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FATHER GENERAL

Visit to Algeria. From 26 to 29 June Father General visited the Jesuits in Algeria, accompanied by his counsellor Fr. Antoine Kerhuel. During the visit, Father General stayed in our house in Ben Smen in Algiers and met with the Jesuit community of Algiers and Constantine. Father Esteban Velázquez, working at Nador (Morocco), could not be present. He visited also the Archbishop of Algiers and the Apostolic Nuncio and met with the lay collaborators, Christians and Muslims. On Friday, June 27th, he presided over an Eucharistic celebration open to all Christian communities at the residence of the diocese of Algiers. He also participated in the meeting of the Committee of the Jesuits in Maghreb and visited the main works of the Society in Algiers: the CCU (University Cultural Centre), the CIARA centre for professional training and the House of Retreats of Ben Smen. The visit was an opportunity to deepen many topics, such as: the participation of the Jesuits to the education in the country, the interreligious dialogue, the birth of a local Church in Algeria, the Jesuit presence among sub-saharian students and migrants, the Jesuit presence in Morocco and the need for personnel for the Maghreb region.

FROM THE PROVINCES

CAMBODIA: Planting trees to build bridges

The Jesuits in Cambodia are finding that planting trees is more than an act of reconciling with creation. Planting trees can foster peace and build bridges by bringing people of different cultures and beliefs together. Encouraged by the experience of their first planning tour last year, they plan to expand to other communities this year, and to plant in two important places - Prey Lang, which is the largest remaining evergreen forest in Cambodia and is protected by a very organized group of villagers, and in the floodplains of Tonle Sap Lake, which is a very productive source of fish and food for millions of Cambodians. "Supporting and preserving these sites will help buttress the biodiversity of the area and hopefully benefit many generations to come," said Fr Gabby Lamug-Nañawa SJ, who is part of the Ecology Programme team of *Jesuit Service Cambodia*. Fr Gabby recounts the lessons learnt from the first planting tour held during the rainy months of July, August and September in 2013. "Every year, volunteers from Spain come to organize and run summer camps together with local youth for young children of the parish and the village. These are exceptional days of laughter and learning when children join games, sports, craft workshops, and other formative activities. When opportune, we join these summer camps for an afternoon of planting trees with the children, Spanish volunteers, and local members of the Catholic community. We usually begin, not by planting trees, but with a lively presentation about the environment, especially the value of trees and the benefits they provide." For more information: <http://www.sjapc.net>

INDIA: Jesuits Help Starving Tea Pickers

A Jesuit-led team in North Bengal is giving food and medical care to abandoned workers in a closed tea estate. Late last year, two people died there, allegedly of malnutrition-related causes. On 8 November 2013, the Indian daily, *The Telegraph*, reported that 12 people had died of malnutrition and lack of treatment in three closed tea gardens. These were in the Dooars region of the North Bengal tea industry. They were owned by the Calcutta-based Red Bank Group. The newspaper said the management abandoned the three plantations on 19 October because of financial problems and "law and order issues." All together, the three plantations employed over 2,200 people. In the three weeks following closure, 12 workers died. "There is a dire need of food in the three gardens where deaths from starvation have taken place. We are focusing our work on the smallest tea garden, at Dharanipur. There are 98 households there with about 550 residents," said Fr Lalit Tirkey SJ. "We visited and interviewed the people and held an informal group discussion to find out about the state of the garden." The Jesuit relief team is pressing ahead with its aid efforts "with the help from whoever donates cash and kind", said Fr Lalit. Work is

also under way to try to tap into government resources, and to draw in NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) involved in the struggle against human trafficking. This is because about 10 young women left the Surendranagar estate for Delhi, and some other big cities, hoping to find work. They have not been traced yet.

