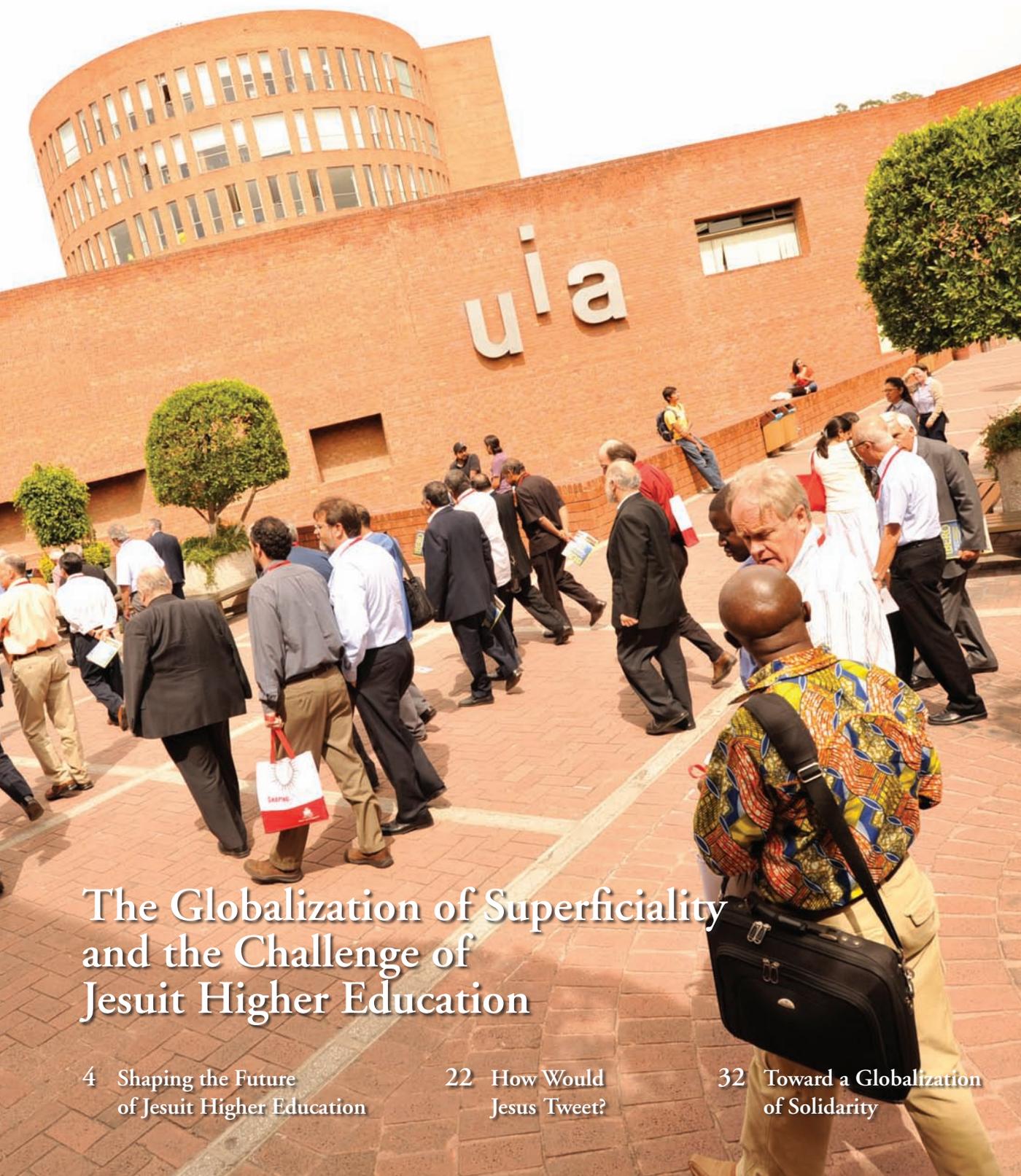


# explore

PUBLISHED BY THE IGNATIAN CENTER AT SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

AN EXAMINATION  
OF CATHOLIC  
IDENTITY AND  
IGNATIAN  
CHARACTER IN  
JESUIT HIGHER  
EDUCATION

FALL 2011 VOL. 15 NO. 1



## The Globalization of Superficiality and the Challenge of Jesuit Higher Education

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of Jesuit Higher Education

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Jesus Tweet?

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of Solidarity



Charles Barry

FALL 2011

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JESUIT EDUCATION AT SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY

## FROM THE CENTER DIRECTOR

With the publication of this issue of *explore*, I would like to communicate my delight in being able to serve as Executive Director of the Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education. Having taught at Santa Clara since 2003, with a joint appointment in the Religious Studies and Classics Departments, I believe deeply in the kind of transformative education Santa Clara provides. Moreover, I am committed to nurturing a vision that will sustain Jesuit education for generations to come.

In many respects, concern for what Jesuit education will become provides the governing theme of this current issue of *explore*. Articles here emerge from an international conference held in Mexico City in April 2010 on “Networking Jesuit Higher Education: Shaping the Future for a Humane, Just, Sustainable Globe.” The chief architect of the conference was our own Paul Locatelli, S.J., who unbeknownst to anyone, was in the last months of his life. It is fitting, then, that someone who cared so much for Jesuit education was shaping its future to the end.

Those who attended the conference noted two highlights. The first was the palpable sense of the commitment to Jesuit higher education from so many different people around the globe. The second was the keynote address of Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus, on “Depth, Universality, and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today.” This issue leads with articles by four participants. Santa Clara University President, Michael Engh, S.J., offers personal reflections on the conference, and Ron Hansen gives tribute to the legacy of Paul Locatelli, S.J. Paul Crowley, S.J., describes Fr. Nicolás’ keynote, and Cesar Arjona, professor of law from Barcelona, urges us to re-think conceptions of justice in the education we deliver.

Picking up on Fr. Nicolás’ assertion of unique challenges of our times, Elizabeth Drescher, in “HWJT (How Would Jesus Tweet),” gives us a fascinating essay on ways to imagine and understand new media. In addition to recent graduate Hilary Titus’ own reflection on her Santa Clara education, and Valerie Sarma’s reflection on the Jean Donovan Fellowships, we are happy to present reports on the research of students supported by the Ignatian Center.

I hope that reading these essays may help you imagine how the future of Jesuit education will best be shaped.

Peace,

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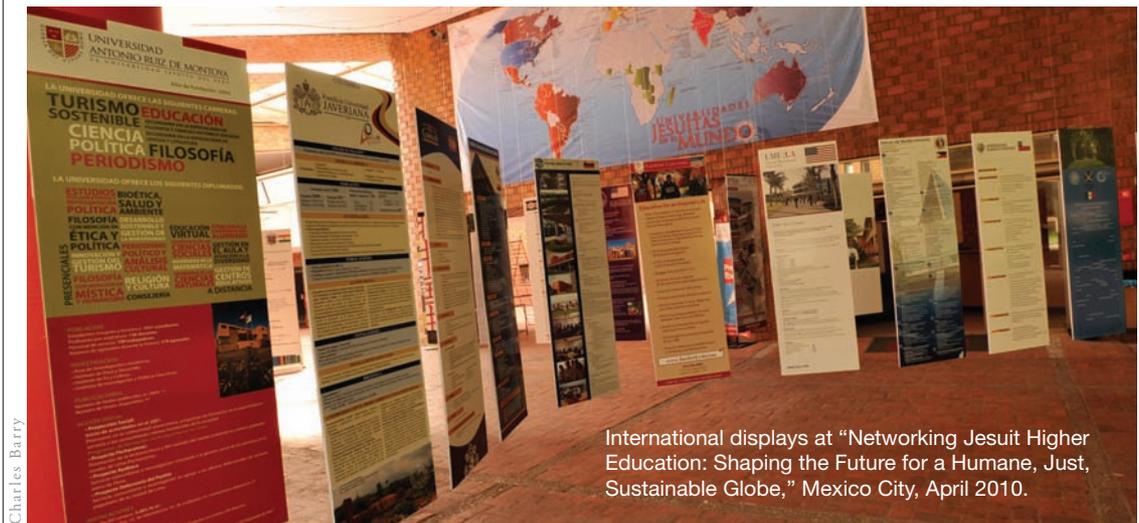
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## The Globalization of Superficiality and the Challenge of Jesuit Higher Education



Charles Barry

International displays at “Networking Jesuit Higher Education: Shaping the Future for a Humane, Just, Sustainable Globe,” Mexico City, April 2010.

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ON THE COVER: Mexico City conference participants outside the Universidad Iberoamericana Ciudad de México (UIA). Photo by Charles Barry



# Refounding the “Universities of the Society” – The Challenge of Fr. Nicolás to Jesuit Higher Education

Reflections on the “Shaping the Future” Conference, Mexico City, 2010



BY MICHAEL E. ENGH, S.J.  
*President,  
Santa Clara University*

IN APRIL OF 2010, MORE THAN 180 LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FROM AROUND THE WORLD GATHERED AT THE MODERN CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSIDAD IBEROAMERICANA IN MEXICO CITY.

My predecessor, Paul Locatelli, S.J., had been planning for the event for over two years. In his role as Secretary for Jesuit Higher Education, Paul had coordinated, secured funding, and structured the four-day meeting. The centerpiece of the program was an address by the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Adolfo Nicolás, S.J. (at left, celebrating Mass), who traveled from Rome to articulate his vision for Jesuit higher education. A palpable energy animated the delegates from around the world when we met one another on the redbrick patio outside the auditorium for the opening session on Thursday, April 22, 2010.

Presidents (also called rectors, principals, or directors) arrived with faculty members,

administrators, staff, and chairs of boards of trustees. We participated in plenary and small group sessions, Masses, meals, and receptions. Our delegation from Santa Clara University included Paul Crowley, S.J., chair of the Religious Studies Department (and author of one of the preparatory papers); Ron Hansen, professor of English; Steve Saum, editor of *Santa Clara Magazine*; and Chuck Barry, university photographer. We had traveled to the conference to contribute to laying the groundwork and setting the agenda for an international network of Jesuit institutions of higher education. As Paul Locatelli, S.J., had conceived the conference, we were to address several major issues and craft proposals for continued collaboration after the meeting.

Surveying the welcome reception it was obvious that men outnumbered women, and it appeared that lay colleagues outnumbered Jesuits. We had arrived from around the world for this assembly, though the eruption of an

Icelandic volcano had deterred a number of Europeans from attending. I met an intrepid Belgian Jesuit who had driven from Belgium to Madrid to catch a flight, as well as Africans who had touched down in London to change planes for Mexico City. If one was determined to be present, it could be accomplished. Twenty or so presidents of U.S. Jesuit universities and colleges were in attendance. Once at the Iberoamericana we met colleagues from across the globe, and I soon accumulated business cards from colleagues in Nepal, Korea, Argentina, India, and Madagascar. The voluble exchange of greetings, stories, and ideas had begun, one of the great highlights of this assembly.

The first full day of the conference included the opening Mass (in Spanish), plenary sessions (with simultaneous translations on headphones), and our first small discussion group meetings. The plenary speakers focused on the challenges that Jesuit institutions of higher learning faced in Latin America (Jose Morales, of the Iberoamericana), India (Xavier

Alphonse), East Asia (Joel Tabora), Africa and Madagascar (Mwana Mfumu Isangu), North America (Jack DeGoia, of Georgetown), and Europe (Jose Ramon Busto). Jack DeGoia noted that in North America we were experiencing desecularization, that is, the re-emergence of religion in public discourse, with the frequent consequence of heightening polarization among people.

