

## HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

### 1. Anticipatory Phase of General Congregation 36

In a letter of 20 May 2014 (2014/08), Father General Adolfo Nicolás informed the whole Society that later in the year he intended to summon a General Congregation. He noted that, after the Assistants *ad providentiam* indicated their support for conducting a formal consultation about convoking a General Congregation, he had informed Pope Francis of his plans. Father Nicolás explained that he had consulted the Provincials and Assistants *ad providentiam* according to the procedure described in *Complementary Norm 362*. Since they had indicated their approval for summoning a General Congregation, he announced the cancelation of the meeting of Provincials that he had previously planned for Yogyakarta in January 2015.

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, 8 December 2014, Father Nicolás formally convoked the 36th General Congregation. In his letter to the whole Society, he indicated that all Province Congregations should complete their work before 31 July 2015 so that the first plenary session of the General Congregation could begin in Rome on 3 October 2016, the feast of St. Francis Borgia. In addition to encouraging the Province Congregations to deal with any postulates that might emerge, Father Nicolás invited the members to reflect on the three most important calls the Eternal King makes to the whole Society today. He also urged all Jesuits and communities to pray for all the preparations that would culminate in the General Congregation.

Even before the official convocation of the Congregation, Father General established seven working groups within the Curia Generalizia to facilitate preparations for the Congregation. A Postulate Committee [Robert Althann (ZIM), Joaquín Barrero (ESP), Rigobert Kyungu Musenge (ACE), and chair Antoine Kerhuel (GAL)] organized the materials sent by the Province Congregations before the *Coetus Praevius* met. Antoine Kerhuel (GAL) led Lisbert D'Souza (BOM) and Daniel Huang (PHI) in organizing and preparing the work of the official *Coetus Praevius* in anticipation of its arrival. Patrick Mulemi (ZAM) worked with James Grummer (WIS) and Gabriel Ignacio Rodríguez (COL) in addressing issues of Communications. The leader of the Logistics Committee, Arturo Sosa (VEN), called together various members of the Curia community [Lauro Eidt (BRA), Robert Danieluk (PMA), Jesús Rodríguez (UCS), and Gian Giacomo Rotelli (ITA)] to organize the practical details of feeding, housing, and shaping the community of the Electors and Members who attended the Congregation. Ignacio Echarte (ESP) took charge of the Secretariat Committee [Miguel Cruzado (PER) and Tomasz Kot (PMA)] for planning and overseeing the technological and secretarial infrastructure for the Congregation. Severin Leitner (ASR) coordinated the other members of the Liturgy Committee [José Magadia (PHI) and Fratern Masawe (AOR)] in ordering albs, stoles, and vestments for the Congregation participants; organizing the plenary and daily Eucharistic liturgies; and in identifying Clemens Blattert (GER) to lead the daily morning prayers. After the tragic death of Father Leitner, James Grummer (WIS) acted as chair of the group. Chair Thomas McClain (CDT), Daniel Huang, and Douglas Marcouiller (UCS) established procedures and budgets to organize the financial aspects of the Congregation. Father Grummer helped the committees coordinate their tasks to avoid overlapping responsibilities.

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In response to GC 35's call for "the presence of an adequate number of Brothers as electors," the Major Superiors and elected members of each Conference elected a Brother from among those nominated by the Province Congregations. The Electors were Ian Cribb (ASL) for CAP-Asia Pacific, Stephen Power (BRI) for EUR-Europe, Thomas Vaz (BOM for JCS-South Asia, Guy J. Consolmagno (MAR) for JCU-Canada and USA, James Edema (AOR) for JES-Africa and Madagascar, and Eudson Ramos (BRA) for PAL-Latin America.

