

PROMOTIO IUSTITIAE

N° 70, April 1999

“We live in a broken world”

REFLECTIONS ON ECOLOGY

We live in a broken world where men and women are in need of integral healing, the power for which comes ultimately from God ... God's action does not begin with what we do; already, in the blessings of creation, God has laid the foundation for what he will accomplish through the graces of redemption.

34th General Congregation, Decree 6

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Michael Czerny, S.J.
Editor

Social Apostolate Secretariat
C.P. 6139 — 00195 Roma Prati — ITALY
+39-0668-79-283 (fax)
sjs@sjcuria.org

“We live in a broken world”

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

What concerns and problems does ecology include, and what importance or urgency do environmental issues have, for the Society of Jesus? Such questions naturally arise when considering Decree 20 of the 34th General Congregation, which recommended to Father General that a study be made on issues related to ecology.¹

Some of us, taking an intellectual or scientific approach, discover the grave problems in the environment and the people who suffer them. Others, in the social apostolate, begin from the suffering of the poor from environmental degradation and look to science for help. Some see human reality in explicitly ecological terms; for others, ecology is a spiritual vision or a theological world-view; and still others take an economic or political viewpoint, an ethical or theological one, in their approach to environmental issues. Some of us, finally, are puzzled by the topic, or frankly disinterested in it.

Ecology therefore is multi-faceted, and a constant interplay amongst the viewpoints may be the best approach – intellectual-scientific aspects combining with the spiritual-theological dimensions for the sake of effective action and networking.² Our Society of Jesus, scattered all around the world, is in a wonderful position to develop effective concerted work across cultural, disciplinary and national boundaries. Such pluralism is reflected in Decree 20, for all its brevity, and also in the study which it recommended be undertaken. The results of this study are published here under the title, *“We live in a broken world.”*³

Sources of *“We live in a broken world”* include Vatican II, Pope John Paul II's many recent teachings, and Father General's own previous remarks on ecology,⁴ as well as the indispensable contributions of some fifty Jesuit scientists and practitioners.⁵ Brief selections by quite a few of them are printed on each left-hand page, and these quotes represent the dialogue which informs the whole study. Moreover GC34 itself had a great deal to say, besides Decree 20, about ecology, creation, and our human responsibilities, and is often quoted.⁶

Father General introduces *“We live in a broken world”* and explains its scope, spirit and style. Then the five chapters open with a “reading” applicable to particular ecological situations of local or global dimensions. This framework sets up the three topics signalled for study by Decree 20: Ignatian spirituality, apostolic work and co-operation, and lifestyle and institutional decisions. Each chapter makes a contribution essential for the Society's overall approach. The concluding questions and suggestions for our way of proceeding, in chapter 5, are followed by several

¹ 34th General Congregation, Decree 20, “Ecology,” re-printed as Appendix C, below. All citations of Decrees (D.) are from GC34 unless otherwise noted.

² For a more complete presentation of this multi-level approach, see the *Characteristics of the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus* (1998). Specifically for how the different levels of science and expertise come together in apostolic efforts of the Society, see *Characteristics*, ch. 3.1.

³ The title is taken from D.6, n. 14.

⁴ See footnotes throughout the text and especially notes 104 and 105 in Appendix D, below.

⁵ For the names of the Jesuits who have taken part and contributed, see Appendix E, below.

⁶ For the citations of GC34 on creation, ecology and environment, see Appendix F, below.

Appendices of documents which help to explain both Decree 20 and the process which it set in motion.⁷

Having gathered ideas and suggestions about ecology since before GC34, the Social Justice Secretariat is happy to have facilitated the interchange among Jesuits which Decree 20 called for, and to retribute the fruits to Jesuits, colleagues and friends now in the form of “*We live in a broken world.*” In distributing this monograph issue of *Promotio Iustitiae*, the Secretariat gladly acknowledges the co-operation of Jesuits in Science.⁸

Scientific controversy and socio-political-cultural complexities ought not to block people from prioritising ecological issues and acting on them. Nor should the difficulties blind us to the Spirit working today and us to overlook the seeds of transformation already germinating.

There is need for a better appreciation and understanding of *the signs of hope present in the last part of this century*, even though they often remain hidden from our eyes. *In society in general*, such signs of hope include ... a greater awareness of our responsibility for the environment.⁹

Michael Czerny, S.J.
Social Justice Secretary

⁷ For a brief chronology of the steps taken in response to Decree 20, see Appendix D, below.

⁸ See Appendix E, below.

⁹ John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 1994, n.46.

FATHER GENERAL'S INTRODUCTION

*"Lack of respect for a loving Creator leads to a denial of the dignity of the human person and the wanton destruction of the environment."*¹⁰

With these clear and prophetic words the 33rd General Congregation in 1983 gave a first authoritative expression to environmental concern in the Society of Jesus, and at the Congregation of Provincials in 1990 we saw a vital "ecological consciousness" in most of our Social Centres which was not so evident before.¹¹ The two early statements already provide some of the essential elements of the Society's approach to ecology today.

In 1993-1994, several Province Congregations passed postulates on ecology,¹² and the 34th General Congregation wished to respond to them, but difficulties were encountered: "The Congregation was not able to treat this ecological problematic in depth for many reasons. The theme was a very broad one and would have required preparatory studies and competent experts. Besides, the Justice Commission also had to address many other very complex problems. Finally, the time was limited."¹³

What the GC did, then, was to issue a brief Decree which begins by acknowledging an apparent conflict: "The contemporary debate between development and ecology is often posed as an opposition between First World desires and Third World needs."¹⁴ The Decree goes on to recognise that ecological issues are complex, for "the terms refer to many inter-related problems throughout the world."

Some of these severe problems are spelled out elsewhere by the GC: "Unscrupulous exploitation of natural resources and the environment degrades the quality of life; it destroys cultures and sinks the poor in misery."¹⁵ Such serious injustices may be understood in terms of *human rights*: "Respect for the dignity of the human person created in the image of God underlies the growing international consciousness of the full range of human rights, including rights such as development, peace and a healthy environment."¹⁶

The *Complementary Norms* speak of ecology in terms of the *promotion of justice*.¹⁷

We must become more aware, as the Church herself has done, of its more recent and new exigencies for our mission;¹⁸ such are, among others ... the disturbing consequences of the

¹⁰ GC33, D.1, n. 35.

¹¹ See Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., *De Statu Societatis Iesu*, 1990, n.100 in *Acta Romana* 20:3 (1990), 467.

¹² See Appendix A, below.

¹³ Josep Miralles, S.J., Introduction to Decree 20 in the French and Spanish editions of GC34. Reprinted as Appendix B, below.

¹⁴ Decree 20, "Ecology," re-printed as Appendix C, below.

¹⁵ D.3, n.9, from the section "New Dimensions of Justice," nn. 5-10.

¹⁶ D.3, n.6.

¹⁷ NC 247, §1.

¹⁸ See John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987, n.26; *Centesimus Annus*, 1991, nn.28, 36-39.

interdependence of peoples with grave damage to the quality of life and culture of poor peoples, especially of “indigenous” peoples¹⁹ [and] protection of the environment.²⁰

Such *justice* is owed to fellow peoples now as well as to all our heirs:

Ecological equilibrium and a sustainable, equitable use of the world's resources are important elements of justice towards all the communities in our present “global village;” they are also matters of justice towards future generations who will inherit whatever we leave them.²¹

Therefore, “we need to promote attitudes and policies which will create responsible relationships to the environment of our shared world, of which we are only the stewards.”²² The Society has a contribution to make, says Decree 20, and hopes that these efforts result in both international awareness and local action.

This, briefly, is the awareness and solidarity which the Congregation had in mind when it went on to recommend that three topics be studied: Ignatian spirituality, apostolic contributions and collaboration, and our lifestyle and decisions.

Soon after GC34, some twenty-five Jesuits involved in ecological research and action around the world were asked to contribute to the study. Their replies were systematised in an unpublished ten-page report, “Ecology and the Society of Jesus: Initiating a Dialogue,” and discussed during two study days (*tempo forte*) at the General Curia in January 1996. Since then an additional twenty-five Jesuits knowledgeable about ecology have made comments, both on an individual basis and at meetings focusing on the topic.

The results of the study are now being communicated, in the present issue of *Promotio Iustitiae*, to the whole Society as an orientation for our way of proceeding.

The expression, “our way of proceeding,” seems fairly clear when applied within Jesuit contexts.²³ But when entering a multi-faceted, controversial new field like ecology; when seeking a clear, full, reliable and common picture; when reflecting, discerning, deciding upon policy and taking action: – how indeed should we proceed?

A constant and indispensable starting-point, according to GC34, is scientific research:

There can be no substitute for individual, painstaking and, quite frequently, solitary work. Such capacity is indispensable if we wish to integrate the promotion of justice with the proclamation of faith, and if we hope to be effective ... in our concern to protect life and the environment....²⁴

¹⁹ See D.4, n.11.

²⁰ See D.3, nn.5-16.

²¹ D.3, n.9.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ See, for example, D.26, “Characteristics of our way of proceeding.”

²⁴ D.16, n.3, partially quoted in NC 297 calling for “the intellectual quality of all our ministries.”

A consensus of the scientific analysis and interpretation provided by Jesuits knowledgeable in the field is presented in the first chapter. This “reading” of ecology, subject of course to revision, establishes a useful framework or *grille de lecture*.

On this basis, the subsequent chapters treat Ignatian spirituality as a foundation for a universal response; the specific contributions of apostolates and their effective collaboration; and our community lifestyle and institutional decisions. Out of these points, the concluding chapter draws some orientations for our way of proceeding.

All the chapters of ***“We live in a broken world”*** are the fruit of exchange and shared reflection, and they are presented in active dialogue with the many Jesuit scientists and practitioners of ecology who have contributed. Not only are their contributions at the basis of the text, but its very style reflects their dedicated, indeed passionate commitment to creation and the Creator, to the poor today as well as to generations to come. Their assistance has been indispensable in carrying on the study requested by Decree 20, as even a cursory glance at the text reveals, and I express my gratitude to both Jesuits and colleagues for this help and for future collaboration.

The purpose of ***“We live in a broken world”*** is not to simplify the complexity of the scientific, social, ethical or spiritual issues involved in ecology, nor to make the pluralism of approaches more uniform, but to bring many viewpoints together. It wants to share the results obtained so far with the Society of Jesus and with our co-workers. Rather than a decree specifying policies, it takes the form of a double invitation. It is a specific invitation to Jesuits and colleagues to continue the exchange and deepen the collaboration, for these are indeed the most indispensable features of our way of proceeding in the field of ecology. It is a broad invitation to Jesuits and those who share our mission to show ever more effective ecological solidarity in our spiritual, communal and apostolic lives.

Pope John Paul II reminds us that

the Creator has put man in creation, charging him to administer it for the sake of the good of all, thanks to his intelligence and his reason. We can therefore be certain that even a person’s tiny good actions have a mysterious effect of social change and contribute to the growth of all. On the basis of the covenant with the Creator, towards whom man is called over and over to return, each one is invited to a deep personal conversion in his or her relationship with others and with nature.²⁵

As we meditate on these words and on the chapters which follow, may the confession, ***“We live in a broken world,”*** taken from GC34, also serve as our heartfelt prayer and shared commitment, all within a spiritual perspective of hope.

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.
April, 1999

²⁵ John Paul II, Address to the Seminar on “Science for Survival and Sustainable Development” at the Pontifical Academy of Science, 12 March 1999, n.7.

1. Our Reading of Ecology

*"The terms [development and ecology] refer to many inter-related problems throughout the world."*²⁶

Let us bring to mind a typical "ecological" or "environmental" issue. Each situation consists of many, intimately-interrelated issues which can, nevertheless, be distributed under separate headings such as spatial-scale, time-scale, scale of severity, and degree or kind of development. These distinctions, although somewhat artificial, help to shed light on facets of the problem which needs to be approached, in any case, in a collaborative, multi-disciplinary way.

1. Spatial scale

To some extent, ecological issues can be sub-divided according to their spatial scale. E.g., greenhouse gases are global, desertification may be regional, and the dumping of toxic waste, local. There are, however, several traps inherent in this subdivision. Some of these are described here:

1.1. The area where the problem becomes manifest may not coincide with its real source. Tropical deforestation, for example, may owe more to the pressures imposed by a Structural Adjustment Program than by local land-use decisions, though the degradation appears to stem from the misuse of the resources by local inhabitants. Thus a real solution often requires the active participation of people living outside the damaged environment.

Those affected by the problem may live far from its source of origin. For example, the effects of the nuclear catastrophe at Chernobyl were felt most in the neighbouring country of Belorussia. The flooding and erosion associated with some land-use practises may have more impact downstream than in the source area.

1.2. The scale of the problem may be confused with its severity. For example, greenhouse gases are sure to change the global climate and, in the short term at least, these changes may be detrimental to some and advantageous to others. Local problems, such as living in an environment polluted by toxic waste, can affect the lives of villagers far more drastically than the effects of global warming. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the longer-term effects of global climate warming are likely to be of the greatest severity for all.

2. Time-scale

The notion of "sustainability" implies the obligation to consider the consequences of human decisions for the environment on a time scale that includes future generations.²⁷

²⁶ D.20.

²⁷ In order to ensure that future generations benefit from the richness of the earth, the present generations should

- strive for sustainable development and preserve living conditions, particularly the quality and integrity of the environment;
- ensure that future generations are not exposed to pollution which may endanger their health or their very existence;

...

