The Mission in a Time of Pandemic
page 5

Church, Doubts, and Martyrdom:
Father Ismael Moreno, SJ
page 28

Googling God in All Things
page 16

Doing Good by Doing Business at Cowork Magis
page 32
This year’s second edition of Canadian Jesuits focuses on one of the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus: To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future. All human beings, believers or not, desire to be happy. However, the future for young persons in particular appears bleak on the ecological front, with a sense of disunity, injustice, and, more recently, uncertainty in the face of a pandemic that leaves death and destruction in its wake. Nevertheless, life encompasses not only devastation and decay but also birth and renewal. A grain of wheat continues to grow on icy nights because under the newly fallen snow, the seed is still green.

In recent years, and even during the crisis of COVID-19, Jesuits and partners in mission have helped to plant and nurture the roots of a new tomorrow. We do not imagine a simple return to the social, political, economic, or even religious conditions—broader and older than those of COVID-19—which led to the chaos that many of us experience today.

More broadly speaking, as an Ignatian family that desires to respond to Pope Francis’s call, we are committed to collaborate with others to eradicate the multidimensional pandemic of poverty, of climate emergency, and of an underlying exploitative culture that privileges a few and discards those perceived as the weakest in creation. Just as systemic evil exists and sucks the life out of our world, systemic grace abounds through our willingness to be conduits of life and love alongside others.

God is already at work in the world and, by his grace, when we accept the challenge to labour together for the common good, to love one another, a better world is possible. We see this when strangers link arms with each other to protect minorities (#BlackLivesMatter) or offer help to those who feel lonely or isolated (#CareMongering). We see this when leaders, institutions, and citizens unite to defeat a tragic disease. We see this across Canada and around the world. And it is proof that when moved by Love in our hearts, change can happen.

These pages offer a glimpse into the short- and long-term initiatives of the Society of Jesus, of our colleagues and various groups of collaborators and friends: spiritual accompaniment of people affected in one way or another by the pandemic, attention to vulnerable or ill persons, online learning programs, promotion of communal life, and intellectual work to examine—with Gospel depth—the causes of the crisis, as well as calls for advocacy and collaboration with institutions for the construction of a better world.

May the fire of the Holy Spirit give us the life we need to continue working together as agents of reconciliation and renewal.

José Antonio Sánchez
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In this Issue

2 From the Director
4 From the Provincial

Our Works
5 Love in a Time of Pandemic: Jesuits Respond to COVID-19
8 Camp Lac Simon: 47,018 Days to Grow Together
11 Multidimensional Development: Empowering Haiti’s Rural Communities

News
13 Canadian News
14 News from Haiti

Spirituality
16 Googling God in All Things: A Psalm for Hard Times

Portrait of a Canadian Jesuit
18 On Life, Laughter, and Lenses: Marc Rizzetto, SJ

Ignatian Wisdom in Daily Life
22 In Deeds More Than in Words: What Can St. Ignatius Teach Us about Gratitude?

Resources
24 Publications and Resources

Formation
25 Brave Enough to Try: Marc André Veselovsky, SJ, and Jesuit Formation

International
28 On the Front Lines for a Just Society: Fr. Ismael Moreno, SJ
31 International News
32 Journeying with Youth at Cowork Magis: A Space for Start-ups in Paris

Witnesses of a Life
36 History Today: How Jesuits and Wendat Experienced Epidemics in New France
Dear Friends,

Be assured of the prayers of the Jesuits of Canada during these months when we are still very much focused on the COVID-19 reality that has quickly redefined much of how we function as a society. We are also living in the age of the Jesuit Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs), and the theme of the current issue of Canadian Jesuits is the third UAP, which focuses on accompanying youth.

In a talk I gave to the student body of Loyola High School (Montreal) last fall, I stressed the importance of making the most of the high school and university years not simply to find the best job but also to strive to become the best person possible, ready to face the challenges of an ever changing world as a mature human being attentive to the common good. In the context of a Jesuit school, this means being diligent in studies, certainly, but also taking advantage of Ignatian retreats, social outreach programs and becoming ecologically aware.

I also directed some words to teachers and shared that, in our rapidly changing world, tried-and-true teaching methods are often in need of an overhaul. Creativity and thinking outside the box have always been de rigeur in an Ignatian curriculum. The Ignatian image of “a balance at equilibrium,” ready and able to respond and adapt at a moment’s notice, has served the Jesuits well over the centuries. Jesuit formation stresses the need to be rigorously informed and highly adaptable, traits that have been integrated in our educational institutions since the first school was founded in 1548.

For those who accompany young people, authenticity and spiritual depth are essential. These anchors help us to develop a flexible attitude towards novelty and challenge. Father General Arturo Sosa has noted, “Accompanying young people puts us on the path of personal, communal, and institutional conversion.” Youth in our age may sometimes be less religious than many of their forbears, but this does not make them less open to seeking the deep meaning of life or being available to share in a common mission to make our world a better place.

What are our young people telling us? Are we ready to listen and to dialogue? Whether our relationship is that of teacher and student, parent and child, or any variety of combinations, dialogue and listening are vital. To truly dialogue means to listen first, take time to receive what the other is saying and then, if we have something pertinent to say, to offer a response. Youth must learn from their elders, of course, but it is also important that we ask ourselves: What can we learn? What are we learning from this young person or group?

In the spirit of openness and dialogue,

Erik Oland, SJ
Provincial of the Jesuits of Canada
Being together has never been more difficult than in the time of COVID-19. Both churches and meeting places have been closed, while physical distancing measures and fear of the virus have created a context in which living and acting in the service of others is difficult.

“The crisis provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted at least three important challenges that face Western societies in particular: people need to live in community but rarely have the skills to easily create one; political structures frequently lose their capacity to encourage citizens to serve the common good; and many people no longer have the spiritual resources necessary to discover deeper meaning and guide them during a time of crisis,” explains Fr. Gilles Mongeau, SJ, socius of the Jesuit Province of Canada.

Oriented by the call of the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus to work for the common good and to show the way to God ‘by every means possible’, Jesuits across the world are showing a great deal of creativity, whether in bringing people together in new ways or by being there to listen and accompany them through these worrisome times. They creatively connect with those they serve through digital means, or, of course, the trusty telephone!

“In the moment, we called on Jesuits and Jesuit works to propose ways of creating community, even online; to find methods of encouraging people to put their hearts and spirits at the service of the common good.”
the service of the common good; and to suggest ways to discover a path to the new meanings and values that can emerge from paying attention to one’s deepest and most authentic interior life,” continued Fr. Mongeau.

The initiatives born in the context of the coronavirus were largely led by the younger members of the Jesuit Province of Canada. Below are some examples of initiatives launched by Jesuits and Jesuit works.

PROVINCIAL INITIATIVES

Although churches are closed, the Church is, first and foremost, the people of God gathered as the Body of Christ. This is why the Jesuits of Canada have put a model of the Liturgy of the Word online, along with time for spiritual conversation. Used as much by members of the clergy as by lay groups, this initiative is being used not only across the country but also worldwide!

Moreover, since these times of crisis can be difficult to navigate, a “network of listeners” has been created to help people affected by the pandemic deal with their fears and questions. These listeners are priests, deacons, clerics, and laypeople who are already experienced in listening to people who face difficulties in their lives.

VILLA SAINT-MARTIN: AN EXAMPLE OF CREATIVITY

“At Villa Saint-Martin,” explains Fr. Sylvester Tan, SJ, “our Young Adult Team proactively moved to full online work even before social distancing was widely implemented, so we’ve been offering daily (!) activities online ever since then in collaboration with our local partners. We’ve even hosted a full-day Zoom-based discernment workshop. In addition, we’ve offered classes, time for silent prayer and reflection, small group conversations, a mass…”

The Jesuits at the Villa are keeping things fairly small so that they can exercise a real ministry among the young adult community in Montreal with a proper cura personalis; it would be good to see similar initiatives in other places.

Recently, the Montreal diocesan Youth Ministry posted a screenshot of one of the retreats for young adults at Villa Saint-Martin. “I don’t know who gave it to them, but it looks great and really shows the energy and creativity of our team, as well as the wonders of collaboration with...”
other institutions. As Fr. General of the Society Arturo Sosa, SJ, emphasized, ‘They do not share our mission. We, as Jesuits, share with others the mission of Jesus Christ, the missio dei.’ It’s a very important approach, and this is how the Young Adult Team has been approaching things from the very beginning,” says Fr. Tan.

ELSEWHERE IN CANADA

All kinds of initiatives have proliferated across the country.