### **2. The Preparatory Phase of General Congregation 36**

In accord with *Formula* 13 and after consultation with the Conference Presidents and the General Council, Father General named the members of the *Coetus Praevius* and summoned them to convene on 31 August 2015 with the task of completing the immediate preparations for the General Congregation. The members of the *Coetus Praevius* were Father Nicolás (*ex officio*), Moderator Douglas Marcouiller (UCS, General Counselor), Paul Béré (AOC, Professor, Institut de Théologie de la Compagnie de Jésus, Abidjan), Jorge Cela (ANT, President of CPAL), John Dardis (HIB, President of CEP), Stefan Dartmann (GER, Rector, Collegio Germanico e Ungarico, Rome), David Fernández (MEX, Rector, Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico), Thomas Greene (UCS, Rector, Bellarmine House of Studies, St. Louis), Timothy Kesicki (CDT, President of JCU), Michael Lewis (SAF, President of JESAM), Antonio Moreno (PHI, Provincial), George Pattery (CCU, President of JCSA), Francis Xavier Periyannayagam (MDU, Director, Loyola College of Engineering, Chennai), and Mark Raper (ASL, President of JCAP).

The *Coetus Praevius* met 31 August—12 September 2015 to organize, classify, evaluate, and select the themes and postulates that the General Congregation or Father General should address (*FCCG* 13 §13). After carefully studying the 146 postulates, 242 Calls, and 20 themes the *Coetus Praevius* received for review and action, the *Coetus* identified the emphasis on integration that emerged from the Province Congregations throughout the world. In every region, Jesuits called for greater integration of the Society's response to the apostolic challenges of today—care for our human, social, and natural environment; solidarity with migrants and other vulnerable peoples; and the construction of a new culture of dialogue and reconciliation. At the same time, the Province Congregations asked the Society to integrate more deeply its spiritual experience, its community life as friends in the Lord, and its apostolic service. The emphasis on integration led the *Coetus* to form two commissions: one focusing on a call to renewal of Jesuit life and mission; the other focusing on renewed governance for a renewed mission.

When Father Nicolás reported to the whole Society about the work of the *Coetus Praevius* (3 October 2015), he presented a summary of the responses that the Provinces and Regions had made to the question, "Meditating on the call of the Eternal King, what do we discern to be the three most important calls that the Lord makes to the whole Society today?" He asked, in particular, that all the communities and ministries of the Society reflect prayerfully on this summary as a way to participate spiritually in the Congregation's process of discernment. Father Nicolás also announced that, in deference to the Holy Father's opinion, the *Coetus* had decided to entrust the small number of postulates calling for reconsideration of grades to the Superior General for a study of options for celebrating final vows.

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### 3. The Initial Phase of General Congregation 36

The *Formula for a General Congregation* initiated by GC 35 indicates that the work of the General Congregation begins when the President of each Conference convenes the Conference Members (FCG 14 §1). Meeting independently at different times in October and November 2015 all the Conferences began the initial phase of GC 36. Eventually, the Members from South Asia and those from Africa-Madagascar met a second time as well. As required by the *Formula*, at each Conference meeting the Members discussed the materials provided by the *Coetus Praevius*, considered the state of the Society and other pertinent matters, and shared information about who could be elected General. They also chose one Member for each of the following committees: (1) the Coordinating Committee of the General Congregation; (2) the Deputation *De Statu Societatis*; (3) a Commission concerned with “the Renewal of Jesuit Life and Mission”; and (4) a Commission to study “Renewed Governance for a Renewed Mission” (FCG 14 §§2-6).

Father General was an *ex officio* member of the Coordinating Committee, and he presided at its meetings. The six men elected at the Conference meetings were the other members of the committee: Paul Béré (AOC), Jorge Cela (ANT), Stefan Dartmann (GER), Timothy Kesicki (CDT), Antonio Moreno (PHI), and George Pattery (CCU). Immediately after the election of the members of the Coordinating Committee, Father Nicolás called them to their first meeting in Rome, which took place during the first two weeks of December 2015. After the working groups established by Father General provided important background information, the Coordinating Committee began to exercise its responsibility for making decisions about the details of the Congregation.

