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CONTENTS

1. *From the Editor's PC*
The Sacred Power of Darkness 1
2. Paradoxical Dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises
Towards Mystical Experience 6
M. Illanko Xavier, SJ
3. Imagination in Ignatian Prayer 22
Joseph Murray Abraham, SJ
4. Fr Constant Lievens, the 'Apostle' of
Chhotanagpur (1856 - 1893) 40
Msgr. Francis Correa
5. Language of the Heart: Reading through the
Images used in the Documents of the 35th
General Congregation 53
C. Putranto, SJ
6. Frontiers and Bridges. A Reflection on Decree
Three of GC35 68
Hedwig Lewis, SJ

Ms Murray

From the Editor's PC

THE SACRED POWER OF DARKNESS

The Buddhists make a retreat that they call the Darkness Retreat. They get into a dark cave and spend a few years in this darkness depending on their age, education and ability. The preparation for this retreat is very rigorous. The spiritual guide will make sure that the one desiring to make this retreat is able to feel content and balanced in long periods of stillness.

While they are in this darkness they sit alone and become more and more aware of themselves. Their life experiences begin to surface in the form of sounds, lights and rays that rise from the depth of their subconscious or their deep unconsciousness but these experiences are rooted in the eternal essence. In the darkness of the cave they have no expectation of light from the outside and so begin to look for the light that comes from

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- ¹⁸ Pothacamury Archbishop Thomas, *The Church in Independent India*, Bombay, 1961, pg. 101
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 - ²⁰ Correa Francis Msgr., *Mother Church in Mother India*, Mumbai, 2008, pg. 74
 - ²¹ Rodrigues Rosario F., *Models of Holiness From India and Missionaries on the Way to Sainthood*, Goa, 2008, pg. 44
 - ²² Soares Aloysius, *Catholic Church In India: A Historical Sketch*, Bombay, 1964, pg. 116
 - ²³ Ekka Cornelius, S.J., *Contribution of the Laity for the Spread of Christian Faith*, *Indian Church History Review*, December 2008, pg. 95
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LANGUAGE OF THE HEART: READING THROUGH THE IMAGES USED IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE 35TH GENERAL CONGREGATION

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Introduction

This short essay seeks to look at the documents of the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (2008) with an approach that might have been intended for their publication. As soon as they were officially published did people begin to sense that there must be some new way of reading that was different from the approach adopted to the documents of the previous General Congregations. After all, with regard to substance there hardly seems to be anything new in comparison to the previous Congregations. The last General Congregation just wants to confirm and reiterate all that have been said, especially by the post-conciliar General Congregations. What seems new, however, is the way and approach that the recent General Congregation took on to articulate familiar topics such as the Jesuit identity, mission, governance, collaboration with other people, our vows, etc. There appears to be a strong desire from the part of the members of the Congregation to move the Society of Jesus from within, from the deepest core of the heart,

towards living up joyously its grace-given identity and carrying out its mission within today's world in a humble enthusiasm in collaboration with other people.

It is well known that the famous phrase "school of the heart" comes from St. Ignatius himself, when speaking on the Tertianship as the final stage of Jesuit formation [*Const.* 516,4].¹ This stage of formation is aimed at "touching the Jesuit in the depth of his affectivity. What is at stake is his maturity and specifically apostolic capacity. Secondly, the formation of this spiritual affectivity is introduced as the result of self-denial so as to be able to receive God's gift in full..."² This specific aim of the Tertianship can be applied, by way of extension, to the whole range of Jesuit life and apostolic activity. In a certain sense, the 35th General Congregation confirms the same intention when it calls all Jesuits "to live with great spirit and generosity that is the center of our vocation..."³

In a sense, the documents of the 35th General Congregation can be perceived as an exhortation for all Jesuits to experience their Tertianship anew, so that the Society as a whole can retrieve its apostolic energies, drawn from the *Spiritual Exercises* and lived up within the frame of our way of life delineated in the *Constitutions*.

This small study will explore the use of expressions pointing to the realm of the heart, adopted by the documents. It will approach the documents as a unified whole, although taking into consideration the fact that it had been the commissions set up during the Congregation that drew up the individual decrees. Keeping an eye on the symbolic expressions used by the documents, this study will attempt to discover how the keen desire of their authors to keep the Society ablaze in our times stays in a living connaturality with the ideals of the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions*.

