



**SEEKING PEACE IN A VIOLENT WORLD**  
**NEW CHALLENGES**



**SANTA SEVERA –ROME**  
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## **I. WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE HAVE DONE**

1. We are a worldwide and diverse group of 45 Jesuits, religious and lay colleagues, men and women, who have met near Rome for two weeks to discern and to reflect on the possible response of the Ignatian Family and its apostolic endeavours to the realities of war, violence, and the challenge towards sustainable peace in our world today. Indeed, we feel that the complex realities of violence and the emerging peace movements require that we focus on our role and commitment with regard to violence and peace, for we are part of a global organisation that has intellectual expertise, is in touch with the grassroots situations where the effects of violence are directly tangible, and has the capacity to organize advocacy and to influence on policy decision making.

2. We want to share with Fr. General, with the larger Society of Jesus and with the Ignatian Family the insights we have gained, the concerns we have, and the conclusions we draw. We want to highlight some of the new challenges we see today with regard to violence, war, conflict transformation, and sustainable peace. We have seen both new challenges and new possibilities in our world. In our globalizing world, the faces of violence and war have changed in complexity, intensity, interrelatedness, and risk. In response to these new forms of violence, new international institutions as well as new peace movements and peace initiatives have arisen which call us to articulate our own commitments. We do not intend to propose “solutions” to these challenges; we rather propose to enter into a process of shared spiritual discernment that will allow us all to commit ourselves in ever changing situations at the service of those who suffer most the effects of violence and the absence of sustainable peace.



3. The experience of shared discernment in our meeting has been a fruitful and creative enterprise. On our way to discover God's action in us and his desire for our world and His people, we have shared spiritual and Ignatian resources in common prayer and in liturgy, we have listened attentively and appreciatively to one another's experiences, stories, concerns and viewpoints, and we have discovered how creativity emerges in our mutual relationships and amidst our great diversities. In all of those we have felt the consolation of God's presence and grace, which give us the strength to engage concretely in the service of peace, each one of us in his or her specific circumstances. We came to experience how this process of shared discernment – that addresses our whole human being, cognition, affection, will– enriches our understandings and practices of sustainable peace building and, in fact, constitutes a method to reach out towards sustainable peace amidst violent conflicts. We urge that this approach, in which the reflection on violence and peace is decidedly enriched by shared dialogue and prayer, be promoted in the Ignatian Family. Indeed, through this we can draw on the full richness of our corporate expertise, on our grassroots presence and on our international capacity to influence, advocate and act.

4. While experiencing this process of shared discernment, and at the very heart of our consolation, we have felt the need for the regenerative power of forgiveness and reconciliation, that binds us together in a community of peace and for peace. We have touched our personal histories of failure and of sin, as well as those of our institutions, of the Society of Jesus and of the Ignatian Family. We have remembered our omissions when we did not dare to address violence, the support we have sometimes given to violence, our own violence towards others, our cowardice and our lack of sensitivity to hear the cry of those who suffer. In the course of the meeting we have also experienced our limits and our



wounds, that may render us deaf to the stories and opinions of others, that may produce defence mechanisms or the fear to enter into creative confrontations and conflicts, that may awaken in us violence against others, that may render us blind to appreciate in the others the face of the God of peace and compassion. Therefore, when we present this document, we know we need to be humble: we are part and parcel of the histories of violence and peace of this world. It is in this spirit of humility that we make our choice to serve God and humanity in His project of sustainable peace.

## **II. NEW CHALLENGES OF CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE TODAY**

5. War, armed conflict and violence are among the most tragic aspects of the human scene. Today's armed conflicts have some significantly new aspects that call us to new responses.

