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STUDIES

IN
THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

“One and the Same Vocation”

The Jesuit Brother, 1957 to the Present

A Critical Analysis

CHARLES J. JACKSON, S.J.

THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

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“ONE AND THE SAME VOCATION”
THE JESUIT BROTHER, 1957 TO THE PRESENT
A Critical Analysis

Charles J. Jackson, S.J.

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For your information . . .

First order of business: Please accept my apology for the late arrival of your copy of the September STUDIES. I hope that by the time you have received this November issue, you will already have received the one for September. Several knotty problems involving our mailing lists eluded a prompt solution. I especially regret the delay because Clem Petrik's essay, "Being Sent: A Personal Reflection on Jesuit Governance in Changing Times," was well-worth receiving and reading as soon as possible.

The present November issue, "One and the Same Vocation: The Jesuit Brother, 1957 to the Present," by Charles Jackson is a first—the first STUDIES essay to be written by a brother. I think you will find that it provides not only the careful and thought-provoking "critical analysis" that the subtitle promises but also, substantiating that analysis, a mine of information on the last four general congregations and the two international meetings that dealt with the life and work of the brothers of the Society of Jesus.

"What do you think of when you think of the Jesuits?" This is the title of an article in the February 1998 issue of *Jivan*, that excellent journal published by the Jesuit Conference of South Asia. The article in turn is an abridgement of a survey conducted in Taiwan last year, the results of which were published in the *China Province Newsletter*. What follows are some of the findings of that survey. With a thank-you to *Jivan* and its editor, Fr. Myron Pereira, and to the Jesuits of Taiwan, I borrow the material shamelessly from *Jivan*. I wonder how similar to or different from the Jesuits of Taiwan we Jesuits of the United States are and how similar or different would be the results of that survey if it were conducted here.

First, the report outlines our strengths: Jesuits have a strong sense of identity and of mission. As for identity, they are proud to be members of the Society of Jesus; this sense of belonging is a corporate strength. As for mission, the Society is consciously discerning about and aware of what its mission is or should be. Secondly, Jesuits are regarded as apostolically prepared, competent, and dedicated. They are in general respected as "men of prayer," the products of a sound theological and spiritual formation. Jesuits are thought to be qualified professionally, creative, and willing to offer their services in their apostolates with competence and generosity. They organize and plan things well. Third, they are strong in key apostolates (many of them similar to the apostolates in which Jesuits work in the United States), such as education, spiritual formation, theology, and the Spiritual Exercises. Next, Jesuits are reputedly good spiritual "formators." (I hate that word but I don't have any one single term to replace it.) Spiritual accompaniment, retreats, the Spiritual Exercises in daily life, and an attempt to discern what others are doing and why they are doing it greatly assist priests, religious, and lay people to grow in the spiritual life.

Next, our perceived limitations: A sense of sufficiency that is far too strong sometimes brings with it an attitude of superiority. This attitude is an obstacle to genuine partnership and cooperation with non-Jesuits. Jesuits are good at training leaders but poor at using them. Jesuits, while forming many competent Catholics, are often reluctant to give them positions of authority in Jesuit institutions. The Jesuits could be much more influential in an institution if their role were supportive and spiritual, rather than authoritative. Because many Jesuits have a strong personality, that very quality can tend to an individualism that makes collaboration at least difficult if not at times almost impossible. They may be very polite, but they do not sufficiently consider the viewpoints of their partners and the difficulties they encounter. Jesuits sometimes seem lacking in human warmth. They are very rational people, but it is difficult for them to share their personal inner experiences. There is something in the attitude of Jesuits that appears to be voluntarism, in the sense of acting through sheer willpower. While that may simply be their way of marshaling all their resources for the work of God, it sometimes loses its image of love. On key social issues Jesuits are often out of touch and not concerned enough about society and politics. Jesuits are high-level intellectuals and do not have experience of and do not understand the concrete lives of ordinary people. The strong structure of the Society and its giant establishments limit its flexibility and its alertness to respond to the actual needs of society at large. Jesuits have an insufficient "corporate" commitment to the poor and less fortunate people. What some Jesuits do in this respect as individuals is not enough. And, at the end, Jesuits persist in directing works for too long, even when age has diminished their capabilities.

Hopes for the future: That Jesuits develop a cooperative work style. To have a "Jesuit agenda" is not enough, but the sharing of common goals and common resources with others for the fulfillment of those goals is important for the future. Jesuits ought to be ready to renounce a certain excessive zeal for our "Jesuit identity" when it becomes an obstacle for collaboration with others. Working with others when Jesuits are in the same field with them is urgently necessary, for example, in the ecumenical apostolate. Can Jesuits do more to share their charism with others in the Church, imparting more of their vision and spirituality, the treasures of their formation and their Ignatian tradition? Can Jesuits be far more hospitable both individually and in their communities? Finally, that future includes the hope that Jesuits will be, on the one hand, men with a down-to-earth spirituality, nourished by the human aspects of the actual life of society at large, and, on the other hand, men of radical commitment to the living God.

Do we Jesuits in the United States recognize something of ourselves in these comments on the Jesuits taken from the survey in Taiwan?

John W. Padberg, S.J.
Editor

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“ONE AND THE SAME VOCATION”
THE JESUIT BROTHER, 1957 TO THE PRESENT
A Critical Analysis

Introduction

This paper began in me many years ago. Although it was written in its entirety during this past year, it is the product of years of reflection on the meaning of my own vocation and, for at least the past five years, on that of all Jesuit brothers. The past forty years have witnessed dramatic changes in the brother's vocation, both in its lived experience and in how it is understood. In a sense, my own Jesuit life exemplifies these changes—a life that began as a printer, carpenter, and cook, and then moved on to include undergraduate and graduate studies in computer science, high-school teaching and coaching, and province-, assistancy-, and Society-level administration. This paper documents a number of events that have played pivotal roles in bringing about these changes. Without denying the importance of legislated structural reform, this paper will demonstrate that the Society's "brother legislation" was often a response to and an affirmation of social changes that were already taking place. In documenting these events I have tried to present them in the context in which they occurred, point out their accomplishments, and assess their meaning. I felt the events themselves, however, were of primary importance and have made every attempt to allow them to speak for themselves.

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1. General Congregation 30

The story begins in September 1957. Although this writer would not enter the Society for three more years, this was largely the Society he entered. A great majority of its membership was centered in western Europe and North America: the five provinces of Italy had over 1,900 members, Spain over 4,700, and the United States over 8,300. There were 33,732 Jesuits worldwide, 5,782 of whom were brothers.

The Thirtieth General Congregation began on September 6, 1957. Like two congregations since that time, it had been convened, not to elect a new superior general, but rather to deal with matters of major importance for the Society. Although Pope John XXIII's *aggiornamento* would not become operative for more than five years, it was clear that the congregation had been convened to assess and respond to the changing world in which the Society found itself. Its work would touch upon a wide variety of topics, such as the spiritual life, graduate studies, the vows, our apostolic works, formation, fostering a worldwide spirit, and governance. Three of its decrees would deal explicitly with the brother.

Though the *Constitutions* describe in some detail the brother's vocation and mission, other legislation of the Society pertaining to the brother was to be found summarized in two works: the "Rules of the

Coadjutor Brothers," with its emphasis on interior dispositions and the passive virtues, and the *Collectio decretorum*, a compilation and condensation of the statutes of earlier general congregations. This latter work described the brother in greater detail. The novice brother was to acquire no more literary education than he had when he entered, though he should be taught to read and write and do basic arithmetic if he did not already have these skills. The

The Thirtieth General Congregation was remarkably innovative in its understanding of the brother and his role in the Society.

brother was encouraged to develop a zeal for poverty and humility and to show deference toward others; his clothing was to be such as to distinguish him both from laymen and from our priests. Superiors were to demonstrate a paternal diligence toward the brother, guide him, safeguard him from dangers, and assure that he received points for his morning meditation. And finally, the other members of the Society were to treat the brother with due love and reverence.¹

¹ GC 27, *Collected Decrees*, 42-48.

GC 30 proved particularly solicitous about the brother. It liberalized his formation by rescinding the ban on his acquiring more learning than he had upon entrance and directing Fr. General to revise the rules for brothers. It mandated a modified tertian program and a brother’s juniorate program to provide instruction not only in skills pertaining to his office, but also in culture, the humanities, the history of the Society, and Christian teaching.²

Although many post-Vatican II Jesuits often ignore the work of general congregations prior to GC 31, GC 30 was remarkably innovative in its understanding of the brother and his role in the Society. Its decrees on the brother projected a breadth of vision that represented a radical departure from earlier legislation.

It seems important to point out, however, that the congregation’s “brother legislation” was not so much “visionary” as it was a recognition that the subject matter of the legislation—the brother himself—had changed. Education had become widespread. Literacy was increasingly being taken for granted. Two great wars had broken down the insular existence under which many people had lived: the rural, agrarian lifestyle was giving way to one that was more urban and diversified, and the rigidly defined, class-structured society of the past was giving way to one that was increasingly egalitarian. Moreover, the brother of the 1950s brought skills that were unimagined fifty years earlier. No longer could one justify ignorance in the name of “holy simplicity and humble service.”³ Although virtually no hard data exist with which to compare and contrast the brother of the 1950s with his counterpart of fifty years earlier, they were vastly different. This was a foreshadowing of a trend that was going to continue and would prove to be an ongoing challenge to the leadership of the Society: both the men entering the Society as brothers and the activities in which they would be employed would continue to change.

A study of the Society’s legislation during this past century would reveal attention given to topics of passing interest as well as to those central to the Society’s mission and self-understanding. It would also highlight the Society’s hopes or concerns, many of which have resisted simple solutions and are with us today. Certainly among the latter is the “problem” of the brother—a problem with many facets, one of the most troubling of which is that his numbers in the Society continue to decline.

² GC 30, d. 13, nos. 2, 4; deocrs. 41, 42; these texts can be found in John W. Padberg et al., eds., *For Matters of Greater Moment: The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations: A Brief History and a Translation of Their Decrees* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994).

³ *Rules for the Coadjutor Brothers*, no. 15.

In 1900 there were 15,073 Jesuits, of whom 3,944, or 26.2 percent, were brothers. By the mid-1930s the number of Jesuits had soared to 24,732, of whom 5,216, or 21.0 percent, were brothers. Although the number of brothers had increased by almost 1,300, their percentage in the total membership of the Society had dramatically declined. By the mid-1950s the number of Jesuits had again risen to 32,899, of whom 5,637, or 17.1 percent, were brothers. Once again, while the number of brothers had increased, their percentage in the total membership continued to decline. It was too early to call this a trend, yet the overall decline in vocations that would begin in the mid-1960s would affect the brothers the most seriously of all.

2. General Congregation 31

On October 5, 1964, after having served as superior general for eighteen years, Fr. John Baptist Janssens died. Five weeks later Fr. John Swain, the vicar general, summoned GC 31 to elect his successor. The congregation began on May 7, 1965. Just fifteen days later it elected Fr.

The whole life of a brother must be called apostolic.

