

# SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS, SPRING 2023

## JESUIT COMMUNITIES & *Ad Hoc* GATHERINGS

25 Conversations  
190 Participants

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### **JESUIT COMMUNITY: 1** (11 participants)

#### **Summary of Responses**

The four themes given in Sean Carroll's letter seem to be the appropriate areas for the focus of the province. Related to the first theme (Spiritual Exercises), the annual province retreat is very helpful in grounding the experiences of those who attend it, and perhaps it can be encouraged, so that it can be a focus of future discernment processes. And there is great need, especially post-pandemic (where there was a great feeling of isolation especially among young people), to help in fostering community and a sense of belonging among those to whom we minister, especially young people, who (according to reports) have been very affected by the isolation caused by the pandemic "lock-down."

One concern is a sense of loss in the ministry of Higher Education and a feeling of a lack of support of this traditional apostolate of the Society. One wonders if there are opportunities to socialize those in formation into this apostolate via university regencies and novice experiments.

There are bigger questions, however, that should not be overlooked, and those include: "What does the Church need today that we Jesuits can do? What is Church's priority? How can we read the signs of the times? How can we make Ignatius' 'thinking with the Church' more real in our day and age? What are the needs now vs. the needs in 1851?" The Society of Jesus (in the province) should be at the service of the Church, particularly given the history of the priestly and sacramental nature of our apostolic works.

#### **Suggestions**

Give all deliberations adequate time for thoughts to germinate and mature. Perhaps having smaller groups would have been more helpful to allow more time for conversation and comment. We should proceed with caution, and not rush the process. Some suggested that some Jesuits may not be completely on-board with all the priorities, especially as expressed in various concrete events. Are the events publicly advertised too narrowly focused on one ministry rather than on broader apostolic needs? One wondered if the future direction of the province has already been set and the "rank and file" are merely asked to verify the pre-determined direction. Will any input be really valued? A comment was made that the timing of the June event to summarize all the input is very inconvenient for faculty at Santa Clara University, since it falls during the last few days of the term (should faculty miss the last day of class?) and the day of ordinations coincides with the major fund-raising event on the campus for the SCU. Not every SCU Jesuit has enough time and energy to try to be "present" at the same time to their students and apostolate as well as to the province events and planning!

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### **JESUIT COMMUNITY: 2** (7 participants)

#### **Summary of Responses**

Vocation Promotion: Characterized by foundation in Spiritual Exercises, example by Jesuits in ministry and community, apostolates taking some responsibility, and humility.

Spiritual Exercises: The narrative motivating our actions and presentation of them in a way attractive to our collaborators.

Reconciliation Ministry: Bridging divides internally and externally to the Society and living out reconciliation in our apostolates.

#### **Suggestions**

Involve lay partners in our apostolates in vocation promotion. Vocation promotion isn't just the sole responsibility of Jesuits. Lay partners should be actively helping to promote vocations in our parishes, schools, universities, social apostolates, retreat centers, etc. This also is an opportunity for meaningful Jesuit-lay partnership.

Go to the margins and recruit vocations from those areas.

Be hopeful.

Seek for more opportunities for promulgating the Spiritual Exercises.

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**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 3** (8 participants)**Summary of Responses**

Small Group Report – UWE Apostolic Planning  
Jesuit Novitiate – March 10, 2023

Participants: Drew Kirschman, UCS (Facilitator), Tony Harris, UWE (Recorder), MacLean Andrews, Tony Del Castillo, Kevin Miller, and Paul Prevou, UWE (First year novices); Will Hayes and John Nuttli (First year UCS novices).

The novices recognized that they had a limited knowledge of the Province and its works.

The following were highlighted:

The Spiritual Exercises are our gift to the Church. We need to find new ways to make the Exercises more available to collaborators, marginalized and seekers.

An encouragement to take the Exercises to the people rather than waiting for the people to seek us out. The going out would be valuable to the young and to the marginalized.

Meeting the people where they are and empowering them to become engaged. A recommendation for work on the Umatilla Reservation for care of the earth. Engagement with the parish would help keep youth engaged and involved.

Some practical suggestions:

A center for Jesuit spirituality in the Los Angeles area.

Praise for the work of Mike Kennedy and Greg Boyle for accompanying the marginalized.

A novitiate like experience for collaborators

Our formation should help us promote the apostolic priorities.

A willingness to think “outside the box”.

**Suggestions**

Continue the good work. Keep Jesuits involved.

