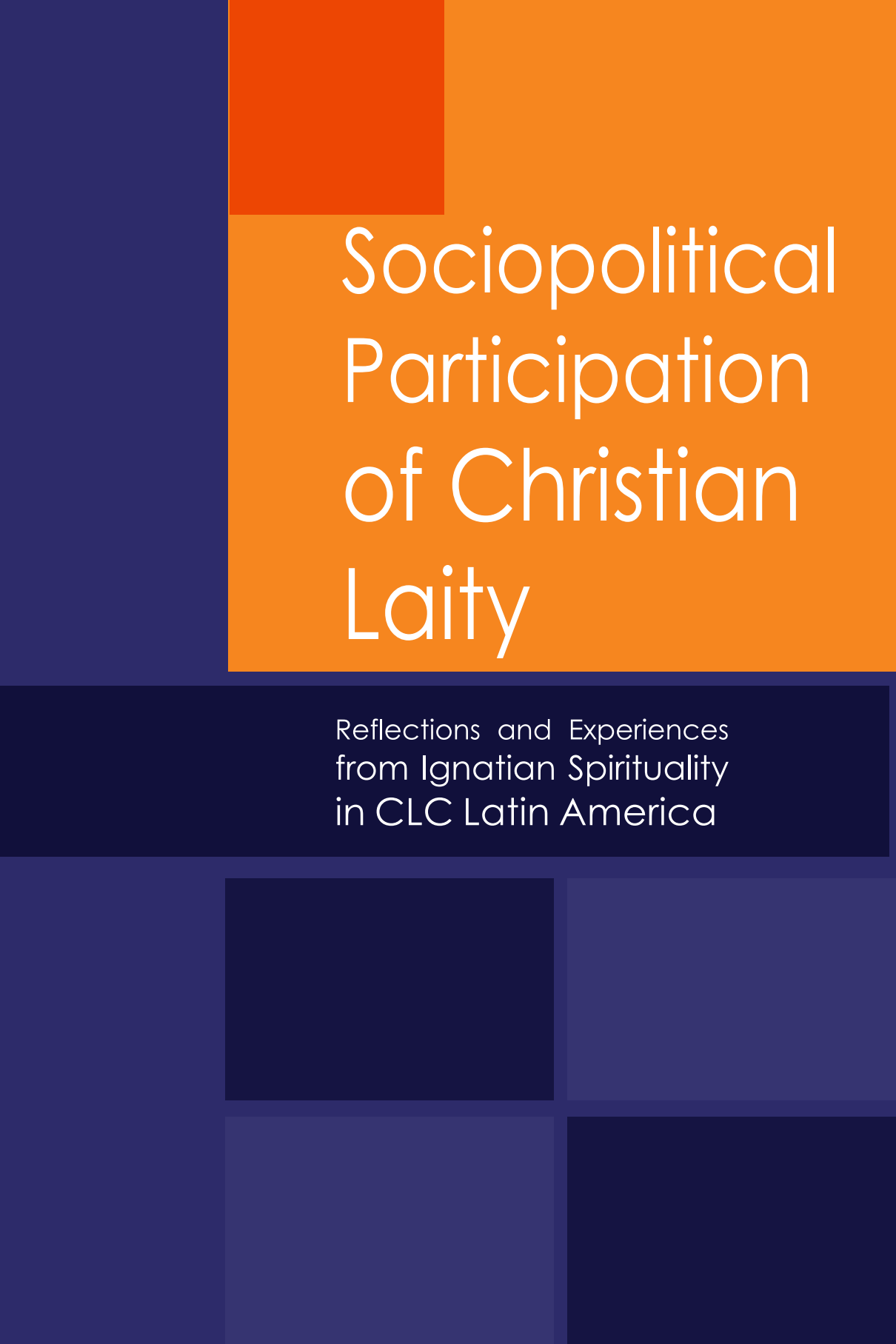


The book cover features a dark blue background with several geometric blocks of different shades of blue and orange. A large orange block is at the top right, containing the title. A smaller orange block is at the top left. A dark blue block is at the bottom left. A medium blue block is at the bottom right. A dark blue block is at the bottom center.

Sociopolitical Participation of Christian Laity

Reflections and Experiences
from Ignatian Spirituality
in CLC Latin America

Sociopolitical Participation of Christian Laity

Reflections and Experiences from Ignatian Spirituality in CLC Latin America



David Martínez Mendizábal and Mauricio López Oropeza
Coordinators

Christian Life Community -CLC-
Latin America



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1. The Iberoamerican University at León, Mexico.
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6. All together, these people and groups have been co-participants in making this CLC contribution to the Church and society in general a reality.

We also thank all those who contributed their time, experience, knowledge, and faith, working as coordinators, facilitators, tutors, supporters, editors, translators, designers, and so many other priceless contributions.

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We give special thanks to María Celia (Mace) Galli for coordinating the translation team, and for all her devotion as a member of the CLC community. Together with the support of Kelly Jennemann, they embraced our desire to share this community project from Latin America so that it could be shared and passed on to our community worldwide. Their translation work, seeking to be faithful to the desires of the authors, has been a vehicle for sharing our hope.

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Dedications

We would like to dedicate this book, and all of the effort, commitment, dreams, and hope for the future it represents, with profound respect and love, to our beloved brothers Tony Rodríguez of CLC Cuba and Palmiro González of CLC Guatemala, who, with their life and testimony among us have inspired CLC in Latin America to a greater commitment of life, of faith, and of sociopolitical formation and choice. Their footprints remain among us, together with those of so many women and men of CLC who have given their testimony and life so that others may have life and have it more abundantly.

We thank Tony for being a life force that from his tireless happiness, his fine and sharp humor, his deep words accompanied by his pepper and spice, and his deep love for the Church and his country, always opted to commit to his loved ones and his beloved Cuba. You remained there for love of the Church, for your CLC, and for your beloved family. Your cry was forceful, and because of it, despite the pressure, your political position gave an account of your valiant vocation as a true Christian who fought for justice.

We thank Palmiro for showing us with his testimony that the desire to build a more humane and more just world can lead us to seek living spaces of genuine sharing and teaching, especially by being witnesses and sharing our personal testimony. Your happiness, good humor, and desire to keep growing in that commitment to a better world have remained among us like an indelible mark of your genuine living.

*“The essence of the Church is in its mission of service to the world,
in its mission to save it in its entirety and to save
it in history, here and now.*

*The Church is for embracing the hopes and the joys,
the anguish and the sadness of men and women”*

Monsignor Óscar A. Romero (Speech at Louvain)

Introduction

*"When I give bread to the poor, they call me a saint.
When I ask why the poor have no bread, they call me a communist."
Helder Cámara*

In John's first letter, we are bluntly presented with the relationship between faith and life in society, between believing in God and defending justice: How can I love God, who I do not see, if I do not love my brother, who I can see? (1 John 4:20) If I love God, I should be concerned about my brother, who is the reflection and likeness of God (Gen 1:26-27). If I love God, I must do something for that God who has identified with he who is hungry, needs clothes, is sick (Matthew 25); in brief, with my neighbor who needs my help and whose needy situation implores my aid.

In Latin America the face of the neighbor whom Christians should love has very concrete characteristics.

The Bishops of the region, convened in Puebla (1979), defined the poor when they spoke of the "faces of Christ in Latin America."¹ Among these faces they mentioned the landless, exploited farmers, the poorly paid workers, the abandoned children, the undernourished and/or exploited, the youths without opportunities, the forgotten senior citizens, those who live in overcrowding, the indigenous peoples and African Americans who experience different

forms of injustice. ² We could broaden the list to include so many other groups of marginalized people and sufferers such as women condemned to take on a double shift at work as they work outside of and within the house, or the migrants who move from the countryside to the city or from one country to another in search of better opportunities and who, frequently, are not well received.

And so Latin America becomes a land fertile for and in need of evangelization. I would like to understand evangelization in this context not only as the transmission of the Christian faith, but as the implementation of that more just and more brotherly world that Jesus promised for all. When we change the living conditions of those who suffer, that is when the gospel in its fullness arrives to their contexts; it is there when one has "life abundantly" (John 10:10). Latin American Christians are not called to only communicate a message but also to carry it out; we are called to transmit a promise and make it believable and truthful by own actions.

² For example, in the labor market, the difference between whites and non-whites of the same gender, age, and education level is 28% in Latin America. ATAL, Juan Pablo; ÑOPO, Hugo; WINDER, Natalia. "New Century, Old Disparities: Gender and Ethnic Wage Gaps in Latin America." 2009. <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=2208929>

¹ Puebla Document, No. 31-41

There have always been different alternatives to improve the life of the poor and suffering. Take, for a concrete example, the economically poor, those who do not have the resources or sufficient income to decently satisfy their needs and/or those of their families. In the Gospel, we find phrases like “the one who has two loaves of bread and gives one to someone who has none,” “give them food to eat,” “I was hungry and you fed me.” These texts literally invite a direct action between me, a first person, and a “you”, a second person who needs my help. “I feed you” or “I show you support” have been some of the oldest forms of reestablishing social equilibrium. But they are not the only ways to support the needy. We can say that the final result in this way of alleviating their suffering is quite significant: people were hungry, and now, thanks to my help, they are not.

This type of solidarity is very evangelical, but it is not the only possible one. We also see another form of showing solidarity in Jesus’ actions: fighting against the causes that produce suffering. In the history of the Church, some saints understood it this way: they not only gave bread to the hungry but they also went to the king to ask him to feed them. Today we could say it in the following way: instead of just giving food to the hungry, could I and should I not ask myself what caused their unsatisfied hunger? What are the social structures at play that cause some to go hungry? Are there political structures available to the hungry instead of me doing it directly? If I give bread to the beggar on the corner, I am helping him. But if I fight so that the State takes care of him or so that the economic system does not exclude him (as it does to so many people who end up becoming beggars), I am also helping him.

This is what our book is about: finding an appropriate connection between the State, the

market and the society to change the social structures that cause injustice in the name of a more just and caring world. For a Christian, to focus on the social structure means to make society look a little more like Jesus’ dreams for the world. Why should the Christian “focus” on social structures? How do I do it? What are the main challenges? What good practices do we already have? Does it involve focusing on the day-to-day or rather in the large structures through showy campaigns? Can it be done alone and/or rather within an association or ecclesial community (CLC, for example)? These and others are some of the questions that arise in the Latin American context and that we wanted to answer as a community in the present volume.

In this collection we gathered some final works from the participants and some presentations from professors and tutors, almost all associated with the Christian Life Community (CLC). CLC, a Catholic association of Ignatian spirituality is present in more than 70 countries. It considers its mission to be unlimited: from the smallest tasks, invisible and individual, up to the largest visible and community works. A Christian community action is an important challenge today in a context of globalization and transnationalization with relevant topics like migration, poverty, ecological risk, world governance, etc.

The reader will not find homogenous speeches. The works are an expression of what we are: lay men and women with very different processes of formation, theoretical orientations, and experiences. We want, above all, to share and express a concern: the need to reclaim political participation as a constitutive part of our lay vocation.

CLC Latin America commits to delve into the causes of injustice to seek structural remedies. To this end, the essays published in this volume

represent the conclusion of a formative process. Between 2011 and part of 2012, a virtual course was developed: "The Political Dimension of the Social Commitment of the Christian Life Community -CLC- in Latin America".

This effort has been made possible thanks to the participation of many, beginning with the Ibero-American University at León and DKA Austria. The Ibero-American University³ collaborated with lecturers and academic counseling to guarantee the quality of the course content as well as its methodology. DKA Austria collaborated with the necessary economic means to carry out the concluding on-site meeting and publication. Dr. David Martínez and Mauricio López Oropeza, M.A. were the coordinators of the course and the book production. We also give our thanks to the fifteen professors from eight countries in our sub-continent that have made part of this shared dream and have dedicated their time, experience, and above all, their life commitment to move this unpublished work forward. We give many thanks to Miguel Collado for his support with regard to virtual pedagogical platforms and his invaluable friendship and commitment. Our deep gratitude also goes to Christian Ubilla, for the enormous support he gave in building the virtual classroom, uploading all the community service materials, and working with the evaluations. We also express our gratitude to those who collaborated as guest lecturers and tutors from multiple countries. We are also grateful to all the national CLC communities in Latin America that strongly supported this process and contributed to a good outcome.

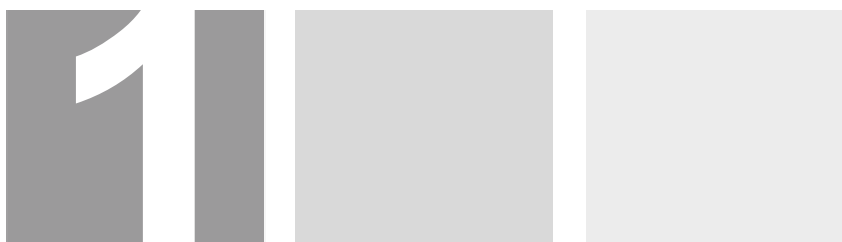
For this English version, a selection has been made of the works that the team coordinator considered to have the broadest perspec-

tive, or valuable testimonies for reflection of the worldwide CLC. This way, a part of this tremendous effort could be known. We hope that reflections and concerns are awakened, and that this volume serves as a detonator of dreams to work for a better world as a Worldwide Apostolic Body - CLC-.

Our hope is that this pioneering CLC contribution would invite other Catholics to organize, reflect, and also act on these topics. Our hope is that this course would soon progress from formation to a more direct effect, which is the final objective of the course. Our hope is that all of us involved in this experience would let ourselves be transformed by it and that through it, we would help in the transformation of our world. Our hope is that Latin America, and in particular all of her suffering faces, would see the promises of Christ fulfilled. To that effect we commit ourselves as co-responsible for this mission.

Franklin Ibáñez
CLC Executive Secretary
Rome, February 2013

³ We particularly thank Dr. Martha Mora, from the Ignatian Center for Humanist Formation, who enormously supported and helped in attaining a grant, and Dr. María Esther Bonilla for her work revising the essays.



Part I

Conceptual Ideas about Advocacy and Political Commitment of Ignatian Laity

The Necessary Political Commitment of CLC:

Faith, Justice, and Political Commitment in Ignatian Laity
David Martínez. CLC Mexico.

I recently returned from Santiago, Chile, where I participated in the Magis Formation Course. They asked me to say a few words about CLC's sociopolitical commitment. I listened to the different points of view and varied commitments that the responses to our concrete realities bring about, and it confirmed my idea that we are faced with a great need to open spaces for reflection, but above all, with the need for supporting those in our communities who are politically committed.

During dinner, Norma Cabrera from Paraguay told me about a concern she had regarding CLC: there is not always general agreement about partisan political postures, which can be translated into mistrust, disqualification, and fractures in the national community. She had already spoken of this impression with Gloria Servin, also from Paraguay.

I remembered that during the 2006 and 2012 presidential elections in Mexico, CLC, as well as the society at large, was split in two: the people who sympathized with the candidate on the left, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, and those who practically loathed him. This fracture was also present in CLC.

We can share an Ignatian spirituality, we can agree on CLC's general principles and the values of our lay lifestyle, but we can have, at the same, time have opposing partisan or political options.

In this article I would like to share a few ideas about why it is necessary to have political or partisan commitment and at the same time feel assured, in our minds and hearts, that we share

our CLC vocation, as brothers and sisters, with other brothers and sisters who choose different options. I will begin by affirming the reasons for being in the sociopolitical world, a demand born of a faith that is indignant about the conditions of exclusion in which a good part of our Latin American societies has to endure. Social sciences have confirmed these conditions, as well as the real possibilities for change. In the final section of this article, I will offer some ideas that can help accompany the processes of CLC groups and individuals who are committed in the sociopolitical sphere.

1. Hope and Utopia as Components of Faith

If one thing pertains to faith in Jesus Christ and particularly in Ignatian spirituality, it is the refusal to accept things just as they are. The promise of the Kingdom contains a double implication, as on the one hand it is found to be fully rooted in reality; there is no Kingdom without the here and now, there is no salvation without liberation, there is no love for God without love for our brothers and sisters, the history of salvation is one of redemption. However, at the same time this promise tells us that it is here now but not yet here in its fullness: the eschatological present but not yet totally fulfilled. Many parables of the Kingdom have this progressive dimension: something small that keeps growing until it bears fruit.

One of Christianity's most radical innovations is that it presents a God who lowers Himself and

takes on human form. He was incarnated into our concrete reality, but not to remain there, rather to announce the potential triumph of life over death, of good over evil. It all begins with a concrete reality, from within and not from the outside:

To believe in Jesus is to believe that good can and must triumph over evil. Despite the system, and despite the magnitude, complexity, and apparent insolubility of our current problems, man can be, and will end up being, liberated. All forms of evil - sin and all its consequences: sickness, suffering, misery, frustration, fear, oppression and injustice - can be overcome. And the only power capable of achieving it is the power of a faith that believes in it. Because faith, as we have said, is the power of good and truth, the power of God (Nolan).

The social teaching of the Church goes in this same direction. The Fifth General Conference of Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean held in Aparecida, Brazil reminds us again what has already been said in the *Evangelium Nuntiandi* of Paul VI -1975-:

The field of your evangelistic activity is the same vast and complex world as that of politics, of social and economic reality, as it is also of culture, of science and the arts, of international life, of "mass media," and other realities open to evangelization, as are love, family, education of children and adolescents, professional work, and suffering.

The Church has principles and fundamental options that mark a useful and guiding ethical framework for sociopolitical action. Among them, "the principles regarding the person, the common good, solidarity, and participation are considered fundamental. The rest are closely united with them and are derived from them."⁴

Identifying questions about what is good for people, better structural conditions for social

justice, social support networks to solve problems, particularly those of the excluded, and collaborating factors in the decision-making, are, in essence, the framework for political intervention guided by the values of the Kingdom. Is it complicated? It is. It presents many difficulties, indeed.

Mistrust in the real viability of this type of sociopolitical intervention produces a kind of practical atheism, where the relationship between the Kingdom and the social reality is accepted as an intellectual truth, although denied in daily life. This religiously tinted atheism responds to social conundrums and problems from a disincarnated faith, a faith without roots, up in the air. This type of faith acknowledges that there are problems, but it considers that those problems will be resolved, we just need to have certain amount of faith in God. However, we need to have at least a small incidence in reality, an incidence that seeks to historically concretize what is needed. The social teaching of the Church is enlightening, since it calls for a personal conversion and a change of structures, as part of the same process:

Under the light of the faith, we see the growing gap between rich and poor as a scandal and a contradiction to being a Christian. The luxury of a few becomes an insult to the misery of the great masses...This is contrary to the plan of the Creator and to the honor owed to Him. In this anguish and pain, the Church discerns a situation of social sin, even more severe since it takes place in countries that call themselves Catholic and that have the capacity to change: "that the barriers of exploitation be removed ... against which the best efforts for promotion crash" (John Paul II, Oaxaca, 5. AAS, LXXI, p. 209).

To proclaim that God has promised a better future for humanity is an undeniable affirmation from the beginning of faith. However, not taking responsibility for this moment in history or lowering our heads when confronted with a complicated or difficult reality is the same as stating that one can love God, but not human beings.

⁴ Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests. Rome, Palace of the Congregation, December 30, 1988. WILLIAM CARD. BAUM Prefect

We are not referring just to a certain type of popular piety known by all, which separates the history of salvation from human history. There is a more subtle form of constructing a spirituality that passes over history and thus is incapable of recognizing hopeful events from concrete social processes. To believe and to live this way must question the disappointed and those who belittle any social transformation effort for being incomplete, perfectible or questionable, since their faith in God -and in the Kingdom as well- is not reflected in the active hope of a better future for society. What is worse, blindness to observing hopeful elements in reality produces a certain ethical invalidity that ultimately turns into a chronic inability to trust humanizing changes. Hopelessness, besides being a form of atheism toward the God of Jesus, is a form of suicide based on its inability to find better ways for collective life.

Fr. Ignacio Iglesias, S.J.⁵, takes up this approach and unpacks it with Ignatian tools:

The art of Ignacio is unique for taming the past and the future and making them gravitate toward the present... The avoidance of yearning for the past and of dreaming for the future will be constantly overcome upon concentrating on the present that is being born, the strength of memory (the past) and that of desire (the future)...

...To Ignacio, history continues to be a theological place of uninterrupted epiphanies about God and about the faltering or generous responses of human beings toward God. And God, always greater, will keep unveiling and stretching us in the process, and feeding the magis of desire, which is why it is not wishful thinking...

Spirituality judges history; but in turn it is quality control of a spirituality.

In conclusion of this first subsection, we can say that hope, utopia and its inseparable link to historical realities are part of following Jesus.

