

July 30, 2012

PANEL: LA MISIÓN JESUITA Y REFLEXIONES SOBRE LA CONGREGACIÓN GENERAL 35

Secretariado de Justicia Social y Ecología

P. Francisco Javier Álvarez sj

La organización de este *Colloquium* nos pedía a los Secretarios de fe, justicia y colaboración que ofreciéramos una reflexión –cada uno desde su propia perspectiva– sobre los retos que afronta la educación en el contexto de la última Congregación General 35.

Estas páginas están escritas desde la perspectiva del Secretariado de Justicia Social y Ecología que represento. En primer lugar, me detendré en el valor de la espiritualidad ignaciana en la educación que ofrecemos. A continuación desarrollaré cuatro contenidos propios de las últimas Congregaciones y que deben ser incluidos en nuestro servicio educativo: un horizonte de educación de calidad para todos, que aspira a mejorar nuestras sociedades, que beneficia en particular a los últimos y que promueve el cuidado del medio ambiente. Terminaré proponiendo la necesidad de una visión universal sobre el mundo actual, comprensiva de su complejidad y esperanzada, que podamos presentar a nuestros alumnos y alumnas, para fortalecer su carácter y ayudarles a tomar un compromiso.

1. Una educación apoyada sobre la espiritualidad ignaciana

La educación de la Compañía se apoya sobre la espiritualidad ignaciana. Esta educación responde a las exigencias legales y planes educativos vigentes en los diferentes países, pero la dinámica interior de nuestra educación quiere regirse por las características de la espiritualidad ignaciana. En realidad, esta espiritualidad es el mayor tesoro que jesuitas y colaboradores ignacianos podemos ofrecer a nuestros alumnos y alumnas y constituye un modo de situarse ante Dios, ante la realidad, ante los demás y ante nosotros mismos.

La espiritualidad ignaciana impulsa el crecimiento de la persona: promueve el conocimiento de sí misma, fomenta la autonomía y la capacidad de decisión, impulsa el compromiso solidario y favorece una mirada esperanzada sobre la historia. Por este motivo resulta tan valiosa en la tarea educativa, pues ayuda a las personas que acompañamos en las aulas a crecer humanamente desde su propia personalidad, para que sean cada vez más autónomas, más conscientes de la dignidad de las personas y más solidarias.

Esta espiritualidad se apoya sobre la convicción de que Dios está presente y creativamente activo en la historia y en las personas, convocándonos a colaborar con él. Es una espiritualidad dirigida hacia el futuro de Dios y por este motivo siempre resulta crítica con la realidad presente: nos invita a amar el presente, pero aspirando al futuro por llegar. Tal vez esa **conciencia crítica** sea un rasgo esencial impulsado por la espiritualidad ignaciana en el proceso educativo.

Por otro lado, vivimos en un mundo que descaradamente, de modo constante, nos bombardea con seducciones que deshumanizan. Muchas veces, ya ni siquiera somos conscientes de ello. Nos rodean reclamos continuos de los sentidos y ofrecimientos de vida aparentemente buena. En particular, una publicidad con escasos límites se nos cuela en todos los espacios geográficos y vitales intentando ganar nuestro deseo. Con frecuencia lo consigue. Los modelos humanos propuestos para la imitación están frecuentemente inscritos entre las “celebrities”: juventud, éxito, glamour, belleza y riqueza. Modelos muy luminosos, pero vacíos.

Por ello, urge presentar sin miedo nuevos modelos de vida buena y bella: solidaria, olvidada de sí misma, valiente y desprendida. Tal vez sea ésta una de las grandes tareas educativas hoy: ofrecer a nuestros alumnos y alumnas **ideales de vida noble**: narraciones vitales de personas con valores nuevos, relatos actualizados y atractivos del “rey temporal”. Esas propuestas actuarán en su interior a modo de contrapeso frente a otros discursos que venden felicidad a precio de saldo.

2. Educación acorde con la misión de las últimas Congregaciones

Las Congregaciones Generales que la Compañía ha celebrado desde la CG32 en 1975 –37 años ya– han subrayado la necesidad de una misión universal de servicio de la fe y de promoción de la justicia. El lema del Colloquium –“el mundo es nuestra casa”– remite a esa perspectiva universal.