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**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 4** (10 participants)**Summary of Responses**

Even though the topic was apostolic planning (ad extra), everyone spoke about the importance of the Jesuit community as a dynamic that is important (ad intra). While the external planning is important, the lack of a conversation about the importance of the Jesuits as people living in community was noted. Being all things to all people in our apostolic works takes a toll and we need to set those work persona aside and be ourselves in our own communities with brothers who share our lives. Because of this we didn't have a conversation that addressed much on the apostolic works other than we are spread too thin and the provincial needs to be strategic about missioning a viable number of men to a region in order to have a successful and healthy community so that the Jesuits can be of service in various ways in that region.

**Suggestions**

Care of souls is an important aspect that the province leadership should hold at the center of any of these planning meetings or group discernments. This is both the care of others' souls (ad extra) and our own (ad intra). And it starts in the Jesuit community among the Jesuits. How can we give what we don't have? Our lives are more than performative or functionary and the province leadership needs to focus on presence rather than the performative—focus on cura personalis. We should be reflecting on the language of the GC 35 Decree 3, “community as mission” statement and look at what needs to be updated and how that has been lived out successfully or unsuccessfully. Having communities built around single apostolates was helpful in the past and also was a main tool in the promotion of vocations to the Society, does this need to be reexamined as a viable option moving forward.

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**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 5** (9 participants)

**Summary of Responses**

There was consensus that our apostolic priorities are accompaniment of youth and the marginalized, ministering with lay partners by living Ignatian spirituality, and care of the earth. We celebrate that some institutions may retain Jesuit sponsorship even with no Jesuits at the work because lay partners embody the Ignatian way of proceeding.

We urge that decisions about apostolic planning be made not by a business model of expediency, but by Ignatian discernment – the slow process of discovering God’s preferences.

Our present context is a polarity between those who want to quiet their fears by seeking the security of the past (Latin Mass, doctrinal purity, and clerical privilege); and those who want to implement Vatican II’s progressive vision (e.g., the role of women as deacons, blessing of LGBTQ unions, and welcome to the divorced and remarried). The Society was created in an epoch of ecclesial malaise. Jesuits from Ignatius to the present are at our best in response to a crisis.

And this is a season of crisis: war in Ukraine, severe weather, income inequality, gun violence, racial tensions to name a few. Recovering from the pandemic and diminished church attendance, we desire to witness our trust in Christ by living with joy. Aware of the generational impact of the scandal of clerical misconduct and cover-up, we pray to grow in humble acknowledgement of our need for transparency and accountability.

Our Jesuit way of proceeding is nicely embodied in Pope Francis’ synodal way. This is discernment based on respectful listening that makes decisions in response to the attraction of the of the Spirit. The synodal way acknowledges that there will be conflict, and that the Spirit will accompany us to enter the darkness of divisions to emerge into the light of where God wants us to serve. The synodal way takes seriously the role of the *sensus fidelium* in discovering God’s priorities for the church. We do well to listen to the prophetic Spirit with discreet charity as we deal with local church politics.

While we need not fear difficult missions, neither should we stay where we are not wanted or supported.

**Suggestions**

How do we live our Jesuit charisms in today’s conflicted world? By living with joy. How do we live with joy? By trusting the promises of Jesus – that our mission comes from God, that the Spirit will accompany us in our ministries, and that our lay partners will provide new vitality as they join us in the Ignatian way of proceeding.

The story goes that Ignatius bid farewell to Xavier with the words “Go and set the world on fire.” Our challenge is to live our mission with the same contagious enthusiasm.

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**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 6** (10 participants)**Summary of Responses**

- Institution apostolate is more effective when people seek us out. When it is the from the ground up rather than the top down. Ask the leading lay colleagues to voice what kind of needs they want us to help with .
- The model of our current community is good for the Province because it not dominate by one particular apostolate. Various conversations from different apostolates are good for the community.
- Having one Jesuit who work in one apostolate is as effective as a group of Jesuits in one institution.
- The priests in the community also supplied for many parishes, and prominently visible.
- One Jesuit does many apostolates
- Formation for lay colleages is important in one institution particular higher education, because if it is not then we should not be there.
- What we should be doing is a perpetual question. We have not done well is to ask those wo we serve what is their evaluations of we have done, and how we can serve them in the future. We have done mostly from our point of view. We need to do it in more of synodal way and much more broader than from the people in our institutions.
- Detachment from our institutions.
- Discerning, Sending, Supporting, Evaluation. (from CLC). It seems to work in collaboration with different group.
- Formation should be exposed to different ministries in formation. So that they can find their own passion once they have been ordained.
- It is to have one or few men to stay in one of the ministry, so that they can be the glue for that apostolate when men are being shifted around.
- The people in different apostolates could identify the 4 goals in our ministries because of our work.
- Able to articulate what we believe and stand for even if we are not in our institution.
- We need to be available for the mission.
- Witness and embody what we believe. We need to be humble in our understanding and working with the marginalized.