What is meant by "heart"?

As known from the dynamic of the *Spiritual Exercises* as well as from the *Autobiography*, the question "*quid agendum?*" keeps recurring as the *leitmotiv* of Ignatius's continuous search

for God. Not everything was clear to the recently converted pilgrim except that God's love overwhelmed him with an ardent desire to serve with all he had. He had only a generous heart with him and the freedom to leave everything behind. He had to probe everything to express his generosity to God. Through trials and errors he finally accomplished his life dream by founding a new religious family of companions, learned and virtuous, to serve the Church under the Roman Pontiff. What we learn from Ignatius' life is a range of decisions and actions, which he submitted to a rigorous judgement in the light of the Spirit, who is also active through the ecclesial authorities of his time. Through this series of decisions, actions and review, Ignatius changed into a living instrument of God for his time.

The brief and quick description above attempts, by way of illustration, to point out what constitute the elements of what we call "heart": *first* of all, as the most intimate constituent of a person, heart is the point by which he or she is intimately related to God. *Secondly*, it points to a dynamic of actions in the search of God. *Thirdly*, it is proper to the heart to be the integrative principle of a person; *Fourth*, freedom and generosity as a mark of a heart open to serve; *Fifth*, it seems that a keen understanding of God and of the created realities takes place in the heart; *Sixth*, the dream and desire for action as a response to challenges originates in, and strongly motivated by, a transformed heart.

Can we discover these elements in the *corpus* of the GC 35 documents? Without doubt, the answer is affirmative. The documents seek to address the heart of Jesuits, and in doing so the Congregation made use a number of symbols and imageries. What follows therefore is a cursory glance through the documents, looking for important highlights and recurring expressions⁴ and symbols that throw light upon an integral insight of the Society's charism in our times. It seems to be a matter of heart when the documents speak about having an integral view on our mission⁵ and about the Jesuits' unity in midst of diversity⁶. The same is also true with the intimate and deep understanding of self and of everything required from a Jesuit; although it is put as "understanding", yet it has more to do with heart.⁷

When it comes to the delicate topic of obedience, the documents take on a couple of themes that basically point to the heart: desire, freedom and creativity. It is the desire to be with Christ that lies as the starting point of the First Companions' pilgrimage from Montmartre up to La Storta.⁸ Then it is the liberating aspect of obedience that set the Jesuits free to engage themselves fully in the apostolate.⁹ In its turn, genuine creativity in mission will grow from a transformed heart always in pursue of the *magis*.¹⁰

What is suggested by some narrative styles in the documents?

Some documents begin their reflection with a narration about Ignatius or the experience of the First Jesuits.¹¹ This fact suggests three things: *first*, looking back to the founding experiences is very formative, since living examples speak more loudly than any words or exhortation; *secondly*, narration appeals more to the heart than to the head; *thirdly*, narration would seem to suggest that Jesuit life belongs to a "grand story" which is still in progress. Therefore the narrations do not merely stand as ornaments to the documents; on the contrary, it is within the frame of a given narration that the exposition in the documents should be understood. This will in turn provide a clue for reading the documents. One is supposed to approach the documents with an openness of heart and mind, letting himself be affected by the stories. The reader of those documents would better check his or her personal reaction after reading the narrative sections.

Point of contact with God

The first thing to do during a General Congregation would be to exhort all Jesuits to return into the center of their identity and charism. This is not just a matter of repeating well known formulas of our Institution, but rather helping Jesuits to reflect and probe deeply to discover once again the very grace that brought the Society into being. In every line of its documents the General Congregation urges the Jesuits to go deeper into the core of their being in order to find the kernel of their vocation. Describing what a discerning person should like, the Decree 4 on obedience says: "Someone who seeks familiarity with the Lord through prayer, desires freedom from disordered attachment, and

thus opens himself to the guidance of the Spirit in an ongoing quest to discover the divine will."¹² Throughout the documents we find the very confidence that present day Jesuits are able to revive anew the experience of the first companions; this is possible only because Jesuits have a heart that is the point of contact with the action of God.¹³

In spite of this confidence from the part of the documents, still the question remains: what is it that very often hinders Jesuits from entering into the inmost recesses of their being? The documents do not seem to say much in this regard, at least directly. It does not seem to be the intention of the documents to abound with admonishments; rather, they consist mainly of encouragements, appealing to the Jesuits' capacity of willing and desiring noble acts and attitudes. Perhaps when the documents describe the challenges of our times, it is implied therein the obstacles that might get in the way of Jesuits entering into their hearts.¹⁴ The propensity that marks our present global culture has certainly affected Jesuits too.

