

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF THE 21ST CENTURY: EDUCATING FOR SOLIDARITY

by Paul Locatelli, S.J.

On October 6, 2000 in his talk entitled, “The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education,” Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, introduced “well-educated solidarity” as the new standard for Jesuit education for the 21st century.

Specifically, he noted that the real measure of our Jesuit universities lies in who our students become in the emerging global reality, with its great possibilities and deep contradictions. Tomorrow’s “whole person,” he thought, cannot be mature or complete without an educated awareness of global society and culture with which to contribute socially and generously in the real world. Our graduates must have, in brief, a *well-educated solidarity*. We must raise our Jesuit educational standard to form a “whole person of solidarity for the real world.”¹

This seminal and bold vision inspires a new sense of purpose for Jesuit colleges and universities around the world. Many are using this standard to evaluate their mission, programs, and pedagogies. Nonetheless, this new standard raises questions, ambiguities, and even controversy.

In an email to several faculty with the subject line, “From Jargon to Gibberish,” a Santa Clara faculty member wrote “to protest several recent descriptions of our commitment to fostering ‘solidarity.’” These descriptions, he said, “strike me as vague and sloppy. . . I think we should be embarrassed about displaying them to the world while we are proclaiming our quest for academic excellence.”

Subsequently, after a number of exchanges among faculty, he wrote another email entitled, “Solidarity Salvaged?” In it he alleged that Father Kolvenbach’s whole person of solidarity formulation was “hopelessly obscure. . . When we promulgate our jargon in a way that burdens outsiders who encounter it, aren’t we marginalizing them and violating the norms of solidarity?”

Other faculty joined the discussion. One response noted that “the term [solidarity] has been adopted by the Society of Jesus to describe the biblical and humanist concern for social justice. It implies, moreover, the element of our identification with concerns of the poor advocated by Pope John Paul II among other [places] in his play *Our God’s Brother*.”

In this paper I discuss how solidarity is a virtue just as charity, justice, and hope are. Also, I argue solidarity is not simply a euphemism for political movements or economic systems, nor is it an ideology. And I will raise two significant questions: One, how can we, as universities, legitimately integrate solidarity into our academic and educational mission? And two, how will – and why should – students acquire a well-educated solidarity that leads to fashioning a more humane and just world? In other words, what does well-educated solidarity and academic excellence do for our students in today’s world?

In response, let us begin with Father Kolvenbach’s ideal pedagogy for a well-educated solidarity.

He urges students to “let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering, and engage it constructively.” He notes that “solidarity with our less fortunate brothers and sisters. . . is learned through ‘contact’ rather than through ‘concepts.’ When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. Personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the degradation and injustice that others suffer, is the catalyst for solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry, reflection, and action.”²

What is the “gritty reality” that we must allow to infect our colleges and universities?

Our responses to the South Asia tsunami, the recent earthquake in the Kashmir region of India and Pakistan, and Hurricane Katrina provide some examples of stunning moments in time when we realize how interconnected we are and how much we want to be united in helping and consoling those affected. Katrina, in particular, made us painfully aware of the correlations among poverty, race, ethnicity, and class, with more than 25 percent of the citizens of New Orleans living in abject poverty, and of them, 84 percent were African-Americans.³ The underlying causes, be they prejudice, ignorance, neglect, or something else, that heightened that crisis and its aftermath may well be one of the greatest social justice challenges for us today.

Roughly 170,000 people have died and 127,000 are missing following the terrible South Asia tsunami. Yet, how does that one-time event compare to the on-going gritty reality of this world where there are growing levels of poverty and inequality, where more than one billion people still live on less than a dollar a day, and where, each year, three million people die from the HIV/AIDS pandemic, leaving tens of millions orphaned. Add to this the scandal in Africa where 4.8 million children die annually before the age of five. That’s nine per minute every day of the year. Even worse, Africa is the only region in the world where the mortality rate among children is rising.⁴

Ongoing scandalous realities like these require critical analysis of their root causes and educated solutions to address such devastating problems. They are the ones that Fr. Kolvenbach want us to include in our teaching, research, and learning because, as he notes, global problems require global solutions. And, a well-educated solidarity will prevent us from becoming de-sensitized to these realities.

