



Perspectives on the Implementation of the 2003 Apostolic Preferences

The USA East Province is grateful to those who contributed to this reflection: Ken Boller, John Cecero, Dave Ciancimino, Paul Holland, Phil Judge, Brian McDermott, Tom Regan, Vinny Sullivan

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Background work for beginning the process of Apostolic Planning for the USA East Province is well underway. A process is being launched that has many different dimensions and will have broad participation. One of the ways that we can spark our apostolic imagination is to review how the three former Provinces handed apostolic preferences, and then worked on them.

As part of this forward-looking process, the VRev. Joseph O’Keefe, SJ, Provincial, has been interested in what ways and how well such preferences have functioned in the past. Fr. Sosa asked the Provinces in 2018 to assess the true benefits of the apostolic preferences as defined by Fr. Kolvenbach in 2003 and reaffirmed five years later by General Congregation 35 in March 2008. Here, he refers to the commitments to Africa, China, the intellectual apostolate, the interprovincial houses in Rome and migration and refugees (GC35, Decree 3, no. 38). A reflection on the lessons learned here is important because Fr. Sosa has asked our Province to make the new Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) the heart of our Apostolic Plan. As Fr. Sosa remarked:

They [UAPs] seek to unleash a process of apostolic revitalization and creativity that makes us better servants of justice and reconciliation. Let us undertake this process, designing and assessing it in accord with the persons, times, and places in the light of the Church’s orientations and the Spirit’s guidance.

As the new USA East Province is on the threshold of its inaugural Apostolic Planning process, two questions ought to be answered:

- Where have the three former Provinces experienced consolation in responding to the Kolvenbach preferences?
- Where have they not borne fruit in the deliberations of the three former Provinces?

To respond to these questions, input was sought from those involved in decision-making about the implementation of the Kolvenbach apostolic preferences. Provincials, Consultors and Associate Consultors from 2004 to 2007 were consulted. This period corresponds to the four years after the Kolvenbach apostolic preferences were approved. The content represents a lightly edited selection from the written submissions of the respondents.

Reflections on the Implementation of Apostolic Priorities

Since Vatican II, the establishment of apostolic preferences for the universal Society has happened twice. In 1970, General Congregation 31 established five apostolic “priorities” and asked the recently elected, Pedro Arrupe, SJ to implement them. In 2003, the recently elected, Peter Hans Kolvenbach, SJ announced five “apostolic preferences”; and five years later, General Congregation 35, affirmed them and Fr. Kolvenbach was encouraged to continue their implementation.

A review of archival material from the three former Provinces about the implementation of the Arrie priorities and Kolvenbach preferences might be of some historical interest, but it would not reveal to the USA East Province what it needs at this time. We need to gather the recollections of the lived experience of the leadership of the three former Provinces as they reflected on/responded to/implemented priorities. While that lived experience from the period immediately after GC31 cannot be recovered, almost all the Provincials and Consultors in the years 2004-2007 are alive and well! We are not interested in a nostalgic look at the past, but rather the lived experience of leadership of the three former Provinces as they looked to the future. Positive guidance and cautionary tales might emerge from these reflections as we prepare our journey in apostolic planning!

We will now turn to a summary of those reflections. They will be organized under each of the five priorities. Then we will offer some more general comments. And finally, some of the contributors could not resist the temptation to offer “unsolicited” guidance to us as we embark on this process. We gladly share that guidance with you at the end this document.

I will say that the priorities played a reasonably significant role in decision making at the province and conference level.

David Ciancimino, SJ

First, and this may be so obvious that it need not be mentioned, the five commitments articulated by Fr. Kolvenbach and confirmed by GC 35 really were apostolic priorities, rather than preferences as the UAP's are rightly understood. They were “apostolic areas requiring ‘special or privileged attention’” especially in interprovincial cooperation. I think it's crucial that we constantly remember that the contemporary UAP are a set of lenses through which to view each apostolic work, each community, and our individual living of Jesuit religious life.

Paul Holland, SJ

General comments

At the outset, we should note the great difference between the Society in the United States in 1970 and 2003. With the establishment of the Jesuit Conference in 1972, the leadership conversation in the United States change dramatically. Over the last fifty years, we have observed provincials working together, taking a longer view, collaborating closely with Father General and the USA Assistant. These cultural changes to governance have allowed the Provincials to keep international priorities more in focus.

The key to keeping the goals of the apostolic priorities of the Society at the center of discernment and decision making was the focus of the Jesuit Conference (meetings on the priorities). The leadership of Fr. General, the USA Assistant, and Jesuit Conference president was important. Provincials need the Jesuit Conference meetings to lift their heads up - to remind them of the priorities (now preferences) - to put wind in their sails and to provide direction as they work together for the good of the Society and Church for God's holy people.