### **IDENTITY CONFLICTS**

6. Many of today's wars are driven by conflicts over cultural identity, having nationalist, ethnic and sometimes religious dimensions. The genocide in Rwanda and the violent conflict in the Great Lakes region tragically illustrate how identity-based group conflicts can lead to immense human harm. The former Yugoslavia and Sudan are other examples of the tragedy of such identity conflict. Religion sometimes plays a significant role in these contemporary identity conflicts: fundamentalist forms of religion are factors in the conflicts the Middle East, parts of Africa, Asia, and in the terrorist/counter terrorist conflicts that are so destructive today. The religious dimensions of contemporary conflict have led some analysts to conclude that religion is becoming the primary source of war and conflict in the post Cold War world. Though we believe it is a mistake to see any



single factor as the principal cause of all conflict today, the role played by religious communities in contemporary conflicts surely raises a powerful challenge to these communities to become agents of peace and reconciliation wherever war and violence occur.

7. Identity needs to be defined in inclusive rather than confrontational ways, avoiding the exclusion that denies the very humanity of others and by that very fact does violence. Recognition of the other who is different is perhaps the key test of whether one is capable of recognizing the inherent dignity of all human beings. We Christians believe that every human being has been created in God's image and thus has a dignity that demands respect and care. Other religious and secular traditions possess similar insights. In the face of twentieth century conflicts, these insights have led to the rise of a universalist human rights ethics that calls us to move from closed communal boundaries to open frontiers of human solidarity among the diverse communities of our world. We are challenged today to help build peace by further advancing this ethos in collaboration with all who are working for the protection of human dignity in inclusive communities.

8. This calls for deep interreligious conversation, which is a condition of sustainable peace in the midst of religious diversity. Various theological models for such dialogue have been proposed and these need further reflection in light of new experience. In our workshop, we have experienced the need to be open to engagement with other Christian denominations, other religious traditions beyond Christianity (including the religions of indigenous people) and to people who do not confess any religion. Such openness to engagement is itself the beginning of peace. Thus today we can say "dialogue is the new name for peace."



## **GLOBALIZATION, CONFLICT, AND JUSTICE**

9. Many of today's armed conflicts are fuelled by inequalities of economic and political power. Market-oriented globalization brings very unequal benefits and burdens to peoples: it often benefits one class, ethnic, or religious group within a country or region while it disadvantages others. Conflicts in Chad, Colombia, and parts of India, which our workshop has considered in some depth, have significant roots in inequalities of economic and political power. Some of these struggles, which may, at first, appear to be conflicts of ethnicity or religion are stimulated by the struggle over economic benefits and political participation. Similarly, the economic dependence of developed countries on oil is a central aspect of the recent and current conflicts in Iraq. Further, the policies of powerful developed countries, of international financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and of multinational enterprises also play important roles in creating conditions fuelling such conflicts or at times in helping to alleviate them. The desire to retain economic privilege can lead groups who are better-off to violent action to separate themselves from those who have much less. Also, when people feel so economically or culturally excluded that they have nothing to lose, armed struggle even through terrorism can seem the only path toward the improvement of their lives. War and armed conflict, however, almost always diminish the economic well being of those whose lives it touches.

10. Genuine justice has always been an important precondition for peace, more so in our time. Justice requires that everyone be able to participate in the economic, cultural, and political life of the community in those basic ways needed for her/him to be respected as persons. The opposite of such participation can be called marginalization--exclusion from producing or sharing in the common good of the community. This can take the



political form of concentration of power in the hands of a unique party or a ruling elite. People can be marginalized on the grounds of ethnicity, culture, religion, or gender, in the extreme leading to the horrors of genocide or ethnic cleansing. Less dramatic but still deeply unjust forms of exclusion follow from economic policies and structures that cause poverty or lack of education, health care, and employment. Women and girls suffer such exclusion in ways notably greater than do males. Our efforts to build peace are linked with overcoming all these forms of exclusion of the poor and vulnerable, both within nations and globally.