The Coordinating Committee appointed moderators for the Deputation on the State of the Society [Agbonkhanmeghe Orobator (AOR)], the Commission on the Renewal of Jesuit Life and Mission [Francis Gonsalves (GUJ)], and the Commission on Renewed Governance in the Service of Renewed Mission [Miguel Cruzado (PER)]. In anticipation of the January meetings of the commissions, it established guidelines to help the various groups accomplish their tasks. The Coordinating Committee stressed the importance of working from the perspective of the universal Society rather than a Region or Province, studying and discussing the postulates and themes thoroughly, and the importance of seeking the integration proposed by the *Coetus Praevius*. Furthermore, the Coordinating Committee encouraged each commission to consult experts if they needed further information about a topic. Each commission was free to prepare the text of a possible decree if one might be necessary.

The Coordinating Committee established a Postulate Committee moderated by Douglas Marcouiller (UCS) that included Rigobert Kyungu Musenge (ACE), Bienvenido F. Nebres (PHI), Alfonso Carlos Palacio Larrauri (BRA), Francis Parmar (GUJ), and Nicolas Standaert (CHN). This group performed an invaluable service by studying the 29 personal postulates submitted by individual Jesuits or groups of Jesuits after the first session of the *Coetus Praevius* and the 9 postulates submitted by members of the Congregation before it concluded its business.

The Coordinating Committee also established a Juridical Commission as the *Formula* directed (FCG 15 §2, 7°): Robert Geisinger (CDT), Thomas Greene (UCS), Francis Kurien (HAZ), Michael Lewis (SAF), Benoît Malvaux (BML, moderator), and Luis Javier Sarralde Delgado (COL). This group explained changes introduced into the *Formula* since the last

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Congregation, proposed points for decision by the Congregation, and provided juridical advice on a number of different occasions.

Taking advantage of previously planned meetings, the Coordinating Committee eventually met in late February, mid-August, and late September to continue its planning and coordination of the General Congregation.

The Deputation on the State of the Society included the four Assistants *ad providentiam* [Lisbert D'Souza (BOM), James E. Grummer (WIS), Federico Lombardi (ITA), and Gabriel Ignacio Rodríguez (COL)] and one man elected by each Conference: John Dardis (HIB), Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator (AOR), Bernardinus Herry Priyono (IDO), Sebasti L. Raj (MDU), Mark Ravizza, (CFN), and Arturo Sosa (VEN).

Those elected to serve as the Commission on the Renewal of Jesuit Life and Mission were Stephen Curtin (ASL), José Ignacio García Jiménez (ESP), Francis Gonsalves (GUJ), Ludovic Lado (AOC), John McCarthy (CDA), and Luís Rafael Velasco (ARU).

Soon after the Conferences met, the commissions received an invitation to attend their initial meeting in Rome. Three groups were able to meet at the Curia in Rome at the same time, 13-16 January 2016: the Deputation on the State of the Society, the Juridical Commission, and the Commission on Life and Mission. The Commission on Mission and Governance met 27-30 January. Each commission had the opportunity to meet with Father General to learn more about their responsibilities and the perspective of the Coordinating Committee. The three groups that had the opportunity to meet at the same time were able to pray and meet together, intensifying the sense that the Congregation was underway and making progress, even before the first plenary session.

During their initial meetings, the deputation and commissions planned their work schedules for the months from January through September so they could study, consult, discern, and write in anticipation of the beginning of the plenary phase of the Congregation. All the groups eventually prepared draft documents for review and comment by the Electors and Members. The electronic system developed at the Curia greatly facilitated this work.

Father Nicolás encouraged a number of practical initiatives to assist the Congregation. To make the Congregation as paperless as possible, Father Ignacio Echarte (ESP) and Mr. Kenneth Yong (director of the Curia's information technology) took advantage of the latest technological innovations as they designed a remarkably successful system. To make the aula as safe as possible, Mr. Fabrizio Salis of the Curia staff assisted Fathers Echarte and Sosa in overseeing a massive renovation project that included installing a new heating and air-conditioning system, devising the best use of wireless technology, and reorienting the seating in the aula. In spite of unforeseen challenges and unanticipated delays, all was ready for a series of training sessions before the first plenary assembly. These enabled the Members to familiarize themselves with the systems for simultaneous translation, accessing electronic documents, voting, and electronic communications. After the Congregation was underway, Edward Fassett (CFN) earned high marks for demonstrating heroic patience as he helped technological tyros overcome various difficulties.