Certain parishes, such as Our Lady of Lourdes in Toronto, have made their masses available online.

Michael Knox, SJ, and his colleagues at Martyrs’ Shrine are preparing weekly messages of prayer and reflection for the members of the Martyrs’ Shrine Association. They also offer pastoral services by telephone to older people in their community.

Indeed, the internet is not the only means of communication. Fr. Mario Brisson, SJ, uses a wide array of methods. “Considering the current situation, I am performing spiritual and psychological accompaniment as well as psychosocial support by text, email, and telephone.”

Even those Jesuits less familiar with technology have learned new techniques to communicate with people. For Fr. Paul Robson, SJ, this period has been an initiation into the world of Facebook.

“Here at Wiikwemkoong, I have been doing some things that are very new to me: I’ve published a reflection on the parish Facebook page. We are also planning to film and televise our mass locally.”

Gordon Rixon, SJ, professor at Regis College, has, for his part, had to learn how to teach from a distance.

“Like my colleagues, I have put my classes and student support online. As the days go by, we are getting more familiar with videoconferencing.”

CONNECTING OFFLINE

Jesuit works and parishes are also connecting with people offline. At Our Lady of Lourdes parish, the Connect & Care ministry has paired up 86 older and/or vulnerable parishioners with 53 volunteers from the parish.

Loyola House Retreat & Training Centre in Guelph has started to welcome homeless people from Guelph who need to self-isolate for 14 days.

“The general director of the local drop-in centre, a good friend of mine, asked us if we would be interested in partnering with certain service agencies in the county, and we said yes right away. Only afterwards did we study the logistics, because it was a natural choice for the Jesuits and for me. There was no doubt that we were going to help. It was just a question of knowing how,” says Lisa Calzonetti, director of operations, Ignatius Jesuit Centre.

A UNIQUELY JESUIT RESPONSE TO COVID-19

“The initiatives launched by the Jesuits of Canada favour the creation of small, online ‘base communities,’ including, among others, providing tools for spiritual conversation and communal discernment. We also offer several spiritual retreats and meditation exercises for times of crisis in order to help people re-centre themselves so that they can experience a more profound internal peace and freedom and open themselves to new possibilities and directions in their lives. We are therefore putting an emphasis on personal formation in order to help people become empowered to take responsibility for the common good,” concluded Fr. Gilles Mongeau.

Thanks to the work of Jesuits and their colleagues, the experience of God continues to reach people exactly where they are, whether on or offline.
About Lac Simon:

- Founded in 1956
- 47,018 days spent at camp
- 22,793 days of volunteering
- 42 campers per summer, per camp (two weeks for the boys and two weeks for the girls)
- All staff are volunteers
It changed my life!” This phrase has come up in every conversation that I have had about Camp Lac Simon. Celebrating its 64th anniversary this year, the summer camp was started through a Jesuit initiative, and the Society is still, in the words of camp director André “DD” Courchesne, the “heart and soul” of the work. It must be said that the Jesuits were involved in the 20th century both in scouting and in the founding of summer camps in Quebec.

The idea behind the camp is to bring together volunteer counsellors (who are often well-to-do) from Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf and underprivileged young people between the ages of 9 and 15 from Pointe-Saint-Charles (Montreal) who have not had easy lives, a sector where Ignatian pastoral activities go back a long way. The camp thus forms men and women for others.

Several people involved in Camp Lac Simon offered to share their experiences of the camp. Enryck Arbour del Vecchio, who was a camper for four years, is still in school and would like to train in paramedic care. Mathieu Floriot, a former camper then volunteer at the camp, is now one of its directors. Following the Ignatian principle of forming ‘persons for others’, the camp thus seeks to reconcile socio-economic divisions and deeper union with God through service to the neighbour.

Each interview was conducted separately, but many of the answers often resembled each other word for word! In short, the camp does not change people fully, but it helps them move towards human greatness.

NOT EVERYONE IS LUCKY ENOUGH TO SEE PINK CLOUDS

After over sixty years of activity and working in a new context, is the camp still relevant? André did not hesitate at all before responding. “Today, the camp is more relevant than ever. In 2020, people have more electronic media but fewer moments of introspection. At the camp, there are no electronics, but there are moments when we pause. We reconnect with who we are and with nature, too.” He then described a striking example of a scene that occurred between a former Brébeuf counsellor and a young camper after a beach activity.

“The group is ready to leave, but one of the campers refuses to go. The counsellor insists, and the little boy says, ‘No way! Look, we should stay here, it’s so beautiful!’ The counsellor asks, ‘What are you looking at?’ ‘THAT!’ the boy says, and gestures to the lake and the sky. For him it was the first time; he was in full contemplation. It really astounded the counsellor, and he said, ‘It was on that day that I realised that not everyone is lucky enough to see pink clouds.’”

In André’s experience, the camp is important if only because it awakens the young campers to the hope that there is something better than the street, or because it helps Brébeuf students become more aware of other social realities. It teaches everyone to be better in their relationships with others.

“We don’t change the world at Lac Simon, but the campers really appreciate these two weeks,” added Simon Guertin.
IMPACT ON THE CAMPERS

Mathieu Floriot is a striking example of the impact of Camp Lac Simon. “The global experience of the camp, where we learn to push ourselves and excel, is something that has helped me a lot in my life. When I returned to the camp for the first time as an adult, I remembered everything I had been through and, I have to admit, it was very moving. The camp will always be a part of who I am.”

For Enryck Arbour del Vecchio, the most beautiful moments at the camp were when everyone was together. “At the lake, everyone is at the same level. It’s just awesome because, at the camp, you can disconnect from the world for two weeks and spend time with good people. You discover who you are because you have the time to think, because you don’t need to worry about anything else. You go there to have fun.”

IMPACT ON THE COUNSELLORS

The contemplative and relational experience of Camp Lac Simon changes the ways in which the people involved see the world and, sometimes, it affects the choices they make. This is the case not just for the campers but for the counsellors, too. Although Simon Guertin went for fun, he realised the extent to which the camp allowed him to make his own contribution to the campers.

“The camp experience completely changed my life, especially in terms of my studies. [He is now a student in psychoeducation.] I was at Brébeuf and was planning to go to business school at HEC. When I went to the camp, I had a revelation about social inequalities and about how lucky I had been. It really shook me, and my mission ever since has been to reduce the level of these inequalities.”

Camp Lac Simon also had an impact on Lucas Wise’s career. “During my stay at the lake, I developed a work ethic and perseverance that have stayed with me till today at school and at work. My two years as a cook have also contributed to my passion for all things food-related, which is the subject of my master’s degree. I am looking to find innovative chemical methods to avoid and transform food waste, something that is promoted at Camp Lac Simon.

A TIGHT-KNIT CAMP

“It’s always a special moment when a camper comes to me on his last day to hug me and cry.” This testimony from Simon Guertin sheds light on the bonds forged at the camp that can last for years. André, for example, has known a camper since 1979–80 and is one of his best friends to this day. “It’s also important to understand that when you hold the hand of one of these kids, you aren’t allowed to let go.”

Enryck Arbour del Vecchio agrees: “Every year it’s fun to see the counsellors again. Even today I still see some of the counsellors and André. It’s not just a simple two-week camp. These are people who will stay in my heart for the rest of my life, who I will continue to see, who have only brought goodness into my life and who support me.” This support is also there for the counsellors such as Lucas Wise, who remembers receiving “incredible support from the community at the lake when I left, when things got difficult for me. It’s impossible to express how much I appreciate this support, even to this day.”

We will end this article with a word of advice for young people from Enryck Arbour del Vecchio: “You can’t be afraid to try new things. I was really scared the first time I went to the camp, but I would have regretted not going. New things can bring good things into your life. The camp changed my way of thinking and my way of acting.”
The Support Group for Rural Development (GADRU) is a nonprofit organization founded on November 16, 1992, by Fr. Jean-Mary Louis, SJ, not only to oversee and promote the rights of those living in rural communities but also to participate in the construction of an inclusive, fair, and democratic society. According to GADRU’s founding philosophy, the people who live in these communities are to be the principal actors in rural development, which is why GADRU is committed to accompanying these families, by means of Ignatian spirituality, through both local and national programs.
ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES

At the national level, GADRU is implementing a program of counselling service for the members of the Agro-Ecological and Sustainable Development Platform (PADED) and the National Confederation of Haitian Agro-Ecological Families (CONAFAH). This work consists primarily of training, organization, accompaniment, and networking. PADED brings together Caritas and other NGOs that work in the agro-ecological domain and has a national reach, with over thirty member institutions. It has also become autonomous and now has its own permanent secretariat in Port-au-Prince.

