





# STUDIES

## in the Spirituality of Jesuits

BOOKS REVIEWED

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REVIEWS BY



**The Transformation  
of Jesuit Poverty**  
by  
**Joseph A. Tetlow, S.J.**

Published by the American Assistency Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality,  
especially for American Jesuits working out their *aggiornamento*  
in the spirit of Vatican Council II

## THE AMERICAN ASSISTANCY SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

A group of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States

The Seminar studies topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and communicates the results to the members of the provinces. This is done in the spirit of Vatican II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material which it publishes.

The Seminar focuses its direct attention on the life and work of the Jesuits of the United States. The issues treated may be common also to Jesuits of other regions, to other priests, religious, laity, men or women. Hence the *Studies*, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

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For Your Information . . .

In the next several issues of *Studies* I hope to describe how the Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality works and how it produces *Studies*.

The purposes of the Seminar and its current membership are on the inside front cover of *Studies*. They suggest some questions. How are Seminar members chosen? What do we do when we meet? How do we decide what to publish in *Studies*? To such questions, I hope to respond.

The previous issue of *Studies* introduced new members of the Seminar and noted that they had been "chosen by the Jesuit Conference Board from a list recommended by the Seminar itself." The Jesuit Conference is made up of the ten American provinces of the Society of Jesus; the ten provincial superiors and the President of the Conference are its board.

Every year the Seminar considers a very large preliminary list of possible future members. In studying "topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits," the Seminar wants to represent the variety of those Jesuits, their provinces, backgrounds, training, professional activities and interests. Because the Seminar is responsible for the publication of *Studies*, it must take great account of ability and willingness to write. In the normal course of events, each member, during his three years on the Seminar, will write one or more of the *Studies* and at each meeting he will serve as part of the collective editorship of the manuscripts under consideration. Mindful of these circumstances, the Seminar then selects ten or twelve good prospects for membership and discusses at some length that short list before voting on it. From the final list in order of preference, the provincials choose the replacements of those members who have completed their three year terms. In the next issue I shall describe what happens in a Seminar meeting.

In the September issue I said that this present issue would deal with "American Technology and Adult Commitment." Problems with that technology itself have caused a postponement of the article. But wait for its appearance soon; it will stimulate thought and imagination, as does our present article on the transformation of Jesuit poverty.

John W. Padberg, S.J.

Chairman: Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality

Editor: *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*

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# THE TRANSFORMATION OF JESUIT POVERTY

by

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## Introduction

If the Company of Jesus had earned a nickel for every word we have written during this century on our poverty, we could endow Mozambique--from agrarian reform to graduate education. Perhaps we should not feel bad about that: Franciscans began their controversy over poverty even before Francis's death, and despite the decrees of three popes and the inquisitorial burning of four friars, never settled it. And the early Jesuits, as George Ganss has pointed out, fretted over the poverty of our colleges from about 1570 through the 3rd, 4th and 5th General Congregations before finally drafting the solutions of the 6th in 1608.<sup>1</sup>

Besides, the reality of poverty has changed more than once since the preindustrial age, as has the way humankind thinks about poverty. And today so many people become poor in order to work against poverty for combinations of political, ideological, religious or humanitarian motives that we might be patient with our own confusion.

Actually, we are not. We feel vaguely vexed that questions of poverty seem neither to go away nor to get solved. They drift from commission to commission, document to document. Can we say what our poverty is? Can we keep a single vow of poverty in First, Second and Third Worlds? Laboring in city and migrant camp, university and village? Are we trying to identify a specifically Jesuit poverty, somehow different from all other religious' poverty?

Well, yes, to all of the above. The fact is, during the last ten years the Company of Jesus has grown very clear about poverty. We have not simplified it, exactly; we are faced with too many complex matters for that.

But we are clear about where we want to go with our poverty and how we are to get there.

To share that clarity, first of all, we need to remember some things about Inigo's experience and about the making of the Constitutions. Second, we need to focus on some points in the evolution of religious poverty from the Restoration in 1814 into the twentieth century. Then, third, we will be in a position to see what the 31st General Congregation tried to do about poverty; fourth, what the 32nd General Congregation accomplished; and, fifth, what the 33rd General Congregation confirmed. From all this, sixth, we can draw a set of definitions which allow us to think clearly about our poverty and which can serve as tools to enact our thoughts.

#### ONE: INIGO AND THE COMPANY OF JESUS

Inigo was born as the feudal world was dissolving and the age of exploration quickening. Most Europeans belonged to demesne or guild or clergy, and few died far from their birthplace. What poverty young Inigo experienced was caused by plague or poor harvest, which was felt by everyone alike--hidalgo, clerk and oaf. He saw enough poverty, but his Christian world felt poverty to be touched by the holy, "a state to be venerated as *such*, because it was Christ's state."<sup>2</sup>

Upon his conversion in this milieu, Inigo predictably yearned to live as a beggar like a Dominic or a Francis. He gave himself to that life and discovered that, stripped of all, he found the Lord and a self full of deep joy and purpose. With his long experience of beggary, he proved a tremendous reinforcement to friends in Paris whom he invited to his kind of apostolic life. He was a great gift to them, for human fear of poverty and powerlessness is among the most binding of fears.

The first companions conquered that fear and wanted nothing so much as to "preach in poverty" in the Holy Land as Jesus had.<sup>3</sup> Leaving Paris, they served at corporal and spiritual works of mercy in and around Venice, begging all the time. When their hope ended of getting to the Holy Land, they moved to Rome to discover what the Church might need of them. Even there, beginning to work as scholar-apostles, the "Masters of Paris" found beggary astonishingly fruitful.<sup>4</sup>

But in Rome--Inigo was approaching his fiftieth year--the Companions faced a poverty different from the largely rural poverty of their childhoods. European population, for one thing, had been notably increasing. Unattached journeymen replaced settled guildsmen even as peasants were being driven into towns and cities by new laws of enclosure. Bankers and middlemen (entrepreneurs) were swiftly wresting economic control from town fathers and landed gentry. Merchants got rich on dynastic wars (like the one Inigo had enjoyed) while the lower classes suffered the inflation of prices (in Spain, four times higher in 1600 than in 1500). Most relevant to the Jesuit beginnings, towns, merchants and churchmen began to see the importance of educating more people, and began to spend money on it.

As the Companions enlarged their apostolic scope, they began corporately to practice the nuanced, *tantum-quantum* attitude toward actual poverty that each had adopted through the Spiritual Exercises. Following the Standard of Christ, they reached for the highest "spiritual poverty," but prayerfully left to their Lord whether they were to live in actual poverty.<sup>5</sup> In this, they put into effect the active indifference of the Principle and Foundation, refusing to prefer "health to sickness, riches to poverty," or actual poverty to apostolic sufficiency.<sup>6</sup> They had chosen the indifference of the Third Class of Men, "wanting to rid themselves of the attachment" whether that meant keeping the ducats or giving them away--living in actual poverty or having some means of dependable support.<sup>7</sup>

The one thing they had set their faces against was avarice, a social disease enervating Church leadership. They feared it as lurking at the root of all evil and, in praying the Two Standards, had chosen what lies farthest from it--evangelical poverty.<sup>8</sup> Their personal preference emerged lucidly in the vows pronounced in 1543 on his twenty-second birthday by Peter Canisius. Ending his long retreat, he vowed before his director, Pierre Favre, to live in "actual poverty, except insofar and as long as the Superior of the Society...shall prohibit me from doing so."<sup>9</sup> That Superior had felt the joy of living as poor as Jesus, but he felt as keenly the urgency of Europe's religious need. With him, the Companions did not choose to live for the sake of poverty while doing apostolic work. They chose to do apostolic work in poverty.

What the Company Came to Own

The Companions perceived that "apostolic work" as part of a great enterprise, so they undertook great things. What they came to own because of what they undertook, in the context of poverty throughout Europe--not to mention India, Brazil, the Congo and the rest--is instructive for us. Inigo himself provided that the houses have a garden, when few but the wealthy in a town had one.<sup>10</sup> He himself spent the two weeks before the week of his death in a small country house near Santa Balbina that he had provided for students of the Roman College--the first Jesuit villa. At Inigo's death the Company had thirty-three colleges for externs, and just a dozen years later, cardinals and choirs attended the laying of the cornerstone of the Gesù, a prototype of hundreds of resplendent baroque churches built under Jesuit inspiration. By 1600, to leap ahead in history for a moment, Jesuits were reputed to be powerful people, and power has normally been connected with wealth. By 1700 their reputation shouted from the stones of 566 colleges in Europe and another 139 in the colonies.<sup>11</sup>

A digression here about those colleges during the sixteen and seventeen hundreds can make an important point about Jesuit poverty. In each college one or two dramas were written and staged by the Jesuits every year. The productions were commonly elaborate and even lavish, as was the one "magnifique et grandement variée et entrecoupée de diverses pyrrhiques et ballets" presented to Louis XIII at Avignon in 1622.<sup>12</sup> They were presented before princes, nobles, bishops, statesmen and magistrates, and one at least--directed by Robert Bellarmine--before a pope. On these Jesuit stages the art of ballet took its earliest classical shape, and the art of Calderon, Corneille, Lope de Vega and Molière found early formation.

