



## **Australian Province of the Society of Jesus**

---

### **Australian Jesuit Province Apostolic Plan 2019-24**

#### **A Call to Mission in Hope**

##### **Introduction**

This final presentation in our Province Gathering calls us to mission, drawing on our shared need, lay and Jesuit, to conversion, companionship and being with Jesus carrying his cross. It draws on those key points raised in my *De Statu* address earlier and focusses on our call to live Christ's mission in hope. It sets out key directions for our Province life over the coming five years.

The image I now put before you is that of the *Deposizione* by Safet Zec which hangs in the Church of the Gesù in Rome. It presents three key Jesuits, modern founders as they have been called, who embraced a battered and broken Society of Jesus at different times of our history. Joseph Pignatelli (1737-1811) during the time of the Suppression, Jan Roothan (1785-1853) after the Suppression and Pedro Arrupe (1907-1991) after Vatican II. Each of these men offered leadership of service and courage when it was most needed. They are there with Mary at the Cross but their journey does not end there. I will return to this image at the end of the presentation.

Those of you in positions of leadership in the Province have seen earlier drafts of a Province Apostolic Plan which were made available for your comment. That draft was divided into five Foundations for Mission and number of Apostolic Priorities for the Province over the next five years. They were conceived as dimensions of our mission which are so fundamental to our way of proceeding that they need to be present in all our ministries, without necessarily determining particular priorities for the Province as a whole.

Alongside our Province process of discernment there has also been the discernment by the whole Society of Jesus of Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs). A key question in this last stage of our own planning, since the announcement of the UAPs in February, has been how to incorporate our own foundations and priorities with the UAPs and those that will emerge in the future in our Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP). What is presented today will, necessarily, involve more conversation and consideration of the UAPs and those emerging in JCAP.

As it has transpired, the universal preferences found significant resonance in our own Province discernment process over these years, with the UAPs mirroring our own sense of the priorities for our time. Hence it seemed good to frame our priorities with clear links to the UAPs, while adding two further priorities that have particular relevance to our context.

I will now read out the Province Apostolic Plan for the next 5 years, beginning with a Preamble, moving on to naming our Apostolic priorities in line with the four UAPs. I will then add two further ones.

## Preamble

Since 1848, the Society of Jesus has sought to be of service to the Church within Australia. Over that time, we have been known for our contribution to spirituality, education, intellectual life and public discourse promoting a faith that seeks justice. At this point in our history, we have been reflecting on our Province mission, responding to the Society's renewed commitment to ongoing apostolic planning.<sup>1</sup> We are also conscious of Pope Francis' reminder to Jesuits in 2016 of the *magis*, the 'plus' that was so much a part of Ignatius' way of proceeding, leading him not only to undertake apostolic initiatives but also to follow through on them and evaluate them.<sup>2</sup>

In our reflection over the last two years, we have sought to enter into the Contemplation on the Incarnation that St Ignatius placed at the beginning of the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises. With the three Persons of the Holy Trinity we gaze in faith, hope and love upon our world, especially on Australia and the Asia Pacific region, with all its diversity and need. We seek to see where we are called to respond with discerning creativity over the next five years.

Ignatian reflection is always attentive to historical and social context. Our current review comes at a time when the Church in Australia is struggling to come to grips with the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. We are acutely aware that our own Province has not been immune to serious failures in this regard. This Province Apostolic plan includes our commitment to ensuring that the highest professional standards prevail in all our ministries, making the safety, protection, and flourishing of the young and vulnerable our paramount concern.

The diminishing numbers and increasing age profile of the Jesuits within our province present another major challenge. Nonetheless, many senior Jesuits continue to labour generously in our ministries and to provide their wisdom and experience. We are also blessed that young men of quality, albeit fewer in number, are still inspired to join us as companions of Jesus, willing to place their talents and gifts in lifelong service of the Church and society. We have been graced with those coming forward for ordination in recent years, three last year, two this coming year and others into the future. Moreover, lay partners who share our charism – women and men, many in positions of leadership – have ensured that our ministries continue to grow and flourish in new and significant ways. As the Australian Church prepares for a Plenary Council in 2020-2021, we seek to embody new models of governance and leadership within the mission of the Christ and the Church.

