

# Pilgrims Together

*with Jesus on Mission*



Apostolic  
Discernment  
Document for the  
Jesuits of Canada



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# Letter from the Provincial

*To Jesuits and partners in mission*



**Dear sisters and brothers,**



photo: Roei Weiss

With the election of Arturo Sosa during GC36 in October 2016 the Society of Jesus embarked on a path of renewal. The decrees of GC36 call forth a response to the contemporary challenges in our world that is at once bold and humble, faith-filled and a call to an ever-deepening conversion to Christ. We read in the decrees that “in a world losing its sense of God, we should seek to be more deeply united with Christ in the mysteries of his life. Through the Exercises, we acquire the style of Jesus, his feelings, his choices.” (GC36 decree 1, 18) In addition our way of proceeding is ever more grounded in ‘discernment in common’: “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.” (GC36 decree 2, 5)



photo: Moussa Faddoul

According to Fr. Sosa there are a few factors that contribute to what he has termed “a historic moment in the life of the Society of Jesus.” He suggests that with the ‘emergence of lay vocation’ to the Society, in addition to some 16,000 Jesuits there are over 80,000 collaborators worldwide many of whom, men and women alike, are taking positions of leadership. “Collaboration with others is the only way the Society of Jesus can fulfil the mission entrusted to her... Jesuits are called to the mission of Jesus Christ, that does not belong to us exclusively, but that we share with so many men and women consecrated to the service of others.” (GC36 decree 1, 36) “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." (GC36 decree 2, 6) In addition we have a Pope who uses Ignatian language and is, in fact, providing much guidance for the Society's renewal. Fr. Sosa suggests the 'historic moment' contains a call to re-imagine who we are, in addition to responding to the deep needs of our contemporary world.

Since becoming Provincial of the Province of French Canada three years ago, I have been asked about preparing a new 'province strategic plan.' At that time, I shared that I would like to wait until the founding of the new Jesuit Province of Canada before embarking on a planning process. Shortly thereafter, Father Sosa announced a process of discernment for the whole Society that would

entail the widest possible consultation. In a series of letters published during the summer and fall of 2017, Fr. Sosa outlined the process and a timeline that resulted in the publication of the Universal Apostolic Preferences.

In sum, with the inauguration of the new province in July 2018 and the publication of the UAPs in February 2019, the Jesuit Province of Canada was now poised to embark on its own planning process. Thus, in September of 2019 Jesuit communities and apostolates were invited to begin a twofold discernment process: first, on the UAPs themselves, and second, on implications of the UAPs for their community or apostolate. The results of those reflections were then compiled and presented to a joint meeting of Jesuit superiors and directors of apostolates held in Chateauguay, QC at the end of October 2019. *We were surprised and consoled by the generosity and thoroughness of our works and communities that yielded some 250 pages of materials for our discernment.*



photo: José Sánchez

As the result of the Chateauguay meeting, we distilled the materials to 110 pages that highlighted the calls to our province and these were sent to the province consultants and assistants for their prayerful considerations in the six weeks prior to the expanded consultation in January 2020. The expanded consultation of the Province met to distill further the results of the previous meetings. The province consultation next took up the task in early March 2020 leading to the redaction of the document you are receiving today.

I hope that those who participated in the multi-stage process will recognize something

of their participation and, most importantly, that the document will be helpful for ongoing discernment at the community and apostolic level.

This is in line with the General’s admonition that the UAPs are first and foremost about how we are called to ‘be’; about ‘how we live, how we work and how we relate to the people we serve.’

### **What this document is...**

- Reflective and invitational
- A discernment resource to further deepen the UAPs in the context of the Jesuit province of Canada, its communities and apostolates
- An invitation to broaden the focus of each work and community

### **What it is not...**

- A series of lists and priorities to check off
- A re-invention of the UAPs



The third part of the document outlines a number of tools by which we will together continue the ongoing process of apostolic planning. I am committed to making use of these tools in my visitations and meetings and I encourage local communities and works to make regular use of them as well. These tools will help prevent the fruits our shared discernment from becoming a dead letter or merely inspirational.