All of this is worth noting in an essay on poverty not because the Jesuits owned such splendid resources, but because with their resources they created so splendidly.

This creativity--every kind of creativity--has been a mark of Jesuit apostolic poverty from the beginning. Jesuits living lives that a European had to consider wretched and woefully lacking in resources created in Paraguay a civic order full of music and sculpture. They put on golden earrings

and saffron tunics and "became" pandaraswamis in India. All over the opening world, they alphabetized esoteric languages and fashioned dictionaries and grammars. From everywhere they sent neat drawings of insects and plants to scientists back in Europe and often had their names enshrined, like Kamel's in the camellia. They wrote books that endure as classics in their languages, as Ricci's do in Chinese. Jesuits are hardly unique in all this, but in many epochs these men--who could walk away from everything they had achieved and go start over again, poor as some quidnunc from Nazareth--these men simply stand out as marvellously creative.

### Poverty Gets into the Constitutions

To return again to the earliest days: Even the first Jesuit works required such patronage, funds and political leverage as to make the poverty of a community of clerks regular immensely complex.<sup>13</sup> That complexity shows up in the Constitutions from the time Inigo began composing them. For instance, he wrote that we would own lands and buildings (technically, the mendicant orders did not), but must have no endowments for them--not even for the sacristy. However, should a benefactor set up some such endowment for the maintenance of our buildings, we could accept the revenue, "provided that...the Society is not in charge of this revenue."<sup>14</sup> The professed, of course, ought never "avail themselves of the fixed revenue" of a college, but if some college needed their services, they could live on the college's income, even if it was endowed.<sup>15</sup> From that and any income, however, all would exclude stipends and tuition.<sup>16</sup>

One matter shows the tensions lucidly. In an age when horses and mules carried princes, merchants, cardinals and soldiers, "no mount will be kept for any member of the Society." If one were, "the purpose should always be necessity and decorum, and in no way ostentation."<sup>17</sup> Forget a mustang; stick to the spavined nag.

The poverty of the Constitutions suited men who deliberately head off to do a job anticipating that they will find, by God's grace and gift, whatever resources they need. The consequences are astounding. Xavier, in total poverty, launches a mission that eventually thrives with the silk trade under license from the king. Matteo Ricci begs his way to China and

then lives in an elegant house in elegant clothing surrounded by art and artifact of great value. Jesuits working in the howling wilderness of Paraguay end up as authoritarian governors of prosperous settlements.

Yet these men stood always ready to *go*, money or no money. With steady purpose they sold off anything no longer necessary to their works "to relieve the penury of the poor of the Society or outside it."<sup>18</sup> Moreover, they suffered the recurrent shortages, fevers and plagues along with the common folk; they made sure of that by preferring to stay among the poor and sick wherever they went. Too, they walked wherever they went, an Alfonso Salmerón lugging on his back a ream of notes as he walked begging to another town.

Except at the very beginning, however, it seems that they did not spend much time begging. For in many places during Inigo's later years, changes in society due to corrosive religious confusions made "Alms for the love of God!" nearly a taunt. So Inigo wrote that individual Jesuits are to be "ready to beg" when they are told to or when "necessity requires it." He also called for a man or men to raise funds "by which the members of the Society may be supported." Superiors and directors were expected to be generous, and were, setting individuals to wonder about receiving from the rector money for the journey and bringing Inigo to write that they may.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, as if to make sure that each man had at least a taste of relying on God alone, he built into Jesuit training some times of actual begging, the "third experience" of novitiate and tertianship of going for a month on unfunded pilgrimage. Almost as though that did not work either, he made official the practice of begging for three days before vows.<sup>20</sup>

#### Transition: Two Hundred Years after "Regimini"

Even that month of begging seems not to have survived the Enlightenment. For by the end of the Company of Jesus' second century--to jump to the middle of the seventeen hundreds--poverty was no longer considered "holy poverty." It is true that Jesuits were still doing in poverty things they had done from the start: In 1740, for instance, some watched the town fathers of Arles in France build a fine new Jesuit college, while in the colleges of Spain, others led Sodalists to work among the sick and the

imprisoned.<sup>21</sup> And of course, they kept educating Filipino and Guarani, meeting martyrdom in Macao and La Louisianne and dying in epidemics in the foothills of the Andes.

But Europeans' attitudes towards poverty and the poor had shifted drastically. As the Enlightenment progressed, "holy poverty" came to sound like bilious humor, and the hordes of poor began to look less like God's chosen and more like failed human beings. Poor people were commonly jailed for defaulting on debts and in most cities were forbidden to beg. Poor laws were now designed to protect the economy against failures of the poor, not the poor against the failures of the economy. England's laws, to take an instance that comes close to home, emptied debtors' prisons onto the shores of Carolina and Georgia as a favor to herself, not to the debtors. Even there in the "new world," the poor did not win much from the Founding Fathers, who repudiated as ignoble in a republic the law that made a man swear that he was a believer before he could take office, but wrote into law that only those who owned considerable property would make trustworthy voters.

And just then, on August 16, 1773, the men still living as Jesuits discovered a fate common among the poor--capricious dispossession and (for many) death in destitution.

During the forty-one years of the Suppression, several developments made real poverty worse and concepts of it less humane. To list some important instances: In 1776, James Watt's improved steam engine made possible the "industrial city." That same year, Adam Smith argued suavisly that wages are a finite sum; anything taken from that sum and given to the poor harms them and the economy. As the century ended, Thomas Malthus went far beyond the preaching of his fellow divines--"The poor you have always with you"--to announce that poor people exist because of a law of nature. Their decimation by diseases and by starvation? The divine law for controlling population.

## TWO: THE RESTORED SOCIETY

When the Company was restored by Pius VII in 1814, the Industrial Revolution was well underway in Europe and had a good start in the New World, getting organized around the "factory." As that revolution unfolded in

the nineteenth century, women and children were allowed to drudge as long as fifteen hours a day. The urban poor huddled through a life filthy, damp, nasty-smelling and plagued by disease. At the same time, consumption of goods intensified in Europe and the New World: People ate exotic new foods like the potato, and foods newly common, like fish. They used new textile products such as cheap cotton cloth. (Some Jesuit rector somewhere decided for the first time that washable cotton underwear would suit a poor man.)

In this "era of good feelings," as contemporaries called the time after the Peace of Vienna and the Treaty of Ghent, Jesuit religious poverty developed along two lines. First, the 20th General Congregation reaffirmed in 1820 that all statutes and regulations regarding poverty had exactly the force they had had before the Suppression. It demanded strict observance of these norms, and uniformity in common life. It also declared "an alms, to which we have no right" all pensions and incomes that had been settled on Jesuits during the Suppression.<sup>22</sup>

Second, the practice of poverty grew more and more into an individual dependence on the superior, and less and less a matter of the community's dependence on alms. The fact seems to be that individual Jesuits had never had any trouble finding rich and powerful friends, as frequent regulations and censures in general congregations indicate.<sup>23</sup> But on the contrary, professed houses that lived completely on alms had found little support at any time in our history: Inigo himself had discovered that donors were readier to endow colleges than they were to support professed houses; when he died, he left behind forty-six colleges and two professed houses.<sup>24</sup> During the next two centuries, several general congregations urged provinces to found or to keep professed houses, all in terms that suggest little hope. The 20th General Congregation in 1820 summed up the judgment of all those that had faced the question since Inigo's time: Open a professed house? "*Res visa est in praesentibus circumstantiis difficillima*"--right now, it is practically unfeasible.<sup>25</sup>

These developments do not mean that Jesuits in nineteenth-century Europe or in the missions--including Maryland, Louisiana and Missouri--found the living easy. Everywhere Jesuits lived Spartan lives and worked like Trojans--the classic Jesuit existence. But so many accommodations had been



made that the vast preponderance of Jesuits were not living day to day on alms.

Of all accommodations in our poverty during the nineteenth century, perhaps the best example emerges from the early history of Jesuit education in the United States. As they opened their schools, Jesuits discovered that Americans did not much appreciate what they did not pay for. This proved serendipitous, since Jesuits had found no munificent nobles, landed gentry, prince-bishops or towns to fund their schools. Everything pointed to the need for tuition. So the Jesuits of St. Louis's young college, merely to keep their work going, requested that the Company receive a temporary papal dispensation from the explicit provision in the *Constitutions* forbidding tuition.<sup>26</sup> On January 13, 1833, they received the dispensation from Gregory XVI, who extended it also to the English and Irish Jesuits.<sup>27</sup> The accommodation was for the sake of running schools and made eminent sense. But the Jesuits--in last vows or as scholastics--were fed and housed from the tuition. We need to note that charging tuition was a special papal privilege--a far-reaching exemption from our own institute and an exception to our way of proceeding granted us by His Holiness--until the 31st General Congregation in 1965 recast the whole matter.