Being part of the universal Society of Jesus, we will continue to reflect upon and respond to the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) of the Society of Jesus 2019-29 that were issued on 19 February 2019 and as will be implemented in the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP).

In this context, drawing upon Ignatian spirituality and the grace of spiritual conversation, Jesuits and lay partners seek to be companions of Jesus in service of his mission according to the following Province priorities for mission for the next five years.

---

<sup>1</sup> GC 36, 2.

<sup>2</sup> GC 36, 1, 39.

## Province Priorities

### *First Priority: Nourish our ministries through Ignatian Spirituality*

*We seek to express our life and mission in Christ through deepening our Ignatian spirituality. We seek to be open to the constant renewal to which this spirituality calls us. We seek to ensure that it permeates all aspects of our life and ministry, including our conversations and listening, the way in which we support each other as companions, and our discernment in decision making.*

*Linked to UAP: To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment.*

An important depth which the Church expects from us is, of course, in the area of our Ignatian spirituality, picked up as the first of the UAPs.

Our mission is to serve Christ and his Church, of which we are but one part among many. I am now asking for a new imagining and strengthening of this ministry across the Province. To this end, we will continue to follow through the review of this ministry, particularly in the recommendation that we establish two key foundations within it: one of the ministry of the Spiritual Exercises and the other of Ignatian Formation. Let me speak about each of these in turn.

Firstly, the ministry of the Exercises: we engage in the ministry of the Exercises in a range of ways, including the giving of various Ignatian retreats, the First Spiritual Exercises and offering spiritual direction. We minister in Australia and beyond our shores. We also share companion ministries with the Christian Life Community and Companions in the Ministry of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises.

Secondly, Ignatian Formation: our mission, in all the ministries in which it is lived out, needs to be distinguished by Ignatian spirituality. It calls us to constant renewal and a deepening of our lives of prayer and service. It challenges us to be contemplatives in action so that our spirituality permeates all aspects of ministry, including conversations, the way in which we support each other as companions, and our common discernment in decision making. Hence we need a commitment to more intentional Ignatian formation, particularly for those in leadership, including our Boards and Councils. The Jesuit College of Spirituality has an important role to play in Ignatian formation as well as the formation of givers of the Exercises, alongside its academic research and teaching work.

As part of this priority I also commit the Province to developing and implementing accreditation and evaluation instruments for all ministries. Our schools ministry already has such an instrument in the Ethos and Identity review which each Jesuit school and Companion school undergoes periodically. We now need to develop appropriate instruments for all other ministry areas. Part of the review of a ministry's Ignatian identity will be a review of how the ministry is implementing the Province apostolic plan. Each Provincial Delegate responsible for a ministry area will develop such instruments for review and report on them through the Ministries Commission.

In addition, at our Province Assembly yesterday, I asked all Jesuits to be involved in some way in this ministry of the Spiritual Exercises and Ignatian Formation as, of course, many already are. How this will happen will vary from Jesuit to Jesuit but, as I mentioned in the *De Statu*

yesterday, we Jesuits share a particular responsibility to the life and hope offered by our charism.

To coordinate and have oversight for these two areas: the ministry of the Spiritual Exercises and of Ignatian Formation, I am establishing a new body called ‘Jesuit and Ignatian Spirituality Australia’. The members of this body will be tasked to have oversight of these two foundations and to be creative, imaginative and bold in the outreach and expressions of this priority.

## *Second Priority: Heal Humanity and our World*

*We seek to be close to Christ who is revealed in the suffering and vulnerable of our world. We commit ourselves to reconciliation with God, with one another and with creation. With Christ we are called to a personal experience of closeness and companionship with all of humanity, especially those most in need.*

*Linked to UAPs: To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice & To collaborate in the care of our common home.*

Our second priority links to two of the UAPs. With Ignatius, and as one of those key graces of the Spiritual Exercises, we see Christ mysteriously present in all humanity, revealed especially in the suffering and vulnerable of our world. Authentic companionship with him involves companionship with those most in need.

