



Engaging a Changed  
and Changing Context

*TOWARD AN APOSTOLIC PLAN*

USA Central and Southern Province  
of the Society of Jesus

Planning | 2020-2030



**JESUITS**<sup>®</sup>  
USA Central and  
Southern Province

# Universal Apostolic Preferences

## **Showing the Way to God**

*To show the way to God  
through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment;*

## **Walking with the Excluded**

*To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world,  
those whose dignity has been violated,  
in a mission of reconciliation and justice;*

## **Journeying with Youth**

*To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future;*

## **Caring for the Common Home**

*To collaborate in the care of our Common Home.*



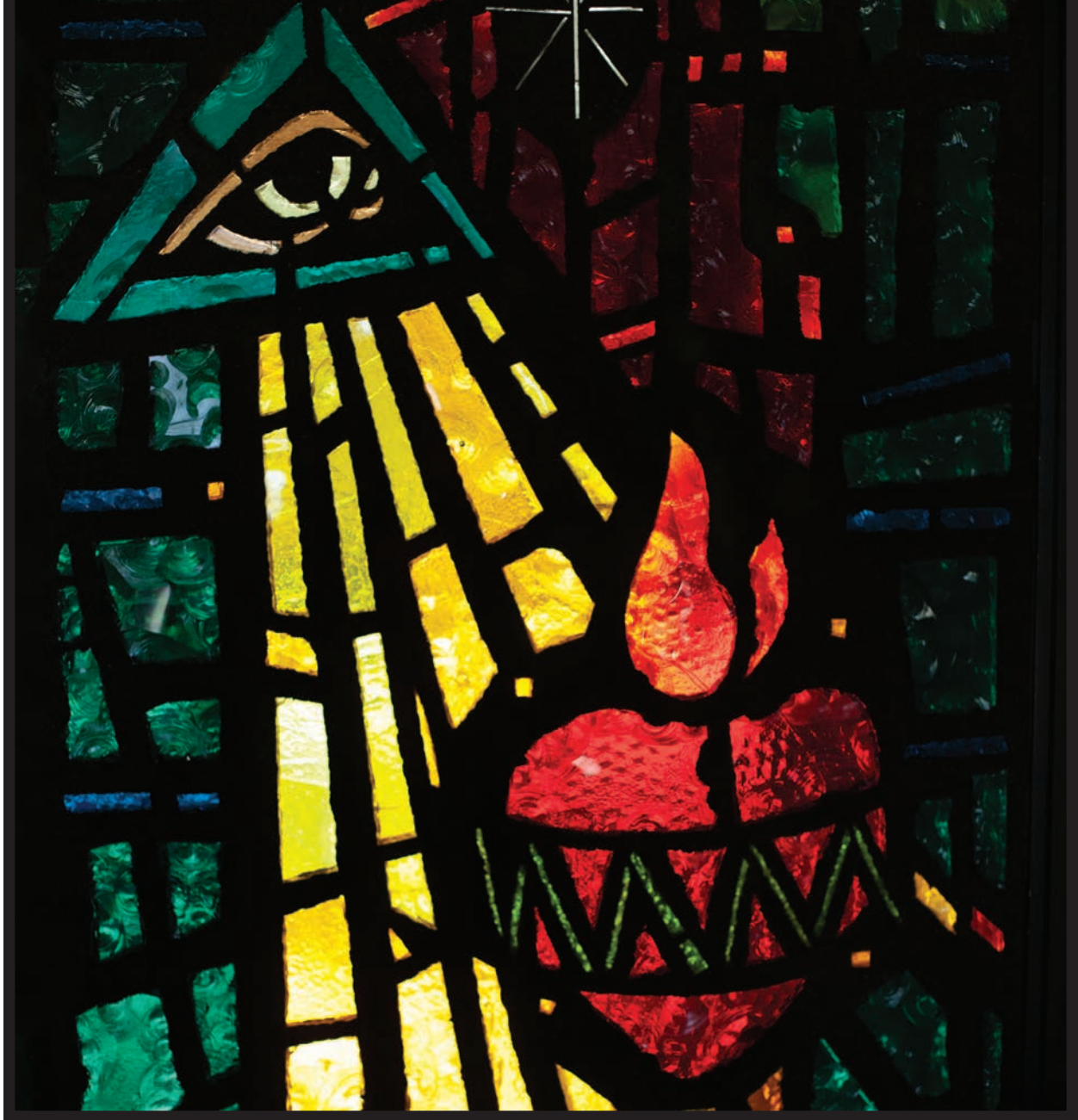




*Our desire has been to find the best way to collaborate in the Lord's mission, the best way to serve the Church at this time, the best contribution we can make with what we are and have, seeking to do what is for the greater divine service and the more universal good.*