### The Twentieth Century

At the beginning of the twentieth century, while religious observed poverty as a privatized matter of dependence on superiors, the world was more and more seeing poverty as a most public matter. Many voices began arguing that poverty was caused and its causes could be eradicated. A Jane Addams of Chicago's Hull House scorned the defensive belief that the poor are simply the improvident and the lazy. Muckrakers like Upton Sinclair produced scalding exposes of the grim injustices grinding up the working classes. Social Gospellers like the Rev. George Rauschenbusch stung the conscience of Christian liberal capitalism. The poor themselves had become a turbulent political force through labor organizations and socialist movements such as the one that exploded on the world scene in the Russian Revolution in 1917.

Religious who vowed poverty--Jesuits included--began this century numbered among those favored by the established order, or at least not numbered among its victims. They were maneuvered into this by many historical forces, but that does not diminish the fact that they lived relatively privileged lives in many crucial matters such as housing, diet, health-care and education. As the century progressed, their religious poverty, in symbol and in truth, moved further and further away from the violent socioeconomic poverty that fueled revolution. No one chose that distance; no one could control the forces that effected it. Everyone who made any little decision contributed to the widening gulf.

Thus, while the century unfolded through world wars, Jesuits came to accept salaries as military chaplains and stipends as university fellows. We could hardly avoid bank accounts that paid dividends, and we were required by law to buy various kinds of insurance. We had to sign book and teaching contracts. To come to very recent decades, some found checking accounts necessary (we finally got the province treasurer as cosigner after a few of us died intestate, as it were); and some began using credit cards, which not even the Fuggers, then the greatest bankers in Europe, had enjoyed in Inigo's day.

#### About Poverty by Permission

How did we manage these changes in good conscience? Well, for the rank and file, the important thing was that every move was approved by superiors. Wherever funds came from or went to, we were not aware of damaging anomalies, simply because we lived a poverty of dependence on superiors and on the Company. By mid-century, we had learned from our novitiate study of *Miles Christi Jesu* "this rule of universal application" about poverty, that "our doubts...are solved by recourse to the advice of the Superior."<sup>28</sup>

During the first two-thirds of this century, in America at least, Jesuits lived a poverty real enough in our own minds and in the minds of the ordinary Catholic, who found incredibly edifying that a John LaFarge or a John Courtney Murray would ask permission to have toothpaste or a new clerical shirt. Yet, who did not also consider the source of toothpaste and shirt inexhaustible? It was true that Jesuit missionaries actually

lived on alms (rarely at the level of the natives); but most other Jesuits lived in large houses, and if those houses did not have fixed incomes, the men in them did not know about it. We were, in fact, kept in a paternalistic dark about the finances of communities and works.

That dark began to break as the Great Depression scoured the world and every Jesuit gained access to our laws on poverty as none before had had, in the *Epitome*. This "masterful compendium of four centuries of the Society's legislation," as John Padberg calls it, had been mandated by the 26th General Congregation in 1915, drawn up by Father General Ledochowski and approved by the 27th General Congregation in 1923.<sup>29</sup> In the compact little book "ad usum nostrorum tantum," each tertian highlighted pertinent citations from the new Code of Canon Law of 1917, from the *Constitutions*, and from the new *Collectio Decretorum*. Every formed Jesuit had his copy of the *Epitome* (he also carried with him by general permission a breviary and a Bible). Moreover, all Jesuits heard read out in the refectory letters about poverty from Fathers General Ledochowski and Janssens--long on regulation and detail, all as symbolizing the genuineness of our poverty--like those on smoking in 1916, on the use of radios in 1931, and on vacations in 1935.<sup>30</sup>

### Finding Another Kind of Real Poverty

But as the century progressed, the "legal thing" became less and less relevant to humankind's steadily more manifest poverty. Jesuits began to sense that how a man or a community got something was not as important as that they had it and what they did with it. As we began to see and almost feel the poverty plaguing the world, we felt our own poverty slipping away, transmogrifying into something not entirely real. Under Father Janssens, both the 29th General Congregation in 1946 and the 30th General Congregation in 1957 grappled with questions about poverty, most of them on the line between legal and experience-generated. The 29th Congregation, for instance, fretted about accepting payment for preaching retreats and about where our law allowed us to allocate Jesuits' book royalties. The 30th General Congregation worried whether we were honoring the vow not to relax poverty and wondered about the tuitions we were charging in our colleges.

Both congregations felt compelled to face these and other problems raised by twentieth-century economic and social developments, but neither felt equal to solving them. So each set up commissions of experts to report solutions to the following congregation. In this way a poverty commission of some kind became part of the Jesuit way of life for nearly half a century.

### THREE: THE THIRTY-FIRST GENERAL CONGREGATION

We must remember this: Jesuits trying to find a way of living poverty in the second half of this century were trying it in a new world. We had been heaved into the age of revolution, our men driven out of places such as Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Iraq, everything confiscated. We knew that six percent of the world's population consumed forty percent of its wealth. We were dazed by images of starvation in India and Africa and stunned to read about hunger in post-Eisenhower America. We began to resent that we were somehow identified with the middle class, which was somehow identified with colonial powers, which somehow snatched food out of starving mouths. Looking for leadership, we Jesuits elected as general a man who had barely escaped being atomized by an American bomb.

All such developments made it impossible for the bishops in the Vatican Council to stick with the courtly mindset of neoscholasticism. They also made it impossible for Jesuits to believe that getting permission for a color television or an electric typewriter ensured that having it did not violate poverty.

So the members of the 31st General Congregation assembled in early May of 1965. They met eight reports on poverty, pulled together from documents of the prior two congregations' commissions on poverty. They found in those piles of paper every kind of question from abstruse ones about the congregation's authority over our poverty to urgent ones about salaries and health insurance. Ultimately, having found enough of these problems still intractable, the members were to establish yet another commission. But they did not back away from hard decisions. On the contrary, "heartily desiring to open up the road," the 31st Congregation left Jesuits with great freedom to work on poverty, even where it touched on "the sub-

stantials" of the institute.<sup>31</sup>

### Opening the Way with Concrete Decisions

To begin with the most "substantial" issue of that kind, the congregation used its full power of interpreting the institute to declare that the professed Jesuit who vows not to relax our poverty vows one single thing: Not to grant a "stable income to professed houses and independent residences."<sup>32</sup> They thereby freed themselves and all Jesuits to consider a number of things that had been trammelled up in a great reverence for the wordings of our institute.

In that freedom, the congregation decreed that accepting Mass stipends and honoraria for spiritual ministries does not now violate the gratuity of our ministries. We ought not demand stipends (parishes need special norms), though we can require "legitimate recompense for travel and other expenses, including sustenance," when we go to do some ministry.<sup>33</sup> Neither, it decreed, does charging tuition violate our poverty--though our institute pressures us to charge none where possible and to keep trying to find ways to give a free education, which remains our aim.<sup>34</sup> Where foundations and funds are involved, we may accept the income from them not only for maintenance of our buildings, but even for operating costs and for living expenses.<sup>35</sup> The congregation mandated to Father General and another congregation some more ticklish questions about funds.

Finally, seizing a movement newly abroad in the Church, the congregation declared any salary or wage "a legitimate source of material goods."<sup>36</sup>

Overall, the 31st Congregation's choices breathed a fresh realism. The members recognized that religious poverty enhances human development by securing the necessities of life and ensuring leisure, whereas true socioeconomic poverty trashes the human spirit with a corrosive mixture of ignorance, sickness and helplessness.<sup>37</sup> Feeling keenly the inherent tensions, the members chose to reach for some kind of real poverty, expressing their hope in a single sentence: "The Society really intends to answer the demands of this real, not pretended, poverty."<sup>38</sup>

Part of that realism emerged as experimentalism--in a combination that made some among us wonder, in the pungent rhetoric we were then using

in these matters, whether the 31st Congregation had "sold the Society down the river." So, concerning poverty as concerning everything else it had to legislate on, the congregation declared that important changes "should not be decreed definitively without a previous experiment," unless for compelling reasons.<sup>39</sup> This experimentalism of the 31st Congregation is much broader than any single decree or decision, and marks a notable evolution from the more essentialist congregations of the Restored Society that laid greater weight on definitions and concepts.<sup>40</sup>

This congregation saw the need that "the letter of the norms be changed," and it changed what it could.<sup>41</sup> But that was just a start. For the congregation saw that real renewal and adaptation must also change "the forms of our poverty," the way we live it out, "as well as the juridical norms."<sup>42</sup> What would those forms, that lifestyle, look like? The 31st Congregation could not see very far ahead, but what it saw clearly it stated clearly.