It remains an important element of this priority in our current context that we continue to commit ourselves to the implementation and continued improvement of consistent, Province-wide policies that will help prevent abuse. We seek to monitor and improve our Australian experience and share that knowledge with other Provinces. We commit ourselves to promoting a culture within our ministries that promotes the dignity of all. It remains important that we continue to reach out to those who have suffered sexual abuse and offer tangible support and accompaniment. We remain committed to being accredited throughout the Province as ‘child safe’ by the Australian Childhood Foundation.

In 1882 our Province began a mission to Indigenous peoples in the Northern Territory. That mission closed in 1899 and some seventy years later in 1979 we took up that mission again in Townsville. Forty years later we commit ourselves, particularly through the Bookends Project, to ongoing reconciliation with our First Nations peoples.

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si’* encourages such a commitment.

*It is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. They are not merely one minority among others, but should be the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed. For them, land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values.<sup>3</sup>*

We commit ourselves also to the accompanying and advocating for refugees and people seeking asylum. Our Province ‘Bookends’ commitment speaks to the heart and ‘unfinished

---

<sup>3</sup> Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, 2015, 146.

business' of our Australian society, moving us forward as a Province seeking reconciliation and justice for all.

In terms of our Province institutions we re-commit to those most in need here in Australia and in our world, in particular through the works of Jesuit Social Services, Jesuit Mission and Jesuit Refugee Service.

When GC36 spoke of reconciliation, it insisted that full reconciliation according to God's vision involves reconciliation with God, with one another, and also with creation. We can no longer live separated from the needs of those who live 'at our door' nor the need to better care for our 'common home'.

Hence we commit to embedding reconciliation with creation in all our ministries. To this end, we will strengthen the mandate and charter of the Province Reconciliation with Creation Committee in order to address this Universal Apostolic Priority as outlined by Fr General. I am also asking Jesuits to look at their expression of community life and how it can express care for our common home. This call applies to all our ministries as well.

We are presently establishing a new body called 'Jesuit Social Ministries Australia'. This group of Jesuits and lay partners will provide oversight over our various social ministries. They will be mandated not only to support our social ministries but also explore ways in which all ministries can further dialogue, networking and collaboration in relation to this priority. We want to reach out to those who are experiencing being excluded within our society and in our Asia Pacific region, in dialogue with other ministries.

### *Third Priority: Form the young in a faith seeking justice*

*We encourage outreach to and with the young. We seek to listen to them, inviting them to be creative, just and generous, encouraging them to be open to the journey of Christian faith. For our Church and nation, we wish to form a new generation, grounded in faith and justice as modelled by Christ.*

*Linked to UAP: To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future.*

Our third priority links to that of the UAPs and builds on an important ministry for the Society of Jesus since its early beginnings, forming in each generation leaders for the Church and the world grounded in faith and justice as modelled by Christ. It involves a deep listening to young people and inviting them to be creative, just and generous and, today especially, to be open to the journey of Christian faith.

Our largest current engagement with young people is through our schools. Apart from their primary task of forming students during their school years, the schools also provide an important link to those who have left school but remain part of our networks. The establishment of Jesuit Education Australia (JEA) has provided a solid governance structure for our education ministry into the future.

In terms of our Companion Schools, I am commissioning JEA to look at the sort of outreach and presence that will be possible to enable them to continue to develop in their Ignatian identity. We look forward to the establishment of a further Jesuit Companion school in Auckland, New Zealand. We are also committed to the implementation of the JESSEDU Rio

2017 Action Statement developed in response to Fr General's challenging invitation to education delegates in 2017 to re-imagine Jesuit education.

In our current Australian context, we wish to make a stronger and renewed commitment to forming young adults in faith in their formative post-school years. We already have a particular focus for such ministry in works such as Newman and Cardoner, as well as the networks of former students of our schools which we wish to develop further.