11. This understanding of participation as essential to justice has important implications for how we see good governance, accountability, and the role of civil society on various levels. Bureaucratic corruption in government is another form of violence that takes food from the mouths of the poor and abuses public trust for private gain. Local people's groups such as labor unions and community organizations, as well as national and international NGOs, can work to hold governments accountable to the well being of the peoples, thus helping to serve the cause of peace. Regional and national organizations can also hold international and global institutions accountable in similar ways. For example, networks that focus on environmental issues, human rights, humanitarian law, and the dignity of women can confer legitimacy on governments and multinational enterprises, or they can withdraw it. This is a form of "soft power" that we can use to work for justice and thus for peace.



## **THE CHALLENGE OF DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION**

12. Recent wars have created over thirty million refugees and other displaced people, most of whom are women and children. The international community takes some faltering steps to respond to refugees who have been driven from their homes by persecution, but those driven across borders by war or internally displaced within their own country are often forgotten. Restoring justice requires enabling these people to return to full participation as citizens of their home countries or enabling them to become active citizens in countries of refuge. The destruction of livelihoods that guarantee economic survival has also become a central source of migration, and many countries are increasingly unwilling to receive such immigrants. Indeed resistance to immigration and refusal to acknowledge its very existence are sources of negative attitudes toward those who are different, leading to new forms of conflict. The work of the Jesuit Refugee Service makes these challenges particularly relevant to us.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES**

13. In many armed conflicts today, the control over natural resources such as oil, coal, and other minerals is a key factor. Conflict over water is also becoming a serious threat to peace. In the coming years, resource and environmental wars and injustice will probably become more important. There is a clear link between environmental degradation, poverty, and injustice. When potential conflicts are accompanied by the development of technologically advanced weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical, or biological), the threat of war to the environment is further magnified. Deepened appreciation of the relation between justice and the integrity of creation, the concern for the future generations, the significance of bio-diversity, and the environmentally



destructive aspect of contemporary war is a new challenge of the conflicts we see around us today.<sup>1</sup>

## THE CHALLENGE OF NONVIOLENCE

14. Perhaps the most fundamental challenge we face in addressing the reality of conflict is whether the use of violent force can ever be morally justified. Gandhi and Martin Luther King, among others, have been challenging examples of the power of nonviolent responses to oppression and injustice. The Second Vatican Council placed an innovative stress on nonviolence<sup>2</sup>, and many Catholics have become increasingly convinced that resort to military force is never appropriate as a strategy for socio-political changes. At the same time, they would, albeit reluctantly, agree that humanitarian intervention by military means to protect innocent people from grave violence, such as the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, may be justified. The position that holds that the use of military means can be justified under stringently defined and exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, remains part of the traditions of Catholic ethics and international law. It is certainly clear that followers of Christ have a fundamental commitment to seek justice nonviolently. Thus Christians can never resort to the use of force without grave hesitation. Peace is our primary commitment and nonviolence is the route to a just peace in all but exceptional cases, such as protection of people from genocide, ethnic cleansing, or other grave injustices and violations of their human rights. Understanding how to live out this commitment in diverse circumstances will be one of the central intellectual tasks we face in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Our workshop took place while the catastrophe in New Orleans developed, and while the discussion on the UN Millennium Goals as well as on the Kyoto protocols were high news items.

<sup>2</sup> Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 78.



15. This commitment to nonviolence adds support to the growing conviction that in today's interdependent and globalizing world, national sovereignty can no longer be considered somehow an absolute value. Both the UN Charter and recent church teaching affirm that international response to serious forms of oppression or grave violations of human rights such as genocide or ethnic cleansing should be multilateral, not unilateral. The religious conviction that we are all part of one human family under God means that the borders of nation states do not determine the boundaries of our moral responsibility. This has important implications not only for military affairs but in the domain of the use of resources, economic interaction, international advocacy and our assessment of the impact of global forces such as the media on local culture.