**– Superior General Arturo Sosa, SJ**





## Guiding Principles

*This sketch of an apostolic future for the U.S. Central and Southern Province for the next ten years follows on the discernment processes of the last few years. The process has been extensive. All of us involved in the ministries of the Province have shared in two discernment processes. Members of the Commission on Ministries helped clarify important topics. Social analyses of the main metropolitan areas served provided important data. Reviews of the demographic changes in the number of Jesuits available for ministry also played a role. The Province staff and Consultors reviewed all materials. Last, dialogue with leaders in all apostolic sectors gave a rich sense of the strengths, challenges, and opportunities they face. Most importantly, in all these discussions, the central role of the Spiritual Exercises as ground and guide for the future emerged as a constant refrain.*

Now, in the light of the gift of the Universal Apostolic Preferences the Society and its colleagues received on February 19, 2019, the Province seeks to reconfigure its apostolic commitments to respond to the four Preferences given to us by the Holy Father. The changes outlined will necessarily be gradual and strategically focused. Changing the nature of our relationships with our apostolates, building new apostolic links, and fostering a more robust communal life will take time. The Province and its apostolates must, however, deal with the rapidly changing demographics of the area served by the Province and the apostolic needs of the universal Society.

While this plan necessarily recognizes limits on the ability of the Province to maintain some commitments so as to refocus our energies, these limits must not blind us to the abundant graces. We continue to receive gifted men who seek to follow St. Ignatius in the Society of Jesus. The fruits of decades of work toward mission and charism formation in our apostolates are evident for all to see. While the efforts and results vary among apostolates, no one can simply dismiss what God has done in moving many to a deeper love of Christ and a broadening commitment to the Catholic and Jesuit character of our works. Too often in our reflections, the Society has focused narrowly on the intra-Jesuit concerns. The two most recent General Congregations and Father General's letter on the Universal Apostolic Preferences demand a broader, more inclusive horizon.

The changes foreseen will no doubt be traumatic for some. The nature of the Province's relationship to some of its apostolates will change over the next few years. UCS will no longer provide Jesuits for all the works it currently does. The Province recognizes the pain this will cause; for the Jesuits of UCS, such change will also be painful given the depth of the ties developed over decades, sometimes more than a century. Yet, to be able to respond in new ways to the needs of the Church

and of the area the Province serves, such change is needed and perhaps overdue. The Province will seek to engage in conversations with all its apostolates about crafting new forms of relationships.

Of course, we know that the mission of the Society ultimately comes from and through the Church, as did the Universal Apostolic Preferences, confirmed by the Holy Father. Affirming that ecclesial dimension must constitute a basic framework of all our planning.

*The preferences seek to unleash a process of apostolic revitalization and creativity that makes us better servants of reconciliation and justice.*

– Superior General Arturo Sosa, SJ

As we begin to implement this plan, however, it is important to bear in mind some basic commitments by the Province that will shape our decisions:

- UCS will continue to promote, within the communities and ministries of the Society, a consistent culture of protection and safety for minors.
- UCS will develop the financial resources of the province itself for formation, healthcare, and apostolic initiatives.
- UCS will assess the implementation of this plan in three and five years.

**This overview will address four different topics:**

1. The need for spiritual growth within the members of the Province and our partners in mission;
2. The need and desire for communities of spiritual conversation;
3. The criteria for continued apostolic sponsorship of our works;
4. The emerging vision for the future – limits and possibilities.





## Spiritual Depth

At the heart of the Universal Apostolic Preferences lies a call “to show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment.” As Father General has noted, in order to show the way to God, one must also be on it. He has called for growth in spiritual depth on the part of all Jesuits, our communities and our apostolic partners. Moreover, “to walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice; to accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future; and to collaborate in the care of our Common Home” requires growth in freedom to see and hear in new ways. Father General’s call to celebrate “The Ignatian Year” in 2021 and 2022, calls for the grace of conversion for Jesuits and our colleagues. By deepening our ex-

perience of the Spiritual Exercises we can better hear the Lord’s call and serve Him. As Father General has noted, the conversion we need must be “personal, communal and institutional.”

