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MEN AND WOMEN FOR OTHERS

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This is a digest of an address given by the Superior General of the Society of Jesus at the Tenth International Congress of Jesuit Alumni of Europe in Valencia, Spain, July 31, 1973. The address, originally entitled "Men for Others," essentially redefined the mission of Jesuit education as including education for justice. Edited by John J. Callahan, S.J.

Education for justice has become one of the chief concerns of the Church in recent years. Why? Because there is a new awareness in the Church that participation in the promotion of justice is a constitutive element of the faith which Our Lord has entrusted to us. Impelled by this awareness, the Church is now engaged in a massive effort to educate -- or rather to re-educate -- itself and all men and women so that we may all lead our lives in accord with the gospel principles of personal and social morality.

Today our prime educational objective must be to form men and women for others; men and women who will live not for themselves, who cannot even conceive of a love of God which does not include a love for the least of their neighbors, and who are completely convinced that a love of God which does not result in justice for all is a farce.

This kind of education goes directly counter to the prevailing educational trend practically everywhere in the world. We Jesuits have always been heavily committed to the work of education. We still are. What, then, shall we do? Go with the current or against it?

Let me ask this question: Have we Jesuits educated our alumni for justice? We will have to answer, in all sincerity, that we have not. This means that, in the future, **we must make sure that the education imparted in Jesuit schools will be equal to the demands of justice in the world.**

We can do this because, despite our historical limitations and failures, there is something which lies at the very center of the Ignatian spirit which enables us to renew ourselves ceaselessly and to adapt ourselves to new situations as they arise. It is the spirit of constantly seeking the will of God. It is that sensitivity to the Spirit which enables us to recognize where and in what direction Christ is calling us at different periods of history, and to respond to that call.

It is simply our heritage from the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. For the *Exercises* are essentially a method enabling us to make very concrete decisions in accordance with God's will. It is a method which does not limit us to any particular option, but spreads out before us a sweeping vision embracing many possibilities.

It is this "not being tied down to anything except God's will" that gives the Society and the men and women it has been privileged to help educate what we may call their readiness for anything, any service that may be demanded of them by the signs of the times.

Jesuit education in the past had its limitations. It was conditioned by time and place. As a

human enterprise it will always be so. But Jesuit education was not a failure if we were able to pass on this *spirit of openness to new challenges* and this readiness for change. This is our hope: that we can read the Word of God as it resounds with that precise note and timbre needed by each historical epoch.

We must, then, deepen our understanding of the idea of justice as it becomes more and more clear in the light of the Gospel and the signs of the times. We must also determine the character of the *type of men and women we want to form*, the type of persons into which we must be changed, and the type of persons which the generations succeeding us must be encouraged to develop.

The Synod of Bishops of 1971 echoed the Second Vatican Council when it said, "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race." We cannot, then, separate action for justice from the proclamation of the Word of God.

Quite clearly, the mission of the Church [or of higher education] is not coextensive with the furthering of justice on this planet. Still, the furthering of justice is an integral element of that mission. Recall that the pact between God and his chosen people in the Old Testament was basically concerned with the carrying out of justice. In the New Testament we see how Jesus had received from his Father the mission to bring the Good News "to the poor."

We are commanded to love God and to love our neighbor. But note that Jesus says that the second commandment is "like unto the first." They fuse together. In the vision of the Last Judgment, the Judge says, "As long as you did this for one of the least, you did it for me."

Just as love of God fuses with love of neighbor, so, too, charity and justice meet together. How can you love someone and treat that person unjustly? Take justice away from love and you destroy love. You do not love if the beloved is not seen as a person whose dignity must be respected.

Just as we are never sure that we love God unless we love our fellow human beings, so we are never sure that we have love at all unless our love issues in works of justice.

This means, *first*, that we must have a basic attitude of respect for all men and women which forbids us ever to use them as instruments for our own gain.

Second, it means a firm resolve never to profit from, or allow ourselves to be suborned by, positions of power derived from privilege. [*Editor's note:* Arrupe is speaking to a European culture (and a Catholic Spain living under a dictatorship) in which merely being born into a privileged class grants tremendous economic and political power. American culture has this privileged element, but more as a matter of wealth (earned or unearned) rather than by birth. In general, America is much more open -- at least in its ideals.] To take undue advantage of privilege, even passively, is equivalent to active oppression. To be drugged by the comforts of privilege is to become a contributor to injustice.

Third, it means an attitude not simply of refusal to participate in injustice but of counterattack against injustice, a decision to work with others toward the dismantling of unjust social structures so that the weak of this world may be set free to grow as complete

human beings.

Sin is not only a personal act which makes us guilty. Over and above this, sin reaches out and vitiates our habits, customs, spontaneous reactions, criteria, thought patterns, imagination, and will. When a person is converted, when God effects the marvels of justification, sin in the strict sense is forgiven and washed away. However, the *effects* of sin continue their powerful domination in ways of which a person is often not even aware.

Let us see the meaning of this as it pertains to the relationship between personal conversion and structural reform. If personal conversion is understood only in the narrow sense of justification operative at the very core of our person, it does not adequately represent the truth of the matter. Our customs, our social, economic and political systems, the institutions we have created for ourselves, *insofar* as they have injustice built into them, are the concrete forms in which sin is objectified. They can be, then, wholly or partially, the consequences of our sins as well as the continuing stimulus for further sin.

In short, interior conversion is not enough. God's grace calls us not only to win back our whole selves for God, but to win back our whole world for God. We cannot separate personal conversion from structural reform.

It follows that social sensitivity is so central to our Christian attitude toward life that whoever stands aloof from the battle for justice implicitly refuses love to fellow human beings and, consequently, to God.

Having stated the principles, if anything is going to be done as a remedy, methods of analysis and paradigms of the social good are needed. We cannot forget that these methods and paradigms, such as contemporary *capitalism and socialism*, necessary though they are, derive their origin, historically, from a mixture of good and evil. Put it this way: they are tools, imperfect tools. It is the Christian ethos, the Christian vision of values, that must use these *tools without making them absolutes* in themselves.

What kind of person is needed today by the world? My shorthand is "men and women for others." But is not a human being his or her own center? A human being, gifted with conscience, intelligence and power is indeed a center, but a center called to go out of self, to give self to others. This is what we call love. Only a person who loves fully becomes a full human being.

What is it to "humanize the world" if it does not mean to put the world at the service of human beings? The egoist, on the other hand, changes men and women into things by dominating them and exploiting them. In doing so the egoist dehumanizes the very self which seeks to gather more and more at the expense of others.

This dehumanization of self and of others is often objectified in social structures. Starting from our own acts of egoism, we become exploiters of others and harden the process into a structure of society which may rightly be called sin objectified. Egoism becomes hardened in ideas and institutions, in impersonal and depersonalized structures and set ways of thinking which gradually escape our direct control.

Evil is overcome only by good. Egoism is overcome only by generosity. To be just, it is not enough to refrain from injustice. One must go further and refuse to play the game,

substituting love for self-interest as the driving force of society.

To do this, three attitudes are necessary: a determination to live more simply, a determination to draw no profit from clearly unjust sources, and *a determination to be agents of positive change in society*. Here precisely is where we begin to feel how difficult is the struggle for justice.

The paramount objective of Jesuit education must be to form men and women for others. This is the prolongation into the modern world of our humanist tradition as derived from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Only by being a man or woman for others does a person become fully human. Only in this way can we live in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who gave of himself for the salvation of the world, who was, above all others, a Man-for-others.



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