Editorial

In February 2016, the Jesuit Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology and for Higher Education in Rome published a Special Report on *Justice in the Global Economy*. The Report was compiled by an international group of Jesuits and lay colleagues in the fields of social science and economics, philosophy and theology. It understands itself as part of the thrust of the pontificate of Pope Francis with his insistence, particularly in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), and his Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si'* (2015), on the need for action in the face of ongoing poverty, growing inequality, and severe environmental degradation: 'We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental.' (*Laudato Si'*, 2015, § 139)

This issue of *Working Notes* is a response to the Report, focusing specifically on two major themes: the changing nature of work and the implications for inequality and social justice, and the unattended fragility of our common home. The issue also outlines the implications for faith and our theological tradition, and the implications for Jesuit schools.

In the opening article, Professor James Wickham challenges the view that any job is better than no job, and argues that economic growth does not automatically create more and better jobs. Growing social inequality, he notes, is partly caused by the very types of jobs that are being created: more good and well-paid jobs but also, crucially, more bad and poorly-paid jobs. Work, Professor Wickham argues, is becoming increasingly precarious, and these changes militate directly against equality and social justice.

Writing about the unattended fragility of our common home, Catherine Devitt describes how, since the middle of the 20th century, human activity has become the main driver of environmental change. This activity, she argues, is attributable to a global economic system based on international trade, resource extraction, and consumption. Although some have benefited from these processes, a sizeable proportion of the global population is excluded. In a time of environmental decline, poorer communities are more exposed to environmental hazards, and the human health effects. Yet market-based policies are often used to address the problems they help amplify in the first instance. She argues that a new economic vision is required, a vision that improves and sustains well-being for all, and protects nature. Devitt concludes by highlighting the particular role Jesuits can play, and reiterates many of the recommendations laid out in *Justice in the Global Economy* on how Jesuits can respond.

In his article, Gerry O'Hanlon SJ writes that one of the key problems in contemporary Irish society is the difficulty in linking challenging issues – such as those presented in *Justice in the Global Economy* – with an operative grasp of faith and spirituality. The result, he argues, is that our faith is not the dynamic motivation it might be in the struggle for a better world. He outlines what he identifies as 'steps towards a renewed theology'; lines along which we might be able to ignite the contemporary imagination required to help move us towards the social and ecological conversion that Pope Francis sees as crucial to addressing the current ecological and social crisis.

Finally, Brian Flannery explains how the promotion of justice is an integral part of a Jesuit education. In responding to the contents and recommendations of *Justice in the Global Economy*, he outlines the various initiatives and activities taking place in Jesuits schools in Ireland, and charts the significance of social justice in what a Jesuit education aspires to be. In Ireland, admission to a number of Jesuit schools is based on a fee-paying structure. He argues that we need to ask if the challenges of our time require a more radical response and commitment than has been demonstrated to date. He concludes with the charge that Jesuit institutions should evaluate whether or not they are creating leaders of positive change, and if not, why not.

Decent Work: Implications for Equality and Social Justice

James Wickham

Introduction

The idea that any job is better than no job is increasingly debatable, and the assumptions that have guided employment policy for decades no longer hold.

There is not much point in wanting to return to a golden past of straightforwardly good jobs, perhaps in the 1960s and 1970s, because they never existed. However, while in many ways work has got better, there has been a crucial deterioration in other aspects of work. Firstly, the very types of jobs that are being created are now part of a process of growing inequality. Secondly, much employment is insecure and *precarious*, and this means that many of the reasons why employment was seen as desirable are simply not valid anymore.

The Golden Past and its Problems

In the 'golden years' of welfare capitalism in Western Europe[1] and the United States after World War II there was full employment – at least for men. Most jobs were regular and if not strictly permanent, they were nonetheless long-term. Work was central in people's lives and the basis for many people's social relations. Extensive trade union organisation protected most workers from arbitrary authority. However, work was often boring – consider, for example, the banality of working on the assembly line of a car factory. For a significant number of manual workers, jobs were quite simply dangerous: injuries at work were on a scale that today would be unacceptable. Bad working conditions contributed both to campaigns for better working conditions and to early retirement. In countries such as Germany and Sweden in particular, there were action research programmes aiming to 'humanise' work. What we did not realise at the time was that those societies – constituting, of course, only a tiny corner of the world – were in themselves relatively equal. Certainly, over the Wall and behind the barbed wire in what was then called Eastern Europe, income distribution was more equal, and there was even greater job security. Yet of course, the overall standard of living was lower and, even after the end of the Stalinist terrors, there was not exactly political freedom.