Ignatian Origins of Solidarity and Academic Excellence

The conjunction and creative tension between solidarity with the poor and academic excellence has been part of Jesuit education since the time Ignatius Loyola founded the Society of Jesus in 1540. Excellence in learning was paramount for Ignatius. He studied at the universities of Salamanca and Paris, which were then among the finest educational institutions in Europe. And he wanted the same excellence for all Jesuits, and, in opening colleges, for their lay students as well.

Originally, education was not a work of the Society of Jesus. Rather, Ignatius insisted that the mission of the Society was to go to any place in the world and, for the greater glory of God, initiate any work with the hope that such service achieved the greatest good for individuals,

communities, and the Church.⁵

But eight years after founding the Society, the people of Messina, Sicily, petitioned Ignatius to establish the first Jesuit college, or high school, for lay students. Educating the poor and rich children of Messina, he felt, would improve all their lives and the culture of the city, and so Ignatius approved. Ignatius had great faith in education. In 1554, when Peter Canisius, S.J., asked him what Jesuits could best do for Germany, he responded, “colleges.” By 1556, the year Ignatius died, another thirty-five educational institutions in Europe and India were founded, including the renowned Gregorian University in Rome.⁶

The Ignatian aim for Jesuit education remains the same: to form well-educated, morally-responsible and reflective humanists who will leaven their communities with knowledge, wisdom, and virtue.⁷ The formation of contemplatives in action is the ideal. Love is the end of contemplation, and love is seen more in actions than in words.⁸ Social action emanates from their imagining realistic possibilities for the greater good of society, and it flows ultimately from communion with the Divine and the recognition of God in all creation.

The Catholic University and the Commitment to Excellence

Academic excellence must always be the *sine qua non* of Jesuit education. Excelling academically is a hallmark of Catholic education and Ignatius insisted that Jesuit universities thrive within the context of Catholic education.

In *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, “From the Heart of the Church,” Pope John Paul II reminded us that the great medieval universities of the West, such as the universities of Bologna in the 11th century, and Paris and Oxford in the 12th century, originated in the Catholic tradition of learning and inquiry.

As the Church played a central role in the development of the great medieval universities of Europe, today it must play a similar creative role for American Catholic universities while always respecting the principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

Universities are the places where the Church does its best thinking, learning, and teaching. At the same time, universities must enhance academic inquiry by preserving continuity with their faith tradition, which *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* identifies as “the search for an integration of knowledge, a dialogue between faith and reason, an ethical concern, and a theological perspective.”⁹

There have been some aberrations to this commitment as, for example, in cases of Galileo and, in the 20th century, the Jesuit John Courtney Murray. However, in both cases, the hierarchy eventually vindicated both scholars. Importantly, Catholic orthodoxy is not fundamentalism and ought not impose limitations on scrutiny and investigation, but rather instill the freedom to grapple with the broadest and deepest questions about cultures and justice within their global realities, and, in interreligious dialogue, to broach questions about the perplexities of life and death, good and evil, and the mystery of God.

Catholic university communities must simultaneously search for truth in any field of knowledge and encourage a Catholic imagination that is agile in dealing with every area of learning. Within a plurality of religions and cultures, Catholic social and intellectual teachings and Catholic theology must have a critical place in the search for truth and knowledge.

As Pope John Paul II insisted in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, “Every Catholic university, as a university, is an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching, and various services offered to the local, national, and international communities.”¹⁰

All of us readily agree that research and teaching are necessary and proper for any university, but a third dimension, service to communities, is not as readily accepted as a value in itself. But such service goes directly to the point of using knowledge wisely and constructively to fashion a more humane and just society rather than only to ensure the most efficient political or profitable economic systems. As John Paul II put it in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*:

A Catholic university, as any university, is immersed in human society; as an extension of its service to the Church and always within its proper competence, it is called on to become an ever more effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals as well as for society. Included among its research activities, therefore, will be a study of serious contemporary problems in areas such as the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, a more just sharing in the world's resources, and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community at a national and international level. University research will seek to discover the roots and causes of the serious problems of our time, paying special attention to their ethical and religious dimensions.¹¹

In this context, the meaning of solidarity begins to take shape. Let's explore, in part, the historical and contemporary understanding of solidarity .