### The Forms of Our Poverty and Vatican II

The congregation saw three elements clearly: Whatever norms and rules we follow, we must live lives somehow genuinely poor.<sup>43</sup> In that lifestyle of ours, a second element will also be constant--hard work. We must "resemble workers in the world," to use a phrase that rings like a manifesto. Our poverty will get its witness value from the fact that we work very hard for others' sakes and not for our personal profit. And here lies the third element: Our life must manifestly be lived for love of others, for sharing what we have and are. To miss the relevance of this is to misapprehend Jesuit poverty utterly.

These elements were as much as the congregation could say about our lifestyle. They were hardly snatched out of thin air, and in fact reflect the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council--unfolding as the 31st Congregation met--about religious life. This is important, because the Company of Jesus cannot define itself apart from the Church without falsifying itself.

Now, the council's commissions on the religious life rewrote its document four times, practically producing a new document each time. We may have forgotten how bitterly everyone had to struggle then with the basic

meaning of vowed religious life, and how everyone found poverty singularly difficult to define and legislate.<sup>44</sup> But the council gave a strong focus to these tasks by its own chosen focus. In the "Message to Humanity" it issued on October 20, 1962, nine days after its opening, the council intended that its own "concern swiftly focus first of all on those who are lowly, poor, and weak."<sup>45</sup>

Keeping to that chosen spirit, the document that the council almost unanimously approved brusquely wiped away centuries of "keeping the vow" of poverty. It declared: "Religious poverty requires more than limiting the use of possessions to the consent of superiors." Religious are somehow to be poor in fact, and not in spirit alone. The council opened the new vision of what it might mean to be poor in fact when it declared that religious are to think of themselves as "subject to the common law of labor." They themselves make "necessary provisions for their livelihood and undertakings." They are to share what they have with other less fortunate provinces or houses of their own community, and to contribute from their own resources "to the other needs of the Church and to the support of the poor."<sup>46</sup> After the council, religious could hardly think of their poverty without thinking of some kinds of sharing. For instance, new Jesuit "open house policies," far from being the social fads they sometimes seemed to be, were rather prompted by the Church's dawning convictions about voluntary poverty.

In any case, juxtaposing the decisions of the 31st Congregation and the decree of Vatican II dissipates the fear some Jesuits felt in the 1960s that the congregation had given excessive weight to secular concerns of a social and political nature. When the 31st Congregation discerned the signs of the times about poverty, it found the decisive signs within the Church itself.

#### Another Commission on Poverty

As did its two predecessors, the 31st Congregation set up a commission on poverty. It required the commission to produce "a schema of adaptation and renewal, and revision of our entire law concerning poverty."<sup>47</sup> The congregation was betting on the Un-Sisyphus Law: In time, somebody reaches the top of every mountain.

Its commission did reach the top, and in 1967 Father General Arrupe

published interim statutes on poverty.<sup>48</sup> Directed by the congregation, he asked from superiors and many others their opinions and reflections on these statutes.

#### FOUR: THE THIRTY-SECOND GENERAL CONGREGATION

During the decade between the 31st and the 32nd Congregation, the Vatican Council's emphases developed swiftly. A synod of bishops made it plain that true faith actively works for justice, and a papal pronouncement specified what faith and justice must mean to those who take the vow of poverty. In *Evangelica Testificatio*, published in June of 1971, Pope Paul VI contended that religious ought to be able to hear the cry of the poor better than anyone else. Their personal commitment should "bar religious from whatever would be a compromise with any form of social injustice" and drive them "to awaken consciences to the drama of misery."<sup>49</sup>

This courtly language might cover over the great change in the Church's official doctrine on poverty. The whole Church in Inigo's day valued poverty as a stable, established element in the order of the world; when a Christian felt it, he said "*Deus vult!*" Today, the Church wants rather to value poverty as a drama--a dynamic conflict liable to conscious, deliberate resolution; when a Christian feels or sees it, he is to say, "Humankind inflicts this and humankind can prevent it!" Poverty is no longer holy of itself, even though Jesus lived poor. Instead, in every kind of religious document: "Poverty is an evil. We must do everything we can to eradicate poverty."<sup>50</sup>

As such convictions spread abroad in the Church, a committee of experts gathered by Father Arrupe in 1970 studied the hundreds of responses to the experimental "Statutes on Poverty" of 1967. They summarized these responses in three reports published in 1972 and 1973, and in two booklets which the official Historical Preface of GC 32 asserts, "were meant to encourage reflection during the preparatory phase of the congregation" already scheduled for 1974.<sup>51</sup>

As provincial congregations prepared for the opening of the 32nd General Congregation, they sent to Rome nearly 250 postulates about poverty. These the General handed to a preparatory commission, which published still another document. By the time the delegates arrived in December of 1974,



they faced a sizable stack of material on poverty, the collected reflections from the entire Company of Jesus around the whole globe.<sup>52</sup>

### Document 12 on Poverty

Instructed by Vatican II and *Evangelica Testificatio*, the congregation made the primary context of our struggle with poverty the Church's "striving for a deeper understanding and new experiential knowledge of evangelical poverty." Instructed by the Spiritual Exercises, it rooted each individual's voluntary poverty in a sharing in Christ's kenosis, "the self-emptying of the very Son of God in the Incarnation," so that for each man "the principle and foundation of poverty is found in a love of the Word made flesh and crucified."<sup>53</sup>

Standing on these convictions, the congregation produced a document that does three things: First, it lays out the ascetical and pastoral considerations that moved it (Section A). Second, it returns to the practical matter of the "form" that our poverty might take (Section B). And third, it establishes new juridical structures. (Sections C through F).

The ascetical and pastoral considerations show a more vivid awareness of the world around us than emerges in the relatively low-key, in-house concerns of the 31st Congregation. Even the language has left home: All humankind now recognizes that we suffer massive, systemic poverty, a fiercely dehumanizing force. The rich--individuals and nations--have not been able to relate their own plenty to others' poverty. The poverty we see is not only material, but spiritual as well--a thing not truly recognized in past times--and we have to acknowledge that our consumerism has become a kind of practical atheism. This is how the Church, too, sees poverty today.

The conclusion for us Jesuits is plain. "Something of an evolution seems to have taken place: today, the primary import of religious poverty is found not only in an ascetic-moral perfection through the imitation of Christ poor, but also and more in the apostolic value of imitating Christ, forgetful of self in generous and ready service of all the abandoned."<sup>54</sup>

The congregation's development offers a striking instance of that deprivatization of religious experience explored by Donald Gelpi in an earlier issue of these *Studies*, "The Converting Jesuit."<sup>55</sup> For this congregation

actually lived through a sociopolitical conversion of its own, discovering that it could not find its own self apart from the kind of service it and the whole Company of Jesus is summoned to give today. Its statements rang with this creative tension: "There is no genuine conversion to the love of God without conversion to the love of neighbor and, therefore, to the demands of justice."<sup>56</sup> Then it invited all Jesuits to do what it found itself choosing to do--to take personal responsibility for the structures of poverty in the world and for the structured failures of our own corporate poverty. Full of conflicts and consolations, the 32nd General Congregation embodied an exciting promise: If we can realize our own way of being poor, we will thereby make our own personal call relevant to the human drama, not only giving prophetic witness against injustices in the world but also making an effective contribution to subverting the structures of poverty.

#### Again: The New Forms of Our Poverty

Is the promise feasible? What realistic forms can our poverty take, since "in a world of mass starvation, no one can lightly call himself poor." Call our first vow by some other name? No: Our vowed poverty "can and should have a meaning and message" even in this world.<sup>57</sup>

This congregation defined five points about the form our poverty can take everywhere in the world. First, we try to limit consumption, keeping as the standard of living in our houses "that of a family of slender means whose providers must work hard for its support." To which cohort of "the poor" do we assimilate our communities' lifestyle? The destitute? The middle class? Perhaps we hear a call to figure ourselves members of the laboring class.<sup>58</sup>

Second, a further definition: Our community lifestyle should be such that it will give every Jesuit "an unembarrassed access to the poor--his manner of living not being so startlingly in contrast with theirs that the contrast is shameful," to use Michael Buckley's words.<sup>59</sup>

Third, the only people who know what these first two principles mean are the Jesuits on the scene. Consequently, each Jesuit community must discern "the concrete exigencies of such a standard with their superior."<sup>60</sup>

Fourth, about the individual: Each man turns over to the community everything given to him or paid him, and receives from the community alone what he needs. There is a little more to it than that: Each man either willingly goes along with the community's lifestyle or is a drag on it.<sup>61</sup>

And finally, fifth, about all of us: Our own poverty--the sharing of our selves and all we possess--makes us a sign of faith's struggle for justice for all, since we are "clearly seen to be communities of charity and of concern for each other and all others." Can we hope that it is this simple? The theological connection between a man's vow of poverty and faith's struggle for justice is rooted in his God-inspired concern for others.<sup>62</sup>

These five points, because they have to accommodate socioeconomic realities in Dar-es-Salaam, the Bronx and Darjeeling, leave out definite detail. The congregation could give sharper detail to what it called "new structures of temporal administration," since they will frame the way Jesuits proceed all over the world.<sup>63</sup>

#### New Juridical Structures of Our Poverty

With its first change in structure, the congregation marked a new epoch. It noted Inigo's distinction between colleges on the one hand that could own things and have a fixed income, and on the other professed houses that could have neither. Then it asserted that a new, somewhat parallel distinction now helps more in keeping poverty: between apostolic institutes on the one hand--the college, the center, the retreat house--and on the other the communities that serve them. The congregation declared the "keystone of this reform" this distinction between the institute and the community, and it proves that as it works out the details of the distinction.<sup>64</sup>

Note clearly: This congregation did not start or allow an innovation--Jesuits living off their institutes' or works' incomes. Who could say in 1960 where Jesuit High's heating bill ended and the Jesuit community's started? No; the congregation clarified a fact of religious life that it found, put some order in it and declared that from its twentieth-century point of view the practice had not been mere abuse but a necessary adaptation to changing economies and religious mores. But the congregation also demanded of us that we find evangelical, apostolic and even ascetical poverty within this practice.

