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COLLABORATION: DISCERNMENT IN THE IGNATIAN TRADITION

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April 20, 1991

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1. INTRODUCTION

We live in a world that values collaboration, and modern people have grown to expect it at home, at work, and in social and civic life. Excellent and innovative contemporary businesses and political groups foster collaboration at all levels of their organizations. In all walks of life we witness the end of efficacy in hierarchical structures and a dedicated search and discovery of collaborative forms of organization. Church - sponsored organizations that are less than our human ideal will face major problems in their evangelizing work.

Collaboration encouraged by the Second Vatican Council quickly gathered dust, and while there is still a lot of talk, there is also considerable indifference and understandable opposition to collaborative forms of administration and ministry. In addition to individual reluctance to collaborate, there continues an unwillingness to confront the reality of accelerated change and new needs and a complacent belief that things will work out, vocations will increase, and this terrible period of shortage in leadership will soon be over. Many Church personnel are willing to sacrifice their status and vocational privileges, but they lack both the vision and the skills to initiate collaboration with their lay colleagues, for in many cases they were not trained to live collaboratively.

The Church and its organizations need to dedicate themselves to collaboration and to take leadership in doing so rather than be seen as merely reacting to pressures. The 1985 Extraordinary Synod stressed the ecclesiology of communion as the central idea of the Council and saw collaboration as a concrete expression of this vision (II, C, 1 and 6). Moreover, post-conciliar General Congregations, and the writings of Fr Arrupe and Fr Kolvenbach have stressed the importance of collaboration as an integral dimension of the vision of the Society of Jesus. Therefore, fidelity to the Council, an adequate portrayal of a new image of Church, and a contemporary dedication to the Society's mission require collaboration. Moreover, without it the Church will encounter great difficulty in bringing

Christ's call to modern men and women. Nowadays the effectiveness of our common ministry depends on communion manifested through collaboration.

2. WHAT IS COLLABORATION?

Collaboration is not a way of doing something more efficiently, but a way of being Church more authentically. It is a result of baptism, confirmation, and faith in the Spirit's charisms in us all. Rooted in our understanding of the Church as a communion of the People of God, in which each member shares in a universal call to holiness, mission, and ministry, collaboration is a communal expression of the priestly, prophetic, and servant responsibilities of all the baptized.

Collaboration requires the friendship of faith, where love and mutual respect show in a conviction that we are moving to a common vision and would be incomplete without each other. Collaboration is a faith- and love-filled response to others that leads to hope. An essential element in Christian life and ministry, collaboration is a sign of equality in faith. It requires in each baptized love and humility, interior freedom, selflessness, a desire to seek truth and serve the common good, and conviction that all are gifted to contribute to the ecclesial ministry we share. It fosters harmony in plurality, diversity, and dissent, and encourages attentiveness to the Spirit in others, reciprocal openness, and sensitivity to new forms of God's call. Collaboration is a Christian form of shared responsibility and essentially a form of ongoing discernment.

Although collaboration is a practical expression of ecclesial communion and shared responsibility, it is a sacramental witness to our union in baptism. It presupposes an appropriate vision of the Church, and an appreciation of the community aspects of Christian life and call. It requires peace of soul, freedom of spirit, prayer, and discernment. It implies availability to others in love, a readiness to dialogue, an acceptance of discerned truth, and courageous fidelity to build the ecclesial community together.

However, collaboration is also a practical expression of faith, in which believers actively and willingly take responsibility and initiative in a common ministry. It is more than advice or consultation, and leads to full participation in decision-making in keeping with the equal status in baptism that all Christians possess. It is a genuinely Christian form of shared authority that seeks truth, shares love, and serves the common good.

Christian collaboration is not possible between unequal parties; between those who are the organization and those who belong to the organization or associate with it. As an expression of Christian faith collaboration is a sign of equality, mutuality, and reciprocal openness. This is true even when dealing with the special charisms of individual groups within the Church, since charisms are more important for their ecclesial commonality than they are for their distinctiveness. Differences will always exist among the faithful as signs of richness and vitality. Christian collaboration affirms the distinctive qualities of individuals and groups, and through collaboration can preserve them for the common good, as it unifies, serves, and builds up the community.

3. COLLABORATION AND IMAGES OF THE CHURCH

The Council's ecclesiology of communion, reinforced by the extraordinary synod in 1985, is visibly portrayed in ministry through collaboration. The extraordinary synod draws the conclusion that there must therefore be participation and coresponsibility at all levels of the Church's life (II, C, 6). This is precisely the image of the Church we find in the New Testament. Thus, while we may be passing away from a period of privileged positions, often careerism, and sometimes ministerial control, that resulted from social, political, and educational restrictions of past ages, we are not moving to something new by emphasizing collaboration, but returning to styles of baptismal responsibility grounded in New Testament times. Our baptismal coresponsibility, lived through hierarchical structures in more recent centuries, is again lived through collaboration as in the early days of the Church.