#### **RECONCILIATION AS A CHALLENGE**

16. It is increasingly clear today that, in many settings, the pursuit of lasting peace in the aftermath of conflict can call for innovative forms of reconciliation and even forgiveness. Such reconciliation cannot occur when injustice continues to take place. Therefore injustice must cease if lasting peace is to be established. But it is also true that justice does not mean revenge. Restorative justice rebuilds communities that have been fractured by conflict. Such restorative justice is a form of reconciliation, and it can call for forgiveness of the perpetrator of past injustice and violence, opening new ways to a peace that can last. Thus Pope John Paul II observed that there can be no peace without justice, and no justice without forgiveness. Such forgiving does not mean forgetting. Indeed true reconciliation cannot occur if past harms are hidden from view by impunity for perpetrators. But forgiveness can come as a gift and a grace when a new future comes into view, a future lived in justice and truth. We are challenged to discover new and effective



ways of bringing about such restorative justice and reconciliation as we work to bring about lasting peace in the contexts of our ministries.

### **SPIRITUAL AND THEOLOGICAL CHALLENGES**

17. In light of these new challenges of violence and peacemaking, our workshop participants feel called to a renewed vision of how our spiritualities and theologies help us discern the path forward. We cannot propose definitive solutions here, but rather we invite Jesuits and our co-workers, including those who are adherents of other religious traditions, to join in a process of discernment.

18. Our response to the realities of violence and peace is closely linked with the way we live our relationship to God. Our faith, spirituality, and theology are public, not private, affairs. They open up a picture of our mutual relationships with each other and with God. Thus spirituality and theology have a powerful impact on social life and, specifically on our approach to others through peaceful or violent relationships.

19. In situations of violence, Christians are called to live out Jesus' proclamation of the Reign of God as a reign of peace. This is a call to reject violence, an invitation to forgiveness and reconciliation, and a call to rebuild broken communities. Jesus repeatedly called his disciples to be peacemakers, to love their neighbors (including their enemies), and to follow him in taking up their cross. Christians have often failed to live out this call in ways that build peace. The cross is misinterpreted if it is seen as a call simply to endure injustice or suffering. The cross challenges us to follow Jesus in witnessing to the Reign of God, no matter what the cost. Jesus' crucifixion is also a powerful symbol of God's solidarity and identification with all who suffer and face death, including those who suffer and die because of conflict. Thus, the cross calls us to serve those who suffer from



injustice and violence, even when this is costly for us. Our faith in the resurrection enables us to trust that peace is possible even when we face ongoing conflict. This trust can sustain a hope that gives us a passion for the possible, a deep trust that patient and courageous endurance in the struggle for peace will be victorious.

20. Our understanding of the church is also challenged by the reality of violence. The Christian community should be a reflection of God's action for peace and against violence in our world. In our workshop we heard many stories of the church in action as a community of peace and reconciliation. Sadly, we have also heard stories of where the Christian community has failed to act, or acted in ways that led to violent conflict. Such experiences invite us to radical, critical and creative responses that enable the church to become the community of reconciliation that the Spirit calls it to be. The church can only be this kind of peacemaker in genuine dialogue and partnership with people of other faiths and traditions. Deepening a spirituality and theology that lead us to more effective work for peace in collaboration with all people of good will is a central challenge of our time.

### **III. NEW MOVEMENTS FOR PEACE TODAY**

21. During our meeting, we have become more aware of existing peace initiatives and peace movements all over the world, which have emerged as a contribution of a variety of civil society organizations<sup>3</sup>, including a growing number of grass-roots initiatives; national and international NGOs; churches and educational institutions; governmental institutions and multilateral organizations. We have experienced the creative strength of these movements. We perceive that our globalized worldwide context, which

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<sup>3</sup> An example of this growing number of peace initiatives is the recent publication *People Building Peace II – Successful Stories of Civil Society* (P. van Tongeren et al., Eds., 2005, Reinner Publishers), which collect more than 60 different experiences of civil society groups and organizations all over the world.



has generated new types of war and violence, also provides new **opportunities and initiatives for peace**, nurturing our hope that a peaceful and just world is possible.