**Suggestions**

- Listening to others. And put the resources behind it.
  - To be identified with the spiritual exercise, by what we do and live.
  - Openness to new thing, and go where we need to go.
  - Excited about the blending fo the church synodal way and the Society's to where we need to go, even if we have to change and surrender.
  - Collaboration with lay people in our apostolates and with the community members.
  - The Miguel Pro community is the experiment of various apostolates living together. No dominate institution. No anchor apostolate and it work.
  - Clarification of UAP and these priorities.
  - May be some of members in main institution community need to split up to live in with other members from other apostolates.
  - It might be useful to devise some kind of process of gathering information from our lay colleagues that would give us input of how they feel about our ministries as to what is appropriate.
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**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 7** (5 participants)**Summary of Responses****Planning**

- Given the large number of ministries with which the Society and its collaborators can be involved, the criteria for discernment is key for determining the "apostolic portfolio".
- The Formula of the Institute is the founding document of the Society and the embodiment of our original charism. In our humble opinion, it would have been ideal had it been the point of departure for the apostolic planning process. Given that it has already started, we believe, in the spirit of Perfectae Caritatis, that it should strongly frame the discussion for the subsequent discernment conversations, along with the other relevant considerations.
- How does the charism received from the Formula inform the mission of the apostolate?
- What and how are the criteria determined to identify the marginalized? At what level is discernment encouraged? Why is it easier to be a gay Jesuit than a Republican Jesuit? A defined focus on specific groups will lead to better allocation of resources for maximum impact.

**Collaboration and Governance**

- How do we understand collaboration? Ignatius understood it as lay partners supporting the Jesuit apostolate, as such it behooves the Jesuits to lead in planning and decision making, in the spirit of art. 419 of the Constitutions.
- Certainly, the lay leaders are screened for the Ignatian charism, but what does it say about our formation when it becomes increasingly difficult to find Jesuits to fill top leadership roles in our major institutions?
- Arguably, this should take us back to the Formula. Given the limited Jesuits, we should focus on the issues that we have control and can offer maximum guidance based on our formation, rather than take supporting roles that could gradually diminish (into "mascots"). For example, if a lay Jesuit university president were to approve a health insurance policy that funds abortions, how strong is our voice on the matter?
- Does our collaboration result in an apostolate that supports the needs of the universal Church even more than the Society?
- We should also be careful about addressing issues just because they are politically correct. Have we fallen into the temptation that our motivation for collaboration is based on the desire to do everything?
- What will it take (personally and institutionally) to prune apostolates that are increasingly straying from the Jesuit charism? Given that discernment requires freedom from attachments, can we say that we have the interior freedom to divest from any of our institutions? Are we free to face challenges at every level? Without challenge there is no growth. Without tension, no creativity.
- Lay collaboration is certainly virtuous, but there seems to be less energy behind inter-Jesuit collaboration. Is there a trust issue with some of our brothers?

**Formation**

- Do we accept men into the Novitiate who strongly believe the core values (charism) of the Society?
- Should we, like the Marines, use our best men to do vocations work?
- Should the Provincial be more involved with formation rather than the management of apostolates?
- If the Exercises are a universal priority, why are the men not trained on giving them as standard practice in formation?

**Suggestions**

Thank you for taking the time to consider what we have said. We recommend an Examen of our Governance: we should be led by our Charism and not be heavily influenced by corporate or worldly dynamics.

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**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 8** (7 participants)**Summary of Responses**

- The Spiritual Exercises, Jesuit formation, our academic preparation and the Formula of the Institute help us to discern the charism of present-day institutions, and other ministerial works.
- We noted our changing roles over the past decades from directors of works or faculty, to now being increasingly animators of the institution. As Jesuits we engage different constituencies, their needs and our limitations to discern our presence. We note that many in our Catholic communities feel alienated from the Church as they try to make sense of the contemporary society and the changes in the Church.
- Two fundamental perspectives: in most of our institutions today we are not in charge any longer, but we are animators of our works, which is distinct from past models of the Society of Jesus. As Jesuits, we are called to use the benefits of our education, our spiritual formation and our call to holiness in serving God's people in this time of great transition. This is what God's people expect and want of us as Jesuits. Integrating these three commitments makes our vocation unique and valued.
- Jesuits help others deal with complex issues of the day such as identity, gender, racial issues, etc., that are contemporary topics requiring discernment and thoughtful engagement.
- Many of our current ministerial works are found in the Formula of the Institute.