Given my interests stated in my inaugural address,<sup>1</sup> I had registered for the Ecology and Sustainability work group. The original Spanish and English language groups quickly merged into one English-speaking group of 19 people from 10 nations. We elected Nancy Tuchman (Loyola, Chicago) as our chair/facilitator, and Susan Jackels (Seattle University) as recorder. Paul Locatelli had charged the working groups to develop position statements with outcomes that we wished to see implemented locally and internationally. Our exchanges were rich and engaging in our group comprised of ecologists, political scientists, historians (happily, there



Charles Barry

Banners along a hallway at the Mexico City conference highlight the many Jesuit institutions around the world that participated in the gathering.

*I witnessed how the United Nations must have to function in order to accommodate the vast range of delegates' concerns, personalities, perspectives, sensitivities, cultural values, and educational specializations.*

were two of us), mathematicians, theologians, climatologists, anthropologists, business professors, sociologists, and one agricultural engineer. Only a few of us were Jesuits, two were presidents, six were women, and not all were Christian or even believers.

Over the two and one half days together we progressed from general concerns and personal interests to the position statement and plan of action. I witnessed how the United Nations must have to function in order to accommodate the vast range of delegates' concerns, personalities, perspectives, sensitivities, cultural values, and educational specializations. We moved from individual statements and pet projects to a collective vision of what we could do together once we left the conference. We affirmed that we could contribute best to solving problems of ecology and sustainability if we did so as university people "committed to learned ministry in Jesuit higher education." As such, "[w]e believe that our engagement as educators enables us to work creatively and collaboratively for a more just, humane, and sustainable world" (from the draft of our position statement).

In the midst of our meetings, we heard Fr. Nicolás deliver his riveting keynote address.<sup>2</sup> For ninety minutes, he analyzed how globalization affects the way we as educational leaders approach Jesuit higher education. He focused on three dimensions of this topic: promoting depth of thought and imagination, particularly among students; rediscovering universality and developing networks to address issues globally; and renewing the Jesuit commitment to learned ministry. In his departures from his prepared text, Fr. Nicolás often displayed his winning sense of humor. He closed by offering three

interlinked questions: If the founders of the Society of Jesus were starting today, would they opt to engage in the work of universities? What kind of universities would we create if we were refounding the Society of Jesus? How would we proceed in these universities if our goal was to fashion a more humane, just, faith-filled, sustainable world?

For the Santa Clarans in the audience, the phrasing of the last segment of the question repeated verbatim part of the university's mission statement,<sup>3</sup> but he added the further dimension of faith. This aspect of the university as an explicit agent of evangelization caught my attention because it contrasts markedly with the more secular environment of American higher education. Clearly, our response to globalization must consider the role of faith and religious belief, just as Fr. Nicolás had urged us in his call for depth of thought and imagination. Implicit in this conviction is the belief that Catholics, while sensitive to the beliefs of others, at the same time enter into dialogue with a theology that requires attention and respect. Further, we do so animated by an Ignatian spirituality that greatly benefits the persons of our world through its Incarnational understanding of creation.

In our small group, the speech re-energized and broadened our deliberations. We returned to writing a document of common purpose that owed significant inspiration to Fr. Nicolás. Writing by committee was a demanding process, but we hammered out a position statement that began, "We believe that we are created to be with God, and that creation is a gift from God. We also realize that that creation is wounded by sinful actions. We are called to join God in the healing of creation." The religious language



*I took from the conference a new and deeper understanding of the words of St. Ignatius to Jesuits when he sent the first Jesuits on mission: *Ite inflamate omnia* (“Go set the world on fire”). With our discreet topic we found one means to launch out with faith, creative imagination, openness to the poor, and hard thinking.*



Photos by Charles Barry

Above, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., traveled from Rome for the Mexico City conference in April 2010. Fr. Nicolás gave the keynote address and also celebrated Mass with Secretary of Higher Education for the Society of Jesus and former SCU President, Paul Locatelli, S.J., at right, and others. Below left, SCU President Michael Engh, S.J., participated in the Ecology and Sustainability working group. Below right, participants gathered in small group consultations with topics ranging from “Human Rights and Civic Responsibility” to “Theology, Science, and Culture” to “Markets, Inequality, and Poverty.”

troubled some in the group, yet we sought a spiritual grounding to our declaration. “As members of the universal human community,” we continued, “we recognize our common responsibility for the welfare of the entire world, especially in facing challenges of ecology within sustainability. It is our moral obligation both to learn with the poor, who are most affected by environmental degradation, and to respond to the present without compromising the needs of future generations.”

Next, we created two work products, along with their suggested outcomes and means to achieve them. First, to raise awareness of the complex issues involved in sustainability we proposed the organization of an international Jesuit higher education network that focused specifically on teaching, research, advocacy, and action on sustainability. This would include a website and webpage to share best practices in classrooms and programs that developed leaders committed to environmental justice. Annual report cards on progress at individual universities and conferences every two to three years would bring together environmental sustainability leaders to share successful programs and successful outcomes.

Such a network addressed the challenge of Fr. Nicolás to think globally and deeply when addressing issues in closer collaboration. The second desired outcome was the development of research themes among our university scholars to raise awareness and to inform policy makers. This included the creation of standards for ethical behavior for environmental protection, as well as developing a database of Jesuit college and university faculty with expertise similar to the existing Community of Science.<sup>4</sup>

One work group at a single conference did not refound the Society of Jesus. We realized, however, the extraordinary influence of institutions of higher education to affect student learning, faculty research, formation of public policy, the dissemination of knowledge, the articulation of human rights, and the creation of jobs and wealth to benefit the poor. In our discussions we affirmed the importance of this work as a true ministry to those in need, a ministry needing to be better coordinated and linked in order to be more effective. We

touched on numerous issues, but recognized that an animating spirituality was a fundamental dimension of how to shape the world.

In leaving the conference, I carried memories of a direct experience of how Fr. Nicolás inspired this working group of 19 educators from around the world. His passion and brilliance modeled how our own dedication and talents could animate others in ecology and sustainability and beyond. I took from the conference a new and deeper understanding of the words of St. Ignatius to Jesuits when he sent the first Jesuits on mission: *Ite inflammate omnia* (“Go set the world on fire”). With our discreet topic we found one means to launch out with faith, creative imagination, openness to the poor, and hard thinking.

It is now up to Fr. Nicolás to coordinate the next steps after the unexpected setback of Fr. Locatelli’s death. We look to him to determine how best to meet the goals of the conference, but I have seen that the desire and the passion exist within many people to realize the aspirations we had embraced. e

#### NOTES

- 1 For more on President Michael Engh, S.J.’s, inaugural address (the emphasis being on “creating a more just and sustainable world”) see: <http://www.scu.edu/president/inauguration/transcript/index.cfm>.
- 2 Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., “Depth, Universality and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today,” Mexico City, April 23, 2010, available at [www.ausjal.org/files/Nicolas-2010.pdf](http://www.ausjal.org/files/Nicolas-2010.pdf).
- 3 Santa Clara University Mission Statement can be found here: <http://www.scu.edu/jesuit/University-Mission.cfm>
- 4 The Community of Science (COS) describes itself as “the leading global resource for hard-to-find information critical to scientific research and other projects across all disciplines.” It is found at: <http://www.cos.com/>.

# Jesuit Higher Education and the Legacy of Paul Locatelli, S.J.

Reflections on the “Shaping the Future” Conference, Mexico City, 2010



BY RON HANSEN  
*Gerard Manley Hopkins S.J.*  
*Professor, English Department,*  
*Santa Clara University*

LATE IN 2006, FR. PETER-HANS KOLVENBACH, THEN SUPERIOR GENERAL FOR THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, APPOINTED SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT PAUL LOCATELLI AS THE FIRST SECRETARY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, HEADQUARTERED IN THE ROMAN CURIA. His tasks were to convene meetings of the International Committee on Jesuit Higher Education, plan periodic meetings of Jesuit university presidents, encourage programs of collaboration among Jesuit universities, and provide important perspectives on higher education to the Superior General.

At first it was not considered a full-time job and Fr. Locatelli continued as a university president in California, but soon after the 35th General Congregation elected Fr. Adolfo Nicolás as the Society’s 30th Superior General, Fr. Locatelli was asked to expand his role to include overseeing the worldwide Intellectual Apostolate, and he took up residence in Rome.

With some 180 institutions of higher education in roughly 50 countries, the Society of Jesus has an incomparable network of colleges and universities, and Fr. Locatelli was excited by the technology-based opportunity to develop a virtual Jesuit university that could in time be international and, through the Internet, reach any learner with a computer, benefitting students, faculty, and the Church, and addressing serious contemporary problems.

Fr. Locatelli’s doctorate was in accounting, and he had written and spoken frequently on topics ranging from community-based learning in accounting, the role of the teaching scholar, Jesuit education in a globalizing world, educating for justice, and Catholic education in the 21st century. So it was only natural that he soon began planning an international conference that would consider the shifting future for Jesuit education in that globalizing world and would invite as participants not just institutional presidents, rectors, and vice presidents of academic affairs, but lay faculty

and collaborators as well—the first time that had been done. And he decided, crucially, that the conference would be held not in the United States, or Europe, but in a developing country.

Fr. José Morales Orozco, rector of the Universidad Iberoamericana, Ciudad de México, graciously offered to host. Banamex, Mexico's largest financial institution, provided considerable funding for the conference and made possible some scholarships for Jesuits from developing countries in Asia and Africa.

In 2007, Fr. Locatelli had conducted a survey of the international Society of Jesus requesting that each region name five principal challenges it was facing. Consequently the conference, titled “Networking Jesuit Higher Education for the Globalizing World: Shaping the Future for a Humane, Just, Sustainable Globe,” focused on “frontier challenges” such as the ethical and religious dimensions of inequality and poverty; theology, science, and culture; ecology and sustainability; Jesuit mission and identity; and human rights as they related to the work of Jesuit institutions worldwide.

Jesuit professors and their colleagues were invited to submit scholarly papers on their subjects of expertise to which other authorities responded; Superior General Adolfo Nicolás agreed to deliver the keynote address on the challenges to Jesuit higher education and the intellectual apostolate today; and mixed working

groups were established to discuss and draw conclusions from the talks in order to facilitate a forward movement of the Society of Jesus into and through the 21st century.

Unfortunately, through an administrative snafu some group reports were erased from the computers in which the notes were stored, and a few reports, if compiled, were otherwise lost. But we have a significant representation of the discussions of the hundreds in attendance during those three days in April.

The working group on “Catholic Identity and Jesuit Mission,” for example, urged that there be a survey of all Jesuit institutions of higher education to note how mission statements reflected Catholic, Jesuit values of the institution, and to query, measure, and evaluate how student outcomes reflected accomplishment of each element of the mission statement. The group imagined a team representing diverse regions that could function like accrediting agencies in examining the Catholic, Jesuit goals of the institution, ascertaining how those goals had been realized, and making recommendations that would encourage and inspire a closer alignment with the founding principles of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Another international working group, on “Theology, Science, and Culture,” proposed a think tank dedicated to analyzing and evaluating culture. Regional consultations uniting similar



Charles Barry

Former SCU President Paul Locatelli, S.J., addresses a gathering at the Mexico City conference in April 2010.

cultural legacies would follow, and then Jesuit institutions would respond to the cultural analysis and evaluation with factual, imaginative, analytical, and experiential learning.