Moreover there is a time lapse between the onset of an ecological crisis and its detection, and similarly the solution may take several decades to take effect. Two examples: the pressures of growing population are increasing in some places, but not as quickly as predicted a decade or two ago; the emission of CFC's increased for decades before anyone noticed the ozone layer was being destroyed, and now the holes are predicted to continue to grow for decades despite lower emission rates.

3. Scale of severity

The range in severity of environmental degradation goes from considerations of survival to aesthetic ones. Under which criteria do we judge the importance of a particular ecological question? In the light of Church teaching and the mission of the Society, two considerations can be proposed:

3.1. Environmental degradation generally has its most severe impact upon the poorest who have the least protection, the least power to act, and the fewest alternatives. Our position should be that of Christ, poor among the poor and at their side. In this preferential option for the poor and for their cause, Jesuits must resist the temptation to become ecology or development "experts" whose benevolent dominance actually aggravates the spiral of disempowerment and postpones overcoming material poverty and cultural impoverishment.

3.2. Contributing to global awareness and action is an urgent necessity because the far-reaching consequences of local actions on the well-being of millions are but poorly understood, e.g., the connection between the emission of carbon dioxide, as a by-product of energy generation, and global climate change. Nevertheless, the ecological questions that are close to home, the local environment in which each one is rooted, are probably the starting-point for most Jesuits. For example, in a developed country, reducing waste may appear trivial compared with the struggle for others to combat desertification or tropical deforestation, but for many, this effort or gesture is what is realistically possible in daily life.

4. Degree or kind of development

4.1. The forces leading to environmental degradation are to some extent different for developed and developing countries. Factors like land ownership, cultural breakdown, government policies, socio-economic conditions differ according to region, and an analysis along these lines could be undertaken.

4.2. The current development model is based almost entirely on economic considerations.²⁸ This approach has led to the current environmental crisis, and a solution will not arise from within its internal logic but thanks only to a fundamental shift with regard to development itself. Human rights include "rights such as development, peace and a healthy environment."²⁹

-
- preserve for future generations natural resources necessary for sustaining human life and for its development;
 - take into account possible consequences for future generations of major projects before these are carried out.

²⁸ The neo-liberal form of capitalism currently spreading everywhere, with its refrain of "let the market decide," ... seems to entail very self-centred consumerist attitudes, the idolatry of money, spoiling nature, and reducing human and social goods to market values. (Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., *New Vigor for the Church: Conversations on the Global Challenges of our Times*, Toronto: Compass, 1993, pp. 24-25).

²⁹ D.3, n.6.

4.3. There is therefore an urgent need for alternative development models, models which integrate cultural, environmental, and social justice values in their functioning. Such models are likely to emerge piece-meal, that is, as people forge sub-models appropriate to specific conditions: the expansion of agro-forestry, organic farming, watershed and bio-remediation are examples. Participatory Development, and Rapid Rural Appraisal are techniques designed to eliminate the crippling domination of “locals” by outside “experts” in development or environment.

5. Multidisciplinary approach

There is no instant during human life, from conception until after death, in which we are not intimately in relationship with the environment through the air we breathe, the foods we consume, the waste we produce. Because ecology entails many inter-related facets and dimensions, as outlined in the previous points, a multi-disciplinary approach is called for.

5.1. The overwhelming majority of environmental problems has economic, social, political, and cultural forces at their origins, and it is only by taking these broadly into consideration that ecology as a viewpoint acquires its full human scope. Pope John Paul II diagnosed the ecological crisis as a moral problem.³⁰

5.2. Environmental questions can be interpreted and resolved by applying various social and physical sciences in a multi-disciplinary approach that responds to the many inter-related aspects of typical environmental problems. Similarly, “ecology” refers to many differing and complementary approaches: as awareness or concern, as science, as action, as movement.

5.3. The present rate and intensity of human alteration of the environment is unprecedented, and may be compared with periods of dramatic transformation in the past: climate change, glaciation, sedentary cultivation, species extinction. While this massive fact should not incite panic, neither is complacency a responsible attitude. There is need for awareness and effective response. These require accurate understanding: sound analyses furnished by many disciplines, accompanied by interpretation in the light of the Spirit.

6. Questions

Questions such as:

- ◆ what are the extent and degree of ecological degradation?
- ◆ which physical and biological processes are involved?
- ◆ what socio-economic factors are the underlying driving forces?
- ◆ who suffers most?

contribute to our understanding of ecology in the context of the Society’s apostolate.

Ecological complexity defies quick and easy understanding. Scientific research often consists in making dark areas less impenetrable, rather than shedding great clarity on uncertainties. Addressing scientists taking part in a Seminar sponsored by the Pontifical Academy of Science, Pope John Paul II said:

³⁰ John Paul II, "Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation," *Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1990, § II.

The reliable predictions you work out represent a most valuable contribution because, on these bases, full responsibility may be assumed – especially by those responsible for guiding the destiny of peoples – with regard to future generations. Dangers may then be avoided which would otherwise result from negligence, from deeply flawed economic or political decisions, or from the lack of a long-term perspective.³¹

Perhaps demonstrating how multiple scientific approaches are essential for addressing any serious issue of ecology is the greatest contribution which Jesuit scientists, working closely with practitioners in the field, can make. May our shared reading of ecology be as accurate and comprehensive as possible for the sake of the greater good, the better service.

³¹ John Paul II, Address to the Seminar on “Science for Survival and Sustainable Development” at the Pontifical Academy of Science, 12 March 1999, n.6.

2. Ignatian spirituality

*"How our Ignatian spirituality provides us with a foundation for a universal response."*³²

With reference to one of Ignatius' three well-known apostolic criteria,³³ we may understand "a universal response" in the sense of "more universal" which, according to GC34, points "towards action which contributes to structural change to create a society more based on shared responsibility."³⁴ Such is the response which the ecological crisis with its many inter-related issues seems to require. An appropriate foundation is provided by Ignatian spirituality, as Decree 20 suggests, and this we find in the Spiritual Exercises, whose own point of departure is inspired by the first chapters of Genesis.

"The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7). Thanks to a subtle play on words, God's work of creation reveals a definite, innate and intimate connection amongst:

- ◆ the Lord God, who formed
- ◆ man (*adam*), the one who is drawn from
- ◆ the ground (*adamah*).

Thus a three-fold relationship of "subjects" has existed ever since "the beginning" when God created everything. We find the same three in relationship at the very beginning of the Spiritual Exercises.

2.1. Principle and Foundation

FIRST PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION [23.]

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.

The other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created.

Hence, man is to make use of them in as far as they help him in the attainment of his end, and he must rid himself of them in as far as they prove a hindrance to him.

Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and are not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honour to dishonour, a long life to a short life. The same holds for all other things.

³² D. 20.

³³ *Constitutions* [622-623].

³⁴ D.4, n. 22.

Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created.

In a text more philosophical than biblical or spiritual in tone and yet deeply inspiring, Ignatius affirms that God, man and the world are inter-linked in a providential and transparent way. God our Lord is clearly differentiated from man, and both from “the other things,” yet no two can be related while prescinding from the third. This triad establishes a valid beginning and sound basis or, in other words, the principle and foundation, and experience shows its enduring truth:

For human beings there is no authentic search for God without an insertion into the life of the creation, and, on the other hand, all solidarity with human beings and every engagement with the created world cannot be authentic without a discovery of God.”³⁵

Ignatius presents the triad, not out of speculative interest, but as a guide to life. “From this it follows,” as a logical, moral conviction, “that we ought to use these things to the extent that they help us toward our end, and free ourselves from them to the extent that they hinder us from it.” Ignatius indicates, in abstract but inspiring terms, the necessary path to the attainment of human freedom. Which Pierre Teilhard de Chardin expresses in this way: “The creature is not a means only, but an occasion for saving communion.”

Outside this triangular relationship, there is no genuine human self-understanding, nor free choice, nor real transcendence, nor enduring transformation. Here is a wisdom drawn from the mystery of the Creator and of all creation, establishing the concrete conditions for freedom and efficacy, namely that all three sides of the relational triangle be intimately, dynamically linked.

The author of Genesis uses extraordinarily strong verbs – man is to fill (*kabas*) the earth and submit (*radah*) it³⁶ – to underline the majestic authority of the Creator revealed in the act of creating and to express the pre-eminence given to the human vocation within all of creation. These verbs also show that men and women share in this authority and have a real part to play in establishing, maintaining, restoring order throughout the universe. Human dominion is a share in the divine lordship of the Lord (*Dominus*).

Compared with *kabas* and *radah*, the expression of Ignatius seems more abstract or scholastic: “to make use of the other things to the extent that they help us in the attainment of our end.” But neither Genesis nor the Exercises offer licence to misuse the things God made. On the contrary, “to rid ourselves of them in as far as they prove a hindrance to us” is freedom and respect, not abuse and rebellion.

So, Christian faith in God, our Creator and Redeemer, entails a permanent relationship with all *adam* and all *adamah*. Within this triptych, everyone is called to praise God, to respect the Divine mystery, and to serve God in service to other creatures. Man is created by God and called to be redeemed, and therefore holds a privileged place in the universe. But men and women have not chosen the environment in which God has created and placed them, and they cannot avoid responsibility to work in it and protect it. This includes the discerning, freely chosen use of the

³⁵ D.4, n.7 quoting Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J., Discourse to General Congregation 34, 6 January 1995.

³⁶ Genesis 1:28.

created things on the face of the earth. Ecology may be the contemporary name for our stance towards – and our place amongst – “the other things on the face of the earth.”

Ignatius pays balanced attention to all three poles of the relationship, and herein lies the sound basis which the Principle and Foundation offers. He avoids an anthropocentrism independent of God and the environment (narcissism); a theo-centrism that pretends to ignore creatures and all created things (disembodied spiritualism); a bio-centrism that ignores the Creator and His call to all people (atheism or pantheism). Ignatius indicates that a lack of relationship between man and God will have serious consequences in the biosphere.³⁷

This then is the sense in which the *Principle and Foundation* grounds and founds a respectful comprehension of all things created. To such an awe-filled respect Teilhard gives voice in his stupendous *Hymn to Matter*:

Blessed are you, reality ever new-born; you who, by constantly shattering our mental categories, force us to go ever further and further in our pursuit of the truth; triple abyss of stars and atoms and generations: you who, by overflowing and dissolving our narrow standards of measurement, reveal to us the dimensions of God.³⁸

2.2. The First Week

Just as the opening exercise mirrors the biblical vision, so too does the First Week. The rebellion of Adam and Eve explains the contemporary disrespect for the Creator, which spills over into mistreatment of fellow human beings and recklessness with the rest of creation. As our first parents condemned themselves to death, so do we heedlessly cause truly hazardous ecological situations, the full range of present-day crises. The powerful verbs (*kabas*) and (*radah*) do not justify a violent handling of the earth, a destructive hostility.

The gravity of sin consists precisely in its undermining and destroying the foundational relationship of God, man and created things. Ignatius would have *each one* of us sense, taste and feel sin in its horror and destructiveness, and as *each one* of us is involved, we meditate in the first person. For with my sin I partake of, become one with, a history of de-creation, a story of death and hell.

PERSONAL SIN [60.]

This is a cry of wonder accompanied by surging emotion as I pass in review all creatures. How is it that they have permitted me to live, and have sustained me in life! ... And the heavens, sun, moon, stars, and the elements: the fruits, birds, fishes, and other animals – why have they all been at my service! How is it that the earth did not open to swallow me up, and create new hells in which I should be tormented forever!

³⁷ The Austrian geologist Seuss introduced the term "biosphere" to designate the living "capa" on the earth similar to the older terms hydrosphere and atmosphere, and it means "the part of the earth and its atmosphere in which living things are found."

³⁸ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., *Hymn to the Universe*, tr. Simon Bartholomew, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1965, pp. 68-69.

This perversion manifests itself, as Ignatius assures me with a certain ecological realism, in the “new hells” created by sinners.³⁹ But shouts of cursing and lamentation can never silence the earth’s songs of blessing, because created things show forth the mercy of God.

Despite my abuse of creation, created things continue all along to sing of the mercy of the Lord. Ignatius invites me to marvel at the heavens, with the sun and moon and all the stars, and the earth with fruit and fish and animals, and to consider how these created things sustain, nourish and protect me, keep me alive and permit me to live and never cease to do so ... even when I ignore God and refuse to praise the Divine Mystery, even when I close myself up in isolation from other creatures, even when I refuse to serve Him and mis-dominate these created things ... bringing me to a colloquy with the Merciful One.⁴⁰

In the time of Ignatius, nature could inspire a pure “cry of wonder” which strikes our ears as innocent because society was not then in possession of the powerful means whose abuse today threatens the environment. “Instead of fulfilling his role of collaborator with God in the work of creation, man acts independently of God and ends up by provoking the revolt of nature, more dominated than governed by him.”⁴¹ We must add our own “cry of horror” to Ignatius’ spontaneous admiration.

At the origins of the ecological crisis is the denial – in deed even more than in word – of the relationship with God. To cut with God is to cut with the source of life, it is to cut with the fundamental love and respect for life. When we are so cut off, then we permit ourselves to destroy life and, ecologically speaking, the conditions for life. The environment, instead of being treated with proper respect, becomes subject to irresponsible and violent repression. “The virtuous man looks after the lives of his beasts, but the wicked man’s heart is ruthless.”⁴² By attributing this caring concern to the virtuous, scripture affirms that a correct relationship with God is reflected in respectful relationship with the environment, and living rightly within the environment includes God in a well-adjusted hierarchy.