On the evening of 2 October, hundreds of Jesuits and friends of the Society joined the Members of the Congregation for a concelebrated Eucharist at the Church of the Gesù that Washington Paranhos (BRA) planned and coordinated as Master of Ceremonies. A visiting

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choir directed by Vlastimil Dufka (SVK) prayerfully supported the full and active participation of the entire congregation. Father Bruno Cadoré, Master of the Order of Preachers, presided and preached with eloquence and grace. He spoke eloquently and inspired the participants by inviting them “to move between the duty of constantly calling the Society to dare the audacity of the ‘improbable’ and the evangelical willingness to do it with the humility of those who know that, in this service where the human engages all his energy, ‘everything depends on God.’”

### **4. First Plenary Sessions of General Congregation 36**

The first plenary session of General Congregation 36 began Monday, 3 October with the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* and opening prayer with every Elector present. Father Nicolás immediately informed the Electors that he had appointed James E. Grummer (WIS) as Vicar to oversee the proceedings until the election of a new General. Father Grummer then introduced the translators, amanuenses, and technical support staff; on behalf of the Congregation, he thanked them in anticipation for their important contributions to the work of the coming weeks. The Congregation unanimously approved the presence of the support staff and then declared itself complete and legitimate.

Father Grummer presented the daily schedule that the Congregation usually followed throughout the rest of the Congregation. Each day began at 9 AM with a morning prayer that Clemens Blattert (GER) carefully prepared. Clemens Blattert, Gabriel Côté (GLC Elector), José Yuraszeck (CHL student at the Gregorian), and sometimes Jesuit scholastics from San Saba in Rome provided musical accompaniment. Different members of the Congregation led the multilingual prayers that always included a benediction in the local language of the presider. Two morning sessions and two afternoon sessions, each lasting about 75 minutes, preceded the evening liturgies in four different locations to accommodate the Spanish, Italian, French, and English language preferences.

The Vicar noted that the joyful newness of such things as the *Formula*, the aula, the technology, and relationships with brothers from throughout the world should be accompanied by awareness of potential tensions about perspectives and values that the enemy of our human nature might try to exploit as a way to undermine our consolation and peace. He suggested that the Ignatian emphasis in the Spiritual Exercises on generosity [5], reverence [3], and withdrawal from distractions [20] could help the members during the prolonged period of communal discernment.

By a secret electronic ballot the Electors approved the proposal that Agnelo Mascarenhas (GOA) serve as interim secretary of the Congregation until the election of the Secretary of the Congregation. The Electors also agreed that Paul Béré (AOC) and Jorge Cela (ANT) should serve as Examiners in the vote about the General’s resignation through an application of FCG 46 §2. The Congregation then supplied all deficiencies that might have occurred in the Provincial Congregations or anywhere else.

In the light of FCG 31, §3, the Congregation unanimously confirmed that the norms for confidentiality that Father General had determined for the communications team should apply to all. Therefore, the names of individual speakers; the numerical results of votes; and anything not yet resolved or that might change before the end of the General Congregation must remain confidential. Timothy Kesicki (CDT) and John Dardis (HIB) received the mandate to work

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with the communications team organized by Father Patrick Mulemi (ZAM) about publishing appropriate information.

After the Congregation completed all this business, Father Nicolás presented his resignation in a simple and humble review of the state of his health, emphasizing his desire that the Society have the leadership it needs to serve the Church. Gabriel Ignacio Rodríguez (COL) reported the perspective of the Assistants *ad providentiam* regarding Father Nicolás's health after he left the aula, and the Vicar invited the electors to ask any questions. Since no one raised any further points about the reasons for and against the proposed resignation, the Congregation took a few moments for prayer before proceeding to the secret paper ballot, which accepted the resignation. Father Nicolás received a thunderous and long lasting standing ovation in gratitude for his faithful service of the Society when he returned to the aula. Father Federico Lombardi (ITA) then thanked Father Nicolás on behalf of the Congregation and the Society, presenting him with an icon that Marko Rupnik (SVN) had prepared. Father Nicolás thanked the Congregation and the entire Society for the affection and support he had received during his time in office; then this historic session that had so deeply moved the participants ended.

