ GC 32, D. 2, n. 2.

focus our mission. Finally, looking to the future, we attempt to discern how we might best fulfill this mission in some of its specific implications.

A. Our Experience

34/ 31. In keeping with the requests of the Popes and the mind of the Society itself, the 33rd General Congregation continued the review of our mission, especially with regard to papal concern for integral evangelization and the proper role of a priestly order.⁵ We have found these years an experience of grace and conversion for us as individuals and as a body. We have made serious efforts to address realistically the issues of atheism and indifference in our secularized world. Our religious life has been enriched by the opportunity to “labor with”⁶ Jesus in the greater service of the Kingdom. This closeness to the Christ of the Exercises has brought us closer to the poor with whom he identified himself.⁷ At times it has also brought us the persecution for his sake that he promised his followers.⁸ Our service of faith and promotion of justice has made the Society confront the mystery of the Cross: some Jesuits have been exiled, imprisoned, or put to death in their work of evangelization. Some have been prevented from attending this Congregation.

35/ 32. But we who engage in this mission are sinners. Our reading of Decree 4 of GC 32 has at times been “incomplete, slanted and unbalanced.”⁹ We have not always recognized that the social justice we are called to is part of that justice of the Gospel which is the embodiment of God’s love and saving mercy.¹⁰ We have not learned to enter fully into a mission which is not simply one ministry among others, but “the integrating factor of all our ministries.”¹¹ We have found it difficult to understand the Church’s recent emphasis on changing the structures

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⁵ *Letter of the Cardinal Secretary of State to Father General*, May 2, 1975 (AR XVI, 456–461); John Paul I, *Alloc. ad Cong. Proc.* (AR XVII, 212–217); Fr. Arrupe, *Final Address of Father General to the Congregation of Procurators* (AR XVII, 540–558); John Paul II, *Allocation to the Presidents of Provincial Conferences* (AR XVII, 639–641); Fr. Arrupe, *Letter to all Major Superiors* (AR XVII, 823–827); John Paul II, *Allocution to the Fathers Provincial* (AR XVIII, 721–734); John Paul II, *Homily to the Members of the 33rd General Congregation*, n. 7 (see pp. 465–466 below).

⁶ SpEx, 93.

⁷ Mt. 25, 34–46; Ignatius Loyola, *Letter to the Fathers and Brothers of Padua*, August 7, 1547: “Friendship with the poor makes us friends of the eternal King.”

⁸ Jn. 15, 20.

⁹ Fr. Arrupe, *Rooted and Grounded in Love*, 67 (AR XVIII, 500).

¹⁰ GC 32, D. 4, n. 18.

¹¹ GC 32, D. 2, n. 9.

of society,¹² and what our proper role should be in collaborating with the laity in this process of transformation.

36/ 33. In all honesty, we must also acknowledge that this new understanding of our mission can lead to tensions both in the Society and outside it. Some have at times emphasized in a unilateral fashion one aspect of this mission to the detriment of the other. Yet neither a disincarnate spiritualism nor a merely secular activism truly serves the integral Gospel message.¹³ Our experiences of recent years have made us increasingly aware that the more a Jesuit is exposed to situations and structures alien to the faith, the more he must strengthen his own religious identity and his union with the whole body of the Society as represented by the local community to which he belongs.

B. Challenging Context

37/ 34. As we implement our mission, the Exercises invite us to contemplate the world of today with the loving gaze of the Three Divine Persons, that we may be drawn to understand its needs as God does and offer ourselves to share in His work of its salvation. As expressed in the Institute, the mission of the Society consists in the integral salvation in Jesus Christ of all women and men, a salvation begun in the present life and brought to its fulfillment in the life to come. In this mission, the promotion of justice is today a matter of growing urgency in the Church's work of evangelization; this dimension of our apostolate must therefore be fostered with particular care.¹⁴

38/ 35. Our contemplation of the world reveals a situation frequently hostile to the spreading of the Kingdom. The dominant ideologies and systems—political, economic, social, and cultural—often prevent an adequate response to the most elementary aspirations of the human family at both national and international levels. A pervasive materialism and the worship of human autonomy obscure or obliterate concern for the things of God, leaving the minds and hearts of many of our contemporaries cold and empty. This both reveals and causes a profound crisis of faith that expresses itself in an atheism at once theoretical, practical, and institutional. Lack of respect for a loving Creator leads to a denial of the dignity of the human person and the wanton destruction of the environment. Massive poverty and hunger, brutal oppression and discrimination, a frightening arms race and the nuclear threat: all offer evidence of sin in human hearts and in the core of contemporary society.