When GC 35 reaffirmed Fr. Kolvenbach's 2003 commitment to (1) Africa, (2) China, (3) the intellectual apostolate, (4) the interprovincial houses in Rome and (5) migration and refugees (GC35, Decree 3, no.38), there was a sense that this was an undertaking for the whole Society and not the responsibility of one province or one Assistency by itself.

Africa

Jesuits were sent to establish and administer Loyola Jesuit College, Abuja, Nigeria (est. 1996) and the NYK province remained committed to the school.

Nigeria and Ghana and what is now the North-West Africa Province, once a mission of NYK, became an independent province during the years under discussion. NYK provided a significant financial commitment to establish the various *arcae* of the new province. The fruit of a successful mission was evident.

Our history in the missions (and in Africa) should be a source of consolation.

As I recall during the time, we were in the process of helping the Nigeria-Ghana Region shift to its rebirth as the Africa Northwest Province. Jeff Chojnacki, SJ had asked Consultors to help him in specific areas of Province administration. He asked me to work with finance, so I spent a lot of time helping craft the settlement amount for the new Province. That was a step that New York was proud of in helping launch another Province from a mission [like the Philippines], as well as a great joy for the men of the new Province. That it coincided with the universal commitment to Africa was serendipitous.

China

The provinces remained committed to The Beijing Center. Fr. Terry Curry was missioned to China to teach architecture at Tsinghua University. His mission was simply to be a friend of China through his interaction with colleagues and students. Having said this, China is a difficult mission.

In fairness, I am not sure any of those preferences, with the possible exception of refugees, would have led to ongoing reflection. Either we could provide men or resources in those areas, or we

could not. Once provided, [the initiatives to which they were sent] were not particularly the substance of ongoing reflection or deliberation.

Terry Curry was allowed to work in China for a while but otherwise there has not been much contribution in that area.

Intellectual Apostolate

The intellectual apostolate has been a difficult term or identity for me. Many, perhaps most, of our men in universities and colleges are very good teachers. What does it mean to be engaged in the "intellectual apostolate?" I am not sure. If we mean Jesuits engaged in serious and notable scholarship, I think we have some, perhaps not many. Again, it's perhaps in the definition of terms and due to my own ignorance, that I say some.

A serious concern of the provincials was: who will follow the generation of Jesuit intellectuals and scholars about our own Jesuit history and spirituality. Who follows Howard Gray, John O'Malley, and John Padberg to name a few? I am unsure how well this concern was addressed and whether it remains a concern today. I'm guessing it may be.

From the priorities (intellectual apostolate - to serve the theological training and preparation for the USA, CAN, the international Society and Church) rose questions regarding assuring that, what was then, the east (Weston) and west coast (JSTB) theology centers had sustainable futures and the resources to serve the Society's and Church's needs. What emerged were the commitments, relationships, and developments with Boston College and Santa Clara. We can see the good fruit of the discernment and decisions that followed.

At the time, the New England province was highly committed to the intellectual apostolate. It had a strong presence at Boston College, Fairfield University, and the College of the Holy Cross, as well+ as a significant number of Jesuits on the faculty at both the Weston School of Theology and the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley.

Less influential in guiding mission decisions and inspiring the men was the preference of the intellectual apostolate. This preference was largely understood as a commitment to higher education (research and teaching), and those who were already trained and serving in this mission may have felt affirmed, but this preference did not inspire or encourage the Province to the same degree as the other four preferences.

For this reason, Fr. Sosa insists that our commitment to the intellectual apostolate extends beyond work in higher education and instead is to be integrated in our approach to all ministries of the Society. I believe this is a much more promising approach to inspiring our hearts, minds, and energies of our members.

Inter-provincial Houses in Rome

Two popes, John Paul II and Benedict XVI told the Society that the Roman Houses and our pontifical works must be "the priority of priorities." Memory says the global Society took this to heart. As such, Jesuits were reminded very early in their studies that the Society's priorities were the Roman Houses, the Jesuit Conference theologates, and then the twenty-eight colleges and

universities - in that order. Jesuits such as Fathers Bechard, Dunkle, Riordan, and SooHoo, formerly NYK province men, are good examples.

The work of the provincials to identify men to serve as superiors, professors, and in various roles at the Curia was a source of tremendous consolation. Joe Daoust, SJ did a great deal of heavy lifting in "refreshing" the faculties.