Understanding the Virtue of Solidarity

For the Catholic university, solidarity begins with a Christian anthropology and a Christian humanism nested in God's creation. A theology of solidarity indicates humanity's covenant relationship with God. In addition, humanity became truly a “new creation” when God became one with us in the Incarnation – “the” origin and epitome of a new solidarity. In the person and life of Christ, God identifies with the least in human history,¹² shatters human sinfulness, and redeems us.

In the context of Christian anthropology, solidarity invites us to transcend the human condition, not by sacrificing personal liberty, but by realizing our freedom and full potential in the community, and assisting others to do the same. It is important to restore the sense of transcendence and the sacred, and not let human life be devalued, manipulated, or lost. Human solidarity thus becomes communion which, more than interconnection or interdependence, is a

way of living together as one human family.

The foundation for solidarity as a virtue began around the turn of the 20th century. Since then, Catholic social thought has used solidarity to insist always on the human dignity of each person, to refuse to permit individuals to be dehumanized, and to promote the common good. It also locates political economy within society, and not vice versa. Both society and political economy must be ontologically and ethically oriented toward cooperation and harmony among people and nations for the common good.¹³

The bishops at the Second Vatican Council, in *Gaudium et Spes*, stressed the need for cooperation and solidarity for the Church and society alike. They noted we are to make our own “the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted.” Prophetically, they insisted that we find no more eloquent proof of solidarity than in engagement and conversation with the entire human family about the pressing global issues of “hunger, poverty, illiteracy, oppression, war, international rivalries, and the whole purpose and meaning of human existence.”¹⁴

Following the Council, Paul VI proclaimed the “spirit of solidarity” as essential for integral human development. And John Paul II taught that solidarity is a gift from God in creating and redeeming the human race. His Christian anthropology understood solidarity as seeing each person as a gift from God, to be loved just as God loves. And love inspires the sense of responsibility. His position reiterates, for the contemporary world, the rich tradition of Christian anthropology and humanism. And, it echos Ignatius’ vision of love and action.

In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, John Paul II emphasized that solidarity is a virtue which is not just some “feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress” at another person’s plight but rather “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. . . to the good of all . . . because we are truly responsible for all.”¹⁵ He challenged individualism on the grounds of our common humanity and freedom.

In 1975, Jesuits adopted the integrating principle of the service of faith that must promote justice, but they also recognized that the justice of socio-political economy and the justice of the gospels must converge. As they noted: “reconciliation with God demands the reconciliation of people with one another.”¹⁶

Twenty years later, Jesuits worldwide again affirmed that the commitment to justice is an essential ingredient of faith. And like faith and justice, solidarity transcends any ideology, philosophy or political movement.¹⁷ Rather, rooted in Scripture, tradition and human wisdom, the justice of solidarity requires working on not only on fashioning more humane and just socioeconomic and political structures, but also on the full range of human and international human rights, the growing inequality and massiveness of poverty, the environment and creation itself, the tragic marginalization of nations, the need for freedom, peace, reconciliation, security and human life itself as well as a concern for refugees, women, and today we must add for children.¹⁸

These are not simply concerns of the Catholic Church or Jesuits, but problems common to all. They are genuinely catholic (with a small “c”) in the sense of applying universally to our global

society.

Moving beyond Social Justice to the Justice of Solidarity

Solidarity defines relationships between individuals, professions, communities, churches, and nations as communion with each other and God; it is also grounded in our reconciliation with God. It calls for moving from social justice to the justice of solidarity, as both a theological and social imperative, based on *agape*, on love in friendship. As one scholar noted, “if justice is conceived in the biblical sense of God’s liberating action which demands a necessary human response – a concept of justice which is far closer to *agape* than to justice in the classical philosophical sense – then justice must be defined as of the essence of the gospel itself.”¹⁹

Since the justice of the gospel is *agape*, our friendship with God is integral to our friendship with all of humanity and the creation that sustains humanity. With love as the foundation, the justice of solidarity is not an accumulation of “my justice” and “your justice,” competing with each other, but rather it is “our justice.” And we have an ethical and moral responsibility for the entire human family, from the well-to-do to those suffering and dying from hunger and thirst, disease and broken hearts, from natural disasters or genocide, as in Rwanda and Darfur. This communion as one human family encompasses but is greater than economic, political, cultural, technological, religious, or any other form of interconnections and interdependence.

