



MISSION NEWS

Canadian Jesuits International (CJI)

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The Universal Apostolic Preferences: A vision for the future

Indigenous Tseltal women in Chiapas, Mexico, participate in their community's assembly.

Xavier Jeyaraj SJ is director of the Jesuit Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat

The Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) are the result of a global process of discernment that lasted 16 months and involved the whole Society of Jesus, including Canadian Jesuits International (CJI). Confirmed by Pope Francis and promulgated by Father General Arturo Sosa SJ in February 2019, they are to serve as a guide for all Jesuits and Jesuit partners for the next 10 years.

The four Universal Apostolic Preferences are: (a) showing the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment, (b) walking with the poor and excluded, (c) journeying with youth, and (d) caring for our common home.

First and foremost, UAPs are **Universal**. They are not limited to one particular Jesuit province or one particular sector like social justice, education, or pastoral ministry. They are for the entire Society of Jesus. Secondly, UAPs are **Apostolic**, that is, they are mission-oriented. Thirdly, UAPs are **Preferences**, not priorities. As Fr Arturo put it, "This is not a strategic plan or a ministry checklist, but a call to conversion." Priorities would mean that we exclude or stop certain things that we are doing. Instead, UAPs are intended to *orient* ourselves in all our ministries.

Although there are four preferences, they must be seen as integrally related, not as separate entities or as four different types of work to be done by different apostolic

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The vision & mission of CJI

The vision of Canadian Jesuits International is a world of peace, justice and integrity of creation, transformed through active commitment and finding God in all things.

The mission of CJI is to love and to serve by working with people struggling for social justice and dignity in the world. Together with Jesuit and other partners, CJI responds in solidarity, through awareness-raising and advocacy in Canada and supporting partnerships in the Global South.

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A word from Jenny Cafiso, CJI Director

After an extensive consultation and discernment process involving Jesuits and lay people, the Society of Jesus has selected four Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs): showing the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment; walking with the poor and excluded; journeying with youth; and caring for our common home. They are to serve as our guide and inspiration in all that we do for the next decade.

For us at Canadian Jesuits International (CJI), the four UAPs are both an affirmation of who we are and what we do, and a source of inspiration to go deeper in our understanding of our reality, in our commitment to the universal good and in the way we work and live.

For this issue of the newsletter, we asked friends and partners we work with in the Global South and whose work we support, to write about how the four UAPs are reflected in their current work and how they will affect their future direction. Their rich reflections show us that when discernment is rooted in the day to day lives of people who are relegated to the margins of society, it deepens our understanding of the UAPs. Their contributions do not illustrate how to implement a specific UAP, but rather how to integrate and fulfill all four. Indeed, all four of the experiences presented are rooted in the practice of discernment based on the Spiritual Exercises; all four work with people who are poor and excluded; all of them have youth as an integral part of their work; and all allow care of our common home to guide their choices.

We at CJI take our inspiration from our partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America. They will continue to share with us how to make the four UAPs a source of personal and institutional renewal, so that we can respond to the call for a deeper conversion, a greater commitment to justice and peace, and a bolder response to the cry of the earth and its people.

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sectors. The challenge is for each of us to integrate these four preferences in whatever mission we are engaged in.

Having been brought up in a multi-religious context in India, I believe that the divine spirit is active in every religion and in every human person. All of us are pilgrims on this earth, just as St Ignatius was or many other

divine-seekers have been. God cannot be imprisoned in one religion or one type of spirituality – or one UAP! The conversion that Fr Arturo speaks of in relation to the UAPs is not simply an ideological or mental change. It is a changing of our ways, our lifestyle, our perceptions, our actions. It will cost us, but it will give us new life! ■

Practising discernment in Comparte

Arturo Estrada Acosta SJ is director of the Jesuit Mission of Bachajón, in Chiapas, Mexico

The promotion and practice of discernment have always been key apostolic principles of the Society of Jesus. In his first years as Father General, Ignatius of Loyola urged his fellow Jesuits to discern their mission and seek the greatest good in all their actions. The recently promulgated Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs), particularly the first, emphasizing the activity of discernment, underline this permanent feature of Jesuit work since the very beginning.

In Comparte – a learning and economic development network comprised of 16 social centres and 5 universities of the Society of Jesus, in 11 Latin American countries and in Spain (see p. 7) – we welcome these preferences as our very own. From our perspective of alternative development, we recognize that the first preference, which centres discernment squarely in our action, is related to the second preference, which aims to promote social justice and change economic, political and social structures that generate injustice. Such change is a necessary dimension of reconciliation of human beings, peoples and entire cultures with nature and with God.