Through teaching, research, advocacy, and action, the working group on “Ecology and Sustainability” hoped that the network would encourage development of curricula that address sustainability issues and teach a certain level of environmental literacy; increase research on such things as the relationships among ecology, environmental justice, poverty, migration, deforestation, and the loss of biodiversity; and create a collaborative action project and an assessment tool to measure each institution’s progress in sustainability.

The subject of “Markets, Inequality, and Poverty” reminded participants of the transcendent dignity of the human person and the requirement to alleviate poverty and foster a more equitable society. To do that, some

practical steps were promoted: one, to help the poor improve the quality of their services and products to meet international standards and help them find sustainable markets globally so they earn higher returns for their labor; two, organize local self-help groups and cooperatives to instill in the poor the habit of thrift and increase their collective creditworthiness; three, focus on some segment among the growing service sectors, and empower the youth among the poor to capitalize on emerging opportunities; four, introduce organic farming, food processing, packing, and marketing; and, five, where there is demand in affluent countries, train youths and find employment for them in skilled physical labor like driving, plumbing, and care for children, the elderly, and the ill.

And a working group on “Human Rights and Civic Responsibility” noted that Jesuit

institutions of higher learning were ideally suited for hosting a consortium of human rights practitioners and Jesuit apostolic partners to be better educators for justice and more effective actors countering injustice. The group proposed a foundational document on human rights that would be adopted by all Jesuit institutions, drawing on the statements about justice, peace, and human rights in recent General Congregations of the Society of Jesus. The group urged a continuing and rigorous self-examination by Jesuit universities regarding their just structures and investment practices; an equal participation of women in governance; a closer linkage with human rights organizations; curricular exposure for all students to human

rights and peace issues, including as far as possible Catholic social teaching; and a distinctively Ignatian and academic promotion of a culture of peace in which human rights might flourish.

All those collaborative

goals are either in progress or in their incipient stages and all were coherent with the goals of the conference initiator, who did not yet realize that he was suffering from pancreatic cancer when he helmed the conference in April 2010. Paul L. Locatelli, S.J., entered into Eternal Life less than three months later on July 12.

His “Shaping the Future” conference is just one shining aspect of his wonderful legacy as a Jesuit priest, scholar, administrator, and friend.

When the editors of *Santa Clara* alumni magazine first began talking with Paul about reporting on the Mexico City conference, he said he thought the real news story would have to do with what happened afterward. This issue of the *explore* journal is a first step in the realization of Fr. Locatelli’s ambitions. e



Charles Barry

*Santa Clara Magazine* editor Steven Boyd Saum, SCU President Michael Engh, S.J., and SCU English Professor Ron Hansen at the Mexico City conference in April 2010.

# Universality, Learned Ministry, and Depth of Thought and Imagination

Reflections on the “Shaping the Future” Conference, Mexico City, 2010



BY PAUL G. CROWLEY, S.J.  
*Jesuit Community Professor,  
Religious Studies Department,  
Santa Clara University*

IN APRIL 2010 IN MEXICO CITY, FR. NICOLÁS’ KEYNOTE, “DEPTH, UNIVERSALITY AND LEARNED MINISTRY: CHALLENGES TO JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY,”<sup>1</sup> ADDRESSED A SITUATION THAT HAS CHANGED GREATLY EVEN SINCE FR. KOLVENBACH, THE FORMER SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS, GAVE HIS WELL-KNOWN SPEECH ON JESUIT EDUCATION AT SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY A FEW YEARS AGO.<sup>2</sup>

The two talks were similar in their call for solidarity of Jesuit institutions and works with the weakest, partly through entering into dialogues with religion and culture. But what motivated Fr. Nicolás’ talk far more than Fr. Kolvenbach’s was the explosion of interdependence, interconnectedness, and communication that we call globalization. Globalization extends beyond matters of transnational migration and interlocked global economies; it also extends to politics. Witness

the sweep of political change in the Middle East—events unimaginable before the onset of globalization through technology and the instantaneous interlinking of people, especially young people.

What did Fr. Nicolás say about this phenomenon, and its effect on the future of Jesuit higher education worldwide? There are three points made in his speech on which I’d like to focus briefly: contemporary rediscovery of the universality of our Jesuit mission, the need for a recovery of the learned dimension of Jesuit works, and reaffirmation of depth of both thought and imagination in the life of the university.

## UNIVERSALITY

Jesuit institutions are fond of speaking of their belonging to a global Jesuit network. Yet, as Fr. Nicolás pointed out, what we have now is a conglomeration of institutions of varying degrees of Ignatian inspiration, some sharing enough family resemblances that they can join together in regional organizations such as the

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities in the United States, and similar organizations in Latin America and Europe. Occasionally institutions do manage to find ways of working together, as we have discovered to some extent through the Casa Educational Network, now in San Salvador and Manila.<sup>3</sup> These are promising beginnings.

But what Fr. Nicolás calls for is something more: the expansion of regional groupings into more universal, more effective international networks of Jesuit higher education through a sharing of resources: information, personnel, technical and technological expertise, and especially the strategic meeting and interchange of people over time in projects designed for the betterment of society.

Specifically, he called for confronting new forms of atheism (what is known as “aggressive secularism” in Europe); finding solutions to poverty, inequality, and other forms of injustice; and addressing global environmental degradation, which especially affects the lives of the poor. The impetus for this drive toward global networks is found, he said, in the Jesuit Constitutions themselves, which call upon us to work for the more universal good.

As some indication of how daunting this task might be, consider the panel in which I participated, on science, theology, and culture at the Mexico City conference. It was populated fairly evenly between representatives from schools like Santa Clara, and others from the developing world. One representative was from a small technical institute in the Democratic Republic of the Congo specializing in agriculture and veterinary medicine. The conversation about the relationship between science and faith means something very different in that kind of cultural context than at Santa Clara, where the discussions can quickly become theoretical. How, we might ask, would a Jesuit institution like a Santa Clara imagine working collaboratively for the more universal good with a small Jesuit institute such as the one in the DAR? Not an easy task! One instrument suggested at the meeting that might help us imagine our way there is the newly launched website, Jesuit Commons ([www.jesuitcommons.org](http://www.jesuitcommons.org)), which links Jesuit works and people worldwide in the service of the poorest of the earth. But that is only one instrument among many that might be devised in the future. This is a matter for all schools of a university, including engineering, business, and law.



Charles Barry

A map at the Mexico City conference highlights the many Jesuit institutions around the world.

*Technology makes so many demands upon us, and so hooks us with its near narcotic effects, that some of us are not even reading as much as we should or once did. And when professors are not reading deeply with a view toward a learning that can grow and be shared... then we are in trouble.*

### LEARNED MINISTRY

The downside of globalization, says Fr. Nicolás, is a worldwide culture of superficiality, where serious thinking gets short-circuited. Technology makes so many demands upon us, and so hooks us with its near narcotic effects, that some of us are not even reading as much as we should or once did. And when professors are not reading deeply with a view toward a learning that can grow and be shared, and inform all that we do, then we are in trouble. We cannot very well expect our students to treasure learning when our own lives are so glutted with “information” and constantly shifting attention spans.

On the yet darker side, our students, as well as professors, can become caught up in superficial relationships, private worlds, or degrees of self-absorption that weaken their sensitivity toward others. Technology can, subtly, lead to a dehumanization if it is not used intelligently and in a discerning way. While technology can unite people and make things possible in previously unimagined ways (for example, travel), it can also cause us to lose our mental home, culture, and ethical bearings, such that everything becomes equally irrelevant, including, of course, the Mystery of God. This is a serious challenge for Jesuit works. And so, Fr. General calls for a renewal of “learned ministry.”

Despite his use of the word “ministry,” this is not an intra-Jesuit topic. For all of us working in the Jesuit university can be pulled away from habits of learning and deeper contemplation. We find ourselves diverted to various programs, projects, and worthy activities, but too often at great sacrifice to the learning that should inform

these efforts. Nor can this dimension be replaced by mere enthusiasm or goodwill.

Indeed, Fr. Nicolás says that the Jesuit enterprise in all its works, not only higher education, must be infused with a “love of learning, intelligent exploration of faith, imagination and ingenuity, solid studies and rigorous analysis.”<sup>4</sup> This calls especially for new explorations of the relationship between faith and reason if we are to confront in our institutions the challenges of aggressive secularism as well as new forms of religious and political fundamentalism. A recovery of the value of learning—of learnedness informing what we do—is essential. This is our gift to the Church, and marks how we engage the world. We cannot commit to this halfheartedly or with inadequate attention to what is central to a Jesuit understanding of intellectual infusion of all our works.

### DEPTH OF THOUGHT AND IMAGINATION

How do we recover a sense of this learned ministry? Fr. Nicolás suggests that the path is through a depth of thought and imagination. Here is where Jesuit educational tradition has something to offer, for it pushes imagination and thought beyond academic excellence or brilliance alone, toward a transcendent depth. Traditionally, humanistic studies, and especially the classics, have been a vehicle toward this depth. As SCU Professor Emeritus Michael Buckley, S.J., has shown in his explorations of Jesuit humanism, the classics helped to engender in Jesuit students a disciplined and learned

*[W]e must also always be asking whether and the degree to which our students are being transformed. Are their encounters with reality—real books, real people, real poverty, the earth as it actually is—helping them to put the world together in a way that will bring about transformation toward the more universal good?*



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sensitivity toward the human and the humane, toward tragedy and human suffering, toward misery as well as hope.<sup>5</sup> Today, Fr. Nicolás asks, where might we look for the classics? Not only to Greece and Rome, but also China, Japan, India, and to indigenous cultures. There is much wisdom yet to be learned!

The *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignace are also a natural pedagogy for creative imagination, not only in their use of imagery as a means of entering into the depths of human experience and the experience of God, but also of finding coherence in a world that does not obviously cohere because it is so broken. Indeed, one could say that our current situation is one of almost Nietzschean destabilization—of ontology, language, culture, and order. Ignatian imagination begins with this reality, the reality

of our fractured human lives, and strives toward a remembering of the parts, so that reality can not only be grasped, but comprehended in its wholeness. This involves, as the late Jesuit William Lynch explained, a direct engagement with the real, for only in such a direct engagement is there the possibility for the discovery of the hidden presence of God, and for transformation not only of reality, but of the engaged person, and of engaged communities as well. For Lynch, this was a matter of a Christic imagination, an imagination informed by the visceral reality of the Incarnation.<sup>6</sup>

What does this point have to do with Fr. Nicolás's main idea that Jesuit educational institutions need to establish real connections among one another for the sake of the greater good? It is a vitally important point because our

institutions are not foundations, corporations, or NGOs. Yes, the university is a *projecto social*, as Fr. General insists, and there are some social functions that universities play that are not directly tied to the classroom. But, fundamentally, universities are places where students come to learn and to be transformed, and in that process, universities also help to transform societies. Some of that learning will occur in direct contact with the realities of the world, with the suffering and poor of the world—and it must. But we must also always be asking whether and the degree to which our students are being transformed. Are their encounters with reality—real books, real people, real poverty, the earth as it actually is—helping them to put the world together in a way that will bring about transformation toward the more universal good? Are their imaginations being developed and their thinking deepened so that they themselves can meet the challenges of globalization? At Santa Clara I think we are generally doing a good job of this, but we still must ask: How many of our students graduate with this degree of transformation coming from a depth of thinking and imagination?