¹² Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens*, 43–45; Synod of Bishops 1971, *Justitia in Mundo*; John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 14–16.

¹³ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 26–38.

¹⁴ FI, 1; *Cons.* 3; John Paul II, *Allocution to the Fathers Provincial*, 8 (AR XVIII, 728).

39/ 36. Yet even as we consider these things, we observe other signs of the times that encourage us and give us hope. There is throughout the world a heightened sense of the solidarity of the human family and a rising consciousness, especially among the young, that conditions of misery and oppression cannot be tolerated. The Church, enlivened by the Second Vatican Council and expressing itself in new forms of community and parish life, is more and more engaged in works of peace and justice. Many of the world's religions and cultures are experiencing a new vitality; and there are indications of a growing search for meaning, sometimes expressed in more profound reflection and in prayer.

C. Papal Calls

40/ 37. It is in this context that we Jesuits hear the calls that have come to us from recent Popes. Their calls give apostolic orientations to our mission today, and must illumine, enrich, and specify the options before us. As we opened the 33rd General Congregation, we heard Pope John Paul II tell us: "The Church today expects the Society to contribute effectively to the implementation of the Second Vatican Council."¹⁵ Moreover he repeated the mandate to confront the problem of atheism and cooperate in that profound renewal needed by the Church in a secularized world. He invited us to adapt our traditional apostolates to the different spiritual necessities of today, singling out the renewal of Christian life, the education of youth, the formation of the clergy, the study of philosophy and theology, research into humanistic and scientific cultures, and missionary activity. He encouraged us to pay particular attention to ecumenism, relations with other world religions, and the task of authentic inculturation. Finally the Pope, speaking of our apostolate, again drew our attention to the need to promote, within the Church's evangelizing action and in conformity with our priestly and religious Institute, "the justice, connected with world peace, which is an aspiration of all peoples."¹⁶

D. Confirmation

41/ 38. In the light, therefore, of requests coming from the whole Society, the needs of the world, and the Church's teaching, the 33rd General Congregation readily receives the calls which the Pope has made to the Society, and commits itself to a full and prompt response. At the same time, we confirm the Society's mission expressed by the 31st and 32nd General Congregations, particularly in the latter's Decrees 2 and 4, which are the application today of the *Formula of*

¹⁵ John Paul II, *Homily to the Members of the 33rd General Congregation*, 6 (see pp. 465–470 below).

¹⁶ John Paul II, *ibid.*, 7.

the Institute and of our Ignatian charism.¹⁷ They express our mission today in profound terms offering insights which serve as guidelines for our future responses:

- the integration of the service of faith and the promotion of justice in one single mission;¹⁸
- the universality of this mission in the various ministries in which we engage;¹⁹
- the discernment needed to implement this mission;²⁰
- the corporate nature of this mission.²¹

E. Our Way of Proceeding

42/ 39. If we are to fulfill our mission, we must be faithful to that practice of communal apostolic discernment so central to “our way of proceeding,” a practice rooted in the Exercises and Constitutions.²² This way of proceeding calls for a review of all our ministries, both traditional and new.

43/ 40. Such a review includes: an attentiveness to the Word of God; an examen and reflection inspired by the Ignatian tradition; a personal and communitarian conversion necessary in order to become “contemplatives in action”; an effort to live an indifference and availability that will enable us to find God in all things; and a transformation of our habitual patterns of thought through a constant interplay of experience, reflection, and action. We must also always apply those criteria for action found in the 7th part of the Constitutions as well as recent and more specific instructions concerning choice of ministries²³ and occupations or tasks to be avoided.²⁴ This process, undertaken in the local community, province, or region, leads to apostolic decisions made by superiors, after normal consultation and with accountability to Father General.

¹⁷ GC 32, D. 4, n. 2.

¹⁸ GC 32, D. 2, n. 8.

¹⁹ GC 32, D. 2, n. 9.

²⁰ GC 32, D. 4, n. 10.

²¹ GC 32, D. 4, n. 62–69.