Has our world changed as the result of Covid-19? Our Jesuit province was touched in a particular and very challenging way when the crisis entered René Goupil infirmary in Pickering. We mourn the untimely loss of our men and yet, we are deeply consoled by the selfless dedication of the staff and the volunteer young Jesuits and others who quickly offered to help when the situation became particularly difficult. It is fortuitous, as you will see when you read the attached document, that the volunteers chose 'pilgrim' as their name of grace during their debrief. They wrote: Pilgrimage was a helpful image

for our experience. *"Our home is the road" (Jerome Nadal). There was openness among us to the present moment and a comfort with that openness. Freedom kept coming up in conversation, a freedom to see where God was acting.*

Yes, our world has changed, and our lives are different as we mourn our losses and begin to figure out how to move forward as society slowly opens. Is the work that we did prior to the pandemic still relevant? The resounding answer is 'yes' because the experience of Covid-19 has heightened our sense of what it means to be on pilgrimage in the midst of a reality where we are not always in control except to be vigilant to the fact that God IS acting. The rich collaboration that produced the attached Apostolic Discernment document is now more essential than ever as we, the Jesuits of Canada in all our diversity, religious and lay, move forward with our contribution to the worldwide mission of the Society of Jesus.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



**Erik Oland, SJ**

Montreal, May 31, 2020  
Feast of Pentecost



# Introduction



photo: Arthur Poulin

The model adopted for this document is the one proposed in decree 2, number 5 of General Congregation 36: “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.”

This document presents a framework for reflection, evaluation and decision-making that invites an ongoing appropriation and incarnation of the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) in the context of the Jesuit province

of Canada, its communities and apostolates. It is an invitation to broaden the focus of each work and community as members of the apostolic body of the province. It will orient our apostolic planning for the next five years. It is not a series of lists and priorities to check off, nor is it a re-invention of the UAPs.

The tools introduced in part III are crucial to ensuring that the fruits of this discernment process become an integral part of our life as a Province, and not simply end up as an inspirational document consigned to the shelf.

# Part I:

## *Our Apostolic Name*





Throughout the process of discernment, many people remarked on the frankness, vulnerability and trust of our conversations. This is a source of genuine gratitude. As a result, the fruits of our discernment are a realistic assessment of where we really are, of our limitations but also of the way in which the Spirit has already given flesh to the UAPs among us. In all four phases of our process, we experienced the life-giving and Spirit-led apostolic energies at work in our province.

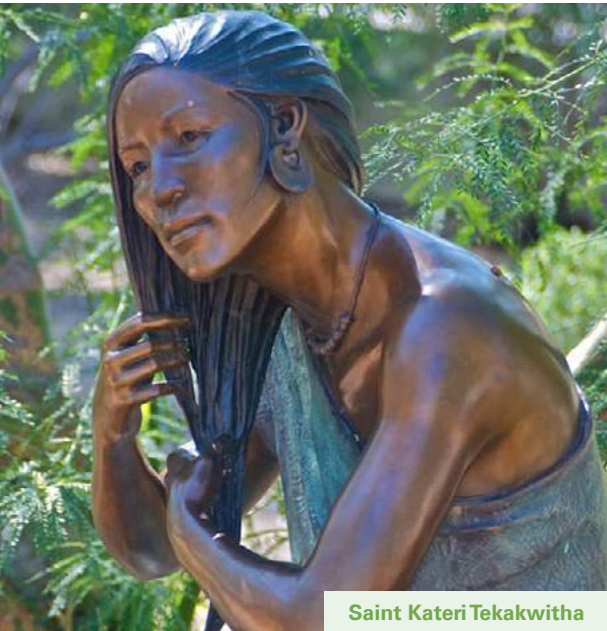
- We have come to know ourselves better as an apostolic body missioned with Christ:
- We are Jesuits and members of other religious communities
- We are lay women and men
- We are partners with Jesus in service to the Church and to society
- We are those who work in the vineyard of the Lord
- We are Canada and we are Haiti
- We are Indigenous and settler peoples, we are old and new immigrants, we are the descendants of slaves
- We are those who desire to incarnate the Gospel and its values for today



photo: Camille Legaspi

We bring with us the heritage of French and English Canada, both in the Society and in our country. We bring the heritage of Haïti's turbulent history, and the newness of the Society's

mission there. With the very first Jesuits who arrived in Canada, we recognize that we are most ourselves when we are in right relationship with Indigenous peoples and when we allow the Gospel to bring to life in us