What had been a freedom we corporately had to take, the congregation transmutes into a responsibility we freely embrace together. (And in that, reveals a community going through sociopolitical conversion.)

### The Institute and the Community

Apostolic institutes, like colleges in the *Constitutions*, can have endowments or fixed incomes and can own in any legal way open to them. Communities, like the professed houses in the *Constitutions*, do not live directly on any fixed funds. Instead, they live more tentatively, from paycheck to paycheck as it were. In a sense, salaries are considered a parallel to alms, so that every community is to act as though it were a professed house with no right to its income.<sup>65</sup>

How will all this work? The community might legally own the institute or not, and the two may incorporate separately, whatever proves feasible and useful. But the community always keeps a separate set of books from those of the institute, clearly distinguishing its own resources from those of the institute.<sup>66</sup> Each community draws up a budget every year and submits it to the provincial. At the end of each year, if a community has any surplus, it distributes the funds. It gives them first to the institute or institutes in which the members work; but with provincial permission a community might share with other communities, the province or the whole society.<sup>67</sup> The community regularly shares its income with the province as a whole by contributing to several newly established funds that parallel the *Arca Seminarii*--one for retired and sick members (no name), one for establishing new works (*Arca Foundationum*) and one for supporting poorer institutes and a short list of specific works (*Arca Operum Apostolicorum*). And finally, each community is invited to save what it can in order to contribute to a fund (current or rolling; the money comes in and goes right back out) owned by the whole Company of Jesus for worldwide distribution by Father General.<sup>68</sup>

The congregation also laid out norms for the poverty of our apostolic institutes. Obviously, it meant us to keep control of our works, making certain that the works themselves--university, school, institute, magazine, social center--"avoid every manner of extravagance" in order to find ways to preach in poverty, which is to be "a character and mark" of all Jesuit

works.<sup>69</sup> Where it would help to preach in poverty, the provincial can clear legalities and get the general's approval to move endowments or surplus from one institute or work to another.<sup>70</sup>

Clearly, all of these definitions extensively changed our laws and our practices. For that and other reasons, the congregation called for a commission of *definitores* to draw up a new set of statutes on poverty, replacing those of September 15, 1967.<sup>71</sup> It made two recommendations about these statutes: first, that they should embody and promote social justice; and second, that they help communities reflect on their poverty. These two indicated where our poverty was heading in 1975, since by then we were all finding ways to put social justice into our statements of purposes and goals, and were about worn out with discussions about our houses' poverty.

#### FIVE: THE THIRTY-THIRD GENERAL CONGREGATION

The 33rd General Congregation enjoyed a double historical distinction. It accepted the first resignation of a general, and then it elected another general under the guidance of a papal delegate. In the glare of these two, its other achievements did not scintillate, though at least one of them may prove farther-reaching and longer-lasting.

For the 33rd Congregation also had the historical distinction of definitively approving a quite total *renovatio accommodata* of our way of living poverty. To achieve that, it had to respond to questions raised by Cardinal Jean Villot in his letter conveying the responses of Pope Paul VI to the work of the 32nd Congregation. The questions were these: Is the distinction between community and apostolic institute feasible and useful? Has Decree 12 made it very likely that Jesuits will abandon works that must be done gratuitously and turn to those that yield income? Has the 32nd General Congregation eroded Ignatian poverty?<sup>72</sup>

Before the congregation convened, provincial congregations had formally pondered the three questions and sent their reflections to Rome. A preparatory commission summarized the responses--results of the second formal, worldwide inquiry about our poverty since Vatican II--in preparation for the congregation.

The congregation itself responded to the questions in two ways. First,

in a brief section of its introductory decree, it confirmed the ascetical and pastoral foundations for poverty laid by the 31st and the 32nd Congregations.<sup>73</sup> Assaying its evidence from around the world, the congregation judged that the distinction between community and institute has helped us live poverty better. It did not note any evidence that we were abandoning ministries that pay little. The changes, therefore, have not subverted Ignatian poverty, though the Company remains far from full assimilation of the decrees and changes, and equally far from real "transformation of our personal and community lives [and] apostolic activity."<sup>74</sup>

Then, second, the congregation turned to juridical matters and answered the questions in a summary way. In a technical statement--Decree 2, On Poverty--striking for its brevity, it declared: The legislation and dispositions concerning poverty of the prior two congregations "fully respond to the demands of the poverty of our Institute in today's circumstances." The 32nd Congregation approved its final recasting of our law, Decree 12, experimentally. The 33rd Congregation approves it definitively.<sup>75</sup>

The congregation also declared that the *Statutes on Poverty* of September 8, 1976, as such, have the "authority of ordinations of Father General and in future may be reviewed when and insofar as may be opportune."<sup>76</sup>

Then the congregation did a thing only rarely granted to any human body to do: It dissolved a committee. No more experts; we are on our own.

#### A Community of Definitores

Here is the situation, then. The historical struggle to find a relevant, sign-valuable way to live vowed poverty now rests in our hands--in all of our hands. We are not on an uncharted battlefield, however; rather, we have devised both strategy and some definite tactics in union with the Church. A *précis* of some particulars:

Decree 18 of the 31st Congregation does these things: It looks for a definition of our poverty both in our recorded history (the Institute) and in the way we currently proceed (the institute). It limits the meaning of the vow not to relax poverty to the refusal to grant a stable income to professed houses. It declares that tuition, stipends and honoraria need not violate the gratuity of our ministries. It allows salaries. It con-

firms our belief that--contrary to our times' conviction--our poverty is a real poverty and relevant to the human condition. It commits us to preach in poverty.

Decree 12 of the 32nd Congregation does these things: It establishes a clear distinction between the community and the institute. It declares working hard integral to living poor. It establishes the community budget as a means of controlling consumption and of managing lifestyle. It places the responsibility of living a real poverty onto each community with its superior, who are to discern what a poor lifestyle means in its time and place. It mandates an annual distribution of surplus funds and indicates some priorities in recipients. And it declares unequivocally that our poverty, when it is genuine, puts us in solidarity with the poor and dispossessed.

*Statutes on Poverty and Related Matters*, 1976, collects our beliefs and current practice. The general principles are summarized in two sentences each phrase of which is given a brief paragraph of comment in Part I: "Evangelical poverty in the Society of Jesus should be apostolic and suited to our times; that is, sincere, hardworking, a sign of charity, and impelling to the service of the poor. It must be real and brotherly, always to be preserved and fostered in conversion of heart and in mutual support if the aspirations of the Society are to be realized."<sup>77</sup>

The statutes then move through every important topic, beginning with the individual's life and ending with general laws. Part II pictures the poverty of each man and Part III describes our common poverty in community, in apostolic work, in the province and in the Company of Jesus as a whole. An appendix covers strictly legal questions on renouncing ownership and administering successions and the like.

## SIX: CONCEPTS TO WORK WITH

The community that chooses to shape its own lifestyle has access to an intelligent, carefully crafted corporate strategy in these documents. But we are likely to have problems with vocabulary, since we do not find terms used in exactly the same sense each time they appear in the unfolding

strategy. We do find patterns in usage, however, and these might help.

### Voluntary Poverty and Socioeconomic Poverty

In this century, humankind perceives poverty as a "massive" and "de-humanizing" force, as the 32nd Congregation branded it.<sup>78</sup> The poor do not choose this socioeconomic poverty; they suffer it. Some Jesuits have felt this so keenly that they have not been able to see or value any other kind of poverty. They have found themselves in conflict, because as Horacio de la Costa pointed out, Jesuits are trying to eradicate socioeconomic poverty, not join it.<sup>79</sup>

Voluntary poverty can never be socioeconomic poverty precisely because it is voluntary. Attempts by Jesuits, singly or in community, to ape socioeconomic poverty have usually ended in confusion.