Search of God and His Will

A human heart touched by the finger of God will follow through with continuous effort to know God more deeply, to search for God's will and to live according to the purpose of God. This dynamic, stemming from inside, should also mark the Jesuits as a corporate body, not merely as individuals. The Society of Jesus should become an apostolic body, which ultimately means a group in continuous discernment: this is done by looking honestly inside, and at the same time by looking out towards the challenges posed by the surrounding world. Looking inside into the heart will lead a Jesuit, first of all, to recognize his failings and weaknesses; this seems to be at the base of his feeling of impotence in face of the challenges. However, this awareness of his fragility is soon followed by a sense of relief that the healing power of God has enabled him to raise beyond his sinfulness and to dispose himself totally for the service of God. This experience had been strongly spelled out by GC 32 when speaking on the identity of a Jesuit.¹⁵ This is also echoed by GC 35¹⁶: "Our effort to be completely honest with ourselves and

with the Lord included much of the dynamic of the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises: it helped us discover and recognize our weaknesses and inconsistencies but also the depth of our desire to serve."¹⁷ In short, the discovery of Jesuit identity takes place in the encounter with Christ bearing his cross.¹⁸

The outward alertness is a graced response of a heart touched by God. The surrounding world ceases to be a mere dwelling milieu; now it has become a world of signs pointing to the divine will and movements. This has been emphasized more strongly by recent General Congregations. The Society is not a body closed in itself; instead, it is a body of apostles who ought to be always on the look out.¹⁹

The dynamics of the heart

It is quite clear from the outset that the documents do not wish to deal with mere understanding of the Jesuit identity and mission. The documents want to go further; they want to stir the heart; they want to generate to a deep sense of gratitude to the Lord; they want to ignite a certain enthusiasm for the Jesuit vocation; they want to encourage a deep, humble self knowledge and esteem; they want to give rise to a generous sense of mission; they want to kindle an apostolic fervour; in short, the documents want the Jesuits to be happy with the grace of vocation that they have received and thus to give themselves without any reserve to the Lord's project.

For this purpose, the documents make use of some expressions that reflects the dynamics of the heart. The *first moment* of this dynamics is a reflective self-knowledge. Looking into his innermost self, the Jesuit would come face to face with his sinfulness and unworthiness, yet at the same time he encounters the prevailing grace of the Lord that heals him and calls him.²⁰ For the followers of Ignatius, this is primarily a matter of in-depth knowledge of God and of self.²¹ To help one to reach this kind of knowledge, the documents suggest the use of memory.²²

The *second moment* of this dynamics would be the emergence from this level of profundity of an open heart, deeply involved

with the plight of the surrounding world, something which reminds us of Jesus' compassion in the gospels;²³ the documents put it as "pastoral sensitivity"²⁴, a heart moved to give prompt response²⁵. Decree One abounds with the resolution to respond to various challenges of this time, particularly the ones pointed out by the Holy Father.²⁶ In the context of the mission from the Church, this commitment to respond should stem from faith²⁷, and as a wholehearted, generous and corporate service at the same time, it assumes an ecclesial quality.²⁸ By this one comes to the theme of fidelity to the Church, which is both "effective and affective".²⁹

The *third moment* of the dynamics is in continuation with the second; I would call it "mystical moment", in which the response of the Jesuit comes to be more deeply united with the heart of the Lord, with His way of seeing and understanding things, with His way of acting.³⁰ Making use the imageries of "looking", "seeing" and "eyes", the documents point to the twofold mystical unity that should mark a Jesuit response: on the one hand, when speaking on joining Christ's mission in the world, Decree Two states: "*The grace we receive as Jesuits is to be and to go with Him, looking on the world with His eyes, loving it with His heart, and entering into its depths with His unlimited compassion.*" (n. 15) On the other hand Decree Three affirms: "*Our commitment... invites us to see the world from the perspective of the poor and the marginalised, learning from them, acting with and for them.*" (n. 27). These should not be seen as two opposing perspectives: they are two faces belonging to the same coin, since they are based upon the Christological truth mentioned by the Holy Father when he reminded that "*the preferential option for the poor is implicit in the Christological faith in a God who for us became poor, to enrich us with his poverty [2 Cor 8:9]*".³¹ The intensity of this mystical moment seems to be the basic reason why a Jesuit should welcome these invitations and challenges with humble enthusiasm and total dedication.³²