Improvements in Work

How do jobs today compare with those of forty years ago? Are jobs today getting 'better' or 'worse' and in what sense? There is a long social science research tradition studying different aspects of job quality and we now have comparable survey data in most European countries that goes back more than twenty years.

The simplest aspect of job quality is perhaps now the least important in differentiating between jobs, namely the physical environment in which work occurs and any attendant risks to health and safety. Here, nearly all available sources show clear improvements over time. For example, Green *et al*. (2013) construct a Good Physical Environment Index using self-report questions from the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) from 1995 to 2010 to measure exposure to 'environmental hazards and posture-related risks'.[2] At the United Kingdom level, this index shows a slight fall between 2005 and 2010, but it remains the case that workplaces are still significantly better than when measurement began in 1995. Clearly part of the reason for this long-term improvement has been the shift in employment away from manufacturing and extractive industries, but most of the improvement has been *within* industries.[3] Health and safety at work is one area where European Union level regulations have been important.

There are some possible counter-trends to the long-term improvement in physical working conditions. Firstly, some work in the growing services sector creates industrial injuries of types that are often unreported and simply accepted and normalised as part of the job – as evident in our study of working conditions in Ireland. To illustrate, one worker in an Irish fast-food restaurant recalled:

... everybody [in the kitchen] *got injured and there wasn't a huge fuss about it, just 'get on with it'. I only saw one person get injured quite badly. And his hand went into the fire. Now: he was ... with the ambulance and all that kind of stuff. But he was back in work in a couple of days*.

And she went on to say:

And he worked with the bandage. He didn't go anywhere near the fires, he was just doing burgers. And you can do burgers with one hand. So that's fine [laughing].[4]

The author's study found that in hotels, cleaners – who are usually women – have to turn mattresses as part of their job. This is curiously invisible: few people apart from the cleaners themselves realise that this is heavy lifting work. Furthermore, cleaners work to targets of cleaning so many rooms per shift. During the recent recession in Ireland, these targets were often increased as hotels tried to cut their costs. As one hotel middle manager recalled in our study:

I think it's coming down to health and safety at this stage. Where people are actually doing damage to themselves in regard to their backs … 17 rooms is way too much for people to be doing. Way too much.[5]

Secondly, the new availability of an immigrant workforce in some areas of Europe and the USA is facilitating the re-emergence of low skilled and often unregulated work in agriculture and manufacturing.[6] Indeed, in sectors such as garment manufacturing in cities as different as Paris and Parma new cheap labour allows the use of out-of-date equipment and working conditions that until recently would have been unthinkable.

Always More and Better Jobs?