Pedro Arrupe superior general, thus completing its most immediate task. The delegates now faced a responsibility far more challenging: Vatican Council II was about to start its fourth and final session, and the promptings of its *aggiornamento* were beginning to pervade the Church. Over 1,900 *postulata* had been submitted to the con-

gregation, reflecting the immense expectations of the entire Society. When the congregation ended a year and a half later, after a near-record 141 days, it had produced sweeping legislation touching upon almost every aspect of Jesuit life and mission—the Institute, formation, religious life, the apostolate, governance.⁴

⁴ The longest was GC 8 (November 21, 1645–April 14, 1646), which lasted 145 days. This congregation, along with its predecessor, GC 7 (November 5, 1615–January 26, 1616), had its part to play in a very painful chapter in the Society's history—the dispute over the brothers' use of the biretta. This sad story ultimately involved “the brothers, 8 general congregations, four popes, countless provincials, one pontifical brief, and an attempt to recur to the King of Spain, Philip III” (Antonio Cabezas, “A New Age for the Brothers,” *Woodstock Letters* 95, no. 3 [1966]: 278). At stake was the right of the brothers to wear the biretta: the priests saw it as a distinctive symbol of their priesthood and scholarship, the brothers as symbolic of their religious consecration. In the end, GC 7 forbade the brothers to use the biretta and added that not even the general could dispense from this prohibition (GC 7, d. 24, no. 2). GC 8, after a long discussion followed by a secret ballot, supported this decision (GC 8, d. 21). The brothers saw this episode as a

Through all the documents of GC 31 runs a common thread: the character of the Society of Jesus, a group of men called to union with Christ in his redeeming mission, is essentially apostolic.⁵ The influence of this insight, first realized by St. Ignatius and his companions in the experience of the Spiritual Exercises, is pervasive. The documents of the congregation, solidly based on the foundational documents of the Society, evoke a heightened awareness of the roots of Jesuit life and a rediscovery of the Ignatian charism.⁶ This insight is vital to their understanding, and is particularly vital to understanding the document on the brother.

Almost eighty *postulata* had been submitted on the topic of the brother, forty-one by provincial congregations. In spite of widespread agreement on the issues, the delegates were reluctant to rush the document to a vote during the first session. They felt that a topic of such importance needed time to mature. The document that was ultimately passed during the final days of the congregation reflected all the concerns that had been touched upon during the first session—with one important addition: “[T]he whole life of a brother must be called apostolic.”⁷ This seemingly insignificant addition represented a dramatic paradigm shift in the legislation of the Society, and ultimately provided the justification for everything that followed in the document. The result of this legislation was that the brother had finally been returned to his rightful place in the mainstream of the Society’s life. He was, first and foremost, a *Jesuit*.

Eight years earlier GC 30 had responded to a changing world with its remarkably innovative “brother legislation.” In a sense, GC 31 could be perceived as merely continuing this initiative. In its document on the brother it had, like its predecessor, responded to a changing world. Yet the world to which GC 31 responded was not the world outside but the world

terrible humiliation (Cabezas, *New Age*, 280).

⁵ Since GC 31 the terms “document” and “decree” have been used somewhat interchangeably in reference to the legislation of a general congregation. Although all such legislation is technically a “decree,” the legislation of GC 31 was written with a secondary purpose in mind. The decrees were meant to be *read*—to be read and pondered and reread and taken to heart—by *all* Jesuits. In adopting the scriptural and pastoral language of the decrees of the Vatican Council, GC 31 established a practice that has been followed ever since by subsequent congregations. Thus, the decrees of these congregations are commonly referred to as “documents.”

⁶ William V. Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1972), 509.

⁷ James J. Jurich, ed., “The 31st General Congregation: The First Session,” *Woodstock Letters* 95, no. 1 (1966): 60f. GC 31, d. 7, no. 2.

within. In rediscovering the Ignatian charism, it reaffirmed the centrality of “mission” in the life of *all* Jesuits.

The brother was now understood as sharing with the priest “one and the same vocation” as a Jesuit.⁸ His activity in the Society was to be determined by the same principles that define the apostolic service of all Jesuits—the greater service of God and the universal good. He could be given administrative positions or any other task for which he had a God-given talent and in which he could be of assistance and example “for the help of souls.” His formation and education were to include spiritual, doctrinal, and technical training, in order that he might better serve the Society in its mission. The brother would no longer be simply a support person, but would increasingly be an active participant in the apostolic mission of the Society. Such a change would dramatically advance his communal and apostolic integration into the Society.⁹

All previous general congregations had confined their “brother legislation” to one or two decrees that dealt exclusively with that subject. Although GC 31 produced a decree on brothers, ultimately its “brother legislation” was spread throughout the work of the congregation, in the decrees on spiritual formation, religious life, community life, the priestly apostolate, the education apostolate, province congregations, ecumenism, and the interprovincial Roman houses.¹⁰ Such a broad distribution reflected the congregation’s desire that the brother experience full participation in the Society and be fully integrated into the community’s social, liturgical, and apostolic life.¹¹ The novitiate experience of novice brothers and scholastic novices was to foster a suitable sharing of life and work to promote a mutual appreciation of their respective vocations.¹² Every social distinction

⁸ GC 31, d. 7, no. 1.

⁹ The increasingly active participation of the brother in the Society’s apostolic mission would also affect the terminology used to describe him. It is interesting to note that the term “coadjutor” or “temporal coadjutor” is never used in the “brother document” (decree 7) of GC 31. In fact, the term “temporal coadjutor” appears only three times in the entire body of legislation, each time being used in a formal or juridical sense (GC 31, d. 5, no. 2; d. 40, nos. 2, 4). This established a practice that was followed by subsequent congregations. In 1970 the World Congress of Brothers perceived the term to be universally objectionable and recommended that its use be suppressed. It seems, however, that this was more a reaction against its pejorative use than against its Ignatian imagery. Twenty-five years later, however, GC 34, recognizing that the term “temporal coadjutor” was no longer in common use, abolished it (GC 34, d. 7, no. 12).

¹⁰ GC 31, deocrs. 8, 13, 19, 23, 28, 40, 26, 31.

¹¹ GC 31, d. 7, no. 5.

¹² GC 31, d. 8, no. 18.

in community life (including separate recreation rooms and tables in the dining room) was to be avoided. Common household chores were to be shared among all the members of the community. Brothers could now be appointed house or province consultors or delegates to province congregations.¹³

“[T]he whole life of a brother must be called apostolic.”¹⁴ This statement reflected a changed understanding of the brother’s vocation and significantly affected the manner in which he would live his life. One has to wonder, however, to what extent the degree affected the brother himself or his self-understanding as a Jesuit. A skilled brother craftsman might have toiled happily for years in the semicontemplative “hidden life” existence in which he had been formed. From one perspective, this brother’s life was already apostolic, but what meaning did these words have for him? What new understanding or new appreciation of his vocation did they impart? Although it would undoubtedly be important that he continue his work as a skilled craftsman, it would be equally important that he avail himself of the opportunity to grow in awareness and appreciation of the apostolic life he shared with all Jesuits.

Somewhat related to this was the directive that “every social distinction in community life” was to be avoided, resulting in the disappearance of the brothers’ tables in the dining room and the brothers’ recreation rooms.¹⁵ Perhaps many brothers welcomed such a change and others grew to accept it. Yet this was a radical social change for which many, priests and brothers alike, were unprepared. From one perspective, it is foolish to make an issue of a situation prevailing over thirty years ago. One would have to wonder, however, how many brothers, now that their support structures were taken from them, simply retreated to the fringe of the community and never experienced the integration the document intended.

“. . . [I]t was of the greatest moment . . . that all members of the Society, even at the cost of a *complete change of mind*, . . . may together and in the spirit of our founder dedicate themselves totally to the mission of the Church.”¹⁶ At first glance, it might seem that the subject of this “complete change of mind” should have been the *priests*. It could certainly be said that many priests were in need of such a change. The document, however, addressed this passage to “*all* members of the Society.” In all honesty, many

¹³ GC 31, d. 7, no. 6; d. 19, no. 7; d. 40, nos. 2, 4.

¹⁴ GC 31, d. 7, no. 2.

¹⁵ GC 31, d. 7, no. 6.

¹⁶ GC 31, d. 7, no. 1 (emphasis added).

brothers shared this need for a “complete change of mind.” The decree would break down old structures and attempt to create new ones in their place. It would also attempt to replace old misunderstandings and prejudices with an atmosphere of understanding and openness. Some of this change could be legislated and some of it could not. Ultimately, it would happen only if Jesuits, perhaps through a “complete change of mind,” became active participants in the process to make it happen. If there were any weakness in this document—and one would be reluctant to say there was—it would be its failure to engage the brothers themselves in this process. The document did much to foster the brother’s *apostolic* integration into the larger Society; his *communal* integration, however, was another matter and could not be so easily accomplished. Ultimately, it would require a change of mind on the part of both priests *and* brothers.

The document began and ended on the theme of identity. This was a topic that was to occupy the minds of Jesuits for a long time to come: What did it mean to be a Jesuit, a Jesuit priest, a Jesuit brother in today’s changing world? And the very change that made the answer so elusive provided the impetus to pose the question. As is the case with all questions of identity, the answer would be a blend of the timeless essentials with the time-bound lived expressions of those essentials. The answer, like the world and the brother himself, would continue to change and evolve. Ultimately, the brother’s identity would be both discovered and created.

3. World Congress of Brothers

The “brother legislation” of GC 31 would have to rank among the most significant bodies of legislation ever issued by a congregation. It provided a model in its assessment of the situation, its understanding of the foundational charism of the Society, its widespread consultation, its effective response to the needs of the time and of the Society, and its decision to make the implementation of its decrees the responsibility of all Jesuits. It was a remarkable beginning. In all honesty, however, it was only a beginning. The legislation introduced not only a new “way of proceeding” for the brother but a new understanding of who he was and what he was called to be. The structural changes were going to take time, and the social changes were going to take all of that and much more. The congregation, however, recognized its limitations. It directed Fr. General to establish a commission to assist him in directing the implementation of the decree.

Within months after the congregation concluded, Fr. Arrupe established this commission of experts. Its task was to propose a theology of the brother’s vocation, the practical applications that would flow from it,

and guidelines for the brother's formation.¹⁷ Specifically, two points needed to be clarified: the meaning and implications of the brother's "enjoying one and the same [Jesuit] vocation apart from priesthood," and his having "a full share in the special apostolic nature of the Society." The commission quickly recognized the need for broader consultation. Fr. Arrupe responded by mandating the establishment throughout the Society of province- and assistancy-level commissions in which the brothers themselves would play a large role. Within the year, recognizing the value of such consultation, he proposed a general meeting of brothers, and nine months later, on September 26, 1969, announced that the World Congress of Brothers would meet May 20–30, 1970, at Villa Cavalletti near Rome.¹⁸

The meeting was unique in the history of the Society of Jesus.¹⁹ Never before had brothers from all over the world been asked to gather to evaluate the Society's legislation and offer their opinions and recommendations to a superior general. Although the original mandate of the World Congress was simply to evaluate the results of Fr. General's commission of experts, the delegates spontaneously moved well beyond that, eventually formulating thirty-nine recommendations on almost every aspect of the brother's life.²⁰

This was a topic that was to occupy the minds of Jesuits for a long time to come: What did it mean to be a Jesuit, a Jesuit priest, a Jesuit brother in today's changing world?

