

## Decree 2

# *Renewed Governance for a Renewed Mission*

### Introduction

1. Apostolic mission lies at the very heart of the Society. From its earliest days, discernment has guided the development of governance to better serve and support the Society's mission, the *Missio Dei*. Governance in the Society is personal, spiritual and apostolic. Each General Congregation is a source of inspiration that guides the development of governance in changing circumstances and the care for the persons engaged in this mission in ways most appropriate to the times.
2. GC 35 gave helpful recommendations to guide the Society's governance, many of which have been implemented. Reviewing progress, GC 36 points to several areas that need further attention and clarification. First, GC 36 identifies important features relevant to our way of proceeding today that we wish to encourage. Second, this Congregation acknowledges the ways in which renewal of governance has already been undertaken at diverse levels in the Society since GC 35. Third, GC 36 makes clarifications and recommendations for ongoing apostolic discernment and planning.

### Ways of proceeding suited to our times

3. Discernment, collaboration and networking offer three important perspectives on our contemporary way of proceeding. As the Society of Jesus is an "international and multicultural body" in a complex, "fragmented and divided world,"<sup>1</sup> attention to these perspectives helps to streamline governance and make it more flexible and apostolically effective.
4. **Discernment:** Discernment, a precious gift of Ignatius, is integral to our personal and corporate apostolic life. It begins in contemplation of God at work in our world and allows us to draw more fruit in joining our efforts to God's designs. Discernment is what "roots us in the Church in which the Spirit works and distributes his various gifts for the common good."<sup>2</sup> Discernment serves as the foundation for decision-making by the proper authority in our way of proceeding. In preparing for this Congregation we already have an experience of discernment that began in Provinces and Regions and helped us to name both significant challenges to our mission today and our responses to the Good News of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> This discernment process offers the spiritual base that enables our apostolic planning.
5. Given the magnitude and complexity of contemporary challenges to the mission, and the declining numbers in our least Society, discernment is more than ever critical for apostolic

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<sup>1</sup> GC 35, D. 3, n. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Address of Pope Francis to GC 36, 24 October 2016.

<sup>3</sup> See Father Adolfo Nicolás, "GC36, *The Call of the Eternal King: A Meditation*" (2015/15: 3 October 2015).

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effectiveness.<sup>4</sup> Consistent and participative discernment is our way of ensuring that ongoing apostolic planning, including implementation, monitoring and evaluation, is an integral element in all Jesuit ministry. Given the crisis of authority in contemporary culture (family life, education, politics, religion), the practice of discernment is a gift that we can offer to others. By living discernment, we can impart its practice to others. Sharing in discernment leads to a shared vision. Forming collaborators for mission means first that we be formed for discernment.

6. **Collaboration:** GC 35 stated that “collaboration in mission... expresses our true identity as members of the Church, the complementarity of our diverse calls to holiness, our mutual responsibility for the mission of Christ, our desire to join people of good will in the service of the human family, and the coming of the Kingdom of God.”<sup>5</sup> GC 34 had already asked that “all those engaged in the work should exercise coresponsibility and be engaged in discernment and participative decision making where it is appropriate.”<sup>6</sup> GC 36 recognizes the decisive role of our partners in the vitality of the Society’s mission today and expresses its gratitude to all those who contribute to and play significant roles in Jesuit ministry. That mission is deepened and ministry is extended by collaboration among all with whom we work, especially those inspired by the Ignatian call.
7. Noting remarkable progress in collaboration across the Society, obstacles remain. The challenges may be found in our own lack of imagination and courage, or they may come from inhibitions arising from our social contexts or even from local clerical practice. A particular difficulty can be the lack of genuine collaboration among Jesuits -- individuals, institutions, communities, Provinces, and Conferences. Inclusive discernment and ongoing planning and evaluation of our efforts to go beyond the obstacles is required in order to mainstream the participation of mission partners further in various levels of the Society’s apostolic activities and governance. It is also important to discern to which projects, initiatives or activities carried out by others, we could offer our support, whether human, technical, intellectual or financial.
8. **Networking:** Collaboration naturally leads to cooperation through networks. New technologies of communication open up forms of organization that facilitate collaboration. They make it possible to mobilize human and material resources in support of mission, and to go beyond national borders and the boundaries of Provinces and Regions. Often mentioned in our recent Congregation documents, networking builds on a shared vision and requires a culture of generosity, openness to work with others and a desire to celebrate successes. Networks also depend on persons able to provide vision and leadership for collaborative mission. When properly conceived, networking provides a healthy balance between authority and local initiative. It strengthens local capacity and encourages subsidiarity while assuring a unified sense of mission from a central authority. Local views are more readily and speedily heard.
9. Governing bodies in the Society are already encouraging networks. Depending upon their scope and scale, Provincials, Conferences and the General Curia actively facilitate, foster,