²² Fr. Arrupe, *Our Way of Proceeding* (AR XVII, 691–722); Fr. Arrupe, *Litt. ad univ. Soc. “De spirituale discretionem,”* Dec. 25, 1971 (AR XV, 767–773); Fr. Arrupe, *The Local Superior: His Apostolic Mission* (AR XVIII, 571–572, n. 33–36).

²³ GC 31, D. 21–32; GC 32, D. 4, n. 60.

²⁴ GC 32, D. 4, n. 80; CollDecr, 239.

44/ 41. But such an effort runs the risk of failure unless we attend to the practical conditions required for its serious application.²⁵ These conditions, to be given special attention both in initial and ongoing formation, include: deeper involvement in the lives of the people around us in order to hear “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted”;²⁶ a regular exposure to new situations of life and thought which oblige us to question our way of seeing and judging; a gradual assimilation of that apostolic pedagogy of St. Ignatius; a well-informed use of social and cultural analysis; and an inculturation which opens us to the newness of Jesus the Saviour in the evolution of every people, and thereby prevents us from absolutizing our perceptions and actions.

45/ 42. Definitions alone cannot clarify the apostolic directions of our mission. Such clarity can only come when we are faithful to the process and conditions of communal discernment and to the lived experience of religious men striving to labor with Christ in serving the Kingdom. For we will then understand better how the service of faith and the promotion of justice are not two juxtaposed, much less conflicting, goals but a single commitment which finds its coherence and deepest expression in that love of God and love of neighbor to which God calls us in the One Great Commandment.²⁷ One cannot act justly without love. Even when we resist injustice we cannot prescind from love, since the universality of love is, by the express desire of Christ, a commandment that admits of no exceptions.²⁸ To attain this universal love, we must continually learn how to seek God in faith, both for his own sake and as the abiding source of all justice and love. Striving for God’s reign here on earth with works of justice, love, and peace, we also know we are foreshadowing the new age which is to come.

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F. Some Applications

46/ 43. As we continue to respond to our mission, as described in paragraph 38, traditional apostolates take on fresh importance, while new needs and situations make new demands on us. The essential ministries of preaching the Gospel, fostering sacramental life, giving the Exercises, teaching, formation of the clergy, the work of catechetics, the promotion of Christian communities, and evangelizing those who have not yet heard of Christ — all should contribute to strengthening the faith that does justice.²⁹

²⁵ GC 32, D. 4, n. 35–38.

²⁶ GS, 1.

²⁷ Jn. 15, 9–16; 1 Jn. 4, 7–20; Mt. 22, 34–40; Mk. 12, 28–34; Lk. 10, 25–37.

²⁸ Fr. Arrupe, *Rooted and Grounded in Love*, 56 (AR XVIII, 495).

²⁹ John Paul II, *Allocution to the Fathers Provincial*, 8 (AR XVIII, 728).

47/ 44. Of great importance among the ministries of the Society are the educational and intellectual apostolates. Jesuits who work in schools of whatever kind or level or who are engaged in non-formal or popular education can exercise a deep and lasting influence on individuals and on society. When carried out in the light of our mission today, their efforts contribute vitally to “the total and integral liberation of the human person leading to participation in the life of God himself.”³⁰ Research in theology and philosophy, in the 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. The opportunities and responsibilities of these apostolates require a change of heart and an openness to human needs around us; they also demand a solid intellectual formation. Jesuits in these fields and our men in more direct social and pastoral ministries should cooperate and benefit from one another’s expertise and experience. Finally, the Society should promote the apostolate of the social communications media which, like education and intellectual work, reaches large numbers of people and so permits “a more universal service to humankind.”³¹

48/ 45. Among new needs and situations we list, without any attempt to be exhaustive, certain problems that call for our special concern since they have been mentioned frequently in the postulates. While a number of Jesuits have already been working for years in these areas, the General Congregation now wishes to bring them to the attention of the whole Society:

- the spiritual hunger of so many, particularly the young, who search for meaning and values in a technological culture;
- attacks by governments on human rights through assassination, imprisonment, torture, the denial of religious freedom and political expression: all of which cause so many to suffer, some of them fellow Jesuits;
- the sad plight of millions of refugees searching for a permanent home, a situation brought to our special attention by Father Arrupe;
- discrimination against whole categories of human beings, such as migrants and racial or religious minorities;
- the unjust treatment and exploitation of women;
- public policies and social attitudes which threaten human life for the unborn, the handicapped, and the aged;
- economic oppression and spiritual needs of the unemployed, of poor and landless peasants, and of workers, with whom many Jesuits, like our worker priests, have identified themselves in order to bring them the Good News.