Saint Kateri Tekakwitha

and among us a new vision of a just society. Christ's call and the Spirit's creative energy impel us to express and give flesh to the countercultural meanings and values we discover in the living

out of the Spiritual Exercises. We call upon Kateri Tekakwitha, the Canadian Martyrs, François de Laval, Marie de l'Incarnation and many others to accompany us on this journey.

In the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, the time of 'election' is central to the journey. Ignatius is clear that the Exercises are designed to help an individual come to a decision regarding major life choices (married, single or religious life). At the same time, the most basic decision that is behind every specific one, is the decision to place God at the centre of one's life. In the light of this, the traditions of our province, rooted in the work of John English and Gilles Cusson, suggest that one spend the time of Election in discerning one's 'name before God' or 'name of grace'; that unique name, phrase or motto that defines one's response to God's being at the centre. Out of this 'centre' the specificity of how one lives out the name continues to unfold. Election and one's name before God can be applied to the bigger picture of apostolic planning





photo: Dominik Haake

for our Jesuit province. In effect, it is helpful to define our 'apostolic name'; a name that undergirds our sense of being a corporate body and a name that helps to focus our apostolic discernments.

Towards the end of the expanded consultation in January of this year, as we reviewed the fruits of the day, an image emerged which seemed to capture some essential elements of our reflection and conversation: that of pilgrimage. For many of the Jesuits in the room, this image evoked the humility, poverty and reliance on God alone of our own pilgrimages as novices and tertians. The image of an apostolic pilgrimage transforms the diminishment of our means from a problem to be overcome to a gift that lightens the load and keeps us attentive to the signs that show us the way with Jesus on mission. On pilgrimage, we are beggars who rely on

the kindness of others and who learn about God's goodness from them. A pilgrim can identify the direction she or he is called to follow in the present but has at best a general sense of the destination. On pilgrimage, the temptation of the enemy lies in wanting to know already the whole of the journey so we can control it; consolation lies in the openness to take another small step in the direction we are shown. For us as pilgrims, secular society is the gift of a place within which to journey.

This image of the pilgrim was strongly confirmed in the spiritual conversation of the provincial consult in March. It is, of course, firmly anchored in Jesuit tradition: Ignatius called himself the pilgrim, and pilgrimage was an important spiritual exercise of the first founders of the Society. **Pilgrim** is our grace name, our vocational identity as the apostolic body of the Society of Jesus in Canada and Haïti.

# Part II:

## *Living the Universal Apostolic Preferences as Pilgrims*



*Incarnating the UAPs as Pilgrims: Graces and Calls*



photo: Jesuit Curia in Rome

As Father Sosa has reminded us many times, the Universal Apostolic Preferences are first and foremost about our way of being; they are about “how we live, how we work, how we relate to the people we serve.” We have witnessed the energy that working with and reflecting upon the UAPs has already released in our province. We are not called to rewrite or replace the UAPs, but there is a particular way that we can incarnate them more and more as a Jesuit province that includes Canada and Haïti.

*As we offer a way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment,* we have recognized with gratitude our common history of creative leadership in adapting the Spiritual Exercises and of forming others in giving the Spiritual Exercises. We want to make the Spiritual Exercises, spiritual conversation and discernment in common more and more our way of proceeding in our works and communities. We are also aware of the very real danger of pride in our heritage, which can lead to desolation, loss of creativity and resistance to change. Our stance in offering this way to God is instead one of mutuality, of encounter with others in humility, of working together to find new ways to present the Exercises in ways that speak to the needs of our society. We are called to be people of peace and silence in the face of a culture of noise and hate, in both Church and world. We offer freely, knowing that what we have to offer may not be received.