2. Hope and Utopia as Components of Social Change

In addition to the hope that is born of faith -of a certain type of faith-, I will add some reflections on the substantiation of the hope and utopia that come to us from philosophy and social sciences. I will begin by saying that our social reality changes constantly. Reality cannot remain unchanged. Our daily experience confirms the existence of social dynamics that suddenly escape our comprehension, precisely by seeming to be an apparently senseless change. The problem lies in the direction of the change and in the agents (the actors) who push it in that direction. Therefore, it seems reasonable to me that the discussion should center not in whether things can change, but rather, on the type of change that can define new situations.

For this purpose, it is appropriate to recall social utopias from dusty corners, despite the general assumption that we have come to the end of great realizations. Zemelman says that projects, all projects, by definition, are loaded with the future. As a future horizon, utopia fulfills the function of guiding the construction of options; the very duty of political activity. Utopia demands to be built, opposing any fatalist, mythic, or mechanistic conception in history.

It is worth remembering with Galeano that utopia suddenly seems to move further away as we advance in our walk. But that is what utopia is for: to walk, and even better, to walk with a direction. Rethinking utopias supposes an open and problematic concept of history, without a mechanically predictable order and as a horizon of extraordinary possibilities. Possibilities that could be as real as the possibility of the dominant utopia. Although it is true that social structures influence the types of social relations most strongly present among human beings, it is also true that they do not ultimately determine them.

⁵ Ibidem p. 114-115.

That is to say, human freedom is influenced by, but not chained to, the current existing forms. The fight into which we are invited consists of the construction of options. For that, it is fundamental to fight against “the imagination block” (Zemelman).

To think of a future that is not strictly programmable but is strictly possible, the options require a present-future ebb and flow without rigid conditions, “but exclusively with those resulting from the combination of these two dimensions of reality, which will depend on real junctions from which a social totality can be put into effect.” (Zemelman). On this level, the work consists of knowing how to transform values that shape an option into difficult content, and convert them into viable proposals.

This clear line between values, problems, and projects must be reviewed very carefully. How many times do we remain stagnant on the first two and not firm it up into projects, which are generally political, inasmuch as the construction of options is one of the specific tasks of political life?

After a long time where the social aspects of utopias were held in total contempt, it is fitting to pick this field back up in light of new social events, such as the emergence of the World Social Forum, the alter-globalist movement, the survival of many anti-capitalist modes, the advance of feminism, the surge of the environmentalists, the new concept of world citizenship, the sensitivity toward problems of indigenous communities, the opening up of sexual diversity, and the necessary modifications to the variety of democratic systems, where a restructuring of all the political architecture is required, in addition to participation in organized civil society.

When one points out that reality demands political projects, corruption assuredly comes to mind, such as the politicians who do not fulfill their promises, the role of partisan politics, the detrimental party system that hinders democracy and drains the budget that could alleviate a

country’s educational problems. That surely comes to mind, but we must not stay there. Politics are not only made up of the negative daily notions that are commonly held and that scare “decent people” away.

There are politics in the church, in education, in the methods of communication, in the family, in the factory, as I will explain later. One of the notions of politics is the constant and never finished construction of a desired reality, according to Norbert Lechner. One of the challenges that appear to that respect is the construction of the political subject that avoids presentism and utopianism. Lechner maintains that several tendencies are likely to reinforce the present - presentism - as an exclusive dimension: the market concept, the temporal compression of globalization, system’s self-referral, and the job’s added flexibility.

In addition, the absolutization of the present contains a selective loss of history. And that loss of the past affects our image of the future. Without the memory of the suffering of others, without the vital incorporation of the needs of others, the criteria that guide the construction of a different future are very lax. Tomorrow would be a poor cumulative progress of the current state of things. But the present without a seed of the future is as negative as the disappointment about reality for not corresponding to idealized longings, however just they may seem. We refer to this when we speak of utopianism: reality does not match my ideal, therefore it is practically impossible.

3. Politics and Political Issues

Until now, I have proposed that faith demands a commitment to transforming the current realities under Jesus’ hopeful promise that things can go better. I also pointed out that reality is changeable, and in order to have a compass, the role of social utopias is relevant. Christian love may linger at empty spaces if we do not have the adequate

means and measures that enable us to touch the ground in daily life, in the particulars, in the history of salvation that is this life we live today. In turn, the tension between the concrete and the universal invitation allows us to relativize means and measures to avoid their absolutization. It is in this continual process of discernment that one juggles efficiency and the sense of civic duty when faced with complex realities.

For Christians, perhaps the fundamental problem is not found in staying in agreement with generic plans about the Kingdom, but rather in the realities that surround it, especially the world of politics.

There are Christian members in every social movement and political party. Fortunately almost no one claims that their organization has exclusive rights to be called Catholic or Christian, except conservative groups that consider their political participation like the reconquest of a lost sanctuary, and of course, they are the only ones with the moral quality to do it. But except for these supposed messiahs, there is no one else.

Can we agree in our general inspiration and differ in the activities that we have chosen? Of course we can, because the relationship between the two is neither casual nor mechanical. This plurality of paths is a positive sign of the current times, and it corresponds to processes that we have previously claimed as creativity, imagination, and the high priority of subjectivity.

"If something seeks discernment in sociopolitical realities," says F. Joao B. Libiano, S.J., "it is to orient the individual and collective subject to find their own way, although it should be honestly recognized that within plurality there is the possibility of finding mutually exclusive alternatives." Everything cannot and should not fit, but the search for consensus is already a process that in itself proves worthy and positive, independently of the final results.

In political matters, no matter how Christian they are or claim to be, there will be irreconcilable

differences in concrete measures, on the subjects of economic policy, social programs, the concept of poverty and how to solve it, sexual and reproductive health, respect to sexual preferences, and the relationship between Church and State. Only a naïve view accepts the possibility of eliminating conflict in political matters. The problem is not to move toward the elimination of conflict, but rather toward a peaceful, negotiated, and tolerant resolution.

And here is exactly where the importance and place of the political factor lies, as a difficult, unfinished -like all human action- and complex process. This process speaks of the way we human beings come to an agreement to govern a society, according to joint construction of more human and humanizing ways of life.

Now we move on completely to a third level. I could have begun here, but I wanted to establish the context, because it gives it a different shading, especially to those for whom active membership implies service to others. Let us speak of the critical part, of the political parties and the different ways of political participation that shade the area of Christian commitment.

Political life has a double interpretation, as Mardones well establishes. One that comes to us from the room of the civitas, from the city, which understands policy as tied to the community and the interrelation between the two to seek civilized cohabitation. This interpretation speaks of the common good, of putting agreement above particular interests. It uses power to serve, not to dominate.

Following the thinking of the Second Vatican Council, that politics is one of the highest expressions of Christian charity (Octogesima Adveniens, No. 80), Mardones points out:

At the present moment, with no excessive appreciation for political activity, I have the confessed interest of countering that negative opinion -about politics- and to collaborate with

all those who see one of the works that is most specifically human and worthy of dedication in politics...politics is one of the most noble tasks and vocations of man (Mardones, p.20).

This way of understanding politics, as a means of acting out love and service, is what citizens currently look for. However, because of political agents and the conformation of a generally exclusive system, citizens hold political parties and representatives in very low esteem. I will return to this subject later, because, I expect, this perception has an intentionality that is built from other areas of power to be able to disqualify this modality that is necessary for democracies.

There is a second conception of political life, of Weberian origin, that does not point to the necessary existence of politics but rather to the historical recognition of political processes as they occur in societies. They start with the notion that power is at play in every political process. Power is understood as one group's capacity to influence another, independent of whether this second group wants to be influenced or not. Therefore, the purpose of politics is the process of procurement or conservation of power. (This notion comes from Clausewitz's definition, who states that war is the continuation of politics, only with other means; the reverse can be understood the same way: politics is the continuation of war, only with other means.)

I will not make a distinction now between domination and hegemony, which are two different expressions of power, but it is fitting to consider that power is not necessarily carried out by coercive means, and that processes of domination have several variations, for example, the power involved in the communication media.

Politics, then, would have the maximum expression of institutionalized power, that is, the State, as a form of self-regulation and construction of common ends and means through the institutions that the society itself, or a part of it, has prompted. The State thus understood -

and not as the Kelsenian definition of the sum of territory, population and government, which does not explain much - would be formed by an apparatus of power created by the three levels of government -national, state, and municipal, not counting the community level-, the federal branches - executive, legislative, and judicial- and the institutions that have been created to deal with a variety of conflicts. Needless to say, it is a heterogeneous and conflictive apparatus.

Various Ways of Political Commitment

I am familiar with four ways of political intervention that are part of CLC's heritage in Latin America. I am sure there are more means of intervention, but I will refer to these four:

- a. Civil Service
- b. Social Movements
- c. Political Parties
- d. Civil Society Organizations

The relationship between Civil Society Organizations and the State - and the citizen participation that comes out of it- contains a colorful spectrum of actions and strategies. Olvera is right when he points out that civil society is not a homogenous group, neither in its composition nor in the type of relationships that it generates. Therefore, it becomes confusing to speak in general terms about citizen participation, giving it an absolute interpretation.

The agents who intervene in civil service play an important role as the junction of State and society. It is desirable and possible, although not achieved in every case, to have civil servants who bring about a just and democratic society. Civil servants sensitive to the problems of poverty, who are open to dialogue with civil society, and whose political ethics safeguard them against one of the worst types of corruption prevailing at the government level: inefficiency and personal gain from the tangle of administrative procedures which continually waylay citizens.

Aguayo, who places himself at the left end of the political spectrum and proposes an option that excludes other options, addresses this problem and specifies that when he speaks of citizen participation, he excludes aid and charitable organizations based on the following criteria (Aguayo, 2011:269):

- They seek to modify the structural causes of specific problems at their root, and they focus on one topic.
- They are subjects of change, formed by civil and aware academic specialists, and communicative organizations.
- The Civil Society Organizations have a cutting-edge element, as they are the ones who direct the proposals.
- They are a connector between politics and society; their vision is to try to create a national movement.
- Their internal life (at least they try to make it so, says Aguayo) are governed by a horizontal and participative democracy. They preach tolerance, plurality, and ethics in social matters, and they explore peaceful paths to social change.

And a fundamental characteristic that unveils the notion of social change, implicit in Aguayo's speech, is taken from Cohen and Arato: "...they practice the politics of influence, that is to say, indirect pressure on the political system which works by appealing to criticism, mobilization, and conviction."

But since they do not have one single societal project, this type of organization influences and applies pressure for their options and proposals to find an echo in the political world. Among the Civil Society Organizations and movements themselves, there are not only differences but severe points of contention which undermine a possible monolithic social block, called civil society. Topics such as abortion, poverty, security, the environment, and human rights show that just as differences exist between political

parties, they also exist between Civil Society Organizations. In this way, instead of forming a vector with one sense and direction, what really exists are multiple vectors, some of which can be added together, but others subtracted, within the political quadrants.

I am personally convinced that the quality of democracy depends on the characteristics of citizen participation that a country or a region possesses, but this is not all. The battlefield where political capital is fought for has multiple factors. Only a naive view of societal changes can attribute them exclusively to civil society groups. For example, we can look at the authorship of the changes related to political reform or to the rights of women. From the sphere of the State (in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches), there are allies or enemies who can underwrite full authorship in social changes, in which civil society groups of different and plural signs are on board.

In this dilemma of whether organized society goes before or against the State, Ramírez Sáiz makes the following note: "democratization does not wish to pit society against the State; rather, it implies the strengthening of both and the establishment of a relationship between them characterized by mutual control and negotiation... as prerequisites, it demands the dismantling of corporate and subordinating relationships with respect to the State, it affirms its autonomy before it [the State] and affirms interdependence...that is to say, that it is not state-centered or society-centered." (Ramírez Sáiz in Aziz Nacif, 2003: 135).⁶

This same relationship of autonomy and interdependence can be transferred to the

6 Regarding the debate over whether it is appropriate for the state to institute mechanisms for participation for organized societies, it is fitting to read the work that is suggestive from its title "Governmental Instruments for the Promotion of Civil Society in International Experience: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, and Spain" at [http://www.incidesocial.org/incide2009/images/pdf/instrumentos\[1\].pdf](http://www.incidesocial.org/incide2009/images/pdf/instrumentos[1].pdf)

link between political parties and civil society organizations. For democracy, it is not convenient for civil society organizations and political parties to oppose each other in general, except in an incompatible relationship that originates from an antithetical standpoint between the problems and their alternatives.

In fact, civil society organizations, referring to those that are authentically autonomous, conduct their lobbying in the parties which they consider closest to their specific interests, and create diverse joint alliances on subjects such as women's rights, the environment, and poverty. These are not to be confused with corporate or patronage-style organizations and movements that function as appendices to political parties.

There is a gradual but sustained loss of confidence in the political parties in Latin America. In Mexico, only a quarter of the population has trusts them (Mitofsky Group, 2011). Things are not going well for the television broadcasting companies and the government, having a confidence level of 47% and 45%, respectively. Therefore, rejection among citizens about the parties' image is high. This perception is immediately turned into reality, and the parties and the things that they produce are demonized.

In this context, the truly transformative, ethical, and trustworthy agents seem to be those from civil society. Several of the critiques of the parties -and others more so- are accepted, recognized and experienced by this author. Among the critiques little transparency of private life, continual, publicly disclosed conflicts and divisions, organic dissociation from those who suffer acute social problems, the formation of unresponsive bureaucracies, self-promotion, and high public financing⁷. However, and recognizing the existence even of "parties" that are not really parties, the absolute disqualification of all parties, besides being false, is risky for the democratic

life of a country. A strong party system is indispensable in a framework of checks and balances that is not only attractive in design, but also in its operation and evaluation.

One of the elements that should be considered in criticizing the government and the party system is to integrate a good analysis that makes distinctions without using automatically disqualifying generalizations.

That requires:

- a. Distinguishing the actions of the government from the political party from which it arises, and directing the critique to one agent or the other; although there is a relationship between them, which, incidentally, is almost never smooth. In advanced democracies, the relationship between the party and the government is not one of submission.
- b. Recognizing the parties that make alliances with civil society organizations and who together press for significant agreements to be turned into law or integrated into governmental plans and programs. There are successful experiences of such a relationship.
- c. Investigating the diverse governmental positions, at the federal as well as the subnational level, in such a way that the established mechanisms for the participation of the civil society in the design, operation, and evaluation of public policy are evident.
- d. Differentiate between the behavior of partisan bureaucracies and voluntary active membership. Like all bureaucracies, in the Weberian sense, a partisan bureaucracy is subject to rules, regulations, and hierarchies that all too often become a way to preserve power and an obstacle against internal democracy. However, dependable parties count on groups and people within

⁷ Some of these characteristics, on another scale and of course avoiding absurd and clumsy generalizations, are also attributes of some civil society organizations.

their active membership who are ethical, responsible, and legitimately motivated by political convictions. Only those who have not deeply studied or are not familiar with the reality of partisan life can negatively generalize and qualify a party and its active membership as one.

I add a brief parenthesis here to say that the UNDP [United Nations Development Program] performed a study during the past decade called "Democracy in Latin America: Toward a Citizens' Democracy." I would like to focus on two of its main points: the Latin American triangle of inequality, poverty, and democracy -from which a disappointment with democracy arises because of its poor results in reducing inequality- and understanding the struggle for power as a subject which escapes institutionalized power.

UNDP, and it is fitting to pay attention to its analysis, calls attention to the relationship between institutionalized powers -referring to the State- the actual powers, and the illegal powers -such as drug traffickers and organized crime. The actual powers, understood to be those who operate politically to influence according to their own interests, are businesses, the communication media networks, what are called extraterritorial factors (international financial institutions, among others), the Church and the unions.

Among so many political agents which make up such a complex architecture and power dynamics, (if one really wants to fully understand what is happening, and wishes to build a new power structure, a laudable and shared desire, with more citizen involvement), it is at least suspicious that the only ugly ducklings are the political parties, and the rest of the real factors of power are not considered. Note that I am not staunchly defending the current *modus operandi* of the parties, neither am I unaware of their errors (the ones observed from the outside and those which the members see from within). What I am saying is that political parties must be placed in their proper dimension within the real power structure.

In this sense, one must consider that the boundaries between groups of power are permeable. There are incidents of drug trafficking in political parties and the government; some ecclesiastical groups and hierarchies have networks of privileged contacts; television networks have their own representatives, besides all their lobbying, in addition to favoring the image of certain politicians and denigrating others. Affected businesses lobby for laws in their favor. In a nutshell, one has to progressively advance in the study of partisan life to keep our analysis from being naïve. I close the long parentheses that I opened.

Service and power (understood, I stress, as the capacity to influence) are juggled in the real dynamics of the political world and are not easily integrated. It is an ethical challenge for Christians to have power, especially personal power, and not use it for their own gain. However, if one of the qualities of a politician is that his/her decisions can affect a large number of people, being able to have an impact on politics should be a good desire, and therefore politics is a field which should not be renounced due to its strategic nature in affecting the well being of people, especially of the poorest and most excluded ones.

The search for power and service inside political parties and in the public realm does not necessarily have a negative connotation. It forms part of the necessary political culture to reach a privileged place, albeit commonplace, to serve and to cause changes in the circumstances of a great number of people. In the same way, it is necessary to recognize the close relationship of power to prestige and money. Each one, as well as the combination of the three, are counter-values when made absolute. The Ignatian "as much as" discernment criterion proves to be a clarifying tool, and more so if it is used in a community setting.

I understand that the search for power can sound out of tune in Christian environments, based on the notion of service from a position

of powerlessness. In addition, individuals may not seek or accept positions that imply a good dose of power because of the underlying risk that it contains. I insist that if we consider that social changes are not smooth agreements, but rather that most negotiations are pulled out of an organization that attempts modifications in correlation with strength, power is inevitably present in the construction of a more just and equitable society.

In the four ways of political intervention mentioned several paragraphs above (public service, political parties, civil society organizations and social movements), if motivated by the desire for social justice, solidarity, participation, and respect to human dignity, the possibility to have a bigger impact should be an intentional process, despite the scars we may get when we walk on thorny paths.

4. CLC and Political Option: The Collateral Damage⁸

Political life, like every social dimension, is characterized by what Edgar Morin calls the whirlwind game: “detours/trends/conflict/crisis/counter-trends/schismogenesis/transformations” (Morin 2011:22). Lineal and smooth trajectories do not belong to significant human processes, and less so in the field of politics. In the same sense Negri, quoted by Morin, states that “crisis is not the opposite of development, but rather its very form” (Morin 2011:30). If we paraphrase Negri, we could say that politics are not the opposite of crisis and conflict but rather their very form.

And if, in addition to the conflict that comes with political life, one adds the factors of passion and emotion, indispensable components when one chooses committed states in life, what happens

when a process with these characteristics bursts into the community life of CLC? I can “imagine” three scenarios (in quotations because they are situations that I have observed within CLC, and they are not simply exercises of the imagination):

First scenario: The conflict of political life penetrates the life of CLC and the group, without any obstacles, and as an expression of a society with similar characteristics, it becomes polarized. The impact is vast since some feel misunderstood and others more wounded by the lack of solidarity. This scenario is a problem during elections or when individuals or groups work at the frontier, such as with sexually diverse groups or with women’s right to choose movements.

Disqualifications arise very quickly, helped along by new information technologies. Jokes and pictures are exchanged that end up putting a strain on the climate within CLC. Lack of understanding takes the form of resentment, creating hostile territories. Our passions and personal issues bring in these types of harmful and non-communitarian polarizations.

Second scenario: There is no impact and the invasion of political life is very superficial, because there is no true community. That is to say, it is considered that individual commitments are the responsibility of each person, and as such, CLC is not susceptible to being affected by it. There is a false respect for the options of the rest and a marked difference arises -in the popular sense, not the Ignatian sense. “Mind your own business” is the theme of the relationship.

Third scenario: It is understood that nothing that happens to a CLC member is apart from the community. There is good support available to those members who are politically committed, because the decision was discerned in the small group, at the very least, and there is a consensual sending which demands brotherly and critical support. The proposition of the neighbor is saved and there are spaces for broad discussion where the reasons for different political commitments are

⁸ Thanks to Norma Cabrera and Gloria Servin from CLC Paraguay for the valuable ideas they shared with me to remake this section.

heard. Political work forms part of the community's commitment, and different individual callings and vocations are respected. Community awareness does not substitute individual awareness; rather, it enriches it. There is brotherly correction, which implies a call to attention when it is required. Sociopolitical discernment, suggested by F. Libiano S.J., is exercised in all its depth.

In the regional and national community there is an awareness of the importance of commitments in political life and such commitments are encouraged, not tolerated with a simple "suit yourself." The mechanism of peaceful conflict resolution is greased with a good dose of fellowship. A challenge exists within the Ignatian community, to find/build a tool that allows dissenting views to coexist without evading the conflict that this generates within our CLC, and looking toward responding to the great problems of our Americas and the world as a community. To give an answer to these questions in each community is, without a doubt, a difficult yet necessary exercise, and one that challenges our tolerance, creativity, and expertise in Ignatian spirituality on conflict resolution.