Profundizaré en esta amplia perspectiva de **misión universal de fe que obra la justicia** desarrollando cuatro contenidos:

a) Un horizonte universal: educación de calidad para todos

En nuestros centros educativos educamos a alumnos y alumnas concretos, pero en realidad, aspiramos a una educación de calidad *para todos* los niños y niñas de nuestro mundo. Rebajar esta aspiración es hoy traicionar nuestra misión. No hay en el mundo ningún niño o niña que se merezca peor educación que la que ofrecemos al más cuidado de nuestros alumnos. El mundo no es solamente *nuestra casa*. **El mundo es la casa de todos.**

En la actualidad unos 70 millones de niños y niñas no están escolarizados, ellas en mayor proporción que ellos. Otros tantos no terminan la escuela por una variedad de motivos: en ocasiones se trata del coste, que no pueden pagar; otras veces las barreras sociales y culturales son infranqueables; en particular, los niños con discapacidades tienen muchas menos oportunidades que las de sus compañeros sin ellas¹. Las regiones del mundo con mayores obstáculos a la educación se encuentran en el África Subsahariana y en Asia del Sur.

Igualmente grave es la situación de la calidad educativa, deficiente en muchos lugares. En muchos de los países en los que se encuentran nuestros colegios esta calidad es muy baja, en especial la que reciben los niños de familias pobres o pertenecientes a minorías étnicas y culturales.

Por ello, empeñarse hoy por la educación en el horizonte de universalidad que nos señalan las Congregaciones exige que demandemos a nuestros gobiernos acabar con la discriminación educativa por motivos económicos o étnicos, mayores presupuestos destinados a educación y un alcance verdaderamente universal. Nuestro compromiso por la educación pide hoy no sólo educar, sino **incidir política y culturalmente para que todos los niños y niñas** –sin discriminación por sus medios

¹ Naciones Unidas, Objetivos del desarrollo del milenio, Informe 2010, p.18. en http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Resources/Static/Products/Progress2010/MDG_Report_2010_Es.pdf, revisado el 7 de junio de 2012.

económicos o su pertenencia étnica— **reciban una educación de calidad**. Esto es algo que la Compañía está realizando en algunos países.

b) Una educación que aspira a mejorar nuestras sociedades

Nuestra educación no puede dirigirse sólo a que nuestros alumnos se desarrollen personalmente, sino a que toda la sociedad sea más humana, más justa y solidaria. **No queremos profesionales exitosos en sociedades fracasadas**, tal como decía a los alumnos en su graduación un rector de universidad.

Educamos a jóvenes concretos para contribuir a una sociedad más justa y solidaria. Es necesario buscar este fin de una manera explícita:

- Ofreciendo a los alumnos la posibilidad de implicarse en servicios sociales y de conocer realidades de pobreza, para percibir la desigualdad y la injusticia del mundo en que vivimos;
- Involucrándolos en iniciativas ciudadanas locales.
- Implicando en actividades sociales a las asociaciones de padres y a la comunidad educativa.
- Ofreciendo a padres y alumnos la posibilidad de participar en comunidades laicales ignacianas comprometidas con la sociedad y con la Iglesia.
- Haciendo todo esto en alianza con otras obras de la Compañía, para mostrar una credibilidad de cuerpo y generar una base social que comparte horizontes y valores.

La mayoría de nuestras instituciones educativas ponen en práctica algunas de estas actividades. En esta misma línea, aquellos de nuestros colegios que cuentan con más medios, que realizan mayores inversiones y se dirigen a los sectores sociales más pudientes nos debemos preguntar, con humildad y sinceridad, si con nuestra tarea educativa estamos contribuyendo a perpetuar la injusticia en la que viven nuestras sociedades, su desigualdad y su discriminación. Un diagnóstico cuya claridad debe orientar el discernimiento sobre nuestras prioridades y esfuerzos.

c) En particular en beneficio de los últimos

Ignacio siempre pedía a los jesuitas que discernieran el servicio que podían ofrecer. Y les ofreció criterios para ello, con un determinado orden: primero debían mirar dónde hay mayor necesidad; segundo, dónde se podría producir más fruto; tercero, dónde hay mayor deber de devolver lo recibido; cuarto, dónde puede multiplicarse más nuestro servicio².