Solidarity begins as a theological virtue that differentiates Catholic social and intellectual understanding of life from the excesses of two great mindsets of the past century: liberalism and individualism. Specifically, Marxist communism and neo-liberal individualism are challenged by the perspective of solidarity. Marxism ignores the human dignity and rights of each person on the one hand, and the social and moral responsibility for the common good on the other. When Pope Benedict XVI warned that the West is in the grip of a “dictatorship of relativism,” he was challenging the extreme of self-indulgent individualism and excessive consumerism. Relativism, another name for the excess of neo-liberal self-interest, eviscerates the only genuine basis for human rights, which depends on the belief that every human being has transcendent value.

The solidarity of justice extends beyond being a theological virtue since its aim is to fashion a humane and just society. Its social benefits, then, extend to the entire human family by encompassing the full range of human relationships. The systems and processes, be they political, economic, scientific, cultural, educational, to cite only a few, must be for the common good of peoples, cultures, and nations while respecting the dignity of each person.

As one engineer at Santa Clara noted, solidarity can connect theology and science. It leads us to recognize the universe as nonlinear and a highly complex set of relationships which only God can create, but only science can, in some aspects, explore and explain, for example, by chaos theory and quantum mechanics.

The political philosopher John Rawls and economist Amartya Sen help to clarify the transition from justice as fairness to a justice of solidarity. Rawls urges us to imagine that the original condition of humanity is not a community but a social contract. Relationships operate like a mildly regulated market, a modified utilitarian social contract, where everyone has the

opportunity to participate, even though the results cannot be guaranteed. His understanding of justice aims to promote fairness by establishing social structures and rules that benefit, at least minimally, the least advantaged members of society.

Sen, the 1998 Nobel Prize winner for economics, goes beyond the justice as fairness of Rawls to the justice of solidarity.²⁰ For Sen, persons are owed their freedom in justice. Freedom is not understood in an ideal or an historical way. Rather, it is a freedom that ensures human dignity and the broad range of social and political institutions that sustain each person's freedom within society. He adds the dimensions of human freedom for each person and society to economic development. His ethical framework for socio-economic development leads to a prosperous and just society for the poor and the rich.

Educating for Solidarity

Educating for a prosperous society of faith and justice was eloquently summarized by Ignacio Ellacuría, the martyred Jesuit president of the University of Central America, in 1982. His idea of a university offers a perspective on the first question – How can we, as a university, legitimately integrate solidarity into our academic and educational mission? – and a transition to the second question:

A Christian university must take into account the Gospel preference for the poor. This does not mean that only the poor study at the university; it does not mean that the university should abdicate its mission of academic excellence – excellence needed in order to solve complex social problems. It does mean that the university should be present intellectually where it is needed: to provide science for those who have no science; to provide skills for the unskilled; to be a voice for those who do not possess the academic qualifications to promote and legitimate their rights.²¹

Ellacuría provides us a practical perspective on the virtue of the solidarity of justice. He still challenges us to ask and to educate for responses to: “Who is our neighbor?” and “How do we become neighbors to all in society?” These questions underlie the gospel iteration of the two great commandments and the parable of the good Samaritan.²²

This is the solidarity of justice in *agape* – integrating the justice of the gospel with social justice – that leads to my second question: How will – and why should – students acquire such a well-educated solidarity that leads to fashioning a more humane and just world?

The *gaudium de veritate* that was so precious to Saint Augustine, which identifies the joy of searching for, discovering, and communicating truth “in every field of knowledge,” no longer goes far enough.²³

Father Kolvenbach envisioned a dialectical relationship between “contact” and “concept” that ultimately leads to accompaniment as the new dimension of Ignatian pedagogy. Contact requires engagement with the poor and suffering, including intelligent reflection on that engagement. Concept is intellectual inquiry, thinking critically about the great questions and gritty reality of our time and cultures.²⁴

Exploration is at the heart of both contact and concept, and in the dialectic they mutually enhance each other. At one level, the mind is challenged to change when the heart is touched by direct experience with cultures, including their gritty reality. But at another level, experience with reflection in the search for truth leads to further intellectual inquiry and to the habit of doing the right and virtuous thing. This dialectic has the greatest potential to spark the imagination with great hopes and the desire to transform the world.