**Suggestions**

- Find ways of concretely encourage us to go out to the people of God where they are.
- Significant changes are on the way in our Archdiocese and the church is now and will increasingly look very different as the number of clergy and Jesuits continue to diminish. We need to pay attention to both Provincial discernment and local needs and concerns and how we are responding to the people of God.
- Are we willing to suffer with God's people in the changes that are coming that will require more of us? We are not called just to be "sacramental" priests which some of our diocesan models seem to desire as they deal with reduced numbers of priests. Our charism values sacramental ministry, but also includes educational work, social engagement and spiritual formation. There may be pushback as we maintain our multi-focused ministry and our call to be present to the marginalized, the disenfranchised as well as sacramental needs when the latter is so significant. At some point the Church has to grapple with the question of who can be ordained.
- The younger Jesuits in formation get the kind of formation that is in line with where we are being led. But this presupposes an understanding of the Jesuit charism which should be part of their formation grounded in the Spiritual Exercises.
- Note the dynamism of ever evolving culture. The challenges of the first Jesuits as they faced different cultures can methodologically give us ideas about how we are to proceed in our time of radical change when our numbers are much smaller and our institutions more autonomous.
- Spiritual Exercises are not lived in a vacuum. How do we engage the world and bring its realities into our own prayer and back out into our work?
- Lay collaborators want our support. Their experience of the Spiritual Exercises is as lay people and is distinct from that of Jesuits. What we can offer is the experience of Jesuits living in the modern world, and what we can receive is how the laity interpret and live into the Ignatian charism.

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 9** (13 participants)**Summary of Responses**

The planning process is a 4th-week experience: gifts and talents are a springboard of the imagination:

- Multi-apostolic communities are seen as the future, with fraternity as the catalyst.
- Hope is seen in the process of change
- We do need to mourn our past. However, we also need to look for opportunities: our goal is to re-found something new, a re-invention of ourselves.
- Invitation to freedom: we are called to live out freedom not necessarily tied to our institutions.

**Suggestions**

- We must re-conceive our notion of apostolates: current structures are built to serve institutions, not individual Jesuits or communities.
- We need to look at elements of governance that bond people to our works.

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 10** (9 participants)

**Summary of Responses**

Our ministerial structures are changing, and we need to ready ourselves for something very different from what we have known in the past. Clearly, as one man noted, “we are no longer in the driver’s seat,” but our relationship with laity is still a work in progress.

Still, the Spiritual Exercises and apostolic mission will ground the charism of our labors. The Formula of the Institute provides an essentially pastoral focus—preaching, teaching, the Exercises, reconciliation, acts of charity—all for the glory of God and the common good of God’s people. Our consolation lies in conducting our core ministry, which is the care of souls, in all of the activities we undertake. Our labors may individually focus on spiritual care, pastoral administration, education, scholarship, justice, labor with displaced peoples, or other areas of endeavor, but we are always humble missionaries serving the Church and its people.

Thus, while the core of our work will not change, the question will be how we conduct our mission. Our consolation will lie in our openness to the growth of an essentially pastoral, missionary role exercised with a sense of humility and cooperation.

**Suggestions**

Our themes have focused on listening to our communities, that is, to the lived experience of Jesuits, lay leaders and collaborators, and the goals of the local church, always with an effort to discern the good spirit at work. We can consider new works, but always with a deep sense of reality and limit. Regarding our present works, we should look for opportunities for refocused or re-imagined service.

Finding meaning in a pastoral focus does not mean that we leave our present ministries in favor of the more obviously spiritual. As a community anchored in higher education, we Jesuits are always aware of our opportunities for the care of souls inherent in teaching, administration, and service to both present and former students. Instead, it means that we direct our efforts, at the most fundamental level, at spreading the Gospel and caring for souls, in the spirit of the Formula of the Institute.

Our evolving (not to say diminished) situation requires that we understand and embrace a changing relationship with those with whom we work. A few years ago, we focused on working with collaborators, laity who joined us in our apostolic endeavors. Now, humbly, we realize that in many works we are the ones asked to collaborate with lay leaders. We need to keep this changing landscape always in mind.