The real foundation for ministry is baptism and confirmation, not priestly ordination or religious profession. In past centuries, lack of education and religious awareness prevented a responsible living of baptismal dedication through collaborative ministry, but this is no longer the case. Lay participation in all dimensions of Church life now contributes to the molding of a contemporary image of the Church. This implies daily struggle, since collaboration is lived in local groups that are different, polarized, and only partially identified with one another. Collaboration is not only a way of ministering together but a way of being Church.

Generally we want an image and structure of the Church we can cope with. In fact, images are frequently used as means of control, and people give descriptions of the Church that keep them in power. Current models of the Church call for communion of life and collaboration in ministry. They imply willing cooperation, new styles of collaboration, a collegial spirit, and an appreciation of unity at the local level, even in the smallest basic ecclesial communities. The synod proceeds to speak about "diverse partial realizations" of collegiality, the appreciation of "the principle of subsidiarity in use in human society," and "collaboration. . . on the regional, national and international levels" (II, C, 6).

People can work together in ministry, cooperate in planning, and pray or discern call, without sharing the same understanding of Church. However, Christian collaboration implies the striving for common goals, common vision, common mission, and common ideals of life. Christian collaboration, besides being a working together in ministry, is a common dedication to build a shared vision. It is both a capitalizing on pluralism and a striving for unity at the same time.

4. LAITY AND COLLABORATION

Apostolic coresponsibility of laity results from baptism. They have an active part to play in all major aspects of the Church's life and ministry, whether internal to the Church or in outreach and service. We are a lay - centered Church whose membership is over 98% lay with less than 2% priests and religious. Collaboration in the mission of the Church is an essential responsibility of baptism. Many laity ignore this obligation, but a large number do not - a number that is well in excess of all priests and religious combined. While collaboration is often seen as priests and religious sharing their responsibility with laity, the opposite is more correct, for collaboration is rooted in baptism.

The present situation of positive dedication of laity is the result of the ministry of priests and religious as well as laity. In the past, priests and religious trained, formed, educated, and delegated responsibility to laity. Now, training, formation, education, and responsibility, are the result of mutual interaction and are mutually beneficial - - laity learning from other laity and priests and religious, while priests and religious learn from each other and from laity. The knowledgeable and gifted in Church life and ministry no longer correspond to a restricted vocational group. After all, laity have as much to contribute, but their contribution is different. They may not have studied theology, but they are in touch with valid theology at its roots.

The emergence of laity in the Church is not merely a Church phenomenon, but a reflection of the general evolution of society. It means the emergence of a new type of Church in which leadership and ministry are experienced and developed in new ways. Laity are discovering that being authoritative people of stature, is more important than having authority. In fact, people who need to claim positions of authority generally do not carry authority among their followers.

Living in a lay-centered Church will require new styles of expressing the self-sacrifice of religious and priests. They are called to acknowledge the charisms of laity, re-evaluate their relationship with laity, and develop a comprehensive plan for future collaboration with laity. They will also need to renounce certain types of delegation that give impressions of patronizing or of clericalism, as can happen when clergy or religious share with laity only those ministries which they really do not want. We must all learn how to collaborate without monopolizing the tasks, or the initiatives, or the policy-making. Collaboration gives us the chance to portray a new image of the Church in which we gladly work with others, stifle no one, mutually empower each other, and capitalize on the competence of everyone. This will imply risk, some loss of control, and transitional conflict.

Although numbers of priestly and religious vocations are smaller, the number of men and women who dedicate themselves to ministry is increasing. Imagine what the Church could, be like if this dedication is utilized, and imagine what it will be like if it is not. Those priests and religious who can channel the willing collaboration of laity will build up the Church, help the vocational fulfillment of laity, and also be faithful to their own call to serve the Church.

In some sections of the Church and its organizations collaboration will develop very slowly because distinctions between clergy, religious, and laity are still firmly drawn, structures are dominantly hierarchical, and there is fear of eroding the status associated with vocation. Moreover, many laity remain passive, like it that way, and will continue that way. Difficulties on all sides will remind us that nothing significant will be attained without a conversion through a paschal living of the cross of our Lord.