The idea of contact is, with its pedagogy of engagement, an enhanced derivative of community-based learning, but he explicitly adds the necessity of moral, and sometimes actual, accompaniment with the poor. Research confirms that students who engage in “contact” gain in “their ability to identify social issues, a sense of connection to the community, openness to other points of view, commitment to social justice, and the perception that problems are systemic rather than the fault of individuals who suffer from the problems.”²⁵

Other research reports that engagement with the off-campus community motivated students to work harder and stimulated them more intellectually. Their international understanding and civic responsibility increased and racial prejudice decreased. Students in ethics classes exhibited significant increases in moral reasoning compared to those without community contact.²⁶

In this dialectic, students discover truth about gritty reality. They also understand themselves and the world better because they see life as others see and understand it. This has the greatest possibility of inspiring them both to think more critically about issues and to accompany others – morally and/or actually – by using their knowledge and talents to act in solidarity. Or as Ellucuría so well articulated it, “to be present intellectually where we are needed,” and “to be voices for those without voice.”

Where Does Educating for Solidarity Leave Us?

Solidarity becomes a virtue that, for believers of any faith tradition and for non-believers, shapes our personality, character, and relationships; that transforms our perspective; that evokes ethical, compassionate actions.

- *First, solidarity improves the quality of education and forms contemplatives in action for the new century.*

Universities play a unique, ethical role in society. Evidence shows that education, combined with stable political, corporate, and legal systems, and the infusion of workable technology, is key both to enhancing the quality of life and to integrating people into their communities.

Solidarity brings all of reality, good and bad, into sharp focus and makes us aware of our obligation as educators, an obligation that I believe is even greater for us than it is for corporate, civic, and community leaders. Only education is able to address the greater questions of our time and our global society, and solidarity opens our horizons to include gritty reality and the preference for the poor in preparing students to be ethical, socially responsible citizens.

Consider poverty and power. The 2000 Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations, with its commitment to cutting in half the proportion of the world's population living in poverty by 2015, is laudable. But despite global progress, the 2005 Human Development Reports questioned whether the power brokers of the 189 governments who signed on will make the necessary investments or have the political will to achieve the goals.²⁷

Communities are not just becoming poor in fact, but poor in spirit, for the hostility of poverty shapes lives in a perverse and pervasive way. Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian priest who has lived in the barrios of Lima for years, summarizes poverty's effects:

Food shortages, housing shortages, the impossibility of attending adequately to health and educational needs, the exploitation of labor, chronic unemployment, disrespect for human worth and dignity, unjust restrictions on freedom of expression (in politics and religion alike) are the daily plight of the poor. The lot of the poor, in a word, is suffering. Theirs is a situation that destroys people, families, and individuals. . . Equally unacceptable is the terrorism and repressive violence with which they are surrounded.²⁸

We give priority to the poor because their needs are greater. We learn much more when we learn with and from them. We can be enriched by them. Jesus called them "blessed" in the Beatitudes;²⁹ often they have richer, deeper spirituality that offers them hope in the midst of conflict and disease, courage in the face of unjust systems and societies that neglect them, and a capacity to love even in a world that discriminates against them.

With poverty and its intertwined problems of race, ethnicity, and class increasing in the United States, we need to ask what is going wrong with our democracy, and our economic, educational, and legal systems. Similar questions must be asked about the process of globalization. This is not about eradicating governing systems, but developing the knowledge to change them, freeing them, where needed, of structural flaws, corruption, and injustice.

Because of the rapid pace of change and the complexities of globalization, and because reducing poverty while addressing the attendant problems of illness, instability, and illiteracy require sophisticated analysis for ethical actions, universities, especially Catholic, Jesuit universities, must play an increasingly important role in preparing reflective – contemplative – graduates who will seek to fashion a more humane and just global society. In this context, the model of insulated and detached research and learning is not enough.

- *Second, solidarity transforms our point of view by placing the common good and the dignity of each person at the center, as the highest values.*

We all begin with our own point of view. We all begin with presuppositions about life and the world, about individuals and communities. We all have individual value systems. When we question our presuppositions and see life as others do, especially as the poor do, our learning, research, and teaching will be changed.

Most of our students will never have direct contact with great tragedies like Hurricane Katrina or the adversities of those suffering from HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. However, immersion trips and community-based courses that include post-experience intellectual reflection on global realities such as poverty and alienation, discrimination and illiteracy, inequality and global warming will influence their perspectives and presuppositions about life.

