

Go Forth!

Ten Guiding Principles
for the USA Midwest Jesuits | 2021-2024



JESUITS[®]
USA Midwest
Province



For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. — Jeremiah 29:11

Universal Apostolic Preferences

Showing the Way to God

*Show the way to God
through the Spiritual Exercises and Discernment*

Walking with the Excluded

*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

*Accompany young people
in the creation of a hope-filled future*

Caring for our Common Home

*Collaborate, with Gospel depth,
for the protection and renewal of God's creation*





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

UMI Guiding Principles

The Midwest Jesuit Provincial shares these guiding principles for the consideration of fellow Jesuits, Catholics, other Christians, people whose pathways to the divine are other faiths, people who struggle with their faith, and all people of good will who labor within and are served by our diverse ministries.

2021-2024

In response to these Universal Apostolic Preferences, we seek union in mission over uniformity of expression. By reading the signs of the times, we likewise have discerned these principles as essential for the religious and spiritual vitality of our mission in the Midwest Province today and into the future. These principles are to be used in the important task and function of the Province office when evaluating and deploying resources, including Jesuits, for future service. They will also be used in conjunction with existing protocols for evaluating the continued sponsorship of ministries. The leadership of Jesuit sponsored works are invited to embrace, support and advance these guiding principles.

1 The Midwest Province recognizes that our ministry is carried out in a “**culture of encounter**” with diverse constituencies: fellow Catholic believers who regularly practice their faith, as well as baptized Catholics who no longer practice their faith regularly; other Christians, people of diverse faith traditions, and people who struggle to find their pathway to God. Amidst this encounter, the Midwest Province is passionate about **evangelization** in the service of faith and the promotion of justice. We desire to lead others to Christ and the sacraments in and through welcoming and inclusive church communities of hope. As Pope Francis has written in *Evangelii Gaudium*, “The joy of the gospel fills the hearts of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew.”

2. The Midwest Province is committed to promoting **lay formation in Ignatian Spirituality and leadership.** This is a pathway to God, a means of evangelization, and an essential strategy for the religious and spiritual vitality of our sponsored works as well as the parishes which have been entrusted to our care. Ignatian formation opportunities will ensure that the lifeblood of Ignatian Spirituality will pulse in our Ignatian colleagues and our works. The Midwest Province is committed to supporting an increase in local, regional and conference-wide initiatives in Ignatian formation within and across apostolic sectors, and the provincial asks our sponsored works to increase their commitment of human and financial resources to these efforts. The provincial invites our larger and better resourced works to help support and include our smaller works in these efforts.

The Midwest Jesuits also are deeply grateful for the ways in which the **spirituality of our Ignatian colleagues** and the people of God we serve in our ministries both enrich Jesuits and form us in our understanding of the lived experience of the people of God and their experience of the church. **Jesuits are also called to ongoing spiritual formation and professional development** to serve as spiritual directors and in diverse roles sharing Ignatian spirituality.

More than two decades after the GC 34 Decree 14 “Jesuits and the Situation of Women in Church and Civil Society” (1996) the Midwest Province recognizes that there has been great progress in some areas, such as greater visibility of women in important leadership roles in many Jesuit sponsored works. The **Midwest Province commits itself to striving for greater recognition, respect, inclusion and empowerment of the gifts of women in the life of our church and our Jesuit works.**

3. The Midwest Province affirms that Jesuit **sponsorship** of works depends upon the religious and spiritual vitality of the mission, along with a clear relationship with and accountability to the provincial regarding mission effectiveness, and through the provincial to Father General. Sponsorship will not depend upon the number of Jesuits missioned to a sponsored work. There have been in the past and there will be in the future very effective apostolic works sponsored by the Society of Jesus which do not have full-time Jesuits assigned to them. We are committed to offering high quality *cura apostolica* to our sponsored works primarily through the support of provincial assistants.

Specific attention to the Society’s **Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs)**



And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. — Romans 8:28

is expected of sponsored works and local Jesuit communities. Sponsored works vary of course in their mission and ministry, such that one or other of the UAPs may be more central to one work than to another, for example, “Showing the Way to God” in retreat ministry, or “Journeying with Youth” in a high school. However, it is difficult to imagine a sponsored work or a local Jesuit community which would not have cause and opportunity for “Showing the Way to God,” “Caring for our Common Home” and also “Walking with the Excluded.” In the UAPs the Society

makes explicit four major areas that are foundational directions central to our province, local communities and sponsored works. These clarify, in a manner that is open and flexible in implementation, directions authentic to Jesuit identity. We recognize that in many works and communities we are at the beginning stages of embracing serious initiatives in the service of “Caring for our Common Home;” we want and need to do more in this area and deepen our conversion to the vision of *Laudato Si*.