5. SPIRITUAL VALUE OF COLLABORATION

Neither personal fulfillment nor Christian ministry grow in isolation. Christian growth and ministry are always communal experiences. We realize our potential in communion with others. Thus, collaboration is a formative power that can generate individual spiritual growth and ecclesial vision. In fact, collaboration is a sign authenticating the theological life of

faith, hope, and charity: faith because we believe God has gifted each one so much that we must capitalize on the gifts of all; hope because collaboration anticipates the growth we attain through interaction; charity because collaboration is only possible through the group's love for each other. Unfortunately, there is sometimes too little faith for the existence of a collaborative approach to ministry.

Christian collaboration is a form of on-going discernment and is always carried out "in the Lord." It requires openness and indifference as one searches with others for the direction of the Lord; an attitude of constant attention and listening; and prayer that permeates the interactions of collaboration.

As Christians we do not collaborate merely as a way of being more efficient, but rather as a way of living our faith. Thus, we prepare for collaboration as if approaching something sacred. We approach it with reflection and benevolence toward others; with social and political awareness that we can together achieve the common goals of our ministry; with spiritual readiness borne of a humble awareness that God alone gives growth and fulfillment.

Collaboration needs patience as we struggle to share vision and work together for common goals. It needs prudence since not all are capable of discerning the truth the Lord brings to us through collaborative sharing. Collaborating with others requires courage - - Christian fortitude - - to challenge each other with frankness and honesty, or to let go with genuine detachment.

Modern Christians can attain a more thoroughly developed spiritual life through the interdependence and coresponsibility experienced in collaboration. This working together, motivated by faith, prolongs Christian ministry, portrays an appealing image of the Church, and leads to spiritual maturity. Collaboration brings to the fore new leaders and critics with bright ideas--both of the utmost importance for the future vitality of any group.

6. THE PLACE OF COLLABORATION IN IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

A Spiritual Vision

For the sake of each one's spiritual growth, we should all cooperate actively in a spirit of fraternal love, bearing one another's burdens according to the measure of each one's grace and the work entrusted to each one by the society.

Documents of the Thirty-first General Congregation. Woodstock, Md.: Woodstock College, 1967. p. 20.

Personal Aspects of Collaboration

With brotherly union, each Jesuit and his superior must collaborate in this humble and oft-repeated search for the divine will.

Documents of the Thirty-first General Congregation. Woodstock, Md.: Woodstock College, 1967. p. 42.

Authentic Community Life

...the following are increasingly necessary for community life in the Society of Jesus:

Collaboration of every kind, transcending every sort of individualism, which is more necessary in contemporary circumstances than ever before for the apostolate of the society and a more intimate way of living together.

Documents of the Thirty-first General Congregation. Woodstock, Md.: Woodstock College, 1967. p. 63-64.

Collaboration Within The Universal Church

In keeping with the mind of Vatican II in its theological and pastoral teaching, the provincials are invited to a close collaboration with those whom the Holy Spirit has placed to rule the church of God... Therefore, let our works be harmonized with the pastoral programs of the bishops, especially by means of our collaboration as religious with the conferences of bishops.

Documents of the Thirty-first General Congregation. Woodstock, Md.: Woodstock College, 1967. p. 71-72.

Collaboration and Effective Ministry

An extensive and sincere collaboration with the laity is likewise to be commended. For in the works of our society, our own responsibility for their inspiration, orientation and direction must be shared in a certain definite way by the laity... With regard to the Universal Church, let the society provide cooperation in the same spirit of service, through centers that organize apostolic action.

Documents of the Thirty-first General Congregation. Woodstock, Md.: Woodstock College, 1967. p. 72.

In the Community of Believers

Collaboration between Jesuits and the Catholic laity is growing fast. In all our works, from universities to retreat houses for Spiritual Exercises and the parishes, the number of lay-people taking part in our apostolic labors is on the increase. I might indeed say that many of our works couldn't go on without this growing cooperation from the laity.

Men of God: Men for Others. Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach, 1971. p. 151.

Collaboration and a New Vision of Church

The other aspect I should like to underline, in the context of growing insertion into the life of the Church today, is collaboration with all layers of the People of God, especially with the laity. The 33rd General Congregation expressed the growing desire of the Society to associate lay people in her apostolic tasks in the Church today. . . collaboration with the laity is a natural procession from this gradual insertion into the life of the Church; . . . it should not be promoted for reasons of pastoral tactics or on account of problems of numbers, but rather be inspired by the ecclesial vision which Vatican II would have us re-discover.

Opening Talk to the Congregation of Procurators. Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach S.J. Rome. 9/8/1987.p. 7.