### **GRASS-ROOTS MOVEMENTS**

22. New actors and movements courageously and creatively participate in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. We want to highlight the role of grass-roots groups and communities, university students, women, and indigenous people. We witness the growing role that local communities and grass-roots organizations play as peacemakers, articulating in their initiatives elements of dialogue, development, resistance, and reconciliation. Women's movements also are an essential agent for building wider and lasting peace and making possible ways of reconciliation, as in the cases of Zambia, India, and Indonesia. Indigenous and peasants' movements contribute from their local cultures to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, sharing with all of us their traditions and practices, as in the cases of Chiapas in Mexico and tribal groups in India. Some of these new actors need to be strengthened and empowered (through awareness raising, organizing, strategizing, and networking) to play more effective roles in the process, through broader participation in and ownership of all stages of peacebuilding.

### **NEW NETWORKS**

23. Globalization facilitates some of the ongoing wars and violent conflicts; it also offers increased opportunities for networking at the service of peace. The challenge of fragmentation and powerlessness common to conflict situations as well as the international complexity of contemporary conflicts has shown us the importance both of supporting some of the efforts made by the supranational organizations and of building networks of



companionship and solidarity among peacemakers. Civil society groups and organizations can come together, both at local and international levels, to make a real difference in finding solutions and alternatives, particularly for the affected groups we are in contact with.

24. First, international bodies like the UN, European Union, and regional organizations like the Organization of American States and the African Union increasingly play constructive roles in peacemaking. Other global agreements and agencies such as the Kyoto accord and the International Criminal Court confront critical issues for sustainable peace.

25. Second, global and national campaigns, like the international campaign to ban landmines and against the use of children soldiers, the international action network against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and the campaign for basic human rights of the Dalit and tribal communities and of women in India, can influence decision makers and global public opinion, even challenging the war-making narratives.

26. Thirdly, there is a growing dynamism of “world citizens” in solidarity, as we observe in the growth of transnational advocacy groups working on issues such as human rights and international humanitarian law, the advancement of women, and the protection of the environment. We share experiences of networking (such as the Ignatian Solidarity Network in the USA, the African Jesuits AIDS Network and the International Jesuit Network for Development); of solidarity support and aid (such as Entreculturas, Alboan, South Asian Peoples’ Initiative); and of advocacy, in Washington (Office of Social and International Ministries of the US Jesuit Conference), in Brussels, and elsewhere (JRS). We are aware of the necessity of such advocacy in solidarity. Advocacy is an important way in which the Society can exercise a faith that does justice; as such, advocacy must be



seen as an important element of the work for justice. This advocacy is understood as influencing policy at three levels: with national, governmental and legislative structures, with international and regional structures (such as the European Union, the United Nations, the World Bank, etc.), and with corporations (socially responsible investment).

27. Fourthly, there are some experiences emerging in the civil society sphere, such as the World Social Forum, that suggest new dynamisms for the construction of our world. A number of Jesuits and lay colleagues have participated in different moments of the Forum and have found new inspiration for peace and social justice in its work.

#### **RESPONSE TO REFUGEES AND IDPs**

28. We also see the many initiatives in favor of the victims of all kinds of violence, e.g. the service to refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs). Some of the massive displacements of population require enormous support operations. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees plays a leading role, but there are many other organizations involved, including Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) with presence in more than fifty countries, and the experiences represented in our meeting: Africa, Aceh (Indonesia), Europe, Colombia and Venezuela, and the work with migrants and refugees in Ecuador.

#### **HUMAN RIGHTS, NONVIOLENT, AND INTERRELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS**

29. In tackling violence, some crucial issues have gained importance: resistance against impunity through different actions on human rights and international humanitarian law. The non-violent approaches, as exemplified yesterday by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, inspire today new peace initiatives: peace communities and declarations of ‘neutrality’ in Colombia, peace zones in the Philippines and Indonesia. There are also



several experiences of inter-religious dialogue emerging from our activism for peace, which have tried to build bridges among contending parts, as is the case in Northern Ireland, South Africa, and in Mindanao in the Philippines.