In order to deepen our own experience as Jesuits and colleagues, the Province will undertake the following:

1. Request that in calendar year 2020 all Jesuits make a directed or preached retreat, not a private one;
2. Continue to offer and promote the Colleagues Retreat to give more people an experience of Ignatian prayer and of our contemporary mission;
3. Emphasize Ignatian formation in all visitations and sponsorship reviews.  
*(See also initiatives under spirituality ministry.)*

# Community Life

General Congregation 36 (GC 36) built upon the foundation laid by GC 35, identifying community life as a critical component of our charism along with mission and identity. That represented a real change in our thinking: community for mission is now balanced with community as mission, a concept we Jesuits have yet to understand and implement completely. In recent gatherings of younger Jesuits, the importance of community has become a consistent theme, paralleled with a desire to be part of an apostolic team in an apostolate. As we move forward as a Province, we will need to grow in our sense of what the Society is asking of us for community life. Decree 1 of GC 36 expounds that vision clearly in nn. 9-16. As many of you have noted, however, the call to communal discernment in the decree is far from our current practice; we need first to lay the groundwork for such a practice. As Father Sosa has repeatedly emphasized, we must maintain the inseparability of our life and our mission.

The next ten years will be an important time for putting the vision of GC 36 into action. This will require development of some basic practices in our communities.

1. Some pattern of regular spiritual conversation must become part of community life. Regular conversation at that level, speaking about one's experience of God and the joys and challenges encountered in one's life and ministry, will require practice over time. The Province will help prepare superiors to animate such conversations and respond to tensions within communities.
2. Communities should regularly have times for common prayer, especially celebration of the Eucharist together.
3. Jesuits working in a particular apostolates will have times when they can speak prayerfully about their ministry and come to decisions concerning the ways in which they can help animate the charism of the apostolate. This may mean several apostolic teams in a multi-apostolic community.
4. Our Province, like the culture around us, knows the reality of divisions, whether political, theological, or cultural. If we are to exercise a ministry of reconciliation, that has to include seeking reconciliation within common life, within and between communities.
5. Hospitality is already a hallmark of the communities of the Province, especially with respect to those with whom we collaborate in our ministries. Deepening that sense of hospitality and cooperation is an important call from GC 36.
6. Our hospitality has to extend broadly. Since GC 32, opening our houses to those with and for whom we work has been a great grace for all concerned.
7. GC 36 calls us to expand such hospitality. To open our lives to the poor and the marginalized has been a constant call and challenge.
8. In order to facilitate regional apostolic planning, UCS will continue a process of community reconfiguration.
9. Care for senior Jesuits and those facing health challenges will remain a priority for the Province, with special concern for providing communities designed to care for their needs.





# Criteria for Continued Sponsorship

The following attributes were considered indispensable for continuing sponsorship of a ministry. Development in these areas is a priority over the next ten years for apostolates and for the Province. Of course, these criteria will apply differently in the various apostolic sectors.

As a context for our reflections, being a Jesuit apostolate has the hallmarks mentioned in GC 35, dec. 6.10,

- living out the Ignatian charism
- with a mission in accord with that of the Society
- being accountable to the General of the Society through the normal patterns of governance of the Society.

In these criteria, “*Mission*” here refers to the call of the Society, notably through the General Congregations and the UAPs.

1. Resources present to ensure institutional sustainability.
2. A shared commitment between the apostolate and the Province to a strong and healthy Jesuit community to support / animate the apostolate.
3. A history of commitment to the Jesuit and Catholic charism and mission, including ongoing initiatives to address and foster the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society.
4. Resources present to ensure the viability of the mission of the apostolate.
5. Continuing embrace of and institutional support for the charism and mission, especially through efforts to promote experiences of The Spiritual Exercises.
6. Clear evidence that Boards or other decision-making bodies devote appropriate time to their formation in the Jesuit and Catholic mission and charism and include the Jesuit and Catholic mission and charism within all planning, including strategic planning.
  - a. Ensure a critical mass among Board members and senior leadership of persons who have a deep appreciation of the Spiritual Exercises and the Jesuit and Catholic character of a work.
7. Racial/ethnic and socio-economic diversity among those served by the apostolate.
8. Staff and/or faculty, as well as Trustees, representative of the demographics of a region, or at least commitment to greater inclusion.
9. A commitment to working with other Jesuit-sponsored apostolates in the region.
10. Collaboration with the Province, the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, sectoral organizations (Jesuit Schools Network, Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, ...), and global networks (IAJU, JESSEDU, ...). This includes participation in Province visits, reviews, and programs and sharing in the cost of the services provided.
11. Active engagement in vocation promotion, including promotion of vocations to the Society of Jesus. In the light of the Universal Apostolic Preferences, foster ministry to the young adults.
12. Ensuring that selection of Board members for the apostolate includes openness to formation in the Jesuit and Catholic charism and mission.