In the first session of the afternoon, the Vicar informed the Congregation that the Holy Father had already sent his blessing on the Congregation and the Election of a new General and that Pope Francis planned to meet with all the Members on 24 October. The Congregation then approved the Vicar's proposal that Lisbert D'Souza (BOM), Regional Assistant for South Asia and Assistant *ad Providentiam*, give the exhortation on the day of the Election. The Vicar then took a few minutes to explain that during the next few days, on at least 10 different occasions, discussions would prepare the Electors for the discernment at the heart of the Congregation. The discussions in 20 small groups provided time to become more familiar with the materials already prepared for the Congregation (especially the *De Statu Societatis*), prepare for the election of the Secretary of the Congregation and his Assistants, and get to know one another more deeply. Thus, the discussion questions would focus on introducing the Members to one another, recognizing the spiritual movements that arose when considering the materials, and providing Members the opportunity to identify important points for further consideration.

Later during the session, on behalf of the Deputation on the State of the Society, Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator (AOR) presented a description of the preparation of the report, its main themes, and suggestions about how to use it in discussions. Finally, after a short break, the Congregation Members divided into 20 small groups to review the *Relatio Praevia* and the *Calls*.

Over the next three days, although several important presentations took place in the *aula*, the Congregation primarily conducted its business in small groups. The small groups discussed the situation of the world today, the situation of the Church today, vocation promotion and formation, the Society's universal mission in a global society, the situation of Jesuit community life, servant leadership, collaboration, and the challenges the Society will face in the next ten years. At one afternoon session, the moderator of the commission on the Renewal of Jesuit Life and Mission, Francis Gonsalves (GUJ), explained how the commission had organized and conducted its work; then he introduced the latest version of a possible decree. The next afternoon, the moderator of the commission on Renewed Governance for Renewed Mission, Miguel Cruzado (PER), presented a similar survey and introduction.

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After the morning prayer on the fourth day of the Congregation, 6 October, the Vicar noted that a few Electors had asked to postpone the date of the Election from the initially proposed date of 11 October. He mentioned the importance of examining the movements experienced when considering the reasons for and against a delay. After a brief time of prayer and after working together in raising the reasons for and against the proposal, the Electors prayed again briefly before deciding by an overwhelming majority to begin the *murmuratio* on Monday, 10 October. The Electors then met in small groups to continue the discussion of the *De Statu* document.

In a plenary session at the beginning of the afternoon, the Electors had the opportunity to ask questions about the *De Statu* report. Father Orobator (AOR), the moderator of the deputation, organized the responses. During the final meeting of the day, four redactors [Francis Xavier Periyamayagam (MDU), José Ignacio Garcia (ESP), Paulin Manwelo (ACE), and Thomas D. Stegman (WIS)] summarized the conversations of the small group discussions about the challenges the Society will face in the next ten years. The Electors took the opportunity to make comments and present reflections until adjournment to celebrate the Eucharist in various languages.

On the fifth day of the Congregation, 7 October, the members made a pilgrimage through the Holy Door for the extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy and celebrated the Eucharist together at the Altar of the Chair in the Basilica of St. Peter. Bienvenido Nebres (PHI), the senior religious among the members, presided and preached at a quiet, early-morning ceremony while a torrential downpour raged outside. After the usual morning prayer in the aula, the members of the Congregation met in Assistancy groups to prepare two *ternae*, one for the election of the Secretary of the Congregation and one for the election of the assistant secretaries.