To its credit, the New England Province also had a sizable number of Jesuits working and teaching in the Roman Houses. Across these institutions, the scholarly output in terms of books, articles and journals edited, is impressive.

Likewise, the intellectual apostolate and the interprovincial houses in Rome have always been supported by NYP. Examples in recent years include Brian Dunkle, Dave McCallum, Joe Riordan, and Anthony Soo Hoo, to list just a few who were committed to advanced studies in that time period and are now serving the Church and the Society. A look at the current list of USA East Jesuits in the Roman Houses also shows a significant commitment.

In New York, Phil Judge recalls an Assistancy "point system" for men of Provinces serving in more Assistancy/Universal missions (e.g., rector of a theologate, faculty in Rome). I remember New York being proud of how many men we had working in Rome at the time. Ken Gavin had also begun his work with the Jesuit Refugee Service during those years following his provincialate. Rather than consciously planned (let alone "discerned"), I think we were simply pleased that what we were doing seemed to be aligned with what the General was proposing we keep in mind.

In New York, we prioritized the Roman interprovincial houses by sending scholastics for pre-Ordination studies and young priests for advanced studies and work in serving the international students as faculty and mentors at the Gregorian, Biblicum, and Orientale.

Migration and Refugees

In 2003 a Nativity model school, Brooklyn Jesuit Prep, was opened to meet the needs of the largely Caribbean community of the surrounding neighborhoods. The Province clearly supported the Nativity Schools and did much to guide them, support their leadership and at times help them financially, and the Province gave a good bit of support to the Cristo Rey School in Harlem. And I know Jesuits serve on the Board and support sacramentally the Cristo Rey School in Brooklyn. I think these things represent a clear commitment to serving the poor and immigrant communities.

With St. Peter's University, I also had the impression that the Province was sympathetic to, and supportive of, the work of this institution that does so much for first generation college students, representing various ethnicities and faiths. I point to the Province's willingness to assign priests for St. Aedan's Church, which the University took over in 2011. It was a commitment to the University's desire to strengthen its Catholic identity.

In 2004, the Nativity Miguel Middle School opened in Buffalo, NY. It continues to welcome African refugees and members of the underserved Black community of Buffalo.

Likewise, we have been weak in migration and refugee work although Ken Gavin and now, Dan Corrou have served JRS well. Men were sent to JRS works at detention centers here in the USA (Jack Mattimore and Richard Sotelo) as well as to refugee centers in Africa (Peter Gyves).

Then-Provincial Jeff Chojnacki established the Centro Altagracia de Fey Justicia to help meet the needs of the large community of Dominican immigrants in Washington Heights (NYC).

To focus our east coast provinces on new collaborative work in the service of poor, and to some extent immigrant Latino communities, Cristo Rey Jesuit HS Atlanta was opened by the three provinces/provincials with the support of the Archbishop of Atlanta, then Abp. Wilton Gregory.

As I write from Brooklyn, I have felt consoled that our work in Our Lady of Presentation-Mercy Parish, as well as in BJP, Medgar Evers College, and in retreat and spiritual opportunities that present themselves, reflect Province commitment to the Apostolic Preferences.

In 1989, following its long history in Baghdad, the New England renewed its presence in the Middle East by opening a Catechetical Center in Amman, Jordan <http://www.jordanjesuits.org/> . A good number of Jesuits staffed the Center, worked in an English-speaking parish, and collaborated with individuals working with the Jesuit Refugee Service. When Chaldean Catholics were forced from their homes in Mosul, by Saddam Hussein, the Jesuit Center in Jordan helped to process a number of the refugees, who were able to escape from Iraq.

General conclusions

In fairness, I am not sure any of those preferences, with the possible exception of refugees, would have led to ongoing reflection. Either we could provide men or resources in those areas, or we could not. Once provided, [the initiatives to which they were sent] were not particularly the substance of ongoing reflection or deliberation.

The positive impact on a Province derived from raising a new Province from a mission ...

Lastly, I want to say a word about the importance of a province having a focus beyond its boundaries. This is to say, having a mission. NYK has had mission commitments in the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Northwest Africa (especially Nigeria and Ghana), and Micronesia.

A province can derive energy from such missions and commitments. When, at the request of the Regional Superior of Micronesia, the NYK province sent two men to open a school in Yap, it captured the imagination and hearts of many members of the province and beyond.

New York Province has taken great pride and satisfaction in the work done over a half century to establish Jesuit presence in Nigeria and Ghana, leading to the formation of the Northwest Africa province more than twenty years ago. Because of those ties (including the ongoing management of their portfolio), there has always been an interest in helping the new province in any way possible. African Jesuits, trained in the Nigeria-Ghana region, have been and continue to be leaders of the Society in Africa.

