
REASON FOR OUR HOPE

August 10, 2018

Province Days Talk by *Fr. Scott Santarosa, SJ*

Thank you all for being here today. I am so moved by your presence. These gatherings are really important for us, and your presence yesterday, today, and tomorrow clearly communicates how important these are to you. Let me also thank Andrew, Brad, and Javier for their reflections. I hope my comments address some of their questions.

I would like to speak today of where we are now, which I am calling the **Moment**; where we are going, which I will call the **Path**; and what keeps us going which I call the **Hope**.

1. **“The Moment”** – what is this moment? I have been speaking of this as an important moment for us as a Province. It is an invitation to not simply go on with business as usual, but to say to ourselves, “Hey, this is a time worthy of our attention. Worthy of our intentionality.”

First, is always good to look reality squarely in the eye, as best we can. Tony Sholander in his role as Provincial Assistant for Planning has been helping us to do that this year. And I am so impressed with those of you who have heard his talk. You have not run out of the room as he has talked about challenges that face us. While we have all felt some fear and trepidation, I can also say that I think we feel relief that finally we are facing some realities that we know loom ahead.

In a spirit of what I hope is refreshing honesty, let me also state some of the challenges that face us:

- Challenges facing the Province
 - **Decreasing numbers of Jesuits.** This is felt in all of our works and communities. We decrease by about 12 men per year, the equivalent of my Colombiere community in Portland per year. This change is felt not just by Jesuits but by our lay colleagues. The good news in this is that everywhere I go, people want more Jesuits. People want us. And they are sad when they can't have more of us.
 - **Increased dependence upon benefactors.** Already we cannot make ends meet, and we are dependent upon advancement for \$5M of our budget each year. (We are beggars, brothers!) And this will increase. Our largest age cohort are men in their 70's, with an average age of 75. While they are working hard in the trenches still, earning incomes for our communities and, in turn, for the province, there will come the day when they will need to retire. If anything keeps me up at night it's how we will be prepared for them at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center, which will not happen on my watch but likely on my successor's watch.

- **Lack of a sense of communal apostolic contribution.** Jesuits are clearly doing work which is fulfilling to us personally. But what I hear again and again is that we do not feel that collectively as a community of brothers we are making a contribution. And we are missing that, we are wanting that.
- Challenges coming from our culture and economy
 - **Increased secularity** of US culture. We must wonder, are we needed? Outdated? Where does faith fit into our culture today? Among a growing “None” population in our country, does what we do make any difference?
 - Role of technology. Increased dependence on technology and the dependence of the economy on technology has us wondering if our great strengths of liberal arts and humanities speak to our times.
 - Costs of our traditional methods. Our secondary schools and universities, our signature works, have become cost-prohibitive and run the risk of pricing themselves out of existence. Or at least the high costs of doing business are forcing us to ask if we are really serving the people we most want to serve.
- Yet, in this same “moment,” we have much good news
 - We have a steady stream of **very diverse and exceedingly competent men** joining our ranks every year. On average, 10 men join us and about that many profess vows.
 - I hear universal **praise for the men in formation**—from first studies through regency and theology. We are indeed deeply blessed.
 - **New Fr. General, Fr. Arturo Sosa**, who has energy, ideas, directives. He is not afraid to make decisions.
 - **Pope Francis has breathed new life** into the Church. Many people, especially young people, see him as a true world leader. (Confidentially, many Jesuits no longer want to leave the Church!)
 - We have as a new Province taken the time and energy to articulate our **Vision, Mission, and Values** in this document, and attendant priorities. While not giving a blueprint for the future, we have stated who we are.
 - In accounts of conscience, **the best part of this job**, I hear **hope**, a desire to face our future with creativity and energy. Men are living this life faithfully. Men give themselves daily over to prayer and our common life.

2. “The Path” — Where are we going?