In the first afternoon session, the Society's Procurator General, Benoît Malvaux (BML), explained the major changes in the *Formula* that GC 35 had initiated in decree 5, nn. 2-4. After receiving a few clarifications, the members unanimously approved the revised *Formula for a General Congregation*. The Vicar then explained why the Assistants *ad Providentiam* and the Coordinating Committee had determined that the proposed changes in *Complementary Norm* 362 did not meet the requirements necessary for discussing the matter before the Election of the General. No one made a representation regarding the decision. After a brief discussion, the Electors approved the composition of the Coordinating Committee.

In the final meeting of the day, the Electors assembled for the secret electronic balloting to elect the Secretary of the Congregation and his assistants. Luis Orlando Torres (UCS) was elected Secretary of the Congregation; Agnelo Mascarenhas (GOA) was elected first assistant; and Francisco Javier Álvarez de los Mozos (ESP) was elected second assistant. After a brief prayer of thanksgiving that the Assistancies had nominated so many excellent candidates without consideration of their origins, the Congregation adjourned to celebrate the Eucharist in the various languages.

After the opening prayer of the sixth day of the Congregation Father Grummer announced that the Coordinating Committee had decided upon a method for approving the minutes of the Congregation (FCG 23). Jean-Marc Biron (GLC), Nicolas Standaert (CHN), and Scott Santarosa (CFN) would review each day's minutes and approve them on behalf of all the members. The Vicar then asked Francois-Xavier Dumortier (GAL), Francisco Javier Álvarez de los Mozos (ESP), and Devadoss Mudiappasamy (MDU) to describe their experience of the

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process for gathering information before the Election of the General. Other Electors who had also attended previous Congregations added a few brief points that helped all those present better understand how to proceed.

After a brief pause, Father Grummer read the names of the judges on ambitioning, the Vicar (ACU) and the Electors oldest in religion from each Assistancy: Paramasivam Stanislaus Amalraj (JCS), Jorge Carvajal Cela (ALS), John K. Guiney (EOC), Michael Lewis (AFR), Federico Lombardi (EMR), Anto Lozuk (ECO), Bienvenido F. Nebres (ASP), and Alfonso Carlos Palacio Larrauri (ALM). He then presented some points for reflection and prayer before the beginning of the Election phase of the Congregation. He proposed some points for an Examen of the first week of the Congregation so that the Electors could recognize more deeply the graces received. After celebrating the Eucharist in language groups, the Electors enjoyed a day and a half for relaxation and recreation.

### **5. The Election Phase of the Congregation**

The election phase of the Congregation began with an exhortation by the Vicar on Monday, 10 October. Father Grummer reminded the Electors of the special quality of the four days as a time of reverential recollection and deep respect for each individual and for the way God works so that all might seek God's will with growing confidence. To promote and facilitate the atmosphere of prayer, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed throughout the day in the Borgia Chapel.

The day of election began with an early morning Mass of the Holy Spirit at which Father Vicar presided and preached, assisted at the altar by Lisbert D'Souza (BOM) and Tomasz Kot (PMA), the most senior and most junior Regional Assistants. At the end of the Eucharist the Electors processed to aula, where they sang the *Veni Creator Spiritus*. Lisbert D'Souza gave a twenty-minute exhortation that reminded the Electors of key texts from the Scriptures and the *Constitutions*. In accordance with *Formula 75*, all prayed silently for the remainder of the hour.

After fulfilling the prescriptions of the *Formula*, Arturo Marcelino Sosa Abascal (VEN), Delegate for the Roman Houses, was elected the 31<sup>st</sup> Superior General of the Society of Jesus. Immediately after the Vicar read the decree that certified the election, Antonio Spadaro (ITA) informed the Holy Father. Then the communications team entered the aula to record the General's profession of faith, the traditional reverence accorded the new General, and the congratulations of all the Jesuits present at the Curia. A prayer service that included the *Te Deum* then took place in the Borgia Chapel. The following morning Father Sosa presided at a Mass of Thanksgiving at the Church of the Gesù. He called those present not only to the "audacity of the improbable" mentioned by Father Cadore at the opening Mass but also to the "audacity of the impossible," because as the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary, "Nothing is impossible for God."