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**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 11** (9 participants)**Summary of Responses**

Phoenix Jesuit Community

Apostolic Planning – Second Consultation – Four Directions and Two Fundamental Questions

April 25, 2023

There was a general sense that the four Directions make sense for the future of the province, though comments ranged from “they read no better than NGOs” to “they are practical and inspiring.”

It was clear from the conversation that the Directions are dependent on where Jesuits fit in and on lay and Jesuit partnership. The province works have been good at lay Ignatian formation and hiring for mission, but Jesuits at a work witness to the core mission of the work and the mission of the province. We have to recognize and account for the unique contribution of Jesuits, especially as the role of Jesuits at the works is changing. Are we, as many of our lay partners are, willing to affirm who we are rather than what we do? Priestly presence is significant – as noted at Catholic schools where there are no priests. Special mention was made of the province Vocation Team’s partnership with some of the province schools to foster vocations: “we want you Jesuits to have friends in the Lord to spend your life with.”

To address the roots of injustice and racism and poverty, we have to “walk into the fire” and be close to the experience of people, to love them. Those on the margins are real people. Continual conversation and discernment are critical to knowing the signs of the times and how the province can respond with new initiatives, as the province has done in the past, e.g., Verbum Dei and KBI. Do we have the imagination to be bold, to think outside of the box. Where are the frontiers from GC35? Promoting the Spiritual Exercises and relying on them can help our discernment and the discernment of those we minister with.

In everything we must preserve the “human to human” relationship. For example, AI is not going away, but human beings cannot be marginalized. Our vocations rely on human interaction: with one another, in our priestly ministry, working with parishioners, students, and colleagues. We need to reinforce collaboration within and beyond our apostolates. Understanding the need for customs, rules, and regulations, can we prioritize helping those we serve to know they belong and to experience that belonging – in the Church, the parish, the school.

Parents have a hard time passing on the faith (witness the nones). After Vatican II, the Church didn’t do a great job educating people; in whatever apostolate we have, we need to take every opportunity to educate the people we serve – practically and spiritually.

There is a sense of being overwhelmed – we are doing a lot and yet there is so much more to do. Given the culture and the times we’re living in, how can we encourage people to have a relationship with God, how do we lead people to Christ. Yet there is also a sense of excitement about the future and our place in it.

**Suggestions**

n/a

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 12** (3 participants)**Summary of Responses**

We found ourselves in broad agreement with the Apostolic Directions. But we hope that the voices of our lay collaborators were captured in Phase I of this process and are being captured in this second phase as well. We are happy to know that they will be in attendance at LMU this summer.

**Suggestions**

We cannot maintain our institutions as we have in the past. We need some alternative to our institutional bases perhaps along the lines of the Kino Border Initiative or the Christo Rey schools. Collegiality and ministry with others is here! We must have a strong sense of our Ignatian charism. Rather than making up a large percentage of the institutional staff, perhaps one or two Jesuits could act as yeast, leavening the entire loaf.



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**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 14** (8 participants)**Summary of Responses**

As it was Holy Thursday, we looked at our reflection in the context of our priesthood. I think there is excitement about continuing our work as Jesuits, especially in the context of our work with the youth and marginalized. I think there is continued concern about numbers--with a divide between generations. There is hope for continued collaboration within our communities, and to work with the resources we have in a way that recognizes varied needs.

**Suggestions**

I think there are some ambivalent feelings about continued planning, with a hesitancy to an inclination to 'over plan.' The hope is that we can continue to work, with the continued prompting of the spirit, in a way that is faithful to our tradition while remaining open to change.

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 15** (10 participants)**Summary of Responses**

We need more creative ways to give the Spiritual Exercises and share Ignatian charisms; we are asked to help find the forgotten & lost ones whom culture and church have abandoned; we need to take more risks in ministry and not be satisfied with the status quo; we are dared to meet the people (especially Native People) in their venues while also maintaining some type of traditional work (parish, school); our ministry will be more effective if we focus on a point of contact / entry into the lives of people (Cursillo retreats, Native Powwows, etc); our chosen works should be grounded in social justice and not just charity.

**Suggestions**

To reimagine Jesuits as missionaries in the broadest sense; bringing creativity, zeal, and joy as men of faith. There is little energy in "plugging holes" when we need to be mission oriented. A multi-apostolic community of Jesuits can be a great witness and resource. The Native Peoples have much to share with us if we listen and pay attention; this exchange could bring healing and friendship to our strained relationships with them and ground the Spiritual Exercises in their lives and culture.