## CONCLUSION

The most challenging moment in Fr. Nicolás's talk came at its conclusion. As we know, Jesuit numbers are on the decline for the most part, and Jesuit institutions are increasingly being led not by Jesuits, but by people who share the Ignatian inspiration deeply. We are at a crossroads, a new historical moment. In that light, Fr. Nicolás asked all in attendance, Jesuits and lay colleagues alike:

*If Ignatius and his first companions were to start the Society of Jesus again today, would they still take on universities as a ministry of the Society?...*

*One of the most, perhaps the most, fundamental ways of dealing with this is to place ourselves in the spiritual space of Ignatius and the first companions and—with their energy, creativity, and freedom—ask their basic question afresh: What are the needs of the Church and our world, where are we needed most, and*

*where and how can we serve best? We are in this together, and that is what we must remember rather than worrying about Jesuit survival. I would invite you, for a few moments, to think of yourselves, not as presidents or CEOs of large institutions, or administrators or academics, but as co-founders of a new religious group, discerning God's call to you as an apostolic body in the Church.*

*In this globalized world, with all its lights and shadows, would—or how would—running all these universities still be the best way we can respond to the mission of the Church and the needs of the world?<sup>7</sup>*

Wisely, he did not answer these questions, but I am grateful that they were raised. It is up to us to consider them, to imagine what it would mean to co-found a new religious movement, and in that light, to understand what a Jesuit university can be, or ought to be. The times surely demand this kind of fresh thinking. 

## NOTES

- 1 Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., "Depth, Universality and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today," Mexico City, April 23, 2010.
- 2 Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education." The Santa Clara Lectures, Santa Clara University, October 6, 2000, 1–17.
- 3 For more on the Casa Educational Network see: <http://www.scu.edu/casa/network/>.
- 4 Nicolás.
- 5 Michael J. Buckley, S.J., *The Catholic University as Promise and Project: Reflections in a Jesuit Idiom* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998).
- 6 For more on the thought of William Lynch, S.J., see *Images of Hope: Imagination as Healer of the Hopeless* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), and *Christ and Prometheus: A New Image of the Secular* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1970).
- 7 Nicolás.

# Shaping the Future of (Jesuit) Legal Education

Reflections on the “Shaping the Future” Conference, Mexico City, 2010



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AFTER RECTORS, PRESIDENTS, AND FACULTY MET IN MEXICO CITY IN APRIL 2010 FOR AN INSPIRING CONFERENCE ON JESUIT HIGHER EDUCATION IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD, ONE THING WAS CLEAR: WHEREVER WE ARE IN THE WORLD, THE CONTEXT IN WHICH WE WORK, LIVE, AND TEACH IS CHANGING DRAMATICALLY. IN PARTICULAR, THE CONTEXT WHERE INJUSTICE IS HAPPENING IS CHANGING.

## THE NEW CONTEXT OF INJUSTICE<sup>1</sup>

I would like to draw on the Indian Nobel Prize Laureate Amartya Sen, who in his most recent book, *The Idea of Justice*, undertakes a criticism of the prevailing theories of justice (primarily modern social contract theories) from a non-Christian and non-overtly-religious perspective and highlights their inability to perceive the real nature of the many problems of global injustice, and consequently their

inability to counter them.<sup>2</sup> Significantly enough, these problems are closely related to what the 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus describes as the “new dimensions of the promotion of justice” (Decree 3)—which include the risks and the opportunities involved in globalization (N. 7). This global frame is also highlighted in the 35th General Congregation’s discussion of the new context for the Jesuit mission—the context of the global world, full of tensions and paradoxes (Decree 3, N. 11).

As a law professor at a Jesuit institution, my perception is that the prevailing model of legal education (on a global scale, although with significant geographical and cultural nuances) marginalizes to a great extent the question of justice, separating it from the central core of legal education. This is not a coincidence. In my view, this disjunction stems from the fact that legal education, for the most part, lies on the more general paradigm of the theories of justice that Sen is criticizing. Thus, the inability of the latter to identify and fight against injustice

*[T]he Society of Jesus has magnificent potential as a globalized organization itself, whose members and areas of action cover a multicultural reality.... This global character was both intellectually and physically obvious at the 2010 Mexico City conference, as it is in the scope and universality of the Ignatian message.*

in the global context necessarily pervades the former. In this essay I will describe in more detail how this happens and suggest how Jesuit institutions can (and are designed to) contribute to a positive change.

### **THE EXCLUSIONARY CHARACTER OF DOMINANT THEORIES OF JUSTICE AND LEGAL EDUCATION**

Sen criticizes the prevailing theories of justice, and in particular John Rawls's contemporary version of social contract theory as it is advanced in his seminal book, *A Theory of Justice*,<sup>3</sup> for being institutionalist (concentrating on fair institutions, rather than real human life and social realizations), transcendental (aiming at the achievement of perfect or ideal justice rather than comparing different situations of relative injustice), and exclusionary (limited to the consideration of justice within one particular political community). Although these three concepts are all significant in relation to the limitations of the prevailing concepts of legal education, I will concentrate on the third concept, of legal education as exclusionary, since this concept is most relevant to the context of a globalizing world.

The contractarian tradition is by definition focused on one particular political community. The social contract, both in the Rawlsian version and in the more classical, is signed by specific individuals (with the exclusion of others) who come to an agreement that links them together (and not to others) in order to establish a fair society. This is coherent in the context of the contractualist tradition, which aims at the legitimization of state political power. However, as Sen rightly points out, evaluating justice in

a specific state without taking into account perspectives from outside this state is quite limited in its perspective. First because, in the global world in which we actually live, what occurs in one country usually has a great impact on other countries, and second, because the perspectives that come from beyond one's own borders are often useful for illuminating the perspectives belonging to a specific community, thus making it possible to fight against parochialism.

Parochialism in the consideration of justice pervades legal education through the principle that identifies law with the local production of written rules by a particular state. This principle functions as dogma in the strict sense of the term. In its most extreme version, law and state are claimed as exactly the same thing from a conceptual point of view (as defended by one of the most influential Western legal thinkers of the 20th century, the Austrian-born Hans Kelsen).<sup>4</sup> And this dogma defines the curricula and methodologies in law schools to such an extent that it can be considered the dominant paradigm in contemporary legal knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

The dominant position of the national/state character of law is an important factor when it comes to explaining the marginalization of justice in law schools (for the same reasons offered by Sen in relation to the exclusionary character of Rawlsian theory of justice). On the one hand, injustices in our world are global in dimension and national law is irremediably narrow, whether it be as a perspective from which to contemplate and analyze them or as an instrument to combat them. On the other hand, the concentration on national law excludes perspectives from beyond the borders of a given

state, thereby making law an area condemned to parochialism.

Though the field of international justice seems to be the appropriate way to advance (and this is what Rawls himself explored in his work *The Law of Peoples*, opening up the social contract to the dealings between representatives of different communities),<sup>6</sup> Sen notes that international justice is not the same as global justice, and often the nature of injustice in our world is global and not (only) international. Besides the structural problems that stem from the absence of a supra-state offering institutional support, both the victims and the agents of injustice can be individuals, groups, and organizations (public and private) that are different from the states. The interactions between all these agents, which are not necessarily dependent on national borders, cannot be rerouted toward a perspective of international relations based on the traditional concept of relations between states, which prevails in current legal theory.

Thus, the dogma of the state character of law, which controls legal education, is not only parochial (because it excludes perspectives from other parts of the world), but it is also reductionist even within national borders because it does not consider the legal relevance of agents other than the state, or does so only indirectly. In this respect, it is significant that the study of legal pluralism, which attacks the dogma of the state character of law (for

being parochial and state reductionist) is still not very present in law schools, though it is acknowledged in other fields, such as sociology and anthropology.

### HOW JESUIT INSTITUTIONS CAN HELP

The 32nd General Congregation formulated the Society of Jesus' mission as "the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement," and the 34th General Congregation stated that the "integrating principle" of its mission is "the inseparable link between faith and the promotion of the justice of the Kingdom" (Decree 2, N. 14). More specifically, the Society of Jesus carries out its mission to serve faith aimed at the promotion of justice via two dimensions: "the inculturated proclamation of the Gospel and dialogue with other religious traditions" (GC 34, Decree 2, NN. 14–21). Both dimensions are, in my view, crucial for the purposes of reshaping legal education along the lines suggested in this short essay. If inculturation provides for a powerful correction against the institutionalist vision of justice, dialogue and pluralism are central to the fight against parochialism. This dialogue is of course inspired by the life of Jesus himself, who "crossed over physical and socio-religious frontiers" (GC 35, Decree 3, N. 14). In this area, the Society of Jesus has magnificent potential as a globalized organization itself, whose members and areas of action cover a



Andy Ladrigan-Whelpley

Professor César Arjona (center) presenting in February 2011 at a panel at Santa Clara University entitled: "What's Next?: The Future of Jesuit Higher Education—Reports from Mexico City."

*We must build bridges between institutions and real life, between books and action, between laws and the consequences of their application, between the law school and other areas of knowledge, between different legal systems, traditions, and social–legal cultures.*

multicultural reality (GC 35, Decree 3, N. 43). This global character was both intellectually and physically obvious at the 2010 Mexico City conference, as it is in the scope and universality of the Ignatian message.

We are witnessing a paradigm shift in legal education as the principle of the state or national character of law (that has been predominantly assumed as the starting point since the 19th century) is increasingly critiqued. Imagination and creativity are called for to suggest alternative paradigms, and as Fr. Nicolás highlighted in his keynote speech in Mexico City, Ignatian dispositions and attitudes can be significant resources in this endeavor.<sup>7</sup>

Far from being an oxymoron, legal education requires imagination, both at the curricular and at the methodological level. A focus on nonlegal and nondogmatic subjects is essential to understand the social context in which law exists and the consequences of its application on a global level. In this respect, legal pluralism should be an important object of study. Furthermore, there should be more international and comparative subjects and approaches than there are today, not mainly for the utilitarian acquisition of norms of other state systems, but rather to open up perspectives that will allow us to understand and assess our own system in a better light. And, of course, at an anthropological level, it is part of our tradition to work on the comprehensive training of the individual both as a professional and as a person. As was highlighted in Mexico City, perhaps the most important question to ponder is what sort of anthropology are we transmitting to our students. If our students are entering the legal profession, this anthropology must be centered around concepts of justice and the realities of injustice.

The “tradition of Jesuits building bridges across barriers” (GC 35, Decree 3, N. 17) is precisely what we need today in legal education. We must build bridges between institutions and real life, between books and action, between laws and the consequences of their application, between the law school and other areas of knowledge, between different legal systems, traditions, and social–legal cultures. By fulfilling our own mission, and being faithful to our very identity, Jesuit institutions can make a significant contribution to legal education and culture. If we add our immense power as a global network, I suggest that we are in a privileged position to advance global legal change that must come. 