### **6. The Business Phase of General Congregation 36**

At the first session of the business phase of General Congregation 36, the Electors formally welcomed three Members whom Father Nicolás had appointed: Michael J. Garanzini (UCS, Secretary for Higher Education), José Alberto Mesa (COL, Secretary for Education), and Thomas W. Smolich (CFN, director of the Jesuit Refugee Service). Father Secretary Torres



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noted that the Conference of Latin America needed to elect a substitute for the Deputation on the State of the Society to replace Father Sosa.

Father Sosa made a few initial remarks about governance and raised some preliminary questions about which he wanted to receive feedback from the members of the Congregation. He also announced that in accordance with FCG 88 §7 Father Nicolás had chosen to leave the Congregation so that he could spend some time in Spain before assuming a new assignment in the Philippines Province.

The Congregation spent 23 days dealing with an array of different issues in a number of different settings. Small group discussions provided the Congregation members a particularly important opportunity to deepen their comprehension and appreciation of one another's experience and thoughts about a wide range of topics. Conference meetings clarified regional perspectives. Plenary sessions provided a forum for developing a universal viewpoint. Redactors worked assiduously to provide invaluable and nuanced summaries to further the Congregation's work. The authors and editors of draft proposals worked long hours honing texts to meet the requirements of the Congregation.

Father General frequently announced his appointment of new Provincials, many of whom were in the aula. He also announced his intention to name Antoine Kerhuel (GAL) as Secretary of the Society. In thanking Ignacio Echarte (ESP) for his years of service in Rome as Secretary and Delegate for the Roman Houses, Father Sosa indicated that the transition to the new Secretary would take place early in 2017.

In addition, preparing *ternae* for the selection of Regional Assistants and electing Assistants *ad Providentiam* and the Admonitor required the personal reflection, dialogue, careful attention, and the active participation of all the members of the Congregation. Based on the consultation Father Sosa received from the Members of Assistancies and from the General Councilors, on Monday, 31 October, Father Sosa named the first members of his team. As Regional Assistants he chose Victor Assouad (EOC), Joaquín Barrero Díaz (EMR), Vernon D'Cunha (ASM), Lisbert D'Souza (ASM), Daniel P. Huang (ASP), Tomasz Kot (ECO), Douglas Marcouiller (CUS), Fratern Masawe (AFR), Claudio Paul (ALM), and Gabriel Ignacio Rodríguez (ALS). He also named José Magadia (PHI) as General Councilor for Formation and John Dardis (HIB) as General Councilor for Discernment and Apostolic Planning.

After four days of private conversations and information gathering, on Friday, 4 November, the Congregation elected the Assistants *ad Providentiam*: John Dardis, Vernon D'Cunha, Douglas Marcouiller, and Fratern Masawe. The Congregation then determined that Douglas Marcouiller would serve as Admonitor for the General.

### **7. The Papal Visit**

Perhaps the single most important day of the business phase of the Congregation was the visit of Pope Francis on Monday, 24 October. The papal recommendation to ask insistently for consolation, to let ourselves be moved by our Crucified Lord in His person and in His people, and to act in the Good Spirit as men of discernment who think with the Church noticeably resonated in the heads and hearts of all those present in the aula that morning. During the period of questions and answers that followed the Holy Father's prepared remarks, his personal witness to the importance of consolation, compassion, and discernment in serving

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the Lord and His Church was profoundly moving. The fraternal message and closeness of the Pope inspired and encouraged the Congregation as its work continued.

### **8. Companions in a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice**

The commission on Jesuit Life and Mission attempted to examine the processes, causes, and consequences that link Jesuit community life with the apostolic realities of ecology, migration, fundamentalism, and ministry among indigenous peoples. They examined in detail more than 75 postulates and six themes submitted by the Provinces. The commission and the Congregation took this challenge seriously in considering six drafts and 173 proposed amendments before approving the final version of the decree, *Companions in a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice*.