*In our walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, we have discovered a strong desire to be in closer relationship: to listen to, stand beside and befriend. We want not just to serve but to walk with Indigenous Peoples, the impoverished, refugees and migrants, youth, women, LGBTQ+ persons, and victims of abuse both in the Church and*

*As we accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future, we are grateful for the many initiatives that already exist in high schools, university chaplaincies, summer camps, parish youth groups and in the vocation apostolate. We know that in many places, youth today are fundamentally unchurched, sometimes to the 2nd or 3rd generation. We are learning how to listen to them, to hear what they are saying. We hear a call to adapt the language of discernment to youth and young professionals and to find new ways of making the Exercises available to them. Here, it is essential that we be visible in society and authentic in our witness.*



photo: Jesuit Curia in Rome

in society. But we also recognize a certain lag or gap between our desire and our lived reality. We are called to have honest conversations about the ways in which our communities and works are often perceived to be places of privilege, so that they may become more and more places of openness, hospitality and friendship with those who are excluded.

We have made a good start in our *collaboration with others, with Gospel depth, for the protection and renewal of our Common Home*. A number of our works and some of our communities have made significant progress in integrating an ecological perspective into their way of proceeding. The appointment of a province coordinator for ecology is also an important



step. But we have many challenges ahead of us if we are to be credible and our conversion firmly rooted. Working with Indigenous Peoples and youth is a source of grace for us here. Involvement with ecological issues is perceived by many Elders as an act of reconciliation with Indigenous People, and for many young people, the creation of a hope-filled future passes through concern for the Earth.

*Converging Desires:  
Virtues for the Pilgrim Journey*

A number of *converging* desires emerged in our discernment that we believe we are called to deepen and cultivate as apostolic virtues in the coming years if we are to live the UAPs as pilgrims in Canada and Haïti:

**We are called to a deeper humility:** there is a sense of consoling humility that emerges from our process; instead of a certain triumphalism that may have marked some past exercises of discernment, we are recognizing that we can't do everything, and that we can benefit from what others bring. We are shifting from "having all the answers" to an open-ended seeking with others. This brings a simple honesty about the challenges we face: we are not giants of social transformation, but we do our little bit with the limited means at our disposal. We offer freely what we have, with





open hands, without worrying about whether what we have to offer will be received. We are called to authenticity and simplicity in our way of proceeding.

**We are called to deeper listening:** over and over, we experienced the call to practice “active listening”; not only to the people with whom we work, but also to the people to whom we are sent: for example, we can shift from a stance that says “we are doing this to our students” to “we are collaborating with our students in their own formation.” We are called to listen to and be transformed by the lived experience of Indigenous People, youth and young professionals, women, and the Earth, our Common Home.

**We are called to mutuality in encounter:** mutuality and encounter seem to us a foundational disposition that informs all the UAPs. The theme of “being-with-others” emerged again and again as a key to our way of being on pilgrimage. We want to be affected by our relationships with others, to become one with them, recalling that in deepening our relationships we must not shy away from places of woundedness still requiring healing and reconciliation. This mutuality is connected with both humility and active listening, but it also requires of us that we be clear about our own identity as partners in Christ’s mission. The goal is authentic dialogue with others, which can only happen if we respect our own identity



and that of others, recognizing different contributions as we become more and more the *minima compañía colaboradora* envisaged by the UAPs.

**We are called to hospitality,** especially to the poor and marginalized. This desire flows from the first three. Apostolates such as Quixote House, Solidarité Fwontalye and the Jesuit Refugee Service show us the grace that can flow from hospitality, but overall there is a gap between our desire to be in closer relationship with the outcasts of the world, and the reality of our lives, our communities and our works. This calls us to examine our communal way of life and our apostolic way of proceeding, to ensure that we shift more and more away from a position of privilege and develop a simplicity and openness that welcomes others into our homes and works.