¹⁷ GC 31, d. 7, nos. 1, 2, 8. The central commission comprised nine priests, five of whom had served on the "brother's commission" during GC 31. They were later joined by twelve brothers, representatives of each of the eleven assistancies and of the international Roman houses. This latter group served as the preparatory commission for the World Congress of Brothers.

¹⁸ *Acta Romana* 15:339f., 437f., 456. The delegates to the congress were the nine priests of the central commission, the twelve brothers of the preparatory commission, three brother representatives from each assistancy, and four assistants from the General Curia.

¹⁹ *Acta Romana* 15:567.

²⁰ *Acta Romana* 15:339. All the documents relating to the World Congress of Brothers—letters and talks of Fr. Arrupe, summaries of the responses to a questionnaire, list of the participants, program, position papers, interventions, recommendations, summaries, and evaluations—were printed in Spanish in *Congreso internacional de hermanos* (Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1971). The thirty-nine recommendations appear on pp. 242–46.

Most of these recommendations focused on the nature of the brother's vocation and attempted to highlight important themes or to clarify terminology. A few were loosely phrased or displayed a lack of understanding of the Society's history or of the subtleties of Church law. But all in all, the recommendations of the World Congress of Brothers provided an excellent summary of the brother's self-understanding at that time and offered appropriate directions for the future.

It is difficult, looking back from the perspective of almost thirty years, to appreciate the experience of brothers of such a different time. One might have hoped for a dispassionate assessment of the present and an equally dispassionate recommendation for the future, but that's not what we find. In many parts of the world, brothers considered that they were perceived as and treated like second-class citizens. Undoubtedly, they were reacting to situations that ranged all the way from a simple lack of sensitivity to outright and blatant discrimination. The delegates of GC 31 understood that social change would require time. It is difficult to assess the improvements in the brother's social and apostolic integration since the time of the World Congress, yet it is still painful to find six of the recommendations from that meeting speaking of "bitterness," "mistrust," "lack of human dignity," "sad inequality," "discrimination."²¹ The delegates, to their lasting credit, had the wisdom to move beyond these old hurts and differences, and went on to produce a work of considerable substance.

It was only appropriate that from such a setting the theme of unity should have figured so prominently. An overwhelming majority of the recommendations were explicitly or implicitly concerned with the "one and the same vocation" shared by all Jesuits, and together they made a pointed observation: Such "oneness" was deemed impossible without a commensurate equality—common rights (including participation in governance), common responsibilities (including roles of apostolic leadership), common formation (including novitiate, cultural training, and tertianship), and common vows (including the recommendation to abolish the distinction between the professed and formed coadjutors).²² Needless to say, some of these recommendations fell within the powers of the superior general, others within

²¹ Recommendations 27–32.

²² A Church-mandated six-month postulancy was required of all brother candidates prior to their novitiate. The delegates judged this requirement to be discriminatory and expressed their desire for a change. In 1983 the new Code of Canon Law abrogated this requirement. The responsibility for guaranteeing a candidate's readiness for the novitiate now falls within the purview of each religious institute (can. 597, §2; see James A. Coriden et al., eds., *The Code of Canon Law: A Text and Commentary* [London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985], 489).

those of a future general congregation, and still others within those of the Holy See.²³ Many could be perceived as constructive and helpful, a few as unrealistic and naive. Yet the delegates were expressing not merely their own sentiments but those of the whole Society. In speaking of unity and equality, they were following in the tradition of Vatican Council II and GC 31.²⁴ Their egalitarian spirit would later meet with frustration and disappointment during GC 32, but this is not to deny that their sentiments were valid or that they were shared by Jesuits worldwide.

The Society of Jesus was changing and so were its brothers. Several months after the conclusion of the World Congress, Fr. Johannes Schaching, the regional assistant for the German Assistancy, addressed the Sixty-fifth Congregation of Procurators on the World Congress of Brothers. After summarizing its conclusions, he proceeded to speak of the brother himself.

The traditional image of the brother is vanishing. The causes of this are many and complex. . . . It is now necessary to present a new image of a Jesuit non-priest: an image always based on the Ignatian charism, but at the same time adapted as much by current theological doctrine as by the psychological, social, and cultural needs of our time.²⁵

4. General Congregation 32

By early fall of 1970, less than four years had passed since the conclusion of GC 31, yet both the Church and the world had experienced profound change. Within a few short years, *aggiornamento's* renewal and a growing awareness of the many facets of injustice had strained the social fabric of both the Church and the world. There was a great need to determine how the Society might best respond to these challenges. GC 31, moreover, had established commissions, proposed studies, and introduced changes on an experimental basis, all of which needed to be evaluated in the context of a general congregation. On November 16, 1970, Fr. Arrupe announced the beginning of remote preparation for GC 32, and five months later he informed the Society that the preparatory commission was already in place and at work.²⁶ Finally, on September 8, 1973, he announced to the

²³ Intervention by Fr. Arrupe, May 28, 1970, in *Congreso internacional de hermanos*, 240f.

²⁴ Vatican Council II, *Perfectæ caritatis*, no. 15; GC 31, d. 7, nos. 1f., 5f.; d. 19, nos. 1-3.

²⁵ *Congreso internacional de hermanos*, 261f.

²⁶ *Acta Romana* 15:631-34, 722-24.

Society that he was summoning GC 32.²⁷ In explaining his reasons, he spoke of his hope that the Spirit might confirm the direction the Society had taken since GC 31 and that this confirmation might offer a graced call to a new and deeper unity within the brotherhood of the whole Society.²⁸

Fr. Arrupe's desire for unity was not unwarranted. The profound changes experienced in both the Church and the world had not left the Society unscathed. The Society of Jesus that waited expectantly in late 1974 for the beginning of GC 32 was decidedly different from what it had been less than ten years before. Though the dramatic number of departures from among its ranks had abated, the decline in vocations continued. The Society continued to grow in some parts of the world, yet in less than ten years its numbers had fallen by more than seven thousand.

Eventually sixty-five postulata on the brother's juridical status in the Society would be submitted to the general congregation.

Numbers alone, however, tell nothing of the social reality. Though the spirit of renewal was greeted warmly by many, others reacted with confusion and hurt. Within a few short years the "long black line" had given way to a diversity and a pluralism unknown in the Society's history. It was the rare community that didn't show some sign of social strain or polarization. Fortunately, most Jesuits and most communities adjusted and, in time, found new vitality in their lives and ministries. Sad to say, a few did not.

Diversity and pluralism could be seen as healthy, but not when they touched upon the Society's fundamental "way of proceeding." In one of the better-known cases, a group of Jesuits in Spain, judging the Society's direction since GC 31 to be a departure from the genuine Ignatian spirit, attempted to break away from the Society. They petitioned Fr. Arrupe to permit "the creation of some houses or provinces, under [his] direction and authority, which would allow them to live in a manner they judged to be more in conformity with the nature and tradition of [their] vocation."²⁹ It is unclear how many Jesuits were involved in this "traditionalist" movement, yet it was deemed sufficiently serious to prompt Fr. Arrupe to make a two-

²⁷ Ibid., 16:115-19.

²⁸ George A. Aschenbrenner, "On Formation to the Apostolic Life: The Novitiate," *The Way Supplement*, nos. 29-30 (1977), 149.

²⁹ *Acta Romana* 15:663.

and-a-half week visitation of Spain, write two long letters on the subject, and meet with Pope Paul VI to discuss the matter.³⁰

The story of a lesser-known case appeared in the Jesuit periodical *La Civiltà Cattolica* only months before the opening of GC 32. In an article based on the results of a questionnaire distributed by the preparatory commission of the congregation, the author described a movement among a group of “central-European” Jesuits. “Some seem to think that in today’s secularized world Jesuits should not be distinguishable from other Christians, neither in their manner of being nor in their apostolic activity, and even propose: using other words, the transformation of the Society of Jesus into a secular institute.”³¹ Their goal seemed to be the creation of a Church and a Society of Jesus no longer bound by external structures. Since this “de-institutionist” group is never further identified, it seems to have simply disappeared from history. Yet, as with the previous story, this article undoubtedly came across the desk of Pope Paul VI. It was an inauspicious setting in which to begin GC 32.

This congregation began on December 2, 1974. By the time it concluded on March 7, 1975, it had confirmed the direction the Society had taken since the previous congregation, and through its major legislation—on Jesuit identity, the Society’s mission of faith and justice, formation, life in the Spirit and in community, poverty, and governance—given focus to its communal and apostolic life for the future. Unlike its predecessor, it produced no “brother document,” though the brother himself was mentioned in five of its decrees. What might have been the congregation’s most important “brother legislation” was never written. The events surrounding this still-born legislation shed important light on the brother’s changing role in the Society of Jesus. It is this writer’s contention, moreover, that this apparent failure should more correctly be seen as an affirmation of the brother and of his valued place in the Society of Jesus.

GC 31 had directed Fr. General to establish a commission to “study the whole matter of suppressing the grade of spiritual coadjutor” and “the advantages and disadvantages involved in granting solemn profession also to the temporal coadjutors.”³² The topic of the brother’s juridical status in the Society had surfaced during the World Congress of Brothers and was highlighted only a few months later during the congregation of procura-

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 15:662–73.

³¹ Bartolomeo Sorge, “XXXII Congregazione Generale della Compagnia di Gesù,” *La Civiltà Cattolica* 125, no. 4 (1974): 526–39.

³² GC 31, d. 5.

tors.³³ Eventually sixty-five *postulata* would be submitted to the general congregation on this topic. The widespread sentiment was clear: The distinction in grades should be abolished. About two weeks before the congregation was scheduled to begin, Fr. Arrupe met with Pope Paul VI, giving him a copy of the *postulata*, along with a memorandum listing the topics that the congregation would probably treat. Included on this list was the possibility of extending the “fourth vow” to all formed members of the Society.³⁴

On December 3, 1974, Pope Paul VI delivered an extraordinarily comprehensive and carefully prepared address to GC 32.³⁵ He came quickly to the point. Referring to the thick book of *postulata* Fr. Arrupe had given him two weeks earlier, Pope Paul reminded the delegates of their duty to be discerning. They were to be respectful and understanding of all proposals, but it was their duty to judge them against their Jesuit vocation and charism. The theme of Jesuit identity was paramount. *Remember who you are.* “You are members of an Order that is religious, apostolic, priestly, and united with the Roman Pontiff by a special bond of love and service.” *You are religious—men of prayer. You are apostles—preachers of the Gospel. You are priests—trained for familiarity with God.* The influence and experience of the Society of Jesus in its renewal would have important consequences for all of religious life and for the entire Church. “You are at the head of that interior renewal which the Church is facing in this secularized world.” Yet there were “clouds on the horizon”—doubts, questions, uncertainty about one’s identity, desire for change. *Renewal must not imperil the fundamental identity of the Jesuit.* “This image must not be altered; it must not be distorted.” The message was clear.