Cursory look at the symbols and imageries

I would classify the symbols and images used by the documents under five categories, namely "inner sensitivity",

"movement", "inner security", "inner dessert" and "fruitful labour". I am aware that while this classification could help to some extent, it could also be of great disadvantage when individual symbols are pushed too rigidly to fit into the categories, as if one were creating pattern out of thin air. This is an attempt to find out and locate in which sector of the heart those symbols might speak more eloquently.

"Inner sensitivity": Under this group I would include those symbols and images that touch upon the "senses of heart". "Fire", "flame", "to burn", "to lit", "to enkindle", together with cognate images of "light", "warmth", "brightness" (and its antonym, "darkness"), would denote inner energy with its impacts and influences supposed to be exerted by Jesuit life upon the surrounding world, as well as the impact effectuated by the divine love upon the Jesuits himself.³³ Next, there are symbols related to the sight: "image", "face", "eyes", "view", and the corresponding verbs, "to see", "to look": they suggest a deep contact with a reality which involves the whole person, something that would affect his judgement deeply.³⁴ The explicit use of the symbol "heart" would point to the center of something: it could be one's own being, or the Church he serves, or the Lord whose footsteps he follows.³⁵ Decree Two still uses two other expressions, "gentleness" and "sweetness", to describe how it tastes when one is within the divine closeness.³⁶

"Movements": Expressions that denote mobility, movement, crossing of barriers, building bridges, unifying, drawing closer, search, entering, discovering, come under this category. There are many ways and contexts by which the documents want to express the dynamic element of the heart. In talking about the identification with Christ, Decree Two makes use of the verb "to place" in passive voice; hence the Jesuit *being placed with Christ bearing His cross*.³⁷ This implies movement, since Christ bearing His cross is a dynamic reality. This is obvious from what is stated in the same decree regarding apostolic mobility.³⁸ Moving together with Christ means entering into unknown areas, frontier situation.³⁹ It is, among others, the special role of Jesuit obedience to place him with Jesus who is labouring among peoples.⁴⁰ There is another imagery, used by Decree Two: that

of "outreach" or crossing. Jesus is described in that way, the way of outreach to peoples "across the border" hitherto untouched, bringing them the water of life.⁴¹ There is yet a variation of this imagery, one used by Decree Three: *building a bridge*. This time it is describing the task of Jesuits, that of connecting the divided and fragmented segments of the world.⁴²

"Inner security": When speaking about how Jesuits should find for themselves a certain peacefulness, the documents make use of expressions denoting "home", or "house": hence, quoting Jerome Nadal's expression, Decree Two states: "*The world is our house*."⁴³ Whereas, in another discourse, Decree Four points out that for Jesuits, "*Within the Church, the Society is a privileged place where the will of God is manifested to us; it becomes our 'pathway to God'*".⁴⁴ Both expressions certainly imply that for Jesuits there is no point of looking after a peacefulness and security in the sense given by this world. The world gives none of that peacefulness that flows from doing God's will. In other words, the Jesuits should find their peaceful home precisely in a continuous state of being sent anywhere in this world, something which often means physical and psychological insecurity, although they are supposed to bring about a real peacefulness to people who direly need the service.⁴⁵ Above all it is because the world is in fact "*the theatre of a battle between good and evil*", as the Holy Father reminds us.⁴⁶ Far from being in a comfortable and peaceful shelter, the state of being sent put Jesuits into the opposite situation, which the documents describes as "limit situations", or "frontiers".⁴⁷

"Inner desert": the situation of human beings to whom the Jesuits are sent is depicted in the documents using various expressions that could be associated with the desert situation: "barrenness"⁴⁸, "thirst"⁴⁹, a sort of feeling "suffocation",⁵⁰ "darkness",⁵¹ "loneliness", "hiddenness", even "death". As we see, this rich variety of images are more concentrated in Decree Two. To address this situation of emptiness one has to be willing to experience inner emptiness himself, in the manner that Jesus himself has gone through his *kenosis*.⁵² Corresponding to this desert situation is the scriptural image of water and food of life.⁵³ What a Jesuit is supposed to do is to bring life to the

surrounding desert situation which today's world looks like. This is supported also by the images of "healing", "making whole", and "liberation".⁵⁴