There are around 30,000 rural families who make up CONAFAH. This agro-ecological, rural movement is active in the country’s ten departments. GADRU is working to consolidate CONAFAH’s influence through the training of its leaders, promoters, and agro-ecological technicians.

At the local level, GADRU is actively involved in the projects of over 800 rural families in two geographic departments, the North-East (Mombin Crochu, Vallières, Carice, Mont-Organisé) and the North-West (Mahotière).

IMPACT AND INFLUENCE

First and foremost, GADRUS’ activities have had an ecological impact through the ways in which they contribute to and encourage the development of new environmentally friendly behaviours among rural families. By promoting greater ecological awareness, these activities aim to encourage more plant cover in the target areas, improving the quality of arable land and developing sustainable agriculture.

The organization also acts on the economic level by setting up mutual solidarities that have allowed rural families to develop a certain financial autonomy without having to rely on loan sharks. Ecological farming thus contributes to improving the economic conditions of the families involved and helps to reduce the food insecurity that many of them face.

Finally, GADRU’s work is having a positive social impact. Its actions have ushered in a new culture among these rural families who have begun to be aware of their rights and potential. The families are also engaged in collective actions and solidarity networks that seek to improve the quality of life in these rural communities by protecting the land and defending their heritage by growing local produce.

Today, in the light of the Universal Apostolic Preferences, GADRU is reflecting on a more explicit integration of two fundamental elements of its work: the spiritual component and the development of the ethical dimension among farmers.
MOVING TOWARDS GREATER ECOLOGICAL ENGAGEMENT IN THE JESUIT PROVINCE OF CANADA

In order to continue its growing ecological engagement and enable Jesuits and their colleagues to imagine different ways of being more environmentally friendly, the Jesuit Province of Canada has decided to appoint an ecological facilitator, John McCarthy, SJ, a doctor of boreal forest ecology and popularizer of science. His primary role is to promote discernment, reflection, and action in order to encourage ecological conversion on the personal, communal, and social levels. This is certainly something to keep an eye on!

PROTECTION OF MINORS AND VULNERABLE PERSONS

The Jesuits of Canada have retained the services of an external organisation, the King International Advisory Group, to examine all the personnel and provincial files that date from 1950 with a view to publishing the names of all Jesuits in the province who have been credibly accused of sexual abuse of minors. “We hear the voices of the victims of child sexual abuse in Canada,” said Fr. Erik Oland, SJ, provincial of the Jesuits of Canada. “It’s the right thing to do in the promotion of institutional transparency and accountability, and an important step in helping to correct the causes of the crisis.”

THE WET’SUWET’EN-COASTAL GASLINK CONFLICT: THE JESUITS OF CANADA CALL FOR A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION AND RESPECT FOR INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Last January, the Jesuits of Canada urged the Canadian government to work diligently to bring about a peaceful resolution to the conflict sparked in the traditional territory of the Wet’suwet’en People by the construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline. “Reconciliation, and even the sustainability of our land, requires a transition from colonial structures and relations to new models of Indigenous self-determination and participation in Confederation,” declared Fr. Erik Oland.

ORDINATIONS IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

Last May, in keeping with public health measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Terrence Prendergast, SJ, Archbishop of Ottawa-Cornwall, ordained Jesuits Christopher Kellerman, Trevor Rainwater, Oshish Tirkey, Jean Francky Guerrier, and Adam Lalonde to the diaconate and Kevin Kelly to the priesthood. The ordinations took place in two separate masses, broadcast live from the almost empty pews of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Toronto. The Prelate and ordinandi wore masks and gloves during the ordination rite and kept an appropriate physical distance whenever required.

The Archbishop reminded all the ordinandi that those called to exercise an ordained ministry in the Church are called to love with the love of Christ and that “whatever our conditions - and many in our world suffer far more than we do from isolation and other restrictions - God always offers us the ‘paradoxical joy’ of the Risen Lord.”
Coronavirus has taken hold in Haiti. In the spring, levels of anxiety and even fear were particularly heightened among the population due to the chronic decay that characterizes most of the state institutions. At a time when other nations are looking inwards, it is difficult to know what the impact of the catastrophe will be if Haiti is hit full on by the virus. With the support of CPAL, and through Foi et Joie and Service Jésuite aux Migrants, we are prepared to intervene directly in Port-au-Prince and in the North-East to concretely accompany several of the most vulnerable families in the country.
A NEW JESUIT PARISH

The Jesuits of the territory of Haiti are looking to establish a greater presence in the Haitian Southern Region, or “Grand Sud.” For this reason, a small Jesuit delegation, including the provincial, travelled to Jérémie in March to evaluate the situation. During their visit, they met with a large group of faithful from the chapel of Carrefour Charles who, for several years, have been asking their bishop, Gontrand Décoste, SJ, to raise their chapel to parish status. The temporary residence of the future parish priest has already been secured as well as the plot of land to be used for the construction of a church and a new presbytery. Bishop Décoste responded positively to the request and formally expressed his desire to see the Society of Jesus take charge of this future parish, which would have Saint Therese of the Child Jesus as its patron.

REFORESTATION AND IRRIGATION FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THE COUNTRY

With a little economic support from the Social Secretariat of the General Curia, the Comunidad Pedro Arrupe in Ouanaminthe, under the leadership of Fr. Brillaire Délices, SJ, has begun a reforestation project. They have established a nursery and organized tree-planting and irrigation activities in two communities where the Society of Jesus possesses a sizable amount of land. The implementation of this project, however, has not been without difficulty in a country where energy consumption depends primarily on charcoal. They have also faced both human and environmental issues, such as a dry climate. The Society of Jesus nevertheless remains convinced that the well-being of the country requires a serious, constant, and large-scale commitment to reforestation.

GREEN ENERGY AT THE NOVITIATE

The novitiate used to have a serious electrical energy problem. For a while, electricity in the city was almost nonexistent, even though bills were sent every month for a service that was not provided. This meant that the generator had to be running all the time, which not only put considerable strain on the house budget but also posed a major ecological problem. The novitiate is now equipped with a new solar-energy system with a capacity of 8 kilowatts, which guarantees the total autonomy of the house in terms of energy. The focus is now on maintenance. The Curia is slowly moving forward in its plan to move all its communities towards solar energy. The next step will be the Spirituality Centre.
In the pandemic absence of public liturgies, perhaps you have found a renewed relevance to the ancient psalms of the Hebrew Bible. Although never fully out of style, they tended to pass us by during Mass, scarcely noticed, as the congregation rifled through the latest file of its collective short-term memory, searching embarrassedly for the response parroted just moments before. With all their anguished cries for deliverance, protection, succor and mercy, the psalms suddenly sound again custom-made for our own distressing situation. So fitting are they to the tightness of crisis that we Jesuits of Guelph agreed unanimously in March to pray Vespers together in choir. You need only the slightest understanding of the spiritual life of your average Canadian Jesuit to appreciate the magnitude of this unlikely concession to communal prayer. Dire measures for dire times, indeed!

Composed in hardship for hardship, the plaintive, often desperate lines of many psalms have accompanied the persecuted, the imprisoned and the morbidly perplexed throughout nearly three millennia. Even Jesus, at his darkest hour in the gospels of Matthew and Mark, dedicates his final breaths to the recitation of the first devastating words of Psalm 22. My “shield,” my “rock,” my “refuge” — such are the psalmist’s names for God when all looks black and hopeless.

While the amplitude of the psalter allows for tailored application of one or more of the 150 psalms to any given situation, they are best read and understood together as an integral body of scripture. That is, to truly grasp one, you need to have a decent hold on them all. Only in their integrity does the power of their individuality fully emerge. Lines such as “Lord, how long will you look on? Save me from roaring beasts,” from Psalm 35, never stray too far from lines such as “Taste and see the goodness of the Lord,” from Psalm 34. Were all lines expressions of anxiety, the psalms would not instill in us the trust they do. Were they all honey and sunshine, they would taste as flat as artificial sweetener in the bitterness of tribulation. So it is spiritually salutary to wrestle with the psalms of lament and desperation when “it’s all good” while savoring the psalms of thanksgiving and praise when the going gets tough. The former keep us mindful that our comfort and privilege are always precarious; any presumed entitlement to them is dangerously false. Recited in the laps of luxury, certainty, pride and grandeur, these psalms should
work on us prophetically as cautionary reminders that we are masters and possessors of nothing, not even our own bodies. In fact, if Jesus is to be believed, persecutions are the only inheritance his followers can be assured of in this life.