In this scenario, strength is added by finding principles that are born of our Christian-Ignatian-Commitment, which tolerates differences in the activities that we have chosen, without suffocating the Spirit that is manifested in them, in their diversity and originality. No more scenarios.

As it can be inferred, the tone of the reaction to the active political membership of some of its members corresponds to the place that the sociopolitical dimension holds in the CLC community, and its mechanisms of peaceful conflict solution. At the CLC World Assembly of 1979, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J. already encouraged political commitment, as a central element in the service that CLC could give to the world:

"I would make a special invitation to the Christian laity, encouraging them to take on, with a spirit of service, political tasks in the different spheres.

They must throw themselves into this walk, a path of holiness and evangelization, especially if they feel that call and find themselves in the condition for it. For this reason, although briefly, I make a sketch of the image of a Christian politician":

- an individual of profound faith and prayer, who for the love of Christ, serves his/her brothers and sisters in the procurement of the common good at any level;
- an individual who does not close him/herself off in strict and opportunistic partisanship;
- an individual with a good sense of Church, who lets him/herself be led by his or her social and political doctrine;
- an individual who, having power, uses that power to serve and does not fall into idolatry of power;
- an individual who inspires citizens to trust that the politician is telling the truth and making it happen;
- an individual who studies problems and their human context; an individual who is realistic in the options of possible solutions;
- an individual who is humble enough to know to consult and listen to all, and not only to his or her electorate or members of his/her party;
- an individual who trusts in the strength of God when facing difficulties;
- an individual who, beginning with his/her own life testimony, tries to incarnate the evangelical values of respect, fellowship, human growth, justice, dedication and special attention to the poor in society.
- an individual who knows that this path has already been taken by others with the help of the Lord. (Arrupe, 1979)

In communities where political action is considered as something disposable, lacking interest or intrinsically perverse, there will be incomprehension about why one of its members -or several of them- appear there, precisely, in a place of bad reputation and where no one

wants to be. Or in the cases where there has been recognition, but there are no mechanisms for communication available to stir up reflection and dialogue, the different options in the political dimension will surely bring division and animosity. To place the political theme on the agendas of the national communities, seeing as each one requires it, is a *sine qua non* condition so that different commitments come together as a necessary part of our walk together as a community.

Final Reflection

Just as Fernando Sabater takes on the role of the active pessimist, I consider myself a hopeful critic, or a utopian realist. My convictions arise out of the Christian promise of the Kingdom, from the transformability of social reality and from my shared experience with many partners with whom I share principles and means.

I have spent good portion of my life -more than thirty years- cooperating with NGO's, but precisely because of the same micro dynamics of civil society organizations, I felt the need to join an organizational structure that had broader repercussions and that could take on a nationwide project. I believe that it is necessary to say that because political parties freely accept affiliation, without any type of prerequisite, their quality control is poor, and opportunists also sneak in. Even so, I am a member of the left wing because I believe that it contains a political project close to the option for the poor, and because the theoretical means that make up my conceptual spectrum are identified with this political and ideological current.

I am convinced that active membership in a political party has a privileged place in social commitment, as much in the exercise of public responsibility as in a part of government, in civil society organizations, in social movements, and in all collective expressions that seek a social change under the principles of justice, democracy, equality, and respect to diversity.

I am encouraged and enlightened by the changes driven by women's groups, alter-globalization as a project, the environmental awareness as a product of specific fighters; they are an example of the fight of organized communities that not only react to demands but also work on designing a society that does not exist today. I believe in human rights networks with very concrete achievements and in groups that are in favor of sexual diversity. I sympathize with the work of BECs, CLC, of other similar groups to which many of you belong, and other Christian nuclei in Latin America, who risk their own skin for a project with respect to human rights within the Church. They would be considered as work at the frontiers by Ignatian spirituality.

Contrary to what one normally thinks, I have known hundreds of members who voluntarily attend meetings and party gatherings, guard voting booths, organize rallies against rising food costs an a thousand other things, whose motivation is participation in the construction of a more just society. As professors, shoe shiners, unemployed persons, farmers, professionals, public speakers and radio hosts, street vendors, housewives, a little bit of everything, we have given money from our salaries to pay for electricity and transportation without ever having received payment for our participation. Our pockets are not lined with money, nor do we benefit from the citizens' taxes. We are neither sheep nor are we herded in to this; rather, we are people with convictions that are in a place that receives little thanks from the point of view of public image, simply because we believe that we are not alone in this work, and that there is an instrument called the political party that is formed by citizens -as much citizens as are those people who have expropriated the term- who come together freely to motivate tasks that we consider necessary.

The cancer, in terms of social change, is despair. But for those who think that there is no better option, then the challenge is to lay the foundation to create it. In sociopolitical options, this challenge

implies the difference between either waiting idly, while others construct options, or getting our feet in the mud, doing the hard work of forging a path. The constant rejection of any solution places us in a situation of reluctance and conformity. We must combat the speech of hopelessness that results in passive acceptance of the present, especially on sociopolitical ground, because it is a false way out. Without a vision, what exists becomes confused with what is necessary. It inhibits the production of alternatives, it weakens the construction of the future and it promotes the naturalization of the present.

There is no good and pretty agent of transformation. Political parties, civil society organizations, social movements, alter-globalists, all those who try to transform society, are of this world, and as such, are subject to change. Anyone who has ever set foot in a rural community or a trade union will find

people with virtues and defects, which is why the poor are also advised to make options for the poor. Rosario Castellanos, a poet from Mexico, said that she would rather have a couple of scars than a memory like an empty hope chest.

The invitation is for us to be more hopeful, more reflective, and more creative in our political commitment: all three at the same time. Hope without reflection is simply a dream without a well-grounded basis. Reflection without hope brings us to bitterness. Hope and reflection that disregard creativity are condemned to repeat themselves. Creativity without direction and without reflection is like shooting a gun at random to see what it hits. This triad is dangerous to the dehumanizing system in which we live. No one said that it would be easy nor soon. This task is so great, that as the Spanish poet said, there are no substitutes. Let all Christians dig in and wage the battle that their conscience dictates.

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Collaboration in the Mission in the Area of Sociopolitical Advocacy:

A Look and a Contribution to Latin America from Ignatian Spirituality

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Introduction

This text arises as part of the formation process of CLC and its role in political advocacy as well as in the need to take up a recent path of awareness and explicitness of our task as missional collaborators (Jesuits and non-Jesuits), in the area of political advocacy with an Ignatian inspiration. I intentionally make collaboration in the mission⁹ explicit in the title of this article, since I did not want to fall into a possible trap, namely, thinking of mission in a way that separates Jesuits from laity, especially in our current times. This does not mean that it would not be occasionally valid to make vocation and mission explicit from the standpoint of the laity, inspired by Ignatian spirituality and tied to the works of the Society of Jesus.

In this essay, I would try to settle what we have been elucidating in the field of sociopolitical advocacy, as an accumulation of reflections

and practices that may be useful to everyone, pointing out a path of common searching, showing some realities within the Society of Jesus, including the call of the GC35¹⁰, and presenting some challenges that arise. I thank those who have contributed to this reflection. On the one hand, I am supported by your writings and reflections, most of them coordinated and sponsored, although not solely, by the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat from Rome. On the other hand, I support my writings on the practice that we have in this field that we have barely begun to standardize.

The ethical and practical challenge is both great and unavoidable; therefore, it is not transferable. We cannot give ourselves the luxury of renouncing this urgency and this command of the Gospel, from permanently listening to the cry of the poor, caused by the impacts that an unjust system causes. Since we are inspired by Ignatius, let us use the phrase that is attributed to him as a practical motto, saying, *“Act as if everything depended on you; trust as if everything depended on God.”* This phrase refers us to what Ernest Bloch once said, *“You be man, and God will be God,”* adding that upon analyzing and understanding political realities, we also have to identify the art of the possible.

9 GC 35 Decree, d6: “Collaboration at the Heart of Mission” and in the case of the CPAL, it seems very thought-provoking. I also recommend the conclusive text of the sector conference or the Collaboration dimension of the CPAL: “Collaboration in the Mission,” Chile 2012. This reflection helps us change the parameters or reading keys for understanding the meaning of collaboration in the Society of Jesus, which in practice is translated as a manifest priority also in the decision of the Father General to create a Secretariat for Collaboration with Others in Rome together with the Mission, Social Justice, and Ecology Secretariat.

10 GC 35, d3, n.28-29.

We have been distracted and unfocused, we have lacked creativity, and we have not taken very seriously the meaning of our universal mission to live out a faith that seeks justice, as Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., General of the Society of Jesus, has expressed to us repeatedly. We owe a debt to society and to the planet, and without being overconfident about something that has characterized us, but rather trying to be realistically humble, the challenges are considerable, but we have received so much good to be put to a universal service, to the “magis,” always from the perspective of the poorest, the most helpless, the marginalized, the excluded, and the small, which is doubtless the perspective of Jesus.

We have an enormous task, which is to rescue politics from the hands of those who have used it for their own benefit and interests to the detriment of the vast majority, and to cause the State to exercise its power, authority, and delegated responsibility over public matters to the benefit of those who are most disadvantaged.¹¹ We rely on a fragile civil society, represented by its institutions, organizations, and movements, and on a formal democracy, which is not a guarantee of citizen participation. For this reason, our challenge will be to broaden democracy, participating in and strengthening civil society, and exercising direct influence on the decisions that affect the great majorities of our people.¹²

We cannot be naïve when we enter into a topic with political content. On the contrary, we must be realistic. We are aware that the challenges and practices are different, and that ideological differences and a variety of approaches exist in the sphere of the Society of Jesus, and even more so at the heart of the Church. This is surely

one of the largest obstacles to sociopolitical advocacy initiatives, besides the difficulty we have in formulating a common speech about decisive issues on a worldwide scale or an operational theory of justice, which can be a controversial issue, as a basis from which to dialogue¹³. We do not count on having our own common ambition, nor do we have similar visions, conceptions, or options. They vary and they are diverse, which could also be seen as richness and not necessarily as a deficit. However, and keeping the former in mind, without a doubt, we are possibly living in a “Kairos,” a time of possibilities and opportunities, which we cannot let go to waste to make this collaboration in the heart of the mission¹⁴ possible, letting it become our cherished treasure when the time comes to advocate for just causes.

In all of this, we are barely taking our first baby steps, but that does not mean that we cannot grow, unwaveringly remaining in the presence of our always new God, who challenges us to live His project, as a plan for life rather than death, a plan for all.

What is New in Sociopolitical Advocacy

To begin we could ask ourselves: From where does the recent concern or interest in sociopolitical advocacy in the sphere of the Society of Jesus arise? To respond, we first have to acknowledge that this matter of advocacy is not new in the Society of Jesus, as it is clearly found in St. Ignatius¹⁵ and his first partners who influenced kings, princes, ambassadors, and government officials from the beginning of the order. The very history of the Society tells us of well-known works, like those of Francisco Javier, Ricci, Kino, Miguel Agustín Pro, Alberto Hurtado

11 According to Kolvenbach, “Politics is also a space for deliberation of public life and a search for harmonious relationships and solutions to conflicts in societies. Whether a man wants it or not, these facts and gestures have a sociopolitical dimension. In this sense, Ignatius was, as every human person is, a political being, and that to an imminent degree,” in *Politics and Mysticism in Ignatius of Loyola*.

12 See *Public Action and Education-Influencing to Transform*, Fe y Alegría - Between Cultures, Madrid, 2010.

13 See González Raúl, S.J. *Jesuit Social Apostolate: Some Intellectual Questions*, PI 101, p. 74, Secretariat for Social Justice, Rome, 2009.

14 GC 35, d6.

15 Bertrand D, *La politique de Saint Ignace de Loyola*, Ed. Cerf, Paris, 1985.

and so many other missionaries. We can also think of the Reductions of Paraguay as a more collective effort, emblematic in our continent, which continues to be a very important reference for the Society of Jesus in this field from which we keep receiving lessons. Today, JRS International has a clear political influence in this field¹⁶, and the Fe y Alegría movement has interventions at the continental level. More specifically, in our provinces or countries, there are many Jesuit and lay partners, some of whom were recently murdered,¹⁷ who have given up their lives advocating for just and noble causes.

Recently, at an international level, we can mention the initiative of the Conference of European Provincials, which has sought to provide a specific advocacy service for several years with the institutions of the European Union through the OCIPE (Catholic Office of Information and Initiatives for Europe), with its headquarters in Brussels.

So, what is new? I will venture to share elements that, based on my own perception, are where the news would be:

- The challenges and tests that the current context of globalization and the economic, sociopolitical, cultural, environmental, and ecclesiastic crisis present us, marked by the predominance of a prevailing development model which, far from solving the great problems and challenges of humanity, has intensified them.
- -An increase in the outrage and mobilization due to the planetary crisis that has affected some more than others, and a global sensitivity toward solidarity, environmental issues, and protection of human rights.

- The urgency that we feel from a fresh look at our mission of service to faith and the promotion of justice, by promoting transformational truths in favor of the common good, which demands a renewal and a comprehensive adjustment of our ministries, which the GC 32 already pointed out.¹⁸
- The introduction of the idea of “advocacy” as part of the GC 35 as a relevant instrument for the service of faith and promotion of justice, and one of the very actions of the Society in the mystery of reconciliation to which we are invited to serve.¹⁹
- Awareness of the potential and abilities of the Society of Jesus as an international and multicultural body,²⁰ given to the service of a common cause. We have an added value²¹ and a social base that we need to activate.
- The acknowledgement of poor or limited results from our more focal institutional practices, despite an enormous apostolic effort undertaken to produce revealing changes in our broader environments and realities. This is why we have been compelled to detect new tracks, paths, and alternatives - going farther than the local, sectorial, micro-regional, or provincial level trying to give adequate and articulate answers with an emphasis on the territorial (platforms), or on strategic matters.
- The rediscovery of the sense of our universal mission²² while facing challenges at the global and continental level, as well as challenges from third world countries.
- Resuming a “way of proceeding” for apostolic action, characteristic of the Society of Jesus.
- An ever increasing awareness that we are a body with a mission, which surpasses all

16 JRS' objectives of “advocacy,” from companionship, service, and defense of refugees and internally displaced persons are: a) To promote rights, b) To improve treatment, c) To promote lasting governmental actions, institutions, and solutions: see in Guerreo and Carrillo Felipe: “Ignatian Advocacy from the Perspective of the JRS.”

17 Luis Espinal, Rutilio Grande, Vicente Cañas, Sergio Restrepo, Jesuit martyrs from UCA.

18 GC 32, d4, n. 9 and 76.

19 GC 35, d3, n.28-29.

20 GC 35, d3, n.43.

21 The Society of Jesus consists of more than 180 Universities, 150 Social Centers and 2,000 Educational Centers in the world, including those of Fe y Alegría.

22 Letter to the entire Society from the Father General over the University of the Society of Jesus (2009).

levels: personal, work, sector, Province or Conference,²³ which has led us to develop and explore interprovincial,²⁴ inter-sector,²⁵ and inter-network²⁶ joint actions.

- The need to leave the private sector, personally as well as institutionally, to act in the public sphere.
- Resuming the vigor and the strength that represents our incarnated Ignatian spirituality,²⁷ the source of our vocation of service.
- Reaffirming the value of presence, of meaning, and of strength that the main transforming subject possesses, especially represented in excluded and deprived communities and in organized civil society.
- The development of new methods in the social practice of the Society, the fruit of permanent reflections and evaluations.
- The ever more frequent spaces for encounters or provincial, regional, interprovincial, sectorial, inter-sectorial, continental, or international events which allow us to get to know each other, meet, make analyses, exchange experiences and projects, and propose common strategies or actions.
- The alliances that we have established with entities, international cooperation, or development organizations, especially those who form part of the Society of Jesus or have close ties with it.
- The work based on networks, which are invited to further develop.²⁸ These networks have been significantly growing,

gaining preponderance in the institutional landscape, and they pose new challenges.²⁹

What do we mean by SOCIOPOLITICAL ADVOCACY?

There are a variety of definitions for this term. We choose to include the elements that we consider fundamental, understanding that we are referring to Sociopolitical Advocacy.

Some have understood and expressed sociopolitical advocacy as a combination of two words in the English language that may not be possible to translate literally into other languages. The first term, "advocacy," refers to the promotion and defense of principals on the part of some actors or agents, who develop certain strategies, through the commitment of those who make the decisions. The second term is "lobbying," understood as exerting pressure on the decision makers or on the centers of power with the intention of promoting or obtaining specific ends based on their interests.³⁰

Venturing to formulate our own definition by revisiting a few formulations,³¹ we could say that sociopolitical advocacy is: *A sociopolitical process, deliberative and constructive in opinion and action, undertaken in a coordinated manner, through the efforts of individuals and/or collectives who, faced with the conditions of exclusion and marginality, aspire to influence mechanisms, relationships of power and decision making of individuals, institutions*

23 The Society of Jesus, in recent years, has been developing Provincial Conferences in the Universal Society that are at the service of the mission (GC 35, d5, n. 17-23).

24 Common Apostolic Project of the CPAL-CAP and Networks of the sectors within the CPAL.

25 Actions in conjunction with thematic Networks. An important advance has been the projects or joint actions that are developing between Universities and Social Centers.

26 There is currently a space for reflection and for seeking joint actions sought by the President of the CPAL, where the coordinators, presidents, or those responsible for the principal Networks of the social and education sectors come together.

27 Priority 5 from CAP: "Incarnate and Apostolic Spirituality."

28 GC 35, d.3, n.29.

29 Several years ago, the GC XXXIV, in d13, n.21 encouraged collaboration between Jesuits and laity in the creation of "Ignatian apostolic networks."

30 Turner Frank, S.J. "A Model of Ignatian Advocacy," PI 101, p. 36, Secretariat for Social Justice, Rome, 2009.

31 Miller V, Veneklasen, L (2002): "A new weave of power, people & politics," Warwickire, UK, Practical Action or "Public Action and Education - Advocacy for Transformation," Fe y Alegria - Inter-Culture, Madrid 2010, etc.

or organizations, in politics, practices, ideas, and values that promote inclusion and cause changes and transformations in cultures and in political and economic structures.

As Bruno Lima Rocha³² points out in another way, in this case radicalizing the political dimension and giving it a vision that is comprehensive to our effort (which today could sound as much like a “slogan” as the revolutionary processes of the 70’s and 80’s), it involves the construction of popular power, through the radicalization of democracy at all levels, advocating in different spheres of society, such as the political, economic, social, cultural, ideological, environmental, judicial, military, and spatial order.

To be more concrete, and trying to set a course for ourselves in these services, we could delineate a few aspects of Sociopolitical Advocacy that we intend to fulfill in our practice and from the perspective of Ignatian spirituality.

a. The Requirements of Sociopolitical Advocacy

Common Ambition and Vision in the framework of utopia and our own imagination. Our way of looking from, with, and for the poor, the excluded, the marginalized, the oppressed, and the victim (the perspective of our merciful God), is condemned by this world that excludes and devastates creation, and this hard and cruel reality, where the life of so many millions of people are threatened. We are outraged, and we stand up against a system that maintains and reproduces itself thanks to a development model that excludes and disrespects creation. However, in spite of this and the tragedy that it causes, our perspective is also projective, that is to say, full of hope. Our vision of the world, of the Kingdom, or of a shared dream,

is that of a just society, inclusive, sustainable, reconciled, and in peace. In other words, we intend to make God’s dream in this world and this society, a dream which, by necessity, comes to life through us. We make a vision and we build goals not necessarily from Davos, but rather from the World Social Forum Porto Alegre (WSF).

Political Advocacy should be rooted in profound ethical convictions, founded on moral principals and solid judgment.³³ In this sense, political advocacy also requires reintegrating the ethical dimension into social analysis from its very root: the suppositions about how and why people and social groups act.³⁴ We must be aware that we are making part of a process that in turn collects the experiences of long fights for justice where the Society of Jesus, from its institutions or movements inspired by Ignatian spirituality, has made a substantial contribution.

This process should be supported by a practice of daily and permanent contact with the poor, the suffering, the excluded, the victims, and those who live in the margins.³⁵ It is from their perspective and with them. Only that commitment will give us credibility, since words and theories are lost in the wind, no matter how well-founded they are. Indeed, they are the subjects of change and transformation. In this sense, and it is worth noting, I do not consider that the ideal would be to “give a voice to” or “speak for” someone; maybe the ideal would be to “hand them a microphone,” although I know well that this depends on each context and reality.

33 Turner Frank, S.J. “A Model of Ignatian Advocacy,” PI 101, p. 37, Secretariat for Social Justice, Rome, 2009.

34 González Raúl, S.J. “Jesuit Social Apostolate: Some Intellectual Questions,” PI 101, p. 77, Secretariat for Social Justice, Rome, 2009.

35 Proximity and Commitment to Those who Live on the Edges of Exclusion: Preferentially Serving Migrants, Indigenous Populations, Victims of Violence, and Other Vulnerable Populations, through Close Presence, Reflection, and Advocacy (1st Priority of the CAP of the CPAL).