³⁰ GC32, D. 2, n. 11.

³¹ GC 32, D. 4, n. 59.

49/ 46. As an international body, the Society of Jesus commits itself to that work which is the promotion of a more just world order, greater solidarity of rich countries with poor, and a lasting peace based on human rights and freedom. At this critical moment for the future of humanity, many Jesuits are cooperating more directly in the work for peace as intellectuals, organizers, and spiritual leaders, and by their witness of non-violence. Following the example of recent Popes, we must strive for international justice and an end to an arms race that deprives the poor and threatens to destroy civilization. The evangelical call to be genuine peacemakers cautions us to avoid both naiveté and fatalism.

G. Prerequisites for Credibility

50/ 47. The full realization of the Church's mission after the Second Vatican Council calls us to sincere collaboration with the bishops, with other religious, with the diocesan clergy, and with other Christians as well as with people of other religious faiths.

51/ In particular, we must work more closely with lay men and women, respecting and supporting their distinct responsibility and vocation in the Church and in the world. Recent experience teaches us we can make a real contribution to forming a truly apostolic laity as well as receive from them great strength in our own vocation and for our mission. The renewal of Ignatian spirituality in certain fields (Exercises, Christian Life Communities, etc.) can help deepen this mutual collaboration.³²

52/ 48. The validity of our mission will also depend to a large extent on our solidarity with the poor. For though obedience sends us, it is poverty that makes us believable. So, together with many other religious congregations, we wish to make our own the Church's preferential option for the poor.³³ This option is a decision to love the poor preferentially because there is a desire to heal the whole human family. Such love, like Christ's own, excludes no one but neither does it excuse anyone from its demands. Directly or indirectly, this option should find some concrete expression in every Jesuit's life, in the orientation of our existing apostolic works, and in our choice of new ministries. "Only when we come to live out our consecration to the Kingdom in a communion that is for the poor, with

³²Fr. Arrupe, *Epist. de Congregationibus Marianis seu Communitatibus Vitae Christianae* (AR XV, 321–327); Fr. Arrupe, *Our Secondary Schools: Today and Tomorrow*, 20–21 (AR XVIII, 268–270).

³³SCRIS, *Religiosi et Promotio Humana*, n. 4 and 6, note 25; ET, 17–18; John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 8; John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, 3; Fr. Arrupe, *Rooted and Grounded in Love*, 61 (AR XVIII, 497).

the poor and against all forms of human poverty, material and spiritual, only then will the poor see that the gates of the Kingdom are open to them.”³⁴

53/ 49. Finally, in all our ministries, our work will only be credible if the practice of justice is evident in our personal lives, our communities, and our institutions. In this way we can contribute to promoting that justice in the Church which is a necessary condition for evangelization.³⁵

Conclusion

54/ 50. In the task of announcing the Gospel, faith in Jesus Christ is first and last. It is a faith which comes alive only in works of love and justice. Our mission as Jesuits has, from the outset, been to seek the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls. Confirming “the service of faith of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement”³⁶ as the contemporary expression of that mission, we look to the future and renew again our commitment in “a communion of life and work and sacrifice with the companions who have rallied round the same standard of the Cross and in fidelity to the Vicar of Christ, for the building up of a world at once more human and more divine.”³⁷

55/ We confidently call upon the intercession of the Queen and Mother of our Society for the complete fulfillment of this mission, imploring her with our Holy Father Saint Ignatius to “intercede for us sinners with her Son and Lord and to obtain for us the grace so that, in conjunction with our own efforts, we may change from weak and sad individuals to strong and happy ones for the glory of God.”³⁸



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³⁴Fr. Kolvenbach, *Homily in St. Peter's Basilica*, Oct. 15, 1983 (see pp. 483–484 below).

³⁵Synod of Bishops 1971, *Justitia in Mundo*.

³⁶GC 32, D. 4, n. 2.

³⁷GC 32, D. 2, n. 31.

³⁸St. Ignatius Loyola, *Obras Completas*, B.A.C., Madrid, 4th ed., p. 647.