- If this question seeks to name the destination, the bare-naked honest answer to this question is, **I don’t know!** I cannot stand here and tell you where we will be in 20 years, or in 10 years, or even in 5 years. That would not be truthful. I alone am not the person who determines the destination of Jesuits West. But if this question, Where are we going, seeks to know **the Path** to get to where we should be then I can

with confidence talk about that. The path needs to be one which has us traveling together. It needs to be one which has us sharing our deepest desires in our **spiritual conversation**. And it needs to have us listening closely to one another, listening to where the Spirit seems to be most active and alive in the Jesuits and lay partners around us. And if we walk the path in this way, with spiritual conversation and engaging in **discernment in common**, the destination to which God calls us will, I believe, become increasingly clear. The path we are meant to follow requires that we move closer **towards each other**. Not away from each other. It requires we move closer **towards God**, not away from God.

- Lest we think that restructuring of provinces is about improving efficiency, let me read you again an excerpt from Fr. General Nicolas' letter to me in my first year as Provincial of ORE. It was a response to my Ex Officio letter, and I was extolling Mike Weiler and Pat Lee and our province staff for their great work in preparing for the new province: all of the structural boxes were being checked off, one by one. He wrote back, saying, Good job checking off the boxes. But, all of Fr. General's letters have a zinger, and this one was no exception. Next paragraph he said:

*The purpose of restructuring has always been to **broaden apostolic horizons so that the Society can respond more creatively and more effectively to the call of the Lord today. We may be called to start new works, to engage established works in new ways, or to leave some works altogether. We may be called to build new networks, to enter into new partnerships, or to cross geographic, cultural, and economic borders. We may be called to special engagement with young people. We are certainly called to spiritual depth and to a deeper spiritual integration of our spiritual experience, our community life, and our service in the world. As the spotlight shifts away from the issue of province structures themselves, I hope that the provincials will be able to focus more and more on discernment of our response to the calls of the Eternal King. (ORE 15-16)***

- We are called to discernment. **Discernment** of our response to the calls of the Eternal King. This is our path.
- We have every reason to **trust God**. And we have every reason to **trust one another**. This is my experience, first as Provincial of the ORE Province, and now as Provincial of Jesuits West. **Story:** A year ago I told a crowded room at LMU how hard it was to leave Dolores Mission in east LA, a place I loved, and to travel to a province not my own. My voice cracked because it touched something deep inside me, that the Jesuits of Oregon did something amazing in those first accounts of conscience with me, a stranger from the south: they trusted me. And in doing so, they taught me that at the end of the day we are not California Jesuits, we are not Oregon Jesuits. We are Jesuits. Period.

This past year, I must admit to you I also had some anxiety as I came south. How would the Jesuits of my own province treat me? Would they look at me dismissively, saying, What good can come from Sacramento? Would they say, "Is he not the son of Carol and Ed? Didn't his brother go to Jesuit? And his sister to Santa Clara?" The clincher here in northern California would be, "He is a Dodger fan!" and **I would not**

be able to perform any mighty deed here. But instead, as I sat down with Jesuit after Jesuit, brothers I had known from rec rooms, and class rooms, and province gatherings, you shared your lives with me: your hopes, dreams, disappointments; what gives you life and what takes it away; you shared your prayer life, how you find your community life; who your friends are, how your health is. With varying transparency, of course. Some more open and forthcoming than others, but my overarching sense is that **you here in the south trusted me. This humbled me. And enriched me.** I must say, the place I am today is a far richer and more beautiful place to be had I never had to leave the familiar, had I never had to trust God, and trust all of you, both from Oregon and California, to lead me to this place I had never been.

So, I don't know exactly our destination, except that we need to lean into God and into one another. We have every reason to trust God in this. And we have every reason to trust one another. We have to discern together. That is our way. That is our call. **Our Path.** If we do this I believe God will lead us to new places of freedom and beauty and joy that we had never imagined experiencing as Jesuits before.