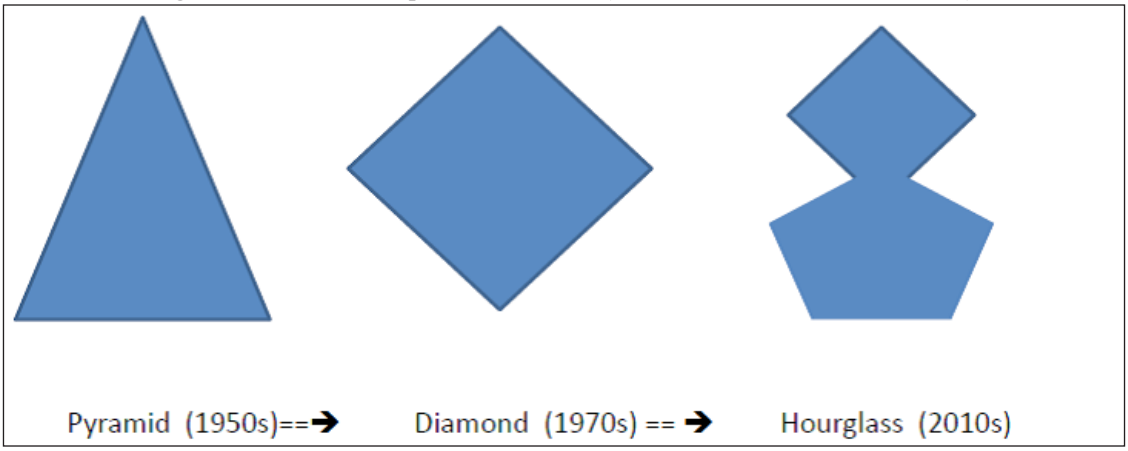
Until recently it was believed that economic growth automatically created more and better jobs. 'Better' here meant jobs that were more skilled and more interesting, and better paid. This comforting belief was based on a particular picture of social change. It was assumed that the occupational structure of developed societies was changing from a pyramid towards a diamond (see Fig. 1) – there were fewer unskilled low-paid jobs at the bottom of the society and more jobs in the middle of the society. In other words, changes in the sort of jobs were by themselves creating a more equal society. These jobs are now moving more towards an 'hourglass' shape (Fig. 1), reflecting similarities to changes in income distribution.[7]

However, in recent years something different seems to be happening in most countries. Certainly there are more skilled and highly paid jobs being created – consider the new jobs in Ireland in financial services or in the IT sector. Yet there are also many new jobs that are low paid and not especially skilled – jobs in catering and hotels, jobs in cleaning and security. At the same time, the jobs that are being lost are jobs in the middle of the structure – routine but moderately well-paid jobs in administration and manufacturing.

These trends started well before the last economic crisis. For example, Goos and Manning (2007) used UK Labour Force Survey data for 1979 to 1999 to show that the occupations that grew during this period were those with highest pay and (to a lesser extent) those with lowest pay.[8] They argued that technical change increases the number of good and bad jobs ('lovely' jobs and 'lousy' jobs) but reduces the number of intermediate jobs.[9] Studies have found this trend towards occupational polarisation in other European countries including, very recently, here in Ireland.[10]

Furthermore, TASC's study of Irish working conditions showed that many jobs that used to be routine and steady, have been transformed and casualised. For example, working as a bartender in Dublin used to be a job with security, regular hours

Figure 1: Trends in Occupational Structure (source: Wickham and Bobek, 2016)



and some real if limited progression. It was the sort of job which a young person could enter, receive basic training and expect to earn enough to take on a mortgage. In the words of one interviewee in our study:

[THEN] *It was seen as a job that you could buy a house, pay a mortgage ... which I did, I got a house, I was 23. Well I took a loan at that stage and I had no hesitation to do it because I was earning quite enough money to do so*.
[NOW] ... *You have people coming in for 4 hours or so, you have people with split shifts ... when the food is over what happens is those people are sent home at nine, nine thirty in the evening ... The whole sphere has changed to actually having two or three people of a qualified nature, and then the rest is totally casual*.[11]

One cause of the growing income inequality in contemporary society is the type of jobs that are being created: more highly-paid jobs, but also more badly-paid jobs, and a growing 'hollowing out' of the middle. Employment change, in other words, is generating increased inequality.

Hollowing Out the Firm

The bartender's account of the changed workforce in his pub can be replicated across wide areas of employment. In many different ways, work is becoming *precarious*. *Precarity* has different elements but at the most fundamental level it means that earnings are irregular and unpredictable.[12] For example, in the United Kingdom 'zero hour contracts' commit the worker to working for whatever hours management decides and to remain available even if no hours are offered. Officially this is not possible in Ireland, but so-called 'if-and-when' contracts have much the same effect.[13]

TASC's research in the hospitality industry showed that the combination of a low hourly wage rate and short hours means that many workers are earning well below what they would receive for a normal working week with each hour paid at the hourly National Minimum Wage. Low earnings are exacerbated by precarity and unpredictability. In the words of one of our interviewees, an accommodation assistant in a hotel:

They [the managers] *write on the roster, they write for example: start at 8am and finish at 3pm but next day you come and you see that you have work until 5pm not until 3pm* (…) *You never know, you can't plan anything, and now it is even worse because they put the roster on the wall the last day, on Sunday. They put the roster on the wall so for example if you have on Monday your day off you can't make a plan for your day because you didn't know* [that] *you will have tomorrow a day off*.[14]

In this case the worker is at management's beck and call, but she is at least an employee with an employer, even if their relationship is rather tenuous. However, in a growing form of precarious work, this relationship is broken: the worker is compelled to be self-employed. For example, in the construction industry in Ireland, many workers have always been self-employed and usually by choice. With the economic crisis and the collapse of employment, a rising proportion of workers (especially craft workers) were working for themselves, but this was what the author regards as 'bogus self-employment'.[15] They were doing the same work as before, they were still controlled by management, but now have not been offered a job with wages, and instead they are being paid for a contract. This has been facilitated by changes in the tax system. Through the Relevant Contracts Tax system the employer simply defines the worker as a self-employed subcontractor. In the words of a bricklayer we interviewed:

Yeah. I am working for them [large firm]*, but I am a sub-contractor to a sub-contractor. It's bogus subcontracting, in essence. Which is encouraged by the Revenue Commissioners* [the state body with primary responsibility for the assessment and collection of taxes] ... *The subcontractors cover themselves by telling your details to them and he says that* [interviewee's name] *is on a relevant contract for XXX Euros for the next 6 weeks. The Revenue Commissioner acknowledges this and then sends me out a slip to say 'we acknowledge you are on ...*[16]

Since the worker is now a self-employed 'subcontractor', wage agreements and even minimum wage levels do not apply; the employer (now re-defined as the 'principal contractor') does not have to pay employer's Pay Related Social Insurance. Since the worker is only paid for work actually done, there is no holiday pay and no sick pay. Indeed, if there is no work, the self-employed worker has no entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit (a weekly payment to people who are out of work) and has to apply for the means-assessed Jobseeker's Allowance (a payment for people who are unemployed but do not qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit).

Such bogus self-employment is now widespread. The genuinely self-employed worker works for more than one client, has the ability to hire employees (even if she or he does not currently have employees) and can make important decisions about how to organise the work themselves. A study by Eurofound (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions) defines 'economically dependent workers' as those self-employed who do not meet at least two of these three conditions. Across the EU this would appear to be about one per cent of all at work.[17] Very recently, the growth of the so-called gig economy suggests that this proportion may have increased. For example, the drivers who work for Uber (an online-based transportation network company) and the delivery cyclists who work for Deliveroo (an online food company) are 'contractors' not employees.

In Ireland, according to the Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS) the number of people who work as 'self-employed without employees' is now at an all-time high: they currently make up about 12 per cent of all those at work. How many of these individuals are actually 'economically dependent workers' or 'bogus self-employed' is actually a matter of conjecture. However, the highly publicised cases of 'portal' firms like Deliveroo are really just the tip of the iceberg and furthermore, much bogus self-employment has very little to do with technological change and the internet. Instead it is driven by the determination of employers to cut their labour costs: turning employees into 'independent' contractors means that workers have less bargaining power and fewer rights.

Today in Ireland 'entrepreneurship' is the new virtue, lauded in pronouncements by business lobby groups and government policy-makers. The growth of self-employment is taken as a sign of economic progress. Yet such enthusiasm detracts from the reality of much self-employment. An increasing proportion of the solo self-employed are self-employed because they have no choice: they are scraping a living from the scraps of casual work.[18] Research shows that the self-employed are more likely to have low incomes than are employees.[19]

The problem of low incomes is no longer just a question of low wages but is also a question of the precariously self-employed. This dependent self-employment is increasingly different from the traditional independent craft worker or small business person, and it is a long way from the excitement of the high-tech start-up or new forms of consultancy. If the new self-employed are described in these terms, then the cult of the entrepreneur has become an ideology, a cover-up for new forms of exploitation.[20] Work is becoming more precarious. As we have seen, this can happen because the employer makes the time and period of work less predictable, or it can happen because the employer transforms employment into self-employment. As Kalleberg (2013) has documented for the United States, the firm is less and less a social institution and more and more simply a collection of short-term economic connections.[21]