In the First Week, we pray to become aware of the involvement of each one of us with processes of sin at work, death-dealing, in a society with no human face:

The sinfulness of the world, which Christ came to heal, reaches in our time a pitch of intensity through social structures which exclude the poor – the majority of the world’s population – from participation in the blessings of God’s creation... These are the signs of the times which call us to realise that “God has always been the God of the poor because the poor are the visible proof of a failure in the work of creation.”⁴³

So, when listing the miseries of poverty and the sufferings of our age, we should also bravely discern our personal and communal complicity. “GC34 encourages all Jesuits to move beyond prejudice and bias, be it historical, cultural, social or theological, in order to [promote] respect for all of God’s creation.”⁴⁴

³⁹ *Sp.Ex.* [60].

⁴⁰ *Sp.Ex.* [61].

⁴¹ John-Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 1991, n.37.

⁴² Proverbs 12:10.

⁴³ D.2, n.9 quoting Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., “Our Mission Today and Tomorrow,” *Faith Doing Justice: Promoting Solidarity in Jesuit Ministries*, Detroit, 1991, pp.48-49.

⁴⁴ D.5, n.2.

We need to learn – both scientifically and theologically – about our entanglement in the processes causing environmental degradation. “Religions [including our own] have also been responsible for sinful elements of global dimensions: injustice, exploitation and destruction of the environment.”⁴⁵ We might do something to protect the environment or promote ecology, if we sincerely repent our sins of complicity, if first we learn to recognise and acknowledge them in the spirit of the First Week of the Exercises.

2.3. The Contemplation

Ignatius returns to the three-sided relationship among God, *adam* man and creation in the closing contemplation at the end of the Spiritual Exercises.

CONTEMPLATION TO ATTAIN THE LOVE OF GOD

SECOND POINT [235.] This is to reflect how God dwells in creatures: in the elements giving them existence, in the plants giving them life, in the animals conferring upon them sensation, in man bestowing understanding. So He dwells in me and gives me being, life, sensation, intelligence; and makes a temple of me, since I am created in the likeness and image of the Divine Majesty....

THIRD POINT [236.] This is to consider how God works and labours for me in all creatures upon the face of the earth, that is, He conducts Himself as one who labours. Thus, in the heavens, the elements, the plants, the fruits, the cattle, etc., He gives being, conserves them, confers life and sensation, etc....

FOURTH POINT [237.] This is to consider all blessings and gifts as descending from above. Thus, my limited power comes from the supreme and infinite power above, and so, too, justice, goodness, mercy, etc., descend from above as the rays of light descend from the sun, and as the waters flow from their fountains, etc.

The divine love we seek to attain is presented as the antithesis of that human hatred which is the hallmark of the First Week. Meditating again in the first person: it is no longer a question of my admiring all created things just because they have sustained me despite my connivance with the destructive work of de-creation. Nor of conceiving of created things as screens which hide God behind a veil impeding any pure love, nor as merely instrumental means which unfortunately are needed to get me going towards God but become useless as I progress along the way. Instead, it is a matter of praising, reverencing and loving the mystery of a God who makes me a loving gift of Himself in his creatures, and they in turn lead me to Him.

⁴⁵ See D.5, n.8.

First we consider how God the Creator is present, dwelling “in all things,” in all creatures on the face of the earth. Nadal says that Ignatius saw the Trinity in a leaf of an orange tree,⁴⁶ and Ribadeneira reports what early Jesuits observed in their Father Ignatius:

We often saw how little things became the occasion for him to lift his spirit to God, and this – even in the littlest things – is admirable. Upon noticing a plant, a little herb, a leaf, a flower, some fruit, when considering a small worm or some other little animal, he would rise up above the heavens and enter the innermost and remotest of the senses; and out of each of these little things he drew advice and teaching useful for instructing the spiritual life.⁴⁷

The *Contemplatio* then articulates the vision of God “working and labouring” in all things: “God’s action does not begin with what we do; already, in the blessings of creation, God has laid the foundation for what he will accomplish through the graces of redemption.”⁴⁸ The *Contemplatio* proposes a reverential respect for all things. It calls for the threefold relationships among God, *adam*, and nature to be not only innate but also intimate, not only respectful and generous, but also loving.

The mysticism flowing from the experience of Ignatius directs us simultaneously towards the mystery of God and the activity of God in his creation. Both in our personal lives of faith and in our ministries, it is never a question of choosing either God *or* the world; rather, it is always God *in* the world, labouring to bring it to perfection so that the world comes, finally, to be fully *in* God.⁴⁹

Finally, Ignatius sees all gifts and blessings as “descending” from the Creator. Perhaps no better image of this than Ignatius himself. His own room opened onto a tiny balcony from which, according to tradition, he often took such great delight in contemplating the star-studded sky that, by comparison, the affairs of the earth struck him as rather “sordid.”⁵⁰

2.4. Mysticism and service.

Ignatius urges us to seek and to find the mystery of God by means of prayerful choice and a service of loving humility, in the heart of all created things. We are to be made one with them because creation aspires, with us and by means of us, to the revelation of the children of God. In that way creation will be free from slavery to nothingness, to have part in the liberty of the glory of the sons and daughters of God.⁵¹

The Exercises, from beginning to end, are integrating elements in our encounter with God. It is in the spirituality of the Exercises, source of our unity as Jesuits, that we and many Christians who work with us form our awareness and the basis for our judgements.

⁴⁶ Jerome Nadal, S.J., *Fontes Narrativi*, II, 123, n.11.

⁴⁷ Pedro de Ribadeneira, S.J., *Vida del P. Ignacio* V, 1 p.743, as in Ricardo García-Villoslada, S.J., *San Ignacio de Loyola, Nueva Biografía*, Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1986, p. 594.

⁴⁸ D.6, n.20.

⁴⁹ D.4, n.7, making reference to the “*Contemplatio*,” points 2-4, *Sp.Ex.* [235-237].

⁵⁰ Cándido de Dalmases, S.J., *Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Jesuits*, Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, and St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985, pp. 266, 273.

⁵¹ Cf. Romans 8:18ff.

Ignatius states a “principle and foundation” for the adventure of the Spirit to which he invites us. The Ignatian core of this spirituality is a life-long relationship with Jesus Christ and the struggle ever to become more indifferent, available, generous, free.

Ignatian spirituality grounds and founds a universal response in dialogue with other spiritualities, like that of St. Francis of Assisi, and with other religions, for example: “Buddhism calls its followers to a selfless universal compassion for all living creatures.”⁵² Our spirituality has its own sound contribution to make and may, on a basis of sharing, integrate gifts and insights from other ways of contemplating, praying, reading reality and acting. “There is a deep desire, expressed through a concern for the environment, to revere the natural order as a place where there is an immanent, but transcendent, presence: this connects with what Christians call the “Spirit.”⁵³

The Church invites us to renew all these environmental and social relationships and make them right again:

The Jubilee is a further summons to conversion of heart through a change of life. It is a reminder to all that they should give absolute importance neither to the goods of the earth, since these are not God, nor to man’s domination or claim to domination, since the earth belongs to God and to him alone: “the earth is mine and you are strangers and sojourners with me.”⁵⁴ May this year of grace touch the hearts of those who hold in their hands the fate of the world’s peoples!⁵⁵

Let us help to re-create creation and reconcile it again with God, so that He might rejoice in it, as on the first Sabbath, and find it beautiful and just, peaceful and true.

⁵² D.5, n.15.

⁵³ D.4, n.21.

⁵⁴ Leviticus 25:23

⁵⁵ John Paul II, *Incarnationis Mysterium*, Bull Proclaiming the Great Jubilee of 2000, 1998, n.12.

3. Apostolic contributions and collaboration

*"How our apostolates can contribute in their specific ways, and also can further effective collaboration ... by encouraging both international awareness and local action."*⁵⁶

As one body with members widely dispersed, the Society in its various ministries can contribute significantly to the ecology movement. Relevant areas include the intellectual dimension, education, social apostolate, retreats, dialogue and networking, and formation.

3.1. Intellectual Apostolate

As the ecological crisis arises in part out of faulty thinking, we see the importance of sound reflection on the coherence of all things and on the ethical responses that impose themselves. Theology and philosophy, areas sometimes disconnected from ecological and social concerns, are opportunities to provide reflections alternative to the dominant materialistic and reductionist approach.

The biblical command to subdue the earth, sometimes blamed for the current ecological crisis, needs to be properly understood in the light of good scriptural and historical scholarship.

In philosophy, nearly every subject-matter may include fundamental questions of ecology: anthropology, human nature, destiny and vocation; cosmology, the meaning and purpose of creation; epistemology, the ways of knowing reality; and the ethics of justice and responsibility for one another, the poor, future generations, and for creation.

In ethics, we bring to light the values of respect for the environment based on scripture, including for example the commandments.⁵⁷ When decisions to develop a natural resource are being considered, the secondary consequences (the collateral costs, or the subsequent costs in future) need to be taken into account, not only the immediate material or financial benefits.

The Church's evolving understanding of her mission in society increasingly includes ecology, perhaps especially ecological ethics.

In our day, there is a growing awareness that world peace is threatened not only by the arms race, regional conflicts and continued injustices among peoples and nations, but also by a lack of *due respect for nature*, by the plundering of natural resources and by a progressive decline in the quality of life. The sense of precariousness and insecurity that

⁵⁶ D. 20.

⁵⁷ The seventh commandment enjoins respect for the integrity of creation. Animals, like plants and inanimate beings, are by nature destined for the common good of past, present and future humanity (cf. Genesis 1:28-31). Use of the mineral, vegetable and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives. Man's dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute, it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbour, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation. (*Catechism*, 2415, with reference to *Centesimus Annus*, 37-38).

such a situation engenders is a seedbed for collective selfishness, disregard for others and dishonesty.⁵⁸

Such Church teaching, which identifies accurately the moral issues involved in ecological concerns, benefits the larger environmental movement and is increasingly appreciated.

The Society's long tradition in the natural sciences continues to have an essential contribution to make:

Such [intellectual] capacity is indispensable if we wish to integrate the promotion of justice with the proclamation of faith, and if we hope to be effective in our work for peace, in our concern to protect life and the environment, in our defence of the rights of individual men and women and of entire peoples.⁵⁹

Several Jesuit scientific meetings dedicated to ecology have taken place in recent years:

The Fourth European Jesuits in Science meeting (Padua, Italy, September 1995) treated three main topics: a scientific appraisal of the environmental crisis; the underlying causes rooted in a techno-scientific reductionist culture; and the challenges of the environmental crisis and a reductionist scientific culture for our mission as Jesuit scientists.⁶⁰

The first meeting of Jesuits in Science in the South Asian Assistancy (Bangalore, October 1995) dedicated one session to global environmental issues – such as acid rain, the ozone hole and the loss of vegetation – on which an awareness needs to be created, while another brainstorming session provided insights into the contemporary debate between development and ecology.

The Jesuit Social Scientists of India (JESSI) dedicated an annual convention (Shembaganur, India, May 1998) to the interface between society and environment because “the issues of environment pertain to our own survival and that of the future generations.”

It would be a sad paradox if sound preparation in the natural and social sciences were in decline just when pressure on the environment is intensifying, when the greatest number of poor are suffering the consequences, and when an alternative God-inspired solution is most urgently needed. Along with scientific and theological competence, the gifts of communication are needed so as to make the results of research available to non-specialists.

3.2. Culture, education, media

“A modernist, scientific-technological culture, too often one-sidedly rationalistic and secular in tone, can be destructive of human and spiritual values,”⁶¹ such as respect for nature or solidarity with today's poor and with future generations. Having made the cultural criticism, the task then is to be constructively helpful. “It is part of our Jesuit tradition to be involved in the transformation of every human culture ... as people reshape ... their whole scientific and technological

⁵⁸ Pope John Paul II, “Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation,” *Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1990, § 1.

⁵⁹ D.16, n.3.

⁶⁰ *Jesuits in Science* 11 (1995).

⁶¹ D.4, n.24.

understanding of themselves and the world in which they live.”⁶² Such transformation takes place through direct social action,⁶³ through education and media.

Jesuit education is world-affirming. Jesuit education acknowledges God as the Author of all reality, all truth and all knowledge. God is present and working in all of creation: in nature, in history and in persons. Jesuit education, therefore, affirms the *radical goodness of the world* “charged with the grandeur of God,”⁶⁴ and it regards every element of creation as worthy of study and contemplation, capable of endless exploration. The education in a Jesuit school tries to *create a sense of wonder and mystery* in learning about God’s creation. A more complete knowledge of creation can lead to a greater knowledge of God and a greater willingness to work with God in his ongoing creation.⁶⁵ It calls for an excellence that reveres the dignity of all people as well as the holiness of all creation.⁶⁶

Education can serve to awaken an awareness of the environment with an adapted curriculum. Courses in such ecological sciences as biology, geography and physics are obviously important. But the same topics may be brought into other subject-matters and approached in various ways, including formation in values and human rights. Young people benefit from discovering the interconnectedness of apparently unrelated systems upon the earth and the human role in maintaining or restoring ecological equilibrium.

The proliferation of electronic media is a late-20th century phenomenon with its own contribution to both the problems and the possibilities of ecology. An endemic shortcoming is the presentation of information in a one-sided way. “Television particularly promotes consumerist and hedonistic values very destructive of life, community and the environment,”⁶⁷ in other words a “mentality that fails to promote genuine human growth.”⁶⁸ At the same time, the print-media and especially the electronic-media occasionally focus on a specific ecological problem, and demonstrate an immense potential for drawing people together in new shared understanding, in solidarity and concerted action.⁶⁹

3.3. Social apostolate

Environmental degradation is often directly linked with socio-cultural injustices, and the groups most affected in very direct and disproportionate ways are the poor and marginalised. They are prone to living in environmental conditions detrimental to their health and well-being.