On the other hand, as soon as the good life bottoms out and our fictions of security reveal themselves in their full, terrifying vacuity, then we best cleave to the gratitude and praise so colorfully present in psalms such as number 34. “Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.” Who on earth can do that in the stranglehold of a global pandemic? Precisely here the ingenious imagination of faith enters, calling creative attention to reality as it is and as it could be.

“With God there is so much soft-eyed deep-seeing, there’s hearing of motherly power.”

What has popularly become known as mindfulness is a secular version of the contemplative Christian attitude that operates whenever the human person deeply experiences her current embodied reality. Every sensation is proof that we are alive and receptive. By spending reverential time with the million little divine manifestations constantly occurring in our sensitive bodies, we can’t help but “taste and see that the Lord is good.”

It is astonishing that Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, emerged from the bloody trenches of World War I with a profound sense of the divinity that animates all creation. He found God where only death and disaster seemed to dominate. Similarly, Viktor Frankl (Auschwitz survivor) notes: “As the inner life of the [concentration camp] prisoner tended to become more intense, he also experienced the beauty of art and nature as never before.” Frankl recounts several occasions when, cold, sickly and starving, he and other prisoners unexpectedly were overcome with awe and gratitude at the sight of a splendid sunset. Systematically numbed by cruel abuse, suddenly their senses were quickened by attentive presence to reality. These were salvific moments of embodied transcendence.

So dare to count your blessings in the days of crisis. Take time to taste and see. This is not irresponsible escapism or self-delusion. This is vital resistance to the oppression of disappointed claims of ownership and associated despair. It is the incarnational practice of feeling God in all things.

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**Greg Kennedy** is a Jesuit priest working in spirituality and ecology at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre in Guelph, Ontario. His *Reupholstered Psalms: Ancient Songs Sung New* was released by Novalis Press in March 2020.
On Life, Laughter, and Lenses
Marc Rizzetto, SJ
Before our interview, I had been told that Fr. Marc Rizzetto, SJ, was very funny, very deep, and also... very busy... Nothing I learned in the interview that I finally managed to have with him did anything to dispel these rumours. As a hockey player, photographer, comic book reader (his last read was Gender: A Graphic Guide—“Not just a feel-good read,” he told me, “you really learn something.”), and lover of fast food, this Jesuit has a lust for life combined with a real attentiveness to people of all ages. He represents well the Jesuit value of openness, with the conviction that God is already working “in all things.”

These pages contain the “heart” of the interview. An expanded version is available at https://bit.ly/MarcR-profile

WHAT LED YOU TO WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE?

It was perhaps a bit of an accident. I find it easy to connect with people of all ages and backgrounds. Mostly that means making jokes, but I’m equally at ease when talking about church matters to people in clericals while disguised in my own clericals. (laughs)

In fact, what happened was that at a certain moment in my Jesuit formation, I asked to take a step back from the community. I knew that my community was going to take care of me until the end of my days. But at the same time, I wanted to be hired for my talents and not because I was a Jesuit. During my novitiate, all my non-Jesuit friends had to work and do their own shopping, cooking, laundry... And then there was me, who had wanted to take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience but found myself the richest of all the gang. It seemed to me that we were giving a counter-witness to society.

The community let me live in an apartment in Montreal and look for a job. I was hired as a spiritual life and community engagement facilitator. It was very enriching. Over the course of one formative year, this job confirmed my choice and also my capacity to live outside the community if I chose to do that.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT THIS APOSTOLATE.

The world of school is not the same as the world of the Church—it’s the aspects of social engagement that the students find most stimulating. My work was more about forming the students as well-balanced citizens rather than as Catholics per
se. I tried to adapt my teaching to the students. For example, going to prepare food in a shelter for the homeless is often an important experience for secondary school students. When they wonder where homeless people come from and realize that they could come from among their close friends or relatives, there’s a certain challenge that emerges.

YOU WERE ALSO A MILITARY CHAPLAIN FROM 2011 TO 2014.

At the moment, I celebrate mass at the Valcartier military base, and I bless military marriages, but I used to be a chaplain for the army reserves. I did my training in 2012, which could sometimes be pretty intense. I learned a lot about myself, about group cohesion, and about how to create objectives and stick to them.

I did it because the Canadian Armed Forces is one of the best places to do pastoral work and to meet young people. It allows us to be in contact with many people and to accompany those who are returning from deployment as they go through their reintegration process.

WHAT PLACE DO THE JESUITS HAVE IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY?

I think that you have to find your own sense of equilibrium before going to see others. Imposing your faith on others stops them from having freedom of choice. As Jesuits, we try to help people make their own decisions and discern the values that are important to them. It takes longer, but at least the decision is better informed.

BUT YOU ARE ALSO CLOSE TO OLDER JESUITS, WHY?

During an experiment in my novitiate, I was asked to go to the Jesuit infirmary. It allowed me to get to know my older brothers. It was a way of learning more about their work and the evolution of the Church and the community. These people pray for us daily, so it still gives me great pleasure even today to stop by to hear their news, to listen to them and share a bit of what I do.

DO YOU HAVE TIME TO TAKE A VACATION?

This year, I am going to experience my third Love Boat (a reference to a TV show from my childhood). Some cruises look for priests to conduct masses in exchange for cabin and board. We do like a like a sport draft and apply for three cruises. (laughs)

It’s a way of taking some vacation time. There’s the mass but also all the conversations with people who speak of their pain, joy, hopes, and even politics. I find it fun to be able to see the world in a different way.

“I’m looking forward to learning more about myself,” concluded Fr. Rissetto. “Such a big mandate in so few words—I hope I’ve accomplished my mission!”

HIS FAVOURITE JESUIT JOKE?

A Jesuit is taking part in a conference dedicated to the religious vow of obedience. Someone asks him: “Your order places a lot of importance on the vow of obedience. How do you make sure the Jesuits stay faithful to this vow?”

In reality, it’s simple. Our superiors first ask us what we like to do, then they give it to us as our mission, in that way we never have any problems with obedience.

But the audience member insists:

“Yes, but don’t you have any brothers who don’t know what they want to do? And if so, what do you do with them?”

“We call them superiors!” the Jesuit responds.
"As Jesuits, we try to help people make their own decisions and discern the values that are important to them. It takes longer, but at least the decision is better informed."
Newborn babies believe that they’re the centre of their world, if not the centre of the world. When their needs are not satisfied in a timely manner, they know how to make themselves heard by making a racket. As they grow up, they gradually learn that the people around them are also their subjects, the ones who take care of them, who give them everything they need and generously give themselves over to them. We teach toddlers to say “thank you.” Learning to ask nicely (say please!) and be thankful for what we are offered helps us to recognize that not everything is owed to us, but that lots of things are given to us freely and generously, even if we don’t necessarily “earn” them. Gratitude underpins all interpersonal relations. Children who learn to receive the gift of another with gratitude are soon capable of giving to others and welcoming their gratitude. Indeed, children are called upon to grow in gratitude.
As children of God, we are also called to grow in gratitude. God’s gift is always given first and does not depend on our response; like the love of parents for their newborn child—it’s given from the very beginning. God works tirelessly in our favour, even when we do not recognize it. We instinctively ask things of God: “Give us this day…” we say in the Lord’s Prayer. Acknowledging God’s gift—naming it and giving thanks—requires learning, practice, and growth on our part. We need to change our perspective and recognize that everything given is unearned, everything is a gift. The Christian imagination is permeated by the acknowledgement of God’s gifts and their importance in our relationship with God: grace, gratitude, eucharist (from the Greek for “giving thanks”), adoration, and even singing praises are all ways to express this movement towards God by those who say thank you and pray with gratitude.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola was very aware of the importance of integrating this attitude of gratitude deep within our relationship with God. He even made it the first movement of a form of prayer emphasized in his Spiritual Exercises but also to be used in everyday life: the Examen. This prayer encourages us to reflect on our day in light of our relationship with God. First, before we consider the day’s thoughts and actions, Ignatius invites the person praying to give thanks to God our Lord for the blessings received (Spiritual Exercises, §43). The relationship of prayer thus begins from a position of gratitude, with an act of thanksgiving for everything that has been so generously given. In acknowledging these gifts, we give form to the actions that follow; they are the human response to God’s initial gift.