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 16** (5 participants)**Summary of Responses**

- We hear an invitation to “broadness”  
Journeying in a way where we do not silo
- Desire to journey forward together as province, with collaborators
- Openness to entering into different parts of the province. Not just my own mission, but my brothers’ mission(s) too.
- Entering into spaces: not just creating spaces, but also being willing to go out into some spaces that already exist.
- Sense of growing appreciation of the process. We are entering into this prayerfully!

**Suggestions**

- For all of us to know the province and its needs a bit better (we hear a desire for this, especially in order to build bridges between works)
- Not to rush the process, not to jump to the execution stage

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 17** (4 participants)**Summary of Responses**

they agreed in general to the directions

**Suggestions**

continue as we are going

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 18** (4 participants)**Summary of Responses**

Overall, the group was consoled that the Spiritual Exercises took pride of place in our framework for apostolic planning and discernment. In a sense, the Exercises have to come first because they force us to continually ask ourselves the question of what sets us in our works and ministries apart from any other NGO in the world. Are we simply another assembly of people of good will looking to help others, or is our work motivated and inspired by something much more compelling and much more powerful? Are we living “the Joy of the Gospel” or do we shy away from that aspect of our mission? The Exercises are a powerful reminder of why we as Jesuits do what we do, and the process by which we determine how to do that. Given the importance of the Exercises, more efforts should be made to provide us with “continuing education” on the spirituality of the Exercises, beyond that which we received in the novitiate.

**Suggestions**

A question that emerged for us is whether there will there be a space and a time for Jesuits, as Jesuits, to discern and reflect on these matters without the presence of our lay collaborators as this process moves forward? This seems to be missing from the framework and we noted that in reflecting on the section of the Formula of the Institute which was provided. The Institute makes a distinction between those who have professed vows and those who have not. While much of this process can, and should, be informed by the views of our lay collaborators, there does need to be space for discernment and reflection on the nature of those vows and what they mean for the living of our charism as vowed Jesuits alone. We have seemed to open the discussion to the world before we have had a proper opportunity to have frank and open spiritual conversation as an Order, or to manifest to the Provincial as such.

The question of discerning our charism touched a nerve because there seems to be something (or someone) completely missing from this process: Pope Francis. We, both the Global Society and us in UWE, have not yet stopped to reflect on what our charism looks like in an era where the Universal Church has been led by a Jesuit for the last decade; something which Ignatius would have found shocking. Have we been “re-founded” as an Order, as a result of having a Jesuit pope? Or, at least, has our charism been rearticulated? These are questions which need to be asked because, if this is the case, the document lacks any reference to those areas which Francis had identified as fundamental to the future of the Church. There is no reference at all to synodality, even though this is the lens through which Francis wants us to reimagine governance and participation in leadership. Also missing is reference to *Laudato Si'*, despite the fact that integral ecology, the understanding that “everything is interconnected” is the heart of Francis’s social vision.

In reflecting upon this apostolic planning process, have we emphasized the need not only to think about how to staff current ministries, but also to discern whether it is time to walk away from some of the places where we currently are? Are we thinking in terms of saying goodbye to certain works, or do we lack the freedom to do so? Why are we in certain places, or certain communities, and not others? As a province, why are we not in those regions or dioceses where either the Church is growing, or where marginalized people are particularly under stress, i.e., the Central Valley of California, Las Vegas, San Bernardino County? Are we dedicating enough men and resources to ministry among the Latino community and other communities of color? Have we included the bishops in this conversation? Are we thinking with the Church in this process, or are we telling the Church in our province what we think it needs?

One of the questions which came up for us repeatedly is that of whether we are afraid to let go? This includes letting go of certain ministries, of course, but also of the comfort of what is familiar. What does it mean to go to the margins in today’s world, understanding that those places and those tasks might be different than anything we imagined before? Are we truly open to the Spirit’s guidance, or are we trying still to direct the conversation towards the ends we want. As much as this is a question of planning for the future, this is also a deeply spiritual quest for us as individual Jesuits and collectively as a Society. We need to recognize the difficulties that asks of us, and lend each other the support and love that is necessary.

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 19** (11 participants)**Summary of Responses**

It did not summarize. For some reason, the meeting was very lackluster with no real communal engagement.