Consider globalization. Globalization contributes to the progress of the world through economic development, international “communication, financial markets and trade, exchange of culture, migration, and dissemination of knowledge including science and technology,”³⁰ and, for some, greater understanding of religions. But globalization also puts indigenous people and cultures in jeopardy. It can also hasten social dislocation by shifts of populations in search of economic opportunities or to escape wars and violence. How many of us know of a person who, in search of economic opportunities, has left family behind in Central America, Africa, or Haiti, only to have their hopes dashed?

Solidarity challenges the case for, and even the language of, globalization as primarily an economic system or process. Many believe that the centrality and connectedness of our humanity is found not in the transcendence of communion, but rather in the global liberal economic system. For example, in “Why Globalization Works,” Martin Wolf argues raising the standard of living would solve all problems; that the impoverished countries in Africa bear witness to the limits of globalization only because they are outside of the global economic system. His reductionist argument never considers the transcendence and sacredness of the person and community.³¹

First outlining many benefits of globalization, Fr. Kolvenbach also noted some “perverse connection” between globalization and markets:

Traffic in human beings and arms, drugs, exploitation of women and sex, child labor, manipulation of the media, mafia of all types, terrorism, war, and the debasement of the value of human life. How can we not in this moment think of Africa, the paradigm for all the negative faces that the globalization of the market can offer?³²

Some negative effects of global economic development are too easily overlooked, even avoided. The assumption that native peoples want only a better economic life dismisses the fact that

globalization often marginalizes them and destroys their cultural heritage. One person in the Philippines remarked, “Much talk of markets, but in reality very little access; much talk of jobs, but they were somewhere else; and much talk of a better life, but for others.” And another commented, “There is no point to a globalization that reduces the price of a child’s shoes, but costs the father his job.”³³

To be beneficial, globalization must favor poor and rich alike. It must ensure the human dignity and rights of each and the common good of all by advancing equality, economic prosperity, cultural integrity, and enhanced communication. We as educators, understanding both the positive dimensions of globalization and addressing its underside, must be an integral part of the research, teaching, and learning on the subject.

At the 32nd General Congregation of 1975, representatives of the Society of Jesus asked whether we really were willing to pay the price for a more humane and just world.³⁴ Thirty years later that question still has resonance and forces us to recognize that, absent the justice of solidarity and that pursuit of the common good rooted in *agape*, globalization can easily degenerate into a dehumanizing process.

- *Third, solidarity leads to equality in relationships and in community.*³⁵

Solidarity challenges the illusions of privilege and isolated individualism, binding us emotionally and functionally to others and the earth – not only in periods of disaster and crisis but in all times and for all people and places. Because solidarity is both a theological and social virtue it inspires a holistic view of the world, recognizing that a person’s greatest potential is realized in community.

Solidarity, then, with its pedagogy of both engagement and accompaniment, calls for an active disposition and an eagerness to participate with all who make up the one human family, not merely those who hold an established or dominant point of view or who have acquired power by position or wealth.

An Aboriginal Australian made this point beautifully when she reminded a student from the United States, “If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

Julio Perez, who works in the Casa program in El Salvador, put it this way: “Solidarity isn’t only realizing what is happening in the world and giving money in response. It is about asking why are these things happening? Why are there so many people living in poverty? And asking what we may do together to eradicate social injustice.”

- *And finally, solidarity leads to moral action.*³⁶

Solidarity vitalizes learning for students as they discover they can make a difference in their

world and institute systemic change in societies. It helps students inculcate the habit of acting in the constant hope of fashioning a more humane and just world, with equality, freedom, and human dignity.

If education is about developing the habit of the heart to choose the greater good, as Ignatius and Kolvenbach would have it, then the justice of solidarity, as both a theological and social virtue, is choosing to be morally responsible for all of humanity and creation, regardless of one's academic discipline.

One notable piece of evidence that our students are understanding a well-educated solidarity can be found in remarks by Chris Wahl, Santa Clara University's valedictorian of last June:

A wise teacher once said, "You have to have one foot in the library and one foot in the gutter." During an immersion trip to Immokalee, Florida, my friends and I joined the farm workers in their struggle for justice. During the trip we witnessed the inhumane conditions in which migrant workers live. I realized that my happiness is bound up in the happiness of these farmers. When we encounter real people, we can no longer treat them as statistics and numbers.