## Criteria for Starting a New Apostolate

As this plan noted at the beginning, while this time in the history of the Province requires some reconsideration of our apostolic footprint, such a change must lead to providing space for hearing and responding to emerging needs of the Church in the U.S. and beyond. With that in mind, there are certain criteria to consider before accepting new ministries.

1. It must fulfill the requirements for a Jesuit work described by GC 35;
2. It must flow from the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society specified by Father Sosa in his letter of Feb. 19, 2019;
3. It must meet the criteria of viability and sustainability required of all apostolates, including feasibility and long-range financial plans;
4. It must respond to an apostolic need with support from the local Church and from a corps of collaborators in the area, including benefactors and potential board members, as well as potential apostolic leaders;
5. It must develop a plan for formation in its Jesuit and Catholic mission;
6. It must seek insofar as possible collaboration with other Jesuit apostolates in its area or with Province, Conference, regional or global networks, especially in seeking counsel in early stages of development.



# Emerging Vision for the Future

*The Province Staff, the Commission on Ministries and the Province Consultors all looked at the apostolic footprint of the Province for the future. Important elements in this discussion included the requirements of the apostolate (for example, the need for pastors in parishes), the apostolic gifts of individual Jesuits, and the mission of the Society as provided to us by the Universal Apostolic Preferences.*







## Higher Education

The Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States has been in dialogue with the leadership of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities regarding our apostolic presence in the future. Several points have emerged for the future of the ministry of higher education in Canada and the U.S.

1. Jesuits currently in the higher education apostolates value strongly the ability to work together with other Jesuits in their ministry.
2. Given the number of Jesuits receiving doctorates each year and the desire just mentioned, there is a need to focus the missioning of Jesuits. The Jesuit Conference is moving toward a common process for missioning of men.
3. This will entail a smaller number of higher education apostolates receiving Jesuits in the future, though the change in presence will take place over time.
4. The choice of ministries will flow from the Jesuit mission, especially the UAPs.
5. That being said, there is a strong desire among many Jesuits for a more innovative engagement with the intellectual apostolate.
6. The Conference and the AJCU will reflect together on how to maintain a strong Jesuit and Catholic identity in our schools. The Mission Priority Examen using *Some Characteristics* as a reference point has presented us with a snapshot of the strength of the identity and mission of each school. A sense of mission and identity that will endure into the future will require the allocation of significantly greater resources, including providing for ways in which the schools, together with the Conference and the AJCU, can develop new ways of deepening and expanding participation in each apostolate.
7. Since this is a Conference apostolate, decisions will be made by the whole Jesuit Conference.
8. We will support the creation of the Theological Institute at the Pontifical University in Ponce, P.R. which will train laity and clergy for service.
9. The Province will seek ways to engage schools sponsored by the Society in vocation promotion.





## Parishes

UCS has a rich mix of 14 parishes spread throughout the Province. They have deep roots in the community and serve a diverse population. Bishops express their gratitude for our presence. At the same time, though, the Province needs to ensure that it provide parishes with men prepared for and gifted in this ministry, one that asks much of Jesuits and our colleagues and yet provides rich apostolic rewards. To respond better to the call of the Universal Apostolic Preferences, the Province will reduce the number of its current commitments.

### **Parishes that maintain sponsorship will normally:**

1. Be “hub” parishes that are linked with multiple ministries;
2. Serve a diverse population, with direct contact with the poor and marginalized;
3. Where appropriate, with the permission of the local Ordinary, explore alternative modes of parish governance, as already in place at St. Matthew’s Parish;

4. Foster Ignatian spirituality as part of their regular ministry.
5. Develop a regular pattern of “sponsorship agreement” with parishes.

### **For the future, the Province plans to:**

1. Identify and provide mentoring for men interested in parish ministry, with special attention to ministry in African-American and Latino communities. Their preparation will include development of appropriate linguistic and cultural abilities.
2. Our ministry will focus on seven parishes with enough men to form an apostolic team and, if necessary, a community where there is no other local community.
  - a. In so doing, the Province will focus on the Universal Apostolic Preferences that shape our ministry today.
  - b. UCS will work collaboratively with the local Ordinary.
3. Explore new relationships between parishes located on university campuses and the university.