**Pilgrims walk slowly and with deliberation:** the attentiveness to the signs of the times that is the hallmark of contemplation in

action requires a slower pace. The magis calls us to do fewer things with greater spiritual and intellectual depth. It is a great temptation to respond generously to every invitation, dissipating our energies in multiple directions. But if we wish to be true to the call to be pilgrims, then we must take seriously the call to rid ourselves – personally, communally and institutionally – of what is non-essential to create time and space for discernment in common.

**We desire to model our way of proceeding on the process of Ignatian spiritual accompaniment:** humility, listening, mutuality in encounter, hospitality, and walking slowly and deliberately come together in the model of Ignatian spiritual accompaniment proposed in the annotations of the Spiritual Exercises. The fifteenth annotation, for example, reminds us to let the Creator deal directly with the creature. The twenty-second annotation challenges us always to be ready to receive the contribution

of another hospitably, and to strive to place the most positive meaning possible on what they offer. This non-judgmental listening is fundamental to social, cultural and interreligious dialogue. We can let the other guide us, entering through their door. We can help others discover a sense of direction, but we do not know in advance what the destination will look like when we arrive.

**We are called to authenticity:** the UAPs are intended to be for all of us, lay, religious and Jesuit a way of being authentic “labourers in the vineyard of the Lord.” Our being-with-others requires of all of us transparency and honesty, and a coherence between what we say and do and how we live. As Fr. Sosa reminds us, young people expect the witness of this authenticity from us. Credible witness comes from credible people who are credible believers. Speaking clearly with humility is different from the timidity that gives in to the tendency to water down or hide the religious character of our enterprise, and in fact calls for a new creative fidelity that resists thinking we won’t be heard if we show our true selves. There is an onus on Jesuits in particular to model this because of their vows and lifelong commitment to the Society.

**We are called to integrate all four of the UAPs:** we have recognized the wholistic nature of the Universal Apostolic Preferences. In each community or work, we can recognize which of the four horizons is less well integrated in our way of living and proceeding. Rather than bracketing out this element, we instead want to ask the question “how can it be better integrated into our work in the coming months or year?” Working in this way, step by step, we will deepen the conversion which the preferences are aiming to promote in us and among us, a conversion that is individual, communal, and institutional.





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# Part III

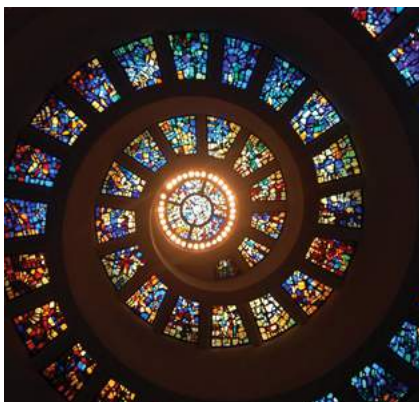
*Tools for living the Apostolic Name*





The global Society and our Province have practiced the model of wide consultation that led to the articulation of the UAPs and that grounded our own apostolic discernment. The rich inclusiveness of the process sought the widest possible participation of Jesuits and partners worldwide. Our own more recent province process elicited deep reflections and committed responses from across the province. This model of implementation, monitoring and evaluation will become for our province, communities and works an ongoing pattern of discernment and inclusivity.

- The Province is committed to forming personnel in Ignatian spirituality and discernment through the Service for Discernment in Common (SDC) and its programs. Personnel of SDC are available to communities and works of the Province to help with formation and to facilitate discernment exercises. In addition, directors of works are strongly encouraged to budget time and financial resources for continuing formation and growth of a critical mass of Ignatian colleagues by means of retreats and workshops.
- Jesuit communities have as part of their mission the responsibility to deepen their practice of discernment in common and spiritual conversation in order to enrich their common sense of Jesuit identity and, by



virtue of their vows and lifelong commitments, to bear witness to authentic models of the Jesuit and Ignatian way of being.