The promotion of human dignity is linked to the right to a healthy environment, since this right highlights the dynamics of the relationship between the individual and society. A body of international, regional and national norms on the environment is gradually giving juridic form to this right. But juridic measures by themselves are not sufficient. The danger of serious damage to land and sea, and to the climate, flora and fauna, calls for a

⁶² D.4, n.25.

⁶³ Cf. “Cultural Reading” in *Characteristics of the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus*, 1998, ch. 3.2.

⁶⁴ Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J., “God’s Grandeur.”

⁶⁵ *Characteristics of Jesuit Education*, 1986, nn. 23-24.

⁶⁶ *Ignatian Pedagogy*, 1993, nn. 13, 14.

⁶⁷ Preparatory “tabloid” before GC34, 1993, n. 1.3.7.

⁶⁸ D.15, n.2

⁶⁹ For example, in phasing out the lead added to gasoline.

profound change in modern civilisation's typical consumer life-style, particularly in the richer countries. Nor can we underestimate another risk, even if it is a less drastic one: people who live in poverty in rural areas can be driven by necessity to exploit beyond sustainable limits the little land which they have at their disposal. Special training aimed at teaching them how to harmonise the cultivation of the land with respect for the environment needs to be encouraged.

The world's present and future depend on the safeguarding of creation, because of the endless interdependence between human beings and their environment. Placing human well-being at the centre of concern for the environment is actually the surest way of safeguarding creation; this in fact stimulates the responsibility of the individual with regard to natural resources and their judicious use.⁷⁰

Because the poor suffer the most from nearly every ecological crisis, defending their present and future rights means exercising responsibility for the environment; it means addressing unjust structures in the public sphere with a view to collective action and socio-cultural change. "Consumerism, a lifestyle of affluence and exploitation of the earth and its resources are intrinsically linked to the social, economic and political injustices of the world and are a wound inflicted on the body of Christ."⁷¹

The cultural survival of Native or Indigenous peoples is often linked with the land and nature; their original religions "play an important role in creating ecological harmony and human equality."⁷² They have much to teach us. Our ministry with them helps them to recover their heritage, resist assimilation, and create responses, e.g., alternative agriculture, popular education, local ecology.

There are many examples of Jesuits working in the style of science in the public interest or science for social change: experimental agriculture, sustainable agriculture, training in agriculture; watershed; appropriate technology, solar-energy and other non-conventional energy sources; awareness programmes and popular environmental studies.

Today, an important role of Jesuit Social/Cultural Centres is to make their own the global perspective that sees the issues of peace, justice and ecology as inter-linked; and to see this also related to the roles that men and women must have, in this new epoch of history, in creating a more human world.⁷³

3.4. Retreats

Retreats may be designed to bring different environmental groups together to assist them in developing their spirituality, in learning to discern on issues and options, in examining their choices and tactics. Many groups could benefit from Ignatian traditions of prayer, discernment and reconciliation, and from adaptation of the Exercises with attention to ecology. Appropriate workshops or retreats could be offered by Jesuits to help such groups to come together and

⁷⁰ John Paul II, "Respect for Human Rights: The Secret of True Peace," *Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1999, § 10.

⁷¹ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "Our Mission Today and Tomorrow," *Faith Doing Justice: Promoting Solidarity in Jesuit Ministries*, Detroit, 1991, p. 52.

⁷² D.5, n.4.

⁷³ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., *De Statu Societatis Iesu*, 1990, n.99 in *Acta Romana* 20:3 (1990), 467.

dialogue, to advance their reflection, to foster reconciliation, to plan joint action. Similar creativity is needed in parish work, preaching, catechetics, and working with parishes, congregations, religious and secular groups “to promote local and global justice by means of both personal conversion and structural change.”⁷⁴

3.5. Dialogue and networking

Jesuits have much to learn from non-governmental groups and movements focusing on environmental issues. Organisations have very different philosophies and use different approaches in working with the poor, on development and in ecology. The interface between the Church and the environmental movement is growing in importance, and the Jesuit penchant for working in frontier situations may contribute to mutual comprehension and greater co-operation.

“Our commitment to justice and peace, human rights and the protection of the environment has to be made in collaboration with believers of other religions ... In social action we willingly collaborate with them in the prophetic denunciation of the structures of injustice and in the creation of a world of justice, peace and harmony.”⁷⁵ The work of ecology benefits from a spirit and style of dialogue wherein, learning from others, we make available our resources such as Catholic social teaching, Ignatian spirituality, the thinking of the General Congregations. When reading the materials produced by other groups, when reflecting on the issues they promote, when discussing our involvement in actions they propose, we might contribute by raising ethical and spiritual questions as well as scientific and political ones.

“The problems of injustice, exploitation and destruction of the environment have taken on global dimensions.”⁷⁶ The varied disciplines and experience of our members, our wide global distribution, and the many networks we take part in, are some of the traits which make the Society suitable for contributing to ecology. “GC34 encourages all Jesuits to ... co-operate wholeheartedly with all men and women of good will in promoting peace, justice, harmony, human rights and respect for all of God’s creation”⁷⁷ by participating, usually at the local level, in countless ecological and justice groups which exist to protect the environment. Enormous potential lies in all such co-operation and networking.

Both inter-disciplinary and international networking can be envisioned. Jesuits interested in ecology can co-operate in doing environmental research in a multi-disciplinary way. Enjoying a certain political and spiritual independence, we have a chance to articulate ecological issues with some freedom from special interests. Such work would support sister groups working on ecology and offer resources for Jesuits and colleagues in formation.

Creative beginnings have been made at the Province level. For example, in Patna and Upper Canada, ecological commissions have been named to reflect on these issues, to work on ecological questions of local importance, and to disseminate information to the Province. In the United States there is a network called the “GC34 Ecology Project” involving Jesuits and colleagues working in university departments and in environmental projects.

⁷⁴ D.19, n. 6.

⁷⁵ D.5, nn. 8, 9.6.

⁷⁶ D.5, n.8.

⁷⁷ D.5, n.2.

3.6 Formation

All the apostolic opportunities and potential mentioned in this chapter have implications for the formation of young Jesuits as well as of future colleagues. Sensitisation to ecological questions may grow through theoretical study in physical and social science, philosophy, and theology; through maturing spirituality; and through practical experience in research and in the social apostolate.

4. Community lifestyle and institutional decisions

*"How this issue affects our lifestyle and the decisions that we make in our institutions."*⁷⁸

The General Congregation asks how ecological questions affect our life-style and the decisions we take in our apostolic institutions. This touches each one of us individually, for citizenship (in both the national and the wider sense) includes becoming aware, acting decently, avoiding doing damage to the environment. It touches us as members of a local Jesuit community and of a Province seeking to share Good News with others and be a comprehensible sign in society of faith and solidarity. And it touches local superiors, directors of works, major superiors, and those responsible for formation, too, in some special ways.

4.1. Community of solidarity

Ecology seems related to two pillars of our Jesuit commitment: evangelical poverty and solidarity with the poor. The vow of poverty is a call to live simply, to consume and waste less, to be less of an ecological burden and to reduce complicity with the forces that lead to degradation of the environment. When the environment deteriorates, the poor usually suffer most. If we live amongst them, more or less like them, and act in solidarity with them, such insertion entails long-term sensitivity to the environment even if the poor themselves do not always seem to count ecology among their priorities.

“Communities have become more sensitive to solidarity with the poor. Jesuits express regret for not living at the level of the poor, and they often express a wish to live among the poor.”⁷⁹ Reducing our distance from the lives of those who suffer can begin as a fearful prospect but, once experienced, it becomes a motive for gratitude and joy. Such options also serve as an encouragement to others. When we urge them to be more responsible or of greater service to the vulnerable and the needy, our witness enjoys a certain authenticity.

The expressions of vowed poverty and of lived solidarity vary greatly from Province to Province, depending on the specific local conditions. GC34 asks each community to “make a common plan that reflects its desire to live simply and in solidarity, a plan which can be easily evaluated at regular intervals.”⁸⁰ Here are some aspects of a community’s or a work’s existence that could be looked into:

- Physical facilities
- Land
- Water
- Wildlife
- Energy
- Food
- Indoor environment
- Waste
- Transportation
- Recycling
- Work practises
- Community relations

⁷⁸ D.20.

⁷⁹ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., Letter “On Community Life” (March 1998), n.8.

⁸⁰ D.9, n.12.

There are both personal and communal opportunities to avoid unnecessary environmental pollution, to exercise moderation in the use of limited resources such as energy and water, and to show awareness of the consequences of choices. For some (many?) personal and communal choices do have consequences in the environment. Any particular choice may be small, a practically insignificant gesture, but it has value as a sign of ethical sensitivity to the rights of others, especially the poor and the future generations, and of spiritual respect for God our Creator.

Finding opportunities to change our own practices is important, even if we often discover that, despite good intentions, attitudes are slow to change, and it is not without considerable effort that new habits take hold.

Choosing to live simply may include buying with care, using less, reducing waste, recycling. For example, a community may begin by buying the cheapest products, but these are often very abusive both environmentally and socially. Purchases are far from neutral; cumulatively they define the structures of production and influence how environmental decisions are made. Accordingly, solidarity with the poor and environmental sensitivity are not just a matter spending less. Buying a more expensive product (for example, something organically grown or raised) may be a better option in favour of the poor than purchasing a mass-produced item.

An act of sensitivity to the environment is not easy to decide upon, especially when the poor themselves usually cannot afford ecologically sound options. So, how and where communities spend their money, even if it is not very much, requires reflection for the sake of greater ecological and social justice.

There are a great many publications addressing such questions: techniques are available for doing an ecological inventory or an audit of environmental impact; consultants and groups are ready to be of assistance. Do we want to avail ourselves? – deciding to do so takes discussion in our Jesuit community or work. Then, once some results are available, it takes more discussion still in order to agree on some concrete measures to be taken.

Our mission of faith doing justice challenges the ways in which we ourselves live, calling for both simplicity of lifestyle and communities of solidarity. Simplicity of lifestyle is connected to our relationship to the poor Christ, our solidarity with the poor of the world and our solidarity with the earth itself.⁸¹

Our hope is to live and function more simply, more respectfully, and in greater solidarity.

4.2. Institutional decisions

When a Jesuit community or apostolic work begins to consider supporting an ecological cause or joining with others on a local or global issue, is when we discover how complex the issues really are.

⁸¹ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., “Our Mission Today and Tomorrow,” *Faith Doing Justice: Promoting Solidarity in Jesuit Ministries*, Detroit, 1991, p. 52.

“During the Provincial’s visitation or our annual retreats, we should let ourselves be challenged about our lifestyle and even about the methods and tools we use in our apostolic work”⁸² from the viewpoint of the poor and of ecology, too. For example, a choice – to reduce the use of cars and take public transportation – is always difficult, but more so if it is made out of poverty or for ecology in the abstract; while, if made in solidarity with people of slender means (especially one’s own neighbours), the option may have a better chance of winning consensus and co-operation.

In our communities and works (universities, secondary schools, parishes, retreat houses, social centres...), we are beginning to learn to make institutional decisions which take ecological factors into account in a serious way.

Finally, we can ask whether the “preferential option for the poor,” and its justice perspective, do constitute decisive criteria for confronting correctly the grave global issues of today, like the external debt crisis, the threat to peace caused by continued heavy investment in production of war material, the growing destruction of the natural environment and the biosphere, the role of women in society. All these affect in a special way the lives of the world’s poor. These global issues and the question of justice at an international level demand a deeper diagnosis of the “values” that are inherent in the dominant concept of development.⁸³

Amongst such “values” are those guiding decisions about our financial assets, both in specific institutions and at the Province level. Do our investments avoid corporations involved in excessive environmental degradation? Is the portfolio becoming more coherent with ecological and social exigencies?

Pope John Paul II speaks of human responsibility “to limit the risks to creation by keeping in view not just revenue and profitability, but the common good and the sustainable development of peoples.”⁸⁴ Reaching communal and institutional decisions in this direction, even if difficult to do, has environmental impact sooner or later and also great witness value right away.

⁸² Letter “On Community Life,” *ibid.*

⁸³ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., *The Changing Face of Justice*, London: CAFOD, 1991, p. 11.

⁸⁴ John Paul II, Address to the Seminar on “Science for Survival and Sustainable Development” at the Pontifical Academy of Science, 12 March 1999, n.3.

5. Orientations for our way of proceeding

*"The results of this study should be communicated to the whole Society as an orientation for our way of proceeding."*⁸⁵

Although GC34 had many interesting things to say about ecology,⁸⁶ it refrained from identifying any specific issues as priority ones for the Society of Jesus, and it stopped short of decreeing any official ecological policy. Instead, it passed a recommendation whose implementation has meant turning for help to many competent Jesuits who are involved in ecology in many different ways.⁸⁷

Therefore, the orientations which flow out of the previous chapters come from much reflection on countless concrete situations: the place, the culture, those who suffer, those responsible, those who have influence. They come from many an *examen* before God of what Jesuits in ecology feel and do – many a discernment of the pushes and pulls experienced in the work on ecology already underway.⁸⁸

The same 34th General Congregation spoke of our way of proceeding. "Certain attitudes, values, and patterns of behaviour join together to become what has been called the Jesuit way of proceeding."⁸⁹ Beginning with reflection and interchange taking place since before GC34,⁹⁰ the process of study uncovered a rich way of proceeding imbedded in the many approaches Jesuits and colleagues are taking to ecological challenges.

The present monograph, "*We live in a broken world,*" tries to express what we Jesuits have already learned, in responding to the environmental challenges of our world, and comes to the conclusion that, in order to continue responding in a more effective way, the best thing would be to foster dialogue, co-operation and networking across geographical and disciplinary lines, and between the different levels: action, organisation, reflection, research.