#### NOTES

- 1 Many of the ideas that are advanced in this text are developed in a longer essay that I coauthored in Spanish with my colleague Josep F. Maria, S.J. See: <http://www.uia.mx/shapingthefuture/files/1-Frontier-Markets/Inequality-Poverty-ArjonayMaria-EU.pdf>.
- 2 Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2009).
- 3 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1971).
- 4 Hans Kelsen, *General Theory of Law and State*, trans. Anders Wedberg (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945).
- 5 All these ideas are developed, from a jurisprudential point of view, in César Arjona, “Transnational Law as an Excuse: How Teaching Law without the State Makes Legal Education Better,” in Franz Werro and Carrie Menkel-Meadow, *Teaching Transnational Law* (Oxford: Ashgate Publishing, forthcoming). Again, cultural variations are important here.
- 6 John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples; With, the Idea of Public Reason Revisited* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- 7 Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., “Depth, Universality and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today,” Mexico City, April 23, 2010.

# HWJT? (How Would Jesus Tweet?)

Reimagining New Media as Social



BY ELIZABETH DRESCHER  
*Author, Tweet If You ♥ Jesus:  
Practicing Church in the  
Digital Reformation*

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO, THE WASHINGTON POST ASKED A PANEL OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND SCHOLARS TO WEIGH IN ON A QUESTION THAT HAD COME TO THE FORE AS IT BECAME CLEAR THAT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS LIKE FACEBOOK, TWITTER, AND YOUTUBE HAD ESTABLISHED MUCH MORE THAN A FOOTHOLD ON POPULAR CULTURE ACROSS THE GLOBE: “DOES GOD TWEET?”<sup>1</sup> A few months later, in response to Pope Benedict XVI’s encouragement to priests to enter the digital domain,<sup>2</sup> James A. Martin, S.J., culture editor of *America* magazine, took up a similar question in the paper’s “On Faith” blog: “*What Would Jesus Blog?*”<sup>3</sup> Both the panel discussion and Martin’s reflection followed what is by now a reasonably predictable, balanced line of thinking about the use of social media in the context of religious practice—a context that extends easily, I think, to educational practice.

With Martin, commentators such as theologian Susan Brooks Thistlewaite, Rabbi Adin Balmer, and Christian Scientist Phil Davis variously argued that, in any particular era, the media at the center of communication and connection are appropriate tools for the enrichment of spiritual life provided they do not become idols in themselves, distracting us from the real presence of the divine and embodied relationship with one another.

Yes, new digital social media can encourage certain modes of superficiality and narcissistic behavior. Used unwisely or designed poorly, as illustrated in the sacramental confusion and controversy over the recently released Confession app for the iPhone,<sup>4</sup> social media can create an illusion of the spiritual that draws people away from the active, face-to-face participation in religious rites and communities of faith. But, in these early days of the Digital Reformation, most religious leaders and thinkers agree that helping people to develop a balanced

*Jesus, the Buddha, and Muhammad didn't have tricked-out smartphones to connect them to premodern seekers and believers, but they were profoundly social within the confines of their time, rattling established religious authorities by going to where people lived their everyday lives, rather than roosting at the local house of worship and expecting folks to come to them.*

approach to the use of new technologies, while engaging those same technologies in order to be meaningfully present to one another in our daily lives, is very much at the center of what Jesuits have long referred to as “learned ministry”—a ministry that is as much social as spiritual and intellectual.

Jesus, the Buddha, and Muhammad didn't have tricked-out smartphones to connect them to premodern seekers and believers, but they were profoundly social within the confines of their time, rattling established religious authorities by going to where people lived their everyday lives, rather than roosting at the local house of worship and expecting folks to come to them. It certainly seems, then, that the roaming spiritual teacher of the Gospels—the happening dude who could distill the whole of the Ten Commandments into one reasonably tweetable Great Commandment—would make himself accessible via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and a personal blog or website.

From this point, the conversation among religious thought leaders tends to move to the imagined content of Jesus' social media presence. Google “What would Jesus tweet?” and you'll find close to a million reflections on how adaptable the sayings of Jesus, verses of the Psalms, lines from traditional prayers, and the like are to the 140-character Twitter format. It takes almost no effort from there to see how this line of thinking extends into the millions upon millions of sermon blogs that float through the digital cosmos and the uncountable numbers of Facebook pages for churches, religious

organizations, and—as with the Vatican's launch of a Facebook page honoring the late Pope John Paul II<sup>5</sup>—revered spiritual figures. Educational institutions have hardly shied away from this sort of participation. (Santa Clara, for instance, has dozens of formal and informal Twitter profiles and several Facebook pages.)

Okay, okay, we get it: digital social-media sites are the reigning centers for communication and connection today, not just in the West, but across the globe. They have important limitations of which we all must be mindful. But the bottom line consensus is that those who refuse to participate in social media communities are refusing to be with most of the people in the world exactly where they are much of the time. This is probably *not* WJWD (what Jesus would do). As a spirituality scholar, an educator, a writer on contemporary spiritual practice, and a wobbly sort of believer myself, I'm squarely on board with all that.

#### **PUTTING THE “SOCIAL” BACK IN MEDIA**

Here's what we're not getting, however: Jesus probably wouldn't participate in social media communities the way many of us do, attempting to adapt our message to new media without much consideration of how these media in themselves have changed—not “*are changing*,” note, but “*have already changed*”—our relationship to information and authority, and, with that, our sense of ourselves and our relationships to others, including God and the Church. Given this, the key question is not

*whether* Jesus would tweet, or *what* he might tweet, but *how*.

Understanding the *how* of meaningful participation in the new social media landscape is critical because it engages many of the concerns raised by Superior General Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., about the impact of new technologies and associated practices on education generally and the richly reflective practice that characterizes Jesuit approaches to education in particular.<sup>6</sup> Fr. Nicolás argues that the substantial benefits offered by wide access to new technologies notwithstanding, they nonetheless contribute to what he sees as “the globalization of superficiality—superficiality of thought, vision, dreams, relationships, convictions.”

If we imagine the social media landscape in very narrow terms that highlight the products of technological hardware (computers, smartphones) and software (apps, social networks), Fr. Nicolás may be right. A study comparing the blogs, tweets, status updates, text messages, and other bits and bytes of digital expression that characterize postmodern life to the meaty tomes produced before 2006, when wide access to Facebook changed everything, would surely show a world polluted by vast quantities of what looks like nothing much. But, of course, such a study would be flawed, comparing apple blossoms in the global orchard of ideas and relationships to oranges grown juicy and sweet through days of sunny, transformative exchange and nights of cool, solitary waiting. When we enter the digital social media landscape, that is, we come into ideas, collaborations, and contributions to the needs of the world at a very different stage than we do when we come upon the same in the mass media landscape defined by finished print and broadcast products. Evaluating the worth of a digital social media exchange based on a cursory scan of Twitter feeds and blogs would be like grading students based on their conversations in the hall outside the classroom or assessing faculty based on the quality of cocktail party conversation.

Still, we all know that much good comes from casual exchanges about what we did over the weekend or where we stand, quite off the

cuff, on the Barry Bonds doping case. We learn a great deal from and about one another through even the most banal chitchat. You like to hike. You're funny. You're not a fan of antinomian ethics.<sup>7</sup> I try not to make the mistake of seeing such snippets as the whole of you or your thinking, but, in the context of our ongoing relationship, neither are they mere throwaway lines. They help me to know you, little bit, by little bit—a Facebook status update or a Flickr photo at a time.

Having access to a wider world of micro-knowledge of many, many others is at the core of the opportunity presented by social media. Those of us formed in the broadcast age, which, as Robert Putnam compellingly argued,<sup>8</sup> thrived on communication practices that separated us from each other, often chafe at the personal exposure that so much digital transparency affords. Yet deeply interactive engagement was very much the norm of social life until the modern period. The individualistic and consumeristic character of contemporary life that we rightly decry has, in fact, much to do with the personal isolation at the center of modernist ideologies of distinction and separation. Indeed, cognitive scientist Stefana Broadbent argues that digital social media, especially as they are accessed through mobile computing devices like cell phones and laptops, restore a day-to-day intimacy among people in families and communities that was diminished as modern educational, work, and spiritual practices were physically separated from familial and communal spaces.<sup>9</sup> Parents now keep tabs on their kids via cell phone. Working spouses check in with one another. Friends on opposite sides of a city or a country or a globe text *bon mots* across a relational void that would have been difficult to traverse on company or classroom time a mere decade ago.

It is this intimate possibility that I would imagine Jesus accessing were he travelling through the digitally integrated reality of social life today—stopping at the digital well to chat with an outcast woman; visiting the IRS Recruitment page on Facebook for a chat with would-be tax collectors; or following the #fibro Twitter trend to get a sense of how 7,000 or so people with fibromyalgia are doing. All of this,

*While this new digitally integrated social reality presents all sorts of educational, moral, and spiritual challenges, a superficial dismissal of its significance in the relational lives of people across the globe today bodes ill for those committed to extending God's love, justice, and hope more broadly throughout a world in need.*



I would imagine, not by way of Jesus getting out his message, but of incarnating the reality of God's abiding attentiveness to humanity in all its particularity in digital spaces that are very real in the lives of people today.

#### **WE INTERRUPT THIS BROADCAST...**

This radical inversion of broadcast communication practice is often overlooked as religious and educational leaders work harder and harder to craft glittering messages that they hope will reach more and more people through digital media. Not long ago, for instance, a clergy friend noted that he had spent half the morning trying to edit his most recent sermon down to a length appropriate for his blog. I

was impressed that he understood that blogs are not, as too many ministers believe, digital pulpits. They are a very particular genre, with very different characteristics aimed at inviting comment and encouraging sharing that simply are not part of face-to-face preaching practice. In my experience, it's rare when a clergyperson understands this, so I lauded my friend's efforts.

Yet, I also wondered this: What if he had spent the same amount of time visiting the Facebook pages of members of his congregation just to say hello and to pay a bit of attention to what was going on in the day-to-day of their lives? What impact might that have on their relationship to him and to the Church? Sure, they might not get a second go at his deep

*[Students'] Facebook conversations with local friends allow them to deepen interpersonal intimacy in ways that enrich their sense of belonging. This sense of belonging... is rich ground for the intellectual, moral, and spiritual flourishing. Students continue their education, develop as learners, not, that is, because they "get something out of it," but because they feel themselves as connected to others, as belonging to a community where even innocuous details like what they had for breakfast matter.*

reflections on Paul's letter to the Philippians or Niebuhr's understanding of hope. But I want to suggest that the visit to the Facebook page is less *relationally shallow* than is rebroadcasting the latest sermon. Imagine, for instance, the impact of a headline like this: *Pope Pledges to "Friend", 10 Believers Every Month*, as compared to the more usual, *Vatican Launches New Facebook Group Page*.

All of this is to say that the thing we often miss in the phrase "digital social media" is the "social" part. Absent the nurturing of relationships, the deeply meaningful work of intellectual reflection, imaginative inquiry, and social engagement cannot be sustained. Two recent studies bear out the significance of extending relational attentiveness to digital locales. The first, by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, shows that people who use the Internet are far more likely to participate in volunteer activities (80 percent) than are people who do not use the Internet (56 percent).<sup>10</sup> Involvement by younger adults is particularly amplified by digital connectivity, as young people use social media to invite friends to participate and to "advertise" their participation in volunteer activities by posting and tweeting on social media sites.