INDIA: Voices from the Margins

Hashiye Ki Awaz ("Voices from the Margins") is a monthly magazine in Hindi published by the *Social Action Trust* ("Indian Social Institute", Delhi) that caters to the Hindi speaking masses, especially of North India. The magazine has its origin in *Hum Dalit*, founded by Fr. Jose Kananakil SJ and published from 1990 as part of the Programme for Scheduled Castes. It was broad based to include issues of all marginalized communities and assumed its present name from 2006. This magazine consists of different types of literary pieces, such as thematic articles, essays, plays, short stories, poems, interviews, book-reviews, reports of programmes for marginalized communities and legal educational matters. During the year 2013-2014, 158 articles were published in the 12 issues covering a wide range of literature related to dalits, tribals, minorities, women and other marginalized sections of society. Moreover, as its name suggests, the magazine has become a platform for authors from marginalized communities even in remote locations in the country to express their thoughts and share their experiences to the mainstream of society. This is an attempt to promote readership of the magazine among marginalized communities and also to encourage aspiring authors from among weaker sections of society to become the voice of the voiceless. For more information: <http://www.isidelhi.org.in> then click: journals.

MALAWI: Tree planting in Dzaleka refugee camp

In a refugee camp where people feel they can't stay permanently, can't go back where they came from and don't see the future, it is easy to give up and lose hope. Dzaleka refugee camp was established 20 years ago on land owned by the Malawian government. To date the average stay of a refugee in the camp is between 10 and 15 years. In this difficult and uncertain environment, a number of graduates from the *Jesuit Refugee Service* online higher education programme have taken steps to give back to their community and to Malawi. The graduates of the *Jesuit Commons Higher Education at the Margins* (JC:HEM) programme have established the *Education and Plantation Strategies Association* (EPSA). The aim of this small community organisation is to plant 6,000 fruit trees in three years in Malawi. They started planting trees throughout Dzaleka camp in August 2013. Sayed Mohamed Ali Haibe, the chairperson of the EPSA, explained that they do not want to stop at planting trees only in the camp, they want to plant trees throughout Malawi. "Planting trees counters climate change and air pollution. It serves the whole community", says EPSA member, Omar Hamed. Those involved in this community tree planting initiative have attended both theoretical and practical classes in community gardening. For more information: www.jrs.net

UNITED KINGDOM: Loyola Hall crucifix passed to new church

A crucifix from *Loyola Hall Retreat Centre*, in Britain, has found a new home - suspended over the altar in the new church dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes in Hungerford, Berkshire. Parishioner Paul Burrough turned to the Jesuits when he was looking for furnishings to adorn the new church which replaced the 'temporary' 1939 structure. The first Mass in the new church in April attracted over 200 people - about twice the number who used to attend in the old church. "I was a Jesuit boy, educated at Beaumont," explains Paul. "When our architect showed us drawings of the sanctuary, with a large crucifix over the altar, the committee discussed buying a new one. I thought 'No, no, surely the Jesuits might have one - possibly from Beaumont College [which closed in 1967]'." Paul contacted the Jesuits at Farm Street Church, who put him in touch with *Loyola Hall*. With the closure of the Merseyside spirituality and retreat center imminent, the Jesuits were able to provide Our Lady of Lourdes parish with a striking focal piece for the sanctuary. "I did have the crucifix cleaned and polished before it was suspended," says Paul. "It looks wonderful and creates a moving and prayerful atmosphere in the church. And it feels very fitting to have a Jesuit crucifix in a new church in the same era that we have a 'new' Jesuit Pope."

USA: Ignatian Spirituality Conference

The Jesuits and *Saint Louis University* are organizing sixth *Ignatian Spirituality Conference: on Ignatian Silence, Heart of Mission*, July 16-19, 2015. The conference is intended for leaders and emerging leaders in Jesuit works and all who practice and promote Ignatian spirituality. The conference theme is drawn from recent calls from Father General Adolfo Nicolás, SJ for the Society to recover a spirit of silence. In the late 1990s the office of Mission and Ministry at Saint Louis University and the Jesuits of the Missouri Province held a conference on Ignatian spirituality that drew particular attention to the significance of the Spiritual Exercises. The conference was a great success and was held subsequently every three years. The conference has become one of the few large scale gatherings of practitioners in Ignatian spirituality across apostolic sectors. The participants can expect keynote addresses, workshops, liturgies, and prayer settings that will enrich the knowledge and practice of Ignatian spirituality; form leaders in Jesuit and Ignatian works; build relationships across apostolic sectors for the sake of our shared mission. For more information: <http://www.slu.edu/ignatian-spirituality-conference-vi>.

The Expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal. In the context of the commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Restoration of the Society of Jesus, Borja Vivanco Díaz, an academic of the universities of Deusto and the Basque Country, published an article on "The Expulsion of the Jesuits in Pombal's Time." It appeared in the latest issue of *Arbor*, a magazine published by the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas* (CSIC). *Arbor* is an influential magazine indexed in the Web of Science (Thomson - ISI). The latest issue of the magazine can be downloaded at:

<http://arbor.revistas.csic.es/index.php/arbor/issue/current/showToc>. The expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal in 1759 marked the start of a powerful process which, in a few years, led to the dissolution of the Order in the Bourbon Kingdoms, and to the general suppression decreed by Clement XIV in 1773. The disappearance of the Jesuits heralded a loss of influence of the Catholic Church in the first decades of the modern age, while different currents associated with the Age of the Enlightenment came to the ascendancy.

Suppression and Restoration in the Philippines. 1768. For the Jesuits in the Philippines, the end came five years before Pope Clement XIV issued *Dominus ac Redemptor* on July 21, 1773, suppressing the Society of Jesus worldwide. As the Philippines was under Spanish hegemony, when Spain's Carlos III ordered the expulsion of Jesuits from his realm in 1767, this meant in the Philippines as well. But the Jesuits in the Philippines were spared another year because it took that length of time for the royal decree to arrive in Manila. On Thursday, May 19, 1768, as soon as the decree was read to the Jesuits assembled at *Colegio de San Ignacio* in Manila, the systematic expulsion of the Jesuits began. Gathered in Manila for the trip back to Spain, 121 Jesuits were sent back in four groups. Another 19 Jesuits, who government physicians had certified as aged and infirm and not able to withstand the rigors of travel, were put on house arrest under the custody of other religious houses. The Jesuits had been in the Philippines for 187 years, from 1581, when Fr Antonio Sedeño, a veteran of the Florida mission, arrived with two other Jesuits. In 1595, Fr General Claudio Acquaviva raised the mission to a Vice-Province under Mexico, and in 1605, made it a Province. By 1768, the Jesuits had established seven colleges in Manila and Cavite, the Visayas and Mindanao, and numerous parishes and mission stations organized under central residences: two in Luzon, six in the Visayas, two in Mindanao. Each residence had between four and seven dependent parishes. The two missions were in Marinduque and Negros. The Marianas was a Vice-Province under the Philippines with one college and four parishes (...). So deep was the Jesuit impact on people's lives that when the people of Samar in Leyte heard that the Jesuits were being expelled, they were ready to defend them and even take up arms. It was almost a century before the Jesuits returned, in 1859. Although Pope Pius VII restored the Society on August 7, 1814, in Spain the Jesuits experienced a number of suppressions until mid-century. What was the secret of Jesuit resilience? What helped to rebuild the Jesuit presence in the Philippines? If there was one important factor, it was the men - unafraid to go to the frontier, to leave the past behind and look forward to the future, seeking only the lost sheep, and working only "Ad majorem Dei gloriam" (Fr Rene Javellana SJ, from: *The Jesuits in Asia Pacific* 2014).

Servizio Digitale d'Informazione SJ - Ufficio Stampa e Informazione

P. Patrick Mulemi SJ

Borgo S. Spirito 4 | 00193 Roma Italia

Tel: +39-06-6986-8289 | infosj-dir@sjcuria.org



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Jesuit Press and Information Office
Borgo S. Spirito 4 | 00193 Roma Italy
Tel: +39-06-6986-8289 | infosj-dir@sjcuria.org