The major areas which Decree 20 identified for study and which are treated in the four preceding chapters of "*We live in a broken world,*" will in all probability remain very valid concerns for us, and none of them ought to be missing from our way of proceeding in future.

In chapter 1, we have seen that the expertise of Jesuit scientists is absolutely required. Not by choosing one or two scientists who will judge and decide for us all, nor by waiting for scientific unanimity before taking difficult decisions in the apostolate or in community. Rather, natural science in itself is a highly appropriate approach to the environment and, combining with social science, offers many approaches to ecology. These provide scientific points of departure and reference for other disciplines like philosophy and theology, and for practical, political

⁸⁵ D.20.

⁸⁶ For the relevant citations from GC34, see Appendix F, below.

⁸⁷ For a list of those who have contributed, see Appendix E, below.

⁸⁸ For a relevant treatment of "discernment" and on-going tensions, see *Characteristics of the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus*, 1998, chh. 4.1 and 4.2.

⁸⁹ D.26, n.1.

⁹⁰ For a brief chronology, see Appendix D, below.

approaches such as advocacy, people's movements, or participatory development. Thus our scientists, both natural and social, our philosophers and theologians, are invited to put their research in common, debate their respective convictions, share their conclusions which are solid and yet open to revision, and co-operate on projects together. And they are invited to communicate the on-going results of the collaboration in an accessible form so that the rest of us Jesuits, in our communities, with our colleagues in our works and with others, may better assess and re-assess the reality of environmental crises (local, regional, global) and respond.

Secondly, with chapter 2 we discover Ignatian spirituality as a characteristic foundation of the ecological commitment of the Society. Spirituality means continual conversion, changing "the spiritual attitudes which define each individual's relationship with self, with neighbour, with even the remotest human communities, and with nature itself."⁹¹ In this area as in many others, St. Ignatius is a trustworthy guide. On this basis of spirituality we all – intellectuals and scientists, practitioners and activists, ordinary Jesuits in every other sort of ministry and in every kind of community – meet to dialogue and contribute to the broader ecological arena.

When it comes to the apostolic work itself as in chapter 3, the process from Decree 20 to "*We live in a broken world*" discovered a high degree of pluralism amongst Jesuit ecologists which leads to debate, comparisons and contrasts, and finally (often inexplicably) arrives at a working consensus. There is great variety in the academy – physical, biological and social scientists, philosophers and theologians; there is great variety amongst practitioners in the field. Variety is not an excuse for the minimalism of each one doing his own little thing in his own little corner, on the contrary it should motivate our working together! With a pluralism of starting-points, viewpoints and involvements, collaboration and networking are *sine qua non* at every level from the local to the global, not just for the sake of efficiency (division of labour), but as a guarantee of a broad, collaborative, inclusive (non-ideological) approach. May Jesuits and colleagues never tire of pooling their experience and competence, raising questions about environmental trends which are worrisome, pushing worries and concerns, confronting issues, experimenting with alternative solutions in ecological situations which are critical.

The issues are complex, the first three chapters demonstrate, and chapter 4 shows that feelings are strong, too; mutual listening and respect are important; and the urgencies of ecology challenge Jesuit individuals, communities and institutions. "General Congregation 34 encourages all Jesuits to move beyond prejudice and bias, be it historical, cultural, social or theological."⁹² It comes down to being willing, and helping one another, to call one's own habits (intellectual, spiritual, work-style and life-style) into question, and to change perceptions, thinking, prayer and behaviour regarding our planet home, the living beings we share it with, and the Creator of us all.

These then seem to be the kinds of orientations which come to light, thanks to the process and study stimulated by Decree 20, and which "*We live in a broken world*," beginning with its title, seeks to communicate.

There is an overall orientation which GC34 proposed to the whole Society: the notion of *community of solidarity*. Community is a structure to live, pray, think and work in together – and solidarity, a new name for charity and justice, means assuming another's situation, making it our own and following through. GC34 combined the two in a fruitful image and presented it in

⁹¹ D.2, n.10 quoting *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, nn. 36-38.

⁹² D.5, n.2.

Decree 3 on our mission and the promotion of justice, applying it explicitly to environmental justice and spirituality:

Full human liberation, for the poor and for us all, lies in the development of *communities of solidarity* at the grass roots and non-governmental as well as the political level, where we can all work together towards total human development.⁹³ And all of this must be done in the context of a sustainable, respectful interrelation between diverse peoples, cultures, the environment, and the living God in our midst.⁹⁴

May effective ecological awareness grow and spread in many communities of solidarity – solidarity with those in need today and with generations to come – and bear ever greater fruit in service of Christ’s mission. May the people whom we serve, and we together with them, witness the whole creation “set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God.”⁹⁵

A.M.D.G.

⁹³ Cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987, nn. 27 ff.; *Centesimus Annus*, 1991, n. 49.

⁹⁴ D.3, n.10.

⁹⁵ Romans 8:21.

“We live in a broken world”

APPENDICES



Relatio Praevia

A) WHAT the NINETEEN POSTULATES on ECOLOGY REQUEST

1. In general:

To stress the seriousness, and to promote awareness of the urgency, of the ecological problem and its link to the question of faith-justice.

The Society should commit itself more earnestly to serious theological and scientific work / reflection in close collaboration with other institutions, lay people and churches.

The religious tradition is rich in bonding peoples with the earth and with the planet; the Church's doctrine / theology of creation on the environment should be developed.

The concept of the wholeness and integrity of creation should inspire our spirituality, our way of living and proceeding.

To promote the responsible use and equitable distribution of the earth's resources, conservation and sustainable growth.

To initiate effective steps to counter the world-wide destruction of the environment and particularly as it affects indigenous peoples.

2. More concrete:

To elaborate a decree or short statement on the responsibility of the Society for the environment.

To make a declaration that ecology is an integral part of the promotion of faith-justice legislated in Decree 4 of GC 32 as fundamental to the mission of the entire Society.

The ecological concern should be co-ordinated by the Social Justice Secretariat in Rome, or by an international "ecological secretariat."

Reasons for:

- The ecological situation is a global ethical challenge; the world expects the Church's guidance.
- Our planet has entered a period of ecological instability; it is undergoing rapid, often irreparable, ecological decline resulting from human activities.
- Ecological issues, being connected with demographic and economic problems, form part of the complex question of faith-justice-option for the poor.

- The weaker sections of society, especially indigenous peoples, are those who suffer most of all because of their dependence on day-to-day and measured use of the natural resources that surround them.
- The Judaeo-Christian tradition is accused by some philosophers and ecologists of being one of the principal cultural causes of the problem.
- The ecology question ranks among the frontier apostolates of the Society and represents a valuable service to the Church.
- The Society with its international organisation, its intellectual, moral, pastoral, and practical resources, is one of the few Christian bodies capable of responding to the immense challenge and threat this issue poses.
- It is an invitation to the Society to enter into dialogue with the world and show our sensitivity; Jesuit leadership will be welcomed in this area of concern both inside and outside the Church; the issue has ecumenical aspects.
- Our fundamental inspiration is the Spiritual Exercises. Especially the *Principle and Foundation* and the *Contemplation to Attain Love* provide the foundation for a universal response to the ecological crisis by plunging us into a world freely and lovingly created and sustained by God, a world which acts as a revealer of God.
- Ignatian freedom calls us to fulfil our profound human vocation as those made in the image of God, as those who constantly see God in all things and all things in God.

B) EVALUATION by the *COETUS PRAEVIUS*

1. The issue of ecology was not treated by recent General Congregations. It is an important and urgent question. As a global ethical challenge of today, it needs to be taken into consideration.
2. This topic is obviously connected with questions of justice and peace in the world.
3. Our spirituality, based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, provides a foundation for a universal response to the ecological crisis, for living in full respect and harmony with nature.
4. We are aware of the fact that an “ecological manner of living” may be very demanding; it will affect our style of everyday living, imposing a more modest, sober, rational and responsible use of goods.

C) PROPOSALS of the *COETUS PRAEVIUS*

1. To stress and promote the awareness and significance of the ecological question.
2. To recommend and encourage serious objective scientific research / studies on ecology, as well as practical steps.

3. To identify the basic problem as a moral question: loss of moral equilibrium, moral pollution, egoism; a change of mentality, a conversion is needed.
4. To emphasise the question of faith-justice in ecology, in a broader meaning of Decree 4 (distribution of goods, exploitation of resources, consumerism: energy...).
5. Some recommendations on this topic might be included in a longer decree on “Our Mission today and tomorrow.” These recommendations could make reference to points of Christian theology and Jesuit spirituality such as the following or others:
 - a) The Biblical account of Creation and the radical relationship of everything to God’s free and loving self-communication.
 - b) The relationship of Humanity to the rest of the created world: man and woman as God’s image; Dominion of the earth — in the name of God, that is, as caring and responsible stewardship; the task of humans as life-giving, life-protecting, co-creative activity in harmony and friendship with all beings.
 - c) The Prophetic and Eschatological references to the care of the earth, the meaning of the land, the sober and ordered use of resources, the task to enhance goodness, justice and peace for all peoples — and the dream of a world without hostility between humans and other beings.
 - d) The New Testament references to Christ’s radical relationship to Creation (Colossians, Ephesians, Romans, John, and so forth).
 - e) The contemplative relationship of the human community to a world created out of God’s love and immersed in it (*Contemplation to Attain Love*).
 - f) The growing awareness of the sacramentality of Creation, which finds its highest expression in the Eucharist.

INTRODUCTION to Decree 20⁹⁶

Why this “Recommendation”?

The concern for ecology manifested itself even before the 34th General Congregation in a series of postulates which asked that the GC take a position on this question.⁹⁷ These postulates may be grouped into two large groups:

a) The first group emphasised the mutual relationship between the promotion of justice and the challenge presented by the degradation of the environment.

Within this framework, one can see that the ecological questions have a strong relationship with demographic and economical problems. In the ecological question our responsibility to future generations is also at stake. Others indicated that the option for the poor and “the option for the land” cannot be separated; in effect, the degradation of the environment affects most especially and directly the poorest populations whose survival depends very directly and immediately upon their relationship with their surroundings; furthermore, the poor regions of the planet, in their struggle for rapid development, are seeing how rapidly their environment is deteriorating.

b) The second group of postulates underscores the connection which exists between the spirituality of the Exercises and concern for the integrity and the security of creation. This spirituality invites us to immerse ourselves in a world which reveals God but which has been damaged by blindness and human sin: a world which invites us to restore the image of God, looking for Him in all things and loving all things in Him.

From the point of view of action, the postulates suggested that the idea of the totality of creation should influence *our overall lifestyle* and “our way of proceeding.” It should stimulate our *theological reflection* and our *research into ecological problems*. The action of the Society should be planned at the *international level*, promoting the integration of the ecological perspective in *formation* and in all the ministries of the Society.

The Congregation was not able to treat this problematic in depth for several reasons. The theme was a very broad one and would have required preparatory studies and competent experts. Besides, the Justice Commission also had to address many other very complex problems. Finally, the time was limited.

For these reasons, the GC reached the conclusion that the ecological theme could not be neglected, but on the other hand it could not elaborate a decree of sufficient quality. Therefore the GC opted for the “Recommendation” to Father General, synthesising and incorporating the most important issues raised by the postulates and the reflections of the Justice Commission.

⁹⁶ Josep Miralles, S.J., Introduction to Decree 20 in the French and Spanish editions of GC34.

⁹⁷ See Appendix A, above.

Decree 20

ECOLOGY

(Recommendation to Fr. General)

1. The contemporary debate between development and ecology is often posed as an opposition between First World desires and Third World needs; in fact the terms refer to many inter-related problems throughout the world. The Society of Jesus can contribute to overcoming some elements of the dilemma by encouraging both international awareness and local action. The many postulates received offer rich suggestions on this subject.

2. This Congregation recommends to Father General that a study be made regarding the following issues:

2,1. How our Ignatian spirituality provides us with a foundation for a universal response;

2,2. How our apostolates can contribute in their specific ways, and also can further effective collaboration; and

2,3. How this issue affects our lifestyle and the decisions that we make in our institutions.

The results of this study should be communicated to the whole Society as an orientation for our way of proceeding.

A brief chronology of concern for ecology

1983, September: In the first official mention of ecology, GC33 gave it a profound theological interpretation: “Lack of respect for a loving Creator leads to a denial of the dignity of the human person and the wanton destruction of the environment.”⁹⁸ But environment is not amongst the “new needs and situations” listed later in the decree under “Some Applications.”⁹⁹

1990, September: At the Congregation of Provincials at Loyola, Father General noted a vital “ecological consciousness” in most of our Centres, which had not been so evident earlier.¹⁰⁰

1992, July: Jesuits attending the United Nations Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro included: Atilio Machado Peppe (East-Central Brazil), José Aguilar (Colombia), John McCarthy (Upper Canada), K.M. Matthew (Madurai), Cedric Prakash (Gujarat), Peter Walpole (Philippines).

1993: According to the *tabloid* in preparation for GC34:

Ecological consciousness is slowly spreading, including sensitivity to the ways our Jesuit lifestyle and work affect the environment. All humanity cannot produce and consume at the rate of the developed world. The restoration of sustainable relationships with nature requires a radical change of outlook, whereby people in significant numbers practise a lifestyle different from present patterns in both developed and less-developed countries. Changing our patterns of consumption, so that even daily activities manifest an option for life in the broadest sense, requires real choices and small steps in the right direction.¹⁰¹

1993-1994: Seventeen Province Congregations passed nineteen postulates on ecology.