32 Bruno Lima Rocha: *Categorias fundamentais para a análise e incidência a partir da organização política proposta* – 1, 2 y 3, IHU, Unisinos, São Leopoldo, 2010.

These processes are often slow and demand perseverance, respect, understanding, and tolerance, especially when they are associated to positions that are foreign or very different, among us and with others. These processes require us to learn to work together, Jesuits with Jesuits and non-Jesuits, in a coordinated and constructive way, recognizing our differences and limitations, broadening our spaces for intervention and presence, and opening ourselves up to the development of bold and novel projects. This demands a commitment, based on clear objectives and goals that transcend the work, the sector, or the province. Working together transforms and allows us to break away from the frequent individualistic scenario of Jesuit work.

We should also include professional and theoretical investigation or reflection, but not just any kind; it must be well grounded, and academically rigorous, with solid and coherent principles, closely linked with the objectives of the processes of advocacy and with a clear political will, where love for the truth comes first,³⁶ keeping in mind that a pure and objective investigation does not exist. In addition, being firm in our convictions, we should be attentive to the coherence and consistency of our intentions or proposed actions, (as, in this case, it would be those of deliberate sociopolitical advocacy), so that we do not fall into action models and strategies that follow current trends or the demands of financial sources.³⁷ We need to discover that the answer to that other possible world that we want to build is found in solidarity. Today we speak of the need to bring solidarity to globalization to counterbalance its other effects that imprison, destroy, and kill.³⁸

36 See, Álvarez Patxi S.J.: "Social Research at the Service of Apostolic Leadership," PI 101, p. 64, Social Justice Secretariat, Rome, 2009.

37 González Raúl, S.J. "Jesuit Social Apostolate: Some Intellectual Questions," PI 101, p. 81, Social Justice Secretariat, Rome 2009.

38 So that our solidarity with the victims of injustice and with the deteriorating creation can be effective, a gigan-

All that we need requires a profound conversion and interior work within us, which sustains us in confidence in the Spirit, who guides and inspires us in the practice of an incarnated God: Jesus as a figure with a fundamental trait of compassion and producing an abundant life. The Spirit, the mysterious strength that, although not ours, acts in us, transforms us, and awakens the desire in us to fight boldly for what is noble. It is in this way that we are inspired deeply, newly, and richly from Ignatian spirituality, the source in our lives.

b. The Objectives or Goals of Advocacy

In summary, we intend to support and help transform the structures that create injustice. We are focused on assuming a greater commitment to achieve just relationships and structural changes in societies,³⁹ so that those who are excluded can have a dignified life: *"Faced with the reality of millions of people who fall victim to a social and economic model that condemns them to suffer poverty and marginalization, we need to fall in love again with the dream of a just, inclusive, sustainable, reconciled, and peaceful society."*⁴⁰

In the mid and long term, what we are looking for is not only decision-making processes in favor of one group, we are also interested in the processes of participation and successful implementation of projects or alternative

tic effort to design and implement societal alternatives is required, which includes new economic expressions and relationships with the environment... it implies selfless work and suffering, in addition to the suffering that can result from misunderstanding or persecution for having chosen this option... Aguilar José A., S.J. "La Contemplación para alcanzar amor y la ecología." [Contemplation for Attaining Love and Ecology] Spirituality Symposium, Bogota, 2012.

39 It is worth looking at the process of COMPORTE, a program of the Red Cross Social Centers of the CPAL, especially regarding the characteristics of development that we want. "The Alternative Development that We Work For - Lessons From Experience," ALBOAN, Bilbao, 2011.

40 García José Ignacio, S.J. "A Shared Vision of Ignatian Advocacy: Common Themes and Their Connections," photocopy, Brussels, 2009.

proposals. Ultimately, we could speak from an Ignatian viewpoint of creating communities of permanent discernment, where the individual as well as the collective body has an affective participation, in the very words Ignatius.⁴¹

In addition, we want to achieve advances reflected in laws, public policy or political decisions that affect the way of life of the poor and marginalized,⁴² or answer to specific situations that affect public opinion and cause behavioral changes.⁴³

c. The Traits of Characteristics of Advocacy

A rigorous and critical analysis of reality and of specific junctures that seeks to understand the contexts, particularly those related to the sectors or problematic areas in which we want to intervene.

Focusing on the actions and their place within the spaces where we would like to influence, like having a *thematic agenda*, are necessary so we do not get lost in the sea of challenges.

Clearly establishing the objective that we intend to achieve is key, and it must be purposeful. Therefore, this requires a sound plan, based on goals, strategies, tools, or actions that we intend to use or implement.

Dialogue, which builds bridges⁴⁴ and strong alliances and relationships among different people, also includes an inter-religious and intercultural dialogue. This dialogue calls us

to participate in spaces of confrontation, social partnership, lobbying, mobilization, or the creation of public policy.⁴⁵ It is a dialogue that is in turn negotiation, which requires shrewdness and cleverness.⁴⁶

It is a process of discernment based on decisions regarding changes or transformations of a social, political, economic, cultural, environmental or ecclesiastical nature.

It occupies place of tension between prophecy and pragmatism.⁴⁷ Our work must serve as a loudspeaker that denounces injustice and announces good news to the poor.

It is a critical and constructive commitment facing power and its conception that, from our lens, is understood as the power of service.

The coordination or direction of a process should be supported by, and in our case, rooted in the structures of the Society of Jesus as an institution, relying on means and resources that should be appropriately planned.

It should also include the support and follow-up with people and processes, which according to some is the essence of promoting in the Ignatian way and one of the essential characteristics as a concrete example of the JRS' mission.

Last, but not least, we must allow for contemplative, celebrative, and festive spaces. Life gains a new and profound dimension when we manage to live the experience of the

41 Affected by: "...those who most want to be affected," (SPEX97).

42 E.g.: Campaign for Quality Education for All from the Education Network of GIAN.

43 E.g.: The case of "False Positives" denounced by the Colombian CINEP, see in PI 101 p.24ss Rome, 2009.

44 The complexity of the problems that we face and the riches of the opportunities that we are offered call us to commit ourselves to build bridges between rich and poor, establishing links for collaboration between those who hold political power and those who find it difficult to make their voices heard in the field of political advocacy. (GC 35 d.3, n. 28).

45 Political advocacy, as an instrument of transparent dialogue, can not only be useful for supporting the creation of more inclusive and sustainable public policies, but also, and especially, to create bridges of dialogue between the spaces of power and those who do not participate in them, and to contribute to overcoming the historical fractures that cause mistrust between those who can decide and those who are far from the centers of decision (Miguel Cruzado, S.J., Political Advocacy in All Voices, Lima 2010).

46 "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves": Mt. 10:16.

47 Turner Frank, S.J. "A Model of Ignatian Advocacy," PI 101, p. 40, Secretariat for Social Justice, Rome, 2009.

creative and dynamic love of God, freeing us from the heavy logic of efficiency so that we can be open to freely giving.

d. The People of Advocacy

We know well that social and political processes involve a variety of agents, whether they are individuals, collectives, or institutions, and that they contribute with their own ideologies, interests, or practices that we should take into account. Advocacy necessarily implies political interaction. Among the variety of agents involved in the process, we are particularly interested in two: those who are fighting for dignified conditions and await changes or transformations to improve their life situation, and those decision makers who are located in what have been called centers of power.

e. The Spatial Levels of Advocacy

There are local, micro-regional, national, regional, continental, and universal levels. It is necessary to locate the field or the space in which we move and the demand to globalize the mission, going from the local-micro level to the global-macro level, and vice versa, with spatial levels in between, which communicate with each other and mutually affect each other, within political and social dynamics.

f. The Spheres of Advocacy

The processes of sociopolitical advocacy affect several spheres: a personal sphere (we focus on the person, a person with dignity); an institutional sphere within works and structures or other governmental or non governmental structures; a social-communitarian sphere, in which we move; a collective sphere, broader entities in terms of civil society; and a structural sphere (which entails the State or national or international organizations, key agents within the processes). Each sphere represents a particular challenge and development.

g. The Strategic Actions of Advocacy

Any political advocacy process requires strategic actions which, combined, and depending on the process and context, could be characterized as follows: increasing awareness, formation, training, public education, creation of tools and development of abilities for civic participation, formulation of proposals, involvement in the public debate, dialogues, formation of agreements, confrontations, mobilizations, public protests, massive campaigns, direct actions, defense of cases in the field of human rights and legal sponsorship, judicial battles, public policy observatories, lobbying, the use of narratives and stories, work and presence in the communication media that have impact public opinion, lawsuits, management of policies and resources, information, documentation, dissemination and communication, both internal and to other agents, etc. Also, monitoring, follow-up, and the systematization of the experiences, which allow us to learn from the processes, should be part of the different strategic actions that we need to develop.

Due to the need for interaction and joint actions, we would like to particularly mention the work in Networks, which is becoming increasingly necessary as was already mentioned when discussing advocacy. It is something we are still learning⁴⁸ about and that we are beginning to reflect upon more systematically in the Society.⁴⁹ Today, there is talk of a network of Ignatian communities or a network of networks, which could be another way of representing our universal mission,⁵⁰ as one apostolic body, weaving in this way a framework in favor of a better world.

48 García José Ignacio, S.J. "A Shared Vision of Ignatian Advocacy: Common Themes and Their Connections," photocopy, Brussels, 2009.

49 "Work in an International Network in the Society of Jesus. Challenges from the Universal Mission: Sessions in Boston College, April 28-30, 2012, Boston College-Between Cultures.

50 Franco Fernando, S.J. Thematic Networks; an Emergent Structure of Apostolic Action, PI 101, Rome, 2009.

The Ignatian and Jesuit Traits of Sociopolitical Advocacy

I connect what is Ignatian in our spirituality based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius (SPEX). What is a particular Jesuit trait, I relate to the structure and governance of the Society of Jesus, since it is not the same, a distinction that the GC 35⁵¹ helped us to better understand. The traits that I would like to examine are the following:

In the Principle and Foundation we are called to plant our whole project on firm ground, taking the actions of God in Jesus as a reference, who invites us to build the Kingdom that is already within us. A Kingdom that commands us to take on the freedom of the children of God, based on detachment, using the means in as much as they help us to reach the purpose, which is oriented toward the common good.

We have been called to a personal, community, and institutional conversion. It is not enough to work with people, culture and values; it is necessary to change structures if we intend to promote justice. We are invited into the difficult task of reconciling with ourselves, others, and creation,⁵² asking ourselves: What have we done? What are we doing? What can we do? We are also accomplices. For that reason, examining the Spiritual Exercises is a way of praying about life (SPEX 77) that in turn allows us to grasp reality in its depth and evaluate our own response, offering us material for discernment in the search for the right intentions, within a decision making process. It is in the Examen that our intentions are purified, our errors are recognized, our surprises are perceived and our interior motions discovered.⁵³

These processes involve prayer, reflection⁵⁴ and a permanent personal and communal discernment based on our motions (desires and passions). That is to say, from a permanent movement that will allow us, by seeking God in all things, to make decisions and take actions that are most accordant (effective, compassionate and intelligent) with the response to the anguish and needs of those who have been wounded and abandoned along the way.⁵⁵

By contemplating the incarnation (SPEX 101-109), we seize the definite and active *commitment* of God for humanity that includes and involves us. It is the perspective of the Triune God, in a framework of diversity, describes the different persons and with a particular glimmer to suffering, war, anguish, pain, exclusion, oppression, death, blindness, and also, to birth, peace, happiness, etc. It is the perspective from a spirituality with its eyes wide open, which discovers the good and the bad⁵⁶ and applies the senses.⁵⁷ Ignatius invites us to discover a flow of redemption in the interior of humanity, which calls out for human collaboration: "let's make redemption," where Mary is the example.⁵⁸ Redemption cannot remain in indifference, apathy, isolation, pessimism, or even in a strictly diagnostic point of view. It demands, in a radical way, to be operative, "love put to work."

From the meditation on the two standards in the SPEX, we are called to acquire internal knowledge of ourselves and of the reality that surrounds us, making wise syntheses -that is, internal or Ignatian knowledge of reality-, in a rigorous manner, in a climate of discernment

54 "Reflect on myself in order to draw profit" (SPEX 114)

55 Parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10: 27-37.

56 The parable of the wheat and the chaff: Mt. 13: 24-30.

57 The Exercises apply the senses of listening, smelling and seeing reality, letting reality affect the sensitivities so that His activity and your activity become one.

58 Álvarez Patxi, S.J.: Social Research at the Service of Apostolic Leadership, PI No. 101- 2009-1, p. 65. Social Justice Secretariat of the SJ-Rome.

51 GC 35 d6, n.10.

52 GC XXXV, d3. n, 16.

53 Eguizábal José Ignacio: "Advocacy and Ignatian Spirituality," photocopy. p.7, Bilbao, 2009.

and with a practical direction.⁵⁹ The subsequent election, in the framework of the SPEX, is none other than perceiving and accepting what God has given me as context and history: what God has given me for my freedom.⁶⁰ The Kingdom, from the Ignatian perspective of the second week of the SPEX, to which we are encouraged to adhere, must reach all the world and include every state and condition of life (SPEX 95 and 145), and it is to be nourished by following a poor and humble Jesus and his liberating actions.

In the third week, we accompany Christ in His passion and death, identifying with those who suffer or have been destroyed and with those crucified in history, assuming the dimension of frustration and failure of our world.⁶¹ We place ourselves in relation to creation, listening to its cry, not only from socio-analytic means, but also from our own heart.⁶²

Now from the fourth week of the SPEX, while contemplating resurrection and particularly the Contemplation to gain love (SPEX 230-237), we are invited to perceive that the compassionate agent is God who is love, and He calls us to be his collaborators, to another possible world from the current situation. Knowing how God loves this world, we learn to love it in the same way. Our response of love begins in contemplating God's creation and his continuous action in the world.⁶³ Our desire will be: to love and to serve in everything, from our personal encounter with the Lord God, which frees us from all binds, prompts us to commit ourselves to the suffering faces (Puebla Document) and sends us out wrapped in the mystique of happiness.

59 Ibid, p. 68.

60 Aguilar José A., S.J. "La Contemplación para alcanzar amor y la ecología" [Contemplation to Achieve Love and Ecology]. Spirituality Symposium, Bogota, 2012.

61 Eguizábal José Ignacio: "Advocacy and Ignatian Spirituality," photocopy, p. 7, Bilbao, 2009.

62 Aguilar José A., S.J. "La Contemplación para alcanzar amor y la ecología" [Contemplation to Achieve Love and Ecology]. Spirituality Symposium, Bogota, 2012.

63 Jeyaraj Xavier, S.J. "Characteristics of Ignatian Advocacy," photocopy, Rome, 2009.

We are an apostolic body of the Church, rooted in Catholic tradition. We want to live out the faith of the Church from its local and global mission with "sensus critico," guided by the Social Doctrine of the Church. We identify with many of the calls to service, especially in the documents from the Conference of Latin American Bishops in Aparecida, with the perspective of forming disciples for the mission, which focuses on advocacy.⁶⁴

Conclusions

To consciously enter into the field of sociopolitical advocacy is to take a leap in our intentions of making the Kingdom of God present, which in Ignatian language is translated as the greater and more universal good. We are called to a personal, social, and political conversion, assuming that the changes for better living conditions of the neediest populations will only be possible thanks to joint actions, which in turn demands of us an indefatigable and permanent struggle, strategically thought out and with our confidence placed in the always greater Spirit of God, who inflames us.⁶⁵

Goodwill is not enough;⁶⁶ the challenges that we face are numerous, many of which we surely have already identified. What is most important is to set out, to take part in these interior, community, institutional, and social processes and dynamics, with the spirit of common seeking, getting involved without fear of making a mistake, renouncing our

64 "A specific formation that can have significant advocacy in the different fields is urgent, above all in the vast world of politics, social reality and the economy, as well as culture, arts and sciences, international life, the media and other open realities of evangelization" (Aparecida Document, n. 283).

65 Love is a movement that takes me out of myself and that wants to involve all of my being in love (the soul comes to be inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord, SPEX 316) see: Aguilar José A., S.J. "La Contemplación para alcanzar amor y la ecología" [Contemplation for Achieving Love and Ecology]. Spirituality Symposium, Bogota, 2012.

66 This famous phrase, attributed to Marx, is very telling, and is one that we can remember, keeping our intentions in mind: "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

personal or institutional interests, with the firm conviction that, despite our weaknesses or the differences that exist among us or with others, we cannot falter before the anguish and afflictions of our people.

These challenges at the global or continental level are immeasurable, and many times unreachable from our condition and possibilities. As an example that helps us, let's consider what the decisions relating to climate change, eradication of poverty, green economics or sustainability, themes from the agenda of the Rio+20⁶⁷ can mean, all of which overwhelm us. Today, we can do very little or almost nothing, if we intend to influence global environmental policy at the State level or in international organizations; however, we can do something from our own spheres with local or regional repercussions. Now, if we venture out further into the magnitude of those global problem areas, we are also being called to address challenges that surround us and commit us as people, as institutions and as a body of collaborators in the mission in the different spheres, always allied with others.⁶⁸ The alternative would be to simply remain impervious and impassive, waiting on the rest to make a decision for those most affected, among which we stand.

Our actions should be principally legitimized by our stance of faith and its implications, by the commitment to those who are crucified in history, and by the social research and reflection that we can carry out in our institutions that are connected to reality.⁶⁹ Only mercy materializes

in transforming actions will be the distinctive factor of implementing a mission that is greater than us and that involves new efforts against great challenges. We should be aware that not everything in social and political dynamics is advocacy, and that sociopolitical advocacy is a process that is especially related to local public policy with a global dimension, although it does not end there; it is sequential and hinged on achievements that are reached in temporality.

In addition, we have to be sensible, since we cannot design ideal futures in these processes without asking ourselves about their real possibilities. We believe that the frustration that we feel about so many failed local, regional, or national projects is enough, although we know well that we also learn from our own errors and failures. We cannot waste the spaces and processes that help us build alliances among ourselves and with others, aware of the effects or results that collective and concerted actions can have, always in favor of the most disadvantaged.

Upon assessing and admitting the timid results of our actions of advocacy, we have to accept and acknowledge, in all honesty, that in spite of the efforts that we have recently made and our awareness of having been a part of the process that is underway, we have not taken the steps that we could have taken. It is hard for us to determine, as a body, what the work that we have in our hands means. Although we have moved forward, in spite of my fear of being wrong, I feel that we are lacking more vision. We do not have the required boldness and courage, we take few risks, we are too settled, and we have lost insertion. It is hard for us to turn the theoretical meaning of going to the frontier into a reality. We do not have enough political will, we continue to be sheltered in local interests and we do not take enough advantage, within healthy realism, of the strength that we have and the power that we can count on, being aware of its limits. We have lost agility and availability (something so characteristic of our way of proceeding) to openly

67 United Nations Conference On Sustainable Development

68 The experience of having been present as the Society of Jesus at Rio+20 and at the People's Summit showed us the magnitude of the challenges and the difficulty of having an impact, but at the same time we became aware of the efforts against the oppressing policies that oppress taking place through mobilization and concrete proposals elaborated by an organized civil society.

69 García José Ignacio, S.J. "A Shared Vision of Ignatian Advocacy: Common Themes and Their Connections," photocopy, Brussels, 2009.

and decidedly encourage processes of this type, being those of international advocacy networks in strategic themes such as: immigration, education, natural resources, ecology, or human rights, or the national projects and strategies from the Conferences.

By acknowledging what has been previously stated, I have the feeling that we are moving more slowly than we could. I would also like to refer to the importance and the greater effect that specific spaces of the body of the Society could have, such as the Provincial Assemblies or within the Provinces and the Sector conferences at the provincial, interprovincial, or international networks level. I also think about events at the worldwide level, such as that of the Universities of the Society of Jesus, recently celebrated in Mexico or the Jesuit schools in Boston, or the World Alumni Congress of the Society of Jesus that will soon take place Medellín, or any other event of the same proportions, all involved with education. Let us imagine all of these efforts

at the service of the campaign based on the commitment for a "Quality Education for All."⁷⁰

We need, therefore, more boldness and a spirit of greater freedom, in a commitment that is reflective, active, deliberate, and sustained against our own limitations and weaknesses, as well as against the forces that cause exclusion. We need to train ourselves in a process of continuous learning, without forgetting about keeping patience, constancy, and passion for the cause, with the purpose of being contagious to others,⁷¹ developing strategies that allow us to keep growing and hoping⁷² in spite of everything. If we work together boldly to build a new world of justice and peace, a place where everyone has a voice and we can all be fully alive, then we will be doing "Ignatian Advocacy." (AI)⁷³

⁷⁰ Education Network for advocacy of GIAN (Global Ignatian Advocacy Network).

⁷¹ To be contagious to others: "A Fire that Kindles Other Fires": GC 35 d.2.

⁷² Rom. 4:18

⁷³ Jenny Cafiso. The way is made by walking, PI 101, p. 44.