That same afternoon Fr. Arrupe received a letter from Cardinal Jean Villot, the Vatican secretary of state. Pope Paul VI had given consideration to the proposal to extend the “fourth vow” to all formed Jesuits. “He desires to let you know that such a change . . . seems to present grave difficulties which would impede the approval necessary on the part of the Holy See.”³⁶ If there had been any doubt about the meaning of Pope Paul’s address earlier

³³ *Acta Romana* 15:569f., 615f.

³⁴ The “fourth vow,” a vow of special obedience to the pope regarding the missions, is reserved to priests conspicuous for their learning and virtue. These are the professed members of the Society. In mid-1998 there were 15,109 Jesuits with final vows. Of this total, 13,008 were priests and, among this group, 9,199 were professed of four vows. Thus, 60.9 percent of Jesuits with final vows were professed, as were 70.7 percent of Jesuit priests with final vows.

³⁵ *Acta Romana* 16:431–45.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 16:446.

in the day, it was quickly dispelled. The congregation's egalitarian spirit was not to distort the Society's priestly identity. The delegates understood Pope Paul's message that Cardinal Villot had communicated to them. Yet they also felt the matter of grades was a mandate from GC 31, and that it had received support from the World Congress of Brothers, the congregation of procurators, and sixty-five *postulata*. Ignatian obedience offered encouragement to represent the case to the Pope. An indicative vote on January 22 supported the proposal, and the congregation conveyed its results to the Pope. As the delegates continued to discuss the matter, however, they recognized that extending the fourth vow to all formed members—effectively abolishing grades in the Society—was not as simple as it had first appeared. In spite of the many arguments that could be made in favor of such a move, the Society of Jesus would be dramatically changed.³⁷ It would no longer be the Society Ignatius had envisioned and described in the *Formula of the Institute*. On February 15 the Pope responded to their representation: "No change can be introduced related to the fourth vow."³⁸ The matter was closed.

It was obvious that Pope Paul's address had a purpose that went far beyond the matter of grades and the fourth vow. It was undoubtedly intended to serve as a program for the congregation. Its emphasis on the *priestly identity* of the Society was intended to be far more than a rejoinder to the Society's egalitarian sentiments. It was a timely and appropriate reminder. Pope Paul VI had witnessed thousands of defections from the priesthood. His comments about "clouds on the horizon," doubts, and questioning among priests were based on fact. It was not only the Society of Jesus that was meeting at GC 32: religious all over the world and the Church itself were looking on. The Society of Jesus needed to be mindful and respectful of its identity. The address, with its rich Ignatian imagery and timely reminders of our Jesuit roots, revealed the Pope's deep affection for the Society. From the perspective of this Jesuit nonpriest, however, the address seemed to project a narrow, over-spiritualized image of priesthood in which its cultic dimension seemed to dominate. It did not describe what this writer understands as *Jesuit* priesthood. When the congregation went on to

³⁷ Vincent T. O'Keefe, "The Holy See, the Society of Jesus and the 32nd General Congregation," *Review for Religious* 35, no. 1 (1976): 41; Brian E. Daley, "Identifying Jesuits: The 32nd General Congregation," *The Month* 236 (1975): 149.

³⁸ *Acta Romana* 16:448.

develop its landmark legislation on the service of faith and the promotion of justice, it in no way rejected the Pope's sentiments. Rather, it was faithfully responding to the Society's own identity as an *apostolic* religious order.³⁹

From one perspective, the congregation's most important "brother legislation" was never written. The brother was not accorded the privilege of solemn profession of four vows. But from another perspective, much about the events surrounding this apparent failure can be judged as both significant and affirming. The Society's desire to extend the fourth vow to the brothers spoke eloquently of "the complete change in mind" for which GC 31 had hoped. That this desire was not to be realized was of secondary importance. The Society of Jesus spoke loudest not by its legislation but by its heartfelt sentiments.⁴⁰

The topic of the permanent diaconate surfaced in 1946 during GC 29 in the context of a discussion about Eastern rites. At that time it was felt to be "something that the congregation did not wish to introduce among Ours."⁴¹ Eleven years later Pope Pius XII expressed a similar sentiment when, in the context of the Congress of the Lay Apostolate, he said that the "time was not ripe" for establishing the permanent diaconate.⁴² It was only appropriate, however, that during Vatican Council II, with its emphasis on increased lay participation in the Church, it should surface once again, this time to stay. The council said little about the permanent diaconate, other than that it could be restored. Although few details were available and much seemed to depend upon the initiative of bishops, the permanent diaconate was to be an ordained ministry for service which would be exercised in the

³⁹ Cecil McGarry, "The Pope and the Congregation," *The Way Supplement*, nos. 29-30 (1977), 122.

⁴⁰ A similar disposition is described in the Preamble to the *Constitutions*: "What helps most on our part toward this end must be, more than any exterior constitution, the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit writes and engraves upon hearts" ([134]).

⁴¹ GC 29, d. 15, no. 2. Although a significant majority of Jesuit permanent deacons are currently brothers, it is technically incorrect to equate legislation pertaining to permanent deacons with "brother legislation." GC 31 made this same point when it treated the permanent diaconate and the brothers in separate decrees. Legislation pertaining to permanent deacons is being considered here under the topic of "brother legislation" solely for the sake of convenience.

⁴² *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* (1957): 925.

areas of liturgy, word, and charity.⁴³ GC 31 received a number of *postulata* supporting its establishment in the Society, discussed it, and issued a decree on the subject. The congregation took a positive but cautious step in observing that it saw "no obstacle" in Jesuits' serving as permanent deacons. It entrusted the matter to Fr. General "for prudent experimentation, according to the mind of the Church, where it is needed for the good of souls."⁴⁴ Eight years later GC 32, recognizing that the experiment had been well received, declared that "the Society can be helped" by having some of its members serve as permanent deacons. Fr. General was directed to obtain the necessary faculties from the Holy See and, as he judged necessary, to establish norms for the permanent diaconate in the Society.⁴⁵

When the topic of the permanent diaconate was first being discussed, there was a sense that this "clerical model" of the brother might represent a direction for the future, one that many brothers would find attractive and follow. This has not been the case. The number of Jesuit permanent deacons has always been small.⁴⁶ The Jesuit permanent diaconate is a legitimate vocation within a vocation, a response to a call. It was never meant to be a response to the shortage of priestly vocations or a means for the brother to raise his social status closer to that of the priest.⁴⁷

*The Society of Jesus spoke loudest
not by its legislation but by its
heartfelt sentiments.*

⁴³ Vatican Council II, *Lumen gentium*, no. 19; Alphonse Borras, "Renewal of the Permanent Diaconate," *Theology Digest* 44, no. 2: 131. These ministries are not, of course, the exclusive reserve of the deacon. In fact, many of them—the ministry of service and charity, Christian instruction, service as a Eucharistic minister or lector, for example—can be exercised by any qualified lay person.

⁴⁴ GC 31, d. 6, no. 2.

⁴⁵ GC 32, d. 9.

⁴⁶ There are currently seventeen permanent deacons in the Society: fifteen formed brothers and two "permanent" scholastics who pronounced final vows as spiritual coadjutors. GC 32 (d. 9, no. 2) decreed that a permanent deacon was to retain the grade he had in the Society: approved brothers were to be advanced to the grade of formed brother and scholastics to that of spiritual coadjutor.

⁴⁷ These were two reasons offered in support of *postulata* submitted to GC 31 on the topic of the permanent diaconate.

5. Fr. Arrupe's Talk to the Brothers of Rome

Shortly before GC 32 had convened, Fr. Arrupe spoke of his hope that its work might lead to a new and deeper unity in the Society. Before concluding its work on March 7, 1975, the general congregation responded with its lengthy decree entitled "The Union of Minds and Hearts," and the theme of unity pervaded its major documents.⁴⁸ This reflected the hope expressed by GC 31 eight years earlier, "that all members of the Society . . . may be truly of 'one heart and one mind.'"⁴⁹ This unity, however, is not simply social compatibility. It is based on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, fostered by prayer both personal and communal. Jesuits are invited to be "companions, not only in the sense of fellow workers in the apostolate, but truly brothers and friends in the Lord."⁵⁰ Such a unity, however, is fragile: its life and growth depend on the individual Jesuit and on his willingness to create and foster it. There is, however, a unity that is free from such conditions, a unity fundamental to the life of all Jesuits, "the unity of the vocation of the entire body of the Society."⁵¹ This is the "one and the same vocation" shared by all Jesuits. In what does the "one Jesuit vocation" consist?

On October 31, 1978, the feast of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, Fr. Arrupe addressed a gathering of the brothers of Rome. He began his talk, which he would later share with the entire Society, by voicing his concerns about the scarcity of brother vocations and the serious decline in the number of brothers.⁵² Very quickly, however, he moved into the substance of his talk. The whole life of the brother must be seen as apostolic. Like all Jesuits, the brother is *on mission*, and it is in companionship that he fulfills his mission.⁵³ His community is a community *for mission*, and it will be authentic only insofar as every member of the community lives and shares the classic dimensions of *koinonia*, *diakonia*, and *kerygma*—a manner of

Koinonia, Diakonia, Kerygma

⁴⁸ GC 32, d. 1, no. 4; d. 2, no. 21; d. 4, no. 62; d. 6, no. 29; d. 8, no. 1; d. 11, no. 14.

⁴⁹ GC 31, d. 7, no. 1.

⁵⁰ GC 32, d. 11, no. 14.

⁵¹ GC 32, d. 8, no. 1.

⁵² *Acta Romana* 17:365, 379-90; also in *The Jesuit Brothers' Vocation* (Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis [1983]: 93-108).

⁵³ GC 32, d. 2, nos. 14f.

living that points both outwardly towards all people and inwardly towards the center of the Jesuit community.⁵⁴

■ *Koinonia* is a communion, a being “of one heart and soul.” It involves a sharing of the substantive part of one’s life—one’s hopes, dreams, concerns, expressions of faith, prayer, the Eucharist—to create a community of faith. The modern-day Jesuit community reflects a broad spectrum of gifts, interests, skills, ministries, and understandings of the Church and the world. This can be a source of enrichment for the community, yet it can also occasion tensions and even polarization. *Koinonia* allows the community to discover its inherent unity in the midst of its diversity.