**Suggestions**

- Creative, focused effort on youth, both in and out of institutions, with a desire to help them encounter Christ as the goal
- We have to listen to the youth, what is of concern to them about the future/ Pay attention to what they are concerned about for their future
- We need to look more seriously about the number of works sponsored or run by us and try to focus on fewer things done better.

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 20** (6 participants)**Summary of Responses**

We want to affirm that these 4 directions resonate with us. We especially like the way that they intersect with the UAPs and recent General Congregations.

That being said, we don't think it makes sense that youth and the marginalized be put together in the same Direction. It's also notable to us that UAP #4 on caring for our common home isn't mentioned in these Apostolic Directions.

We want to especially affirm the first direction—Spiritual Exercises, Discernment of Spirits, etc.—as critically important to our mission and to all of the kinds of collaboration that we're called to. We animate the mission in our works in large part through this first direction.

**Suggestions**

We should reevaluate the model for collaboration between lay apostolic colleagues and Jesuits. What are the structures in place for what collaboration looks like? Do they work? Are roles confused? Are expectations clear? Let's examine, evaluate, and clarify the role of lay colleagues in our own governance structures—as provincial assistants and directors of works.

In addition, we need to have accountability and oversight over our spirituality and mission. There isn't a hierarchical accountability for a number of our works—our high schools are exceptions. The future model needs to include oversight for living the Jesuit mission in works that call themselves "Jesuit."

We need to reflect both on the processes of discernment and decision-making around opening new works and how to meaningfully involve local Jesuits in those processes.

Let's continue to discern prayerfully and ask where the Spirit is leading us and continue to ask big questions.

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 21** (5 participants)**Summary of Responses**

One theme that emerged from our conversation was that this was an opportunity for us to look closely at how we are fulfilling our core mission of serving the Church and helping the spiritual progress of souls. Another theme that emerged was that apostolic planning is also the time to ask honest questions about our works: where are we truly needed? Where do we truly contribute to the work? Where are we sticking around because of tradition? How open are we to the movements of the Spirit with regard to creativity and initiative with new works? A third theme that emerged concerned vocations and formation: vocations are a source of hope, and if we love what we do, then we ought to invite others to share in our life and journey with Christ.

**Suggestions**

It would be edifying if one concrete change can be identified that arose out of these discussions.

Use the tools we already have in our ministries.

Be upfront about confronting reasons for staying in failing ministries.

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 22** (6 participants)**Summary of Responses**

I think we all agreed that we would be most interested in the reflections of the younger of the Province who will be actualizing whatever plans seem to be the best. The general consensus was that all of us felt what we were doing was important, and/but we were open to supporting any new directions as far as age and health would permit.

**Suggestions**

It would be helpful and interesting what the summary reflections from formation communities and communities with younger members came up with. While it is important to consider the reflections of every UWE Jesuit (i.e. lumping together all the data), it would also be helpful (maybe more helpful) to compare the reflections from the different generations within the Province.

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 23** (3 participants)**Summary of Responses****Keep Going**

- We are consoled by this discernment process and we're excited about the collaboration. The areas identified are exciting and important for our province.
- We should keep doing the things we are doing well. We shouldn't let the planning process distract us from what we're doing well.
- We have wonderful diversity in our Jesuit province. We should keep seeking to foster unity in that diversity. We should seek union of hearts AND minds.

**Regarding Models of Ministry**

- Acknowledging the model of proceeding in ministry in the province up to this point and the question of a potential adjustment or change of ministry models, there's a desire to know what the option of ministry models are. Perhaps part of the discernment of models requires more concrete information/examples of what models are possible.
- There's a desire to know if we are concretely investigating what is and isn't working with the current ministry model.
- There's a question about why we are taking on more ministries if the Jesuit province is decreasing in numbers. Perhaps this is counterproductive.
- Perhaps there are certain works we need to increase our numbers in, and other works we need to pull out of.
- There's a desire to know what men in formation can do for this discernment process, given their limited experience. There's also a desire to be more involved.
- Perhaps our ministry model can be informed by the Province being more explicitly connected to the local Church. The Province-Church relationship may help make more explicit the Jesuit work-Church relationship.

**Our Mode of Presence in Ministry**

- Perhaps our role as Jesuits in the different works is to be able to explain the Church to the work and the work to the Church. Perhaps that is our unique role as Jesuits in our works. In other words, where there's tension with the Church or ignorance thereof, we can be bridges between the two.
- We shouldn't get distracted from the importance of the connection between our Catholic and Jesuit identity, for the province, works and individual Jesuits. The Catholic identity is inherent to who we are.
- For example, in campus ministry at our universities where our ministry is to all faiths and backgrounds, we can be open about the Catholic foundation without being coercive.
- Perhaps we can offer more intentional Catholic formation for Catholic students.
- Lay people in our works should have the space to be open about how their Catholic identity motivates their involvement in ministry.