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Territorialities from the Perspective of Incarnation

Reflections from the Amazon Region for a Political Ecology in CLC Latin America

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"We ask ourselves about hope for our times. Those of us who ask ourselves perceive not only extreme anguish, but also a moment where different perspectives do not appear, where the future does not seem to be a time of clarity and elevation. And despite that, precisely because we seek a better perspective, we speak of hope" (Buber, 2006:251).

limited theories are opened to new, more complex and open interpretations today... just like the very reality around us.

This new situation reaffirms the human being, in all his/her dimensions, as the center that allows us to understand every phenomenon in our reality. But this is not about a social subject as an autonomous element; rather, it is like an axis that allows us to understand all the dimensions of our reality, with profound social, cultural, political, spiritual, ecological, and economical interlocking. We are the result of our own history, cultural references, formative processes and the geographic space where we have lived. Specifically, we are the result of our decisions regarding relationships with other human beings and with our surroundings. We are the result of our own territoriality, the one that surrounds us, and also an internal territoriality that reflects our own constructed and accepted identity.

Introduction

Territory as a Space of Symbolic and Material Interaction, as an Axis of Relationships of Inter-Knowledge and Inter-Recognition, and as a Foundation for a New Interpretation of Reality.

New theoretical approaches from the Social Sciences present us with a new challenge to accept and understand reality in a more serious, profound, and open way. Realities, all of them, appear to us as phenomena in permanent transformation, like dynamics in latent transition, and, especially as processes that are constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed, beginning with the interactions that occur between the social entities which support them. Reality, as a social construction, has come to take on a defining role in the interpretation of any societal phenomenon. This appears to us as a new paradigm. What once were rigid, partial, preconceived, and

Although there is no absolute consensus regarding the concept of "territory" in the sphere of Social Sciences, this fact in itself indicates its living, changing nature, and points to an element in construction. In Latin America, we always run the risk of taking on conceptualizations that are "imported" from other places, just as we have imported the dominant life and development models, which correspond to regions that have

imposed their structural models of society and have so often devalued the visions or life expressions of our mega-diverse region. A genuine territoriality is profoundly “endogenous” or it is not genuine at all.

Territory is an “*ideological and political (therefore, social), and economic appropriation of space*” (Di Méo, 1998:107). In the concept of territory, the relationship between the agent and the land is established from a notion of belonging to and coming from it. That is to say, we would call it a co-relationship and co-dependence. As such, the notion of territoriality, besides expressing an idea of a social construction, also represents a profound relationship with our living space and all that it contains.

Furthermore, territory is expressed “*as a cultural space, a geo-symbolic space, laden with emotions and meaning*” (Bonnemaison, 1981: 257). Territory, then, is considered to be a living process in construction, which corresponds to its internal dynamics. In a territorial perspective, there is an unavoidable need to accept a historical base to dig deep into its identity. Pierre Bourdieu (2001) expresses the need to build historical models that can explain a dynamic of actions, in which a process of “interlocking”⁷⁴ occurs in the social world. Bordieu himself (2001: 19) invites us to go against the ahistorical position of the economy or any other science that sets itself up as autonomous when interpreting reality, to locate the origin of territoriality as a social structure. “*The social world is accumulated history, and if it is not to be reduced to a discontinuous series of instantaneous mechanical equilibria between agents who are treated as interchangeable particles*” (Bourdieu, 2001: 131). This assertion is of great relevance to the concept of territorial construction.

Territoriality, as a social and symbolic construction, should be understood from a complex network of relationships of inter-knowledge, inter-recognition, and inter-dependence. This is a profound truth for any human relationship, but also for the relationships of territories with apparently intangible aspects like our culture and spirituality, with the natural environment that allows us to live, and with our history.

As the latest aspect stemming from the new territorial dimension of the Social Sciences, we make note of what we consider to be some of the most important aspects for reaching a connection between the previously discussed territorial identity and what, in our spirituality of commitment, we call an “*incarnation or incarnated spirituality*.” Karl Polanyi, in his book “*The Great Transformation*,” published in the year 1944, not only writes a critical reading for the liberal market-centered model and all the territorial inequalities it caused and would later cause with its current dominant manifestation of a “*neo-liberal market*,” but he also takes into account the most fundamental experiences of the social construction of territories and human relationships, from the definition of identities and societies that are created from:

1. Reciprocity (capacity to give back to others, in a spirit of gratuity, considering what they have contributed for you to live a full life);
2. Redistribution (a vision of communities that are able to create mechanisms so that they configure a structure based on equity rather than cause economic, cultural, social, or political inequalities or domination); and
3. Solidarity (as a fundamental center of human relationships that is sustained by the capacity for generosity and giving of human beings to build significant relationships and more fulfilling life structures in community environments).

⁷⁴ Interlocking: profoundly related, involved-immersed.

The Construction of a Territorial Identity Based on “Incarnation Spirituality” Sustained by Otherness

To reaffirm the goal of this task of articulating mainly social reflection, considering our spirituality as key through the territorial interphase, we take into account Beduschi's idea of *“territory as a social construction, marked by a set of interactions among actors that molds a determined identity over time and forms particular relationships between them”* (Beduschi, 2007: 104). This assertion explains the unavoidable feelings that arise in any relational experience between human beings that affect the construction of the territory in which we co-exist. The relationship, and the interpretation of territorial identity, indicates the truth about the inescapable human experience of otherness. We could say, therefore, that territoriality - at the objective and subjective/personal and community level - is the result of becoming who we are, based on the experience of encounters with others.

“The relationship with the other empties me of myself and does not cease to do so as I always discover new resources. Desire is revealed as goodness: Insatiable Compassion” (Levinas, 1974). There is no greater freedom, nor any more profound way to feel fulfillment, than living out the mystery and meaning of life through the eyes of the other. The other questions me and moves me to understand that he whom I call “other” is rather myself seen through other eyes that seem foreign, although deep down they represent me, with all my desires and hopes. Therefore, we are together, in communion, a reflection, albeit limited, of all humanity, with its dark shadows, but also with its unfathomable hope.

“In drawing near to the other, where the other is under my responsibility from the beginning, something has overflowed my freely made decisions, has covertly gotten inside me, thus aligning my identity” (Levinas, 1974). The other is, therefore, an imprint of God Himself who becomes one with us and among us. The Incarnation - for believers in Christ as the way, the truth, and the life - can be daily confirmed in the experience of otherness, as the mystery of life.

A deep and complex question arises to sustain this reflection: How then does territoriality, as a space where social, material and symbolic interaction, and otherness occur, relate to incarnation spirituality?

As a starting point, I would like to share a beautiful reflection from Buber (2006: 252): “Only when human beings feel as brothers can they become participants in an authentic freedom from one another, and in a genuine equality between one another.”

In a world like the one that we have created, there is a massive experience of un-kinship, distance from one another, and the absence of mystery. Above all, our world reflects the greatest personal and structural sin of our times: The act of believing in self-creation (self-sufficiency, self-referral, self-veneration, self-assertion, and thus self-salvation). In this world, we urgently need to regain the foundational act of the kinship that takes place in a specific territoriality that can be described, in Ignatian Spirituality, in reference to a diversity that emerges from the different “times, places, and people,” and especially from the “Contemplation of the Incarnation” (SPEX 106-108).

Based on my experience of faith, my commitment, and above all, my confirmation that God makes Himself present in our reality, especially in the faces of the most vulnerable, the experience of territoriality is a social and symbolic construction, a space of inter-knowledge,

inter-recognition, and interdependence. It is an axis of otherness that constructs a possible society from reciprocity, redistribution, and solidarity that can and should be understood from the experience of Incarnation. This adds a theological meaning that allows us to look at our lives from the perspective of the Kingdom that must be territorialized here and now as an eschatological certainty.

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, a substantial element of Ignatian spirituality, allow us to be nourished from the depths of God's creative mystery. The possibility of applying the senses and venturing into the very experience of God, our loving father, contemplating the very moment of the most colossal act of otherness, brings us to understand territoriality, even from a theological perspective.

The text of the Spiritual Exercises raises the following perspective from a theological-territorial premise:

[106] 1st point. To see the various persons: and first those on the surface of the earth, in such variety, in dress as in actions: some white and others black; some in peace and others in war; some weeping and others laughing; some well, others ill; some being born and others dying, etc. 2. To see and consider the Three Divine Persons... how They look on all the surface and circuit of the earth, and all the people in such blindness, and how they are dying... (SPEX)

The experience of contemplating the reality of our world, just as it is, in all its contrasts, and the expression of our poor and hopeful humanity that shows us our finiteness, our limitations and our potential, allows us to understand the notion of territory based on the theological premise that upholds the contemplation of the Incarnation. The sociological and political reflections about inter-knowledge, inter-recognition, and interdependence can be sustained in the divine capacity of observing

reality, and being moved by His most loved creation, to the point of deciding to territorialize Himself. That is, to make Himself dirt and bone for us, in us and with us, to reclaim all that we are. To also reorient us toward what we are all called to in this life: to the fullness of love. For believers, the followers of the living and redeeming Christ of reality, the Incarnation is a real, territorial act that continues happening in our midst and before our eyes, in those forgotten places, just as it happened with the birth of Christ, at the margins. This is the reason for the Christ-centeredness of this reflection.

Furthermore, contemplating the Incarnation allows us a unique understanding of otherness that also supports the experience of territoriality for reciprocity, redistribution, and solidarity:

[107] 2nd point. To hear what the persons on the face of the earth are saying, that is, how they are talking with one another... and likewise what the Divine Persons are saying, that is: "Let Us work the redemption of the human race"... [108] 3rd point. To look then at what the persons on the face of the earth are doing... likewise what the Divine Persons are doing, namely, working out the most holy Incarnation... (SPEX)

To accept that the mystery of the Trinity was the origin of Christ's coming to dwell with us [to territorialize himself with us] also calls us to consider the Incarnation as the very same act where otherness comes from and allows us to know territorial identities from interacting with all created beings. In the Incarnation, two foundational types of "otherness" are expressed: 1. Inter-Trinitarian, and 2. Trans-Trinitarian.

An Inter-Trinitarian otherness is expressed in the very act of interaction within the Divinity, an intuition of dialogue between God's united and diverse essences, and in the symbolic, material and spiritual definition of establishing a life plan for humanity, from the deep love that comes from desiring the complete fullness of

creation. Confirming the diversity of human territoriality, as an ambiguous and beautiful, painful and joyful fact, is the trigger for an Inter-Trinitarian otherness that allows for the dialogue of the Divinity with eyes on the Earth-territoriality where human life takes place.

There is also a Trans-Trinitarian otherness that is built from a Divinity, which allows to be deeply moved, to the point of moving God's will toward expressing love for human territoriality. The passion of the Trinity is so strong for the creation, that determining its complexity, contrasts, and possible removal from the project of love that was established in the Inter-Trinitarian dialogue leads to a new otherness, now Trans-Trinitarian. That is to say, the very Divinity chooses to send one of the Trinity, to move into our territory in every way, except in sin, and to become the life model for everyone. The presence of Jesus among us, as a unanimous expression of redemption on the part of the Trinity, converts human territories into privileged places for the construction of the Kingdom.

Moreover, the conditions in which the Divinity exercises this Trans-Trinitarian otherness expresses a preferential option for the most vulnerable, a special tendency for the simple. It opens the door to a model of human life based on Jesus as a paradigm that makes us question our own life and speaks to us about redeemed territorialities from the option for life and love, with an unavoidable option for those who are excluded in our world. The territoriality that we are called to build is supported by the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:1-12), which speak to us of the complete otherness that emerges from the poor and impoverished.

The Incarnation gives us an understanding to build different relationships with every creature on the face of the earth. The Divinity's perspective of otherness about the territories and the call to build different spaces of hope, which are all part of one single Kingdom,

also emanate from the Divinity's fundamental option to redeem all humanity. This way, we also understand the preferential option for redemption that God desires for the poorest (all with a specific name and last name, and a concrete territory). It is among the poor that the experience of the Incarnation moves, from the arrival of Christ in the margins, all the way up to our times, and as such, the preferential option for the most vulnerable from the perspective of otherness is original.

The Incarnation and the world project (territorial identity-otherness-preferential option) is not a utopia; it is a reality that becomes an irrefutable call for all those who follow Christ. If we recognize our God of life in everything created, we are called to give our lives for the dignity of people and nature, for achieving socioeconomic equality, and for recognizing cultural diversity and defending minority groups and their identities. We are called to plead for respect and the construction of territories that are fulfilling, inserted into our history, so they become places of symbolic and material interchange that support the Kingdom of justice, peace, and love.

We also recognize the ecological dimension of territoriality in this redemption, which, in the Incarnation, is understood as the very fruit of God's loving creation and as a call to all followers of Christ to care for life in all its manifestations. We are called to understand creation, not from a viewpoint of idealization or radicalization of absolute visions, but rather from a place of deep reflection in order to understand the tapestry of life and its complexities, a tapestry that comprises and sustains nature. We are called to love creation for the life upheld and emanated from it, for the unfathomable mystery sheltered within, and for our very origin as humans that represents life given to us. Territoriality, which depends on inter-knowledge, inter-recognition, and inter-dependence, is equally important in our relationship with nature.

Toward an Incarnated Territoriality from an Ecological-Environmental Perspective

The redeeming perspective that comes from the Incarnation, which we have previously explained, allows us to reconsider reflection on otherness, territorialities, and the preferential option for the most vulnerable. From this perspective as a foundation, we now want to reflect on the ecological-environmental perspectives that become a fundamental element of our task as builders of the Kingdom and as a responsibility of society as a whole. If territory is a space where the Incarnation takes place and sustains all of our sociological reflections about social interactions and constructions of identities, structures, and realities, then we need to deepen our understanding of the complexity and the origin of territory as a natural-ecological event.

For many ancient cultures, territory is decisively related to their spirituality, to their origin and identity, and to the very land where they live. For this reason, territory is also thought of as a natural space that provides them with the necessary elements to have a full life, known by some cultures as “good living.” The concept of territory, which represents the place where identity is nurtured, transcending mere access to land, becomes a fundamental aspect to understanding God’s Covenant with His people.

Territory is the home, the household, the place where life is built. Ecology also becomes a specific territory. Even from the etymological root of “ecology,” we can see this territorial notion: “oikos” in Greek, means “home or household” and “logos” refers to “the study of.” Thus, ecology is “the study of our own home.” How often do we approach ecology from is notion of absolute belonging, of being part of this home and territory?

Reciprocity, redistribution and solidarity, all aspects that represent the fullness of territorial identity previously discussed, can and should be equally applied to our relationship with our home, with ecology. This allows us to overcome absolute or radical visions and gives us a perspective of co-responsibility. All that we have in life comes from this home of ours; to move the God’s Incarnation project forward. We need this home; otherwise, a project leading to a fuller life would be unsustainable. Reciprocity with our natural territory and home allows us to experience God’s gratuity and the need to take care of our home, just as it cares for us, giving us what we need for life. Reciprocity with nature is an existential and determining aspect of our future.

Redistribution, in an ecological context, must always refer to doing all that is needed so that our home maintains the necessary balance to continue with its natural reproductive process. We have impacted this process to a great extent, and now we must make sure we can continue sharing new possibilities for life for all who inhabit this world.

And lastly, the notion of solidarity is what directs us to a complete determination to take care of our beloved Earth as an absolute vocation of love. If God has based redemption on creation and territoriality for the fullness of humanity, then we must accept the fundamental command to take care of creation so that the construction of the Kingdom may continue.

There also is a key aspect in the Incarnation territorial perspective and it is otherness itself, from an ecological viewpoint. The aspects of Inter-Otherness and Trans-Otherness that emanate from the very experience of contemplating the Incarnation are fundamental for the life plan that is made possible from Ecology:

1. Inter-Otherness that is confirmed by the necessary balance in every habitat, where no being can explicitly and intentionally refuse

the possibility of the other's existence; and where humans, being God's most marvelous creation, have the explicit command to care for and safeguard this balance so that abundant life may be possible.

2. Trans-Otherness that can be clearly reflected in the "trans-generationality" that implies a moving and loving perspective, resembling the divinity's view, in which we are responsible for those who have yet to arrive on this Earth. We are responsible for the generations to come and their possibility of experiencing God's fullness. Our decisions with respect to human relations, and especially our relationship with nature, will determine the possibility of future generations being able to experience that fullness. This may be clearly upheld by a simple equation stating that in a planet where resources are limited, nothing can grow indefinitely, either economically or materially.

Today we see that the dominant view of development and the world's most influential groups with economic power refuse to accept this basic notion. In their foolishness and limited vision, they count on growing without limits, leaving millions of people today out of possibility, and an incalculable number of people (trans-generational context) in the future who will not have the possibility to live abundantly or to survive with dignity. This position reflects the basic sin of our times mentioned before: The act of believing in self-creation (self-sufficiency, self-reference, self-veneration, self-assertion, and thus, self-salvation).

Our planet underwent a process of millions of years to create an integrated system, and its relationship with every living species has been the framework of autonomy and regulation that has allowed for life in all of its manifestations. Today, the planet's capacity for "self-organization" is in question, and, faced with the effects of consumption and a market-oriented lifestyle, our planet's ability for "self-healing" is also in danger (Shiva 2001).

Today, ecological issues have become part of the political sphere. Scientists from different disciplines state that because the current model of consumption and exploitation does not work in harmony with the environment, it is not sustainable unless significant changes occur. "Taking into account the environment and the balance between humanity and the planet's resources is central evidence for every true and serious policy" (Castoriadis 2006: 274). The experience of the freely given redemption in the Incarnation and the balance of creation itself are being violated. Our vocation as builders of the Kingdom must be strongly oriented toward defending our home and the home of our future generations. For this reason, the environmental problem becomes a fundamental mission and a primary ethical issue for the present and the future.

In addition, the option for justice and the most vulnerable is strongly related to the current ecological vision, since indigenous groups, farmers, or marginalized populations are being deprived of their lands, which has a strong impact on their daily life and their life relationships, as well as on their health, due to extractive conditions and contaminating elements. "The impact of these changes disproportionately affects specific social groups who often protest and resist. Some threatened groups appeal to indigenous territorial rights and also to the sacredness of nature to defend and ensure their living" (Martínez Alier, 2004:27).

Based on everything previously mentioned, let us consider that the field of political ecology is a resource and a project that allows us to analyze territorial realities in light of the Incarnation. It allows us to integrate the phenomena that surround the dominant model of consumption and development faced with the social and environmental realities of the most vulnerable groups. It also allows us to affirm the responses from community resistance to find hopeful ways to face the ravenous extractive structure that exploits nature.

Ecology is subversive because it questions the capitalistic conception that dominates the planet. It rejects its central motive of growing without ceasing production and consumption. It shows the catastrophic impact of a capitalist logic on the natural environment and on the life of human beings (Castoriadis, 2006: 265).

Political ecology is recognized as a new space of confrontation between social dynamics; it is not simply a reinterpretation with new tools. It is a novel possibility to respond to an equally novel and extreme situation: "It implies weeding the land, dislocating the conceptual mountains and moving the plow of discussion that defines its original soil to build a seminal basis that gives identity and support to this new terrain" (Leff, 2006: 21).

Rural communities, especially of indigenous farmers in Latin America, have shown, on several occasions, their ability to have a harmonious relationship to the environment, which allows them to reap a balanced benefit and to care for it to ensure its reproduction: a relationship of genuine reciprocity.

The Amazon region as a space to rediscover and reaffirm the Incarnation spirituality of our Ignatian identity: a work in progress for the worldwide Christian Life Community - CLC.

The Christian Life Community -CLC- as an Ignatian lay community that is present in 70 countries all over the planet, has presented major apostolic subjects at the international level, as a result of processes experienced in the World Assembly in Itaici, Brazil in 1998, which were confirmed in the World Assembly

in Fátima, Portugal, in 2008. These themes are ECOLOGY and MIGRATION, both complex problem areas in and of themselves. It is important to recognize that we have identified these issues as the result of community discernment, but we have achieved little in terms of articulating an international response to these difficult issues that demand a consistent response with our Incarnation spirituality and preferential option for the most vulnerable. For this reason, we would like to assign a more concrete sense to this confirmation of the Spirit's call. We see an opportunity to involve CLC in the ecological issue, in the following specific experience.

Background on the Pan-Amazonian Reality.⁷⁵

The Amazon territory, a vitally important biome (living system) for the region of Latin America and the world is one of the most complex and rich spaces in biodiversity, traditional cultural expressions, and diverse resources. Historically, the Amazon territory, because of its remoteness, inaccessibility, and our lack of information about it, has been excluded from many of the state interventions that develop social policy and address the priority needs in the areas of health, education, productive, or infrastructure projects for the population of this territory.