Nuestras instituciones más longevas deben examinar si nuestra presencia jesuita sigue siendo necesaria allí donde estamos. Tal vez nuestros alumnos seguirían recibiendo una educación de calidad aunque no estuviéramos nosotros. Quizás no sea necesario estar allí y sin embargo, otros niños nos esperan en otros lugares. Esto último es lo que lleva años haciendo Fe y Alegría en América Latina. Acudir allí donde nuestra educación es más necesaria.

Era convicción de nuestro querido P. Arrupe que los últimos se merecen lo mejor. La opción por los pobres no es una opción ideológica, sino como nos decía el Santo Padre en la última Congregación General, se trata de una opción cristológica, pues el mismo Cristo eligió ser pobre para enriquecernos con su pobreza. **Si nuestra educación es realmente buena** —como lo creemos todos los que estamos aquí—, **primariamente debemos ofrecérsela a los niños y niñas con menos oportunidades**. Nos lo demanda así toda nuestra tradición ignaciana y jesuítica.

² Constituciones 622.

El servicio a los últimos tiene sus ventajas. En primer lugar, nos obliga a radicalizar nuestra gratuidad. En segundo lugar, nos ayuda también a resituar la excelencia. Muchas veces la hemos ligado al éxito educativo, bajo el que se suele colar un orgullo sutil. La excelencia, en el universo ignaciano, está unida al *magis*: se trata de dar una respuesta generosa y sin medida al amor que hemos recibido. La excelencia de nuestros alumnos está dirigida a promover en ellos un compromiso firme y basado en el amor con la vida y con un mundo más justo.

Es necesario decir que hay muchas preciosas iniciativas de educación a niños de familias pobres, con formas muy variadas, en muchos países y en varias Conferencias.

d) Promoviendo escuelas verdes

Enmarcar el servicio de nuestros colegios en el contexto de la CG35 obliga a incluir una preocupación por el medio ambiente. Estamos llamados a incorporar cada vez más esta atención por la naturaleza y el medioambiente como una dimensión de nuestro servicio educativo. Algunos aspectos que se pueden introducir:

- Cuidar que el espacio educativo esté libre de polución y de materiales tóxicos que pueden dañar la salud de los niños
- Utilizar materiales y recursos reutilizables y reciclables. Uso de energías limpias. Edificios sostenibles
- Donde sea posible, aprovechar el campus para generar algún espacio verde, donde los niños puedan cuidar y conocer la naturaleza
- Ofrecer conocimientos sobre ecología y medioambiente, introduciendo a los niños en la belleza de la creación y en la necesidad de su cuidado

También aquí debo señalar que las iniciativas en este campo de sensibilización ecológica son muy numerosas.

3. Ofrecer una visión universal en un mundo fragmentado

La globalización y la especialización científica han fragmentado nuestra mirada sobre el mundo. Nos resulta muy difícil situar hoy nuestros conocimientos parciales en una visión con sentido, que no reduzca la complejidad de las cosas y que dé cuenta del conjunto de la realidad. Pero será muy difícil trabajar por un futuro más justo para el mundo si sólo disponemos de visiones parciales y fragmentadas. Si carecemos de esa visión universal, que da cuentas de la complejidad y esperanzada nuestros esfuerzos por promover un compromiso social en los alumnos pueden caer en puro voluntarismo.

A veces nos da miedo ofrecer estas visiones universales, porque creemos que pueden considerarse una intromisión ideológica. Sin embargo, sólo proponiéndolas podemos sugerir horizontes de esperanza y convocar a las personas para que contribuyan a ellos.

En nuestra tradición jesuítica esto es lo que se encontraba bajo la *Ratio Studiorum*, una visión universal que construya carácter, proporcione visión crítica y esperanza sobre el mundo y mueva a la colaboración. Algo de esto, sin duda, seguimos necesitando. ¿No deberíamos intentar trabajar juntos en una empresa tan importante como ésta? Creo que es un reto muy ambicioso, pero al que tal vez podríamos tratar de responder unidos, desde la riqueza y diversidad que reunimos al proceder de tantos lugares distintos del mundo y de tantas situaciones sociales y culturales.