Gratitude can even be shown with a “cry of wonder” (SE §60). Indeed, while Ignatius invites retreatants to courageously face the limits of their love, they have often been sinful, which leads them to sorrow and tears (SE §55). But this sadness does not have the last word. By recognizing that it was their refusal of this love, this gift, which led to their sin, the greatness of God’s gifts becomes even more clear, revealing the unconditional nature of his love. As retreatants meditate on their personal sin, they are also invited, in the final stages of their contemplation, to utter this “cry of wonder from a soul moved by emotion” (SE §60) as they marvel at living in the midst of all of creation, the angels, and even the saints. They thus give a great cry of gratitude—giving thanks before a God whose justice is mercy.

In the teachings of Ignatius of Loyola, the summit of this gratitude is expressed in the contemplation that brings a close to the thirty-day retreat of the Spiritual Exercises. Retreatants are led on a long journey that begins with the consideration of creation and sin and then moves to following Jesus, from the Incarnation and his public life to his death and resurrection. In contemplating the life of Jesus, retreatants ask themselves:

*What am I doing? How am I living my relationship with Christ? How am I being called to follow him? How can I respond to the gifts that God has given to me?*

**Concrete answers are explored, imagined, and sometimes given.**

At the very end of this journey comes the contemplation to attain love (SE §230–237). At the beginning of this prayer, Ignatius reminds us that love is found in deeds more than in words and consists of a mutual sharing of what we possess with the one we love. (SE §230–231) Love, therefore, is a reciprocal gift, a mutual relationship. How else can we respond to extraordinary love other than by extraordinary gratitude? The first moment of this contemplation is thus focused on recalling all of the past blessings received from God (SE §234), both those shared by all humanity—the gift of creation, salvation; and those which are more personal—how God has done everything for us, has given us everything, and even wants to give himself to us! Ignatius then invites us to a gratitude that is on the same scale as God’s generosity: immense and without limits—a gratitude that takes over our whole being, our whole life! Faced with such a gift, we are encouraged to say a big thank you, responding gratuitously, freely, and generously, such as Ignatius did in his most famous prayer: “Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me.” (SE §234)

*André Brouillette, SJ* A native of Rivière-du-Loup, Quebec, André Brouillette, SJ, has earned postgraduate degrees in philosophy, history and theology in Europe and North America. In addition to completing academic work and teaching theology at Boston College, he offers spiritual direction and accompanies the French-speaking Catholic community in Boston.
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BOOK: THE JESUIT GUIDE TO (ALMOST) EVERYTHING: A SPIRITUALITY FOR REAL LIFE, JAMES MARTIN, SJ

A practical spiritual guidebook based on the life and teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus. Centred on the Ignatian goal of “finding God in all things,” this book shows us how to manage relationships, money, work, prayer, and decision-making, all while keeping a sense of humour.

BOOK: EXPERIENCING GOD IN THE ORDINARY, WILLIAM BARRY, SJ

What if God is already with us, in the dailiness of our lives? When we experience ordinary but meaningful events, such as our first love or a favorite novel, we are in fact encountering God’s presence.

BOOK: LORD, YOU CALLED ME, RICARDO GARZÓN

What do I want to do? Who do I want to be? In other words, how do I discover God’s dream for me? Learning the answers to these questions begins by opening our hearts and listening to the voice deep inside us—God’s voice.

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Filled with laughter, our interview with Marc-André Veselovsky took place in a joyful atmosphere, reflecting the character of this young man. Twenty-six years old, Marc-André is not only a Jesuit but also a vegetarian, a semi-professional singer, a lover of board games (some might say the more complicated ones…), and a good listener.

So, what pushed this young man to begin his formation to become a Jesuit? What have been the highlights of his formation? Now a regent (or intern) at the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Canada, Marc-André responds to these questions.

Marc-André and Nolan Gibot, rowing companions during a canoe pilgrimage in 2017 | Photo: Dominik Haake
WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE SOCIETY OF JESUS?

When I turned 18, I realized that the only reason I was Catholic was because my parents were, which wasn’t really a good reason to remain one. But that same year, just before I went off to the University of Ottawa, I met a group of young Catholics, Catholic Christian Outreach, whose lives showed that the source of their joy was their relationship with God. God comes to us to demonstrate his love… but he wants us to respond! (laughs). This group encouraged young people to welcome God’s love into their lives. I decided to give it a try.

This experience fostered in me a life of prayer and a closer relationship with God, which became the source of joy and meaning in my life. All of a sudden, I was open to the idea of priesthood. Before that, my greatest desire was to get married and have kids. But after this year of conversion, I became more open through God’s love, which is more perfect than any other. Of course, that doesn’t mean that getting married or having kids is a bad thing (laughs), and it doesn’t mean that I don’t still have this desire—even today. It was a real time of discernment. So, I said to myself that I should really try to enter the seminary, and thought, why not with the Jesuits?

Three weeks later, I saw that there was a “Come and See” event at the novitiate in Montreal. There, someone asked the novice master what differentiated the Jesuits from the other religious orders. He replied, “Look, we take the three vows, but we live them in a different way. As Jesuits, we put the emphasis on obedience. We are supposed to be available to work anywhere and at any time for the greater glory of God.”

That awakened something in me. I may not know where I’m going, but I trust that someone greater than I is leading me. That makes life worth living.

Then, everything I did confirmed the call to this order, along with the formation that the Jesuits offered, with its focus on advanced studies and experiences.

HOW EXACTLY HAS YOUR FORMATION BEEN USEFUL IN YOUR APOSTOLATES?

One example is my apostolate in Paris with JRS-France, which was to accompany asylum seekers. I tried to find them housing, with very little success. I felt that I was not helping them, but they were still very grateful. Government aid is very impersonal, whereas, as a Jesuit, I had and took the time to be with them. My Jesuit formation enables me to be available and also to discover who I am, and therefore to be more genuine in my relationships with others.
WHAT HAS MOVED YOU THE MOST IN YOUR FORMATION? WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST DIFFICULT MOMENT?

From the Spiritual Exercises, I hold onto at least one sentence: I love you. By the grace of God, I have the capacity to love others. I love you, but I love God even more, because thanks to him we are capable of loving each other.

One thing that’s been difficult is the separation from my family and friends. When we see each other, it’s not the same as before. It’s good, but it’s difficult to experience. We have to see how our relationships evolve and be open to new friendships and our relationship with God. A good community helps with that.

YOU SHARED PREVIOUSLY THAT THE PILGRIMAGE YOU MADE DURING YOUR NOVITiate STRUCK YOU DEEPLY. CAN YOU TELL US MORE?

During the novitiate, you have to make a five-week pilgrimage to somewhere in North America with only $70 and a bus ticket. When I visited the Jesuit novitiate for the first time, I told myself that if the Jesuits there had said yes even to that, then they really wanted to be Jesuits!

For my pilgrimage, I discerned that my destination would be Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico. My first stop was New York, where I needed to stay with the Jesuits in order to be able to cross the border. In the city, I met Peter, an alumnus of a Jesuit university. He told me that, honestly, I should live with the poor! He also shared with me his favourite passage from the Gospel. It’s when Peter begins to drown as he tries to reach Jesus who is walking on the water. He told me that Peter had wanted to do something extreme and, even though he failed, he had been brave enough to try.

The next day, I made my way to Atlanta. Arriving exhausted, I decided to go and sleep in the Jesuit community for one night. So, I attended the mass in their parish, where I saw a stained-glass window with the image of Peter drowning, so I knew I shouldn’t stay there! (laughs). I instead slept in a shelter for the homeless.

I was in a room with 600 beds, and there were people doing drugs and playing music. Everyone was either Latin-American or black, so I stood out. But I was confident, even if I was afraid. Ken, my neighbour, started talking to me about his life. I was shocked by his story, and I shared mine with him. I told him that I came from a good family and that I was just on a pilgrimage without much money. We had a connection. He told me that I seemed like a good man and gave me $50. My first thought was that I couldn’t accept it, and my second was that I just had $2 in my pocket. (laughs) He told me, “You have to take it. Do you know how much I spend on drugs? It’s the best thing I can do with this money right now.” In that moment, he was my angel.

After that, I slept in a community of ex-cons and at a mosque, among other places. I finally arrived in Mexico, but it was the relationships that counted more than the destination. All Jesuits have a similar, genuine experience of God’s providence through others.

AS A YOUNG JESUIT, WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THE SOCIETY AND FOR CANADA?