As a learning community exploring alternative productive economies, we believe that taking this task seriously is no easy matter, given the intrinsically unequal, exclusionary and unsustainable character of our current economic system. We know that we must work in this system, reflect deeply on it and transform it from within, beginning with institutions already active in seeking abundant life for all. It is imperative that we improve our studies, analysis and reflection in order to understand thoroughly the economic, political and social processes that create so much injustice. At the same time, we must contribute to the creation of alternative models, which is why our Comparte network includes social centres, universities and grassroots producers.

Over the last 10 years, the Comparte network has promoted and practised discernment with a twofold, concrete result. On the one hand, we have been invited to reflect on our own lives, putting them before the Lord



Mercedes Arango/CJI

José Angel Gómez Hernández (left), a worker at the Bat'sil Maya coffee laboratory in Chilón, Mexico, stands with Alejandro Castro, the director of Capeltic, a social enterprise in the Tzeltal community.

and discovering in them what we are personally called to and what best advances the common good. On the other hand, we have found ourselves rooted in the suffering of the world, where we must ask what we can do communally to transform this hard reality. The promotion and practice of discernment have constantly shaped Comparte's meetings, workshops, field visits, etc. We employ Ignatian discernment to improve our current economic methods.

We know that to live deeply, the Spiritual Exercises lead us to a personal and communal encounter with Christ that transforms us. In the context of economic injustice, we strive to experience the Exercises from the perspective of those who are excluded by the current system. By doing so we come to understand the Incarnation and its embodiment of redemption in relation to the productive organizations we support. In this way we help transform a hard reality and work toward reconciliation. ■

(Special thanks to Greg Kennedy SJ for translating this article from Spanish.) Fr Arturo Estrada is on the board of the coffee cooperative Yomol A'tel which is part of Comparte. He will visit multiple cities across Canada in November 2019 to speak about the work of Comparte for CJI's Giving Tuesday campaign called "JUST Communities" (see p. 7).



UNIVERSAL
APOSTOLIC
PREFERENCES

Walking with the excluded at Jesu Ashram

Julius Kujur SJ is the director of Jesu Ashram in Matigara, India

From its founding in 1971 by Br Robert Mittelholtz SJ, a Canadian missionary, Jesu Ashram has had one focus: caring for those who are excluded by society. Every initiative of the health care facility has been for poor, marginalized, destitute people. The four new Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) of the Society of Jesus are an explicit, helpful indication of those charisms that inform all aspects of our ministry at Jesu Ashram, but it is not difficult to see how our mission is particularly oriented toward the preference “walking with the excluded.”



Dr Ramesh Anand prepares to examine a young couple's baby at Jesu Ashram.

The patients and residents at Jesu Ashram come from that section of Indian society that is often referred to as “the poorest of the poor.” People who are sick and who cannot afford treatment anywhere else find here a home of love, care and new life. Moreover, those who are suffering from diseases such as leprosy, tuberculosis and HIV face stigma and tend to be treated as outcasts in their communities. Neighbours and the general public avoid them and keep their distance as though they were “untouchables.” Family members try to hide their illness, but without treatment this only leads to other complications. Those with such diseases, therefore, know they can come to Jesu Ashram to find a welcoming home of love, acceptance and healing. Once here, they are treated with dignity and respect.

Everyone at Jesu Ashram is encouraged to participate in activities according to their ability, and everyone does contribute to the ashram in their own way. For example, patients and those who come to look after their sick relatives play a big role in the upkeep of Jesu Ashram. They are encouraged to separate degradable and undegradable waste material for disposal. They not only help to keep the compound clean but also plant trees and care for our flower gardens. I am proud to say that our grounds are filled with greenery.

Some of the services at Jesu Ashram include: taking care of 200 patients every day in the health facility, feeding patients, dispensing medicine, and providing accommodation during the treatment period. People who are unable to care for themselves and who have no support from their family are cared for by staff and trainees who feed them, bathe them, take them for walks by wheel chair, cut their hair and wash their clothes.

Whenever there is a health problem in a remote rural area, a team from Jesu Ashram will go to help out. Medical camps are provided on request and medicine is distributed. Teams of staff and students also go into villages and schools to raise awareness about diseases such as leprosy, tuberculosis, malaria, HIV and black fever, and to promote good nutrition. Jesu Ashram also assists patients through referrals to other health facilities for services they require.