### **RECONCILIATION PROCESSES**

30. We confirm that sustainable peace is not possible without reconciliation. Numerous processes of reconciliation have been initiated, ranging from judicial measures and truth commissions to more localized experiences of dialogue between conflicting groups, as in South and East Africa, Rwanda, Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, Colombia, India and Sri Lanka.

### **CRITICAL NEEDS**

31. These emerging opportunities for peace require us to address two critical points if they are to be sustained. First, it is necessary to develop analyses of the different aspects of conflict that acknowledge their complexity (different contexts call for different responses). Such analysis is required if we are to design more precise and effective strategies for an “agenda for peace” (i.e. educating, researching, discerning, organizing, politicking, protesting, dialoguing, resisting, praying). We also need to widen our concept of peace. It is not enough to face the expressions of direct violence, seeking the negative peace of absence of war; we must also address the more structural and indirect forms of violence in ways that enable women and men to find paths toward their integral development as human beings. For instance, adequate representation of both women and men, equal treatment of all races, good governance, and development are key issues in building a lasting peace. In addition, cultural, religious, ethnic, and gender differences



need space not only for expression but particularly for building multiple and inclusive identities in fruitful and interactive coexistence.

32. Second, we observe that there exists a tension in respecting and supporting the active participation of those who are victims of conflict. The effort to be a voice of the voiceless sectors and countries is certainly important and valid. But there exists a risk of supplanting these sectors. We must not forget that communities and social sectors should be their own agents of peace. Empowerment, organizing, and networking of excluded and voiceless groups are needed to enable them to speak for themselves.

#### **IV. NEW RESPONSES FROM THE JESUITS AND THE JESUIT FAMILY**

##### **COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND OUR IGNATIAN ROOTS**

33. In our process of discernment during these days, after pondering challenges and opportunities, we have arrived at a personal appropriation of a key conclusion of GC 34: “A specific challenge today is to embody Christ’s ministry of healing and reconciliation in a world increasingly divided by economic and social status, race and ethnicity, violence and war, cultural and religious pluralism. These divisions must be a focus of Jesuit priestly ministry because Christ’s work of reconciliation breaks down the walls of division among peoples” (GC 34, D. 6, §14). This challenge is even more intense nowadays given the larger number of armed conflicts and their globalized character. We have heard the pain and suffering of many people as a result of these wars and violence, and through these voices we have discerned with humility the call of Christ to join with what God is doing towards reconciliation: “all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through



Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5, 18). Like the first companions in the Society, we feel called to work in “reconciling the estranged” (Formula of the Institute – 1550, §1).

34. Our experience in peacebuilding and reconciliation is rooted in our Ignatian spirituality. Recognizing our fragility and sinfulness, we have discovered that we ourselves are forgiven and reconciled by the unconditional love of God. We also feel called by the Lord to work with Him at the service of the others by sharing our deepest experience of a loving God, who commits himself to human beings amidst a world of violence, and who himself chooses the path of sharing an alliance with human beings. We have felt invited by Christ to walk in solidarity with people crucified by violence and war, manifesting to them the unconditional compassion and tenderness of our God, crucified again with today’s victims. But we also have discovered that the Risen Christ is present among us, both consoling us and enabling us to become peacemakers and agents of reconciliation. Christ is among His people, leading us to commit ourselves to building contrasting communities in which peace, justice, and harmony are possible.

35. Our mission as Jesuits and as members of the Ignatian Family is that of proclaiming the “faith that does justice [...], engages other traditions in dialogue, [... and] evangelizes culture” (CG 34, D. 2, §21). But we cannot be loyal to this mission unless we face the challenges put to us by diverse types of violence, armed conflicts, and wars, which sometimes make it impossible to exercise our mission, and to pursue the agenda we are called to. Today’s conflicts block the necessary changes towards justice, complicate the conditions for a fruitful dialogue with other religious traditions, and generate tensions and dilemmas in a deeper process of inculturation. As a consequence, work towards peace becomes an essential element of our mission.