## Secondary and Pre-secondary Education

UCS currently sponsors 13 schools, including one pre-secondary school. All are members of the Jesuit Schools Network. Three are relatively new, the two schools with the Cristo Rey model and Loyola Academy, a Nativity school. All of them have participated in sponsorship reviews. Two schools, Loyola Academy and the high school division of St. John's College in Belize City, have no Jesuits regularly missioned to the apostolate.

Most schools have developed strong programs for on-boarding faculty and staff into a Catholic and Jesuit ministry. They are exploring more ways to work with members of the Boards who have a special responsibility for the mission and identity of a work. Working together in the Province through the High School Leadership Group, they have, together with the PASE Office of the Province, shaped and shared programs in formation and mutual support.

As the Province moves forward, it will place priority on those apostolates which place an emphasis on serving the poor and marginalized.

### **For the future, the Province plans to:**

1. Identify, train and mission Jesuits with an aptitude for ministry in this area, with special focus on:
  - a. Collaboration with lay colleagues, especially in:
    - i. Apostolic leadership, including administrative ministry
    - ii. Mission and formation work
  - b. Accompanying young people through teaching and pastoral work, carrying out the mandate of the UAPs.
2. Focus on 6-7 schools which will maintain an ongoing Jesuit apostolic team of between 3-5 Jesuits, recognizing that movement toward this goal will require time and strategic planning in conjunction with school leadership;
3. Affirm our ministry in the Cristo Rey and Nativity schools: Arrupe Jesuit in Denver, Cristo Rey Jesuit in Houston, and Loyola Academy in St. Louis;
4. Promote models of collaboration among Jesuits and our partners in ministry;
5. Strengthen sponsorship review models and sponsorship agreements to emphasize an ongoing experience of the Spiritual Exercises within our apostolates;
6. Seek ways to engage schools sponsored by the Society in vocation promotion;
7. For schools that no longer have a regular Jesuit presence, the Province and the school will develop renewed sponsorship agreements along the lines mentioned in the section below.





*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. – Proverbs 3:5-6*



## Social Ministries

These ministries of the Province are linked closely with other apostolic institutions. They help animate these ministries to greater solidarity and concern for the poor, the marginalized, the migrant. We learn from them as well as serve them. Our apostolates have taken seriously the call of GC 32 to the intrinsic link between justice and faith. Nevertheless, the Universal Apostolic Preferences call the Province to a greater effort in this regard, especially in terms of proximity to the marginalized and more direct attention to care for our common home. The Social Justice Committee of the Province has crafted an action plan to be implemented over the next decade. Among the initiatives to develop are:

1. Develop the outreach of the Jesuit Social Research Institute as a major resource for the Province and the Church;
2. Establish a committee to promote care for our common home through programming, apostolic initiatives and events in the Province;
3. Build upon existing outreach, accompaniment, support and advocacy work for refugees and migrants, especially through El Paso – developing links with the Mexican, Central American, and UWE Provinces;
4. In collaboration with the GU272 Foundation and building on the work of the Slavery, History, Memory and Reconciliation Project, address the issue of racism through educational, advocacy, and research efforts.



## Spirituality Ministries

The Province currently has four centers that specialize in preached retreats and two in directed retreats. Our spirituality ministries are centered heavily in southern Louisiana. Beyond the traditional ministries, three lay programs (the ISC in Kansas City, the ISI in Lake Dallas, and the ISP in Denver) train men and women for directed retreat ministry, including the Ann. 19 retreat; in addition, the Emmaus Program at Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau has formed lay men and women to preach the Exercises in the traditional weekend format. Many of the members of the Province regularly direct retreats, preached or directed. Many of the younger members of the Province express a deep desire to be more directly involved in the ministry of the Exercises in some form. The Province has been blessed by many persons, Jesuits and lay partners devoted to and formed in the Exercises.