Collaboration With The Laity

To offer complete trust to the laity in this mutual collaboration, to desire sincerely to meet in them co-workers for every type of apostolate, multipliers for the work of evangelization...is a very real aspect of "sentire cum Ecclesia" today.

Opening Talk to the Congregation of Procurators. Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach
S.J. Rome. 9/8/87. p. 7.

Collaboration - a Choice For the More

In spreading the truth, according to St. Ignatius, we must give preference to people and places capable of multiplying our work for others.

On Spirituality For Today's Jesuits. Final Address of Father General. Fr.
Arrupe, S.J. New Orleans: Southern Printing Co., 1980. p. 22.

Chance to Expand the Gifts of Individuals

The availability of a community is not just the result of adding up availability of each of its individual members, although it would be impossible without this (GC 32, Decree 4,69). It includes also the genuine sharing by all in the search for the Lord's will and the acceptance of the human intervention that helps us recognize it at each turn.

Fr. Arrupe, S.J. "On Apostolic Availability" *On Spirituality For Today's Jesuits*.
New Orleans: Southern Printing Co., 1980., p.16 (note 15).

Collaboration Needed in the Modern World

The closer social relations now being formed among people and nations, in a world that is on its way to becoming unified, demand of us the spirit of dialogue, mutual reverence and a sense of complementarity and collaboration in action.

Documents of the Thirty-first General Congregation. Woodstock, Md.:
Woodstock College, 1967. p. 71.

Collaboration As Evangelization

Today collaboration is urgently needed in preparing the way for the Gospel and in establishing or extending the church's presence by scientific research and teaching, especially in the sacred sciences, by social work and work in communications media, this type of collaboration ought to be regarded as a genuine apostolate for the society's priests...the General Congregation ...desires a greater collaboration with laity in the apostolate.

Documents of the Thirty-first General Congregation. Woodstock, Md.:
Woodstock College, 1967. p. 77.

Witness Value of Collaboration

Since, however, Christ, Head of the Church, is integrating the whole world into a kingdom for the Father, it is for the priest, as sign and minister of the Lord's active presence, to be present in order to collaborate with all human efforts which help in establishing the kingdom.

Documents of the Thirty-first General Congregation. Woodstock, Md.:
Woodstock College, 1967. p. 77.

Lack of Collaboration

Some may say too, that the Society, so unified and stereotyped, gave an unfortunate impression of aloofness, self-adequacy and superiority, or that pastoral care, sometimes organized (on the pretext of our exemption) with no thought for co-ordination with the work of the diocese or other religions, was effectively creating two parallel churches.

Fr. Arrupe, S.J. "Final Address of Father General", *On Spirituality For Today's Jesuits*. New Orleans: Southern Printing Co., 1980, p. 48.

Interapostolic Initiatives

The mission college and university Jesuits face today is so complex that you simply cannot hope to achieve its ends by yourselves. It is therefore of the greatest importance that in one way or other those engaged in the educational apostolate in the Society take the initiative to collaborate with those Jesuits who work full time in the direct promotion of justice.

Address of Fr. Kolvenbach, Assembly, June 7, 1989. Washington, D.C.

Opportunities for Collaboration

We have so many possibilities for collaboration among the ministries of the Society, and we are not taking advantage of them sufficiently. I am convinced that more active collaboration among the different ministries can make our apostolic work more effective. We need to find the concrete means that will make this collaboration possible!

Address of Fr. Kolvenbach, Assembly, June 7, 1989. Washington, D.C.

Collaboration - Paschal

Our Jesuit vocation may often ask us to sacrifice apostolic intuitions that come to us as individuals or small groups in the interests of the greater good of the whole.

Fr. Arrupe, S.J. "Final Address of Father General". *On Spirituality For Today's Jesuits*. New Orleans: Southern Printing Co., 1980. p. 27.

Plan Collaboratively

Therefore the Society should now reassume primary responsibility for apostolic planning as a body. This will avoid a vacuum of decision-making and the disintegration of individualistic action (not the same as the integrated action of an individual) In particular, we must resolutely select and reshape our works as a body, and reform personal and community life according to our basic option for faith and justice.

Fr. Arrupe, S.J. "Final Address of Father General". *On Spirituality For Today's Jesuits*. New Orleans: Southern Printing Co., 1980. p. 28.

7. FACILITATING COLLABORATION

Collaboration takes place on different levels, intellectual, organizational, and personal sharing. Depending on the group or community, one or other may need to be facilitated. Eventually all three levels must be integrated. This demands reasonable maturity from the members, a commitment to each other and to the common mission of the group, trust, and an

appreciation of how each member contributes to the common goals of the community. Innovative companies are introducing collaborative administration, and Christian sponsored institutions can do no less. Indeed, collaboration must be a goal of all educational communities and a realistic expectation of each member.