The second study, by experimental psychologist Richard Beck and colleagues at Abilene Christian University, showed that freshmen who had active engagement with their student cohort via Facebook were more likely to

return for their sophomore year than those with less social media relationality.<sup>11</sup> As Beck points out, the students' digital cohorts are made up, for the most part, of people they regularly see in person, their digital interactivity reinforcing the lived reality of their connectedness to one another in a particular community. While students may also keep in touch with far-flung friends and family members, their Facebook conversations with local friends allow them to deepen interpersonal intimacy in ways that enrich their sense of belonging. This sense of belonging, I would suggest, is richest ground for the intellectual, moral, and spiritual flourishing. Students continue their education, develop as learners, not, that is, because they "get something out of it," but because they feel themselves as connected to others, as belonging to a community where even innocuous details like what they had for breakfast matter. The rapid development and adoption of social media *practices*, understood apart from the use of social media technologies as mere tools, creates a general expectation of enhanced relationality at the root of any other engagement, whether it's spiritual, educational, or, as we saw in the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign, political.

#### **EXPANDING THE REAL**

What's more, the Pew study and the experience of students in Beck's research gives the lie to the persistent idea that there is a hard boundary between "virtual" and "real" space, as though

what happened on my Facebook wall with friends, family, colleagues, and total strangers to my physical world had no substance or meaning. Rather, we see again and again that digital and physical spaces are mutually reinforcing, dialogical realities, each participating in the other as meaningful parts of more widely distributed but nonetheless whole lives. Thus, just as Jesus saw that he could not minister to God's people without leaving the temple (where religious authorities of his day would surely have assumed that "real" religion happened) to walk through the Galilee, I suspect he would be visiting the Spiritual But Not Religious group page on Facebook to get a better sense of what so vexes the religiously disaffected. He might spend some time watching the myriad videos posted on YouTube by people impacted by the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, absorbing the needs of the world in a poignant, digital reality and, by his very presence and attentiveness, encouraging others to give, to serve, to pray.

While this new digitally integrated social reality presents all sorts of educational, moral, and spiritual challenges, a superficial dismissal of its significance in the relational lives of people across the globe today bodes ill for those committed to extending God's love, justice, and hope more broadly throughout a world in need. Reimagining media as social invites us to situate the sharing of knowledge, the enactment of faith, and the healing of the world in the daily flow of ordinary life, in the sometimes slight, but nonetheless meaningful details that make us known to one another—filling in the networked picture of humanity a pixel at a time. Would Jesus tarry in this new digitally integrated social reality? Have you Googled Him lately? It seems He's everywhere. 

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NOTES

- 1 "On Faith" Blog, *Washington Post* (August 11, 2009), accessed online at: [http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/2009/08/does\\_god\\_tweet/all.html](http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/onfaith/2009/08/does_god_tweet/all.html).
- 2 "Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the 44th World Communications Day: The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word" (January 24, 2010), available online at: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/communications/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20100124\\_44th-world-communications-day\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/communications/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20100124_44th-world-communications-day_en.html). A subsequent message from the Pope, for the 45th World Communications Day, encouraged spiritually meaningful participation by young people. See "Truth, Proclamation and Authenticity of Life in the Digital Age" (January 24, 2011), available online at various sources.
- 3 James A. Martin, S.J., "What Would Jesus Blog?" *Washington Post* (January 29, 2010), accessed online at: [http://bit.ly/Martin\\_WashPo\\_WWJBlog](http://bit.ly/Martin_WashPo_WWJBlog).
- 4 On this, see my "Confession Fail: iPhone App Muddies the Sacramental Waters," *Religion Dispatches* (February 11, 2011), available online at: [http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/atheologies/4237/confession\\_fail%3A\\_iphone\\_app\\_controversy\\_muddies\\_the\\_sacramental\\_waters/](http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/atheologies/4237/confession_fail%3A_iphone_app_controversy_muddies_the_sacramental_waters/).
- 5 The page was launched in anticipation of the May 1, 2011, beatification of John Paul II. It can be found online at: <https://www.facebook.com/vatican.johnpaul2?ref=ts>.
- 6 Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., "Depth, Universality, and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today," remarks for "Networking Jesuit Higher Education: Shaping the Future for a Human, Just, Sustainable Globe," Mexico City (April 23, 2010).
- 7 Antinomianism is the heretical belief that one's special status exempts one from moral law.
- 8 Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).
- 9 Stefana Broadbent, "How the Internet Enables Intimacy," TED Talks (July 2009), available online at: [http://www.ted.com/talks/stefana\\_broadbent\\_how\\_the\\_internet\\_enables\\_intimacy.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/stefana_broadbent_how_the_internet_enables_intimacy.html).
- 10 Lee Rainie, Kristen Purcell, Aaron Smith, "The Social Side of the Internet," *Pew Internet & American Life Project* (January 18, 2011), available online at: <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/The-Social-Side-of-the-Internet.aspx>.
- 11 Beck's research has not yet been published, but he comments on it on his blog, *Experimental Theology: the thoughts, articles and essays of Richard Beck*. You can find your way to my commentary on Beck's work as it relates to church vitality at: <http://experimentaltheology.blogspot.com/2011/03/facebook-doesnt-kill-churches-churches.html>.

# Friending in El Salvador and Tanzania

An Education in Solidarity



BY HILARY TITUS '11  
*English major,  
Biology minor,  
Santa Clara University*

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2010, THE DAY OF THE DEAD, I STOOD AMONG THE HUNDREDS OF BURIAL PLOTS IN A CEMETERY IN AYUTUXTEPEQUE, SAN SALVADOR, SURROUNDED BY WHAT SEEMED LIKE THOUSANDS OF JOYFUL FAMILIES WHO HAD COME TO CELEBRATE THEIR LATE LOVED ONES. I ANXIOUSLY HOPED I WASN'T UNWITTINGLY STANDING ON TOP OF ANY OF THE CROWDED GRAVES. The atmosphere was gay, but our party could not be. My friend Iberica had lost her baby girl eight months into her first pregnancy.

When I met Iberica, she was just pregnant enough that I knew I could ask her the due date—it would be right around the time I would be leaving four months later. Every day, I wondered whether or not I would be able to meet this new baby. We talked about her checkups, her impending motherhood, everything.

We weren't going to have time to visit Iberica's house that Monday, but I suddenly had an urge to check on her. Excitedly, I stomped down the uneven earthen stairs to her home, but I only saw her younger sister, Oneyda. Something was wrong, and I began to run. We held each other and cried while she told me what she knew. The baby was gone. Iberica wasn't well.

I didn't know what I could do. Visit the hospital? Go to the vigil that night? I made calls all evening and found out we could attend the funeral if we wanted. I didn't know what I would say. I didn't know if I would bring the right flowers or wear the right clothes. But I had to go. Of course I would be there. It was all I could do.

I was in it with Iberica, of course not the way she was, not the way her family was, or the way I might be if I had been there longer or spoken her language fluently, but I was sharing with her in this life-shocking moment. This was accompaniment, a relationship of mutuality, solidarity.

Orkeeswa Secondary School, Tanzania



Courtesy of Hilary Tirus

*I must admit, I did not choose Santa Clara for its Jesuit values. But now, four years later, I have profound gratitude for my very Jesuit education. I would not be who I am today without those Jesuit values which have become the most entirely life-changing aspect of my time at Santa Clara University.*

**I MUST ADMIT, I DID NOT CHOOSE SANTA CLARA FOR ITS JESUIT VALUES.**

I don't come from a Catholic background and four years ago I could not have told you what made a Jesuit education different from any other. I now, however, can only express profound gratitude for my very Jesuit education. As I recently wrote in my graduation announcements, I would not be who I am today without those Jesuit values which have become the most entirely life-changing aspect of my time at Santa Clara University.

I came to Santa Clara looking for the "typical" college experience. It took me about two months to realize that wasn't what I was in for. My Western Culture class with Jesuit Michael McCarthy fostered such spirited discussion about the enduring questions of humanity that conversations spilled out of the classroom door with us to lunch and into our evening conversations. Outside the classroom, a friend invited me to his residence hall's Tuesday

Night Liturgies, where I found a space where spirituality intersected with our daily lives. I also found the question that would shape my years at Santa Clara and probably my whole life: What does it mean to live in solidarity?

I had never heard that word, *solidarity*, before coming to Santa Clara. I wasn't exactly sure what it meant; I certainly wasn't sure what it looked like in action. At first, I was too embarrassed to ask about it. It seemed to be part of the accepted vocabulary on campus. Naturally, I became incredibly curious.

So how did I get to that cemetery in San Salvador? After two years of participating in Campus Ministry's Simple Meals (modeled after Catholic Relief Services' Simple Meals), conversations with friends off to serve with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, and an immersion experience in San Francisco that left me reeling and confused about how to discard those notions of otherness, July 2009 found me packing my bags for Tanzania. Backed with a

Jean Donovan Fellowship,<sup>1</sup> I set off determined to come home well versed on this whole idea of living in solidarity.

While I was there, I learned that some of the student's fathers had eight or ten wives and up to 80 children but only six cows. Another student listed "digging to find food" as one of his daily chores. I found out that my favorite student, Anna, was only one among many whose parents died when she was very young, probably of AIDS; so she now shared her modest cot with three younger cousins. But in six weeks I visited one student's home. I didn't learn about all of their histories or spend time with their families. Their reality was tragic—but ultimately abstract. I came home even more uncertain about solidarity than when I had left.

I knew I couldn't give up on this journey. If anything, the questions pursued me more doggedly than ever. I decided to spend the fall of my senior year in El Salvador with Santa Clara's study abroad program, La Casa de la Solidaridad.<sup>2</sup>

In the first few weeks, I wasn't sure El Salvador would break my heart the way

Dean Brackley, S.J. (faculty member at the Universidad Centroamericana), told us it would, the way I'd hoped it would. I didn't know if this time would be any different, if I would actually experience solidarity. I had no idea how completely, down to their very foundations, my walls of misconception and separation would be pulled apart. I didn't foresee the bonds of love, acceptance, and shared struggle. I was wrong: My heart was broken by the people of El Salvador, and friends like Iberica helped me enter into friendships of accompaniment and mutuality that before I'd thought were only some kind of faraway hope.

I have Salvadoran friends and family. I don't understand what they've lived through, but I love them and they love me. I will never fully understand their reality. I can learn about it, I can listen to them talk about it, I can accompany them through it, but it will never be mine. Iberica had to walk forty minutes down a volcano in labor, ride on a public bus to the hospital, only to face giving birth to a baby who had already died, on whom the doctors could run no diagnostics. They were unable to tell her what had happened to the baby she had felt kicking just days before. For me, I know that if I ever become pregnant, anything less than the best health care seems an unlikely possibility. Yet she and my other Salvadoran friends want to share their lives with me, and I am trying with them.

**SUPERIOR GENERAL ADOLFO NICOLÁS, S.J., IS RIGHT. IN THIS INFORMATION AGE, WE, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN MY GENERATION, ARE TEMPTED MORE THAN EVER TO STAY ON THE SURFACE.** Everyone can make their voice heard, but instantaneous response is often the medium. We are in need of constant stimulation, but it's often the type of stimulation that keeps us insulated from the realities of the world rather than engaged in them, and it certainly doesn't leave us with much time to reflect or delve deep. Even as I wrote this article, I couldn't help but periodically check Facebook, Twitter, and news accounts on the military action in Libya and rescue efforts in Japan. Clearly these things are not bad in themselves. They keep me informed, help me stay in touch



Courtesy of Hilary Tirus

Hilary with Anna, student at Orkeeswa Secondary School, Tanzania.

with my friends in El Salvador, and enable grassroots movements in Egypt and all over the world. But they can foster very short attention spans and limited engagement with the concrete world around.