■ *Diakonia* is service that is freely given. It involves a willingness to work with all men and women of goodwill; to play an anonymous, subordinate, supporting role; and to learn how to serve from those we seek to serve.⁵⁵ Ultimately, it involves a willingness on the part of each and every Jesuit to be a *coadjutor*, a co-helper in the apostolic mission of the Society. *Diakonia* accepts one’s limitations and recognizes and welcomes the need for a diversity of ministries and service.⁵⁶

■ *Kerygma* is a sharing of the *good news*. It begins in the community itself, in its recognition that it, too, needs to be evangelized. *Kerygma* is a testimony that is carried out by word of mouth and also, perhaps more importantly, by the very life of the community itself.⁵⁷

[O]ur fundamental vocation to form the apostolic and priestly community of the Society . . . is a gift of God, given *as one and the same vocation* to every man called by Him to this Society. The diversity of ministries, whether directed within or without, is not and should not be an obstacle to this radical unity arising from the vocation to construct, in *koinonia*, *diakonia*, and *kerygma*, an authentic apostolic community.⁵⁸

Fr. Arrupe’s talk highlighted the brother’s full participation in the Society’s apostolic mission regardless of his specific role. His life, like that of all Jesuits, is inherently apostolic. The diversity of ministries in the Society should be seen not only as necessary to its life but also enriching it. All Jesuits have received essentially one call, are members of one body, and labor towards the one priestly apostolic goal. From this perspective, the distinction

⁵⁴ GC 32, d. 11, no. 18.

⁵⁵ GC 32, d. 2, no. 29.

⁵⁶ *Acta Romana* 17:383, 387.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 17:383f.; GC 32, d. 4, no. 23.

⁵⁸ *Acta Romana* 17:386.

between priests and nonpriests in the Society does not sever the essential unity of the Jesuit vocation.

6. General Congregation 33

Fr. Arrupe spoke at a time of transition in the Church. On the evening of August 6, 1978, Pope Paul VI died. Three weeks later, Albino Luciani was elected his successor and chose the name John Paul I. Tragically, he died on September 28, 1978, having been pope for just thirty-three days. On October 16, 1978, Karol Wojtyła, the first non-Italian pope in 456 years, was elected and chose the name John Paul II.

By 1980 Fr. Arrupe himself, though still in his early seventies, was feeling decidedly older and wished to retire for reasons of age and health. During that spring he spoke with the Pope about summoning a general congregation in 1981, at which time he would present his resignation. The Pope, concerned about “certain shortcomings” in the Society, forbade him to do either “for the good of the Church and the [Society of Jesus].”⁵⁹ On August 7, 1981, Fr. Arrupe suffered a cerebral thrombosis, leaving him incapacitated and in need of hospitalization. Two months later Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, the Vatican secretary of state, paid him a visit and personally delivered a letter. The Pope had chosen to suspend the Society’s Constitutions and to replace Fr. Vincent O’Keefe as vicar general with eighty-year-old Fr. Paolo Dezza, who would serve as his personal representative. Fr. Dezza would prepare for the general congregation—to be called “in due time”—and direct the normal government of the Society until the election of a new superior general.⁶⁰ Even from the perspective of the years since then, the motivation behind this unprecedented personal intervention remains unclear. The most positive interpretation is that the Pope had a “keen personal interest in the Society” and wished to assure that it “proceed as it should” for the good of the whole Church.⁶¹ Since no explanation for this intervention was offered, much of the Society reacted with shock, questioning, and consternation.

On December 8, 1982, Fr. Dezza summoned GC 33. The Society of Jesus was decidedly different from what it had been on the eve of the two previous general congregations. The “cloud” under which the Society had lived for almost two years had dampened much of the enthusiasm for the

⁵⁹ Ibid., 18:641. Tad Szulc, *Pope John Paul II: The Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 327f.; *Acta Romana* 18:224.

⁶⁰ *Acta Romana* 18:401f.

⁶¹ Ibid., 18:640f.

congregation that might otherwise have been present. Jesuits sensed that the Society was in greater need of implementing what had already been asked of it than of producing new decrees or declarations. It seemed appropriate only to specify more accurately and confirm the orientations of the two previous general congregations.⁶²

GC 33 began on September 2, 1983. The following day, the delegates voted to accept Fr. Arrupe's resignation as superior general. In reflecting on Fr. Arrupe's eighteen years of work in shaping the Society's apostolate and inspiring its spiritual life, they spoke for the whole Society in observing that they were "conscious of living through a time of special grace and importance in our history."⁶³ On September 15, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach was elected on the first ballot to succeed Fr. Arrupe as superior general. His election signaled a return to normal government in the Society and brought to an end the period of questioning and disquiet.⁶⁴

The major declaration of GC 33 would be expressed in a single decree, "Companions of Jesus Sent into Today's World." In fifty succinct paragraphs, the congregation confirmed the orientations of the two previous general congregations and gave greater focus to its apostolic initiatives. The document echoed Fr. Arrupe's call for unity expressed in brotherly love and shared vision, the need to be ever mindful of the ecclesial character of the Jesuit vocation, the need for a greater integration of the spiritual and apostolic dimensions of one's life, and the demand that justice be the integrating factor of our ministries.⁶⁵ A five-paragraph section of the document was entitled "Life in Communion with the Coadjutor Brothers."⁶⁶

Thirty-one *postulata* had been submitted to the congregation on the topic of the brother. Most touched upon the same concerns that Fr. Arrupe had shared with the congregation of procurators five years earlier—vocations, the brother's formation, and the nature of the brother's vocation. The *Cætus prævius*, a preparatory commission of the congregation whose function it was to group and evaluate all the *postulata*, produced and submitted a working document for a decree on the brothers. It recognized the Society's desire for greater clarity about the nature of the brother's vocation and

⁶² GC 33, d. 1, nos. 1f.

⁶³ GC 33, d. 1, no. 1.

⁶⁴ *Acta Romana* 19:243; also in John W. Padberg, *Together as a Companionship: A History of the 31st, 32nd, and 33rd General Congregations of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994), 127.

⁶⁵ GC 33, d. 1, nos. 1f., 5, 7f., 31, 32, 49.

⁶⁶ GC 33, d. 1, nos. 17–21.

about the root causes of the lack of vocations and how these might be addressed. Yet it also recognized its own limitations. Topics of such magnitude could not be adequately addressed in the context of a general congregation. They would demand both serious study and sufficient time to reflect upon it. The congregation concurred with this reasoning and chose, rather, to focus on the need for a formation touching upon all aspects of the brother's life; the complementary nature of the brother's vocation; vocation promotion, which was to be the responsibility of all Jesuits; and the continued need for a change in attitudes.⁶⁷ The most prevalent theme of the document is the brother's intrinsic value—his being “a witness to the gospel” and his “great contribution to [the Society's] apostolate through [his] hard work.” Perhaps the statement that best expressed this sentiment was a paraphrase of words Fr. Arrupe had uttered five years earlier while addressing the brothers of Rome: “The Society needs the brothers, first of all for themselves and then for their labors, for the sake of both its communities and its apostolates.”⁶⁸

It is difficult to disagree with “Life in Communion with the Coadjutor Brothers.” The congregation recognized its limitations and chose to focus on those issues that could be readily addressed. One recognizes, of course, that the “brother legislation” of GC 33 was not a decree but part of one, and space considerations undoubtedly played a role in the final product. Unfortunately, it seems that much of the richness of the *postulata* and working document was lost in the congregation's redaction. A rather curious omission, or at least a significant de-emphasis, was in the area of “one and the same vocation”—a theme that figured prominently in many of the *postulata* and in the working document itself, to say nothing of the legislation of GC 31, the recommendations of the World Congress of Brothers, the underlying sentiments in the “grades and fourth vow” controversy, and the focal point of Fr. Arrupe's talk to the brothers of Rome. The closest the congregation chose to come on this subject was to declare that “they share in the same religious commitment”—a far cry from sharing in the same religious *vocation*—and are “all members of the same body.” It is unclear why this theme, with its rich though relatively short history, was completely ignored by GC 33. It seems, however, that its “brother legislation” was decidedly poorer because of it.

⁶⁷ GC 33, d. 1, nos. 17–19.

⁶⁸ GC 33, d. 1, no. 17; see *Acta Romana* 17:381.

7. The Loyola Symposium

By early 1992 the need for a general congregation had become increasingly apparent. GC 33 had directed Fr. General to bring the Society's legislation into harmony with the new Code of Canon Law.⁶⁹ This revision of the Society's law, which had begun almost fifteen years earlier, was now nearing completion. It would need to be examined and approved by a general congregation before it could take effect. On February 12, 1992, Fr. Kolvenbach announced the beginning of remote preparation for GC 34.⁷⁰ Seven months later, because of the progress being made in the preparation, he anticipated that the congregation would be held early in 1995; moreover, because of the importance of the brother's vocation for both the Church and the Society, he announced that a workshop on "the vocation and mission of the Jesuit brother today" would be held in mid-1994.⁷¹

On February 15, 1994, Fr. Kolvenbach announced that the Symposium on the Vocation and Mission of the Jesuit Brother would be held June 12–24, 1994, at Loyola in Spain.⁷² Although the term was never used, the symposium was clearly intended to serve as a "preparatory commission" for GC 34. Its task was to assess the situation of the brother in the present-day Society, to evaluate *postulata* submitted to the congregation on the topic of the brother, and, with the help of people of particular experience and competence, to determine how the general congregation might best respond to the question of the brother. Twenty-four years earlier, the World Congress of Brothers had also met to discuss and propose recommendations on this theme. Yet the composition of the symposium—thirty brothers, nineteen priests, and one scholastic—and ultimately its goal were decidedly different.⁷³

The Society needs the brothers, first of all for themselves and then for their labors, for the sake of both its communities and its apostolates.

⁶⁹ GC 33, d. 6, sec. II; *Acta Romana* 20:788f.

⁷⁰ *Acta Romana* 20:718f.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 20:768–69.

⁷² All the documents relating to the symposium—letters and talks of Fr. Kolvenbach, summaries of the responses to a questionnaire, list of the participants, program, position papers, proposals—were printed in *The Vocation and Mission of the Jesuit Brother: A Symposium* (Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1995).

⁷³ *Acta Romana* 20:31–33.

The first task of the symposium was to assess the situation of the brother in the present-day Society. As a means to accomplish this, a questionnaire had been prepared and distributed to the brothers in each assistancy. The results were then synthesized and collated by theme, allowing an overall picture to emerge. By and large, there had been a remarkable change since GC 31. The brother's formation had dramatically improved, especially as regards his cultural and theological education. He was now serving very effectively in many positions of responsibility—minister, treasurer, consultor, teacher—and had experienced a notable degree of integration into the life of the community. While there was a sense that some old attitudes persisted and the advances were not universal, the overall sense of renewal was quite positive.

For approximately a week and a half, the symposium adhered to a pattern of large-group presentation, personal prayer and reflection, work in small language-based groups, and sharing of the work in large-group sessions. The discussions, which took place in settings both formal and informal, were typically a medley of evaluation, discernment, and sharing of faith. Gradually four central themes surfaced: *identity*, *mission*, *communion*, and *formation*—themes that would be reflected in the final proposals.⁷⁴

The restoration of the grade of *indifferent* was proposed as a means of emphasizing two forms of one and the same vocation. This grade would allow superiors to accept as a novice a candidate who felt called to the Society but lacked clarity about the specific form of his Jesuit vocation. The specific form of his commitment—as a scholastic or a brother—would have to be determined before the end of his novitiate. Nine months later, this proposal would be approved by GC 34.⁷⁵

GC 33 had briefly considered extending solemn profession of three vows to all formed members of the Society. It was understood that this proposal would not affect the “fourth vow,” which was reserved to priests. Although a vote to open the issue to discussion failed, Fr. Kolvenbach indicated that the matter would nevertheless be given further study.⁷⁶ He subsequently asked the Holy See's authorization to allow GC 34 to discuss the issue. Three months prior to the Loyola Symposium, he was informed that the Pope judged that such a change would introduce an innovation

⁷⁴ The proposals appear in *Vocation and Mission of the Jesuit Brother*, 104–8, and in *Acta Romana* 21:56–59.