Baptismal equality, like that manifested in collaboration, does not exclude the presence or need of exceptional leaders. However, those leaders could be priests, religious, or lay. Moreover, leadership is not equated with authority. Some people hold positions of authority, but actually carry no leadership among their peers or associates. In the past leaders emerged and were given authority, now individuals are appointed to positions of authority and presumed to be leaders. Nowadays, exercising leadership as an authority figure requires different skills than formerly, since the tasks are more difficult and facilitating a communal response to mission is also more difficult.

Spiritual leadership includes many skills, one of which is to create a climate conducive to collaboration; a climate that will stimulate people to constantly pursue this goal of collaborative ministry. In our generation many Church managers do not have these skills and although they remain in positions of authority their leadership is never authenticated by their people. For a spiritual leader, collaboration is the incarnation of faith, whereas authoritarianism, based as it is on self-sufficiency and rejection of the gifts of others, is the incarnation of doubt.

The role of leaders in collaborative ministry is also to acknowledge that the person in authority may not be the leader. This is especially the case with larger groups where individuals appointed to authority have struggled unsuccessfully to acquire leadership. Some organizations, such as universities, like parishes are notorious for their inability to adapt structures and are amongst the most autocratically governed organizations in any society. Their resistance to change makes the work of facilitating collaboration very difficult.

Besides acknowledging the differences between authority and leadership, and the reluctance of autocratically governed institutions to change, leaders are conscious that people do not dedicate themselves to the work of a group that does not invite and welcome the contributions of all members. There is no commitment without participation. Moreover, followers quickly size up a new authority figure and rapidly decide whether he or she has collaborative leadership skills and if not they withdraw their support. When an authority figure generates collaboration in planning, implementation, evaluation, and change, their leadership is acknowledged and support assured.

One of the key components of a leadership that results from faith is the awareness that creative insights and concrete directives for the organization's future ministry do not filter down to the members, but percolate upward to authority figures. Leaders will facilitate this process without feeling any threat to their daily administration of the organization. A leader who is welcomed because of his or her collaborative vision and skills also feels quite at home and unthreatened in the fulfillment of the daily tasks of management. A commitment to collaboration is not a burden, in fact, it influences less than twenty percent of any manager's responsibilities. Those participating in a collaborative ministry are quite happy to leave each other alone in their daily work. Collaboration refers more to the discerning of areas of mission, role clarification, planning, major decision-making, and evaluation.

A good leader collaborates with all members of an organization, but a great leader is one

who knows how every member fits into the work of the organization. The great leader has a vision of community and collaborative ministry. Collaboration not only portrays a contemporary image of Church but also is a sign of exceptional leadership.

8. TREATING OTHERS AS PARTNERS

When leaders put themselves forward as officials in authority they generally lose both their leadership and authority. In the best Christian communities major decisions are arrived at by collaboration just as major areas of ministry are carried out collaboratively.

Recent studies have shown that today's best run organizations are those where all participants are treated as adults, shown respect, and given the conviction that their role and views count. The ongoing sharing between leaders and followers guarantees the emergence of new leaders as needed. Some religious groups, having worked with laity for many years, are unconvinced that laity have the vision and knowledge to take over and continue their mission. Where this is so it is due to very poor leadership in the religious group, since one of the most basic qualities in leadership is the ability to clarify values, share a vision, and facilitate their integration by others.

Facilitating a dedication to collaboration in ministry, especially in cases where laity were previously excluded, is itself a spiritual journey for the leader. This is certainly what Jesus did with the Twelve, the seventy-two, and many individual disciples. Moreover, Jesus had no need of collaborative help, since his ministry was small-scale and restricted to a small region. Jesus' collaborative approach to ministry is imitated by the early Church in Acts.

Present problems in the Church, perennial values of faith, and the insistent challenges of Jesuit Generals and General Congregations demand that we develop a strong, commitment to collaboration. This has its source in personal commitment rather than be the result of drifting toward change. It means learning to trust others deeply enough that we can communicate freely, work together pleasantly and caringly, serve each other, be demanding on each other, tap each other's talents, and pray with each other. It demands a capacity for authentic interpersonal relationships, and an awareness of being a vital, active, and efficient member of and educational community.

Our creative fidelity to baptismal coresponsibility calls for a conversion to collaborative forms of administration and ministry. We cannot continue what went before, but must grasp the opportunity that collaboration offers on the level of ecclesial and individual growth.



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