My education in solidarity has not been easy. It has been long, difficult, confusing, and it is only beginning. It will require continual stripping of the notions of individuality that I was brought up with and society continually reinforces. This education is not an education of instant gratification. It takes deep thought, feeling, action, and reflection.

An education in solidarity isn't a superficial thing. It takes real, repeated engagement and deep, hard reflection, the kind of thinking and feeling that can't happen on the surface.

Colleges and universities hold a unique, privileged position for educating young people in a life of engagement with and reflection upon the world, in a life of solidarity. Students arrive with many different expectations and aspirations. But no matter how they come, they are about to enter a period of great personal change. "There is no such thing as

a neutral education process," writes educator Jane Thompson (drawing on Paulo Freire).<sup>3</sup> Education can help bring about conformity to the mainstream, or it can become "the 'practice of freedom', the means by which men and women deal critically with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."<sup>4</sup> My Jesuit education has brought me in direct contact with realities of the world, and that is why it has been so transformative. I have been called to witness reality, to engage it so that I may be changed and in turn become part of the greater change. e

#### NOTES

- 1 For more on the Jean Donovan Fellowship see: <http://www.scu.edu/ignatiancenter/students/donovan/>
- 2 For more on the Casa Educational Network see: <http://www.scu.edu/casa/network/>
- 3 Jane Thompson, "Adult Education and the Woman's Movement," in *Radical Approaches to Adult Education: A Reader*, ed. T. Lovett (London: Routledge, 1988), 181–201.
- 4 Ibid.



Courtesy of Hilary Titus

Hilary with la familia Alas Alas, her host family in Chalatenango, El Salvador.

# Toward a Globalization of Solidarity

Reflections on Ten Years of Donovan Fellowships



BY VALERIE SARMA  
*Associate Director,  
Ignatian Center for Jesuit  
Education and Co-director,  
Jean Donovan Fellowship*

EACH FALL I HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF MEETING STUDENTS PASSIONATE ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE AND YEARNING FOR A REAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD WE SHARE. THEY ARE STUDENTS APPLYING FOR THE JEAN DONOVAN FELLOWSHIP, SPONSORED BY THE IGNATIAN CENTER FOR JESUIT EDUCATION AT SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY. Attracted by University support, a financial stipend, and a desire to engage in service, students begin by placing their dreams on paper: educating children in Tanzania; farming with migrants in Salinas; supporting homeless women in Boston; teaching dance in El Salvador; caring for the destitute of India; and the dreams continue, each one more inspirational than the next.

The Jean Donovan Fellowship began more than 10 years ago, and now there are 15 student fellows annually, spending their summers in solidarity with people of limited access to wealth, power, and privilege. Donovan

Fellows seek to understand the reality of their communities, both globally and locally, and are often inspired in much the same way as the Fellowship's namesake.

Jean Donovan was a young woman searching for meaning in a complex world. Born into a comfortable Connecticut suburb, her heart was first opened to global injustices while studying as a university student in Ireland. A growing restlessness led her away from a promising business career and into a community of like-minded, socially conscious peers. "Jean Donovan was twenty-six, and she was very much a child of her time. She was not a saint or a hero. She was idealistic and vulnerable, she had a great sense of fun, and she was hungry for life's mysteries and opportunities."<sup>1</sup>

Arriving in 1979 El Salvador, Jean found herself immersed in a civil war. Her "political" work, for which she was later killed, was nothing more than running a food program. Yet, her real calling was being present to her Salvadoran community in daily life: giving motorcycle

rides, singing Irish ballads, and listening to their hopes, struggles, and fears. Jean “became aware that the very people she had come all this way to help—the illiterate farmworkers and their families, surviving from day to day in their bone-poor, uncluttered houses—had something that she wanted. What they had to teach her about life and suffering, about courage and human dignity, about friendship and solidarity, just might provide some answers to the mysterious, elusive calling that had brought her here.”<sup>2</sup>

As the violence escalated in El Salvador and it became clear that Jean’s life was in jeopardy, she was committed to remaining with the people of El Salvador. Such is the power of solidarity. “Several times I have decided to leave El Salvador. I almost could except for the children, the poor bruised victims of this insanity. Who would care for them? Whose heart could be so staunch as to favor the reasonable thing in a sea of their tears and loneliness? Not mine, dear friend, not mine.”<sup>3</sup>

Jean’s life has come to represent an authentic transformation rooted in humility, faith, and fellowship. It is increasingly important for today’s students to connect with the

suffering in our world, and enable their own transformations. The Jean Donovan Fellowship allows students to create this opportunity, and the Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education provides the guidance for critical reflection in a structured and nurturing environment.

In his keynote address from Mexico City, “Depth, Universality, and Learned Ministry,” Fr. Adolfo Nicolás offers a thought-provoking articulation of the “globalization of superficiality,” an alarming trend impacting our students and institutions, marked by a “superficiality of thought, visions, dreams, relationships, convictions,” and a failure to engage “the hard work of forming communities of dialogue in the search for meaning and truth.”<sup>4</sup> The obvious aftermath of such superficiality, according to Fr. Nicolás, can be an underdeveloped and dehumanized understanding of our most critical global issues, a shallow appreciation for the complexity of reality, and a difficulty in forming truly empathic and creative relationships. In essence, the globalization of superficiality can impede a contemplative, thoughtful, and profound engagement with “reality.” In his treatise for



Courtesy of Valerie Sarma

Donovan Fellow Tanya Schmidt '12 with students in Peru.

In November 2010, 100 alumni and current Fellows celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Jean Donovan Fellowship. Rooted in a deep solidarity with their host communities, alumni shared their personal transformations.

“...El Salvador was a pivotal point in my life. I lived in a small town that seemed idyllic, but met many people who had family...who were planning to go to the United States themselves. This made me interested in the economic, political, and social reasons why people would leave their friends and family and travel to a place where the life of an immigrant is so difficult.... I fell in love with immigration law and decided to go to law school to pursue this career path. Today I am a staff attorney at Bay Area Legal Aid, providing legal representation to low-income domestic violence survivors in immigration and family law matters. I would not be here today if it was not for the support and encouragement I received as a Donovan Fellow.”<sup>5</sup>

—KRISTIN LOVE BOSCIA '03, J.D.'08 (EL SALVADOR)

“The month inspired much thought related to themes such as how we define and live out our ideals related to ‘work,’ ‘success,’ and especially ‘social justice.’”<sup>6</sup>

—NOELLE LOPEZ '09, RHODES SCHOLAR (WATSONVILLE, CALIF)

“As we held each other I felt her squeeze a little tighter, her petite frame much smaller than mine. I heard a few sniffles and I knew she was crying. I looked at her and smiled, tears welling up in my own eyes, and we just cried and hugged each other. I knew I had become part of these children’s lives, just as they were a part of mine, and I knew that it would be hard to leave. I felt an immense amount of gratitude to be able to experience this love...with everyone at the Hogar.”<sup>7</sup>

—SHEEVA SABATI '06 (HOGAR TIERRA SANTA, HONDURAS)

“It knocked me off my high horse. It changed the way I look at politics and international relations.”<sup>8</sup>

—JACOB DAVID, M.D. '04 (SARAJEVO YOUTH HOUSE)

In Calcutta, Ferron worked in an orphanage and a school for homeless children. “He made friends with a family that lived on a blanket in a soccer field,” says Paul Fitzgerald, S.J., senior associate dean of SCU’s College of Arts and Sciences. During that time, “there was an amazing progression in his writing,” from a focus on the overwhelming smells, sights, and sounds, to stories about the people there, to his delight at being accepted by those he served, Fitzgerald added.<sup>9</sup>

—SCU PRESS RELEASE ON NEIL FERRON '05, PLAYWRIGHT (CALCUTTA, INDIA)



Jean Donovan

*“Several times I have decided to leave El Salvador. I almost could except for the children, the poor bruised victims of this insanity. Who would care for them? Whose heart could be so staunch as to favor the reasonable thing in a sea of their tears and loneliness? Not mine, dear friend, not mine.”*

—JEAN DONOVAN

positive change, Fr. Nicolás calls our Jesuit institutions to “promote in creative new ways the depth of thought and imagination that are distinguishing marks of the Ignatian tradition.”<sup>10</sup> A “real” understanding of ourselves and our neighbors within the globalized world can evoke the real passion and engagement required for transformation.

Through the Ignatian Center’s Donovan Fellowship, Fr. Nicolás’s “real” experience is available to students through solidarity with their communities. We enable students to follow their own passionate dreams and not the dreams of others. Their experiences invariably offer unforeseen hurdles, resulting in confusion, pain, and feelings of inadequacy, but this is exactly the goal of the experience. It is within these difficult moments that profound growth occurs. Ignatian Center advisors facilitate contemplation and reflection, helping students identify and process their experiences and growth. As Donovan Fellow Quentin Orem ’12 recently shared, “By entering into another reality, our own reality is deeply affected... our suffering neighbors call us to be real college students and graduates, actively engaging the real world.”<sup>11</sup>

At his talk in Mexico City, Fr. Nicolás shared his profound belief that “in all of our diversity we are in fact a single humanity.”<sup>12</sup> The Ignatian Center has at its core the same goal—the powerful notion of living in solidarity with our local and global families. If the fundamental

question remains “to recreate the journey, and recreate the faith”<sup>13</sup> with the goal of shaping a more humane world, following the example set by Jean Donovan is a wonderful first step. 

#### NOTES

- 1 Ana Carrigan, *Salvador Witness: The Life and Calling of Jean Donovan* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984), 8.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 106
- 3 *Ibid.*, 218
- 4 Adolfo Nicolás, S.J. “Depth, Universality, and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today,” remarks for “Networking Jesuit Higher Education: Shaping the Future for a Human, Just, Sustainable Globe,” Mexico City (April 23, 2010).
- 5 Kristin Love Boscia, personal communication, November 2010.
- 6 Noelle Lopez, “Donovan Fellow Example Projects,” *loc. cit.*
- 7 Sheeva Sabati, “Donovan Fellow Example Projects,” *loc. cit.*
- 8 Jacob David, “Donovan Fellow Example Projects,” on the Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education site at: <http://www.scu.edu/ignatiancenter/students/donovan/moreinfo/fellowshipexamples.cfm>.
- 9 “SCU alumnus wins elite George J. Mitchell Scholarship to study and continue playwriting in Ireland,” *University Press Releases*, SCU (November 24, 2008). Can be found at: <http://www.scu.edu/news/releases/release.cfm?c=4844>
- 10 Nicolás.
- 11 Quentin Orem and Mark Vetto, “Global and Local Neighborhoods: Who are our neighbors? How are we called to be in relationships with them?” *Explore* 14 (Fall 2010): 30.
- 12 Nicolás.
- 13 *Ibid.*



Courtesy of Valerie Sarma

Donovan Fellow Jackie Tasarz '11 with students in Ghana.

