

The members of the Apostolic Planning Steering Committee read, listened to, and reflected on the reports from the Conversation and Consultation groups that gathered in Jesuit communities and apostolic works during the fall of 2022. On January 11, 2023, the members of the committee met and, for a full day, shared their reflections on these reports in spiritual conversation. On January 12, the committee processed these reflections and discerned four themes that characterize both the experience of the Spirit alive and laboring in the ministries and works of the province, and the future to which the Spirit is calling them.

The Committee also discerned two fundamental questions underlying each of these directions.

### Apostolic Directions

#### **1. Grounding our Experience of God through the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatian Spirituality and Ignatian Discernment**

- The Spiritual Exercises are experienced as the essential, fundamental and privileged formative tool both for those who minister, and for those who are ministered to. The very identity and mission of the ministry are inextricably tied to and dependent on spiritual formation through the Exercises
- Ignatian Spirituality animates the work itself as well as the day-to-day management, choices and conduct of the work. This expresses itself as a continual search for God in all things, and in an attitude and posture of discipleship.
- Intentional processes for Ignatian Discernment are employed to direct the mission, preferences and choices of the work at every level, including governance, leadership, and implementation.

#### **2. Promoting and Supporting Mutual Collaboration**

Collaboration, in its many forms, is experienced as the essential means not only for Jesuit ministries, but for Church ministries in general. This is not understood to be a practice born out of necessity or scarcity, but as a rich, vibrant and graced response to the baptismal call of both Jesuits and lay persons to service and holiness.

This experience and call include collaboration:

- between ministries & the Province
- among Jesuits and apostolic colleagues in ministries
- within and across apostolic sectors
- within and across regions
- with the local Church
- with and within the local community

#### **3. Fostering Community and Belonging**

The works of the province minister in a context of brokenness, division and alienation, characterized by social and political polarization, economic disparity, social exclusion and distrust of and estrangement from the Church and other institutions. The ministry of healing and reconciliation is experienced as central to these works, thereby creating communities of

belonging, inclusion, mutual ownership, purpose, joy and hope where each individual is cared for and valued.

The focus of the ministry of community and belonging is both internal, as it fosters the growth of community among its members, and external, as it confronts injustice, promotes human dignity, and works for peace and reconciliation beyond its walls, while inviting and welcoming others share in the life of the community.

#### **4. Exercising an Apostolic Preference for Youth and the Marginalized**

More than just a response to the Universal Apostolic Preferences, a large number of those engaged in these conversations noted the special urgency, importance and opportunities for ministries that empower us to continue and to find new ways to be intentional and creative about ministry to youth and the marginalized. Central to this are:

- a posture of listening to the experience of youth and marginalized people
- accompanying them through their joys and struggles
- creating spaces to empower their voices

### **Two Fundamental Questions Underlying Each of the Directions**

#### **1. What is (are) the appropriate apostolic model(s) for implementing the mission of the Province in this day and context?**

Up until about 50 years ago, the predominant model of furthering the mission of the Society of Jesus in the United States was through institutions and works that it owned and operated (or had substantial control over), and assigning Jesuits to fill most of the ministerial positions.

Then over the last 50 years or so, a new model emerged, one of sponsorship of institutions or other works, varying from sector to sector. The Society's sponsorship was exercised in large part through: assignment of men, sharing of financial and other temporal resources, and embedding its charism in the work in collaboration with lay colleagues.

**With the Society's decreased ability to assign men and share financial and other temporal resources, in what ways is the existing model still a viable and effective means for implementing the mission? Are there other models to consider and develop?**

#### **2. Is there a particular/distinctive mission & role for Jesuits in the vision of Province ministry for the future; what is it?**

With decreasing manpower and a larger number of ministerial commitments, there is understandable anxiety about Jesuit assignments being reduced to an exercise in filling slots with a concurrent desire to renew our understanding of and appreciation for the particular charism Jesuits bring to our apostolic works.

**As the province considers these four apostolic directions: in what ways can Jesuits be uniquely and effectively prepared and assigned for the furtherance of a mission grounded in these four apostolic directions; what opportunities might there be for nurturing future vocations to the Society?**