Imagining more effective missions ...

As provincial, I could feel the energy as I met with communities and individuals. We were opening this school (and the one in Atlanta - Cristo Rey Jesuit HS Atlanta) and continuing to reach as a province.

Diminishment or Abundance ...

Given all the talk of diminishment, new ministries and missions breathed life and energy into old bones. Yes, we are fewer and perhaps need to reimagine our relationship with some cherished works, but our men are energized when they see the province respond to the needs of the time. I pray we will continue to look beyond the comfort of our boundaries and have the courage to respond to the needs of the Church.

Inevitably, there is a tension between these international preferences, province willingness to support them and the life of the ordinary rank and file Jesuit. The Kolvenbach preferences were, in many cases, specific to a particular geographic area or apostolate. They did not directly impact most Jesuits, and, as a result, had no fruit in their lived lives. By contrast, the UAP's articulated by Fr. Sosa more readily lend themselves to become a focus within most of the apostolates of the Society and, thus, touch the way of proceeding of ordinary Jesuits.

Advice for the USA East Province as we enter a period of apostolic discernment

Some thoughts from Paul Holland, SJ

Pray for greater freedom ...

I think of the UAP's as a kind of mission statement. If we reduce the UAP's, and so the apostolic planning process itself, to produce a set of priorities, then each work, each community and each individual Jesuit could have a ready-made justification for clinging to the status quo. The argument will run something like the UAP says we are to accompany youth, and I do that by working at a school, so I can check that box; the UAP's says we are to show the way to God, and I do that by my parish ministry or my retreat ministry, so I'm covered. Such an approach will allow us to avoid the harder questions about personal and communal conversion, and the interior freedom needed to engage in a genuine process of communal discernment.

Communal discernment must be the method ...

Next, I suggest that the "planning process" really needs to be an extensive exercise in communal discernment. And communal discernment always requires a stance that includes an Examen which will address our need for repentance (recognition of where my/our freedom is constrained by prejudices, attachments to economic security and societal reputation, power and influence and the like), and our need to foster genuine trust in each of the other partners in the process. The process then will include an extensive investigation of data, an articulation of clear questions and alternatives, and an agreed-upon timeline for the completion of the process.

The method of community conversations which has been proposed for the recent *Conversations that Matter* is a starting point for such a process, but much more need to be done to acquire the stance, in terms of intentional building of trust through recognition of our *scotomas* (Latin for blind spot).

Thrive vs. Survive

Third, I would especially recommend the talk by Fr. General Adolfo Nicholas in Mexico City as a horizon or starting point for the process. (Adolfo Nicolas SJ, *Depth, Universality and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today*, Mexico City, April 23, 2010)

Nicholas said that we need "to place ourselves in the spiritual space of Ignatius and the first companions and ---with their energy, creativity, and freedom---ask their basic question afresh: What are the needs of the Church and our world, where are we needed most, and where and how can we serve best? We are in this together, and that is what we must remember rather than worrying about Jesuit survival."

He asked the question, "If Ignatius and his first companions were to start the Society of Jesus again today, would they still take on universities as a ministry of the Society?" That, I suggest, is one of the foundational questions we would ask of each apostolic work of our province.

Nicholas appealed to the University administrators to imagine themselves as "co-founders of a new religious group, discerning God's call to you as an apostolic body in the Church" and asking of themselves and each other what are the best ways to respond to the mission of the Church and the needs of the world. This is exactly the kind of imaginative invitation we need to offer to our lay

colleagues, as well as to each Jesuit.

The Holy Spirit will speak to us through the reality into which the Son of God entered ...

Finally, Nicholas reminds us that this will require us to move beyond the superficial and to enter into profound engagement with the real; for that is where we will glimpse the hidden presence and action of God. He encourages us to explore new ways of creatively renewing our historic commitment to a dialogue between faith and culture, and I think that's what this planning process, and the UAP's themselves, need to foster.

From Ken Boller, SJ

The whole Society represented by those who hold formal authority in it have a very special relationship to the Apostolic Preferences but, it seems to me, individual Jesuits will necessarily relate to them according to what the Society has asked them to be and do ministerially.

For the purposes of USA East Province planning, the challenge is to devise a plan to enact the UAPs, largely through their local lay leadership, with the support of the Jesuits either directly or indirectly in support of their work. The paradigm of review of apostolic mission in the secondary and university apostolates strikes me as the most effective instrument for assuring fidelity to the UAP's and the ongoing Jesuit/Ignatian identity of our works.