P. Patxi Alvarez sj
Secretary for Social Justice and Ecology - Rome

Secretariado de Promoción de la Fe

P. Gerald Blaszczak sj

“Every scribe who has been trained for the Kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old” (Mt 13.52).

I suggest that you leaders of Jesuit Secondary Education, gathered here from all corners of the globe, are called to do precisely what Matthew challenges leaders of his community to do: like scribes who are trained, “matheteutheis,” literally “made into disciples,” you need to recognize and offer freely your “thesauros,” your treasure, what is most precious and central to your lives, what you consider your deepest commitments and values. Offering anything less disrespects your colleagues, your students and their families and dishonors the name of Jesus, in whose name we carry out the ministry of secondary education. Anything less will eventually leave you empty, disenchanting, perhaps even bitter and cynical.

What is your “treasure”? It is the methodology, knowledge, information and skill-sets that form our academic disciplines. Our “treasure” consists of our professional competence, won at the price of so much hard work, and the fruit of long experience, whether in administration, fund-raising, classroom instruction, athletics, student-services. Because our schools are in the first place just that- schools- the treasure we offer is our intellectual passion, the excitement of struggling with ideas, of discovering new connections, of acquiring new knowledge. Our treasure is the joy and energy we find in teaching, in creating an environment in which our students grow as whole persons, and where we learn and grow along with them, indeed, because of them. Our treasure is our vision and commitment to widening the access to quality education to traditionally under-served or neglected groups- because of race, caste, social class, economic condition.

But the treasure we offer as Jesuit educators has an even more clearly identifiable shape. It is marked by the characteristics of our Jesuit/Ignatian way of proceeding. Whether in Zamboanga or in Abuja, Jamshedpur or Sao Paulo, Bilbao or Gdynia, our treasure includes respect, reverence, and reliance on the gifts of each member of the school community. Our treasure involves our commitment to partnership and cooperation with others in the ministry of education, “rooted in the realization that to prepare for the coming of the Kingdom requires a plurality of gifts, perspectives, and experiences, both international and multicultural” (General Congregation 34, Degree 34, #16).

Our Ignatian treasure is our conviction that there is no such thing as a “value-free” education. The treasure we offer is an educational experience that is explicitly designed to transform our students- and us. Speaking to representatives of Jesuit higher education in Mexico City in April, 2010, Fr. Nicolas puts it this way: “In Jesuit education, the depth of learning and imagination encompasses and integrates intellectual rigor with reflection on the experience of reality together with the creative imagination to work toward constructing a more humane, just, sustainable and faith-filled world. The experience of reality includes the broken world, especially the world of the poor, waiting for healing.”

Unapologetically we claim as our own the treasure of our Catholic Tradition. From it we continue to engage our students’ and our own minds and hearts, our intellects and our imaginations with the Gospel Values of justice and compassion, of reconciliation and global solidarity. We continue to be inspired and challenged by the life and message of Jesus, and Social Teachings of the Church, by the examples of the holy women and men of every generation, who show us what it means to be authentic followers of Jesus, what it means to live in the image and likeness of a God who pours God’s own self out in endless gift of creation, redemption, sanctification. We affirm and share with our students and their families the

Church's rich history of service to the immigrant and the refugee, the widow and the orphan, the marginalized and the abused, the victims of injustice and poverty.

As Jesuit Schools we categorically oppose all efforts from any side to indoctrinate our students. Rather we build into our curricula the skills and information needed to allow our students to wrestle with the most significant issues and complex problems posed by human life and by the specific circumstances in which we live. We are committed to accompanying our students, not by supplying them with easy answers or facile comfort, but by urging them on by our own example of restlessness and determination, intellectual discipline and personal integrity. We refuse to dumb down life's challenges. In the same talk I mentioned earlier, Fr. Nicholas warns us of a "globalization of superficiality". He worries about the extent to which new technologies, together with an intensified climate of moral relativism and pervasive consumerism, shape the interior worlds of all of us, but especially our youth, "limiting the fullness of their flourishing as human persons and limiting their responses to a world in need of healing, morally and spiritually."