# Toward a More Equitable Distribution of Resources Within Our World

## The Importance of Social Support

Authors from the SCU Class of 2011: Alexander Boll, Nicole I. Nasrah, Jacqueline Peterson, Marta Robinson, and Wren White

With Jenna Lugonja, Laura Preuss, and Lisa Vassiliadis

Researchers: Bianca McNeil '10 and Alejandra Moreno '11

Supervised by Laura Robinson, Assistant Professor, SCU Department of Sociology

TRAVELING TO OUR RESEARCH SITE IN AGRICULTURAL CALIFORNIA, MEMBERS OF OUR RESEARCH TEAM FOLLOWED THE CALIFORNIA MISSION TRAIL. Passing through golden hills speckled with gnarled oak trees and populated by grazing cattle, our route followed what was once El Camino Real, the Royal Road. Along this historic route lies the Mission Santa Clara de Asís at the center of Santa Clara University. Founded in 1851, SCU is the oldest college in the Golden State and the only university to be the successor of a Spanish mission.<sup>1</sup> Today, we continue the Jesuit tradition of combining intellectual inquiry with active research designed to promote social justice. Then as now, our ultimate goal is to *help fashion a more just and humane world* following the example set by Ignatius of Loyola.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to funding from Bannan Institute, Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education, in the fall of 2010 we began our examination of the importance of social support as a positive force in social reproduction among disadvantaged youth. Our goal was not only to collect data for scholarly inquiry, but also to act as agents of positive social change with those who shared their lives with us. Our SCU research team made up of Bianca McNeil, Alejandra Moreno, and Laura Robinson conducted surveys and focus groups with over 200 high school students, many of whom are economically disadvantaged, and distributed a free educational CD with over 300 important resources pertaining to post-



Alexander Boll

Bannan Grant Report contributors

graduation career and educational planning.

Bianca McNeil described the experience: “Participating in the project has given me a whole new appreciation of the training I got at SCU and how it can be used to help others. This project made me feel that I was really living out the SCU commitment to social justice.”

Alejandra Moreno reflected, “We helped others and were enriched ourselves. Leading the focus groups was an intensely rewarding experience... The process helped students to articulate their needs, many for the first time, and let us respond to them with encouragement and... give them valuable information and insight on how to pursue their aspirations, as well as putting them in touch with resources.”

Returning to the SCU community, the SCU team compiled their experiences as contemplatives in action in the form of a shared data set to be analyzed by the class of 2011’s sociology majors, including the authors of this report. Our collective report synthesizes the research regarding the significance of social support and social reproduction among

high school students in an agricultural belt of California. These findings have also been published in the *Silicon Valley Notebook* (2011)<sup>3</sup> and presented at the research symposium *From Data to Delivery: Using Data for Resource Enrichment*. Research topics were selected by SCU student researchers who chose to analyze different facets of the collective data set. This report synthesizes their research and highlights the main themes and patterns that emerged, namely the significance of social support among high school students, many of whom are disadvantaged.<sup>4</sup>

Wren White's research, "Perceived Social Support from Groups and Future Aspirations," reveals that social support from groups has a positive relationship with educational aspirations. A high percentage of high school students reported the importance of social support from groups in their lives: sports groups (67 percent), clubs (78 percent), community service groups (49 percent), and religious groups (42 percent). All four categories of group support measured show a significant increase in the number of students who plan to further their education after high school, versus those who plan on going to work after graduation. There is a 5 percent increase for those who reported sports team support, a 13 percent increase from club membership support, a 5 percent increase in community service group support, and a 3 percent increase in religious group support. White's research shows that social support from these groups can raise normative aspirations, indicating one way in which group social support can lead high school students to continue their education after high school graduation.

In "The Relationship Between Participation in Groups and Educational Aspirations," Jacqueline Peterson finds that students who take part in group activities for a minimum of three hours per week are more likely to aspire to attend college. One student, Jazzy,<sup>5</sup> participates in a school group called Conflict Mediation. This experience is central to the development of her career aspirations. She aspires to attend a four-year university after high school and explains that the group "made me open my eyes that maybe that's something that I want to do

later on in life." Peterson finds that participation in clubs, organizations, and community groups increases awareness of potential future paths while enhancing the students' skill sets, because participation opens the doors to experiencing career fields of interest while providing valuable networking. Peterson's study provides evidence of a positive bundling effect of participation in groups and educational aspirations in which groups can function as positive influences and serve as channels of social support fostering aspirations.

Nicole Nasrah's "Socioeconomic Status and Perceived Support" examines the relationship between parental education and perceived social support to reveal the effects of class. While almost all of the high school students report the importance of familial support, students from disadvantaged households are far less likely to perceive their parents as very supportive (75.8 percent) than are students from advantaged households (100 percent). Economically advantaged students also perceive high degrees of support from their sibling(s) and other family members, whereas economically disadvantaged students perceive lesser degrees of social support. Regardless of economic status, a supportive environment seems to be an important factor in influencing high school students and their aspirations. However, Nasrah's findings indicate that the Matthew Effect<sup>6</sup> also plays out in social support. In sum, those who are in most need of social support to mitigate other inequalities are least likely to have it in abundance.



Alexander Boll  
Marta Robinson presenting her research findings, "Exploring the Knowledge Gap: Informational Resources and Their Impact on Future Aspirations."

In “Educational Aspirations and Ties to Latin America,” Alexander Boll examines social support at the community level to explore the educational aspirations of a small cohort of Latino high school students. Focusing specifically on the relationship between educational aspirations and social support, Boll finds a positive relationship between generalized aspirations and strong ties to Latin America. While most students recognize financial hardship as a challenge in furthering their educations and careers after high school, students with stronger ties report being more optimistic in overcoming challenges because of familial or community social support. One student with strong ties highlights this optimism in the face of adversity: “I don’t come from a wealthy family but from a family that is stable enough to keep on doing what is best for me.” Another states, “I feel that there will be many obstacles but none I won’t be able to get through.” Despite the difficulties these students may face, they are committed to overcoming challenges and gaining the necessary education for their future and career, thanks to the social support they receive.

Marta Robinson’s work, “Exploring the Knowledge Gap: Informational Resources and Their Impact on Future Aspirations,” reveals that informational support is a key resource to realizing aspirations. She finds that while the majority of students in the study have high aspirations, many lack the social networks to provide the information necessary to fulfill their goals. This juxtaposition reveals the concept of the “knowledge gap.” For example, while family may offer significant social support for disadvantaged students, many of these students are not embedded in familial networks where knowledge about college education is normative. Their families are unable to offer informational support regarding post-secondary education. However, the most promising aspect of these findings is that educators in this study are filling the knowledge gap by giving students information about educational and career plans. These teachers inspire and mentor their students, helping them attain their goals, especially when students’ families cannot provide the information needed to further education after high school.

In addition to the authors of the Bannan Report, other SCU student-researchers engaged with the importance of social support. Laura Preuss’s work, “Social Support and Levels of Confidence Among Adolescents,” reveals that students with high reported levels of confidence also report the largest and most diverse sources of social support. In “Perceptions of Teacher Support Among Economically Disadvantaged and Advantaged High School Students,” Jenna Lugonja finds that while social support from teachers is critical to students in determining their life goals, it is especially critical to disadvantaged students.

Finally, Lisa Vassiliadis’s work, “Perceived Support and Educational Aspirations: Uncovering the Layers of Emotional Encouragement,” demonstrates that family members, peers, and nonfamilial adults all provide social support that influences students’ educational trajectories after high school; the greater the support, the higher the students’ educational aspirations.

In conclusion, our analysis and engagement in the social world have sought to meet the goals set forth by Ignacio Ellacuria, S.J., to “*analyze causes, use imagination and creativity together to discover remedies.*”<sup>7</sup> 

#### NOTES

- 1 Teresa Pugh, “History of Mission Santa Clara de Asis,” [www.scu.edu/visitors/mission/history.cfm](http://www.scu.edu/visitors/mission/history.cfm).
- 2 Part of the Jesuit higher education vision: “...forming well-educated women and men who will help fashion a more just and human world,” Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education, “<http://www.scu.edu/ignatiancenter/about/>” [www.scu.edu/ignatiancenter/about/](http://www.scu.edu/ignatiancenter/about/).
- 3 Silicon Valley Notebook is published annually by the Department of Sociology at Santa Clara University.
- 4 Jenna Lugonja, “Perceptions of Teacher Support Among Economically Disadvantaged and Advantaged High Schools”, 38th Annual Western Departments of Anthropology and Sociology Undergraduate Conference, SCU, April 9, 2011.
- 5 All names are pseudonyms.
- 6 Matthew Effect in sociology is the phenomenon of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.
- 7 Ignacio Ellacuria, “The Task of a Christian University,” in *Companions of Jesus: The Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador*, ed. Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuria (New York: Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990) 149.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### 2011-2012 Santa Clara Lecture

The Santa Clara Lecture series brings to campus leading scholars in theology, offering the University community and the general public an ongoing exposure to debate on the most significant issues of our times.

FEBRUARY 15, 2012

**Catherine Cornille, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Comparative Theology and chair of the Department of Theology at Boston College, will deliver this year's Santa Clara Lecture entitled "Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity."



### 2011-2012 Retreats

NOVEMBER 5, 2011

#### Day of Mindfulness and Centering Prayer

Join Zen Teacher, **Sarita Tamayo-Moraga**, for an introduction to Christian centering prayer and mindfulness meditation.



MAY 12, 2012

#### Day of Mindfulness and Zen Meditation

A restful day of mindfulness practice—exploring sitting, walking, and eating meditation with Zen Master **Bon Soeng**.



JUNE 29-JULY 1, 2012

#### Faculty/Staff Ignatian Spirituality Retreat

Join us for a weekend retreat at beautiful Villa Maria del Mar in Santa Cruz, CA, with retreat director **Margaret Silf**, noted spiritual director and author of *Inner Compass: An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality* and *The Gift of Prayer: Embracing the Sacred in the Everyday*.



### 2011-2012 Search for What Matters Luncheon Speaker Series

This luncheon speaker series aims to provide a space on-campus for a discussion of personal experiences and values—among faculty, staff, students, and alums of the University.

OCTOBER 24, 2011

**Charlie Ambelang**,  
Interim Assistant Vice-  
President for Human  
Resources



FEBRUARY 8, 2011

**Diane Jonte-Pace**, Vice  
Provost for Academic Affairs,  
Professor, Religious Studies  
Department



MAY 2, 2012

**Jack Treacy, S.J.**, Director,  
Campus Ministry



For more complete event details,  
please visit  
[scu.edu/ignatiancenter/events/calendar/](http://scu.edu/ignatiancenter/events/calendar/)



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**IN MEMORIAM: PAUL LOCATELLI, S.J. | 1938-2010**

Charles Barry

**This issue of *explore* is dedicated to Paul Locatelli, S.J., in thanksgiving for his contributions to the past, present, and future of Jesuit Higher Education.**

“If it were not for the fact that, as a professor, I have close contact with the students SCU produces, I might easily regard Paul’s passionate challenge to educate for solidarity with the poor as a lot of noble rhetoric. But the reality is: he changed us.” —Mick McCarthy, S.J., homily, Mass of the Resurrection for Paul Locatelli, S.J., July 16, 2010

Above, at the Mexico City “Shaping the Future” Conference in April 2010, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., shares a laugh with Paul Locatelli, S.J., who served as the Secretary of Higher Education for the Society of Jesus from 2007 to 2010 and as the president of SCU from 1988 to 2008. For more on Fr. Locatelli’s life, see [scu.edu/locatelli](http://scu.edu/locatelli).