The contemporary dynamics for the South American region, the whole continent, and the world have adopted a model for discussing progress and development primarily based on the industrialization and foreign trade through the extraction of raw materials and agricultural products. This model is based on the premise that development depends on constant growth (as if it were unlimited), and seeks any means to sustain itself. In the last few decades, due to the oil and mining industry boom in several countries in the region, the Amazon territory

⁷⁵ Taken and adapted from the document "Pan-Amazon: from "back yard" to "central plaza of the planet" What is our prophetic mission?" from the Amazonian Itinerant Team. Fernando López, S.J. Laura Valtorta MdI, and Arizete Miranda Dinelly CSA

became one of the most strategically important regions for sustaining this model of development.

With the largest and very valuable oil fields in the region, the Amazon region went from being the “back yard” to becoming the “central plaza”⁷⁶ of the world. In addition, because of the renewed strategic interest in large-scale mining that was once again vital to the extractive scheme of governments, as well as foreign and national business interests. Some of the world’s largest mineral deposits are found in the Amazon region.

However, several of the main mineral deposits in the Amazon region are located in areas established as indigenous territories, ecological reserves, and natural parks. In these territories, colonization and dependent relationships have also caused a serious impact on the local cultural identity, the ancestral productive practices, and the families’ capacity for self-sustenance. This profound change of identity and practices is due to the influence of an urban-western development model.⁷⁷

In this context, the Pan-Amazon region⁷⁸ opens an new and crucial discussion about the future of humanity and of the planet itself; especially regarding the models of regional articulation

in Latin America and in the world, based on this equation of development = economic growth = irrational exploitation of natural resources, where the most economically powerful countries continue seeking ways to take advantage of a situation that has been perpetuated over centuries.

Motives for this growing interest and some defining facts about its strategic importance to the future of humanity:⁷⁹

“The Pan-Amazon region covers a surface area of 7.5 million km². It extends through 8 countries of South America and French Guyana.⁸⁰ It represents 43% of the surface area of South America. The Amazon River has more than 1,100 main tributaries and an infinite number of streams, which knit together the most extensive water system in the world, with more than 25,000 km apt for navigation. The Amazon region concentrates 20% of the fresh, unfrozen water on the planet that empties into the Atlantic Ocean, helping to regulate the systemic balance of the ocean. The Amazon biome (living system) is not ‘uniform.’ It is a gigantic archipelago of ecosystems rich in biodiversity. Here, 34% of the primary rainforest on the planet hosts 30% - 50% of the fauna and flora.

The current population of the Pan-Amazon region is estimated at 40 million. Of that number, 3 million are indigenous, distributed in approximately 400 towns that speak 250 different languages belonging to 49 linguistic families. This enormous sociocultural and linguistic diversity is a consequence of the human capacity to adapt to the rich and diverse Amazonian biome. The

76 Ibid.

77 Currently, 70% of the Amazon population is concentrated in the large cities of the region, with an almost total absence of public policy for the interior communities. According to some analysts, this policy of population emptiness in the interior of the Amazon is not by chance; rather, it is perversely designed to be able to exploit the natural resources of the region while minimizing social conflicts. This understanding indicates the importance of strengthening and helping to stabilize the Amazonian populations in their own territories, always seeking to promote the “good living” of their world vision and ancestral practices in the midst of the new historic juncture in which we live.

78 The notion of the Pan-Amazon region involves a look at everything that constitutes the living system known as the Amazon in the South American continent. It involves more than 10 countries, and a complex living system that is nourished from the ice caps of the volcanoes and to the ocean, passing through innumerable territories, ecosystems, communities, and cities that depend on this living system.

79 Taken and adapted from the document “Pan-Amazon: from “back patio” to “central plaza of the planet” What is our prophetic mission?” from the Amazonic Itinerant Team. Fernando López, S.J. Laura Valtorta Mdl, and Arizete Miranda Dinelly CSA

80 1. Brazil (67%), 2. Bolivia (11%), 3. Perú (13%), 4. Ecuador (2%), 5. Colombia (6%), 6. Venezuela (1%), 7. Guyana, 8. Surinam and 9. French Guyana (all Guyanas 0.1%).

socio-environmental diversity of the Amazon region represents an enormous richness for humanity and the life of the planet. It is an expression of the diverse (Trinitarian) face of God; its unity can only be thought of and articulated in diversity.”

Today the Amazon region is being devoured by lumber and paper pulp industries, as well as oil and mining companies, pharmaceutical companies and agribusiness, hydroelectric companies, waterways, and large highways that slash the jungle and the territories of the indigenous people, who are the most affected, along with the traditional communities of the region.

The opinion of the Latin American Catholic Church, convened in Aparecida (Brazil, 2007) is:

“Very frequently, the preservation of nature is subordinate to economic development, with damage to biodiversity, the depletion of water reserves and other natural resources, air pollution and climate change” (Aparecida Document 66). “In the decision-making process about the richness of the biodiversity and nature, traditional populations have been practically excluded. Nature was and continues to be assaulted. The land was pillaged. Water is being treated as if it were a negotiable asset for businesses, and has become a property disputed by the great powers” (AD 84).

Our CLC Perspective Regarding the Pan-Amazon Region⁸¹

We first acknowledge that the issue of Ecology is one of our apostolic priorities at the international level, and it is unavoidable to think about the Pan-Amazon region as a fundamental axis for any initiative related to the environment that

intends to have a direct impact on defending life.⁸² The Pan-Amazon region becomes a definite ecological enclave for the world, since it represents an area where there is still much to be done to promote an active defense of the environment. As a place in grave danger, it requires meaningful action on the part of social organizations. The Catholic Church itself has promoted action from Pope Benedict XVI's address and the proposals made at the Latin American Conference of Bishops, CELAM.

Furthermore, as CLC, we have recognized the need to work in apostolic networks. Based on our potential and limitations, we need to work together to address the complexity and the dimension of the environmental reality. We highly recommend reading our document about guidelines for our sociopolitical advocacy. The document describes, in detail, our perspective, which profoundly coincides with this initiative of participation in the Amazonian Itinerant Team, AIT. Based on this groups and its specific proposal, we are called to work in networks with the Jesuits, with the Church, and with other Christian organizations. This work proposal is already underway and will be a fundamental aspect in the mission of CLC Latin America and hopefully of the worldwide community as well, in the coming years.

81 For a deeper reflection on the CLC perspective on the theme of apostolic initiatives and international sociopolitical advocacy, we suggest reading Annex 1, and the specific document on this theme.

82 Today, there is a growing discussion on the relationship between the environmental theme and the phenomenon of displacement and human mobility observed in the Amazon region due to social-environmental conflicts. In general terms, the migration theme is our second international apostolic priority; therefore, the two primary axes in this territory that orient our global action are critically integrated.

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Part II

Sociopolitical Intervention and Advocacy in CLC Latin America

Notes and Reflections from CLC-Paraguay Advocacy Group

Follow-up to “The Political Dimension of the Social Commitment of CLC-Latin America”

CLC Paraguay Team: Norma Cabrera, Héctor Lacognata, Sergio Oddone, Silvio Quiñónez, María del Carmen Schaerer, Gloria Servín, Yeny Villalba CLC Paraguay

Sociopolitical Dimension of CLC’s Christian-Ignatian Commitment

The Role of Christians Facing the Current Reality: How to Approach it From Our Identity and Spirituality

The historical Jesus gives us a clue to understanding where being a Christian leads us; Jesus was a man with a cause. He was not simply a good person. He was an individual open to the Father’s revelation. He went about discovering his mission to the point of becoming a man with such hope and utopia, what we consider a fundamental option today. Jesus reveals to us what God is like and how He came to be a human person. This fundamental option is what we call building the Kingdom of God. This is Jesus’ cause, and it must be the cause of His followers.

The Kingdom is the great Christian mission, and the Samaritan way proposes this method: to stop and look at reality, to see the many faces and stories of our people that prompt us to dismantle our safety and supposed efficiency. In other words, to humble ourselves and, on the way, deal with the painful situations that

*“The great liberation is the liberty of Christ, which incorporates the fight for liberty of its people into faith in Christ. That fight brings about the guarantee of a comprehensive, complete, immortal liberty.”
(Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero).*



surround us, the suffering faces of Christ that challenge and question us. As lay Christians, it is urgent that we leave from the sweet apathy of good people and, like prophets of new times, set out with trembling and courage, to support innovative strategies for social change.

Additionally, modern economic theories about social justice and inclusion can help us in our search for innovative tools in constructing our Christian lay identity.

Despite an “organized selfishness” and our own weaknesses and fallacies, some advances nourish our hope, reminding us that God’s mercy, which is greater, supports us. For this reason, this experience of looking at reality together awakens a deep motivation to keep dreaming of another possible world.

Discovering the meaning of “advocacy,” which is to advocate for changing sociopolitical structures, can strengthen our Christian vocation, as a path to the incarnation of faith, based on our Christ-centric and Anthropocentric Spirituality. Believing in civic values is a concrete and necessary way to transform the structures that cause social inequalities. We can adapt Ignatian tools to advocate in social reality, especially community discernment, brotherly correction, being contemplative in action, and to look at how Jesus used rebukes, interrogations, presence, voice, proposal, silence, testimony, and hope. To react like Jesus is to remain in His demanding life ethics, which is the calling of all Christians.

Lights and shadows in CLC, in Latin America, and in Paraguay facing these urgent realities.

Our inner call to work with the poor and the victims of society is a Grace that we have received, and as CLC it is our task to know how to receive it, care for it, and make it grow. Our Christ-centric identity refers us to the historical Jesus in His activity to advocate in His reality and transform it in the direction of the Kingdom. Specifically, prophetic indignation, compassion in solidarity, and permanent liberating activity are the claim to the poor's significance in history.

In this context, Jesus's first political attitude is one of solidarity with those marginalized and excluded by the system, by the Empire as well as by the religious leaders. Jesus's attitude is not just an act of goodness or personal principle. It is a sign of the new Kingdom that has now begun, and a signal that should be followed by all people (Mark 2:15, Luke 7:2-10; Luke 11:14-22, Mt. 8:17, Luke 6:20-24).

As CLC, we are called to give testimony of this resistance and the tenacity of hope. However, a constant temptation in our CLC groups is to have a personal and complacent slant, having the good conscience of the Levite and the priest, of “good people.” We run the risk of losing our vital drive for apostolic service and emptying our prophetic mission, without even managing to experience the authentic faith that changes our life toward another possible world. Another temptation is to only add members of the middle and upper classes to our numbers. We lack strategies to include groups from peri-urban and rural areas that, if integrated, would give us a true sense of a community of people following the Lord. However, there are also proposals in CLC for synergy with solidarity networks that generate significant movements and create new realities of social transformation. Aware of the need to be competent in their vocation of service, these communities commit to systematic joint formation, which helps integrate the different groups and creates identity in the complex mission to which we are called.

A sign of maturity in CLC is how the mission is heading toward the frontier issues that question us, because looking from those places, discernment becomes a better guide to know where, when, and how to advocate. Through our spirituality, we are called as CLC to deepen our reflection and mission in the sociopolitical dimension of our Christian faith, supporting the Ignatian way of making contemplation and redemption in the world. For CLC Paraguay, participating in this space could be a very enriching experience, as well as a very motivating challenge, since it is a point of convergence of all our personal and community missions, such as our family, professional, or political missions.

Basic sociopolitical criteria in CLC to coherently advocate in our current reality based on our Ignatian Spirituality

In the *Gaudium et Spes* constitution, the Second Vatican Council looked at human history and the politics within. The Church tells us that being a Christian involves being concerned that the world and society are ordered toward the common good. Thus, we can conclude that Christian spirituality involves an “incarnation spirituality,” committed to the world and its processes, in search of a more just and caring world. Above all, the political action of Christians must not be naïve, given that no system will achieve the complete happiness of human beings and no perfect system exists. For this reason, a critical vision of the political and social world, of labor and economy, will avoid distortions and greater evils. The Kingdom of God always transcends history, but it does not leave history behind. For this reason, the Second Vatican Council calls us to engage in critical and committed citizen participation.

To work from the perspective of the poor requires a constant conversion of our lifestyle to discover the face of God incarnate. It is our hope that our lay apostolate may work through our organizational structures to dynamically respond to the challenges, human needs, and social demands we face, with an attitude of growth, seeking, and constant self-critique.

In conclusion, we would like to share a phrase in the Guaraní language: “*Paraguái jaipotáva, ñandémante jajapóta*,” which roughly translates to: “Only we can build the Paraguay we love.” This phrase is part of the citizens’ daily life, and it represents a hope and a challenge: to dream together of a project for this country,

and to become aware that only a committed and responsible participation will bring that community dream about. To be good Christians means to be good citizens who are called like Jesus to serve society, by taking part in the problems and solutions of the community, the country, the continent, and the planet. Advocating in the sociopolitical world where we live is a civic duty, a contribution, an opportunity, and a great possibility for Christians.

With help from the instruments that Ignatian Spirituality gives us, we can discern in community according to the breath of the Spirit and act accordingly and effectively. We need formation to intervene in public debates or support vulnerable groups, as well as to present and evaluate community proposals. In prayerful action, we need to participate in public policy and the decisions that affect the well-being of all social groups, especially the excluded, the marginalized, and the weak.

The face of God is discovered in those excluded faces and in the fight for them and with them. In a world of monopolization and discrimination, fighting for the space that justly belongs to them dignifies us as people.

This experience of shouldering reality makes us more human, and it is precisely the revolutionary contribution of Christianity to social sciences: to grow and develop together, to share the world and its resources in solidarity, to make it sustainable over time and a habitable place where we can be fully happy.

Basic Characteristics of the Global Reality in Latin America

Introduction

"Another Latin America is possible" could be a slogan that brings back an aspiration, a dream, a utopia. It also can be the title of an action program that we are not starting today because it is already happening; recognizing ourselves, our culture, our identity, our potential, our history, and our creations that form this Great Country.

This great country, more than an already existing country, is a utopian country. The best of what has been, the best of what is dreamed, the best of yesterday and today, the fights and martyrdoms, the marches and songs, all have considered Latin America as the Continent of Utopia. We are the land of "our flower" defended by the Mayas, we are the "Quilombo" of Zumbi, the "Great Country" of Bolívar, the "Our America" of Martí and Sandino. This is the utopian collective, with luminous names and anonymous crowds, with around five hundred years of indigenous, black, and popular resistance.

We can never renounce the hope and happiness that utopia brings. And today, more than ever, in this time of disappointments and intolerance, we must cultivate the values of a utopia that is as much ours as it is universal, as "impossible" as it is undeniable. And as always, let us try to make Helder Cámara's values of Utopia present now in reality, step by step, hand by hand.

Don Helder Cámara, forerunner and prophet, translated Goethe and brought it to our Latin American reality: "The dream that is dreamed alone, might be pure illusion; the dream that we dream together, is the sign of a solution."

Latin American unity can be, in this perspective, a project of political, economic, social, and cultural integration. A project, built from the people who are fighting, that allows us to better resist policies of domination and integrate with a sense of identity into a perspective of globalized hopes. This is where the endless search for our own identity resides. We are an ambiguous people who, not being indigenous, neither African nor European, are still waiting to proudly accept ourselves as the New People that we are. It is in this global context that we will try to characterize the reality of Latin America, considering its three dimensions: socioeconomic, political-cultural, and environmental aspects.

The Socioeconomic Aspect

At the beginning of 2012, storm clouds reappeared over the Latin American economy. The sharp worsening of the global crisis promised a slowing of growth that increased the general anxiety. During the last five years, the regional GDP maintained an upward trend of 5% per year, despite having a slowdown in 2009.

Facing a probable international recession, regional caucuses multiplied. The frequency of these encounters is in sharp contrast to the decline in the Ibero-American Summits. The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) is reaching a new level of centrality and beginning to operate as a broadened MERCOSUR (Common Market of the Southern Cone), incorporating countries that signed Free Trade Agreements with the United States.

The Bank of the South is another indicator of the extreme sluggishness that seems to dominate in integration projects. Several years have passed since its formal constitution, and it still needs three parliamentary confirmations from the seven parties that undersigned the project.

But the most relevant issue occupies little space in the original reflection. What to do with the enormous reserves that are being accumulated in Latin America? As a result of a trade surplus and an inflow of foreign currency, Central Banks now hold 574 billion dollars. Will the new resources support coordinated productive investments, or will they be squandered on actions that perpetuate dependency?

The term “extraction for export” offers an accurate portrait of the current plan. It highlights the grim consequences of contamination from mining and agriculture for export, to the detriment of domestic supply. This reliance on extraction increases Latin America’s vulnerability without necessarily generating processes of “deindustrialization,” paths totally opposed to the development of manufacturing.

In terms of social polarization, Latin America remains at the top of all international records. The region includes four of the countries that lead this embarrassing indicator (Colombia, Bolivia, Honduras, and Brazil). Some countries in the region have begun a more sustainable neo-development attempt. However, the same attempt appears obstructed by the predominance of mining, the foreignizing of the economy, and the displacement of the old national bourgeoisie for new exporting groups.

Poverty in Latin America is not due to a lack of resources, but rather to the economic control of the rich countries. This perverse logic is reproduced inside our countries. It involves a process that historians from privileged contexts have preferred to silence. About 5% of the population of Latin America controls 25% of the national income. On the other hand, 30% of the population controls only 7.5% of the national income. This is the largest social gap on the planet.

Wealth and poverty form part of an ideological construction that, although clearly “benefitting” the rich, charges an unacceptable toll on all humanity.

Political-Cultural Aspect

The forms of citizen participation have been significantly modified in the last few decades. Unions, which in the twentieth century played a key role in the process of integration and dignification of workers, have begun to lose their density. Even if they continue to be important for the defense of their corporate interests, in most countries they have lost a good part of their former role as political actors and builders of collective identities. The political parties equally appear to be in a crisis, and many times they are *ad hoc* constructions that support the circumstantial ambitions of individuals.

The new forms of organization have been relocated to civil society organizations. Otherwise, somewhat spontaneous explosions arise periodically, generally associated with dissatisfaction toward the government due to a traumatic event. In the end, these demonstrations express dissatisfaction with the political system and the way the representative institutions function. Our starting point is the self-evident, widespread discomfort with political parties in Latin America.

In Latin America’s public agenda, institutional reformism aimed to rebuild the representative link and restore ties between civil society and the political parties. With this purpose, a sequence of measures was promoted, particularly political decentralization, broadening the choice of electoral candidates, and democratization of the parties. In addition to the traditional actors in the Latin American scenario, civil society organizations and NGOs have become part of this indefinite scene in the last few decades. Although their importance may be exaggerated on many occasions, their presence, however, transforms the institutional life of many countries.

Latin America seems to urgently need quality debates about how to activate cultural values that stimulate citizen participation, volunteering,

social responsibility in business, and a stronger sense of solidarity. Culture and values do not come at a later stage in our countries' development. Rather, they have to form an integral part of our countries today. Without citizens who are well prepared with culture, mutual trust, and ethical values, the apparent economic achievements can be fleeting.

In Latin America, religion not only integrates into the culture and is part of the public sphere, but it also fulfills the role of a social gathering place. Therefore, it is one of the unavoidable aspects of social life, depending on the greater or lesser density of the active religious culture of each country. In other words, the predominant tendency in our region is that beliefs are not limited to the sphere of subjectivity. They are not restricted to the dimension of belief.

Environmental Aspect

From the beginning, we must assert the need for compatibility between the right of the people to reach higher standards of living than the current ones in the land, and the need to downsize a country's use of its own material resources. As well as other resources for general use, that do not specifically belonging to anyone, they belong to all humanity, such as the ozone layer, the oceans outside of territorial seas, the climate, the oxygen in the atmosphere, etc.

In fact, sooner or later, the ecosystem will not be able to support the extension of the current patterns of consumption all humanity. We all need to save planet Earth together, although our tasks may be different. Preserving the ecosystem cannot have the same cost for

"I believe that one can only live today in uprising. And I believe that we can only be Christians if we are revolutionary, because trying to "reform" the world is not good enough anymore. Disembodied providentialism, neoliberalism, and neocapitalism, and certain neo-democracies and other placid reforms that repeatedly lie to themselves -cynics or fools- only serve to save the privilege of the privileged few at the cost of the productive submission of the many who die of hunger. And for this reason they seem to me to be objectively unjust. One thing I have understood clearly in life: the right wing is reactionary by nature, fanatically inflexible when it involves saving their own territory, jointly interested in the order that is the good...of the "same minority as always"...I believe that capitalism is "intrinsically evil," because it is a form of institutionalized social selfishness, public idolatry of profit, official recognition of the exploitation of man by man, the slavery of many for the interest and the prosperity of the few."

Casaldáliga, Pedro.



Formation and Practice of Citizenship for Democratic Construction

Introduction

everyone, and it certainly cannot cost more for the poor. "South American countries show various systems of environmental impact, exemplified by intense levels of extraction of natural resources, effects of infrastructure work, and problems linked to emissions and contaminants." (Tendencias en Ambiente y Desarrollo en América del Sur [Trends in Environment and Development in South America, CLAES -Latin American Center for Social Ecology].)