When one is overwhelmed with such a dizzying pluralism of choices and values and beliefs and visions of life, then one can so easily slip into the lazy superficiality of relativism or mere tolerance of others and their views, rather than engaging in the hard work of forming communities of dialogue in search of truth and understanding. It is easier to do as one is told than to study, to pray, to risk, or to discern a choice. (Adolfo Nicolas, "Depth, Universality, and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today," Universidad Iberoamericana, Ciudad de México, April, 2010)

The treasure of our Jesuit-essentially and unapologetically Catholic- identity will not allow us or our students to yield casually to obfuscating dogmatism (read "fundamentalism"), or fatalistically to moral anarchy and incoherence. We can and must foster habits of critical reflection, study, dialogue, which have the promise of leading us, perhaps by fits and starts, to a responsible appropriation of values by which to labor, love, hope. And by which we can contribute to the healing of our broken world.

We are able to do this with integrity and consistency because at the core of our Catholic faith, our Ignatian world-view is a confidence that meaning and value are not arbitrary constructs, but, rather, that the most fundamental human instincts about right and wrong are rooted in the pattern of creation itself and in God's self-disclosure in grace and in revelation. We are not left adrift. The universe is not morally incoherent. We have a meaning and purpose that can be discovered by the use of our God-given reason and in the light of what God has revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

The "Treasure" par excellence which we offer is the God whom we worship and adore, who reaches out and fills us with God's own Triune life. We offer to our students and their families the life-altering, horizon-breaking message that has been proclaimed and forgotten, which has often not been credibly expressed and intelligibly explained: The God who is beyond all our imagining and conceptualizing has drawn near to us in the splendor of creation, in the religious genius and institutions of all peoples, but in a special and ultimate way in the history and life of Israel, and, finally, in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is God's ultimate Word, and that Word is loving acceptance. In all that Jesus is and does and says God shows God's self, God's truth to be abounding mercy and ready compassion. This is what makes the world go around. This is what life is all about. It is that simple, that inexhaustibly rich.

We are Jesuit to the extent that we acknowledge that, as the American Jesuit Theologian and cultural critic, Michael Buckley puts it, "A human being is an emptiness for God, a question for which God is the answer, and to attempt to fill that emptiness with anything finite, anything categorical or created, only

increases the emptiness and the sense of fraud or frustration or even despair.” Our tradition boldly asserts that behind every human longing for God is the desire of God to unite human beings with God’s own self. John of the Cross put it this way: “If the soul is seeking God, her Beloved is much more seeking the soul.” So to our fragmented world, to our students and their families we offer the treasure of faith: We are not cast out into meaningless, ultimately futile existence, into an existence “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” Rather we are made for God, desired and sought out persistently, passionately by God, a God who by God’s own nature is oriented to us, who, preposterous as it sounds, longs for us and comes to us- in all the ways that divine ingenuity can devise.

Secretariado de Colaboración con otros

P. Anthony D’Silva sj

Introduction

In a global world that is networked through the World-Wide-Web (www), collaboration seems like the most natural outcome of this technology and communications wonder. Collaboration invites humans to share and work together for the betterment of our world, often torn apart by conflict, greed and injustice. The networking not only of ideas and ideologies but also of humans and their social relationships is a new way of being in this world and of bettering it.

The purpose of this brief trigger-paper is to share with you a few reflections on the value of collaboration as seen in recent Jesuit legislation of its General Congregations; also, some of the challenges Jesuits face in collaboration, will be highlighted.

A Call for Jesuit Collaboration

Not a few Jesuits fail to see the value of collaboration in our apostolic works, accustomed as some of us are to functioning quite independently and autonomously, both as a corporate body as well as individuals.

The Church, since the Second Vatican Council in its document *Lumen Gentium*, has repeatedly emphasized the vocation and role of the laity in carrying out its mission. In fact, some think that the Church of this millennium will be called the “Church of the Laity”. Following the lead of the Church, the Jesuits in their more recent General Congregations (GC) have spelt out the implications of such a clarion call for the Society of Jesus.