4. The Midwest Province encourages and supports **regional/metro “communities-for-mission”** across apostolic sectors. Inspired by St. Ignatius and the first companions, we seek to create and support communities of Ignatian colleagues and Jesuits who take time to pray together, inspire one another, celebrate, and offer mutual support. Together, as companions of Jesus, we learn and grow in the service of our mission both within apostolates and across regions and networks. Local Jesuit communities should promote and model what being on mission together looks like. The province

has begun to partner with regional leaders, Jesuit and lay, to plan a cycle of large metro/regional gatherings which began in Fall 2020 with a successful pilot program in Cleveland as a demonstration and catalyst of our common mission across apostolates in each region. We affirm the value of **spiritual conversation and discernment in common** as the foundation for decision-making at every level of our sponsored ministries.

5. The Midwest Province affirms **racial healing and reconciliation in both civil society and our**



church as a shared priority for the Jesuits and our sponsored works. The deepest source of this commitment is our conviction that every human person is made in the image and likeness of God, and our faith in Jesus Christ and his prayer that “all may be one” (Jn 17:21). GC 36, Decree 1, “Companions of Jesus in a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice” urges us forward in this crucial struggle of our times. We are mindful of the unique histories of the diverse racial and ethnic groups we serve throughout the Midwest and Great Plains. The current cultural moment--marked by deep societal divisions, polarization, fear and mistrust--cries out for reconciliation. This is the context of our ministries. Sadly, we also know that the present moment grows out of our shared history.

With great sorrow and regret, the Jesuits in the USA recognize and accept our historical complicity in the institution of slaveholding, for which we apologize and ask forgiveness.

Midwest Jesuits also recognize with sorrow and regret the deep and painful wounds of many Lakota Native Americans from the boarding school era on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations in South Dakota when native culture was not respected.

We recognize that pursuing truth, healing, reconciliation and transformation in communities scarred by the sins of racism, discrimination and sinful social structures must be intentional and ongoing. We are all called by our faith to be anti-racist. Conversion of minds and hearts is essential; so too is working together to dismantle systemic racism. We expect our sponsored works to join us in this critically important mission priority.

Our church continues to heal from the wounds of clerical sex abuse and a lack of transparency by some church authorities. Church renewal and reform is ongoing. The Midwest Jesuits pledge to be worthy of the trust which the people of God place in us. We ask God to “give us a new heart and put a new spirit” in us. (Ez 36:26)

6. The Midwest Province affirms the importance of **depth in the intellectual life as a defining characteristic of all Jesuit ministry** and particularly Jesuit high schools and universities.

The Province recognizes that **higher education** in the USA, including Jesuit higher education, is at a critical point in responding to demographic shifts and evolving student interests. At the same time, there is the need to contain costs and seek new revenues for the sake

of maintaining access to Jesuit higher education. For a myriad of reasons, exercising religious and spiritual leadership on college campuses can be very challenging, yet we see this as an opportunity for evangelization. The Midwest Province accepts these challenges and encourages our six sponsored universities to strive for greater religious and spiritual vitality. With Fr. Sosa, we are convinced that Jesuit higher education at its best exercises transformative leadership for social transformation in the service of God's kingdom.

The Midwest Province recognizes that higher education is the one apostolic sector which will see the largest decrease in actual numbers of Jesuits working in this sector over the next 5-10 years, precisely because of the large concentration of Jesuits active today in higher education who are 70+ years of age. The Midwest Province will cooperate with the Jesuit Conference and the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities in the discernment of **conference-wide missioning priorities for Jesuits in higher education**, especially for professors, administrators and leaders in mission effectiveness formation. We recognize that it takes a larger number of Jesuits to have a significant impact at our larger, more complex universities.

At the same time, a small group of dedicated Jesuits working together in a multi-apostolic community can make a valuable contribution in pastoral ministry and Ignatian formation at our smaller universities. The Midwest Province will strive to support all six UMI universities in their pastoral and sacramental activities as well as their mission effectiveness programming.

7 The Midwest Province anticipates that, with some exceptions, **● Jesuit staffing levels in apostolic sectors other than higher education will remain fairly similar in the coming three years**, although from time to time some apostolates may feel that they are “one Jesuit short”. Jesuit parishes may draw more on the supply services of other Jesuits in the region when the need arises. This will provide a privileged opportunity for Jesuits in a metro area to support one another's ministry across apostolic sectors. In some places, Jesuit parishes can serve as a “hub” for the Ignatian mission in the region. Similar needs and opportunities may present themselves for timely support of Jesuit high school, retreat house ministry or social ministry by Jesuits whose primary ministry is in another sector.