1994, July: The *Coetus praeivus* reviewed the postulates and prepared the *Relatio praevia* on Ecology.¹⁰²

1994, August: A “Symposium on Ecology”¹⁰³ involved eleven Jesuits replying to the following questions:

1. As a Jesuit with expertise in environmental issues and the scientific method, what perspective, guidelines, procedures, etc., would you suggest to your fellow Jesuits? What are the criteria, what are the basic steps to take, in making a responsible judgement about the scientific merits of a specific ecological cause, campaign, issue or movement?

⁹⁸ Under “Challenging Context,” GC33, D.1, n. 35.

⁹⁹ GC33, D.1, n. 45.

¹⁰⁰ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., *De Statu Societatis Iesu*, 1990, n.100 in *Acta Romana* 20:3 (1990), 467.

¹⁰¹ Essay 3, n. 4.6.

¹⁰² Reprinted in Appendix A, above.

¹⁰³ Published in *Promotio Iustitiae* 58 (November 1994).

2. In your experience, what contribution is made / could be made to the environmental movement by our mission of faith that does justice, the Church's preferential option for the poor, and the Spiritual Exercises?

1995: GC34's Decree 3 drew attention to five new dimensions of justice, "all of them of continuing importance in the Society's overall mission of the promotion of justice." One of them is the *environment*, and the full range of human rights includes the right to "a healthy environment." GC34 passed Decree 20 and, in several other Decrees, made significant spiritual, theological and practical statements about ecology.

1995-2005: The "Social Apostolate Initiative" and the *Characteristics of the Social Apostolate of the Society of Jesus* offer a framework for reflection on social ministries, including ecological ones, and their renewal.

1995, July: Some twenty-five Jesuits with interest and expertise in ecology were asked to help in responding to what Decree 20 asks of the Society. The replies were summarised with the help of Dr. Dennis Fox (Nice, France) in an unpublished report of ten pages, entitled "Ecology and the Society of Jesus: Initiating a Dialogue," for the use of Father General and his Council.

1996, January: A two-day staff workshop or *tempo forte*¹⁰⁴ was dedicated to studying the consensus paper, "Initiating a Dialogue." Subsequently Father General conferred with his Council and decided to continue consultation with Jesuit practitioners in the environmental field, along the lines recommended by Decree 20, and to encourage members and institutions of the Society to co-operate on ecology.

1996-1998: The summary "Initiating a Dialogue" circulated amongst those who originally contributed to it and a few others.

1998, August: Father General's address opening Arrupe College, Harare, Zimbabwe.¹⁰⁵

1999, April: "***We live in a broken world***" (incorporating the contents and style of the summary, "Initiating a Dialogue") is published and distributed.

1999, September: The sixth European Jesuit Scientists meeting in Frankfurt, Germany, on the theme, "Science and Culture," including discussion of "***We live in a broken world***," which "encourages co-operation and networking between Jesuits in work for ecology."

¹⁰⁴ Father General's opening prayer was published in *News and Features*, 24:1 (January-February, 1996), 1-2.

¹⁰⁵ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., *Our Responsibility for God's Creation*, with commentaries by Frs. J. English, J. McCarthy, J. Profit and W. Ryan, Ottawa: Jesuit Centre, 167 Sunnyside Ave, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1S 0R2. Fax: +1-613-730-3210 or e-mail: wfxrsj@web.net

Participants

The following have contributed in various ways to the process; in the present document, see page:

José Aguilar (Colombia)	4
Christoph Albrecht (Switzerland).....	46
Gian Luigi Brena (Italy).....	34
Lester Coutinho (Gujarat).....	36
Louis Cramer (Sri Lanka).....	18
Paul Desmarais (Zambia).....	76
Manuel G. Doncel (Catalonia).....	30
Andrew Dufner (Oregon).....	26
Francis Elliott † (Central Africa; Northern Belgium).....	16
John J. English (Upper Canada).....	22
François Euvé (Russia).....	54
Dr. Dennis Fox (University of Nice, France)	
Albert Fritsch (Chicago).....	70
Francis G. Hilton (New York).....	32
Savarimuthu Ignacimuthu (Madurai).....	10
Rudolf Kutschera (Austria).....	50
Roland J. Lesseps (Zambia).....	44
Adolfo López (Nicaragua).....	52
K.M. Matthew (Madurai).....	66
Semoto Masayuki (Japan).....	28
John McCarthy (Upper Canada).....	38
Thomas Michel (Secretary for Inter-religious Dialogue).....	42
Josep Miralles (Catalonia).....	65
Chris Moss (Vatican Observatory).....	14
Adolfo Nicolás (Japan).....	40
Ignacio Núñez de Castro (Bética).....	48
Chryso Pieris (Sri Lanka).....	62
James Profit (Upper Canada).....	8
Alois Riedlsperger (Austria).....	60
Johannes Seidel (Northern Germany).....	64
Josafá Carlos de Siquiera (East-Central Brazil).....	74
David Skelskey (East Africa).....	72
John Surette (Jamaica).....	12
David Toolan (New York).....	20
Johan Verschueren (Northern Belgium).....	78
Peter Walpole (Philippines).....	68
William J. Wood (California).....	24

For further information about Jesuit networks involved in ecology:

Jesuits in Science – <http://www.Jesuits-in-Science.org>

Europe Co-ordinator – Chris Moss, S.J. – cmoss@Jesuits-in-Science.org

North America Co-ordinator – William Cain, S.J. – wcain@lmumail.lmu.edu

South Asia Co-ordinator – Savarimuthu Ignacimuthu, S.J. – ignacimuthu@xiweb.com

Latin America ecology network – contact Xabier Gorostiaga, S.J. – gorostia@url.edu.gt

Citations from GC34

... social structures which exclude the poor – the majority of the world’s population – from participation in the blessings of God’s creation ... the signs of the times which call us to realise that “God has always been the God of the poor because the poor are the visible proof of a failure in the work of creation.”¹⁰⁶ (“Servants of Christ’s Mission”, D.2 n.9)

Respect for the dignity of the human person created in the image of God underlies the growing international consciousness of the full range of *human rights*. These include economic and social rights to the basic necessities of life and well-being; personal rights such as freedom of conscience and expression and the right to practise and share one’s faith; civil and political rights to participate fully and freely in the processes of society; and rights such as development, peace and a healthy environment. (“Our Mission and Justice”, D.3, n.6)

Preserving the integrity of creation underlies growing concern for the *environment*.¹⁰⁷ Ecological equilibrium and a sustainable, equitable use of the world’s resources are important elements of justice towards all the communities in our present “global village;” they are also matters of justice towards future generations who will inherit whatever we leave them. Unscrupulous exploitation of natural resources and the environment degrades the quality of life; it destroys cultures and sinks the poor in misery. We need to promote attitudes and policies which will create responsible relationships to the environment of our shared world, of which we are only the stewards. (D.3, n.9)

Full human liberation, for the poor and for us all, lies in the development of *communities of solidarity* at the grass roots and non-governmental as well as the political level, where we can all work together towards total human development.¹⁰⁸ And all of this must be done in the context of a sustainable, respectful interrelation between diverse peoples, cultures, the environment, and the living God in our midst. (D.3, n.10)

This is not just a pragmatic apostolic strategy; it is rooted in the mysticism flowing from the experience of Ignatius, which directs us simultaneously towards the mystery of God and the activity of God in his creation. Both in our personal lives of faith and in our ministries, it is never a question of choosing either God *or* the world; rather, it is always God *in* the world, labouring to bring it to perfection so that the world comes, finally, to be fully *in* God.¹⁰⁹ “Ignatius proclaims that for human beings there is no authentic search for God without an insertion into the life of the creation, and that, on the other hand, all solidarity with human beings and every engagement with the created world cannot be authentic without a discovery of God.”¹¹⁰ (“Our Mission and Culture”, D4, n.7)

¹⁰⁶ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., “Our Mission Today and Tomorrow,” *Faith Doing Justice: Promoting Solidarity in Jesuit Ministries*, Detroit, 1991, pp.48-49.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 1991, n. 37.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987, nn. 27 ff.; *Centesimus Annus*, n. 49.

¹⁰⁹ *Sp. Ex.* [235-237].

¹¹⁰ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J., Discourse to General Congregation 34, 6 January 1995.

As there is a unified goodness in God's work of creation, so in Christ's redemptive work, the fragmentation caused by sin is being healed by a single thread of grace throughout the restored creation. (D.4, n.16)

We do not plant the seed of [God's] presence for he has already done that in the culture; he is already bringing it to fruitfulness, embracing all the diversity of creation, and our role is to co-operate with this divine activity. (D.4, n.17)

And there is a deep desire, expressed through a concern for the environment, to revere the natural order as a place where there is an immanent, but transcendent, presence: this connects with what Christians call the "Spirit." (D.4, n.21)

General Congregation 34 encourages all Jesuits to move beyond prejudice and bias, be it historical, cultural, social or theological, in order to co-operate wholeheartedly with all men and women of good will in promoting peace, justice, harmony, human rights and respect for all of God's creation. ("Our Mission and Inter-religious Dialogue", D.5, n.2)

Through proclamation others encounter the compassionate God in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, whose Spirit brings about a new creation in all realms of life. (D.5, n.7)

Our involvement in the promotion of justice takes place in a world in which the problems of injustice, exploitation and destruction of the environment have taken on global dimensions. Religions have also been responsible for these sinful elements. Hence our commitment to justice and peace, human rights and the protection of the environment has to be made in collaboration with believers of other religions. (D.5, n.8)

In social action we willingly collaborate with [believers of other religions] in the prophetic denunciation of the structures of injustice and in the creation of a world of justice, peace and harmony. (D.5, n.9.6)

We live in a broken world where men and women are in need of integral healing, the power for which comes ultimately from God. ("The Jesuit Priest: Ministerial Priesthood and Jesuit Identity", D.6, n.14)

God's action does not begin with what we do; already, in the blessings of creation, God has laid the foundation for what he will accomplish through the graces of redemption. Consequently, in the exercise of their ministerial priesthood, Jesuits try to see what God has already done in the lives of individuals, societies and cultures, and to discern how God will continue that work. (D.6, n.20)

There can be no substitute for individual, painstaking and, quite frequently, solitary work. Such capacity is indispensable if we wish to integrate the promotion of justice with the proclamation of faith, and if we hope to be effective in our work for peace, in our concern to protect life and the environment, in our defence of the rights of individual men and women and of entire peoples. ("The Intellectual Dimension of Jesuit Ministries", D.16, n.3)

Complementary Norms, NC 247- §1. For the promotion of justice, we must become more aware, as the Church itself has done, of its more recent and new exigencies for our mission¹¹¹; such are, among others: protection of the human rights of persons and peoples (individual, socio-economic, civil and political, the right to peace, to cultural integrity and preservation); the disturbing consequences of the interdependence of peoples with grave damage to the quality of life and culture of poor peoples, especially of “indigenous” peoples¹¹²; safeguarding human life itself, from its beginning to its natural end, which is severely threatened by the so-called “culture of death”; the influence of social communications media in the service of justice, which requires co-ordinated action of Christians and other persons in different areas¹¹³; protection of the environment; the tragic marginalisation of not a few nations, especially on the African continent at this time; the need of the peoples of Eastern Europe to find a sure way to a future in freedom, peace, and security; the problem of the socially marginalised in every society; the very grave world-wide situation of refugees¹¹⁴.

NC 297. We must never forget the unique importance of the intellectual quality of all our ministries¹¹⁵. Therefore we must all insist on the ongoing development of our capacity to analyse and evaluate our mission, which is indispensable if we wish to integrate the promotion of justice with the proclamation of faith, and if we hope to be effective in our work for peace, in our concern to protect life and the environment, in our defence of the rights of individual men and women and of entire peoples¹¹⁶.

¹¹¹ See John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987, n.26; *Centesimus Annus*, 1991, nn.28,36-39.

¹¹² See D.4, n.11.

¹¹³ See D.15, n.5.

¹¹⁴ See D.3, nn.5-16.

¹¹⁵ See D.6, n.21; D.16, n.1.

¹¹⁶ See D.16, n.3.

What do "ecology" and "environment" commonly mean today? According to the dictionary,

***Ecology** comes from Greek logos discourse and oikos house, suggesting a house common to all; "eco-" denotes concern with habitat and environment in relation to living organisms. It is related to **economy** (Latin oeconomia, from Greek oikonomiā, from oikos a house, and nomos a law) and **ecumenical** (Latin oecumenicus, from Greek oikoumenikos, from oikoumenē (gē) inhabited (world) as a whole).*

*Therefore, **ecology** is the scientific study of plants, animals or peoples and institutions, in relation to environment; the term "ecology" was introduced by Ernest Hæckel into biology in 1869; the science of the relationship of living beings with their surroundings; and now is a relatively new socio-cultural application of the physical sciences.*

***Environment** comes from French environner, from environ around, from virer to turn round (in English, veer): external conditions or surroundings influencing development or growth of people, animals or plants, and concern about their preservation from the effects of pollution.*

*Both **ecology** and **environment** refer to the interaction of man and habitat, the life-sustaining surroundings that are partially a given and partially the outcome, more or less intended, of centuries of human enterprise.*

Thus, strategies of conservation should be undertaken not only in terms of bio-physical sustainability but also for the sake of sustainable societies, with freedom, participation, justice, and opportunities for human development, especially for the less privileged sectors of society. Of great relevance in the long run are those complementary actions oriented towards the elimination of extreme poverty, the process of democratisation, the improvement of education with emphasis on values, and a greater external financial independence via efficient production and improved terms of trade, which generate savings and foreign exchange. Such strategies would try to narrow the gap between a natural (Divine) project and the projects implemented by men and women, would try to generate processes which respond to spiritual and material necessities simultaneously and which do so using the resources of the bio-sphere rationally.