### Religious Poverty and Evangelical Poverty

This distinction names the evolution of attitudes about voluntary poverty. Religious poverty, as we mused earlier on, meant dependence on superiors, stress on personal virtue, and an atmosphere of legalism. We need to be careful here: Religious poverty commonly accompanied tremendous apostolic accomplishments; the frugal lives of several hundred thousand women created the American Catholic parochial school system. And yet those same women read as late as 1961 that "the primary immediate purpose of religious poverty is interior detachment from material things."<sup>80</sup> And Jesuit novices from 1948 on read August Coemans' list of the many important things poverty accomplished in a man's interior life, and his final addendum: "Poverty is of the highest importance *also* in connection with the apostolic end of our life."<sup>81</sup> "Religious poverty" functioned as a privatized value hidden within apostolic effectiveness.

Evangelical poverty, on the other hand, emerged as a public force in the lives of the Master and His disciples, plainly described in the Gospels (they were given sums of money; one was treasurer; their effectiveness did not depend on money; they spent the money to serve anyone in need). That gospel value was never utterly lost in the Church's life, but it calls now for "a new experiential knowledge" of being poor and newly evolved life-



styles responsive to the world's socioeconomic poverty.

Where religious poverty implied a withdrawing from the world and an exemption from wrestling with material needs, evangelical poverty implies the opposite: an embeddedness in the world and some kind of solidarity with everyone who has to wrestle with material needs, which can only mean with the laboring class and even with the destitute. Hence, the new knowledge cannot be merely expounded, and the new lifestyles cannot simply be legislated. Instead, they demand continuing conversion (*metanoia*) of each religious in his or her interior life and of all religious together in their common life.

Something needs to be said here. Jesuit documents of the 1930s and 1940s address questions of "religious" poverty; Jesuit documents since the 31st Congregation, questions of "evangelical" poverty. Their whole vocabularies sharply differ. This change goes so deep that older Jesuits--unless they can recall that they fervently desired *nudus nudum Jesum sequi* and that they did indeed make a vow like Canisius's to live personally poor--could claim that they have not vowed to live as Jesuits are now called to live. We are invited to a truly heart-shattering *metanoia* whose meaning has slowly unfolded. The 31st Congregation discoursed on "renewal" and "adaptation"--objective-sounding processes. The 32nd Congregation focused on individual conversion and opened the question of communal conversion, developing each with considerable sophistication in Decrees 2, 4, 6, 11 and 12. The 33rd Congregation named the years since the Vatican Council "an experience of grace and conversion for us as individuals and as a body." If we continue what we have begun under the Holy Spirit, we come to a genuine "transformation of our personal and community lives."<sup>82</sup>

#### Apostolic Poverty and Poverty as an Apostolate

This distinction concerns our work. More recent documents talk about "apostolic poverty" without adequately distinguishing it from evangelical poverty. The 31st Congregation makes something of a distinction when it draws the "criterion for the poverty of our life both from our apostolic end and from the principles of the Gospels."<sup>83</sup>

Under "apostolic poverty," the documents are actually handling three

distinct but interrelated dynamics: The way we live our vow of poverty takes shape from our apostolic purposes. Our institutes--our apostolic works themselves--give witness to Christian poverty of spirit. All who vow poverty undertake solidarity with the poor and are thereby committed to labor for justice.

Thinking of Jesuit apostolic poverty, we have to avoid a serious confusion. For some--for example, the Little Brothers of Jesus, Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity--poverty functions as their apostolate, which calls on them to live poor with the poorest of the poor, incarnating in their own poverty the enduring, nurturing love of Jesus Christ for the *anawim*. Their lives seem singularly beautiful to all, but all note that their lives do not touch the social structures that produce the unwilling *anawim*.

This is not Jesuit poverty. True, we have always among us many who feel an effective attraction to this poverty with the poorest; and if we live our whole tradition (institute), all the rest of us will always be learning from these men, as his companions learned from Inigo.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, we are constantly challenged, in an age of wordy manifestos and ambiguous legislation against poverty, to give what Father Arrupe called "the unarguable witness" of an austere lifestyle.<sup>85</sup> But our poverty does not require that all of us live poor among the poorest.

Instead, Jesuit poverty becomes apostolic poverty in more complex ways. The work we do takes us among all classes of people, and we are able to honor their mores and customs. We build, organize, fund, promote--collecting and dispersing considerable sums of money. We choose no work because it pays well; we refuse no work because it pays badly or not at all. In every work we choose, we hope and expect that the apostolic purpose include the erosion of unjust socioeconomic structures. Even in our community life, we design our practices of poverty so that they contribute in some humble way to changing those structures, perhaps only by giving witness that unbridled consumption is not a sine-qua-non of human happiness.<sup>86</sup> In these ways, we do not exactly choose apostolic work for the sake of poverty; as the Company of Jesus always has, we choose a poor lifestyle--*tantum-quantum*--for the sake of today's apostolic work.

### Apostolic Effectiveness and Apostolic Efficiency

Of all the distinctions, this one is the hardest to make and hold to since, as the 32nd Congregation said, effectiveness and efficiency are both good, "two values to be held in an on-going tension."<sup>87</sup> Perhaps we need only note that we do want to make a distinction between these two valuable goods. Efficiency means getting the apostolic task done with whatever means are useful or better. Effectiveness suggests that the means reflect the full apostolic intent. Hence, means that make us wealthy or make us appear wealthy might seem to the tough-minded very efficient. To us, they do not seem effective. We intend something tougher-minded, to "preach in poverty."

### Conclusion: The Transformation of Our Poverty

Can Jesuits' poverty be in some sense real? Does our vow mean something identifiable in First, Second, and Third Worlds? Have we a genuinely Jesuit poverty? Is poverty worth fighting for?

Our poverty can be real. It is not the socioeconomic poverty of any given place. But that it is not leaves us free to choose how we will make it real, and we choose to make it real by taking into our lifestyle some of the characteristics of the poor in the countries in which we live and work.

What characteristics? A few that are common to all poor: We work hard. Perhaps like many pressured laborers, we hold down a full-time job and something of a part-time job. (Teaching all week and doing supply on weekends pertains to our poverty.) We pay attention to a budgeted income and do not spend as though we had plenty of money. We actively share what we have, the way ordinary people really do.

A few characteristics we do not have in common with all the poor: Each of us puts into the common fund whatever he earns or is given, and each of us takes out of it what he thinks he needs--generally in full view of our community and always with the approval of the one of us who is superior at the time. Although quite commonly we need not, we live frugally so that we can share more. We keep no surplus but give it away before it accumulates very far.

And then there is the one big thing: Socioeconomically poor people do not have to figure out what it means to be poor. Voluntarily poor men have to, and no one can hope to do it on his own. So we all contribute to discussions on lifestyle our time and energies, as though these were of little market value--whereas, at most times in most of our lives, they are of great market value. One man noted that he had spent an hour and a half twice during one week on two discussions: once in the board room to approve a budget of nearly thirty million dollars; again in the community recreation room to discuss endlessly a surplus of a hundred twenty-five thousand dollars. It may be that this is our share of the poverty of organizing neighbors, who have to spend hundreds of person-hours to decide, for instance, where the city should put a fireplug.

Certainly each man is responsible for his own poverty, and just as certainly each of us is accountable to the rest of us and even to our lay colleagues.<sup>88</sup> But all of us together are responsible for our Jesuit poverty. Together we face some very tough questions.

Are we willing to submit to the humiliation of budget-keeping? Can we find a way of thinking about others' need of our surplus? Could my community grow aware of its image, and come to prefer some inconveniences and discomforts (say, cranky cars) to the public image of a secure lifestyle without want? Can we trust those among us who have the charisms of living poor and working for justice to lead the rest of us out of our diffidence or fear? What would change in our lifestyle were we, rich by God's gift with learning and experiences and connections, to figure ourselves members of the laboring class? Are the men in my community freed by our lifestyle to be truly creative?

Communities all face those questions. Each of us faces some more intimate ones: Do I really believe that Jesus lived poor? What difference did that make to him? Do I want that difference in my life?

There is the poverty that Jesuits all around the world can practice. And "practice" is the word--meaning to work at and to fumble along doing. For, as the 33rd Congregation pointed out, remembering its predecessor, "we who engage in this mission are sinners."<sup>89</sup> We keep attending to the summons to a lifelong *metanoia*, or we will hardly care about questions of poverty, let alone try to live their answers.

