

EXERCISING AN APOSTOLIC PREFERENCE FOR THE MARGINALIZED

Conveners Jack Bentz SJ & Bryan Pham SJ

Number of Meetings: 2

Committee Members

James Antonio, S.J.,
Peter Byrne, S.J.
Carol Gabrielli
Jennifer Kelly
Nathan Sheets
Thomas Morning Owl

Possibilities

We hope the future is filled with a posture of listening to the folks on the margins. These are communities with whom we have been traveling for some time, like Native Americans, unhoused, and immigrant as well as those to whom we are open, like the LGBTQ+. But we first listen and then listen some more to discover together the new directions, or recommitment to older directions. Two areas were expressed and received with a lot of energy, firstly a sustained commitment to Native Americans in which we continue to mourn the losses of language, culture and agency and learn to invite again the people to a humble church. And secondly, a future in which we are bold enough to engage the strangeness of being able to see Jesuit diminishment of numbers and inability to see how God is calling so many other people to ministry. People who experience a call to lead and to celebrate the Sacraments but who not male and celibate. How bold does USWest want to be in the future?

People and Resources

If we want to move deeply into ministry with marginalized peoples we have to let go of institutional prestige. Our work can be effective but small, provisional, and adaptive. Granted, this does not look good on a STRATEGIC PLAN, but we find our selves in the lower case.

Collaboration

It does not seem likely that work with the marginalized can be done in collaboration with our institutions. If it could, it would already be in process. Yes, there are examples, with Law Clinics, and mission trips and research fellows and all that is good in itself, but not enough and it is rarely felt as mutual.

Challenges Obstacles and Pitfalls

Yes, if we deeply commit to the marginalized in a posture of listening, humility and improvised adaptability then many Jesuits and partners who are either formed within, or naturally inclined to a faster, higher profile, mainstream Jesuit works sort of path will no longer see a place for themselves. But many of the same group will finally find a place to give their gifts and be on board. But we must fully commit to forming everyone in the Exercises as we move forward into an adjusted model of ministry.

Apostolic Models

We did not get to this question.

Distinctive and Unique Role of Jesuits

Jesuits continue to be immensely valuable as men of the Exercises. Giving the Exercises to others, helping to form others in our shared spirituality, and listening with well formed ears for the work of the Spirit in the culture.

Questions & Topics for Province Gathering

Are we honestly interested in bringing folks from the margins into the center? Or are we interested in being tourists to the margins and then returning to the comfortable center while it lasts? Are we committed to the work with Native Americans and if so what will it cost us? Or are we ready to leave the peoples? Do we, as a province, want to accept that God is calling more than just male celibate men to sacramental leadership in our world? And do we want to be part of that?

Is there anything else that your committee would like to add to this report?

No