### **SOME STRATEGIC CHOICES**

36. During the process of our shared discernment, we perceived some directions that can orient our participation in conflict transformation towards sustainable peace. We are not seeking to settle all the concrete choices that will have to be made. Rather we want to point to some orientations or options that will help us move forward in a more committed way, more profoundly sharing in God's own strategy at the service of humanity amidst violence, which was shown to us in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Our deepest direction is one of hope, towards universal and holistic peace. We know that in this endeavor we will engage in a process of healing and of reconciliation, as we live in a world that by its violence, painfully contrasts with our visions of peace. In that sense the following are issues of discernment that will face members of the Jesuit Family involved in the service of peace amidst situations of violence. As discernment means "process", the following cannot be understood as clear cut positions.

### **AN OPTION FOR NON-VIOLENT STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE**

37. Although the idea of non-violence is complex and requires nuanced analysis in every concrete situation, it points to the desire to work for peace in ways that reflect the goal, i.e. justice and peace. We will have to be particularly careful not to become entrapped in logics of violence, of whatever type this violence may be. Structural violence may be particularly critical. Non-violent action should be understood from the point of view of longing for peace amidst situations of violence. It is certainly not a form of passivity in the face of injustice. In fact there may be times when proportional use of physical force may be required precisely to counter injustice or violence (cf. situations of oppression or of the massive violation of human rights, or of genocide). But we are called



to a process of learning in the line of what Pope John Paul II wrote in *Centesimus Annus*:  
“May people learn how to struggle for justice without violence.” (C. A., III, 23)

#### AN OPTION FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM VIOLENCE, WAR, AND INJUSTICE.

38. When struggling in the midst of violent situations towards sustainable peace, we face the question of where we stand and with whom we preferentially enter into alliance: who are our friends? This is the issue posed by our option for those who suffer violence, injustice and war. Those who suffer touch our hearts when we hear their cries and listen to their stories. Together with them and in a careful process of listening and discerning, we believe God will give us the grace to discover novel and creative ways to tackle and approach the violence we face together. We will be careful, in any situations of violence, not to fall prey to the temptations of easy victimization and all too easy demonization or polarization. Therefore, careful and precise analyses will be necessary.

#### AN OPTION FOR INCLUSIVE AND INTERDEPENDENT IDENTITIES

39. Violence, conflicts and wars often bring about issues of identity. The construction of identities is not an innocent activity in the context of violence, and we are convinced that in all concrete situations there is a need for a process of discernment towards the construction and elaboration of inclusive, interconnecting and interdependent identities, that in their multifaceted interactions promote the endeavor for peace. It will be particularly important not to engage in prejudices and stereotypes, nor to impose negative/inferior identities on others.



#### AN OPTION FOR WOMEN

40. In the context of contemporary conflicts preferential attention will be paid to those who most suffer the consequences of violence: women. We need to learn to see more deeply the potential they have for building sustainable peace. Children and elderly people also suffer disproportionately from war, and we should have special concern for their suffering on our ministries.

#### AN OPTION TO SUPPORT THREATENED CULTURES

41. Increasingly the role of cultures in conflict transformation and sustainable peace is emphasized. We have learned that indigenous and local people have in their traditions developed strategies for sustainable peace and conflict transformation that we tend to oversee. It will be important, therefore, to affirm, to support and even to defend the dignity and right to existence of local cultures, through building alliances that are conducive to mutual learning processes precisely in constructing sustainable peace.

#### AN OPTION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

42. Many conflicts and much violence today originate in corruption and bad governance, amidst lawlessness or the abuse of law. Corruption in post-conflict situations may undermine previous peace efforts. Therefore, we consider it an essential part of peace advocacy to pay attention to good governance and to the building of more effective national and international institutions, in the line of what John XXIII suggested in “Pacem in Terris”. Our emphasis is on just governance and on just law, on transparency and participation. This also implies that we will enter into alliance with those who build up civil society (nationally and internationally) at the critical service of peace worldwide and



as a counterforce to the abuses of law and corrupted governance. Again, this focus requires expertise and a deep spirituality of integrity, that involves the capacity to listen to the voices and the cries of those who suffer abuses, and a careful work of advocacy at an institutional level.