⁷⁵ *General Examen*, [15]; *Complementary Norms*, 6, §1, 1°; 44, §2; GC 34, d. 7, no. 15.

⁷⁶ *Documents of the 33rd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1984), 105.

which "would threaten an essential characteristic of the Ignatian charism." Moreover, the Pope asked that "for the internal peace of the Society and for the faithful preservation of the Institute," this question not be treated.⁷⁷

In the same letter the Pope offered the Society the possibility of removing the *conditionality* of the final vows of the coadjutors. The Society's legislation allows it to terminate these vows as it judges necessary.⁷⁸ Whereas the vows of a professed member can be dispensed only by the Holy See, those of a formed coadjutor can be dispensed by the superior general. If the Society were to remove this *conditionality*, the vows of all formed Jesuits would acquire a *de facto* equality and would better reflect the equality of obligations they already share. The Loyola Symposium recommended that the Society seriously study this proposal. On the one hand, such a move could be seen as a prophetic action stressing the value of the coadjutor in the life of the Society. On the other hand, the Society would no longer be able to dispense a formed coadjutor from his final vows without recourse to the Holy See. In the end, GC 34, recognizing that the proposal ultimately affected only the manner in which a formed coadjutor might be dismissed from the Society, chose not to pursue the matter.

Five *postulata* had been submitted to the general congregation proposing that the Society study the possibility of a brother's being appointed local superior. Although the general congregation could later choose to study the matter, it would be powerless to change it. The brother is barred from serving as a superior not by the Society's law but by that of the Church. According to that law, superiors in clerical institutes such as the Society of Jesus possess "ecclesiastical power of governance for both the external and internal forum" and that "only those who have received sacred orders are capable" of having a share in this juridical power.⁷⁹

What seems less clear, however, is the nature of this juridical power and the degree to which it is applicable in a local community. A Jesuit typically receives his mission from his provincial. The role of the local superior is to adapt that mission to the local circumstances and to promote the solidarity of the community.⁸⁰ It seems that this role is more one of encouragement and discernment than of governance. A significant part of this role is to stimulate and support the individual and the community in prayer, in Eucharist, in apostolic discernment, and in being "friends in the

⁷⁷ *Acta Romana* 21:50f.

⁷⁸ *Constitutions*, [536].

⁷⁹ Can. 596, §2; can. 129, §1.

⁸⁰ GC 32, d. 4, no. 65.

Lord.” Although the role of the local superior entails more than this, none of this seems to demand priesthood. This topic was later discussed during the October 1994 Synod on Consecrated Life. The postsynodal apostolic exhortation, *Vita consecrata*, revealed that a special commission had been established “to examine and resolve the problems connected with this issue.”⁸¹

The symposium proposed that the general congregation do a theological reflection on the unity and diversity of the vocation and mission of all Jesuits. It seems the intention of this proposal was to develop a better understanding of and appreciation for the “one and the same vocation” shared by all Jesuits. To some degree, Fr. Arrupe had accomplished this sixteen years earlier in his talk to the brothers of Rome, in which he highlighted the unity that is fundamental to the life of all Jesuits.⁸² Four years prior to the symposium, however, Fr. Kolvenbach had employed the themes of “unity” and “diversity” to develop a much more dynamic and, perhaps, equally important understanding of the Jesuit vocation. In his final address at the 1990 Congregation of Provincials, he offered a reflective analysis on the “five chapters” of the *Formula of the Institute*.⁸³ He noted that Ignatius had admitted brothers hardly six years after the decree that approved the Society as a “body of priests.” In doing so, “he integrated in the unity of vocation and mission the inequalities present in social reality and the tensions they can always create.” Fr. Kolvenbach pointed out that Ignatius never speaks of “unity” with respect to the body of the Society, but only of “union,” “which is always to be forged and searched for with the greatest care.” And as if to underline the point, he observed that “union” is never acquired once and for all. It is always to be worked at.⁸⁴ Four years later, in his opening address at the symposium, Fr. Kolvenbach chose to continue this theme. He spoke of Ignatius and the first companions gathering during the Lent of 1539 to discuss their future, and reflected on how they described themselves and their motivation.

Since the Lord, had deigned in his clemency and paternal goodness to bring us together in a group—unworthy men, born in very different countries,

⁸¹ *Vita consecrata*, no. 61. It should be noted, however, that this particular section was dealing with “mixed institutes,” in which the priest and nonpriest members are understood to be equal among themselves, not “clerical institutes,” such as the Society of Jesus.

⁸² *Acta Romana* 17:365, 379–90; also in *Jesuit Brothers’ Vocation*, 93–108.

⁸³ *Acta Romana* 20:491–506.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 20:494f.

with very different customs—we thought we should not break the unity of this group, but rather continue to bolster and strengthen it to form one body.⁸⁵

For the Jesuit, all service must always be seen and understood solely in terms of the Lord “who gathers us together.” It cannot be evaluated in terms of lofty or lowly, spiritual or material, but only in terms of *greater* service. All Jesuits are from “very different countries, with very different customs.” The diversity of country and custom and language and service “should not break the unity of this group, but rather continue to bolster and strengthen it to form one body.” Ignatius understood the apostolic body of the Society to be modeled on *union in diversity*, bringing together “in one and the same vocation and mission the different responses to different calls of the Lord.” The union to be sought in our diversity “is never a given, never to be taken for granted. Rather it is always to be built up again and again.” The message was clear.

On the final day of the symposium, Fr. Kolvenbach addressed the assembled delegates, though his presence at the symposium from the beginning was, perhaps, the most eloquent statement that could be shared with them. It also provided the general congregation and the entire Society with compelling testimony to his concern for the issues raised at the symposium and his determination to address

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them.⁸⁶ Perhaps to underline this determination, he announced that he would call seven brothers as delegates to the general congregation: Ndolo Muwawa (Central Africa), Affonso Wobeto (South Brazil), Conrad Fonseca (Bombay), Ian Cribb (Australia), Bernard Coumau (France), Manuel Ibáñez Castillo (Bética), and Charles J. Jackson (California).⁸⁷ This was history-

⁸⁵ See *Vocation and Mission of the Jesuit Brother*, 8–18.

⁸⁶ “A Personal Response from the Symposium Delegates,” in *Vocation and Mission of the Jesuit Brother*, 109f.

⁸⁷ *Acta Romana* 21:54f. The brothers were called as procurators *ad negotia*. As explained in article 7 of the *Formula congregationis generalis*, the superior general can summon individuals to the congregation for the purpose of “business” or “greater information.” These procurators *ad negotia* are delegates with full voting rights except the election of the superior general or the assistants *ad providentiam*. The seven brothers were not, however, the only procurators *ad negotia*. The presidents of the conferences of

making news.⁸⁸ Never in the Society's 450-year history had a brother been a delegate at a general congregation.

8. General Congregation 34

On September 27, 1992, Fr. Kolvenbach announced that GC 34 would begin in early January 1995.⁸⁹ In his letter he explained that the revision of the Society's law was nearing completion, and that the task of the congregation would be to examine and approve it. He expressed his hope that this revision might lead to a "rediscovery" of the Society's law, and that the Constitutions might assume a more central position in the life of today's Jesuit, one similar to the position enjoyed by the Spiritual Exercises since GC 31.⁹⁰ Fr. Kolvenbach wished to dispel, however, any sense that the congregation's task would be purely juridical. He observed that for Ignatius "the only purpose of legislation is to urge us to go *forward in greater service to God*." Consequently, it would be necessary to integrate the Society's reexamination of its legislation with its response to the apostolic challenges of our time. He perceived the people of God to be living in a moment of *kairos*, a moment of grace in the midst of serious crisis and great promise. The Society faced many challenges. And to respond to these challenges *ad extra*, it needed to respond to challenges within—the need for more vocations in greater abundance, so that its mission may go forward; for greater apostolic creativity; and for the ability to give a clear personal and communal witness to an authentic life in the Spirit.

provincials of East Asia, Europe, and the United States and the delegate for the International Roman Houses were also summoned under the same provision (*Acta Romana* 20:924).

⁸⁸ Indeed it was, but it should not have been a complete surprise. On September 8, 1993, Fr. Kolvenbach had informed the major superiors that he would call five brothers to GC 34 "*ad sola negotia*" (*Acta Romana* 20:924).

⁸⁹ *Acta Romana* 20:788–91.

⁹⁰ This latter point was actually made in his discourse "On Our Law and Our Life" on the third day of the general congregation (*Documents of the 34th General Congregation* [St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1995], 275–79); also in *Acta Romana* 21:663–67). In American society, "law" is often understood almost solely in terms of prescriptions and restrictions—its *dos* and *don'ts*. The English language doesn't adequately distinguish this prescriptive and restrictive dimension of law—in Latin called the *lex*—from its other dimension—the *jus*. This latter dimension understands law as including what inspires and energizes. In terms of the Jesuit, it describes both who he is and what he is called to become. It was this dimension that Fr. Kolvenbach wished to emphasize.

On September 8, 1993, Fr. Kolvenbach formally summoned GC 34 and set January 5, 1995, as the opening date.⁹¹ The primary task of the congregation was the revision of the Society's law. In the course of ten years, sets of *Notes* and *Complementary Norms* had been in preparation. The explanatory *Notes* were to be added to the *Constitutions*, while the *Complementary Norms* used the decrees of recent general congregations to express what it means to be a Jesuit in the present-day world. The *Complementary Norms* were meant to act as *signposts*, pointing both to the *Constitutions* to which they refer and to the documents and decrees of recent general congregations from which they came.

The second track of the congregation, which ran parallel to the revision of the Society's law, is reflected in its twenty-six decrees. This was the orientation of the Society's mission. In one sense, this work began with about eight hundred *postulata* that, after being sifted and analyzed, would later play a significant role in the unfolding of the congregation. But in another sense, it also began with prayerful reflection on experiences, struggles, growths—a reflection that carried over into conversations and discussions, both formal and informal, among the delegates. This *communal discernment* model, which became the working model for the congregation, was sometimes perceived as awkward or cumbersome, and its emphasis on *process* seemed to militate against *product-oriented* efficiency. Yet for all its inherent difficulties, this discernment played a significant positive role in the results of the congregation.⁹² The prayerful reflection on experience is mirrored in the documents themselves. Moreover, their emphasis on dialogue—with women, with the laity, with peoples from other religious and cultural traditions—reflects a Society that *doesn't* have all the answers. It reflects a Society that is more mature, more open, more humble, and ultimately more respectful of the Spirit already at work in the world and in others.