Beyond these particular foci for this ministry with young adults, all our ministries will be asked to seek creative ways to engage with young people, supporting ways in which they can have an experience of faith that meets their experiences of life and their commitment to justice.

We also commit to exploring ways to find and invite a new generation of young people to be engaged in our mission. We need, with some urgency, to invite them onto our Boards and Councils, to be a voice and presence within all we do. We need them to provide suggestions, ideas and hopes for our ministries but also our nation and world.

I wish to mention another key priority in relation to young people, namely Jesuit vocations. Yesterday, I made this statement to my brother Jesuits:

*I urge each of you to reflect on how you can contribute to vocations ministry, reflecting on the quality of your religious consecration, the attractiveness of our community life and ministry, your readiness to reach out to young men in need of accompaniment and encouragement. And, most importantly, to redouble your prayers and Masses for vocations, as the Pope urges us.*

In a similar vein, I would challenge our lay partners to renewed efforts to promote Jesuit vocations. I am not aware of any ministry that does not wish that it had more Jesuits working in it; if so, then it asks each of you to do your part – in raising the question of vocation with suitable young men, in promoting a culture of vocations in your ministry, in being attuned to and highlighting the distinctiveness of religious consecration, and in praying regularly for Jesuit vocations.

I have appointed Fr Sacha Bermudez-Goldman SJ as my Assistant for Young Adult Ministry, an area in which he has considerable experience already. I have asked him to bring together a team of Jesuits and lay who can assist him in this new priority and in the ways that Ignatian spirituality can support young people, and to seek further links between our various young adult engagements, the various immersion programs and Jesuit Mission.

#### ***Fourth Priority: Strengthen Jesuit and Lay partnership in mission***

*We seek to strengthen our Jesuit mission by deepening our collaboration and networking amongst all with whom we work, especially within each ministry and between our ministries. We seek to grow in appreciation of the reality that Jesuit and Lay vocations are distinct yet complementary. We seek to deepen companionship between all who share the mission of Christ.*

This fourth priority is most important for our Province and Church at this particular time in history. In this priority we seek to strengthen our mission by deepening collaboration and networking amongst all with whom we work, especially within each ministry and between our ministries.

While it does not align with any particular UAP, Fr General emphasised the importance of such partnership in this way in his letter introducing the UAPs:

*The apostolic renewal of the Society of Jesus that will flow from the implementation of the universal apostolic preferences has as a condition the deepening of collaboration among Jesuits and our companions in mission and among the ministries and apostolic units, other bodies in the Church, and all the persons and institutions that contribute to the inseparable realities of reconciliation among human beings, with creation, and with God.*<sup>4</sup>

Our Province is noted in the international Society for the degree of involvement of lay partners in our mission. As I noted in yesterday's *De Statu*, this collaboration between Jesuits and lay partners is grounded in our distinct but complementary vocations. We commit to modelling and developing authentic collaboration between Jesuits and lay partners and across our Jesuit ministries, as well as between ourselves, other religious and laity as partners in the Church's mission. We also commit ourselves to engaging in conversations that allow distinctive vocations within the Church to be more deeply understood, valued and expressed.

We commit ourselves also to welcoming and encouraging the voices of women in our Province, in particular in leadership and on Boards and Councils. We seek to build on recent consultations so that the voices and wisdom of women are experienced within our Province leadership, governance, formation and service. As Jesuits, and as part of the Church, we also need to learn how to better listen, respect and work more closely with women.

I have already restructured and broadened the Province Ministries Commission to become a stronger, more inclusive management team for the Provincial. We seek to further implement that recommendation of GC35:

*The Commission on Ministries (NC 260 #1) be an effective instrument for apostolic planning and its review, especially as this relates to established works and ministries of the Province, the creation of new apostolic works, and the ongoing formation of collaborators.*<sup>5</sup>

An ongoing task of the Commission will be the exploration of the 'culture' of our ministries particularly in relation to Ignatian formation, appointments of senior leadership, strategic directions and budgets. It will also examine networks, consultations and forms of collaboration between Jesuit and lay partners that include and deepen our mission as part of the universal Society of Jesus and in JCAP. This restructuring will include regular meetings between the Jesuit consultors and the Ministries Commission, with others exercising leadership in the Province and with those whose voices are often not heard.