We begin to understand that there are human beings living in these situations who have families and dreams and hopes. Only in solidarity can we hope to find any real justice, and only in justice can we find real peace.

After we returned from Immokalee, I was inspired to study all the more fervently, because I knew the faces behind the statistics and numbers. Analyzing the situation from numerous academic perspectives meant looking at social psychology, economics and ethics. My friends and I organized a teach-in and a rally in order to raise awareness. . .we knew that as people of compassion we could not remain silent while our fellow humans suffered.

Chris remarkably summarized the meaning of "a well-educated solidarity." He understood that solidarity invites and demands that we give the poor and the vulnerable a stake in conceptualizing and structuring our local and global moral ecology, while not ignoring our responsibility nor that of those who hold civic or community offices. A just and humane world demands that we act together.

Ed Schaefer, a professor of mathematics at Santa Clara whose specialty is cryptography, provides us with another example of educating for solidarity. Ed is currently writing a textbook in this highly technical field while on sabbatical in the southern African country of Malawi. He is spending the year at Mzuzu University to help its math department set up a new graduate program in Information Theory, Coding Theory, and Cryptography. Malawi is one of the ten poorest nations in the world, with a per capita income of \$160 and a life expectancy of 37 years. Why would a cryptographer choose to spend a year there?

Ed answered that question in his sabbatical application:

I am going to Mzuzu University for a year in order to learn. I will learn about the lives of people living in Malawi. Undoubtedly they will have things to teach me about how to live and I expect to mature as a person and community member as a result of this. When I return, I will share what I learn with the SCU community and will look for opportunities. . .to share this knowledge.

The intuition of Ed and Chris is that learning from and with the poor will make them better persons, as scholars, teachers, students, as citizens, as members of communities, and better at whatever they will do. Both have been inspired to take responsibility for the social realities of this world.

I end with a query and a suggestion: universities must be places of open and exacting discernment and debate. They must be effective at preserving a humanistic orientation in the quest for intellectual, ethical, and theological excellence. But if we believe intelligent inquiry and reflection on experience happens best with the guidance of mentors, teachers, and researchers, what obligation do we have for an education of solidarity?

And, for the next conference on our commitment to justice, I suggest that we change the line: “engaging the world” to “transforming the world.”

Thank you.

Notes

I want to thank the members of the Theological Reading Group at Santa Clara for their critique and suggestions and Ron Hansen for his insightful comments. While I adopted some of their suggestions with interpretation, any errors are solely mine.

¹ Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., “The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American, Jesuit Higher Education,” address at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California, October 6, 2000.

² Kolvenbach, “The Service of Faith.” Cf also: Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. “Address to World Alumni/ae Congress,” Kolkata, Poland, January 22, 2003, p. 5.

³ Jason deParle, “What Happens to a Race Deferred,” *New York Times -Week in Review*, September 4, 2005, p. 1.

⁴ Preliminary assessment on Sub-Saharan Africa – the human costs of the 2015 ‘business-as-usual’ scenario. U.N. Human Development Report Office. 2005.

⁵ *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*. Part III. #304. Also see #82, 92, 308, 588, 603, 605, 626, 749.

⁶ John O’Mally, S.J., *The First Jesuits*. (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1993) p. 207

⁷ *Constitutions*, IV.11.1 #440.

⁸ Ignatius of Loyola. *The Spiritual Exercises*. particularly, the “Contemplation to Attain Love.”

⁹ Pope John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. n. 12. Endnotes to Ex Corde: [14]. Cf. The Magna Carta of the European Universities, Bologna, Italy, September 18, 1988, "Fundamental Principles." [15]. Cf. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 59: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1080; Declaration on Catholic Education *Gravissimum Educationis*, n. 10: AAS 58 (1966), p. 737. "Institutional autonomy" means that the governance of an academic institution is and remains internal to the institution; "academic freedom" is the guarantee given to those involved in teaching and research that, within their specific specialized branch of knowledge and according to the methods proper to that specific area, they may search for the truth wherever analysis and evidence lead them, and may teach and publish the results of this search, keeping in mind the cited criteria, that is, safeguarding the rights of the individual and of society within the confines of the truth and the common good.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* n. 1

¹¹ *Ibid.* n. 32.