"Fruitful labour": This imagery is used to depict the fruitfulness of Jesuit labour when intimately united to that of Christ. On the one hand, one is deeply vulnerable to all kinds of influence from the modern, fragmented culture. Decree Two says: *"We live our identity as companions of Jesus in a context where multiple images, the innumerable faces of a fragmented culture compete for our attention. They seep into us, take root in the fertile soil of our natural desires..."* (n. 26) On the other hand, it is by the love for Jesus that this fertile soil will yield real fruits.⁵⁵ In its turn, Decree Six uses abundantly the corresponding image of "harvest" when describing the service rendered to our cause by lay collaborators.⁵⁶

Is this kind of reading worth the effort?

After this cursory reading of the images and symbols in the documents, a question arises: is this a right way to read the documents within the perspective intended by their authors?

First, it would seem well in place to state that the language of imageries and symbols does not mean cheap sentimentalism, nor does the extensive use of concepts necessarily mean conceptualism. Learned as they normally are, the Jesuits have also been trained in the language of the heart, especially during the experience of the Spiritual Exercises. This is a matter of communicating an in depth experience. The Spiritual Exercises uses a language that seems more imaginative than purely rational. This is to effect within the retreatants the similar experience as that of Ignatius himself during his long pilgrimage. The documents issued from a General Congregation do not only serve as materials for academic purposes, but also as points for community and personal prayers and discernment. They are certainly intended to be read as reference materials for retreats. They are meant to elicit enthusiasm and resolution towards apostolic renewal. As such, they should nurture the heart more than the brain. After all, the challenges that confront all Jesuits are so enormous so that it is not so much their understanding

that ought to be addressed than their willingness and readiness to engage themselves on them.

Secondly, the way of looking into the realities of the world does not have to be a cold description of facts; the world as it stands can also be described in ways that prompt deep listening followed by concerted action. The harsh realities of this times can be depicted in ways that are not necessarily dramatic, yet adequate enough to highlight the human values that are at stake. In the last analysis, this way of looking at things points towards God's own way of looking the world, with the eyes of compassion combined with resolute willingness to heal and to save. I do think that the documents of the 35th General Congregation want to present the current situation in ways that call for prayerful response, whatever form it may take.

Thirdly, this is not to say that the exposition of data and facts are not necessary; on the contrary, the way of images and symbols should be combined with good statistics and data, if it were meant to be effective at all. Today, all kind of data are available through the internet; the question is to find out reliable data, based on which one is to draw up a concerted plan of action. Surely the documents of the last Congregation have been prepared in such a way that was based on sufficient reliable data from throughout the Society, attested among other things by copious documents from the province congregations and the postulata. It seems that instead of reproducing those data in the documents, the participants of the Congregation almost deliberately chose the way of presenting their reflection by way of various imageries, and thus they wanted to share with their Jesuit brethren how the Spirit had awakened in them a new awareness, expected to bring them out of inner inertia towards a new enthusiasm and apostolic zeal.

In conclusion, it seems that communicating more imaginatively with the documents is one possible way to get into their main thrust. Surely the documents can be approached in many other ways. The probing into images used in the documents would seem to offer a possibility to get a feel of the riches of the experience that produced them.