**Ministry Opportunities**

- We affirm the importance of accompanying youth and the marginalized.
- While accompanying is crucial, we shouldn't hold back from sharing the good news of the Gospel by evangelizing without coercion.
- The fact that young people in the province grow up in secular culture may come with potential. They may have "fresh eyes" to encounter the Gospel. In other words, they may not have the same kind of barriers as earlier generations. (The U.S. as mission territory.)
- What new ministries may this lead to?
- We should seek more effective methods to reach digital natives, such as digital/social media.

**Suggestions**

See number 9

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**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 24** (10 participants)**Summary of Responses**

- For some, the Directions were uninspiring, not providing any further clarity than previous Apostolic documents, such as the Universal Apostolic Preferences. Additionally, while diminishment is something we will face in the immediate future, it is not a helpful focus for our future planning. Too much focus on diminishment becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. We still have reason to hope.
- For others, the Directions were seen as an expression of the gifts the Society of Jesus can offer the world. This gift mindset can inform strategic ministerial decision.
- Our Directions are best informed by our call to serve the Universal Good and to meet the needs of the World and the Church. To do so, we need to do an analysis to determine what those needs are. The gifts of the intellectual and educational apostolates can be utilized for this process.

**Suggestions**

- Building upon the Direction to Foster Community, there is a desire for ministries that build up faith communities, e.g., CLCs, sodalities, base communities). Under this same Direction, there is a desire for our apostolic work to be guided and more explicitly in communion with the Church.
- When thinking of apostolic strategies, we do not need to reinvent the wheel. Look to what is working, even beyond the Society of Jesus. Where is the Spirit already moving?
- We can hold more consistent listening sessions such as this one to help us continue to discern beyond the end of this formal Apostolic Planning. We can follow Pope Francis' inspiration and become a Synodal Society of Jesus.
- We desire our apostolic planning to be discerned in freedom. St. Ignatius can inspire within us this freedom. Ignatius started ministerial works to meet a need. He did so with the financial backing of the laity. Then, he sought to hand over the responsibility of the work to the laity. Do we have the freedom to follow this same ministerial trajectory?

**JESUIT COMMUNITY: 25** (10 participants)**Summary of Responses**

- a) We find the language and tone of the Apostolic Directions uninspiring and disheartening. It is uninspiring in the sense that it does not reimagine or contextualize our way of proceeding in the contemporary world nor does it make any explicit reference to God. It is disheartening for the members of this group because it fails to capture the contributions Jesuits have made and are making in higher education. In this sense, this present formulation of the Apostolic Directions feels alienating to those who have been missioned by the Society of Jesus to work in higher education. Furthermore, the group discerns a tacit anti-institutional rhetoric and defeatism with regards to our institutions in the document.
- b) We wish to affirm the value of Jesuit higher education as the university is an incredibly rich platform to do Jesuit work such as the education of the youth, the work for justice, and the promotion of vocations. Furthermore, there is need to recognize the intellectual apostolate, in all its diverse manifestations, as part of the Society's history of intellectual pursuits in the service of the Church's mission. Consequently, we hope that the Apostolic Directions affirm the importance of the Jesuit apostolate in higher education.
- c) We wish to stress the importance of considering the relationship of vocation promotion to the intellectual apostolate of the Society of Jesus.

**Suggestions**

- a) We recommend specific reference to the mission of the Society of Jesus as coming from God in the formulation of the Apostolic Directions.
- b) We recommend that the formulation of the Apostolic Directions be re-written and re-thought in a hortatory style that is inspiring. Furthermore, the group invites a more historically informed reading of the Jesuit sources that are included in the document on Apostolic Directions.
- c) We recommend that the document affirm the contribution of Jesuits in higher education as a discerned means of working for the 'glory of God and the common good' (Formula of the Institute 1). Furthermore, we also encourage the apostolic planning commission to also assist in the clarification of the role of Provincial Assistant for Higher Education.
- d) In the spirit of ongoing discernment, it is important that all participants in the process feel heard. To this end, we recommend that the apostolic planning committee write a written response to this group, showing how the concerns addressed here were taken into account.