#### AN OPTION FOR GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

43. We have seen that globalization is an important factor when we try to analyze the realities of violence and peace today, and that it can be a source of new forms of violence and injustice or of heightening existing forms of violence and injustice. We have become aware that there is a need to promote global solidarity and development in solidarity (JPII). We feel challenged to further develop the growing global interconnectedness into a web of mutual responsibility and solidarity.

#### **INSTITUTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WORKSHOP**

##### PRINCIPAL EMPHASES EMERGING FROM THE WORKSHOP

1. Continue to develop an overall vision for Jesuit work in peacebuilding based on this final document of the Workshop. This could be done in local, regional, global, and sectoral groups.
2. Expand the use of the method the Workshop used in its approach to reflection and analysis on peace and social justice issues to other regions and issue-oriented groups linked with the Society of Jesus. Specifically, draw on:
  - the success of the method of prayerful group discernment concerning these issues followed by the Workshop, and



- a diverse gathering of Jesuits and laypeople, men and women, practitioners and academics, and diverse identities that was such a strong source of the Workshop's successful efforts to clarify the issues of conflict and peace today.
3. Stimulate and support new initiatives in developing a spirituality and theology for peacebuilding, as well as the contributions of liturgy, the arts, etc. in the peacebuilding area. Invite Jesuit universities, spirituality and retreat centers, and social centers to advance these goals collaboratively.
  4. Develop formation programs both for young Jesuits and for laywomen and men to advance their abilities to respond to the issues of conflict and peace as they develop their long-term plans for their life work.
  5. Invite Jesuit universities and their staff to develop the in-depth analyses needed to support effective advocacy for peacebuilding today. Find ways to encourage ongoing links between academics, practitioners, and agents of advocacy in the development of this analysis and to take advantage of the Society's potential in the field of education at all levels (from primary to university) in order to develop an educational model conducive to dialogue, peacebuilding and reconciliation..
  6. Finally, we recommend that, where necessary, institutional development of the works of the social apostolate be strengthened. Many of these works around the world need institutional strengthening to become more effective instruments of peace, especially around the following issues: economic sustainability; spiritual formation and sharing; decision making processes; training; and time allocation for networking. Adequate organizational development is also required to promote long-term lay partnership and participation.



**BUILDING OUR CAPACITIES.**

1. Find ways to link all sectors with JRS for information, analysis, advocacy, and education. As a central Jesuit initiative, JRS can serve as a point of insertion and provide a lens on issues of conflict and peace for many other Jesuit works.
2. Develop new patterns of linkage of the social apostolate with other Jesuit sectors as well as with non-Jesuit organizations, based on the model of synergy and interaction we have experienced in the Workshop.
3. Support emerging networks on these issues in the Assistancies, e.g. Africa, and between Assistancies, and help develop those new initiatives that seem appropriate.
4. Support and strengthen existing issue oriented networks, e.g. IJDN, AJAN, etc.
5. Strengthen existing advocacy agencies and develop appropriate new ones, regionally and globally, that will enable Jesuit networks to bring their analysis and insight to bear on policy issues more effectively.
6. Identify as early as possible young Jesuits for social ministry, and provide strong professional training in social analysis, as well as apprenticeship in social action, offering a similar opportunity to our lay partners.

**DEVELOP SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURES FOR THESE INITIATIVES.**

1. Develop an effective internet support system, that fosters both communication among Jesuits and others, including a directory of people working in the area, as well as educational and research resources. This can serve as the base for an e-education initiative.
2. Seek support from knowledgeable Jesuits and laypeople on how to pursue fundraising for these projects effectively, and seek to find new sources of financial support for specific projects.



## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORKSHOP

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