Of the many projects that exist in Latin America, such as solidarity economy, family organic agriculture, and clean alternative energy, two projects are highlighted here for their universal relevance: the first is "good life" and the second is "community and Earth conscious democracy."

"Good life" is present all over the continent, under many names, *suma qamaña* (Aymara), *suma kawsay* (Quechua), *Teko Porá* (Guarani). It means the process of living in fullness. This results from a personal and social life that is in material and spiritual harmony and balance. This life seeks harmony, not accumulation of wealth, but rather producing what is enough and adequate for everyone, respecting the cycles of the land and the needs of future generations.

The other Latin American contribution for another possible world is a "community and Earth conscious democracy," a form of participation that goes beyond the classic, European-style representative and participative democracy. It includes these aspects, but it contributes a new element: the community as a whole. The community participates in the development of projects, the discussions, in achieving consensus and in the implementation. This type of democracy presupposes an already established community life in the population. It is different from the other type of democracy since it includes the whole community, nature, and Mother Earth.

With the constitutional collapse that we experienced in June 2012, after the parliamentary coup, all Paraguayans were able to sense the great weakness of our citizenship. We witnessed, dumbfounded, how the "social contract" under which we had lived together -for good or bad- for four years, was demolished, and a contract put an alternative government in place after having the Colorado Party in power for 61 years.

Initially, we felt impotent and silent. We were witnesses of an attack that other societies, with greater citizen awareness and practice, would have reacted to with more indignation and resistance. They would have taken their protest out to the streets.

It is evident that our citizenship needs to grow and be strengthened in the practice of conscious and responsible participation. Everyone can and should participate, be concerned with public matters, and discuss the issues that concern everyone. But participation, to be effective, requires channels to make it viable, and organizations and institutions to make it possible. To acknowledge the limitations of our current democracies, which have frequently limited citizen participation to a mere electoral exercise of casting a vote, we speak today of the need to go beyond "representative democracies" and foster true "participative democracies."

These reflections intend to push us toward conscious and committed transformative action that seeks justice. It involves accepting, in the words of Pilar Ubilla "the challenge of building a comprehensive democracy that gives power to a critical citizenship, public spaces and political

instruments based on social equality, justice, and the development of a culture that fights against forms of domination and exclusion. We need an alternative concept (of power) that makes fighting against injustice its central axis. There is no authentic democracy without the effective participation of its citizens, especially from the popular sector and its organizations.”

A Fundamental Social Debt: Citizen Formation

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

(Art. 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

The human rights issue has been generalized in the Latin American public debate in recent years. In the 1960's and even in the 1970's, this issue was restricted to certain groups with a deep political commitment. In those years, civil and political rights were given preference. The preponderance that was given to these rights explains the political situation of the time, where openly repressive military dictatorships abounded, with political prisoners, disappearances, and torture as a result. The public actions of citizens were aimed at defending the rights to political participation, peaceful protest, physical integrity, due process, free passage, and freedom of expression... among others.

Today, the prevailing tendency has changed. Human rights are seen in a broader and more comprehensive way. Also, their defense has transcended the groups exclusively dedicated

to this purpose, and it is increasingly becoming a task to which we all commit. Human rights education is an essential part of the construction of citizenship and democracy.

It is fitting to mention that “Before every one of these rights that democracy should guarantee is the duty of every citizen to respect the values and standards that the democracy adopts to make them effective, as well as, in particular, the rights of the rest of his/her fellow citizens.”

The Essential Commitment of CLC: To Build Citizenship

“Our broad and demanding mission requires of each member a willingness to participate in social and political life and to develop human qualities and professional skills in order to become more competent workers and convincing witnesses.” (P. 12).

To be contemplative in life, to pray based on what is going on in the newspaper and the newscast, the problems of our people, the family conversation, work tensions; in our national region, in the daily happenings of national events, to see and feel the world from the street: “some white, some black; some in peace, others at war; some mourning, others laughing...” (SPEX 106). Contemplation of the Incarnation.

Today, as a group that has taken a formative route and has begun to follow the Samaritan way, we want to accept the following stage of this adventure together in the Lord. We want to discover the best way of making Christ present, specifically, in our national apostolic community.

Commitments

With a specific commitment: On one hand, we would like to lay some foundations or guidelines for CLC-Paraguay for 5 (five) years, in the form of an advocacy plan. With the intention of presenting this rough draft on World CLC Day -March 2013. On the other hand, to gain feedback not only at the CLC advocacy group level, but also at the local communities around the country, in order to receive contributions and be validated.

This pilgrimage is not easy. We want to start today as a community, together with many others. To look and see our national and world reality together, and to let ourselves be impacted by the pain of the people and of the Earth. To let ourselves be guided by the Lord.

“Salt of the Earth...I will show you”

As a prerequisite: the formation of the senses, the power to regain the capacity to see and hear from an actual awareness of situations and not from the “normalcy” of the environments of misery and poverty which have become regular to us. Social sensitivity must be the basis for critical and reflective awareness of every citizen process.

In line with **the formation of critical awareness:**

- Developing reading guides and sociopolitical analysis for interested communities.
- Creating spaces and times for shared reflection among communities, about our country's sociopolitical situation (discussion panels/films/lectures).
- In line with network **creation and participation** for more articulate joint work.
- Encourage meetings with civil society organizations, sharing reflections and citizen practice projects.

- Participate in meetings, signatures, and lawsuits implemented by citizen networks with clear participation of the advocacy group.
- Placing ourselves in social networks that build citizenship, receiving documents as well as sending materials for reflection, such as participation in sociopolitical discussion programs.

In line with exercising citizenship:

- Promote the social control system through citizen oversight with other civil society organizations.
- Community workshops about addressing conflict as a source of opportunities and challenges, such as making decisions based on processes of discernment.

In line with formation of servant leadership:

- Developing community projects to implement workshops which, contemplating the social environment, encourage the formation of servant leadership.

All of these lines of action, with their corresponding activities, seek that our efforts as an advocacy group are consistent with our lives, where politics is part of our daily living.

This is the relationship between the micro level and the macro level of our actions, the incorporation of glocality into our discussions and practices. It is the most important challenge where the sociopolitical dimension is inserted into our spirituality as a demand of the incarnation for the construction of another, more brotherly and caring world.

Structural Violation of Human Rights: The Characterization and Role of the Excluded

Am I My Brother's Keeper?

Introduction

"Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother?' He said, 'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?'" Gen. 4.9 Why is it that this question touches on a sensitive spot for us? Is it, perhaps, because we have an answer that betrays us? Knowledge commits us and love calls us to deal with the violence around us.

In the year 2012, Paraguay, as a signatory state to Act 1/89 of the American Convention on Human Rights, and under the international jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights since 1993, has been sanctioned as a consequence of its responsibility in human rights violations in the Inter-American protection system. These sanctions were achieved thanks to the victims' efforts and struggles for effective justice, denied at a local level.

Where is CLC Paraguay amid these systematic violations, well known to us all? A few cases are: Ricardo Canese and freedom of speech and movement, and the judicial safeguards that placed doubt and caused public interest in a presidential candidate's assets (Juan Carlos Wasmosy) during an electoral campaign; Agustín Goiburú, Carlos José Mancuello, Rodolfo Ramírez Villalba and Benjamín Ramírez Villalba, were detainees who disappeared during Operation Condor. Adolescents were deprived of their freedom at the Panchito López detention facility. Teenager Gerardo Vargas Areco was kidnapped and assassinated during his required military service. The experience of the native communities of Yakye Axa, Sawhoymaxa,

and Xamoc Kasec. These victims prompt our community to question ourselves and reflect on where we are, who we are, where and with whom we are going in our search for the truth. Many violations were committed: some were finally brought to justice, but others still have not been brought to light.

St. Ignatius also asks us: Where and what are you going toward?

From this space of community advocacy, we seek the answers from our collective identity, since wisdom is only revealed to us by the spirit of being together, in order to find collective responses to these issues based on truth and justice, always with the face of Jesus Christ.

To further develop the essay in this module, we chose to reflect on Protection Systems –"Transitional Justice and Victims' Rights," based on a Paraguayan case that allows us to analyze our human rights situation at a regional level in the Inter-American human rights protection system: Agustín Goiburú, Carlos José Mancuello, Rodolfo Ramírez Villalba and Benjamín Ramírez Villalba v. Paraguay. Extracted from ICHR Ruling from 2006: "...beginning with the lawsuit against the illegal and arbitrary detention, torture, and forced disappearance of Augustín Goiburú Gimenez, Carlos José Mancuello Bareiro, Rodolfo Feliciano Ramírez Villalba and Benjamín de Jesús Ramírez Villalba, allegedly committed by government officers from 1974 and 1977, as well as the partial impunity of such acts, since not all responsible parties have been sanctioned..."

This case of "forced disappearance of [said] persons is a continuing violation [...] sustained this day, insofar as the State has not established the whereabouts of the [presumed] victims, nor located their remains. Also, the State has not criminally punished all those responsible for committing such violations, nor has the State secured appropriate reparation for the victims' relatives."

The case of Augustin Goiburú, Carlos José Mancuello and the brothers Rodolfo and Benjamin Ramirez Villalba v. Paraguay is a unique example of how it was possible to overcome all obstacles to access justice and obtain a ruling that forced the State to recognize the existence of “Operation Condor” as an oppressive practice carried out by the dictatorships in the subregion.

Operation Condor

Operation Condor⁹¹ was an oppressive regional system that, based on the doctrine of national security and under the guise of defending peace and national values, justified the establishment of State Terrorism. The government of Paraguay joined a regional agreement -qualifying as a case of multinational State terrorism, since it was based on committing crimes against humanity- and made a “contribution to the anti-subversive fight.” A repressive model was put in place, articulated by the region within a governmental structure from the State with practiced methods of torture, organization and interchange of information about people classified as “subversive” between the military governments of the Southern Cone, who were victims of extrajudicial execution and forced disappearance.⁹²

91 There is a virtual memorial museum www.meves.org.py where much information regarding the Stronista regime has been compiled. Nadia Villalba, a CLC member and communicator, has participated in its construction.

92 Inter-American Court of Human Rights Case Gouburú et. al. v. Paraguay. Ruling from September 22, 2006. (Funds, Reparations, and Costs): Referring to “Operation Condor,” Mr. Boccia Paz expressed that at the beginning of the 70’s “the ideological support of the [dictatorial] regimes [of the countries in the Southern Cone] was part of the Doctrine of National Security [...] that allowed them to visualize the movements of the left as common enemies, [no] matter their nationality.” Also, “thousands of citizens of the Southern Cone sought to escape the oppression of their countries by seeking refuge in border countries [which] placed potential enemies [of the regimes] outside of the reach of the organizations of national security [, which is why] it was necessary to establish a common defense strategy [that] required using common codes of information

“...In a document from September 1976, classified as one of the first reports regarding this operation, the United States’ FBI attaché in Buenos Aires, Robert Scherrer, sent a cable to his agency in Washington D.C., where he summarized the operation: “... [...]...‘Operation Condor’ is the code name of a recently established cooperation agreement between South American intelligence services for the compilation, exchange, and storage of intelligence information concerning so called “leftists,” communists and Marxists, to eliminate terrorist Marxist activity in the area. Additionally, “Operation Condor” maintains joint operations against terrorist targets in the member states of “Operation Condor.” Chile is the center of “Operation Condor” and, in addition to Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay are also members.

Brazil also agrees, tentatively, to provide information for “Operation Condor.” To date, member states that have shown the greatest enthusiasm are: Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile. The last three countries have committed to operate jointly, mainly in Argentina, against terrorist targets [...]

The third phase, the most confidential phase of “Operation Condor,” includes the formation of special teams from member states, to travel to any part of the world, specifically to countries that are not members of the agreement, and carry out punishments and even assassinations against terrorists or supporters of terrorist organizations from the member states under “Operation Condor.” For example, if a terrorist from a member state or a supporter of a terrorist organization in a member state of “Operation Condor” was detected in a European country, a

and confidential files about the detainees, as well as the free movement of foreign agents through the territories of neighboring countries.” Inter-American Court of Human Rights Case Gouburú et. al. v. Paraguay. Ruling from September 22, 2006. (Funds, Reparations, and Costs). http://www.corteidh.or.cr/docs/casos/articulos/seriec_153_esp.pdf, P. 22. Paragraph 4.

special team was sent to locate and recognize the target. When the surveillance operation finished, a second “Operation Condor” team traveled to carry out the real punishment against the target. Special teams with false documentation could be formed from only one member state of “Operation Condor,” or they could be composed of a mixed group coming from various member states of “Operation Condor.” In Paraguay’s case, the Military Intelligence Department was in charge of the operational coordination relating to “Operation Condor,” whose leader was at that time Colonel Benito Guanes Serrano. Police intelligence services carried out the orders received from that department, under the supervision of Chief Police Investigator, Pastor Milciades Coronel.

The Investigation Department was the “nerve center of political intelligence.” The collection of data was carried out by police employees infiltrated into political and social organizations, unions, student centers, and every other type of public or private organization.

On the steps followed to detain a presumed “subversive element,” the Chief of the Police Investigations Department, Pastor Milciades Coronel, stated three ways:

1) Application of the Law; 2) Physical Disappearance; and 3) Applied Alternative Measures.

In the mid-1970’s, an extremely repressive process began that lasted for three years. Later, in April 1976, the police revealed the existence of an allegedly subversive and clandestine political-military movement, called “Political Military Organization” (O.P.M. [from Spanish]), operating in Asunción and at other locations in the country.

The forced disappearances of Agustín Goiburú Giménez, Carlos José Mancuello Bareiro and Rodolfo and Benjamín Ramírez Villalba share

similar characteristics: they refer to a specific context, Paraguayan government officers illegally detained, isolated, tortured, and caused the disappearance of individuals whose political activities opposed Stroessner’s regime or were classified as enemies of the regime.

Our Internal Reflection

We consider that these cases, so relevant to transitional justice, are not widely known by society. The information is hidden with a complicit silence and claims have been made to vindicate the oppressive system’s supposed benefits on the development of the country.

Pointing out the deterioration caused by repression would imply identifying those responsible for the damage they caused. In many cases, these individuals play a political role in our current times, controlling the spheres of power and decision-making processes in the Paraguayan State.

We ourselves have recognized the temptations of, on one hand “leaving the pain behind” and “talking about other current events,” to avoid repeating the victims’ stories or to console them with “let’s look forward.” But in this way we are not assigning the relevance that these violations against human rights deserve, due to the consequences and impact that they still have on our culture and political practices. And on the other hand, the temptation is to focus only on anecdotal facts, without valuing the advances made in matters of transitional justice. But this only discourages our process of democratic strengthening and minimizes the results and the vindications for the victims.

The Paraguayan State has an obligation to comply with the decisions sanctioned in the above case. In addition, and to keep us from repeating the same violations, the work

of educators, CLC members facing these “beacons” of dedication and commitment, must bring us to understand the contribution of CLC members from those actions that at first were symbolic and socially referential. Afterward, we can work on an annual plan from a CLC perspective to develop a theoretical and practical formation plan for advocacy in favor of human rights and their corresponding justice system.

The Impact of Hidden Powers in the Political Scene in Paraguay During the Institutional Upheaval of June 2012

Introduction

Conclusions and Proposals

According to this reflection, which has allowed us to recognize and question ourselves about advocacy actions, we identify a few priority points for seeking a more vibrant profile in our society as CLC Paraguay. These points are:

Taking a deeper look into the consequences of human rights violations during the dictatorship that still affect the natives' lives today.

Internalizing the information about human rights in Paraguay, which we started at the local level, and moving forward to a discussion with specific and extended proposals to the entire national community.

Developing a permanent sociopolitical advocacy formation plan for CLC Paraguay about aspects related to human rights.

Implementing actions with the Society of Jesus to disclose and engage in human rights violations currently taking place.

Being up-to-date on the actions that we have taken as a world community, specifically with our working group at the UN regarding human rights issues.

The purpose of this essay is to analyze and reflect on the impact hidden powers have on the democratic collapse that took place in Paraguay in June 2012.

In these events, we can observe the stance taken by different actors and institutions that reflect the interests at play, which many times put our weak democracy at risk. To understand what is happening to Paraguay's democracy, it is extremely important to denounce the attitudes taken on by different political and social actors. Based on this analysis, we can draw conclusions that guide our advocating actions regarding this situation.

Presentation of the Issue

Diagnosis

Extracted from several communications, news articles, etc. about the events: the impeachment of President Fernando Lugo and his dismissal from office, from different sources.

“Faced with the institutional collapse of democratic process that took place... We condemn the removal of the Constitutional President of the Republic of Paraguay, Fernando Armindo Lugo Méndez, by way of a parliamentary coup as an act of political justice. It was carried out with their backs turned away from the interests of the people, violating the popular decision expressed in the 2008 elections. It denied all constitutional safeguards of due process and created an institutional and

democratic breakdown in the country.” (Human Rights Coordinator in Paraguay)

“The whole situation developed within a historical power structure in Paraguay. This structure was based on property and land use. In this sense, the government that came to power in 2008 was not solving, but making increasingly more visible, the problem of land concentration in few hands, and the resulting social inequality. The latest acts, resonating in the media, were the cases of public land usurped by Tranquilo Favero in Nacunda and by Blas N. Riquelme in Curuguaty. In general, one can interpret that exposing society to land problems, and the potential benefits of finding a solution for the country as a whole, were the elements that irritated the old oligarchy, which led them to bring about the fall of Lugo. At the same time, the old political administrators of the oligarchical interests (parties such as ANR, PLRA, and UNACE) perceived with great anxiety how their political legitimacy was increasingly diminished in the former scenario (where Lugo was one of the main actors). This put their dominance in the oligarchical state at risk, a threat that led them to carry out the removal of the ex-president.” (www.ea.com.py)

“Paraguay used a mechanism contemplated in the Constitution, but it was applied in such a way as to violate not only the spirit of the Constitution, but all constitutional practice in a democratic world. In no case do we find even the slightest interest to dialogue with us [foreign affairs ministers at Unasur] and seek an alternative to the summary removal of a president. And what we clearly said to them was that we were there to respect, at the same time, the sovereignty of Paraguay and the international documents that we had all signed. And I want to clarify something that we told the leaders of the Lugo’s opposition. Not only was Paraguay required to comply with the signed agreements. Every other country was also required to comply. We are also required to comply with the agreements. We must apply the clauses, even to ourselves.” (Héctor Timerman, Argentina’s foreign affairs minister)

“Every political party and member of Parliament who carried out the coup held specific economic interests, covert associations with the purpose of obtaining some sort of income with the approval of new laws or official policies that award privileges to certain businesses or groups of businesses through concessions, contracts or tax exemptions.” (Communiqué from the Popular Socialist Convergence Party)

Analysis

The actions of the coup began on June 15, 2012 with the execution of farmers in the city of Curuguaty, an episode used as an excuse for the coup. Land possession and economic interests from transnational groups appear among the determining causes of the institutional collapse.

The authors of the parliamentary coup who were directly involved were the following political parties: National Republican Association (ANR-Colorado Party), the Authentic Liberal Radical Party (PLRA), the Beloved Country Party (PPQ), the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP), and the National Union of Ethical Citizens (UNACE), along with the communication media and representatives of the oligarchies and transnational interests.

The presentation below identifies the main political actors and their stances that were at the forefront of the coup:

- **Legislative Branch:** Executive arm of the coup. As quick as lightning, they resorted to the figure of impeachment and removed President Fernando Lugo from office, without respecting constitutional safeguards and international treaties.
- **Judicial Branch:** An attitude of complicity with the coup by not responding to a claim of unconstitutionality presented on June 22, 2012 in defense of Fernando Lugo

before the Supreme Court of Justice. This recourse was aimed at stopping the impeachment, citing that due process was not respected, especially referring to the amount of time that Congress was granted to prepare a defense, a mere twenty-four hours.

- **Political Parties:** The National Republican Association (ANR-Colorado Party), the Authentic Liberal Radical Party (PLRA), the Beloved Country Party (PPQ), the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP), and the National Union of Ethical Citizens (UNACE), were the promoters of the impeachment from Congress.
- **Business People:** They took a clear and active position in favor of the impeachment of Lugo and the coup.
- **Communication Media:**

Since the events of Curuguaty a vested interest within the country's communication media could already be perceived. It was led by the daily newspaper ABC Color, which criminalized the farmers and blamed president Fernando Lugo for these acts, due to his tepid response and alleged connivance with the land occupiers.

Once the impeachment was underway, most news media sources played a fundamental role in shaping public opinion, by promoting and maintaining a consensus that "the measure was presented as a legal and legitimate procedure that puts Paraguay on track to rebuilding the social order." In most cases, the term "impeachment" was used to highlight the legality of the process and stress how things "have gone back to normal."

- **Armed Forces:** They informed the citizens that they stayed within their specific function, within the constitutional orders and current democratic state. In this way they, supported and benefited from the acts that took place.