Endnotes

- ¹ The original phrase is '*scuela del affecto*'. Cf. an article by José A. Garcia, "The School of the Heart", *The Way*, 42/2 (April 2003), pp. 4-15.
- ² Fr. General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "To all major Superiors: Directives on Tertianship", *Curia Generalizia*, 91/22. Here Fr. Kolvenbach cites the text of the *Constitutions* [516].
- ³ GC 35, D1, n. 9.
- ⁴ By "expressions" I mean words, phrases, or a complete sentence, as well as pair of words or contrasts employed by the documents. E.g., D3, nn 2-3; 11.
- ⁵ Cf. D3, nn. 2-3.
- ⁶ D2, n. 27: "To live this mission in our broken world, we need fraternal and joyful communities in which we nourish and express with great intensity the sole passion that can unify our differences and bring to life our creativity."
- ⁷ D4, n. 14: "The incarnation of the Son of God in human history invites us to see God in all things..." Jesuits should follow the same pattern as Ignatius: "There (= at Manresa) the Lord, who taught him like a schoolboy, gently prepared him to receive an understanding that the world could be seen in another way..." (D2, n. 4). The same decree goes on: "The understanding that Ignatius received taught him a contemplative way of standing in the world, of contemplating God at work in the depth of things..." (D2, n. 6).
- ⁸ D4, n. 3.
- ⁹ Cf. D4, nn. 8; 12; 17; 19; 27. To quote some significant passages: "Obedience frees us to give ourselves exclusively to the service of the Gospel. By freeing us from our own 'affections, desires and interests', we await its fullness as a gift God alone can give." (D4, n. 12) "We will only be able to live our vow of obedience as freedom and true self-realization if the mystical experience of passionate love for Christ...remains alive in us..." (D4, n. 17)
- ¹⁰ Cf. D4, n. 27: "Following the example of Ignatius, the Society expects that the Jesuits will exercise creativity in carrying out their mission as they see circumstances require, that they will go beyond what has been asked in the true spirit of the magis... It is creative, because it calls on the individual's freedom and resourcefulness."
- ¹¹ D1, nn. 1;5-6; D2, nn. 1-2; 4-6; 11; 25; D3, n. 15; D4, nn. 2-7; D6, n. 1.
- ¹² D4, n. 26.
- ¹³ D4, n. 38: "We encourage formatores to help Jesuits in formation to understand and live the mystical source of obedience: an unconditional love for the Lord which will bring them to a desire to serve him in fulfilling the Father's will."
- ¹⁴ Cf. D2, n. 21; D4, nn. 18-22; D6, nn. 4;
- ¹⁵ GC 32, D. 2, n. 1.
- ¹⁶ Cf. D1, n. 4.

- ¹⁷ D1, n. 3.
- ¹⁸ D2, n. 3.
- ¹⁹ D2, nn. 4-7.
- ²⁰ Cf. D1, n. 3 quoted above. Also: D1, n. 14: "This means recognizing...that some of our reactions and our attitudes have not always been expressed as our Institute demands of us: to be 'men humble and prudent in Christ'." D1, n. 15: "Each Jesuit is invited to acknowledge humbly his mistakes and faults, to ask the Lord's grace to help him live his mission and, if necessary, the grace of forgiveness."
- ²¹ Cf. D1, n. 10 quoting *Spiritual Exercises* # 104: "Our desire is to grow now and in the future in the 'interior knowledge of Our Lord, who became human for me, that I may love him more intensely and follow him more closely'..." This is how the Congregation describes the response to the call of the Holy Father: "It is obvious that the Society can not let this historic moment pass without giving a response at the same high level as the ecclesial charism of St. Ignatius (D1, n. 8).
- ²² Cf. D1, n. 1: "Following in the footsteps of St. Ignatius and his companions, we gathered...to be hosted by the Vicar of Christ and to listen, with open hearts to what he would say about our mission." Also D1, n. 6: "That is why we were so moved by the Pope's evocation of the memory of Fr. Arrupe." D2, n. 8: "We travel again the path taken by Ignatius. As in his experience so too in ours..."
- ²³ "*Splagchnizoma*": cf. e.g. Mt 14:14; Mc 6:34, etc.
- ²⁴ D1, n. 7: "This help and this service...extend to all Jesuits, called to act with great pastoral sensitivity in the variety of our missions and apostolic work."
- ²⁵ Cf. D2 nn. 11; 21; 30. Also cf. D3, n. 34: "In heeding the call to restore right relationships with creation, we have been moved anew by the cry of those suffering the consequences of environmental destruction..."
- ²⁶ Cf. D1, nn. 1;5;6;13;15. D2, n. 21.
- ²⁷ Cf. D3, n. 30.
- ²⁸ Cf. D1, nn. 3;6;7;16; D2, nn 16;18; D4, nn. 8;19;33. To quote one of the significant passages: "...our aim is to be ever available for the more universal good...It is this availability for the Church's universal mission that marks our Society in a particular way, makes sense of our special vow of obedience to the Pope, and makes us a single apostolic body dedicated to serving, in the Church, men and women everywhere." (D2, n. 16).
- ²⁹ Expression taken from D1, n. 13: "...to love and serve the Vicar of Christ on earth with an 'effective and affective devotion..." On this fidelity, cf. also D1, nn. 7;8; D4, nn. 27; 33.
- ³⁰ Cf. the title given to the section in D2, nn. 4-7.
- ³¹ D3, n. 27.
- ³² E.g., D1, n.9: "The 35th General Congregation calls all Jesuits to live with the great spirit and generosity that is at the center of our vocation..." It then continues with a succinct statement, quoting Nadal: "*La Compañía es fervor*" (n. 10). Then follows a quotation from Fr. P.-H. Kolvenbach's

remark: "...mediocrity has no place in Ignatius' world view" (n 11). "The General Congregation gives us the opportunity to live 'with renewed vigor and zeal' the mission for which the Spirit willed it in the Church."