After General Congregation 32, we said that our mission was “the service of faith and the promotion of justice.” In Canada, I hope that we won’t neglect either of these. Canada is becoming secularized, and young people are asking a lot of questions about the meaning of life. I hope that we can offer them (without imposing) the option of faith in Jesus by adapting to today’s culture and tell them that life has meaning, that love exists, and that we can experience this love.

I also hope that we can do something significant to help Indigenous communities, even if it’s just to stand by them to support them in their demands. They have experienced the worst of what it means to be a part of Canadian society, and it’s partially the Church’s fault. Maybe faith can help them, maybe not, but we can at least stand by their side and offer support.

To learn more about vocations to the Society of Jesus, visit: beajesuit.org
Our chat was supposed to last fifteen minutes. I had my questions ready. They were all aimed at trying to discover the man behind the public figure. Ismael Moreno, a 61-year-old Honduran Jesuit who many simply know as Melo, has dedicated his life to defending the freedom of expression and basic rights of the most marginalised and vulnerable people in his country.

Head of the Reflection, Research, and Communications Team (ERIC in Spanish) and Radio Progreso, Fr. Melo has been internationally recognised. Meanwhile, the fight for justice has had serious consequences for him and his colleagues—in the form of countless death threats—to the point where today, he lives under police protection. Some members of his team have paid with their lives.

Fifteen minutes of conversation turned into an hour, and my list of questions was thrown out when I began to listen to Fr. Melo.

Where does he find the strength to continue in the face of such dangers? Who is the man behind this fight dedicated to the most marginalised? What’s his story?

In a conversation that turns out to be far less scripted and more relaxed than expected, the answers flow. An expanded version of this interview is available here:

WHAT MADE YOU CONSIDER BECOMING A JESUIT?

I grew up in a humble farm-working family, but thanks to a grant, I went to study with the Jesuits. I started to work with the Jesuits in 1972, and became very good friends with a group of Jesuit teachers. I got the “bug” for this vocation. I said to myself “So, look, if these guys are so enthusiastic, why can’t I be like them?”

Other experiences have also defined me, such as the murder of my father in 1974. He was a grassroots peasant-farmer leader with a very open mentality. But the final trigger was the martyrdom of the Jesuit priest Rutilio Grande on March 12, 1977. I received news of Father Rutilio’s assassination and of the death squads’ threat to the Jesuits. They warned the Jesuits: “If you don’t leave within 60 days, you will be killed.” I was shocked that all the Jesuits replied, “We’re staying put in El Salvador.” So I called up Father José María Tojeira (the Jesuit who was accompanying me at the time) and said, “Since Father Rutilio Grande has been killed, I will replace him.”

HAVE YOU EVER DOUBTED YOUR CALLING SINCE THEN?

Over these forty years in the Society of Jesus, I’ve had many doubts. Normally, they’re related to either the ecclesiastical commitment to the Society of Jesus or to social movements. But I’ve never had a single doubt about fulfilling my vow to serve the society of the poor.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT VIOLENCE AS A MEANS TO ACHIEVE JUSTICE AND PEACE?

I have lived through the three Central American wars. Therefore, I can firmly state that our apostolic mission must always be a contribution to peace, and moreover, our apostolic mission in the service of peace must always be carried out by peaceful means.

“It helps me to be humble—in front of myself, and also in front of my Jesuit brothers. We are part of a church, of an institution, which is often more sinner than saint. But we ourselves are also sinners.”

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH THE JESUITS? IN PARTICULAR, WITH THE MARTYRS OF EL SALVADOR?

On November 16, 1989, six Jesuit priests and two lay women were shot at close range on the campus of the Central American University. | Photo: jesuits.global

On November 16, 1989, six Jesuit priests and two lay people were shot at close range on the campus of the Central American University. | Photo: jesuits.global

My theology studies were completed in El Salvador. There I had the opportunity to take classes with the Jesuits who were later murdered. I was also very close to Elva and Celina Ramos.

I was in Honduras when I heard the news about the assassinations, and I decided not to pass by to say hello to my mother. So she, who had known all the murdered priests, called me to ask why I hadn’t come by to visit. “You didn’t want me to see you cry, son, did you?” And I replied, “No, I didn’t, mother. You’re right.” “Well, look,” she said, “prepare yourself, because if they have killed your colleagues, you mustn’t be afraid. You should be prepared in case you also have to give your life for your calling.” That was seared into my heart because, through my mother’s voice, I felt that I was receiving confirmation from God to continue to fulfill his will amid the great difficulties.

YOU’RE SPEAKING OF DOUBTS RELATED TO THE CHURCH. WHERE DO YOU GET THE MOTIVATION TO STAY IN A CHURCH THAT, TODAY, IS QUESTIONED BY MANY?

It helps me to be humble—in front of myself, and also in front of my Jesuit brothers. We are part of a church, of an
institution, which is often more sinner than saint. But we ourselves are also sinners.

What motivates me? First, I have a very deep faith in God, who makes his presence felt in my life. My second source of sustenance is that at 61 years old, I have known dozens of men and women who were killed because of their commitment. That memory is essential in nourishing my hope. My third source of motivation to live joyfully is the closeness and generosity of the communities [I work with]. I live in probably one of the most impoverished countries on the continent, but the people own their poverty to such an extent that they share it. The fourth source of motivation is the formidable team I work with. They will never make their fortunes working here at the radio. They put themselves at risk. However, when I am with them, I always encounter celebration, joy, generosity, and dedication.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT IN CANADA IS MUCH MORE SECULAR. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO A YOUNG CANADIAN WHO IS SEARCHING FOR PURPOSE, LOOKING FOR MEANING?

Look, you have the chance to discover profound joy by breaking out of the mould of the lifestyle that has been imposed on us. You will never find it in consumerism because such joy is always fleeting and will leave you emptier than before. Ultimately, if you want to discover the deepest joy, try to look at yourself, and in those depths, you will emerge full of life to share with others, because others are the ones who bring full meaning to your life. Friendship, commitment, the struggle for a fairer society, these are things that cannot be bought, they have no price.

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION ABOUT THE CHURCH?

My team and I are convinced that if the Church doesn’t change, it’s only going to become increasingly more isolated. Indeed, we need an ecclesiastical overhaul. Why? Because the Church we have now hails from a time that no longer exists. I don’t mean to say that it has to accept everything we now see in society, but it does have to enter the dialogue to modernise our mission of evangelisation.

Thus, the Church has to be part of the debate and listen to the many minority groups; for example, those who represent sexual diversity, women, Indigenous peoples, and youth in its diverse forms. Because when you listen, you become open to receiving the good news that is present in these various groups rather than simply attacking them or negatively judging them.

José Sánchez is the Director of Communications for the Jesuits of Canada. Of Venezuelan origin and with a decade of experience in communications, journalism, and new business ventures, he is now completing a master’s degree in theological studies at Regis College, University of Toronto.
In 1980, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) was founded by Fr. Pedro Arrupe, then superior general of the Society of Jesus. On his return from a trip to Asia, at a time when millions of “boat people” were fleeing the communist regime in Vietnam, Fr. Arrupe put out a call to action to all Jesuits, encouraging them to give a voice to refugees who had been forced to flee their homes due to armed conflicts or unjust sociopolitical situations. It was in this way that the JRS was born across the world, including in Canada. This year, therefore, the JRS is celebrating 40 years of hope, compassion, dignity, hospitality, and justice.

The COVID-19 pandemic has elicited an outpouring of prayer across the world. The pope has contributed to this on several occasions (for example, on the feast of Saint Joseph and the feast of the Annunciation) by calling on the faithful throughout the world to take part in a collective prayer or by offering a special blessing, Urbi et Orbi. Edified by “the reaction of so many people who risk their lives to heal and defend healthy people from contagion,” he also called for greater solidarity among all people. The pope asked everyone to consider this crisis as a call to live differently (for example, through deeper ecological engagement) and urged world leaders to put humanity before the economy.

In March, the Indian government put in place a lockdown in order to slow the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. But as a result, the “untouchables” of the Indian state of Bihar, who are looked down upon by other castes, have begun to suffer from food shortages. Jesuits in Manthan, a centre for social action, have therefore ensured the distribution of food for the most vulnerable in collaboration with a railway company that agreed to participate in the operation. “Now we distribute cooked meals to 1,500 people daily, and we will continue until the end of the isolation period,” said Fr. Juno Sebastian, director of Manthan. “We are also working to help 6,500 Musahar families in Patna, for a total of about 40,000 people.”