José Aguilar, S.J., Colombia

Our experience of the Resurrection nurtures our hope!

I became aware of this when I was working in Jamaica and once attended a lecture by a European who had written some important works on eco-theology. He began his lecture with a litany of sins that we are afflicting on the earth. At the end of the lecture, someone asked, "Where is the hope?" but the lecturer was unable to point to much reason for hope.

I wanted to say that I am hopeful in spite of the sin of humanity, because I experience and believe in the Resurrection. This is not a mere pious statement, but the expression of my experience of working with peasant farmers who certainly know their share of suffering. It constantly amazed me that, hand in hand with the experience of Good Friday that many had to endure, there were so many signs of the Resurrection. Ironically, it was by working with people who suffered daily that I came to understand what the Resurrection was all about.

I also experienced this Resurrection on the earth when I saw how the people and land of Jamaica bounced back from the devastation caused by Hurricane Gilbert in 1988.

As a result, I have confidence that the earth will survive. The renewed interest of people in the earth and our awareness of the destructive sinful behaviour are two other signs of Resurrection. This hope-filled confidence is a statement of faith, but a faith rooted in an encounter with God in the earth.

James Profit, S.J., Upper Canada

"A traveller was on the roads under the hot sun. He begged for shade. The tree gave it and then the traveller felt like staying with the tree and to build his home near it. He needed wood for his home. His eyes fell on the tree. He looked for an axe to cut the tree. Then he begged for a handle for his axe from the tree and the tree gave it. After he made the axe, he cut the tree and built his house. But when the house was built, the traveller cried and felt lonely and hot. Then he left that place in search of shade."

According to Christian faith, the human environment is more than merely a neutral realm for human life and actions. The repeated formula "and God saw it was good" as well as the Noachic covenant, leave no doubt that all created beings and things were blessed. There is a special relationship between God and all created things. It is indisputable, then, that no life is worthless – human, plant or animal – because even the simplest forms of life are blessed by God.

Savarimuthu Ignacimuthu, S.J., Madurai

Ecology (oikos) is concerned with household, habitat, earth and universe. It looks to the inter-relationships and interactions of all living beings with themselves and with their environment. From an ecological perspective, to be is to be related, to exist is to co-exist. This is true not only of us humans but of everything that carries the mystery of existence. Ecology also speaks of the uniqueness, autonomy, and rights of each entity. As humans we are called to reverence and respect that uniqueness. All that exists does so within the sacred web of life, within the earth's community. As humans we are called to live responsibly and creatively within the communion.

Justice for the human community and justice for the total earth community are intimately linked. Even though the scientific information is not all in and will never be all in, we sense the connection between the dumping of industrial waste and cancer, between the burning of fossil fuels and global warming, and between the deprivation of the earth and diminishment of the human venture.

Hidden behind societal violence today is ecological degradation. We cannot have healthy people on a sick planet. The structures and institutions we build and the plans and programs we create can no longer disregard the ways in which the earth works. Included here are economic, educational, legal, governmental, health and religious structures. Such disregard is not good for any of us and is especially hard on the poor and marginal among us.

John Surette, S.J., Jamaica

For most important environmental issues there is going to be no "scientific" solution. Of course, a serious responsibility doubtless exists to be as well informed as we reasonably can be of the relevant scientific data for the environmental issue at hand, even though sometimes – perhaps often – we will need to make a judgement and act on the basis of necessarily incomplete information. But the most relevant factor of all will finally not be the scientific data itself, but the perspective afforded by our starting point. Which "facts" we consider to be important depends on our often unexamined social stance and prejudices. To challenge our own prejudices effectively, we require the willingness to enter into another person's pain, as we seek to follow Christ who "gave His life as a ransom for many."

Chris Moss, S.J., Vatican Observatory

Let's never forget that crises are possible and normal. A stable world, inhabited by species living in a harmonious balance which it would be harmful to disturb, is a utopian idea, the fruit of an ill-informed imagination. The entire evolution of life has been marked by eras of critical transition often determined by ecological catastrophes whose proportions we can scarcely imagine. And yet these crises have never stopped the progress of life; on the contrary, like metamorphoses, they have provoked such leaps as to let the survivors find new and better ways of life. Without hesitation we can affirm that man's appearance on earth is the result of a long series of crises on a catastrophic scale. This is an odyssey which humanity, in the course of its history, has not escaped itself, nor is there reason to believe it will be able to do so in future. It is up to human beings to assume this history and bravely to face the transformations which impose themselves in order that the new and the better might appear.

*Francis G. Elliott, S.J. (†)
Central Africa and Northern Belgium*

The significance of the environment as a life-supporting system should be stressed in relation to its component elements – e.g. soil, water, air and climate, as conditioning the sustenance of organic life on earth. Hence due regard needs be paid to the significance of these elements themselves from the point of view of sustainable development.

Louis Cramer, S.J., Sri Lanka

Naturally, as a graduate of the University of Paris in 1535, Ignatius would have imagined the material world, in Aristotelian and Ptolemaic terms, as primarily a biological system with the earth at the centre of the cosmos. He would not have gazed up at vast empty space, as we do, nor would his earth or sky have been marked by a sharp dualism between matter/quantity and psyche/quality. For him, everything he could see or touch depended for its existence – its very being – on a proportional participation in divine Being (Aquinas' "analogy of being").

The "heavens," therefore, would have been deemed part of the physical world; spirit moved behind everything, signifying kinship, inviting human participation. The stars fixed in their crystalline spheres, he would have thought, were made of the same fiery element as the fiery element in himself. Growing things, he supposed, drew their strength from the moon, gold and silver from the sun and moon respectively, copper from the planet Venus, iron from Mars, lead from Saturn – and his own health and temperament depended on his extrasensory links to these heavenly bodies.

Indeed he would have sensed that his very bodily fluids – his "humours" and five wits – were tided with the celestial reservoirs. It was thus the cosmic waters of life itself, he would have felt, that filled him with common sense, imagination, fantasy, memory and the ability to conjecture.

David Toolan, S.J., New York

Does the Principle and Foundation – "Everything else on earth has been created for man's sake" – exhibit an instrumental view of nature? The actual words suggest relationship rather than dominance, as "for man's sake" implies. The text itself goes beyond the strictly utilitarian: "The other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created." Today we might wish to say, "The other things on the face of the earth are created as companions to assist us and all of the earth to attain the fullness of relationship with God."

My experience in listening to people's prayer over the First Principle and Foundation is that they are captivated with the need for freedom with regard to all that is not God – a freedom that involves a correct relationship with all creatures and is negated by the abuse of our companions on the way to union with God.

John J. English, S.J., Upper Canada

The Spiritual Exercises are Christocentric. Much of current ecological thinking, however, because of its perception that anthropocentrism lies at the root of the environmental problem, tends to neglect, if not completely reject, the centrality of Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, based on Ignatian principles for choosing apostolic works, it seems most appropriate for Jesuit students of the Exercises to focus on the centrality of the Incarnation, not only to Ignatian spirituality, but to a radical change of human attitudes and behaviour toward the environment.

The ecological dimension of the considerations of sin and redemption with their focus on Jesus is not so readily apparent, in spite of the trail blazed by Teilhard.

In the university apostolate, the dialogue needs to take place, not only between science and philosophy, the arts, and religion, but between "economics," the prevailing model of discourse, and "ecology," the emerging model. In fact, the most telling dialogue between faith and culture in the university today may well be between ecology and economics, as ways of thinking about one's value and place in the universe.

The prevailing way of thinking measures the value of everything mainly, if not exclusively, in economic terms, while the emerging way of thinking measures things in terms of life and relationships. Economics focuses on using the world to produce more wealth, while ecology finds itself at home in the world and rejects the "all-consuming desire for profit at any cost" that fuelled the East-West conflict for almost half a century and now drives the North to bolster its dominance over the South.

William J. Wood, S.J., California

In my judgement the most crucial issue for Jesuits is their personal conversion: conversion that results in a transformed individual who then from the core of his being will be living out of an enhanced sensitivity to the community of beings on the planet around him. This personal transformation will hopefully flow from each person's spiritual roots and have far-reaching consequences in each one's spiritual life and in all behaviours that flow from that source.

Our communal life will obviously be affected, as will the orientation and features of our individual and corporate apostolic ministries. But no aspect of Jesuit life can be empowered without the initial conversion of the individual Jesuit to attitudes and a lifestyle respectful of the realities that permeate the life of every citizen of this planet, Jesuits included.

We must, individually and collectively learn to live lives that are sustainable for all of earth's community to the nth generation.

Andrew Dufner, S.J., Oregon

We Christians must take into consideration that humans will continue to live together with other living creatures in this world as world citizens. It is at the same time evident that, as citizens of this world, we all share responsibility with regard to the fate of the whole human race. Do we, as Christians, have to do anything special besides acting as responsible world citizens?

The sense of responsibility of those who are engaged in ecological issues is most worthy of respect. The reason is because they have a total vision of the life cycle and, as a result, they care for the welfare of the present generation that shares the same limited world, but, at the same time, their thoughts lean also towards the whole ecological basis which supports the life of future generations. Is there anything for us Christians to add so that we may expand the circle of our responsibility?

As Christians, we can add the following questions:

- *a responsibility demanded by whom?*
- *a responsibility we must accept before whom?*

One thing is clear for us who believe in Jesus Christ, who called the Lord of Heaven and Earth "his Father": we are responsible before the Creator.

From the standpoint of taking responsibilities with regard to environmental issues, our faith will, most probably, give us an objectivity difficult to be denied and will provide support for unavoidable and immovable decisions. This includes the work of a retrial of all those sins that we have, maybe, tried to consider only personal, and by bringing them into the open, having the created world as witness, they will be tried as "insults to the Creator." In this way, by making a distinction between God the Creator and the creatures, and drawing a clear line between the human person, called to imitate Christ, the visible image of God, and the rest of creation, there is a contribution for us to make.

Semoto Masayuki, S.J., Japan

In our Constitutions, Part VII, we read the general criteria given by Ignatius in order to select such missions, and the persons and places to which they should be directed:

*"That may always be done which is conducive to the greater service of God and the universal good."
[618]*

"The more universal the good is, the more it is divine. Hence, preference ought to be given to persons and places which, once benefited themselves, are a cause of extending the good to many others..." [622]

This geographical and historical universality clearly singles out today's ecological mission. The arguments are similar to those used by Father Janssens in his letter De ministeriis, when he placed the scientific apostolate in the first place because of its "universal and future" character. We can say today that this ecological mission is a service to the justice with the whole world people, also that of the future "third generation."

Manuel G. Doncel, S.J., Catalonia

Can you identify what is specifically Ignatian that would help our men respond?

I defer here to Gabriel Marcel and his distinction between problem and mystery. Encounter with "the environment" – for individuals and for the Society as a body – is both problem and mystery, a reality to be "solved" and a reality to "be with." It would be useful to deepen both experiences.

In terms of environmental mystery, we could deepen the encounter by becoming more explicit about the connection between the Exercises and the created world. As Father General has suggested so eloquently, "the environment" is an important part of each week in the Exercises. We could all benefit from a deeper awareness of this truth.

Francis G. Hilton, S.J., New York

An adequate approach to ecological questions should pay special attention to three kinds of problems:

- *the relationship between population and resources*
- *the cultural and ethical orientations of the different peoples*
- *the political strategies for facing situations whether local or global.*

While everyone agrees that these are all problems of social ethics, any consensus – even at the level of ideas – is still very far off, regarding the general principles of behaviour and of practical intervention, which may be proposed as being fair and which the great majority of humanity might potentially agree upon.

For now, addressing the critics of the current anthropocentrism, I would only like to point out that an anthropocentrism according to global principles of justice is very different and very demanding when it comes to the ecological care of the planet. And this should come as no great surprise. For that anthropocentrism which legitimates the sacking of the natural environment, usually began by dispossessing others having an equal and prior right, and today it also continues to ignore the rights of local populations and of future generations.

When, by contrast, the rights of each man and woman are respected, one inevitably arrives at a universalistic anthropocentrism which, according to my way of seeing things, demands just as much care for the environment as do theories of deep ecology.

Gian Luigi Brena, S.J., Italy

The emergence of a global focus on environmental issues, instead of widening the agenda, only helps to narrow it in the interests of those who have the global reach. A kind of green imperialism now establishes the universal environmental agenda. The Third World must preserve its forests as carbon-sinks to serve the "larger" interests of the First, to which the local needs of communities to exploit and conserve their forests for subsistence are secondary by far. The ozone-layer and global warming are more important to the global environment agenda than public health problems caused by floods, chemical industries, or changes in the cropping patterns of rural communities in Asia or Africa.

Like the universalising discourse of development, the globalising of environmental concern now helps to mask the real problems of our societies. The victims are turned into the exploiters destroying the environment, and a field of power is again opened up to allow a superior knowledge to intervene and subjugate local knowledges. The development professional is replaced by the environment expert who establishes an area of control and determines the strategies for protecting the environment. Documents on various aspects of the environment are produced at international conferences where poor countries have little bargaining power. The dominant then use these declarations to shirk their responsibilities and lay the blame on Third World peoples.

Lester Coutinho, Gujarat

Ecology made media:

- *how do the visual and print media, subject to manipulation by special interest groups, influence what we consider to be important?*
- *how do the media, which often omit clarifying nuances, influence us in judging the validity of an environmental concern?*

A case in point:

Environmental groups mounted significant international pressure in the 1980s and forced the eastern Canadian baby harp seal hunt to close. Extinction of the harp seal was the reason given, but the available data did not support such a claim. It was TV images of cute seal pups, menaced by hunters portrayed as barbaric and uncivilised, that effectively blocked out other considerations such as the growing population of seals, or the intimate relationship between seal hunting and aboriginal culture, or the importance of this subsistence economy for both Inuit and Newfoundland fishermen.