- **The Church (Bishops, Laity, Religious Leaders):** Within the Catholic Church, there have been two different views regarding the political situation that unraveled. On one hand, some gave support to Federico Franco and approved the removal of Lugo before the end of his term. On the other hand, the event was condemned because it was considered an illegitimate act against democracy.

One day before the beginning of the impeachment process, bishops from the Paraguayan Episcopal Conference (CEP) went to ask then-president Fernando Lugo to resign as a way to avoid confrontations and violent acts among Paraguayans. Later, after the end of the impeachment carried forward by Congressmen, which ended in the removal of Fernando Lugo from office, the Apostolic Nuncio in Paraguay, Monsignor Eliseo Ariotti, offered his support to the new leader, alleging that the local authorities were only thinking of the good of the country, and exhorted for peace, becoming the first diplomat to express his support for Franco.

In contrast, the same day of the president's impeachment, the board of the Conference of Paraguayan Religious Leaders (CONFERPAR) sent out a communiqué in which they condemned, among other things, the manipulation of the facts by sectors that sought to "take political advantage, cashing in on impunity and maintaining a state of things that favors their personal or corporate interests." In addition, they denounced the rapid response of the political parties and their representatives in agreeing to launch an impeachment process of the president in both Chambers of Congress: "Although a constitutional procedure, it was applied in such a way that creates suspicion of manipulation, which gravely affects a process that was legitimately established by a popular vote, as if this were an exit for all the country's problems, or a unilateral responsibility for the grave acts that impinge upon our cohabitation." Along the same lines, members of the Pastoral

Social from thirteen dioceses reject the “politicians’ opportunism for electoral benefit and petty interests,” and urge institutions and citizens to respect the popular will and the institutional process expressed at the voting polls, instead of twisting things with legalist, illegitimate, and unjust mechanisms.

A communiqué sent out by Catholic communities inspired by Ignatian Spirituality, pointed out that impeachment is illegitimate and unjust, and also condemned the existence of behind-the-scenes manipulation.

- **Agricultural Workers:** This sector did not play a leading role. Although some groups were against the coup, the farmers were divided between a vulnerable situation and a fragile support of Lugo’s government, which was not able to answer their complaints in relation to land and production conditions.

The National Peasant Federation did not support Lugo’s government since it never believed that Lugo would bring about an agrarian reform or a path to carry out structural transformations in Paraguay.

- **Social Movements:** Demonstrated their opposition to the coup and called for resistance against the Franco government.
- **International Organizations (MERCOSUR, UNASUR, OAS):** Foreign affairs ministers from UNASUR, as a block, without one absence, arrived in Asunción to send a strong signal of support to the democratic process. They came to say explicitly that they clearly understood that the impeachment maneuver was a coup and that, from that point forward, the UNASUR and MERCOSUR agreements provided for the expulsion of and sanctions to the country, which was materialized shortly afterward. These organizations maintained a firm stance on the political sanctions

against Paraguay, stemming from the collapse of the democratic process.

The OAS took an ambiguous position. After several meetings, they decided not to sanction Paraguay and to send two missions, one of the Secretary General and the other for electoral observation.

Actions

Some identified actions that could be implemented to change or improve the situation are:

At the citizen level:

- Continue with the process of building a sense of citizenship, promoting active citizen participation in current national events.
- Implement actions to strengthen civil society organizations.

At the CLC level:

- Promote formation and reflection among CLC members on sociopolitical issues so that they are aware of some current aspects and are able to act against them.
- Foster youth formation in the sociopolitical field.
- Promote greater visibility of CLC at the national level, maintaining our stance amid the situations that arise.
- Identify common mission issues that could be taken on by CLC in the sociopolitical sphere.

Conclusions

In Paraguay’s case, the strength and power that hidden powers have is quite clear: it was enough to topple a constitutionally formed government, taking control of State institutions.

This exposes the great weakness of our democracy in Paraguay and the need to strengthen it, without losing sight of the hidden powers at play and their impact on State institutions.

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The Right to Education, the First Step to a Dignified Life

Triumph in the Fight for 4% of the GDP for Education in the Dominican Republic

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CLC Dominican Republic

With only THE TRUTH, a YELLOW UMBRELLA (to provide shade from the sun) and a great DESIRE FOR JUSTICE as weapons, a group of Dominican citizens, male and female, began a persevering and passionate fight for compliance with the Education Law (66-97). This group reached their greatest achievement in December 2012, with the approval of 4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) allocated to pre-university education in the 2013 national budget.

The driving forces of this fight are a country with so much social inequality (according to the 2012 Millennium Development Goals Report, 34% of the Dominican population is poor; condemned to ignorance because of little investment in education), a high crime rate that is increasing, and the sum of many years in which enormous amounts of money that should have been allocated to promoting more social justice were squandered. The lack of governmental will has meant a constant battle to get the government to OBEY A LAW.

This immense happiness that the Dignified Education Coalition (CED) felt upon the approval of 4% of the GDP in the national budget allocated for pre-university education was immediately followed by a **great commitment** from CED in MONITORING the execution of this budget to ensure it COMPLIED with the law in an efficient and transparent manner. The credibility of the

movement would not be complete without the ability to monitor the complete fulfillment of what was established in the law through civil society.

In the following pages, we will review the background of this movement, the entire process, with its most relevant moments and this great achievement, made possible by the cooperation between multiple and diverse sectors in Dominican society. We will continue with a look at the advocacy process from CLC and Ignatian Spirituality, to arrive at general conclusions. We will present the story of our experience as CLC, where we united forces with organizations from the Ignatian family represented in the Centro Bonó. We hope to inspire future movements that want to contribute to the GREATER GOOD for the construction of the Kingdom, through advocacy in public policy to achieve a DIGNIFIED LIFE for our brothers and sisters who are most in need, and in this way, in everything and always, TO LOVE AND SERVE.

Background of a Long Road

With a sad history of governmental corruption, together with a devastating performance in the area of education,⁹³ related organizations

⁹³ Cerito and Cruz, on the causes and consequences of poor education quality in the Dominican Republic at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaU-tVzuslw>

such as the Dominican Professors Association (ADP), the Centro Bonó, and others concerned with education, began to call attention to the little investment and poor management of the educational sector. At the same time, the World Economic Forum performed a study on Global Competitiveness. In this study, one can see in exact numbers how low-quality education and poverty have corruption as their principal cause.⁹⁴

Cooperation Process

Moved and “fed up” with this sad reality year after year with no changes in sight, several individuals and organizations, such as the Centro Bonó and the Juan Montalvo, S.J. Center for Social Studies, both part of the Ignatian family network dedicated to the social arena, supported the follow-up on the national budget and the subsequent lawsuit in September 2010, before the approval of the 2011 budget.

Origin of the Symbol: the Umbrella

One of our first rallies took place in front of the Ministry of Economy, where the national budget was being drafted. When the mid-day heat became unbearable, someone had the brilliant idea of buying some umbrellas to alleviate the heat. The umbrellas they found were yellow, and became very visible in the video recordings of our rallies in demand for 4% of the GDP for EDUCATION.

Introduction of the CED Position Document

From the Coalition, we created this document as a tool that outlines the fundamental guidelines of our position:⁹⁵

- The absence of education and its consequences build a wall that hinders the Rule of Law and impedes society as a whole from acting under the true meaning of liberty, which is fundamental for the enjoyment of happiness.
- We urge the Dominican government to comply with the law that requires that 4% of the GDP be allocated to education. This law seeks to protect the management of educational policy, which, according to Law 66-79 should convert schools into spaces for *“forming people, men and women, who are free, critical and creative citizens, who are able to participate and build up a free, democratic, just, and caring society. These citizens are able to constantly question their society. They combine productive work, community service, and humanistic, scientific, and technological formation with enjoying the cultural repertory of humanity, as a way to contribute to the development of the nation and themselves”* (our quotations) (General Education Law 66-97, 1997).
- The importance of education is universally accepted as a determining factor in breaking the cycle of poverty.
- We work from the understanding that education is a right that has been consecrated by the nations: Art. 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. XII of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, Art. 13 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic,

94 See <http://www.acento.com.do/index.php/news/21270/56/Republica-Dominicana-ratificada-campeo-na-mundial-en-corrupcion.html>

95 For the complete document, see www.educaciondigna.com

Social and Cultural Rights, Art. 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Art. 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Education is a right enshrined in Article 63 of the Dominican Constitution: *“All persons have the right to comprehensive, high quality, continuous education, under equal conditions and opportunities, with no limitations except those arising from their capabilities, vocation, and aspirations.”*
- Regarding the State’s investment, item 10 of Article 63 sustains that: *“State investment in education, science and technology shall be sustained and expanded with increased levels of macroeconomic performance in the country. The law shall set minimum amounts of percentages applicable to such investment. Under no circumstances shall the State divert funds allocated to finance the development of these areas to other projects.”*
- The General Education Law establishes in Title X, Art. 197: *“Within two years, beginning from the passage of this law, annual public spending on education must reach a minimum of sixteen percent (16%) of total public spending or four percent (4%) of the GDP estimated for the current year, choosing the greater of the two (...).”*
- This claim was included in the 2008-2018 Decade Education Plan, which is presented as a working tool that aims for educational excellence.

A peak moment for the movement’s growth (more collaboration and acceptance on the part of the public) was the beginning of two years of presidential intolerance: “And the truth will set you free,” John 8:32. The protests and demonstrations in front of the Ministry of Education were preceded by a rally with the new yellow umbrellas in front of the National Palace. There, as CLC Christians and Dominican citizens, we gathered together around this just demand. That day, a large

police contingent was waiting for us with orders from their superiors to “suffocate” the peaceful protest. The police pushed and shoved several of the rally’s participants, including Father Mario Serrano, S.J., Director of the Centro Bonó. In addition, CLC brother Mario Bergés’ hand was hurt as a result of these incidents.⁹⁶

Those images were recorded and uploaded to YouTube, spreading like wildfire and awakening the indignation of the citizens. That incident, apparently negative, was the detonator for growth of the current flagship of social movements in the Dominican Republic for the beginning of a serious commitment that led to the formation of CED. “CED consists of a group of organizations and activists that, through civil and peaceful actions, ask the government to comply once and for all with the General Education Law 66-97, which establishes that 4% of the GDP should be invested in education.”⁹⁷

Organizations and individuals from different educational areas came together to take part in coordinating CED and contributing their knowledge for specific events such as the following:

- **YELLOW MONDAY:** This event had great diffusion in the media, thanks to friends of the press and several organizations. The entire population was encouraged to show their support to the movement by wearing yellow at work or at home. A gathering was organized at several central locations, such as public parks or street corners.⁹⁸ This mobilization made history; people were outraged and took to the streets, as a way to unite and let their voices be heard for a dignified education for everyone.

96 Assault in front of the palace <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snuJ6BZzUo0>

97 See: www.educaciondigna.com

98 See: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_yZWrdN2_U&feature=related

- **YELLOW VOICES CONCERT:** A few dozen artists donated their talent and thousands of Dominicans attended to demand the compliance of the law.⁹⁹
- **THE GREAT WALK FOR EDUCATION:** Thousands of citizens, men and women, gathered to support our actions for the good of the masses.¹⁰⁰ In addition to those many demonstrations, we constantly met together every 4th day of the month at 4 p.m. to demand 4% for education in front of the National Palace, which we later named "The 4 Plaza." As a way to reflect part of the feeling awakened by this event, here's a reflection that my sister Raquel made when participating in the walk alongside her 10 year old daughter:

The contagious feeling of 4. "I confess that I moved faster, motivated by feeling all of the efforts that so many people had made, who like her had selflessly donated their time, talents and even resources, just for the love of their country. That Sunday I learned that the idea was spreading further than anyone had realized, since my youngest daughter, Adriana, decided to accompany me and said, 'I am not doing this to support my aunt. I am doing it because I believe in the 4%.' So then, after putting on our trendy yellow sweaters, a pair of hats and some jeans, we headed out, resolved to walk.

The sound of the kettledrums showed us the way. Arriving at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo-UASD was like attending a party: whole families together, children running about. A disabled young person was trying to climb the steps in a wheelchair, to buy an item referring to the cause. Prestigious news figures and national artists were walking with a steady pace alongside so many Dominicans,

men and women, united without political affiliations. Everybody was happy and determined; we were asserting our rights." Happy choruses were chanted, and youths joined us, showing total respect. We had so much fun that just when we were about to give up, we were there, at the Altar de la Patria [Altar of the Country] monument. Duarte, Sánchez, and Mella (Fathers of the Country) were our hosts to celebrate this feat. I am sure that from wherever they are, they looked on with pride... I don't know how to put it into words, but that Sunday, I fell asleep happier."

- **NATIONAL EMPOWERMENT:** Visits from organizations belonging to the coalition that increasingly gained power in the main regions of the country, where equivalent movements to those from the capital were being implemented. Even in New York, the Yellow Voices concert was replicated, due to the city's large Dominican population. Everyone was empowered by his or her RIGHT!¹⁰¹
- **INTERNATIONAL MOBILIZATION:** According to international opinion, the great weakness of Leonel Fernández, president at the time, was evident. He had signed the international covenant for education in Argentina, which projected investment over 5% in the coming years. For this rally we relied on member organizations of CED that had an international presence, where our CLC played a leading role due to the great number of member countries willing to fight for such a just cause for equality.

Moments of Frustration

The National Police brought a case to court against our movement for the intolerant actions at the National Palace, but the ruling fell in

99 See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XyrUSwfjHG0>

100 See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fv8QqPHEQ8E>

101 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp2gHAK3R7I&feature=related>

our favor. We were authorized to conduct our rallies in a peaceful manner, as we always had. However, the persecution did not end. Every person who had bumper stickers, a yellow ribbon, or any sign referring to our cause was denied access to any government institution; including journalists who went to cover the President's activities.

Our two years of constant rallying in front of the National Congress was frustrating, especially the three months before the approval of the budget, as we pressured Congress not to ratify the proposal sent by the government. Despite our lobbying efforts with the opposing party, nothing worked. We sought ways, even illegal ways, to keep the law from being approved. Facing those results, all that was left was to stand stronger in indignation and carry on.

National Commitment to Education

The Political and Social Commitment to Education was signed on September 7, 2011 by all the presidential candidates and more than two hundred civil society organizations, representing different sectors such as business, church entities, unions, community organizations, and institutions, movements and guilds who advocate for quality education in the Dominican Republic. A group led by the business world took the initiative to sign a National Agreement for Education and asked CED to serve as coordinator among all the candidates and more than 200 signatory organizations. They also asked CED to lead the follow-up to the budget and spending.

As a result of this agreement, a prestigious television program served as the scenario so that the candidates and their education experts could nationalize their education programs, if necessary, adapt them to the demands that arose.

Zumbathon for Education

This fundraising activity consisted of sharing two fun hours of "Zumba" (dance) classes in exchange for collaboration. The event was organized our CLC group "Sal y Luz" as part of our advocacy work. We were able to raise funds for CED's work of following up and monitoring the signed agreement. We promoted the whole family's participation in every CED activity to begin creating social conscience among youth.

On August 16, 2012, the President-elect ratified his commitment to comply with the Education Law that allocates 4% of the GDP to education, and in December 2012, it was also ratified by Congress.

Currently, CED is in a planning phase to monitor the budget's implementation by the Ministry of Education (MINERD). We have started our work by empowering the territories (neighborhood organizations, school parents and municipalities), giving them the tools they need for this monitoring.

Here's a section of the Dignified Education Coalition's press release:

In our country, we have had to take our rights by way of mobilization, and this achievement of 4% of the GDP for pre-university education is a sign of two fundamental elements that should be clear in our country. Firstly, the triumph of the people by way of determination, perseverance, and resolve in demanding a right, tells us clearly that the fight is over.

Additionally, this process in the Dominican society highlights the vast institutional weaknesses observed in our country: deals and agreements are made so our law is obeyed and the entire population is guaranteed to exercise their right as established in the Constitution. With this victory, we have a job ahead of us,

not only the Coalition, but all those who have contributed, to demand that those resources are used in a transparent and efficient manner. At the same time, we must monitor to ensure that the funds are used so that our educational system becomes an increasingly inclusive place, where diversity and tolerance are practiced daily, where symbolic violence is stopped and new images of equality are created.

Sharing Key Points and Lessons

Key points for creating an advocacy campaign:

1. Concentrate efforts on an issue that has high consensus.
2. Coordinate with different actors.
3. Develop a consistent analysis of the theme.
4. Organize a variety of committees: Coordination, Analysis, Communication, Lobby, Mobilization, Fundraising.
5. Establish planning meetings.
6. Decentralize the actions by territory, and encourage creativity.
7. Promote sustainable actions at the economic level and, over time, consider the ease of implementation and decentralization, based on the capabilities and location of each person.
8. Be careful not to give in to the temptation of large activities that are not sustainable over time, activities that are energy draining and only incorporate small groups of people.
9. Use a uniting symbol.
10. Provide leadership support that generates confidence, unites, and encourages democratic participation.

A Look From the Perspective of Ignatian Spirituality, Our CLC Principles and Spirituality in this Advocacy Process

On the day of the events that took place at the National Palace, near the beginning of our demands for 4%, some members of the movement said goodbye to Father Mario Serrano and another colleague from the Juan Montalvo S.J. Center, telling them, "We will keep seeing each other, because Ignatius (St. Ignatius) is sending us all to the same place."

Some of the traits of a committed CLC member are:

- a. the ability to accept reality, showing sensitivity to the social and political world in which he/she lives, and being able to communicate and provide meaningful service to the rest;
- b. openness to understand the needs of the rest, as well as willingness to serve and collaborate with all the initiatives seeking to create a more humane and more God-like world.

We, as Christians who are committed to the construction of the Kingdom, seek different ways to serve our Lord, wherever the Lord calls us. In our search for service at the will of God, we support several homes for at-risk children. We have come to know the pitiful situation they all share, and are overwhelmed by a sense of powerlessness. It did not take much to realize that the lack of EDUCATION, suffered by the parents as well as their children, was the main cause of so much pain in their lives: abuse, violence, and a string of crimes. This vicious cycle of poverty kept going.

We tried to help few, but what about the rest? A significant portion of our population lives in

extreme poverty. We finally understood that only by advocating for PUBLIC POLICIES that benefited the masses could we see a true change: *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."*

In coming together with the initiative of the Centro Bonó, we found a wealth of experiences and people, as marvelous as they were different, but all united in their great desire for justice. Collaborating with others of our own Ignatian Spirituality allows us to speak the same language of equality, common good, tolerance, and respect. Our goal is no other than to seek the will of God for building the Kingdom and working for a DIGNIFIED LIFE for everyone.

Conclusions

"We begin by practicing justice; while justice is not fulfilled, we cannot think of charity. To give to each his own; and let us not only think of giving money, but love, above all things." (St. Alberto Hurtado)

Those who think that faith is not linked to politics have not yet delved into the will of God. We all think this way sometimes, but this way of thinking is far removed from the truth. We combat poverty effectively only by advocating for public policies that provide a DIGNIFIED

LIFE FOR EVERYONE and bring about the GREATER GOOD.

Most developed countries rely on PARTICIPATIVE CITIZENSHIP, where their governments have been shown the distance between their words and their actions, since "Where you put your money is where your heart is." We demonstrated that the government was not considering our people's well-being, but rather was focusing on the works that facilitated corruption and the diversion of funds.

We faced that Goliath, but we won, thanks to the skill of David and the truth on our side. With patience, perseverance, and above all, by being UNITED, we were able to accomplish this victory. COLLABORATION with the citizens, men and women, is vital to strengthen civil society. Change must come from a bottom-up approach.

Many challenges and new fights have begun, such as the newly created Fiscal Justice Movement, with a more comprehensive scope that directly attacks the main causes of inequality. The Coalition movement has served as foundation and inspiration. With our experience, our commitment is to strengthen our civil society, so that it fulfills its duties and DEMANDS THE PROTECTION OF OUR RIGHTS for a MORE JUST AND CARING SOCIETY.

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Christian Life Community (CLC) is a public international association of lay Christians, which is part of the Catholic Church in the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and closely linked to the Society of Jesus. It is present in almost 70 countries. Based on our Ignatian Spirituality, CLC promotes a prophetic action that is transformative of our reality. Our lay communities live their faith and mission with the desire to follow Jesus Christ in all situations in today's world, and make a preferential option for the poorest and most excluded. CLC currently seeks to encourage a process of sociopolitical advocacy as an Apostolic Body.

This book is made possible as a result of a community - apostolic discernment of CLC Latin America and from the regional formation program –Magis-, which specializes in theology of lay commitment. It is a response to the Fátima 2008 CLC World Assembly Mandate to be a prophetic community from the perspective of international networks and advocacy. It reflects the variety of professional experiences, social, ethical, and political commitments, as well as involvement in academic areas, in the Church, and elsewhere, on the part of CLC Latin America members. The intention of this publication is to encourage and enrich CLC's reflection in the region, with the purpose of promoting and consolidating commitment in the sociopolitical dimension of our lay vocation.