- It is because of this that I am asking every community to gather at the end of my visitations on a Saturday for what we are calling **Regional Days of Reflection, Prayer, and Conversation.** (I am asking you to sacrifice a Saturday, which I know is precious to you! And know that I will sacrifice 12 Saturdays of my own.) As I finish meeting with the Jesuits, consultors, directors of works, and board chairs of all the communities and works in a given region, we Jesuits will gather and spend a Saturday together. I will share with you the fruits of what I hear from the visitation. We will pray on that, and I will listen to your reflections on where you feel the Spirit is moving in your community, your work, and your region. It is a call to lean in towards each other, and lean in towards God. It is a call for spiritual conversation and discernment in common.
- And, while I cannot say where we are going, I can clearly state what we stand for and whom we stand with. **Our Vision, Mission, and Values** Document, which all of you labored over with me and Mike Weiler, clearly states our Values. From these come Commitments that we are asking all of our apostolates, Jesuits and Lay partners, to make:
 - Cultivate intellectual depth and apply Ignatian discernment to decision-making, charisms distinctive to our way of proceeding.
 - Develop personal relationships with the poor to deepen our vocations and to better respond, individually as well as institutionally, to their needs. (Fr. Arrupe asked all of his Counsel to have some regular contact with the poor because he believed it would change how they governed the Society. I agree with him—these relationships change us and how we see the world.)
 - Leverage our institutions and networks of relationships in favor of the poor and the vulnerable.
 - Serve as bridges between peoples who are estranged due to cultural, political, or socioeconomic differences.

- Care for the earth, our common home, with institutions and Jesuit communities using their resources to advance environmental justice.
 - We may be in uncertain times, and we may not be certain of where will be going, but we can be certain about who we are and what we stand for. And so we take a stand on immigration. We speak out about mass shootings. We denounce political rhetoric which dehumanizes. We proclaim the sanctity of human life in all its forms. We stand with people on the margins, for whatever reason: for their skin color, their sexual orientation, their political leanings. We do this. And with confidence.
3. **“The Hope.”** Meanwhile, while we are uncertain about our destination, not about our path, but about our destination, **we are not in shut-down mode**. Nor are we in “paralysis of analysis” mode. We are not going to wait for the perfect discernment to try some new things. Rather, I believe greatly in the word “try” and in the word “experiment,” and in the process of trial and error. No, we are **moving forward** with new initiatives. They are the **“already”** in the midst of the **“not yet.”** I would like to discuss these sector by sector.
- Pastoral/Social Pastoral Sector
 - **Newman Centers:** We have men in the following Newman Centers: UC Irvine, UC San Diego, Cal Poly SLO, USC, Boise State, and I am happy to announce we are returning a Jesuit to the Newman Center at Stanford this fall, **Bob Glynn**. Why are we doing this? Two reasons, and I was skeptical, as a consultant. 1. Fr. Nicolas really called us to a creative engagement with young people, and in particular, young adults. 2. A sizable number of younger Jesuits showed great energy and enthusiasm for this. 3. Potential for vocations. How many in this room were members of Newman Centers before joining the Society? As you can see, many!
 - **Native Ministries:** Formerly, we would send Jesuits to a reservation, and they would be lifers out on the Rez. Virtually no younger people are asking to do this, as it seems to them to be solitary. We must ask, are we being called to discontinue this ministry? I do not believe so. Rather, I believe we are being called to try it new ways. In Missoula, with the departure of Drew Maddock for health reasons, Joseph Carver and the Jesuits of the entire Ravali Community have taken the ministry to native folks at nearby St Ignatius, Sacred Heart, and St. John Berchmans on as a community. They rotate in their masses, with Craig Hightower generously living at the rectory at St Ignatius. Everyone says this is a win-win situation: the native folks, who get three priests, not one. The parishioners at St Francis Xavier in Missoula, who also get three priests and not just two. And the Jesuits enjoy it also. This is one new approach. There are others we are imagining, and perhaps others we have not yet imagined.
 - **Hawaii:** We have explored ministerial needs in places like Hawaii. Last year, after visiting with Bishop Larry Silva, I asked two Jesuits, **Jack Bentz** and **Kevin O’Brien** to visit **Oahu**, to explore ways the Jesuits West Province in collaboration with JST might help. Two potential ideas came to light, and one of these we thought we might help with, namely, providing spiritual direction training for deacons, their wives, and others. As we pondered this, they of the Honolulu Diocese realized that

they had the resources themselves to serve this need. The bishop was grateful we had asked and explored, and this process itself helped them help themselves.