GC 35, in 2008, painted a far reaching vision for Jesuits in the area of collaboration, when it said that “our responsibility as Jesuits to collaborate at multiple levels has become an imperative. Thus our provinces must work ever more together. So also must we work with others: religious men and women of other communities; lay persons; members of ecclesial movements; people who share our values but not our beliefs; in short, all persons of good will.” (GC35, decree 2, no. 21)

Again, GC 35 in its decree on Collaboration, reaffirmed the commitment of the Jesuits to collaboration and called it “a grace of our day and a hope for the future”. (decree 6, no. 6)

General Congregation 34, in its concluding decree, already in 1995, stated boldly that “partnership and cooperation with others in ministry is not a pragmatic strategy resulting from diminished manpower; it

is an essential dimension of the contemporary Jesuit way of proceeding...” Furthermore, it said, “Jesuits, therefore, cooperate with lay women and men in the Church, with religious, priests, and bishops of the local Church in which they serve, with members of other religions, and with all men and women of good will”. (decree 26, nos. 16 & 17)

As a result, the Society of Jesus, is focusing more sharply than ever on collaboration with others in all its apostolic sectors, as a new way of being Jesuit. To the educational sector collaboration comes almost naturally since the whole enterprise of education which draws upon the parents, the students, the teachers, and the local community is intrinsically a collaborative venture.

Collaboration in Secondary, Primary and Non-Formal Education

GC 34 had also acknowledged that “significant apostolic renewal has been initiated and carried forward by the large number of Jesuits and lay people working in the apostolate of secondary education. Jesuit-lay cooperation has developed significantly, with each party contributing in a distinctive way towards the total formation of students. Our schools have become platforms, reaching out into the community, not only to the extended school community of parents, former students and friends, but also to the poor and the socially disadvantaged in the neighbourhood”. (decree 18, no. 1)

The decree goes on to confirm that schools in the primary and pre-primary education levels, “ are very important and not contrary to our Institute ... because they can provide a solid academic and religious foundation during the formative early years, they can be one of the most effective services we offer people, especially the poor”. The same decree reaffirms the value of centers of non-formal education because these educate their students as “men and women for others” to take up leadership roles in their own communities and organizations. The decree ends with an appeal for collaboration between Jesuit schools, universities and social centers. (nos. 3 & 4)

Two Best Practices of Jesuit Collaboration in early Education

While there are dozens of examples of Jesuit educational initiatives through collaboration, I would like to highlight just two such outstanding and international examples : Cristo Rey High Schools of the USA; and, Fe y Alegria Schools of Latin America.

Cristo Rey Schools, USA:

This network, presently of 24 schools in 17 States in the USA with an enrollment of nearly 7000 students, was started by the Jesuits of Chicago in a poor Latino neighborhood on the Lower West Side of Chicago. Its mission is to cater to the poor students in urban areas with limited educational options. Its enrollment is inclined heavily towards the minorities with 96% of the student body nationwide being students of color. In many schools the entire graduating class goes on to College.

The Cristo Rey schools are a collaborative venture between the Jesuits, the Corporate World, the teaching Staff, the local communities and many other women and men of good-will who want the disadvantaged children of the neighborhood to have a better world. In fact, the popularity of the Cristo Rey Schools has reached to such an extent that lay persons schooled by Jesuits are also starting to take the initiative to open similar schools on their own.

Fe y Alegria Schools, Latin America:

The Fe y Alegria schools are a movement for integral popular Education and Social Development. Their target group is the most impoverished and excluded sectors of the population. This movement was born

in Venezuela in 1955, “as a way to consolidate efforts that were being made to provide educational services in the slum zones of Caracas”. The bold vision of the founder, Jesuit Father Jose Maria Velaz and his numerous collaborators has resulted today in a network of 1015 schools and 775 centers for alternative education. An impressive 1.4 million students benefit from the educational services of Fe y Alegria, spread out over more than 16 countries of Latin America.

The Fe y Alegria schools are a collaborative venture between the Jesuits, other Religious and lay women and men from various neighborhoods. Presently only about 67 Jesuits and over 43,000 lay and Religious collaborators help run this massive network of education for the poor of Latin America.