Every year 15 young women from economically poor families are admitted to Jesu Ashram's public health training program. They are also taught English and computer literacy to increase their confidence and employability. On completion of the three-year program, most nursing graduates find employment in other health facilities in and around Siliguri.

What really distinguishes Jesu Ashram is that it walks with the excluded poorest of the poor without regard to caste, religion or any other basis of discrimination. ■

Fr Julius Kujur will be visiting Canada and speaking about the work of Jesu Ashram as part of CJI's Giving Tuesday campaign (see p. 7).

Journeying with youth in South Sudan

Diana Karua is Communications Coordinator for the Jesuit Eastern Africa Province

Tremendous efforts toward fostering the new Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) of the Society of Jesus have been made by the Jesuit Province of Eastern Africa. One of the programs supported by the Province illustrates this especially well: *Sowing Seeds for Social Transformation*. Sowing Seeds is an initiative of the Province of Eastern Africa that seeks to accompany people in South Sudan in the midst of great upheaval, violence and civil war and to empower them with transformative education and livelihood training.

Projects within the Sowing Seeds program are multifaceted, just like the UAPs. Although they incorporate all four UAPs in various ways, the focus here will be on how they address the apostolic preference “journeying with youth.” Through projects aimed at youth, problems of vulnerability are reduced – such as boys being recruited into armed militias or girls being pressured into early marriage.

In the city of Wau, all students at Loyola Secondary School are beneficiaries of a Sowing Seeds feeding program. Some students also receive scholarships and school materials to enable their attendance at Loyola. Furthermore, all staff benefit from specialized capacity strengthening training under Sowing Seeds. Recently Loyola teachers underwent training in Ignatian leadership and basic psychosocial support. The ultimate aim of such training is to equip staff with skills to provide a conducive learning environment for the students. Now, for four consecutive years, Loyola has been the best performing school in its state. Similar training sessions have been conducted elsewhere in South Sudan.

The Multi-Educational and Agricultural Jesuit Institute of South Sudan (MAJIS) provides basic training in horticulture and animal husbandry for communities in and around the remote village of Akol Jal, in Rumbek county. Most of the participants in this Sowing Seeds project are young women. They learn vegetable gardening, livestock rearing, beekeeping and agroforestry, and also how to market and sell their produce. Due to the fact that Rumbek is an intra-clan conflict-prone area, special emphasis is placed on integrating peacebuilding initiatives with daily farming lessons. Working in conjunction with St Teresa Parish, forums for youth interaction have been

created to enable them to share ideas and skills. For example, in June 2019 the *Ignite Youth Conference* brought together over 400 young people to share their faith, engage in sports for peace, receive ongoing spiritual accompaniment, and discuss ways of improving their lives.

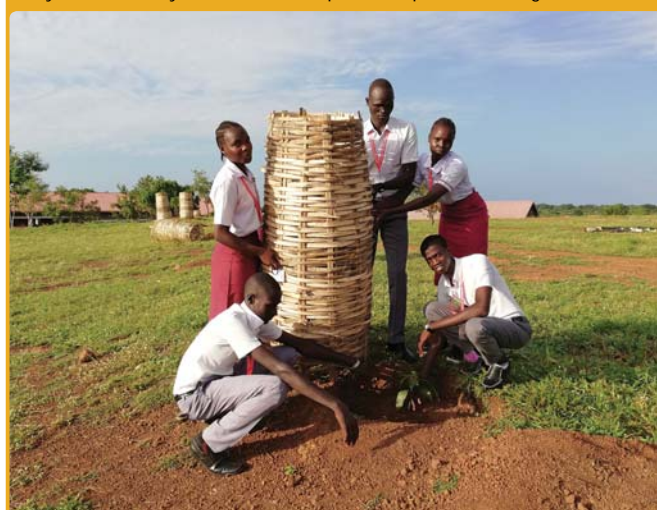
Also in Rumbek, St Peter’s Ecological Training Centre equips youth with basic computer skills and with training in electrical and solar installation, construction, water and sanitation. After the training, some graduates opt to initiate their own businesses while others get employment with government and non-government agencies.