(n. 16). Cf. also D4, n. 29; D6, n. 9.

³³ Cf. D2, nn. 1; 7; 19; 25; D4, nn. 9; 17.

³⁴ Cf. D2, nn. 2; 3; 5; 7; 10; 15; 18; 26; D3, n. 27; D4, n. 14; D6, n. 1;

³⁵ Cf. D2, nn. 8; 15; 18; D3, nn. 14; 19; D6, n. 9.

³⁶ Cf. D2, nn. 4; 6;

³⁷ Cf. D2, nn. 3; 6;

³⁸ Cf. D2, nn. 8: "Thus we enter, with Christ who offers living water, into the dry and lifeless areas of the world." Then says D2, n. 19: "Following Jesus together acts a pointer to the disciples *en mouvement* with their Lord."

³⁹ Cf. D2, n. 7: "Commitment to 'the service of faith and promotion of justice', to dialogue with cultures and religions, takes Jesuits to limit-situations..." Also: "As followers of Jesus today, we reach out also to persons who differ from us... we seek only to be where he sends us." (D2, n. 15) See also D3, n. 15.

⁴⁰ Cf. D4, nn. 10; 12.

⁴¹ Cf. D2, 12: "Jesus, in his outreach, embraced differences and new horizons. His ministries transcended boundaries." The images of nourishment, and water, will be treated below.

⁴² Cf. D3, nn. 17; 28.

⁴³ D2, n. 23.

⁴⁴ D4, n. 16.

⁴⁵ "Human beings need food, shelter, love, relationship, truth, meaning, promise, hope... a future..., an absolute future... a 'great hope'... (D2, n. 13).

⁴⁶ D3, n. 18.

⁴⁷ D1, n. 6; D2, nn. 7; 8; 12 ("where water may not have yet welled up"); 20; 24.

⁴⁸ D2, n. 8: "Thus we enter, with Christ who offers living water, into the dry and lifeless areas of the world." Cf. also D3, n. 21.

⁴⁹ D2, n. 12, *passim*, e.g., "To follow Christ bearing his Cross means opening ourselves with him to every thirst that afflicts humanity today." Also D2, n. 13;

⁵⁰ "...we shall meet once again the Spirit of God seeking to liberate a suffering creation, which demands of us space to live and breathe." (D2, n. 24)

⁵¹ D2, n. 22: "God is present in the darkness of life intent on making all things new."

⁵² Cf. D2, n. 14; D4, n. 15.

⁵³ Cf. D2, nn. 8. 12-13. Especially nn. 12-13 employs a variety of images such as "living water", "food", "nourishment", "water of life", "free-flowing water", "river- (banks)".

⁵⁴ Cf. D2, nn. 13; 24; 26.

⁵⁵ Cf. D4, n. 17.

⁵⁶ Cf. D6, nn. 2; 3; 6; 7.

FRONTIERS AND BRIDGES A Reflection on Decree Three of GC35

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Introduction

The word *frontier* has varied meanings: the edge of empires, a stage for heroes and backdrop for adventure, a technological testing ground and spur to industry, a story of conquest and of rich cultural exchange. The term is also used metaphorically in the context of intellectual and scientific advances, ideological visions, and so on. In our present-day globalized world, "ideas, information, merchandise, technology and capital circulate freely; persons also circulate, though with many more restrictions. Frontiers have become porous, and in many cases they have disappeared. The world has become multi-religious and multi-cultural."¹

The frontiers, from the challenging perspective of a Cuban Jesuit, "are the conflicted expression of our world 'run wild' which is experiencing changes so profound that they strain the entire society and that often we are unable to control nor even understand. In such a 'fragmented' world the certainties of life which had configured persons and society itself, such as the vision of God, of the family, of sexuality, of the meaning of life, have been broken in pieces dividing persons inside and