The implementation of the Province's five priorities will be overseen by the Provincial and his Delegates through the Ministries Commission. The Provincial and his Consultors will meet with the Ministries Commission on a regular basis to review and discern the implementation of this apostolic plan.

---

<sup>4</sup> Arturo Sosa SJ, Superior General, *Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus, 2019-2029*, Rome, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> GC35 5, 28(d).

## *Fifth priority: Serve Christ through the Church within our Jesuit and Ignatian Tradition*

*We serve Christ and the Church, of which we are but one part among many. We offer the spiritual and intellectual depth the Church seeks from us, ready to engage at those frontiers others may have difficulty reaching. We are available to contribute to the needs of the people of God not just locally but also within the Asia-Pacific region and globally.*

One important aspect of our Jesuit way of proceeding is that we are part of the universal Society of Jesus. We make clear to every candidate for the Society that, while they join by way of a particular Province, they are actually joining the international Society. We seek to embody this reality by making Jesuits available, where possible, for service outside of the Province, even though there will always be pressing local needs. Hence, as part of this apostolic plan, we will continue to commit roughly 10% of our active Jesuits to service overseas.

We will also seek to encourage and facilitate the participation and commitment of lay leaders and partners in the universal mission of the Society of Jesus as well.

I have already noted under earlier headings one important aspect of partnership in mission – the renewed governance structures across our education, social and spirituality ministries. These structures provide an over-arching support of these ministries. It is important that we further implement a supportive network structure for our parishes and those in diocesan and migrant chaplaincies as well.

It is important we renew our commitment to intellectual depth. From those early days when the first companions attained high level degrees from the University of Paris, the Society has sought to ensure its men are equipped to engage with the life of the mind, with cultures, with the best of human thought in whatever area, and to seek solutions to serious issues at the depth required if they are to be long-lasting. Various Popes over the years have reminded us of the importance of this charism of depth, especially in theology, for the mission of the Church. While Fr General has highlighted its importance once more in his promulgation of the UAPs:

*Responding to the call of the universal apostolic preferences necessitates that we strive more than ever for the intellectual depth that our foundational charism and tradition demand... The Society is committed to the intellectual apostolate because intellectual depth should characterize all forms of the apostolate of the Society of Jesus.<sup>6</sup>*

In our Province, we have taken this call seriously, with a significant number of Jesuits holding higher degrees and doctorates. There are also, of course, many of our lay partners who bring to our mission high-level academic qualifications in their areas of expertise. Our commitment to depth of reflection is also witnessed in the contributions we make, in a range of ways, to informed and reflective debate in the public sphere on a variety of issues. Hence as part of this apostolic plan, we commit to continuing engagement with theology, Ignatian spirituality, society and culture through the intellectual apostolate.

We also need to commit ourselves to the needs and sustainability of our mission. There is only one Province mission and it is made up of many parts. It is important we continue to invite

---

<sup>6</sup> Arturo Sosa SJ, Superior General, *Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus, 2019-2029*, Rome, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2019.



people to support our Province mission and we accompany them in that journey. Hence, we commit to re-establishing a Province Development Office. This time our commitment is to explore new ways in which our mission is best promoted, funded and communicated across all ministries. We will draw on the expertise of fundraisers in our various Province ministries. This care for the future and sustainability of our Province mission is a responsibility we all share.

## **Jesuit Commitments**

As I mentioned to the Jesuits yesterday, here is my list of current directions in terms of missioning priorities for Jesuits:

There are Province-level roles that we need to have and which need to be filled by a Jesuit (though some of them need not be full-time):

- Province Officials – Provincial, Socius, Treasurer, Revisor of Province Funds, Province Consultors (3);
- Formation roles: Delegate for Jesuit Formation;
- Provincial Assistant for Vocation Promotion.