¹² cf. Matthew 25:31ff

¹³ "Solidarity" by Matthew Lamb in *The new Dictionary of Catholic Social thought* (the Liturgical Press, 1994, pags. 908-912. Since the last century, Catholic social theorists use "solidarity" to differential Catholic social theory from modern theories of liberalism and individualism. Catholic social thought refuses to permit individuals to be dehumanized. Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* and Pius XI's *Quadragesimo anno* insist that society and the economy are ontologically and ethically oriented toward cooperation and harmony. Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* stressed the need for cooperation and solidarity both ecclesially and politically. Paul VI's *Populorum progressio* likewise named the "spirit of solidarity" as an absolute need for integral human development. In *Lavorem exercens*, John Paul II taught that solidarity is a gift from God in creating and redeeming the human race. He emphasized in *Sollicitudo rei socialis* that solidarity is a "virtue." [These points are likewise stressed in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching*, ed., Kenneth R. Himes, OFM (Georgetown University Press, 2004)].

¹⁴ Abbot, S.J. and Gallagher, *Gaudium et Spes*. N. 1. The Documents of Vatican II (New York: Guild Press, 1966).

¹⁵ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, n. 38.

¹⁶ Documents of the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977), D4, n2, D 4, n 69.

¹⁷ Documents of the 34th General congregation of the society of Jesus (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit sources, 1995). D2, n 4.

¹⁸ GC34, D2, n 5-9, and Complementary Norms, VII, n 247. 1 & 2, p. 273-74.

¹⁹ Charles Murphy, cited in Marvin L. Krier Mich, "Catholic social Teaching and Movements" (Mystic, Conn.: 1995, p. 193.)

²⁰ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York, NY: Random House, 1999).

²¹ Ignacio Ellacuria, S.J., "The Task of a Christian University," Commencement Address at Santa Clara University, June 12, 1982; "Una universidad para el pueblo," *Diakonia* 6:23 (1982), p. 41-57.

²² Matthew 22: 34ff and Luke 10:29ff

²³ *Ex Corde* n.1

²⁴ The four educational imperative of Bernard Lonergan offer an parallel namely, experience, understanding, judging, and responding morally; but it's linear rather than dialectic. T.S. Elliot also captures the dialectical relationship when he said: *We shall not cease from exploration ...And the end of all our exploring...Will be to arrive where we started...And know the place for the first time.*

²⁵ Janet Eyler and Dwight Giles, Jr., "The Importance of Program Quality in Service-Learning." In Alan Waterman (ed.) (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey: 1997), p. 64-65.

²⁶ *Service-Learning: Applications from the Research.* edited by Alan S. Waterman. (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey: 1997)

²⁷ 2005 United Nations Development Report. Cf also: "Making poverty history," *The Economist*, December 18, 2004. p. 13.

²⁸ Gustavo Gutierrez, "Option for the Poor," in I. Ellacuria and J. Sobrino, eds., *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), p. 235-250 at 236.

²⁹ Matthew 5:1ff.

³⁰ Amartya Sen, *Globalization and Poverty*, an address at the Institute on Globalization at Santa Clara University,

Santa Clara, CA, October 2002.

³¹ Martin Wolf, "Why Globalization Works" (New Haven, CN, Yale Press, 2004)

³² Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "The Jesuit University in the Light of the Ignatian Charism." Address at the International Meeting of Jesuit Higher Education, (Monte Cucco, Rome), May 27, 2001. n. 30.

³³ Testimonies by the Georgetown study on the effects of globalization and marginlization.

³⁴ GC32, D 4, n 20. Thirty years ago, members of the congregation noted that millions are suffering from poverty and hunger, from the unjust distribution of wealth and resources, and from the consequences of racial, social, and political discrimination, and concluded that not only the quality of life but human life itself is under constant threat but also it is becoming clearer that despite the opportunities offered by an ever more serviceable technology, we are simply not willing to pay the price for a more just and more humane society. Cf. GC 34, D 11, n 9.

³⁵ GC 34, D 26, n 12- 17 notes the importance of being "in solidarity with those most in need" and also Jesuits and colleagues being in "partnership."

³⁶ The prophet Micah (6.8) perhaps, captures the meaning of a justice of solidarity best: what does God ask of us? Only this, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with you God.