Following the momentum created by the Amazon Synod last March, Antelmo Pereira Ângelo, a member of the Ticuna tribe, was ordained as the first Indigenous permanent deacon. Many Ticuna traditions were integrated into the rite of consecration. “As a people, we are used to praising God through song and dance because it’s also what we have in our own rituals,” explained the new deacon. This ceremony was in keeping with Pope Francis’ dream of building a Church with an “Amazonian face,” bringing together different lifestyles and cultures. This has also been the hope of the Jesuit Pan-Amazonian Service (SJPAM) since its foundation in 2015. “The call to evangelize has to go through an intercultural dialogue, through a great respect for cultures, their cosmovision, their spirituality, and their way of life. This requires dialogue and deep respect,” said Fr. Alfredo Ferro, SJ, from the SJPAM.

IN INDIA, JESUITS ARE HELPING THE “UNTOUCHABLES”

FIRST ORDINATION OF AN INDIGENOUS DEACON IN BRAZIL

COVID-19: POPE FRANCIS INVITES PEOPLE TO GREATER SOLIDARITY
It’s not about working for young people but with them.” Listening to Fr. Grégoire Le Bel, SJ, talk to us about Cowork Magis, we were almost ready to move to Paris and jump right into the world of business. After receiving a mandate from his provincial, Fr. Le Bel set up a coworking space in collaboration with a group of young people, first taking one office, then another, and finally an entire space designed according to the needs of these entrepreneurs.

**WHAT IS COWORK MAGIS?**

First and foremost, it’s a workspace, a place of work for young, self-employed entrepreneurs and freelancers to develop their businesses in the best conditions.

But it’s also a Jesuit space with certain criteria: you must be younger than 40, work alone, and have a project that doesn’t focus primarily on making a profit from raw materials. I don’t ask that everyone be Christian, just that the projects have meaning and that the entrepreneurs agree to play by these rules.

One word that keeps coming up when we speak about these coworkers is “goodwill.” Everyone has a positive outlook towards others.
WHAT MAKES THIS SPACE UNIQUE IN PARIS?

First of all, we provide young people with a space for solidarity in their work.

We also invite them to mass on Tuesday afternoons, which is not compulsory.

On Wednesday afternoons, we host Pépite Day, where they have an opportunity to share something that has worked well in their projects. Sometimes, it’s quite difficult for them to realise that their projects are progressing. If there aren’t really any signs of progress, they can ask each other for suggestions or help.

On the last Wednesday of the month, we hold a communal dinner, where two of the young people prepare a meal for everyone. I love that they take the time for that on top of all their work.

In addition, every other Thursday evening, we have a happy hour where someone presents her/his project in a one- or two-minute pitch. The idea is really to encourage the entrepreneurs, or to invite them to go back to the drawing board on the more abstract aspects of their projects, which is all done with lots of goodwill. Sometimes, presenters simply demonstrate a skill that they want to share.

Finally, they all receive mentoring from the Mouvement chrétien des cadres et dirigeants (a Christian movement of business executives and directors), which offers them the perspective of a senior professional.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

I help out on a daily basis, explaining, for example, how to use mind-mapping. On the face of it, though, I don’t accompany them on the professional side. They accompany one another, as they have a very wide array of skills among them. That being said, people regularly come to see me to discuss their projects, emotional questions, or decisions in their lives.

Through my relationships with these young people, I can often show them the other side of a priest, of the Church. For example, at the beginning of the coronavirus crisis, they said to me, “Grégoire, we should make some time for prayer.” “That’s a good idea,” I replied, “organise it.” Why should I direct it? In the Church, it’s not the priest who decides everything.

My desire is that they be happy with their jobs and invent a new way of working in a world driven by a frantic rhythm.
HOW DO YOU REACH OUT TO YOUNG PEOPLE TO ADVERTISE COWORK MAGIS?

Actually, we have a continual supply of young people coming, though it’s harder for us to be in contact with those in great difficulty. Traditionally in France, the Jesuits are above all in contact with students in the major universities or privileged environments.

But these are also the young people who want to get to know us the most, to live the Spiritual Exercises, etc. They are also the people who create start-ups and invent the Earth of tomorrow. It’s as much about being by their sides to see how to help them give meaning to their projects and make sure that they don’t burn out in the process. I think that this structure can really help them.

A COWORKER: ARNAUD DABARD DE BELLECIZE

I’m twenty-nine years old, and in 2017, I launched Retraite Advisor, a leading retirement home comparison website in France. I arrived at Cowork Magis in January 2019 after several years in a traditional coworking space.

The idea is that there is business going on: it’s a cool work environment with a familial side which is nice. It’s a friendly place, and the extra Catholic side is interesting.

Pépite Day is a time of consolation. Quite often we don’t necessarily have anything positive to share, and its pretty cool to be able to say, “Well, it’s fairly complicated. My suppliers are late, etc.” And there are loads of conversations and exchanges that result from this sharing. As such, we have lots of time to help each other be more efficient in our businesses.

And the thing that unites all the entrepreneurs is a search for meaning, a desire to use their talents wisely to serve the community or society in general. It’s something that we feel pretty strongly about here. We’re doing something good, but we also want to earn money and do business! We balance the two at Cowork Magis.
Please take a few moments to fill out this brief survey. It will help us to make sure that the magazine responds to your needs and interests. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Thank you for your time and support.

Would you recommend this magazine to others interested in the Jesuits of Canada?
☐ Yes    ☐ No

Why: ____________________________

Where did you find this magazine?
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Please indicate your agreement with this statement: “Canadian Jesuits magazine strengthens my interest in the Jesuits.”
☐ Strongly Agree   ☐ Agree
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What actions have you taken influenced by reading the magazine?
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☐ Contacted someone who works with the Jesuits
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☐ No action taken
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What is your relationship to the Jesuits?
☐ Jesuit   ☐ Lay colleague of the Jesuits
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Use the attached envelope to send in your answers or fill out the survey online:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LDVWZBS
Today, people who live in what we now call Canada are faced with COVID-19, but it is far from being the first epidemic to attack those living on this continent. For the first few centuries after the arrival of Europeans in the Americas, up to 95% of the Indigenous populations lost their lives, in large part due to new contagious diseases. Those living in “New France” were not spared these horrors.

Particularly active in the region, Jesuit missionaries documented the ravages of these epidemics alongside their own reactions and those of the Indigenous populations, such as the Huron-Wendat. This history has taught us that the most vulnerable people in society are always the ones who suffer the most from epidemics.

Even now, many First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities are particularly vulnerable in the face of COVID-19, largely due to a lack of resources, most commonly, running water. Moreover, the elderly were — and continue to be — especially vulnerable. Given that older people were responsible for passing down knowledge, their deaths brought about an irreparable cultural loss in their communities.

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENED?

The Jesuits wrote frequently about illnesses and epidemics in Relations, annual reports on their missions. These collections of books and other manuscripts are, like all historical sources, subjective. The Indigenous perspective on these epidemics, however, lives less in the writings of the Jesuits than in their own forms of communication, such as oral histories. One of these (retold by ethnologist Marius Barbeau), for instance, tells of a white man who gave someone a bottle that contained smallpox, which began to spread before being fought off by the skunk.

Reading these historical records can be shocking. For example, the Jesuits often criticized Indigenous customs, particularly those that contradicted Christian teachings. Readers must keep in mind that missionaries and Europeans in general participated in colonial endeavours that still have negative repercussions today.

Placed in their historical context, however, how should we understand the goals of the Jesuits? They sought the greater good for each person and even risked their own lives in doing so.
It would be too great an honour for us to lose our lives while engaged in saving some poor soul. - Relations of 1637

Even today, as we can read in these pages, Jesuits are putting themselves on the front lines through their works, offering their services to those who suffer in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

EPIDEMICS AMONG THE WENDAT

Whether through direct or indirect contact with Europeans, the Wendat were struck violently by several different epidemics throughout the 1630s and 1640s which killed almost a third of their communities. In 1634, Fr. Jean de Brébeuf described a sickness that caused a burning fever, a rash and painful diarrhea. In 1636, a terrible epidemic resembling influenza caused cramps and fevers. In 1639, again, the Wendat were decimated by smallpox. Of course, many Europeans also fell ill to these same diseases, but the results were devastating among Wendat communities.

Why did so many die? Did the Wendat lack immunity to these new illnesses? Yes, to a certain extent, but other aggravating factors closely linked to colonisation (stress, war, malnutrition) also played a significant role. As today, the virus could strike almost anyone, but not everyone was equally prepared to face it.