Roles that can only be filled by Jesuits and to which we are currently committed:

- Local superiors – presently 14 superiors;
- Parish priests – currently 7 parishes;
- Formation positions – Novice Master, Socius to the Novice Master, Tertian Director & Assistant Director;
- Rectors – four Jesuit schools, Jesuit Mission, Cardoner and Newman College;
- Migrant chaplains - to Polish and Vietnamese communities.

Current roles where it is desirable to have Jesuits (again, not all of these are full-time roles):

- Available for the international work of the Society including JCAP (10% of those under 75 years of age);
- Formation of Jesuits and lay partners in mission, Ignatian discernment and governance
- Givers of the Spiritual Exercises;
- Wider service of the Church, seminaries and formation of clergy;
- Lecturers and writers in the intellectual apostolate, including appointments at JCS, CTC and ACU;
- Directors of Boards/Members of Councils;
- CLC National Ecclesial Assistant;
- Young Adult Ministry and Education.

## **Conclusion**

Since the end of GC36 in late 2016 we, and members of other Provinces throughout the world, have been reflecting on and considering the call to renew our Jesuit mission. We know that any mission in the Ignatian tradition follows, as humbly and humanly as we can and with the need always for God's grace, that dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises that leads us from conversion to companionship with Jesus, from that companionship to sharing in the carrying of his cross and finally for grace to bring his risen life and hope into the world. Love is expressed in deeds.

Let us return to that image of the Deposizione. These three Jesuits, Joseph Pignatelli, Jan Roothan and Pedro Arrupe stand with Mary at the foot of the Cross. Their individual journeys have brought them to him, and to his mother Mary, at a time when pain and brokenness is present and tangible. Their response to bringing Jesus down from the Cross is not one of fear but one of close intimacy and love that draws them ever more deeply into the mystery of being close to him in his suffering and death.

We might note for particular consideration Pedro Arrupe: dismissed from Spain in 1932 at the age of 25 along with fellow Jesuits, missioned to Japan six years later at the age of 31, interned after the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941 and then witness to the effects of the bombing of Hiroshima in 1945. Named Provincial of Japan in 1958 at the age of 51 years, appointed as Superior General in 1965. He founded the Jesuit Refugee Service in 1980. In his final exhortation to Jesuits, to those working with refugees in Thailand, the day prior to his stroke, he said:

*Please, be brave! I will tell you one more thing and please don't forget it! Pray, pray much. The problems we have been discussing will not be resolved by human power... We must have a basic union of minds for this new apostolate which is being born.<sup>7</sup>*

Here was a Jesuit who touched the very suffering of Christ but found in it a depth of faith and hope that strengthened him for mission in the Church and Society of Jesus that needed to be renewed after Vatican II. His final speech was on the thirty-sixth anniversary of Hiroshima.

At this time in the Australian Church we are invited to come close to that wounded and crucified Jesus. No glamour, honour, pride or riches. Being with Jesus to the end, touching his wounds and those of our Church and world. Also, being with him in hope that we can experience the power of his Resurrection. We are encouraged to stand together with Mary, close to Him who remains our companion beyond suffering and crucifixion. We are called to go on mission together, Jesuits and lay partners, humbly and with a renewed hope.

I urge you all to consider generously these priorities for our Province mission and how they can become deeply embedded in your own works and ministries. We know they will only become effective if our hearts are open and our hands and minds are willing. Let us be graced in this, our shared mission, the different gifts we bring and let us leave here in hope that we can become new forces for reconciliation in our world – with God, with creation and with one another.

*Brian F McCoy SJ  
Provincial  
Province Gathering  
St Ignatius College, Riverview  
Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019*

---

<sup>7</sup> Brian Grogan SJ, *Pedro Arrupe SJ, Mystic with Open Eyes*, Messenger Publication, Dublin, 47.