Near Rumbek, at Mazzolari Teachers College (MTC) in Cueibet, another Sowing Seeds initiative endeavours to address the need for trained teachers. A majority of the teachers in primary and secondary schools in Cueibet are youth who are not trained. At MTC untrained teachers can enroll in a part-time, in-service program on weekends and during school holidays. Additionally, all MTC students are trained in basic child safeguarding and computer skills.

Overall, the Sowing Seeds for Social Transformation program is a strong avenue for peacebuilding and livelihood improvement in South Sudan. Through this program, the Jesuit Eastern Africa Province hopes to create a platform for social transformation and integral human development. There is already cause for hope, as evidenced by the increased enrollment of local youth, especially girls, into the different program areas. ■

CJI supports the Sowing Seeds for Social Transformation program in South Sudan.

Loyola Secondary School students plant and protect a mango tree.



Noelle Fitzpatrick

Caring for our common home with KATC

Paul A. Desmarais SJ is director of Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre in Zambia

What is the link between Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre (KATC) and the Society of Jesus's Universal Apostolic Preference (UAP) "caring for our common home"?

All of KATC's activities – training, extension services, research, commercial production and advocacy – are based on the principles and practices of organic agriculture and agroecology (AE). AE is a broad term that includes organic agriculture but is also concerned with societal values and culture. It is therefore very much part of all four Jesuit UAPs (see cover), but in this article, I will limit myself to KATC's promotion of the UAP "caring for our common home."

Jesus responds to the young man who asked him what is the greatest commandment by saying that love of God and love of one's neighbour are the two great commandments. We have for a long time understood Jesus's response only in terms of our personal relationships with God and other human beings. But God's creation, the Earth, is a part of God and is part of God's gift to us. If we say that we love God then we should respect God's creation. If we poison God's creation then we certainly do not respect God or others, human and non-human, that God created.

We are called to love and serve others. As a farmer, for me this translates into producing food for my brothers and sisters. But how do I produce food? Do I try to achieve the highest yields regardless of how I do this?

Since the Second World War, agriculture worldwide has adopted ways of producing food that are inimical to an appreciative stance of God's beautiful gift of God's self in creation. We have poisoned the soil, water, air and food, all in the name of feeding the masses. We apply more and more chemicals to grow plants, kill insects and control weeds. Many of these chemicals are poisons.

At KATC we grow our crops and vegetables following organic principles. With vegetables we can achieve similar yields to commercial enterprises that use chemicals. With major crops we have yet to achieve yields similar to the large commercial farms. However, small-scale farmers do double to quadruple their yields by following organic practices. And since 70% of the food in the world is produced by small-scale farmers, there is every reason to believe that farming organically can feed the world's population.

The tomato leafminer (*Tuta absoluta*) is a mite that attacks tomato plants with devastating results. Farmers around KATC that use chemicals are having a very difficult time controlling this pest. Even with many chemical applications, they can't control it. At KATC we do not spray any chemicals and yet leafminers are not a problem. Researchers have identified five predatory insects in the KATC tomato plots that control the mite. So there are often natural ways of controlling harmful pests.

It is a similar story with the fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) which attacks maize plants. Many people want to blanket spray the countryside with chemicals to control it. But again, we have found that organic producers are not troubled by this pest,

perhaps because organic farms have so much more biodiversity, with smells that confuse the armyworm.

This fourth UAP is very much in line with what Pope Francis expressed in *Laudato Si'*: "Humanity is one people living in a common home... Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan... of finding effective ways of dealing with grave environmental and social problems ... (including) planning a sustainable and diversified agriculture" (LS, 164). ■

CJI supports the work of KATC.



Organic maize at KATC is not plagued by the fall armyworm.

M. Lopez-Villegas/CJI

Comparte meeting in Mexico

Representatives of the Comparte network held their annual regional meeting in Mexico, from June 7 to 11, 2019. Comparte (meaning “share”) is an alternative learning and economic development support network in Latin America. Delegates to the regional meeting came from 12 Jesuit social centres and from grassroots producing communities, the Jesuit Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean (CPAL), universities, foundations and partner organizations. Altogether there were 60 delegates from 9 Latin American countries, as well as Kenya, Spain, the United States and Canada.

The first part of the regional meeting was held in Guadalajara, Mexico. It looked at ways to include the most vulnerable people in sustainable economic development. Participants then travelled to the Bachajón dis-



Comparte network meeting participants at Bachajón Mission in Chiapas, Mexico.

trict of Chiapas, Mexico, where they took part in working sessions and visited four Indigenous communities where organic coffee and honey are produced.

Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) was represented at the Comparte network meetings by International Programs Coordinator Mercedes Arango-Vasquez and Executive Director Jenny Cafiso. ■

Social Centres Network assembly

“What is God calling us to today?” This was the central question delegates to the annual assembly of the Social Centres Network of the Jesuit Conference of Latin America and the Caribbean (CPAL) were urged to reflect upon.

Participants met from June 3 to 6 in Puente Grande, near Guadalajara, Mexico. Issues arising at the assembly included recent trends in migration and deeper under-

standing of Indigenous cultures. Reflection on these issues was strengthened by the presence of delegates from the Jesuit Network with Migrants (RJM) and the Reflection Team on Indigenous Cultures and Religions of Latin America (ERCRILA).

CJI Director Jenny Cafiso participated in the meetings and expressed the support and solidarity of Canadian Jesuits for the social mission of CPAL. ■

Upcoming events

JUST Communities

Join in CJI’s “JUST Communities” events in the lead-up to Giving Tuesday on December 3, 2019! Our campaign this year will focus on three projects, in Mexico, India and South Sudan. Special speakers will include Fr Julius Kujur, director of Jesu Ashram in India, and Fr Arturo Estrada, director of the Jesuit Mission of Bachajón in Mexico. Please visit our website for details in the coming weeks – www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca. ■



Benefit concert with Steve Bell

CJI is excited to be hosting a concert with Canadian artist Steve Bell, in support of our work. It will be held at Knox Presbyterian Church, 630 Spadina Ave, Toronto, on Thursday, December 12 at 7:00pm. If you are in the area, please join us; if not, join us in spirit and follow our coverage online!

Steve Bell is well known to many as an outstanding singer-songwriter and storyteller. Over a 30-year solo career, he has shared a message of faith, hope and love. Please visit our website for more details. ■

2020 solidarity learning tour in India

Do you have a passion for social, economic and ecological justice? Then join Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) on a learning tour to India in July 2020! Come and discover what faith and justice mean in marginalized communities where Jesuits have been present for several decades.

Visit important historic, social, cultural and religious sites, including the Jesuits' Indian Social Institute in Delhi and the Taj Mahal in Agra. Travel east to the Darjeeling District of West Bengal to meet people engaged in projects focused on im-

proving human rights, workers' rights, health, agriculture, food security, education and livelihoods. Complete the tour with a visit to Jesuit social and education centres in the great city of Kolkata.

The approximate cost of the tour is \$2,600, which includes all lodging, meals, in-country travel, tips and project donations. More information is available at www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/outreach/solidarity-trips / cji@jesuits.ca / 1-800-448-2148. Applications are due by December 31, 2019. ■



Harvest time in Darjeeling.

Nursing students at Jesu Ashram.



JRS visitors

Fr Tom Smolich, International Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), was in Toronto for a series of meetings, July 7–9. CJI hosted a special lunch and meeting with a small group of people who have generously supported the work of JRS over many years. Fr Tom gave an overview of the major refugee crises in the world, including Venezuela, South Sudan and Syria, and spoke of the work of JRS among more than 700,000 refugees worldwide. ■

Cardinal Czerny!

CJJ is delighted that Canadian Jesuit Fr Michael Czerny has been made a cardinal by Pope Francis. Fr Michael has long been an inspiration and support to CJI both personally and through his numerous social justice leadership roles. The latter include his work as co-founder of the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice, Secretary for Social Justice at the Jesuit Curia in Rome and founding director of the African Jesuit AIDS Network (AJAN), whose work CJI continues to support. ■

Mission Co-op

In July 2019, CJI participated in the Mission Co-op program of the Archdiocese of Toronto. At masses on July 13–14, Outreach Coordinator Pieter Niemeyer spoke at Our Lady of Peace in Etobicoke about CJI's work and shared stories from Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre in Zambia. On the following weekend at St Joseph's Church in Scarborough, Fr Michael Rosinski SJ spoke about CJI's support for South Sudan and shared his own experiences from a visit to that country. Special thanks to Our Lady of Peace, St Joseph's and Pieter and Michael for helping! ■

SUPPORT THE UAPs!

Please give to CJI. Your donation will help to promote the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Jesuits in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Please give generously by making a one-time donation, a regular monthly donation or a bequest in your will.

All donations are tax deductible.

All personal information is held in accordance with Canadian Government Privacy Policy.

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