Here scientific, economic, and cultural values were ignored in an extremely well-organised and publicised media campaign that played upon aesthetics and sentimentality.

A classic case.

John McCarthy, S.J., Upper Canada

Just as for Ignatius the work of Jesuits was one of bringing people to the depths of themselves and giving them tools to find God there and everywhere else, I think we should make it one of our main concerns in whatever apostolate we are, to bring people to contemplation (the kind coming from the journey of the Spiritual Exercises). Most of our teaching and catechesis are so intellectual that they make our people extremely weak in the face of reality (which hardly fits our intellectual schemes, with apologies to the theoreticians, like myself).

This whole matter makes me think that every new area of human awareness, crisis, problems that opens up, affects the depth of our spiritual experience and thinking. It tests the genuineness and consistency of our spiritual perspective. It reveals also the inadequacies and the lack of rootedness of most of our preaching and theoretical constructions on the life in the Spirit. It affects also the credibility of our whole ministry. Our credibility today rests not so much in the systematic consistency of our language ... as in the living consistency of our decisions, life style, relationships to people and nature, etc. In this sense, ecology is a providential challenge to us.

Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., Japan

Development projects have caused the displacement of indigenous peoples from their lands: dams have flooded tribal lands in Thailand and India, and lakes have been drained for hydro-electric projects in Myanmar and the Philippines.

Indigenous peoples suffer from the interference of government ministries which often decide what is best for them without their prior consultation or input.

In order to attract tourism, ministries have declared tribal homelands to be national parks where local people are forbidden to farm, fish and hunt. Ecology is a useful argument to defend such projects.

The indigenous peoples are blamed for destroying the forests through slash-and-burn agriculture and for endangering animal species through hunting and trapping. Indigenous people retort that their hunter-gatherer way of life is ecologically sound. For centuries the regions in which they have been living were not deforested nor drained of wildlife. It is modern projects, they claim, which do not take the ecological balance into account and result in irreversible destruction.

*Thomas Michel, S.J.
Secretary for Inter-religious Dialogue*

The importance of our counter-cultural witness to a simple life: The poor Jesus, who in His life put minimal demands on the earth's natural resources, calls us to this simple life in our personal lives, in our community lifestyle, and in our apostolates. Such a life clearly flies in the face of the globally spreading culture of consumerism/economism. I would also like to see the future document spell out the Jesuit role in changing the sinful structures which cause both social injustice and environmental injustice. The earth and the poor are both victims of social injustice and environmental injustice

Roland J. Lesseps, S.J., Zambia

New ethical values have a chance at gaining a foothold in society when certain behaviours are rewarded with, for example, credit or appreciation. And in this regard, we Jesuits have much influence, not only in education, but also in all our other institutions, wherever our counsel is requested. This certainly means that we must be prepared to change our own styles of life and work, and to live the life of material simplicity which we have recognised as a condition for global justice. Only what we ourselves live can we pass on to others.

This holds true for any spiritual and socio-political formation as well. Without confusing evangelical poverty with the misery of the poor, the theology of liberation recognises how important it is that material poverty also be experienced in the concrete.

What can be done in our styles of work and life to demonstrate this commitment in the concrete? Not utopian but prophetic; not only prophetic but also practical, as alternatives for those who look to us for accompaniment, help and orientation.

Christoph Albrecht, S.J., Switzerland

At the household level we should do everything to encourage token gestures even though they seem to have no importance, such as:

- *Favour the use of recycled paper, glass, fabrics, etcetera.*
- *Save on drinking water and no fresh water in general, and save on paper as well.*
- *Keep the use of throw-away items to a minimum.*
- *Be careful with waste and rubbish, especially non-degradable plastics and highly contaminating metals.*
- *Avoid using fluorocarbon aerosols, non-bio-degradable detergents, and a long etcetera.*

We must discover the ethical values of the co-existence of man-and-nature. People of our time should learn to find their place in nature again, as the ground of all cultivation and culture, the real home where we exist together, encounter one another and find repose, where we fulfil our purpose in life.

Ignacio Núñez de Castro, S.J., Bética

The problem is often a simple lack of information among Jesuits on this issue. Jesuits should be urged to reflect on their personal affectedness by the problem of ecology:

"Does the problem of ecology affect my/our life in any way (noise, air, poverty etc.)?"

Stress should be put on the question:

"What could be our SJ-contribution to local networks?"

To encourage Jesuits to engage – with a global perspective – in local networks. It should not lead to more travel, but to more local activities.

Rudolf Kutschera, S.J., Austria

As the ancient Chinese Odes have it:

"Under Heaven all is public domain."

The consequences are obvious: If someone is taking air, water, soil or whatever from the environment for the purpose of manufacturing something or transforming these elements, social justice demands that, when they are returned to nature – whether in the form they were taken or as waste – they must be in as good condition as when they were taken, and that they not affect the environment adversely, much less contaminate it, since it belongs to all and is something essential for life.

The first law of ecology states that all things are related and mutually affected. Thus, taking care of nature itself will also bring about the general good of humans. But we can achieve this general good in better fashion by working directly with persons rather than the other way around, and I consider this to be more proper of our Jesuit charisma and way of life

Adolfo López, S.J., Nicaragua

A theoretical area in which I feel our reflection could be helpful is where one moves from analysis to decision. Two levels must be distinguished very clearly or, if you prefer, two logics:

- *the plural logic of scientific analysis*
- *the binary logic of decision-making*

The latter is finally a matter of proposing an "either-or" alternative, which is why I speak of "binary logic," recognising that a decision does not flow directly from an analysis. This is the trap that one falls into when relying only on "experts" to decide. The risk is even greater when they have so-called "unanimity" on a question.

Any epistemologist knows that while science needs a minimum of consensus in order to progress (the "standard" models), a theory which by definition cannot be challenged does not deserve to be "scientific." The constant temptation, even among experts, is to force an issue to a consensus and so close off debate before any real alternative has been presented at a "political" level.

François Euvé, S.J., Russia

Awareness begins with ourselves. Some sort of "ecological research" could help us become more aware of the world and what we do to it:

- *on the individual level (my personal energy needs, my purchasing habits)*
- *on the community level (where we live, what we buy, how many cars we need)*
- *at Province level (where we invest our money, how we send information, what sort of trips we judge to be necessary)*
- *at the level of the whole Order (where we work with NGOs, where we forge networks)*

A "joyful asceticism" or a "society of sufficiency" (Pedro Arrupe) allows us to be optimistic.

"Reverence linked with sufficiency is a great achievement... If we have food and clothing then we should be satisfied. For those who want to be rich fall into temptation and into ... many useless and harmful habits, which cause people to decline and be spoilt... Fight the good fight of faith, grasp eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:6-12).

Alois Riedlsperger, S.J., Austria

Development of the under-developed countries is not the solution. Not even sustainable development. If the aim of the developmentalists is to bring the Third World up to the level of consumption of the rich countries, the result will be planetary suicide.

What is needed is not the development of the Third World but the de-development of the rich industrialised countries. Cut down drastically on consumption and share the excess with the rest of the world. Turn the consumer culture topsy-turvy. Money-fixation, profit-madness, the very engines of capitalism, must be eradicated from the heart of man to bring him back to sanity. You cannot save/serve both the environment and Mammon (Luke 16:13, a paraphrase).

Chryso Pieris, S.J., Sri Lanka

Some questions about phrases in GC34, Decree 3: "preserving the integrity of creation", "quality of life", and "we are only stewards".

Certainly these expressions can be "saved" but they are also open to misunderstanding. When we talk of "preserving the integrity," doesn't this suggest a kind of naive, pre-revolutionary world-view? Isn't it precisely with the opportunities which genetic technology open up that we stand within the evolutionary process? What does "preserving" mean; which "integrity"?

Is all life qualitatively equal, as renowned ecologists would maintain, or is human life not to be qualitatively distinguished, for instance, from the biologically dominating prokaryotes?

Are we "only the stewards," or "sons and daughters" as well?

Johannes Seidel, S.J., Northern Germany

Our commitment to the environment should have the same determination that Ignatius had when he threw young men into Universities because he saw that human history then was being shaped there more decisively than elsewhere. Greening ministry could be potentially as important in the 21st century.

One final caution: please do not leave the job to the Provincial and his consult, who are too busy and are not likely to be any better informed than other Jesuits. A properly competent team from the region (including lay people) should draw up a realistic, workable action plan.

K.M. Matthew, S.J., Madurai

The human context, however degraded and sinful a world, is today still held up by the love of God and still accompanied by Christ's action. In struggling to bring every moment and movement of an integrally shared environment to fulfilment, we give glory to God.

Present environmental concerns are both old and new: old, in that there has always been human greed and a fear of nature's power; new, in that there are global problems of human origin having widespread local impact. Yet a deep sense continues to obtain that all life is linked, and this links us with the very source of life. Therefore, we are called to consider the needed action in all aspects, from Creation via today's crises through to the Kingdom.

Of primary importance is the reinvigoration of the scientific apostolate for socio-environmental concern. Such reinvigoration calls for:

- *establishing the global focus*
- *linking science to justice*
- *ecological involvement for those deeply engaged in the sciences, thus needing more dynamic and unhampered access to grass-roots experiences*
- *then taking up concerns of more general interest*
- *maintaining an intense sense of the mission.*

Peter Walpole, S.J., Philippines

As a hope-filled Society, we are both uncertain of the immediate outcome and certain that all will work to God's glory. If this earth has been wounded, with inner groaning it still awaits its fulfilment. The vision of the Trinity calls us to be participants in this grand enterprise, that is, to be co-creators of this New Earth, to be united in the redeeming mystery of the suffering Christ, and to spread the ever enlivening Spirit through a vast array of gifts and talents.

We proclaim these closely-allied ecological principles:

- *the fundamental goodness and inter-relatedness of all Creation (uniting with others to pronounce all created things good by not being wasteful)*
- *the conservation of all human activity (offering our sacrifices for the healing of the earth)*
- *the immense diversity and health of differentiation of our Spirit-empowered world (encouraging diverse expressions of ecological healing in such forms as humour, research, stewardship, and prophetic witness).*

Albert Fritsch, S.J., Chicago

As a Body in the Church: Our expected contribution to the "new evangelisation" can deeply involve the good news of a God so involved in the extended world, that this God became a part of it and, as eternally intended, lifted it.

The bad news that comes necessarily with the Good News is that we are sinners – individually and corporately – in the ecological-environmental arena. Healing begins when we sincerely confess this.

Our Jesuit spiritual union within its cultural diversity blesses with wisdom dialogue in such many faceted areas as the environmental-ecological one.

Should we be really able to pray together – properly celebrate the Eucharist – as a body, we should be able to be guided by the Spirit in our responses to the ecological issue.

David Skelskey, S.J., East Africa

The ethical principle of the recognition of the goodness of creatures is profoundly biblical, since it consists in recognising that each and every creature is a reflection of the love of God: "and God saw that everything was indeed very good" (Genesis 1:31).

Affirming the intrinsic goodness of creation is today a fundamental value, given the disappearance of ever more species from the face of the earth, especially in countries where bio-diversity is rather rich, running the risk of the extinction of many creatures which, united with human beings, could reflect better the end for which we were all created.

The ethical principle of solidarity is valued today in the social and environmental fields, sustaining countless persons, both in the religious area as well as in social and political movements. Destroying the environment is not an attitude of solidarity, because it is to ignore the plans of God, breaking the harmony of creation. Ecological solidarity, inspired by theological values, should be for all of us an important apostolic tool for the formation of values for future generations. This principle should be united with the salvific dimension because "God saves people and animals alike" (Psalm 36:6), establishing from the beginning a covenant with humankind and all living beings (Genesis 9:8-17) and recognising that all Creation continues to groan with the pains of childbirth, awaiting the glorious freedom of the children of God (Romans 8:18-23).

*Josafá Carlos de Siqueira, S.J.
East-Central Brazil*

I would state that what we basically need is a worldview with a social consciousness which would include the integrity of creation. Fundamentally it would mean understanding our relationship with God to include our responsibilities towards all of creation.

Loving God with our whole heart, our whole soul and our whole mind and loving our neighbour as ourselves would mean that we discern God's will within the evolution of the planet and that in our decisions and policies the God of all creation be considered.

So, basically, it is our relationship with God that must be understood anew. The covenant we have with God is not strictly personal but is communitarian. The good of others yet to be born is part of our reflection in our decision making.

Paul Desmarais, S.J., Zambia

The General Congregation made a good judgement to integrate the ecological reality and its actual crisis in the discussion of global justice. Jesuits who are specifically working in the promotion of justice should be encouraged to integrate the ecological dimension in their engagements or reflections. At the same time scientists, philosophers and theologians should be encouraged to focus on the environmental reality in their research projects. And finally Jesuits all over the world should help the people to become aware of the seriousness and the world-wide dimension of the environmental crisis.

Ecological issues not only treat local problems but they are the order of the day as well in discussions on the gap between the North and the South.

It is obvious that this awareness should be translated in an ethical attitude that also affects our own life-style and the decisions we make in our institutions and communities (e.g., reducing unnecessary use of paper, energy, cars, etc.). This is a matter of credibility. Some Provinces could perhaps consider (where the need is most urgent) to make of this item a major point of apostolic consideration (research, formation, spirituality, development projects, etc.).

Johan Verschueren, S.J., Northern Belgium