Some Challenges for Jesuit Collaboration in Education

1. To facilitate greater collaboration between Jesuits and women and men of good-will, it seems to me that the first need would be to expose Jesuits from the early years of **formation** to the values of collaboration through practical experiences; thus they would familiarize themselves with the dynamics, challenges and benefits of collaboration. Unfortunately Jesuit formation tends to stress the individual journey of each Jesuit more than the corporate experience of living and working together toward well defined corporate goals. Also, individual rather than group/team responsibility and accountability tends to be the Jesuit way of proceeding in formation. Hence, many Jesuits seem to get socialized into patterns of leadership that make it difficult or stressful for them to support collaboration with others.

Decree 13, of GC 34 stresses strongly the need for more collaboration-oriented Jesuit

formation. It says “ Cooperation with laity in mission requires the formation and renewal of all Jesuits. Initial formation must develop our capacity for collaboration with both laity and fellow Jesuits by means of education and experiences of ministerial cooperation with others”.

2. Also, Jesuits would need to **develop skills** that would enable them to listen to their collaborators, learn from their spirituality, and face together the difficulties of genuine cooperation.

In fairness to the collaborators, it would also be necessary to respond to their desire for formation and the sharing of Jesuit values and our way of proceeding. GC 34 makes it clear that “laity who collaborate in Jesuit apostolates can expect from us a specific formation in Ignatian values, help in discernment of apostolic priorities and objectives, and practical strategies for their realization.” (Decree 13, no. 8)

3. Of course, there may be collaborators **of other faiths or of atheistic persuasions** who will also need to be oriented to mutually shared values and belief systems. May be a new vocabulary would need to be evolved that is not narrowly sectarian or faith specific, but one which would be more inclusive of other faiths and inviting to all collaborators. Such programs of formation can contribute greatly to opening our minds and hearts to collaborative thinking which in turn could lead to collaborative action.
4. An important challenge that endures at all times **is collaboration between and among Jesuit educators and between and among Jesuit institutions of education**. Such collaborative modeling can serve a very useful purpose in making collaboration not only a desirable goal but a reality. Experience frequently shows us that greater and better **communication** and sharing of information between individual Jesuits as well as between Jesuit institutions can be a great

incentive for more and greater collaboration. Warm personal relationships and/or friendships also greatly assist and strengthen the structures of collaboration.

5. One possible troubling consequence for the Jesuits regarding collaboration with laity could touch on the question of **the identity of the Jesuit**. For some Jesuits it is as if collaboration could make them redundant; a question sometimes asked is: if the lay people are doing much of what I am supposed to do as a Jesuit, then why should I continue as a Jesuit? Obviously, this is indicative that the Jesuit would have to come to a better understanding of his own calling to a vowed life as a Religious, and to a renewed understanding of the Mission of God and of the Society of Jesus within this religious commitment.
6. The network of **Fe y Alegria schools in Latin America and the Cristo Rey schools in the USA** are great examples of collaboration in education for the **poor and marginalized**. As we have seen above, the Society of Jesus remains deeply committed to the education of the poor and the marginalized and what better way of achieving these goals than through collaboration with like-minded women and men of good-will. In both of the above mentioned creative initiatives in education there are only minimal Jesuit personnel involved; the greater responsibility for running these schools and transforming the lives of these less privileged children is boldly and enthusiastically borne by dedicated collaborators. There seems to be a mutual flow of motivational energies: the Jesuits are inspired by the singular dedication and professional expertise of the collaborators, while the collaborators are inspired by the personal warmth and rich spiritual heritage of the Jesuits.
7. Jesuit education has traditionally stressed that its goal is to form “men and women **for others**”; the new emphasis with a strong collaborative flavor to it, was articulated in 1990 by the Fr. Kolvenbach, the former Superior General, when he stated that we should now also form “men and women **with others**”. Forming our students in a collaborative mould is sowing the seeds for greater cooperation and mutuality in the globalized and networked world of today.
8. Finally, a challenge that faces Jesuit education in this century is to teach and learn how to live in a **multicultural world**, such that the prejudices and stereotypes we carry can be dismantled and transformed into building blocks for a new society; a society where diverse cultures are acknowledged, respected and shared. The prolonged years of school formation amidst a multicultural student body is the most apt environment for creating and sustaining **inter-cultural identities**. Thus Jesuit education should produce bridge builders of cultures, religions and nations.

Anthony da Silva SJ
Director, Jesuit Secretariat for Collaboration with Others (Rome)