DECREE 2

ON POVERTY

56/ 1. The 33rd General Congregation, having taken into consideration the replies from the province congregations concerning the experience of the decree, closely examined in its entirety Decree 12 of the 32nd General Congregation, which had been approved “experimentally” by the Holy See.

57/ 2. Having carefully considered all these matters, the General Congregation definitively confirms Decree 12 of the 32nd General Congregation and asks, according to the mind of the 32nd General Congregation, the confirmation of the Holy See with regard to nn. 22 and 42 of Decree 12.

58/ 3. The Congregation affirms that Decrees 18 and 12, of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations respectively, fully respond to the demands of the poverty of our Institute in today’s circumstances.

59/ 4. With the promulgation of the new Statutes on Poverty (Sept. 8, 1976, AR XVI, 911 ff.), nn. 37-39 of Decree 12 of the 32nd General Congregation (“Norms of Transition” and “Recommendations to the Commission for the Revision of the Statutes on Poverty”) cease to have effect. The statutes, as such, possess the authority of ordinations of Father General and in future may be reviewed when and insofar as may be opportune.

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DECREE 3

ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE GENERAL CONGREGATION

60/ 1. #1. *Formula of the General Congregation* 6, 3°-4° is changed in this way:

61/ 1° From provinces where the number of members remains less than 0.5% of the total membership of the Society of Jesus, one elector will be sent to the general congregation who is a professed of four vows elected by the province congregation.

62/ 2° From provinces where the number of members is at least 0.5% but remains less than 1.4% of the total membership of the Society, two electors will be sent to the general congregation: the provincial ex officio and another professed of four vows elected by the province congregation.

63/ 3° From provinces where the number of members is at least 1.4% but remains less than 2.4% of the total membership of the Society, three electors will be sent to the general congregation: the provincial and two other professed of four vows elected by the province congregation.

64/ 4° From provinces where the number of members is at least 2.4% but remains less than 3.2% of the total membership of the Society, four electors will be sent to the general congregation: the provincial and three other professed of four vows elected by the province congregation.

65/ 5° From provinces where the number of members is at least 3.2% but remains less than 4% of the total membership of the Society, five electors will be sent to the general congregation: the provincial and four other professed of four vows elected by the province congregation.

66/ 6° From provinces where the number of members is at least 4% but remains less than 4.8% of the total membership of the Society, six electors will be sent to the general congregation: the provincial and five other professed of four vows elected by the province congregation.

67/ 7° In a province where the number of members is at least 4.8% of the total membership of the Society, seven electors will be sent to the general congregation: the provincial and six other professed elected by the province congregation.

68/ #2 The distinction between an independent vice-province and a province is no longer held and those independent vice-provinces currently existing by this decree become provinces.

69/ #3. For the purpose of calculating the number of members in each province in #1, those who are applied (*applicati*) are counted as members of the province to which they are applied.

70/ 2. *Formula of the General Congregation* 6, 2° is changed to include among the electors both general counsellors who are not general assistants and regional assistants.

71/ 3. Other special norms which may be necessary both in the *Formula of the General Congregation* and in the *Formula of the Province Congregation* in order to render nn. 1 and 2 properly effective will be set down by the Superior General with the deliberative vote of those members of the General Curia who have the right to attend the general congregation by virtue of office at least *ad negotia*.

72/ 4. Those points set down in nn. 1 and 2 will be submitted to a new examination in the next upcoming general congregation. They remain in force, however, until they are legitimately changed.

DECREE 4

ON THE FORMULA OF THE GENERAL CONGREGATION

73/ 1. In the *Formula of the General Congregation*, n. 12, #1:

74/ The second sentence is to be changed in this way:

“Its members, to be drawn as far as possible from among those to participate in the congregation from each of the assistancies, will be named by the superior (or vicar) general with his council and after the respective regional assistants have been heard.”

75/ In the same paragraph a third sentence is to be added:

“It is permissible for the electors to indicate to the superior (or vicar) general some names from their own assistancy suited for this committee.”

76/ 2. In the *Formula of the General Congregation*, n. 42, #4:

At the end of the paragraph, after “applied,” these words are to be added:

“or region to which he is assigned.”

77/ 3. In the *Formula of the General Congregation*, n. 130, #2:

After the words “for peace and union,” these words are to be added:

“best equipped to proffer counsel on behalf of the entire Society.”