Less than six months had elapsed between the Loyola Symposium and the general congregation. Both groups had evaluated the same *postulata* and had made similar assessments of the brother's situation in the present-day Society. Moreover, eight symposium delegates would later serve on the

⁹¹ *Acta Romana* 20:922f.

⁹² Discernment is not an esoteric program notable for complications or rigidity. Whatever its form, it reflects a belief that the Spirit is always at work in the world, and requires only an openness of mind and heart. Although *communal* discernment is often thought of in terms of some decision to be made, the discernment *process*, with its moments of impatience, disagreement, frustration, and even anger, can play a valuable role in developing the interior freedom needed to respond to the direction of the Spirit. This writer believes that communal discernment, which played such an important role during the congregation itself, can play a similar role in interpreting and implementing its decrees.

commission entrusted with the task of developing the congregation's "brother legislation."⁹³ It was only to be expected, then, that the congregation's "brother document" should bear a close resemblance to the symposium's proposals and even employ the same headings—*identity, mission, communion, and formation*.⁹⁴

The *identity* section began with a description of Ignatius's foundational experience and the *Jesuit* charism. Very early in its history, the Society recognized the need for a diversity of gifts and tasks in its body and expressed this in the diversity of grades and membership. In spite of such diversity, however, all Jesuits share the same vocation and mission, a unity that demands an active assent on the part of all Jesuits. "A vocation to the religious life is distinct from a vocation to the priesthood. In some ways a religious brother embodies religious life in its essence."⁹⁵

The *identity* section made a sincere attempt to develop the meaning of "one and the same vocation apart from the priesthood," and captured the substantive elements from the corresponding section of the symposium proposals. It would be difficult to argue with anything that was said. Unfortunately,

this section of the document seems terribly jumbled—full of platitudes that speak of *Jesuit* and *brother*, but ultimately say little about a *Jesuit brother*. It can be broken into three parts.⁹⁶ The *Jesuit* theme pervaded the first part, but the two brief references to the brother in this rather lengthy section leave the reader in some

doubt about its focus. The statement, strongly supportive of grades, seems a curious addition, coming as it does so soon after GC 32, which expressed very different sentiments. The second part focused on what GC 31 had called "the complete change of mind" so that all might be of "one heart and one mind"—a paragraph that disrupted the flow of thought and seems misplaced in the document. The third part highlighted the religious brother

Identity, mission, communion, formation

⁹³ This writer served on Commission 1, the "formation commission," a commission that produced no document of its own. Commission 14 was the "brothers' commission" and played the primary role in developing the congregation's "brother legislation." It is important to recognize, however, that although an individual commission might play a primary role in developing a decree, the decree is ultimately the product of the entire congregation.

⁹⁴ GC 34, d. 7.

⁹⁵ GC 34, d. 7, no. 6.

⁹⁶ GC 34, d. 7, nos. 2–6.

and made a number of important points, but failed to mention that the brother in question is a *Jesuit* brother. In summary, *identity* was the document’s most anticipated and important section, and was undoubtedly its most difficult to write. Unfortunately, it was also its most disappointing.

The *mission*, *communion*, and *formation* sections provided well-written and tightly knit expansions of the corresponding proposals from the Loyola Symposium. The *mission* section improved upon the proposals by strongly emphasizing the brother’s active participation in the apostolic mission shared by all Jesuits. The last paragraph of the section, which highlighted the contribution of Jesuit brother saints, seems an awkward addition and, from this writer’s perspective, somewhat condescending. The *communion* section reflected the significant advances that had been made in the brother’s integration into the Society’s apostolic and communal life. The *formation* section closely mirrored the corresponding symposium proposals. Moreover, it made an important improvement in the criteria for admission: The candidate should be “capable of being integrated into the body and mission of the Society.”⁹⁷

The two-week Loyola Symposium and the fifty-three *postulata* that had been submitted on the topic of the brother made it clear that the brother would receive significant attention during the congregation. There was a growing sense, however, that if he truly shared “one and the same vocation” with the Jesuit priest, his vocation could not be assessed in isolation. It would have to be viewed alongside that of the priest. Moreover, the forceful reminders by Popes Paul VI and John Paul II about the Society’s fundamental identity as a “priestly, apostolic, and religious body” had given rise to a desire for greater clarity about the Society’s “priestly” character.⁹⁸ Ultimately, the question about the brother’s vocation could only be answered in terms of the “one and the same vocation” shared by all Jesuits. What does it mean to be a Jesuit?

The congregation chose to address this theme, not by developing an elaborated theology of priesthood, but rather by considering the priestly dimension of Jesuit identity and mission in the light of the Society’s founding charism. Throughout the Society’s history, ministerial priesthood has been regarded as central to its identity and apostolic mission. The expression of this priesthood was to be very broad. It could be said that no ministry which prepared the way for the Kingdom or which helped arouse faith in

⁹⁷ GC 34, d. 7, no. 14.

⁹⁸ *Acta Romana* 16:435, 21:640; GC 32, d. 1, no. 5.

the Gospel was outside the scope of Jesuit priests.⁹⁹ Since the Society's founding, Jesuits have exercised their ministry most particularly where the needs were greatest, where there were not others to minister to those needs, and where the more universal good could be found. This ministry has been particularly directed towards those who had not heard the Gospel, those who were at the margins of the Church or of society, those who had been denied their dignity, those who were voiceless and powerless, those weak in faith or alienated from it, those whose values were undermined by contemporary culture, those whose needs were greater than they could bear.

Wherever in the Church, even in the most difficult and extreme fields, in the crossroads of ideologies, in the front line of social conflict, there has been and there is confrontation between the deepest desires of the human person and the perennial message of the Gospel, there also there have been, and there are, Jesuits.¹⁰⁰

From the perspective of this writer, whatever might have been lacking in the *identity* section of "The Jesuit Brother" was richly supplied by "The Jesuit Priest: Ministerial Priesthood and Jesuit Identity." It spoke of the identity he shares with his brother priest. By emphasizing the prophetic dimension of priesthood, it ultimately spoke of what *all* Jesuits are and what *all* Jesuits are called to become. It was undoubtedly important that the congregation produce separate decrees on the Jesuit brother and the Jesuit priest. In the ideal world, however, this writer would hope that some future general congregation will produce a single document addressing both themes and, in doing so, illustrate the unity of the "one and the same vocation" shared by all Jesuits.

As early as 1978 Fr. Arrupe had warned of the serious vocation crisis among the brothers.

Vocations to the brothers in the Society have diminished to such a degree that more than a few doubt whether this grade will survive in the Society. There are provinces that have not had a single vocation to the brothers in ten years. . . . The extinction of this grade would represent an irreparable loss, a real mutilation with most serious consequences for the body of the Society and its apostolate in the Church.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ GC 34, d. 6, nos. 8, 10, 15.

¹⁰⁰ GC 34, d. 6, nos. 11f., quoting an allocution of Pope Paul VI to GC 32.

¹⁰¹ *Acta Romana* 17:471.

About a month later he underlined this point by calling it "a grave problem touching the charism of the Society . . . [one that] touches me personally, and should touch every Jesuit."¹⁰²

The decline in the number of brother vocations seems particularly troublesome. Whereas some parts of the world continue to receive significant numbers of scholastic vocations, the decline in the number of brother vocations is almost universal. The reasons for this diminution are many and complex. Numerous social, cultural, and religious changes can be singled out, including a fundamental questioning about the nature of religious life itself. Moreover, within the Society a lack of understanding persists about the brother's vocation, as well as a perceived inability to distinguish adequately between a Jesuit vocation and a call to priesthood.

Fifteen *postulata* had been submitted to the congregation on the topic of vocations and vocation promotion. The congregation responded with its substantive, though brief, decree.¹⁰³ A vocation is a gift from God. Although no human action can replace the action of the Spirit, God uses human instruments. Vocation promotion may take many forms, yet vocations ultimately come into being and develop when candidates discover Jesuits who are open and willing to share themselves and the mystery of God's presence in their lives.

The brother's vocation is often described in terms more applicable to a priest. The result is more often a description of what the brother is *not* than of what he *is*: he is *not* a priest. The vocation of the Jesuit priest can be readily, though incompletely, perceived in terms of his sacramental ministry. The brother, of course, lacks such an immediately identifiable image. This writer feels that if the brother's vocation is to be presented as a valid option for a man considering a Jesuit vocation, it must be presented in terms not only of his apostolic activity but also of that substantive part of his life from which this activity flows—his experience of being called by God, his deepen-

¹⁰² Ibid., 17:380; also in *Jesuit Brothers' Vocation*, 94f.

¹⁰³ GC 34, d. 10. A minor historical point touches upon the decree in its present form. A longer decree had been prepared. As it approached a vote in a plenary session, thought was being given to the congregation's producing only one or two long decrees along the lines of "Companions of Jesus Sent into Today's World" from the previous congregation. The documents in preparation would then be subsumed into one or the other of these longer documents. Thus the longer "vocation" decree was reduced to its present size (although the "long" decree into which it was to be subsumed never materialized). The decree included a recommendation that Fr. General write a letter to the Society on the practical aspects of promoting vocations to the Society, a letter which he wrote on September 29, 1997 (*Acta Romana* 22:158-61).

ing relationship with Jesus Christ, and his growing openness to God's love and power in his life.

The diminution in the number of brothers is a serious concern. Moreover, the dearth of brother vocations combined with the brothers' advanced median age seems to indicate that this diminishment will continue for the foreseeable future.¹⁰⁴ It would be a mistake, however, if numbers became the criterion by which the vitality of his vocation was judged. The brother's vocation is a radical following of the Gospel message. It is the "narrow way"—truly "religious life in its essence." In spite of any hope to the contrary, it is unrealistic to expect large numbers to be drawn to the brother's vocation.¹⁰⁵

The final point of the congregation's "brother document" summarized a number of important changes in the Society's law that touched upon the brother.¹⁰⁶ Two of them bear special notice.

GC 31 reformed the legislation dealing with province congregations, making possible a broader participation in them. As part of this reform, it decreed that all formed brothers could vote for the delegates to a province congregation (they were said to have "active voice") and at least one but no more than five formed brothers could be elected as delegates (they were said to have "passive voice").¹⁰⁷ GC 32 extended "active voice" to all members after five years in the Society and "passive voice" after eight years.¹⁰⁸ GC 34 abolished the limitation on the number of formed brothers who could participate in a province congregation.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Since 1981 an average of only 32.4 brother candidates per year have entered the Society, a number which represents just 5.5 percent of all Jesuit vocations during those years. The brother is now nine and one-half years older than his nonbrother Jesuit counterpart. In early 1998, the average age for all Jesuits was 56.79 years, for non-brothers 55.74 years, and for brothers 65.23 years.

¹⁰⁵ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, "Father General on Brothers' Vocations," *News and Features* 25, no. 4 (1997): 26.

¹⁰⁶ GC 34, d. 7, no. 21.

¹⁰⁷ GC 31, d. 40, nos. 2, 4.

¹⁰⁸ GC 32, d. 14, no. 11. At least one nonformed member must attend the congregation, but no more than five such can be elected as delegates.