- **Hispanic Ministry:** We also explored the needs of the Hispanic community in western parts of Portland, and there is a need we can help with. So in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Portland, with whom we share the cost, I have missioned a Jesuit, **Fr Bill Ameche**, to do supply work in Hillsboro, Aloha, and Cornelius, among other places, with the hope that SEEL might soon offer the Exercises in Spanish in those parts of the greater metropolitan area. And in Tacoma, the growing Latino Church borders upon and includes the geographical area of our own St Leo's. St Leo's will be twinned with Sacred Heart Parish so that the growing Hispanic community can be served. **Homeless ministry:** Berkeley, Hollywood. In all of our major cities in the West, the population of homeless continues to grow. **Frank Buckley** explores ways to serve that community in Hollywood, as he and the Jesuits and our partners in Blessed Sacrament engage in conversation about using our resources to serve that need. I have also asked **Sonny Manual** to explore ways we might serve the growing Veteran homeless population in the Bay Area. JST may be a partner with us in some way in that endeavor.
- We try and have the successes of the northern part of the province be transplanted to the southern part, and vice versa. Mike Kennedy's successful **Jesuit Restorative Justice Ministry**, which works with incarcerated youth and adults has been adapted and has taken root in Seattle under the name JRJI:NW under the leadership of Jennifer Kelly. And the successful **SEEL** program, the Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life in the northwest, is being adapted and spread in the south.
- **Secondary and Pre-secondary Sector**
 - **9 to 18.** First, it's important to note that the family of Jesuit schools has grown in the past 17 years from 9 to 18. Tom Smolich, when he was provincial of California, said that if we are so good at secondary education, we should be doing more of it. Well, we are!
 - **Monroe High School** in Fairbanks and **Loyola-Sacred Heart** in Missoula re-acquainted themselves with their Jesuit roots and are endorsed by us.
 - We also now have **3 Cristo Rey Schools** and **3 Nativity Schools** in our network, these schools serving a lower-income population.
 - Two of our traditional schools in our province have now opened middle schools on their campuses: **Brophy** in Phoenix and **St Ignatius** in San Francisco. These schools which serve low-income populations and prepare them for our traditional high schools are excellent examples of how we are engaging our established works in new ways. Much credit to Eddie Reese for these great innovations.
 - There is a unique collaboration between some unlikely partners, perhaps: Seattle Prep and Verbum Dei High School in Watts share an on-line art class through a collaboration with Seattle U.

- **Higher Education**

- In terms of innovation, our five universities are truly born and bred on innovation. I remember seeing that up-close when I was a board member at Santa Clara, and I now see that it is true of all five of our universities.
- Collaborating in new ways. The five universities meet annually and are having conversations about ways they could work together and lower costs in ways that would have been unthinkable five years ago.
- And the new multi-apostolic Jesuit community, **Della Strada Jesuit Community**, in Spokane is evidence that one of our institutions is indeed willing to provide housing for Jesuits who don't work at that institution, such is their conviction that just the presence of Jesuits on the campus enriches that university. As we contemplate further consolidation of our Jesuit communities, we look to the stability and leadership of our five universities.

- **Equity and Inclusion Committee:** If we look again at the first year novice class, we see the true diversity of the Province. This is a gift, and we must be good stewards of it. In my three remaining years as provincial I have asked this committee to help us come with a three-year plan for helping our province to grow in diversity, equity, and inclusion. In the panel this morning, Gordon Bennett and Dick Case were asked if we had our own racial issues worked out. Well, we don't! I hope that those of us who need to own our white privilege can do so as beautifully as Dick Wood did this morning.

4. **Conclusion:** We have reason to hope. And to trust. God is good to us. God is merciful to us and to me in ways we do not deserve it. God is not at all finished with us yet. Let me conclude with a poem by our own Thomas Flowers which gets at this. As a prelude, I read from Luke: "He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah." (Luke 4:16-17a)

The Poem is entitled,

"Glad Tidings"

The air was
Already heavy

With the weariness
Of argument,
The bitterness
Of anger

And no one
Needed anyone else
To tell them
They were wrong

So when you said
You had good news

We were skeptical,

And when you said
You'd free us from
What held us bound

We told you
To prove it,

To give us
A reason
To trust

The hope
You stirred (*Pause*)

By the way
What you came
To say
Revealed you'd
Been listening.

My brothers, Jesus is indeed listening. Let us go with him. He is worthy of our trust.