JESUITS, THE WENDAT, AND ILLNESS

The Wendat and the Jesuits had very different interpretations of illness. The Wendat believed that epidemics were caused by malevolent forces and could be ended by finding the source of evil or using rituals and remedies. The Jesuits thought that illness was a scourge inflicted by God that could be healed by the “supernatural” side of Catholicism. Missionaries, for example, distributed crosses in an attempt to both heal the sick and show the superiority of the Catholic faith. During the epidemics, the missionaries visited the sick in their beds not only to try to heal them but also, above all, to baptise them before their death in order to save their souls from hell. These methods, however, had two very different effects.

On the one hand, seeing that the sick treated by the Jesuits often died shortly thereafter, the Wendat accused the missionaries of being sorcerers who caused the deaths, and they threatened to kill them for their “magic”.

On the other, many Wendat became more open to the physical and spiritual care offered by the Jesuits. Many among them considered baptism to be a healing ceremony, which the missionaries would complain about elsewhere. The Wendat also added several Jesuit remedies to their own practices, such as sugar or the infamous bloodletting. According to the writings of missionaries, sharing their medicine and charitably offering care and attention to the sick brought a certain sympathy from the Wendat.

Most of them regarded us only as persons from whom they expected some consolation, and likewise something to relieve them in their sickness. - Relations of 1637

The Wendat were not the only ones to fall ill during the epidemics or to accept “exotic” remedies. In 1637, for example, the missionaries caught the flu and accepted the remedies (but not the ritual sweat lodge) proposed by the shaman Tonneraouanont. Three days later, they were healed, as the shaman had predicted, but they never gave him credit.

Learning more about the history of epidemics can help make sense of our current reality. Want to find out more? We suggest that you begin by reading The Heritage of the Circle (George Sioui), A Not So New World (Christopher Parsons) or La Nouvelle-France et le monde (Allan Greer).
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

When a Jesuit dies, a Memorial Scholarship is established in his name. Family and friends are invited to contribute to the scholarship. The funds are invested and the interest is used to support a young Jesuit in training during his studies in preparation for apostolic work in the Church. By contributing to a scholarship in their name, you will honour his memory.

In Memory of

Father Charles Bernard Sitter, SJ
DECEMBER 7, 1926 - MAY 9, 2020

Father Charlie Sitter died on May 9 at René Goupil House in Pickering, ON. He was 94 and had been a Jesuit for 75 years. Born in Winnipeg, MB, he entered the novitiate in 1945. Fr. Sitter’s ministry was in high schools and colleges. In 1960, he was sent to Campion to serve as chaplain and professor of religion and history. In 1967, he served as an associate pastor at Immaculate Conception Parish in Vancouver, BC. Fr. Sitter went to Winnipeg in 1968 to become chaplain at St. Paul’s College and serve as director of the student centre. He left Winnipeg in 1971 to become chaplain at McMaster University in Hamilton, ON. Later he worked in the Spiritual Exercises ministry at Manresa retreat centre, Pickering. Fr. Sitter returned to Winnipeg in 1976 and for 13 years conducted retreats. In 1990, he came to Toronto to serve as chaplain to St. Bernard’s Convent and in 1991, returned to Manresa where he set up a house library.
Father Francis Xavier Johnson, SJ
OCTOBER 15, 1926 - MAY 3, 2020

Father FX Johnson died on May 3 at René Goupil House, Pickering, ON. He was 93 and in his 68th year as a Jesuit. After studies at St. Michael's High School, Toronto, and four years at the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph, he entered the Jesuits in 1952. He spent a lot of his Jesuit life on the move from one assignment to another, either as a teacher, a hospital chaplain, or as a parish priest – in Toronto, Montreal, St. John’s, Port Arthur, California, Ontario, and British Columbia. By 1988, Fr. Johnson settled in Toronto, and helped at various parishes. He cared deeply about that which gives meaning and stability to the Church’s life and liturgy. He was the much-loved chaplain of The Kolbe Eucharistic Apostolate, conducting monthly retreats for them. After a fall, Fr. Johnson moved to the Jesuit infirmary in 2018 where he continued his studies at Carleton University, Ottawa, and received a PhD from Columbia. During these studies, he was appointed professor of art history at Carleton from 1977 to 1980. In 1993, he published Light for a Cold Land – Lawren Harris’s Work and Life – An Interpretation, which was nominated for a Governor-General’s award. He lived in Toronto, teaching religion and art, curating exhibitions, and writing. In 1987, he was appointed Socius to the Master of Novices at Guelph, ON, and lectured at Regis College, Toronto. Fr. Larisey moved to the Jesuit infirmary in 2018 where he wrote on the relationship between religion and art.

Father Michael Hawkins, SJ
DECEMBER 19, 1936 - APRIL 30, 2020

Father Michael Hawkins died on April 30 at René Goupil House, Pickering, ON. He was 84 and had been a Jesuit for 63 years. Born in Valois, QC, Fr. Hawkins entered the Jesuits in 1957. He felt a call to go overseas and after vows volunteered for the Darjeeling Missions. In 1963, he was sent to India where for the next 44 years he worked principally in West Bengal. Later, he moved to St. Mary’s College in Kurseong. From 1970 to 1991, Fr. Hawkins held various posts in Gayaganga, including teacher, associate pastor, president, prefect of studies, prefect of regional education, and more. In 1992, he was assigned prefect of studies and associate pastor in Hatighisa. Later, he settled at Siliguri and became director of the pastoral centre, director of regional formation, provincial formation, and education coordinator, Socius to the Provincial, and more. In 2007, Fr. Hawkins returned to Canada and took on Spiritual Exercises ministry at Manresa retreat house in Pickering, ON.

Father Peter Larisey, SJ
MARCH 30, 1929 - APRIL 30, 2020

Father Peter Larisey died on April 30 in Toronto, ON. He was 92 and had been a Jesuit for 68 years. Born in Dartmouth, NS, he entered the Jesuits in 1952. After studies, he was ordained in 1965. Drawn to art, he was sent to Columbia University, New York, to study the history of art finishing. He continued his studies at Carleton University, Ottawa, and received a PhD from Columbia. During these studies, he was appointed professor of art history at Carleton from 1977 to 1980. In 1993, he published Light for a Cold Land – Lawren Harris’s Work and Life – An Interpretation, which was nominated for a Governor-General’s award. He lived in Toronto, teaching religion and art, curating exhibitions, and writing. In 1987, he was appointed Socius to the Master of Novices at Guelph, ON, and lectured at Regis College, Toronto. Fr. Larisey moved to the Jesuit infirmary in 2018 where he wrote on the relationship between religion and art.

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George O’Neill, SJ
FEBRUARY 14, 1943 - APRIL 29, 2020

George O’Neill died on April 29 at Ajax-Pickering Hospital. Born in Kitchener, ON, he was 78 and in religious life for 57 years. George entered the Jesuits at Guelph, ON in 1963. After first vows, he studied philosophy at Mount St. Michael’s in Spokane, WA. He completed two years of regency at Gonzaga High School, St. John’s, NL and theology at Regis College, Toronto. Near the end of theology studies, George showed signs of illness and unfortunately couldn’t advance to priestly ordination. He studied at the Ontario College of Education and taught at Loyola High School, Montreal, QC. George remained a scholar as the Society would not dismiss him due to his fragile health. He was appointed assistant librarian at Regis College in 1977 until 1988 when he moved to Manresa retreat house and René Goupil House in Pickering, ON. There, George wrote many reports for the Province newsletter. He had a pleasant and welcoming personality and was also an avid photographer.
Once a year the Society of Jesus invites men, ages 18-39 to come and spend a weekend in the Jesuit novitiate itself, to sample the life, spend time in personal prayer, and listen to talks from novices and formed Jesuits. The weekend is an opportunity to further their own discernment of a possible Jesuit vocation, with the option of spiritual direction.

NOVEMBER 6 - 8, 2020

To attend the weekend, either in person or online, contact:
Fr. John O’Brien, SJ, at CANvocations@jesuits.org
OR
Fr. Edmund Lo, SJ, at CANvocpro@jesuits.org

DISCERNMENT RETREAT

MARTYRS’ SHRINE DEC. 18 - 20, 2020

The annual weekend retreat for discerners at the site where saints and martyrs walked. This retreat includes special access to behind-the-scenes sites at Ste.-Marie-among-the-Hurons, instruction and time for personal meditation, talks from Jesuits, and the opportunity to continue one’s discernment of a possible vocation to the Society of Jesus.

There is no cost to this retreat for approved candidates.

To attend the weekend, contact the vocation director,

Fr. John O’Brien, SJ, at CANvocations@jesuits.org