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See Father Adolfo Nicolás, “CP70. *De Statu S.J.*” *Acta Romana Societatis Iesu* XXV, 2 (2012) p. 535.

<sup>5</sup> GC 35, D. 6, n. 30.

<sup>6</sup> GC 34, D. 13, n. 13.

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accompany and evaluate international and intersectoral networks. In Jesuit networks we find the intersection between the creativity and initiative that occur in networking and the authority that gives the mission. Networks engage the “horizontal” and the “vertical” dimensions of our ministries and governance. Networking also reflects a contemporary move towards greater synodality as promoted by Vatican II.

### **Review of steps taken since GC 35**

10. Decree 5 of GC 35, “Governance at the Service of Universal Mission,” expressed the desire that Father General follow up on certain issues expeditiously. This desire was articulated in directives, recommendations and suggestions. Directives included the comprehensive revision of the *Formulae* for General, Province and Procurators’ Congregations, and the instruction to perform a comprehensive review of central governance. Recommendations included the establishment of instruments to promote good governance through regular assessment of superiors and evaluation of apostolic institutions, the evolution of a strategy for improved communications within and beyond the Society, and reflection on provincial and regional structures with a view to adapting them to today’s realities. Suggestions for follow-up included the search for ways in which financial resources may be more equitably deployed for solidarity in service of international mission. Another request was that programs for leadership development be undertaken in the Society.
11. Each request received significant attention; time and resources were given to the issues, and substantial progress is evident. GC 36 expresses its deep gratitude to Father Adolfo Nicolás and all who played a role in these efforts.
12. This Congregation identifies three areas for further reflection and action:
  - a. The Society should continue to improve its process of discernment, making it always more coherent, that is, better able to identify and respond to challenges at the global level in a way that integrates local, provincial, conference and central governance. The Society should continue to develop ways at every level to implement, monitor and evaluate the results of decisions taken.
  - b. The breadth and depth of our planning and review processes (for example, the review of central governance and the structures of Conferences) need greater attention and capacity.
  - c. Some of the requests of Decree 5 of GC 35 (for example, communications, sharing financial resources, leadership development) have been acted on, but they are still works in progress that need attention.
13. Reflecting on these realities through the perspectives of discernment, collaboration and networking, GC 36 makes the following recommendations.