Recalling the experience of the First Companions in Venice as they discerned what to do when political conditions thwarted them from going to Jerusalem, the Congregation emphasized that today's Jesuit communities require the characteristics that make them capable of communal apostolic discernment. Members of such communities, on fire with passion for witnessing the Gospel, can participate in the mission of Christ the Reconciler, especially as St. Paul articulates it in 2 Corinthians 5:18. Thus, all Jesuit ministerial activities and all Jesuit ministries will have renewed fervor for reconciliation with God, humanity, and creation.

### **9. Renewed Governance for Renewed Mission**

The commission on Renewed Governance for Renewed Mission based its work on the 68 postulates and five themes that the Province Congregations submitted by the time it began its work as well as other postulates that arrived before the end of the General Congregation. The commission asked for assistance from a number of task forces, working groups, and individuals who all provided important input for deliberation. The resulting document *Renewed Governance for Renewed Mission* emphasized the centrality of the Society's mission for any structure, procedure, or element of governance. Three key features of governance in the Society today are discernment, collaboration, and networking. Therefore, establishing the conditions and means for developing these features is important at each level of the Society's organization. The decree makes six specific recommendations to Father General and those who work with him in Rome, two recommendations to the Conferences of Major Superiors, three to Major Superiors in the Provinces and Regions, and two to local Superiors.

In addition, the Congregation entrusted three important matters to Father General: renewal of the organization and structures of the interprovincial houses in Rome (*Domus Interprovinciales Romanae*); promoting within the Society and its ministries a consistent culture of protection and safety of minors; and a revision of the *Formulae* for a Provincial Congregation, a General Congregation, a Congregation of Procurators, and a Congregation to elect a Vicar General.

Finally, GC 36 modified *Complementary Norms* 362 and 396 to provide greater precision in language and to clarify practice; it also supplied explanatory notes for *Constitutions* [701] and [704] to bring them into conformity with the current *Code of Canon Law*.

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### 10. Witnesses of Friendship and Reconciliation

The last decree taken up by the General Congregation was a letter to and prayer for Jesuits living in zones of war and conflict. John Dardis (HIB), Jean-Baptiste Ganza Gasanana (RWB), and Dany Younès (PRO) comprised a special commission that composed a document that summarized well the sentiments and desires of the Congregation about expressing solidarity with those who witness to the Prince of Peace in places of severe conflict.

### 11. Conclusion of General Congregation 36

On 11 November, the members determined that they would finish all their business the following day.

Therefore, a prayerful evaluation of the entire proceedings of the Congregation began. Reflections in Assistancy groups, small groups, and individually—ably organized by Pablo José Alonso Vicente (ESP), Mark A. Ravizza CFN), and Antonio F. Moreno (PHI)—enabled the members to give thanks for the blessings of the past two years and to make suggestions about what might be improved for future Congregations.

Although any member could have intervened to ask that the Congregation might attend to any necessary changes in the decrees, no one did so. Therefore, after an extended period for morning prayer on the last morning, the Congregation determined that Father General and the Assistants *ad Providentiam* could approve the final *Acta* of the Congregation. The Congregation also determined that Father General could make any necessary corrections to the decrees “according to the mind of the Congregation” and “after consultation with deliberative vote with those Fathers of the General Curia who have the right to by reason of their office to attend a General Congregation” (FCG 140 §4, 2°). Father General and Father Torres then thanked the members of the Congregation and all those whose prayers and labors helped the proceedings in many different ways. Finally, the members declared their work complete and voted to adjourn permanently before singing the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for the many blessings received.

The members of the Congregation, the Jesuits of Rome, and many friends of the Society of Jesus gathered at the Church of Sant’Ignazio at 16:00 to celebrate a Eucharist of Thanksgiving and to sing the *Te Deum* together. Father General’s homily emphasized discernment in solidarity with the others, especially the poor, as the Society goes forth to proclaim the Gospel everywhere. Texts in Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Japanese, French, Sinhalese and Arabic, as well as special Congolese and Indian rituals, emphasized the universality of the Church. A reception followed at the Gregorian University.

Thus, the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation of the Society of Jesus ended on 12 November 2016 after 35 working days.

*(Original: English)*