An exception to this goal of “level

staffing” across works is the Kentucky Mission. With the recent diminishment of men assigned to this mission, Father General has approved the suspension of the Kentucky Mission community. Our house in Lexington has been sold and the remaining men in Kentucky have become members of the Cincinnati Jesuit Community. This young diocese has deeply appreciated the contributions of Jesuits over the past 35+ years. We will strive to continue offering spiritual direction in this diocese.

The provincial also anticipates the likelihood that Jesuit ministry at Walsh

Jesuit High School will, at some point, be assured from the Schell House Community in Cleveland. Finally, two Jesuit communities in South Dakota have been recently united, now called the “DeSmet Jesuit Community” with the house on the Pine Ridge now called the Holy Rosary Jesuit Residence and the dependent house on the Rosebud Reservation now called the Kino Jesuit Residence.

8. The Midwest Province reaffirms its long-standing practice of hospitality to international Jesuits and lay colleagues who enrich our communities and ministries, helping us





gain greater perspective. Recognizing the **universal dimension of the Jesuit vocation**, the Midwest Province will also continue to be generous to the needs of the Roman Houses and other international assignments, remembering the invitation of Fr. Nicolas to strive to have at least 10% of our active membership ministering outside of our own culture. We will continue to deepen our “*convenio*” relationships with the Eastern Africa Province, Kohima Region of Northeast India, and the Province of Peru, seeking reciprocity and gifts freely given. In addition, we will help our UMI ministries and stakeholders

develop a more contemporary missiology. We support international solidarity working in a mutually respectful manner, striving for the gift of interculturality, without a sense of superiority of one culture over another. We will cooperate with other provinces in the Conference to strengthen international partnering.

9 The Midwest Province Jesuits embrace the call of GC 35, stating that “**Jesuit community is itself mission**”. The brotherhood afforded by religious community in and of itself is an apostolic mission where Jesuits

ground their identity and kindle their apostolic zeal. Jesuit friendships within community and beyond are to be prized and fostered. The provincial encourages the value of area-wide gatherings to offer mutual support and help Jesuits thrive as a religious and apostolic body. The provincial will be intentional in assigning men to communities, taking into consideration the desires and needs of both the individual Jesuit and local communities. The provincial recognizes that some Jesuits can live happily and healthfully in very small communities

where, for the sake of the mission, sometimes only two or three Jesuits are living together. Most Jesuits need greater fraternal Jesuit companionship and support on a daily basis in order to thrive. Multi-apostolic communities will be the norm and communities serving one apostolate will be the exception.





Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed. — Proverbs 15:22

10. The Midwest Province recognizes that the **promotion of vocations** provides a vital lifeblood for our mission. We affirm the promotion of vocations to lay ministry, religious life, and priesthood as the work of the whole church, and we rejoice in the diversity of vocations in our church. Regarding vocations to the Society of Jesus, the Midwest Jesuits value each enquirer and candidate as a man of faith, working to find his calling in relation to the Church and the world. We are determined to grow the pool of qualified men in discernment for the Midwest Province. We

are committed to a team approach which values different skill sets, experiments and learns from our experience, and whose knowledge can be passed on to the men who care for the vocations process after us. We promise to employ the highest professional, pastoral, ethical, and spiritual standards in the application process for the good of both the applicants and the Society. We depend upon the collaboration of Jesuits, our lay and religious colleagues in mission, and sponsored ministries to promote vocations to the Society of Jesus.

Reflection Questions

For individual Jesuits and Ignatian colleagues in mission: Within my current ministry and work, what new initiatives might I personally undertake to act on the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) in accordance with these 10 Guiding Principles of the Midwest Jesuit Province in the coming three years?

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For Jesuit communities and sponsored apostolates: What new initiatives might we undertake to act on the Universal Apostolic Preferences and these 10 Guiding Principles for the Midwest Jesuit Province in the coming three years? What help would Jesuit communities and sponsored apostolates need from Jesuits, Ignatian colleagues, other sponsored apostolates, and/or the Midwest Province in order to undertake these new initiatives?

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fills the hearts and lives
of all who encounter Jesus.
Those who accept his offer of salvation
are set free from sin, sorrow,
inner emptiness and loneliness.
With Christ joy is constantly born anew.*

— Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium*



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