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### Recommendations

#### *For Father General and central governance*

14. GC 36 asks Father General to review the process —initiated by GC 34<sup>7</sup> and continued by Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach<sup>8</sup> — to evaluate progress on our current apostolic preferences and, if appropriate, to identify new ones. Discernment of such preferences should include the greatest possible participation of the Society and of those involved with us in our mission. To this end, as indicated by GC 35,<sup>9</sup> Father General and the Council should establish procedures for assessing the Society’s complex processes for apostolic planning at all levels and encourage the use of ongoing discernment and planning.
15. GC 36 calls on Father General to carry to term the comprehensive review of the central governance of the Society that was requested by GC 35<sup>10</sup> and initiated by Father Nicolás. In particular, this review should further help situate various governance elements in relation to the General, his Council, Regional Assistants, Sectoral Secretaries, Conference Presidents, the Major Superiors and local Superiors, noting the competencies of each, the complementarity of their roles in serving the Society’s mission, and their relationship with the person and governance of Father General. This process should include an evolving communications strategy as noted in Decree 5.<sup>11</sup> For this review, in line with what was proposed by GC 35, Father General is encouraged to “make use of the best professional advice available within and outside the Society.”<sup>12</sup>
16. GC 36 requests that Father General study the governance of Jesuit networks and other forms of ministry which extend beyond a Province or Conference. As networking has been promoted to enhance collaboration inside and outside the Society,<sup>13</sup> it is necessary to reflect on how and at what level of governance the Society can exercise its responsibility for Jesuit networks. In the same way, the Society should develop models of governance appropriate to ministries that are global in their mission and service.
17. GC 36 asks Father General to review and evaluate the restructuring of Provinces and Regions that has already taken place, so that what has been learned can be applied to ongoing and future reconfiguration.
18. GC 36 affirms that, keeping in mind our commitment to poverty, various financial strategies, opportunities and implications must be considered in apostolic planning and decision-making at all levels of Society governance. The Treasurer and other skilled and knowledgeable persons should assist in these processes. In this context, GC 36 requests that Father General implement revisions of the *Statutes on Religious Poverty in the Society of Jesus* and the *Instruction on the*

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<sup>7</sup> GC 34, D. 21, n. 28.

<sup>8</sup> Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, “*Nos préférences apostoliques*” *Acta Romana Societatis Iesu* XXIII, 1 (2003) pp. 31-36.

<sup>9</sup> GC 35, D. 3, n. 40.

<sup>10</sup> GC 35, D. 5, nn. 9-14.

<sup>11</sup> GC 35, D. 5, n. 13.

<sup>12</sup> GC 35, D. 5, n. 14.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. GC 34, D. 21, nn. 13-14 and GC 35, D. 6, n. 29.

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*Administration of Goods*, with particular attention to the use of contemporary financial instruments and to the norms on sources and uses of the Common Fund.

19. GC 36 calls on Father General to continue the steps taken by Father Nicolás to promote greater solidarity of human, institutional and financial resources throughout the Society in order to achieve greater apostolic effectiveness. Specifically, the Congregation asks that he:
- a. Continue and bring to fulfillment the Solidarity in Formation process;
  - b. Review the goals and operation of FACSI to promote more effectively the universal mission of the Society at the service of those in greater need.

### *For Conferences of Major Superiors*

20. GC 36 asks that the six Conferences, described by GC 35 as “a significant initiative in the governance structure of the Society”<sup>14</sup>, should undertake a study of their way of proceeding. They should use the guidelines of Decree 5 of GC 35<sup>15</sup> as the foundation for their self-assessment; these self-assessments should be reviewed by Father General. Acknowledging differences in history, context and styles of decision-making, the self-study should have at least the following four outcomes:
- a. More consistency among the Statutes of the Conferences, particularly in the areas of the binding nature of decisions and the President’s decision-making authority in relation to the coresponsibility of Major Superiors.<sup>16</sup>
  - b. A process for implementing ongoing apostolic discernment and planning in the Conference that includes the President in the apostolic planning of Provinces and Regions and in facilitating the preparation of Jesuits for international apostolates.
  - c. Clarification of their capacity for holding resources for formation and apostolic purposes.
  - d. An outline of ways in which the Presidents engage with Father General in discerning and animating the universal mission of the Society and in expanding the horizons of decision-making beyond the confines of Provinces and Conferences.
21. GC 36 calls on Conferences to review implementation of the *Guidelines for the Relationship between the Superior and the Director of Work*.<sup>17</sup> They should take into account the increasing number of lay directors of Jesuit works and adapt the *Guidelines* as needed for the realities of their Conferences. They should further assess the implementation of Decree 6 of GC 35<sup>18</sup> in regard to collaboration with others, and develop and evaluate strategies to promote such collaboration in the Conference. The reduced number of Jesuits, the proliferation of apostolic initiatives of the Society, the increasingly active and welcome participation of partners, and the growing role of lay participation in the Church require further reflection and action in the

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<sup>14</sup> GC 35, D. 5, n. 17.