¹⁰⁹ GC 34, d. 23, D, no. 4. At least 50 percent of the participants, however, must be professed.

GC 34 decreed that all formed members had the right to be “electors” in a general congregation.¹¹⁰ Unlike the seven brothers (and others) who participated in GC 34 as procurators *ad negotia*, an elector has the right to participate in *all* voting during the congregation, including the election of a superior general and the assistants *ad providentiam*. This means that a province congregation can now elect any formed brother as a delegate to a general congregation.

The fundamental relationship between priesthood and the “fourth vow” is clearly stipulated in the Institute.¹¹¹ When GC 32 expressed its desire to extend profession to all formed members, Pope Paul VI intervened and directed that no change was to be made. Although the “matter of the fourth vow” could be considered closed, it continues to surface in many discussions pertaining to the brother.

This writer feels it important to point out that if profession were to be extended to all formed Jesuits, the only juridic change to affect the brother would be the manner of his dismissal, were he to

GC 34 decreed that all formed members had the right to be “electors” in a general congregation.

leave the Society. The brother can now be elected to a province or a general congregation and can hold virtually any position in the Society for which priesthood is not required by Church law. The brother, with or without solemn profession, is barred from being a superior, provincial, or superior general because Church law requires priesthood for these positions. Extending solemn profession to the brother could be seen as having important symbolic value, but that’s all it would have.¹¹²

The Loyola Symposium had proposed to the congregation the creation of some structure “at the level of the central government of the Society” to deal with all matters pertaining to the brother. The congregation responded by asking Fr. General, if he judged it helpful, to establish this

¹¹⁰ GC 34, d. 23, sec. A, no. 2. The number of nonprofessed electors, however, must not exceed 10 percent of the members of the congregation. In this same section provision is made if no brother is elected to the general congregation: “In any case, Fr. General (or Vicar General) will provide for the participation of some brothers, at least as procurators *ad negotia*.”

¹¹¹ *General Examen*, [12].

¹¹² The question is occasionally raised about the “fourth vow” and its possible relationship to attracting brother vocations. This writer feels that the “fourth vow” is a subtle internal matter that would have no meaning for a candidate considering a Jesuit vocation, and would thus have no effect on brother vocations.

structure.¹¹³ Late in 1995 this writer received a telephone call from Rome in which he was informed that Fr. Kolvenbach had judged that it would be helpful, and that he was being invited to consider taking the position. Two months later he received a letter from Fr. General appointing him *consiliarius peritus* for brothers and undersecretary of the Society.¹¹⁴ The position of *consiliarius peritus* is essentially that of consultant to the superior general for a specific concern. He is a member of the Extended General Council—a position which serves the dual function of giving him a greater understanding of the needs and concerns of the worldwide Society and providing a medium in which to make his own contribution.

Conclusion

The “problem” of the brother is still very much with us. Not only does the diminution in their numbers continue but, in terms of social reality, they remain in a time of transition. The candidate entering the Society today as a brother and the activity in which he will be engaged bear small resemblance to the candidate and the activity as they existed forty years ago. His once clearly defined image and well-understood identity have become increasingly blurred. These past forty years, however, have witnessed a number of important events—general congregations, gatherings of brothers, talks by superiors general—that have been extremely helpful in shedding light on the nature of the brother’s vocation. This paper was written to document these events, briefly to describe the setting in which they occurred, to point out their accomplishments, and to assess their meaning. Each played a unique but significant role, but together they reformed, explained, encouraged, inspired. GC 31 awoke in the brother the apostolic dimension of his Jesuit vocation and, in doing so, returned him to his rightful place in the mainstream of the Society’s life. Fr. Arrupe’s masterful interweaving of *koinonia*, *diakonia*, and *kerygma* shed much light on the essential unity of the Jesuit vocation. Fr. Kolvenbach’s similar treatment of unity and diversity touched upon the dynamic element in the Jesuit vocation and its ongoing call to union. “The Jesuit Priest: Ministerial Priesthood and Jesuit Identity” played an important role in clarifying the brother’s position in a “priestly” body and the meaning of “Jesuit identity.”

It seems important to point out, however, that each of these initiatives that touched upon the nature of the brother’s vocation, while not ignoring that he was a brother, chose to focus on the “Jesuit” dimension of

¹¹³ GC 34, d. 7, no. 13.

¹¹⁴ *Acta Romana* 22:20f.

his vocation. As the brother's role in the Society has grown to include all "tasks for which [he] may have a God-given talent and in which [he] may be of assistance and example 'for the help of souls,'" it seems that he is perceived less in terms of his being "a brother" and more as a fellow-Jesuit.¹¹⁵

Until GC 31, general congregations dealt almost exclusively with the Society's law and directives. Thus, they spoke of formation programs, the time for prayer, the role of the superior—areas in which the parameters could be clearly defined and the legislators' expectations clearly understood. Since that time, however, the scope of their legislation has been expanded into other areas, including those touching upon attitudes and interior dispositions. Thus, the Jesuit is now reminded that "attitudes persist among us which call for conversion, and there is need for greater esteem and appreciation of the brother's vocation."¹¹⁶ It seems, however, that in spite of any advantages attached to developing proper interior dispositions, they can hardly be legislated. GC 31 recognized this difficulty and supported its directives in this area with appropriate structural reform. Thus, in its desire that all might be of "one heart and one mind," it directed that "every social distinction in community life" was to be avoided and that novice brothers and scholastic novices experience "suitable sharing of life and work" to promote mutual appreciation of their respective vocations. Proper interior dispositions should certainly be encouraged, and it is undoubtedly appropriate that future general congregations do so. Yet it is unrealistic to expect this hope to be realized without the establishment of suitable means to bring it to fruition.

Legislation alone, however, should not be viewed as the solution. It is unrealistic for the brother to hope for "greater esteem and appreciation" of his vocation without his own effort. His vocation will be best esteemed and appreciated when he himself is esteemed and appreciated—as a man of the Spirit, as an active participant in the life of the community and its apostolate, and as a person who exhibits both a willingness to share his faith and a continued openness to growth in all its dimensions. Ultimately, there will be a greater esteem and appreciation of the brother's vocation only when Jesuits—priests and brothers alike—become active participants in the process to bring this hope to reality.

This paper ends as it began, on the theme of identity. What is a Jesuit brother? We have here documented numerous attempts to answer this question, not so much in its entirety as in its many components. Some

¹¹⁵ GC 31, d. 7, no. 4.

¹¹⁶ GC 34, d. 7, no. 10.



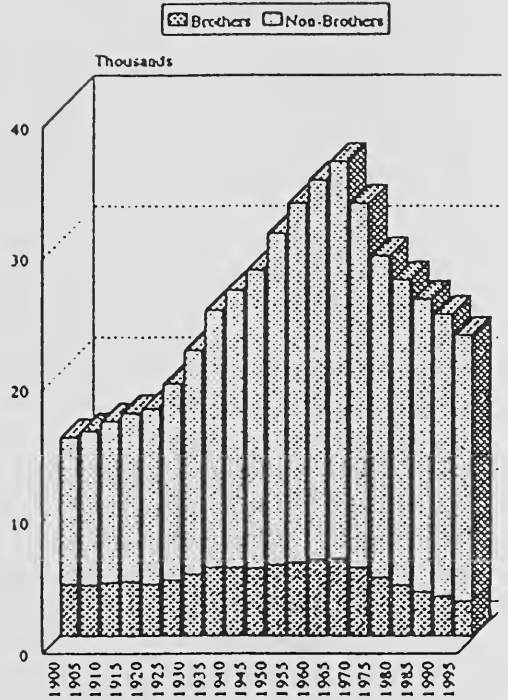
readers of this paper may be disappointed that the question remains unanswered. This was not an oversight. When all is said and done, it is important to recognize that the Jesuit brother's identity must remain elusive. To paraphrase what was stated earlier, the brother's identity must remain a blend of timeless essentials with the time-bound lived expressions of those essentials. Like the world and the brother himself, the nature of his vocation must continue to change and evolve. Ultimately, it must continue to be both discovered and created.



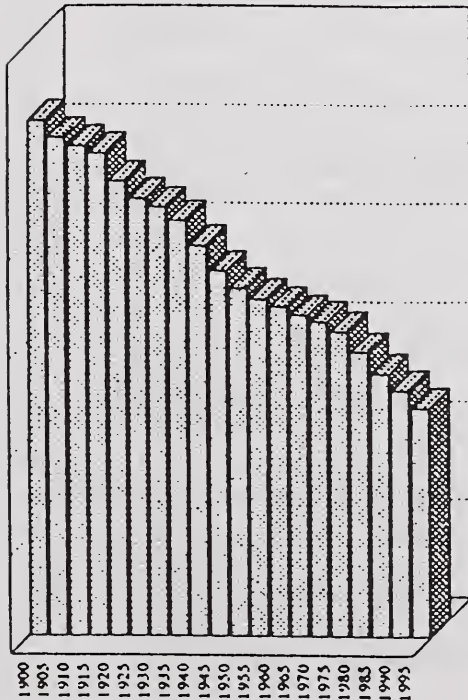
Appendix

Year	Univ.	FF	%FF
1900	15,073	3,944	26.17
1905	15,513	3,925	25.30
1910	16,296	4,060	24.91
1915	16,946	4,154	24.51
1920	17,245	3,982	23.09
1925	19,176	4,259	22.21
1930	21,678	4,719	21.77
1935	24,732	5,216	21.09
1940	26,293	5,214	19.83
1945	27,784	5,150	18.54
1950	30,579	5,404	17.67
1955	32,899	5,637	17.13
1960	34,687	5,801	16.72
1965	36,038	5,872	16.29
1970	32,898	5,257	15.98
1975	28,856	4,459	15.45
1980	27,053	3,901	14.42
1985	25,549	3,410	13.25
1990	24,421	3,050	12.49
1995	22,869	2,654	11.61

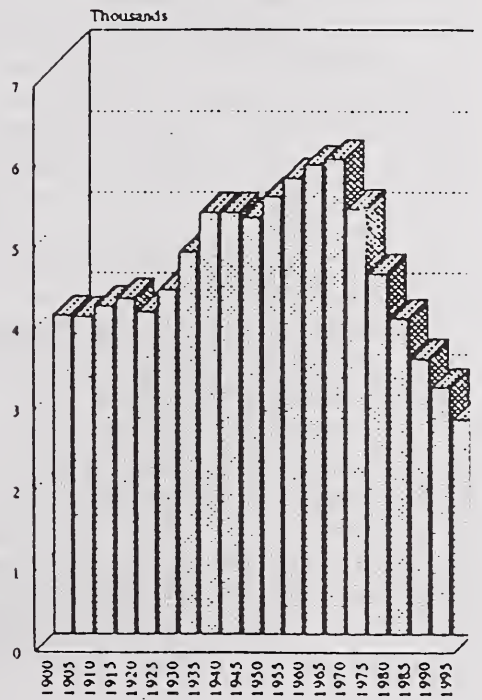
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Percentage of Brothers: 1900 - 1995



Brothers: 1900 - 1995



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