## ENDNOTES

## ABBREVIATIONS Used in These Notes

- Autobiography*      *The Autobiography of St. Ignatius Loyola with Related Documents.* Tr. J. F. O'Callaghan, edited with Introduction and Notes by John C. Olin. New York: Harper & Row, 1974 .
- Cons*                      *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus.* Translated with Introduction and Commentary, George E. Ganss, S.J. St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970.
- DocsGC31&32*          *The Historical Prefaces in Documents of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations of the Society of Jesus.* Ed. John W. Padberg, S.J. St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977.
- GC 31 or GC 32*      *Documents of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations.*
- GC 33*                      *Documents of the 33rd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus,* eds. Donald R. Campion, S.J., and Albert C. Louapre, S.J. St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1984.
- InstSJ*                      *Institutum Societatis Iesu.* 3 vols. Florence, 1892-1893.
- SpEx*                      *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.* Tr. Louis J. Puhl, S.J. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1951.

- 1      George E. Ganss, S.J., "On How to Become Evangelically Poor," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits VIII*, 2 & 3 (March & May 1976): 91. See also his article "The Origin of Jesuit Colleges for Externs and the Controversies about Their Poverty, 1539-1608," *Woodstock Letters XCI* (April 1962): 123-166; see especially pp. 144-147.
- 2      Pie-Raymond Regamey, O.P., *Poverty: An Essential Element in the Christian Life*, tr. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1950), p. 27.
- 3      *Autobiography*, p. 24. See also T. H. Clancy, S.J., *An Introduction to Jesuit Life: The Constitutions and History through 435 Years* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1976), pp. 12 and 36. Fr. Clancy identifies some developments in Inigo's religious ambitions about poverty that are suggestive.
- 4      See the first sketch of their way of life, the Formula of the Institute: "Since we have learned from experience that a life as far removed as possible from every taint of avarice and as close as possible to evangelical poverty is more joyful, more pure, and more

appropriate for the edification of neighbor...each and all shall vow perpetual poverty...." *Autobiography*, p. 108,

- 5 *SpEx*, [147]. In the colloquy, the exercitant pleads "to be received under His standard, first in the highest spiritual poverty, and should the Divine Majesty be pleased thereby, and deign to choose and accept me, even in actual poverty."
- 6 *SpEx*, [23].
- 7 *SpEx*, [155]. During his early conversion, Inigo cherished a practice of giving away in the evening anything that he had not used of what he had begged that day. In Paris he found that the practice hindered study and gave it up. So during the summers he begged what he lived on during the academic year. He also helped his companions with the money.
- 8 See Michael J. Buckley, S.J., "On Becoming Poor," in "On Becoming Poor: A Symposium on Evangelical Poverty," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* VIII, 2 & 3 (March & May 1976): 75-79, esp. p. 76. In St. Thomas's mind, fear of the Lord lays the ground for poverty of spirit. See Regamey, *Poverty*, pp. 123 ff.
- 9 James Brodrick, S.J., *Saint Peter Canisius*, (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1962), p. 37. Peter presently exercised his vow: He received an inheritance (his father died a newly wealthy entrepreneur) that Favre told him to spend to support his fellow novices and other poor scholars at the University of Cologne.
- 10 *Cons*, [563], for the garden; [561], for the villa. Note Inigo's social conscience in his statement that the gardener has no vow of poverty and is expected to make what profit he can out of the garden. Of his "civil" conscience: Deliberating with the first companions during 1539, Inigo had wished to modify even their ownership of buildings. They would hold them so loosely that the people who donated the buildings could take them back at any time they chose; and should they face a lawsuit over some possession, they would plead *nolo contendere*, one point that obliquely did make it into the *Constitutions* (*Cons*, [572]).
- 11 See William H. McCabe, S.J., *An Introduction to the Jesuit Theater*, ed. and published posthumously by Louis J. Oldani, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1983). Beginning on p. 269, he lists by assistancy and mission the Jesuit colleges extant in 1700.
- 12 McCabe, *Jesuit Theater*, p. 17.
- 13 P.-R. Regamey, O.P., in his *Poverty*, deals with Jesuit poverty by not mentioning it. Any Jesuit inclined to self-righteousness over that should check the work of Joseph de Guibert, S.J., who died in 1942. In his hundreds of magisterial pages on Jesuit spiritual doctrine,

he writes just three or four sparse paragraphs about Jesuit poverty, in no systematic treatment. *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, tr. William J. Young, S.J., ed. George E. Ganss, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1964).

- 14 *Cons*, [555-556]. Further: "No one of the Society ought to or may induce any person to establish perpetual alms for the houses or churches of the Society itself" (*Cons*, [564]). When this question first arose, the companions voted in the majority to accept the accommodation common to the mendicant orders: an endowment of some kind meant only for the upkeep of the church and the operation of the sacristy. In fact, they had such an endowment when the Company was given Santa Maria della Strada. But Inigo was not comfortable with this and he spent forty days, from February 2 to March 12 of 1544, on his election whether the Constitutions would permit such an endowment. He concluded against it. He recorded his progress in what is now called his "Spiritual Journal" or "Diary." See *St. Ignatius's Spiritual Journal*, tr. William J. Young, S.J. (Woodstock College Press, 1958), or *Commentaries on the Letters and Spiritual Diary of St. Ignatius Loyola--Plus the Autograph Text of the Spiritual Diary*, by Simon Decloux, S.J. (Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1980).
- 15 *Cons*, [556-557]. See Ganss's footnotes 13 through 15 to [4], pp. 78-79. The superior might send a professed father to a college or villa, to live on its secure income "for a time for the purpose of writing" (*Cons*, [558]). By the twentieth century this had become an anomaly: the House of Writers. It was not a college since no one taught, and not a professed house since it had a stable income.
- 16 *Cons*, [4, 478, 816].
- 17 *Cons*, [575-576].
- 18 *Cons*, [561-562]. See also the General Examen on going without money (*Cons*, [82]).
- 19 See *Cons*, [559]: "When the rector by means of some provisions for a journey helps someone...thus giving him an alms, it may be accepted." Being "ready to beg" and the plea "for the love of God" are in *Cons*, [569].
- 20 *Cons*, [67, 82].
- 21 F. X. Wernz., S.J., L. Schmitt, S.J., et, al., *Synopsis Historiae Societatis Jesu* (Louvain [Lovanii: Typis ad Sancti Alphonsi] 1950), columns 307 and 308.
- 22 *InstSJ*, GC XX, d. 7. These arrangements will meet the new Code of Canon Law a century further along.

- 23 See *InstSJ*, GC V, d. 14; GC VII, d. 20 and d. 22; GC VIII, d. 24; GC X, d. 18; and GC XVI, d. 16.
- 24 Ganss, "The Origin of Jesuit Colleges," p. 126.
- 25 *InstSJ*, GC XX, d. 13. Earlier congregations had insisted on fewer colleges and more professed houses: GC III, d. 17, in 1573, for instance, and GC VIII, d. 7, in 1645. Nor did the matter rest after GC XX; see GC XXII, d. 16, in 1853.
- 26 *Cons*, [478, 495].
- 27 Since this is mildly interesting to many of us, note that the hard-to-find text is in *Institutum Societatis Iesu* (Florence, 1892-1893), vol. I, "Litterae Apostolicae," p. 359. A single periodic sentence grants the privilege that unleashed tremendous educational creativity during 150 years.
- 28 Arthur Vermeersch, S.J., *Miles Christi Iesu*, tr. anon. (El Paso: Revista Catolica Press, [1914] 1951), p. 299. Vermeersch made a careful, intelligent statement of principles and norms on poverty in dependence. Unhappily, his ascetical principles promoted the abdication of the individual's personal responsibility and, as far as true Jesuit poverty is concerned, dampened generous creativity.
- 29 John W. Padberg, S.J., "The General Congregations of the Society of Jesus: A Brief Survey of Their History," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* VI, 1 & 2, (January & March 1974): 61. In some real sense, this and other such actions intensify the return to roots that is sometimes too simply attributed to Vatican II.
- 30 *Selected Writings of Father Ledochowski* (The American Assistancy of the Society of Jesus, Chicago, Loyola University, 1945), pp. 427, 432 and 440. On October 25, 1931, one year after the stock market collapsed, the general wrote a letter on sharing our goods during the Great Depression, in which two things are notable. First, that we do indeed have resources to help those who are worse victims of the Depression; and second, that all the members of communities ought to decide to what extent and how to help: "In this, let all, Superiors as well as subjects, plan together in a fraternal way" (p. 472).
- 31 GC 31:41 (Note that the figure after the colon refers to the heavy black marginal numbering of the documents). Here is the forthright opening sentence of Decree 18 on poverty: "The 31st General Congregation, having carefully considered the need of adaptation and renewal of the Institute in regard to poverty, has decreed by its own authority that it be undertaken according to the norms defined below" (GC 31:283).
- 32 GC 31:300.