- Province assistants are not merely convenors, but leaders who are delegated by the provincial to animate their sectors. They have become key means of shared leadership through their respective commissions and through their dialogue with the provincial. All province commissions will meet at least once a year to network, and for an exercise of communal apostolic discernment for their sector. Each assistant will report the fruits of this discernment at the expanded consultation.
- The expanded consultation, the joint superior/director of apostolate meeting, and the superiors' meeting are key moments of shared leadership in the life of the Province. The Province commits to having ongoing conversations about deepening the sense and practice of shared leadership.
- At the beginning of every apostolic year, each work and community will allot time for a discernment exercise to designate specific outcomes that will help take one more small step towards giving flesh to the UAPs.
- Prior to the provincial's annual visitation, each work and community will undertake a communal examen on the key desires of our pilgrim way, our Ignatian attitude of accompaniment as outlined in part two, and an evaluation of the outcomes they selected.
- These practices will be the foundation for a discernment in common of how existing works might be transformed, which works can continue without province engagement, and what new initiatives we are being invited to take up.
- The attached Toolkit on Communal Apostolic Discernment outlines a number of practices for assistance in the ongoing use of spiritual conversation and discernment.





# Conclusion



photo: John O'Brien

We have learned through our discernment process that following a direction is more important than defining a destination in detail. This document provides a framework for ongoing reflection and communal decision-making for the next five years. Please bring this document to prayer. Use parts one and two for community

reflection or for spiritual conversation in your apostolate. This document is the fruit of a process to which all of us have contributed; please spend the time needed to take ownership of it. Above all, you are encouraged to make use of the tools in section three to practice ongoing evaluation and transformation of both community and work.





*Cuando pase el mensajero, que no me encuentre dormido, afanado en otras metas, indiferente a su voz. Que no sea su relato semilla que el viento barre o luz que a nadie ilumina. Cuando pase el mensajero que no le vuelva la cara para esquivar su propuesta. Se presentará en un libro, en un verso, o será estrofa de un canto que me envuelva. Vendrá, tal vez, en un amigo, en un hombre roto, o en el pan partido. Le abriré la casa, pondré en juego el corazón y escucharé, con avidez, sus palabras. Y entonces me cambiará la vida.*

*Lè mesaje a pral pase, li pa dwe jwenn ou ap dòmi, okipe ap fè zafè ou, epi pou vwa l pa di ou anyen. Pinga van pran mesaj li pote a tankou yon grenn semay, oswa li vin tankou yon limyè ki pa klere pèsonn. Lè mesaje a ap pase, se pa pou m vire tèt mwen devan sa li ofri m nan. Se yon pawòl k ap parèt nan yon liv pwezi, oswa l ap yon kouplè yon chante k ap vlope m. L ap soti, petèt, nan men yon zanmi, yon moun delala oswa nan yon moso pen. M ap louvri pòt kay mwen ba li, m ap bay tout kè mwen epi m ap koute pawòl li yo ak anpil atansyon. Lèfini l ap chanje lavi mwen.*

### ***A prayer by Jose Marie Rodriguez Olaiozola SJ***

*Quand le messenger passera, qu'il ne me trouve pas endormi, occupé à d'autres occupations, indifférent à sa voix. Que cela ne soit pas son récit de semence que le vent balaie, ou de la lumière qui n'éclaire personne. Lorsque le messenger passe, que je ne détourne pas mon visage de sa proposition. Son message sera présenté dans un livre, en vers, ou ce sera une strophe d'une chanson qui m'enveloppera. Cela viendra, peut-être, d'un ami, d'une personne brisée ou du pain rompu. Je lui ouvrirai ma maison, je mettrai mon cœur en jeu et j'écouterai, avidement, ses paroles. Et ensuite, cela changera ma vie.*

*When the messenger passes by, may he not find me asleep, busy with other pursuits, indifferent to his voice. May I not be an example of the story he tells, of seeds swept away by the wind, or of light that illuminates no one. When the messenger passes by, let me not turn my face away from his proposal. It will be presented in a book, in a poem, or it will be the verse of a song that will envelop me. It will come, perhaps, in a friend, in a broken person, or in the broken bread. I will open my home to him, put my heart on the line and listen eagerly to his words. And then it will change my life.*