



Curia Generalizia della Compagnia di Gesù
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First Greetings

2008/05

TO THE WHOLE SOCIETY

Dear Friends in the Lord,

This is the first time I write to you since the election, exactly one month ago, on January 19. I think you can easily imagine the surprise, even shock, I received with the election. I had considered myself out of bounds because of my age, without entering into the long series of inadequacies and shortcomings that are well known to those with whom I have lived and worked.

Maybe the most difficult thing to explain is the experience we all went through on those days, searching in the fog, looking for the Will of God and the good of the Church and the Society. It was this intense, sincere and open search that made it impossible for me to decline or refuse the choice. You cannot say “no” to people so sincerely looking for the Will of God. And now I assure you that I will give all my energy and person to the work of helping the Society move forward, supporting what is good, responding to new challenges, encouraging to face the difficult task of being consistent with and credible witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we believe in.

The task is daunting, the service needed is unlimited, the pace of change in our world is dizzying; we could not even dream of contributing to the mission of our Society if the Lord were not with us, guiding, supporting and comforting us with his Spirit. We will be led and supported by this Spirit and the love for the Church in all its different manifestations. We want to serve this Church with total dedication and depth under the guidance of and in fidelity to the Holy Father, and in an ever friendly and trusting cooperation with the Hierarchy wherever we are.

The incredible support, availability and spirit of service that I am finding in the General Congregation and at all levels of this Roman Curia is a source of joy and of hope. This convinces me that we, Jesuits, will be able to continue doing our best for others; and that we will take our humble position in the Church, as servants called to share our lives, invited to teach and to learn, to search for depth and to pray with intensity and joy.

The weeks following the Election have been equally intensive in the search of a good team to help me with the Governance of the Society. We have almost concluded the task with the election of the Four Assistants *ad providentiam* and the *Admonitor*. I am deeply grateful to the General Congregation; they have given me an excellent team that will help me sleep better, with the confidence that I have the best possible advice and support. Even so I will probably make mistakes and will need your understanding and forgiveness whenever they happen. Be “generously” ready!

As you have surely read elsewhere, the new group of Regional Assistants and General Councilors is composed of the following men:

Africa – Fr. Jean-Roger Ndombi (AOC)
South Latin America – Fr. Marcos Recolons de Arquer (BOL)
North Latin America – Fr. Gabriel Ignacio Rodríguez (COL)
South Asia – Fr. Lisbert D’Souza (BOM)
East Asia and Oceania – Fr. Daniel Patrick L Huang (PHI)
Central and East Europe – Fr. Adam Žak (PME)
South Europe – Fr. Joaquín Barrero Díaz (CAS)
West Europe – Fr. Antoine Kerhuel (GAL)
United States – Fr. James E. Grummer (WIS)

I have also named two General Councilors who will normally reside outside of Rome and come to Rome as needed. They are:

Fr. Mark Rotsaert (BSE and CEP)
Fr. Arturo M. Sosa Abascal (VEN)

The four Assistants *ad providentiam* elected on Monday, February 18, are:

Fr. Lisbert D’Souza
Fr. James E. Grummer
Fr. Federico Lombardi (ITA)
Fr. Marcos Recolons de Arquer

Also on February 18 I named Fr. Ignacio Echarte Oñate (LOY) the new Secretary of the Society to succeed Fr. Frank E. Case (ORE).

It is my pleasure to take this occasion to thank, on behalf of the entire Society, all who will soon be leaving the General Curia after the General Congregation. First of all, we all owe a deep and sincere vote of thanks to Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach for his tireless, inspiring and very wise leadership of the Society over the past quarter of a century. Likewise I want to thank the out-going General Councilors – Fathers Joseph Nguyễn Công Đoan (ASO and VIE), Jacques Gellard (EOC and GAL), Jean Ilboudo (AFR and AOC), Wendelin Köster (ECE and GER), Valentín Menéndez (ALS and CAM), Manuel Morujão (EMR and POR), and Ignacio Echarte (DIR and LOY) – and Father Frank Case, the out-going Secretary of the Society. They have served the Church and the Society generously and well.

Other changes will be taking place in the Curia after the Congregation, of which I will be informing you in due time.

Finally, while counting on the accompaniment of your prayers during the coming months of transition, I also commend the remaining days of the General Congregation to your continued good prayers.

Sincerely in the Lord,



A. Nicolás, S.J.
Superior General

Rome, 22 February 2008