<sup>15</sup> GC 35, D. 5, nn. 17-23.

<sup>16</sup> GC35, D. 5, n. 20 c.

<sup>17</sup> *Acta Romana Societatis Iesu* XXII, 3 (1998) pp. 383-391.

<sup>18</sup> GC 35, D. 6, n. 29.

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area of collaboration. Father General should be informed of the strategies and should approve updated Guidelines.

### *For provincial and regional governance*

22. GC 36 asks Major Superiors to ensure that apostolic discernment and planning in their Provinces or Regions is consistent with the universal apostolic preferences of the Society and the apostolic discernment and planning of their Conferences, so that the mission preferences of the whole Society are taken into account in the ministries of their Provinces or Regions.<sup>19</sup> Discernment and decisions of Major Superiors about works in their Provinces or Regions must take into account the effects they have on flexibility and availability for the universal mission of the Society, especially in their Conferences. This engagement enhances both the General's capacity to undertake global mission and the Major Superiors' coresponsibility in serving the universal mission of the Society.
23. GC 36 calls on Major Superiors to promote the integration of life and mission of Jesuits at the local level, in the context of decreasing numbers of Jesuits worldwide but increasing involvement of others and growth of apostolic vitality. Major Superiors should insist on the formation of Jesuits who will be able to thrive in this evolving reality. Major Superiors are also encouraged to create and support dynamics which build relationships among Jesuits, enhance collaboration among Jesuits and colleagues, support apostolic animation, and promote initiatives of intersectoral collaboration. These initiatives could include meetings among superiors of the same city or area, apostolic networks or platforms, and ministries commissions or other structures of mutual accompaniment. At the same time GC 36 calls on Major Superiors to support processes which give freedom to leave ministries which are no longer sustainable or no longer critical to our mission, and to clarify juridical relationships with ministries which have become Ignatian rather than Jesuit in character.<sup>20</sup>
24. GC 36 requests that Major Superiors ensure that a local Superior's primary responsibility be the animation of the local Jesuit community.<sup>21</sup> Proper training for local Superiors and a manageable workload of apostolic activities are key to the proper implementation of CN 351.<sup>22</sup>

### *For local governance*

25. GC 35 stated that "the effectiveness of the local Superior is critical to the apostolic vitality of the Jesuit community..."<sup>23</sup> The apostolic leadership of the local Superior is today marked by the importance of the promotion of discernment, collaboration and networking. GC 36 requests that local Superiors exercise their service to communities from these three perspectives so that they promote mission at all levels: local, Province, Conference and universal.

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. CG 35, D. 5, n. 20, c.3.

<sup>20</sup> GC 35, D. 6, nn. 9-14.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Complementary Norm 351*.

<sup>22</sup> GC 35, D. 5, n. 38.

<sup>23</sup> GC 35, D. 5, n. 33.

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26. GC 36 invites Superiors and Directors of works, and indeed all Jesuits and partners in mission, to foster deep habits of prayer and discernment as the preludes and accompaniment to ongoing planning, and to foster mutual relationships and collaboration in implementing plans. This means encouraging a spirit of availability and trust among us and with all who serve the *Missio Dei*.

### **Conclusion: Re-imagining and seeking the greater and more universal good**

27. If our governance can inspire us to renew our service of mission, with greater commitment to discernment, collaboration and networking, God's grace can move us closer to its fulfilment.
28. As Pope Francis reminded us, our "way of proceeding" is a process, a journey: "I rather like Ignatius' way of seeing everything – except for what is absolutely essential – as constantly developing, *in fieri...*"<sup>24</sup>. We draw profit, Pope Francis indicated, from "holding tensions together"<sup>25</sup>: contemplation and action, faith and justice, charism and institutions, community and mission. We are pilgrims. Our path involves facing the creative tensions brought about by the diversity of persons and ministries in the Society. In seeking to progress in following the Lord, the Society must constantly re-imagine and discern how our governance structures can better serve the mission entrusted to us.

*(Original: English)*

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<sup>24</sup> Address of Pope Francis to GC 36, 24 October 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.