As the Province moves forward, however, it needs to make some strategic decisions regarding our future. These include the following:

1. Like all other apostolates, the ministry of the Exercises must include attention to the full mission of the Society, including the promotion of justice. The UAPs will further shape this apostolate.
2. The Province will have to limit the number of retreat houses with resident communities to four, to assure a number of Jesuits sufficient to form an apostolic team together with their lay colleagues. As occurs in other retreat houses, Jesuits may still continue to preach or direct retreats at the retreat houses UCS can no longer staff on an ongoing basis.
3. The Province will emphasize the importance for all Jesuits, especially those in formation, to develop familiarity with the theory and praxis of the Exercises.
4. The four retreat centers will include those that offer both preached and directed retreats.
5. Given the UAPs' focus on Ignatian spirituality and the need to reach out to a broader public, the Province will deepen relationships with the lay-led initiatives currently active and encourage networking between them and other sponsored ministries in the area.
6. Supporting the formation programs in Ignatian spirituality at our apostolates will be a priority in spiritual ministries.
7. As noted previously, an Office of Ignatian Spirituality will seek to promote collaboration among spiritual formation programs and help develop:
  - a. Formation of more spiritual and retreat directors in Ignatian spirituality;
  - b. Modes of outreach to young adults.







## Vocation Promotion

Because vocation promotion is crucial and determinant for the future of the Society and viability of our mission, the ministry of vocation promotion is a real apostolic priority which must be embraced by all engaged in the life and work of the Province. Effective vocation promotion also demands collaboration of Jesuits, colleagues and our sponsored apostolates. *While we all recognize that vocations to the Society, like all vocations, are a gift of God, we also recognize that the Lord calls us to be aggressive in making use of many approaches and resources to collaborate with grace.*

Wherever possible and appropriate, all communities and ministries should seek more effective ways to *accompany and invite young people to a personal encounter with Christ, who calls.* Individual Jesuits should be available to offer spiritual accompaniment to discerners, when asked. All communities should *promote vocations by means of prayer, by the witness of our lifestyle, by openness to young people in our works and by inviting those interested in our life to visit with us and participate in our work and ministries.*

To facilitate the promotion of vocations more intentionally, UCS will address the following points:

1. Expand the number of members of the vocation team with a geographic division of responsibilities;
2. Ensure materials and activities in Spanish;
3. Develop better links with lay collaborators in vocation promotion for all Christian vocations, but especially for the Society;
4. Emphasize the gift of the Brothers vocation.





*May it please the supreme and divine Goodness to give us all abundant grace ever to know his most holy will and perfectly to fulfill it.*



## Works Without Active Jesuits

One of the most difficult issues arising during this discernment has been the viability of continued sponsorship of an apostolate without the presence of Jesuits working there. Among the concerns raised during the discernment were the difficulty inherent in having an ongoing way of handing on the charism and mission of the Society without Jesuits being present; the need for increased contact with the Provincial Assistant for the apostolic sector; more Province or Conference support by way of programming or materials; and the necessary loss of the regular personal contact so critical for maintaining the relationship. Yet, the discernment also drew attention to possible strengths on which to build, notably the foundation already laid in many apostolates of formation for mission, the deep desire by our colleagues to maintain a relationship through the Province with the Society, the call to greater creativity in collaboration, and the possibility of greater extension of the apostolic reach of the Society by relying on our partners in ministry. Should there be no Jesuits active in an apostolate, UCS will continue sponsorship under specific conditions. Assuming that an apostolate will devote the time, resources, and personnel for formation in the mission, developing a critical mass of persons able to help others experience our charism, the Province will require that the apostolate:

1. Seek a relationship with a Jesuit community that will provide regular contact with the apostolate;
2. Develop an action plan for formation of Boards, faculty, and staff;
3. Continue to receive regular visitations by the Provincial and the Provincial Assistant including a discussion of the impact of the new situation;
4. Seek clarity with the local Ordinary regarding the nature of the sponsorship of the apostolate;
5. Maintain the presence of Jesuits on the Board of Trustees and, where appropriate, on the Board of Members.
6. Consider how to ensure the spiritual and especially the liturgical life of the apostolate.

## Conclusion

As we enter this time of renewal, restructuring and creativity, let us make our own the concluding prayer in Father General's letter of February 19, 2019, announcing the Universal Apostolic Preferences.

*Let us undertake this process, designing it and assessing it in accord with persons, times, and places in the light of the Church's orientations and the Spirit's guidance. May Our Lady, the Mother of the Society of Jesus, obtain for us from her Son the grace of integrity of life so that, preaching what allows us to know the Lord and doing what we preach, we may be witnesses of the love of God poured out upon humanity, and impelled by the Holy Spirit, we may effectively collaborate for the reconciliation of all things in Christ.*



*“The Christian life, in reality, is a journey,  
a pilgrimage. ... The journey, obviously, is not  
purely geographical, but above all symbolic:  
It’s an invitation to discover the movement  
of the heart that, paradoxically,  
needs to start in order to remain,  
to change so as to be able to be faithful.”*

*~Pope Francis*



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