78/ 4. In preparing methods and a process for handling substantive matters, in anticipation of the 34th General Congregation, Father General is empowered to change some parts of the *Formula of the General Congregation* that have to do with the handling of substantive matters insofar as needed and he may do so with the authority of the 33rd General Congregation, after obtaining the deliberative vote of those members of the General Curia who have a right by reason of their office to attend a general congregation.

DECREE 5

ON THE PROVINCE CONGREGATION

79/ The 33rd General Congregation, in fulfillment of a mandate from the preceding General Congregation and as a response to the recommendation of the Cardinal Secretary of State in an appendix to a letter sent to Father General (May 2, 1975) with regard to the decree of that General Congregation "On the Province Congregation," after having carried out a diligent review of the norms and determinations in n. 11 of that decree, made this determination:

80/ 1° Since the application of the norms of the 32nd General Congregation concerning the participation of members not yet in final vows in the province congregation occurred only twice and indeed within a brief span of time, and yet no grave harm in fact arose from that experience, but on the contrary an impetus to union and integration of all the members in the life of the Society emerged, and since new harm is not to be expected from the application of these norms over not too extended a time and with proper attention, the norms and determinations in Decree 14, n. 11, of the 32nd General Congregation should continue in force and will be reviewed by the next General Congregation.

81/ 2° In order that this review may proceed in the proper way, Father General should see that the necessary studies are conducted in due time. With the help of these studies, other questions which touch on participation in the province congregation and which were proposed by the province congregations recently conducted, especially that concerning the abrogation of a limit on the participation of formed coadjutor brothers in a province congregation as it is connected with the priestly character of the Society, will have more light shed on them and can be properly solved.

DECREE 6

ON POWERS GRANTED BY THE GENERAL CONGREGATION TO THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

I. Powers Which Were Granted to the Superior General at the End of the General Congregation

82/ The 33rd General Congregation grants to the Superior General:

1° That he is empowered, after obtaining the deliberative vote of those fathers of the General Curia who have a right *ex officio* to attend a General Congregation, and without prejudice to the powers given him in other decrees, to abrogate or modify decrees of past General Congregations that seem not to be in accord with the decrees of this 33rd General Congregation.

83/ 2° That he is empowered, after obtaining the deliberative vote of those fathers of the General Curia who have a right *ex officio* to attend a General Congregation, to abrogate or modify regulations of the *Formulas* of the General Congregation, the Province Congregation, the Congregation of Procurators, and the Congregation of Provincials that seem not to be in accord with the decrees of this 33rd General Congregation.

84/ 3° That he himself, for a just reason, can suppress colleges and professed houses, with the deliberative votes of the general counsellors and the provincial of that province in which a college or house to be suppressed is located, and after consulting the regional assistant.

85/ 4° That he may approve of the minutes which could not be communicated with the fathers of the Congregation in accordance with the norm of the *Formula of the General Congregation*, n. 142, #4, 1°.

86/ 5° That in accordance with the norm of the same *Formula of the General Congregation*, n. 142, #4, 2°, in the decrees of this General Congregation he can:

87/ *a.* make corrections that seem obviously needed, and reconcile contradictions, if any are detected (according to the mind of the Congregation and, after having ascertained the deliberative vote of those fathers of the General Curia who have a right *ex officio* to attend a General Congregation).

88/ *b.* to edit the decrees with regard to style.

II. Special Powers That Are Granted to the Superior General in View of the Early Entrance into Effect of the New Code of Canon Law

89/ 1. The 33rd General Congregation empowers the Superior General, after he shall have listened to the advice of experts and obtained the deliberative vote of the general counsellors:

90/ 1° If need be, to seek dispensations of the Holy See from laws of the new Code of Canon Law soon to take effect, in order to preserve the substantial of our institute.

91/ 2° In so far as it may be necessary, to compose decrees by which those elements that the new Code of Canon Law demands should be contained in Constitutions (cf. canon 587, #1) may be inserted in our legislation and that are not found in these or in decrees of general congregations that are still in effect. These decrees will be submitted to examination by the next General Congregation.

92/ 3° Insofar as is fitting for the good government of the Society, to adapt our law to the demands of the new Code. These regulations are to be submitted to examination by the next General Congregation.

93/ 2. The Superior General is given the mandate to prepare by suitable studies for a review of our own law and of our privileges, to be completed by the next General Congregation.