- 33 GC 31:304. The history of Mass stipends parallels somewhat the history of tuition, beginning with a "faculty" granted by Leo XII in 1824, giving to the general the authority to allow men "cura animarum agentes"--in pastoral or parochial ministries--to accept Mass stipends.
- 34 GC 31:306.
- 35 GC 31:307. The congregation mandated an "Ordinance" giving "a more precise definition of the nature and purpose of some funds which are necessary for the financial life of the Society."
- 36 GC 31:301
- 37 The 31st Congregation, overall, stayed close to traditional social teaching, even in its rhetoric. Decree 32, The Social Apostolate, for instance, begins with a sentence from an instruction that Father General Janssens had written in 1949 (GC 31:569). Still, it sometimes used heightened language; for instance, two paragraphs later in that same decree, it noted "massive worldwide problems of malnutrition, illiteracy, underemployment, overpopulation." Frequently, what heightened rhetoric it used alludes to the Gospels or to Church documents; thus, it saw humanity lying "wounded and despoiled" and the Company of Jesuits called to have and to demonstrate "the love of the Good Samaritan" (GC 31:297); and again, the Company hears the criticism that our way of life estranges us "from the world and its struggles, while at the same time great multitudes are still compelled to live a life unworthy of the human person," as Vatican II declared in *Gaudium et Spes* (GC 31:12).
- 38 GC 31:293.
- 39 GC 31:54. This is actually a decision taken by the First General Congregation, Decree 16.
- 40 The entire second paragraph of the 31st Congregation's first decree reads this way: "The nature and the special grace of our vocation are to be discovered above all in the dynamic development of the Society from its earliest historical beginnings" (GC 31:2). The congregation's attitudes show up in this formal definition: "The term 'Institute of the Society' means both our way of living and working, and the written documents in which this way is authentically and legitimately proposed" (GC 31, d. 4:43).
- 41 GC 31:289.
- 42 GC 31:290.
- 43 The three qualities are listed in paragraph 290 and then developed in the following paragraphs, 291 through 295. See also the General Examen, chapter 4, paragraph 26 (*Cons*, [81]), and GC 30, d. 46, paragraph 4.

- 44 See Friedrich Wulf's historical and analytical commentary on "The Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life" in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 2, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler, S.J. (New York: Herder and Herder, [1967] 1968), pp. 301-370. His opening remark, p. 360, on the document's paragraph on poverty: "We are treated here to very scant theological comment upon evangelical poverty."
- 45 *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), p. 5.
- 46 These citations are from the Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life, paragraph 13 (*The Documents*, Abbott, pp. 475-476).
- 47 *GC 31:310*. The commission was made up of the general and four men elected by the congregation in distinct, secret ballots.
- 48 The statutes were promulgated on September 15. *Acta Romana Societatis Jesu XV* (1967): 60 ff.
- 49 Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelica Testificatio," June 29, 1971; *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 1971, pp. 497 ff. The citations are from paragraphs 17 and 20.
- 50 This appears in *Network* 14, 5 (September-October 1986): 6. It opens a series of "position and value statements" by the editors.
- 51 *DocsGC31&32*, p. 379.
- 52 Padberg remarks about the 32nd Congregation's treatment of poverty that "no longer time, in months and years, had been devoted to research, consultation, discussion, and debate throughout the Society on any other topic for the Congregation's decisions than on the topic of poverty." John W. Padberg, S.J., "The Society True to Itself: A Brief History of the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (December 2, 1974--March 7, 1975)," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits XV*, 3 & 4 (May & September 1983): 64.
- 53 *GC 32:257-258*.
- 54 *GC 32:260*.
- 55 Donald L. Gelpi, S.J., "The Converting Jesuit," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits XVIII*, 1 (January 1986): 28 ff.
- 56 *GC 32:77*. See also *GC 32:53*, 65, 85.
- 57 *GC 32:263* and 259.
- 58 *GC 32:263*.
- 59 Buckley, "On Becoming Poor," *Studies VIII* (1976): 78. See the strong

statement "Solidarity with the Poor," in Decree 4, Our Mission Today (GC 32:96-99),

60 GC 32:263.

61 GC 32:264. The individual gives something else, perhaps more difficult. "In the same way, by cheerfully and gratefully accepting the community's standard of living, each undertakes to support his brothers in their efforts to live and to love poverty" (GC 32:264).

62 GC 32:261. The theology implied here is explored by Johannes Metz in *Followers of Christ: The Religious Life and the Church*, tr. T. Linton (London and New York: Burns & Oates and Paulist Press, [1977] 1978, pp. 48-50.

63 GC 32:262.

64 GC 32:267.

65 See Clancy, *Introduction to Jesuit Life*, p. 255.

66 GC 32:276-288 details all of this.

67 A commentary on the distribution of surpluses (and on the document on poverty as a whole) was written by a member of the 31st and 32nd congregation who was in the latter chairman of the Commission on Poverty, Edward F. Sheridan, S.J.: "The Decree on Poverty," in "On Becoming Poor: A Symposium on Evangelical Poverty," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits VIII*, 2 & 3 (March & May 1976): 60-73.

68 The new funds are detailed in GC 32:297-299. The fund that father general gathers and distributes annually is the FACSI that we hear about just before Lent each year.

69 GC 32:290. See also the declaration in Decree 2, Jesuits Today, that "in binding us, the vows set us free," and of the first vow that we are made "free, by our vow of poverty, to share the life of the poor and to use whatever resources we may have not for our own security and comfort, but for service" (GC 32:30).

70 GC 32:291. Civil law determines to a large extent what we can do, of course. For instance, we could not "sell" St. Louis University and send the proceeds to Belize without going to jail. A provincial might, however, move some of the income from a profitable publishing venture to a mission or poor parish.

71 GC 32:295. This commission was to be constituted by the general himself, who is given the mandate "to have the Statutes revised according to the principles, prescriptions, and recommendations of this decree and to promulgate them as soon as possible on his own authority."

The congregation also mandated a review of the postulates to help draw up new statutes and to note anything that ought to be passed along to the next congregation (GC 32:296).

- 72 The questions were formulated in these terms by the Delegate, Father Paolo Dezza, in preparation for the provincial congregations. Curia Praepositi Generalis S.I., 82/18, "To Provincial Superiors of Provinces and Independent Vice-Provinces," December 31, 1982.
- 73 GC 33:25-29.
- 74 GC 33:27.
- 75 GC 33:56-59.
- 76 GC 33:59.
- 77 "Statutes on Poverty and Related Matters, Revised by Mandate of the 32nd General Congregation and Promulgated by V. Rev. Fr. General Pedro Arrupe, September 8, 1976." The pamphlet is published by the Jesuit Conference and the American Assistancy Seminar. The phrases are collected from pp. 5--12.
- 78 GC 32:259.
- 79 Horacio de la Costa, S.J., "A More Authentic Poverty," in "On Becoming Poor: A Symposium on Evangelical Poverty," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* VIII, 2 & 3 (March & May 1976): 45-59, esp. 55.
- 80 Joseph F. Gallen, S.J., "Questions and Answers," *Review for Religious*, vol. 20 (March 1961), p. 138. This opinion was not an unusual one. See also vol. 17 (January 1958), p. 61; and vol. 18 (January 1959), p. 51.
- 81 August Coemans, S.J., *Commentary on the Rules of the Society of Jesus*, tr. Matthew Germing, S.J. (St. Louis: Missouri Province Educational Institute, 1948), p. 191. Fr. Coemans did not italicize the "also"; neither did Fr. Germing.
- 82 GC 33:34 and 27.
- 83 GC 31:291.
- 84 These sentences are from Our Mission Today: "Relying on the unity we enjoy with one another in the Society and our opportunity to share in one another's experience, we must all acquire deeper sensitivity from those Jesuits who have chosen lives of closer approximation to the problems and aspirations of the deprived. Then we will learn to make our own their concerns as well as their preoccupations and their hopes. Only in this way will our solidarity with the poor gradually become a reality" (GC 32:98).

- 85 Father General Pedro Arrupe, S.J., "The Unarguable Witness of Austerity," *Origins*, vol. 7, 27 (December 22, 1977), pp. 418-423. This was an address to the Third Inter-American Congress of Religious, held in Montreal, November 20 to 27, 1977.
- 86 All around the world, Jesuits' personal and communal lives "should offer a striking contrast to the spirit of 'consumerism' that pervades so many societies" (*GC 33:29*). For an unusually rich and helpful treatment of this question, see John F. Kavanaugh, S.J., *Following Christ in a Consumer Society: The Spirituality of Cultural Resistance* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981).
- 87 *GC 32:265*. And in the 33rd Congregation's exposition of its pastoral and theological bases: "In our apostolic works, we should try to combine a desire for evangelical simplicity with the necessary concern for efficiency" (*GC 33:29*).
- 88 See Gelpi, "The Converting Jesuit," pp. 5-6 (see endnote 55 above).
- 89 *GC 33:35*. The 32nd Congregation had begun its conclusion with this sentence: "It is clear that admission of sin and true conversion of heart will help more toward a lived poverty than any revision of law" (*GC 32:269*).

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