Conclusion

Changes in work now militate directly against equality and social justice. The growing inequality within the OECD countries is partly caused by the very type of jobs that are being created: more good and well-paid jobs but also, crucially, more bad and poorly-paid jobs.[22]

Rather less obviously but perhaps more fundamentally, changes in employment also work against social justice. A long European tradition of both social democratic and Christian democratic social thought has stressed that the employment relationship is distinctive. From this perspective, the relationship between employer and employee is inherently and necessarily unequal, in that the employer tells the worker what to do. It follows that this inequality must be regulated – hence the obligation on the state to regulate the workplace and the consequent growth of employment law.

This perspective also recognised the duality of the employment relationship. On the one hand, it is the basis for collective organisation (trade unions and other forms of representation) and even opposition to the employer. On the other hand, the employment relationship also necessarily involves mutual recognition and mutual responsibility between employer and employee. Arguably, social democrats have, at least historically, stressed the former aspect more, while Christian democrats have stressed the latter aspect. However, once the employment relationship is replaced by a highly unequal 'contract' between a global company and an isolated individual, then all that disappears. Neo-liberal economists continue to call for even more 'de-regulation' of employment, but tackling the growing social crisis of western societies and creating decent work requires the exact opposite – a re-regulation and re-institutionalisation of the employment relationship.

Notes

1. Independence in the 1920s, protectionism from the 1930s and neutrality during World War II together ensured that Ireland only experienced the tail-end of the 'mid-century social compromise' (Crouch, C. (1999) *Social Change in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press).
2. Green, F. *et al*. (2013) 'Is job quality becoming more equal?', *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, Vol. 66 (4), pp. 753–784.
3. Green, F., Felstead, A. and Duncan, G. (2015) 'The Inequality of Job Quality', in Felstead, A., Duncan, G. and Green, F. (eds.) *Unequal Britain at Work*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–21.
4. Wickham, J. and Bobek, A. (2016) *Enforced Flexibility? Working in Ireland Today*. Dublin: TASC, p. 33.
5. *Ibid*, p. 35.
6. Martin, P. L. (2009) *Importing Poverty? Immigration and the Changing Face of Rural America*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
7. Wickham, J. and Bobek, A. (2016) *Enforced Flexibility? Working in Ireland Today*. Dublin: TASC.
8. Goos, M. and Manning, A. (2007) 'Lousy and Lovely Jobs: The rising polarization of work in Britain', *Review of Economics and Statistics*, Vol. 89 (1), pp. 118–33.
9. *Ibid*.
10. Eurofound (2015) *Upgrading or polarisation? Long-term and global shifts in the employment structure: European Jobs Monitor 2015.* Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. (Available at: http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2015/labour-market/upgrading-or-polarisation-long-term-and-global-shifts-in-the-employment-structure-european-jobs)
11. This extract is from an interview with a Dublin-based interviewee who started an apprenticeship in the late 1970s.
12. Standing, G. (2011) *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
13. O'Sullivan, M. (2015) *A Study on the Prevalence of Zero-Hours Contracts among Irish Employer and their Impact on Employees*. Limerick: University of Limerick. (Available at: https://www.djei.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Study-on-the-Prevalence-of-Zero-Hours-Contracts.pdf)
14. Wickham, J. and Bobek, A. (2016) *Enforced Flexibility? Working in Ireland Today*. Dublin: TASC, p. 29.
15. Wickham, J. and Bobek, A. (2016) *Bogus Self-Employment in the Irish Construction Industry*: *The Reality of Entrepreneurship.* Dublin: TASC. (Available at: http://www.tasc.ie/download/pdf/bogus_selfemploymentfinal.pdf)
16. Wickham, J. and Bobek, A. (2016) *Enforced Flexibility? Working in Ireland Today*. Dublin: TASC, p. 47.
17. Eurofound (2013) *Self-employed or not Self-employed? Working Conditions of 'Economically Dependent' Workers*. Dublin: Eurofound.
18. Wickham, J. and Bobek, A. (2016) *Enforced Flexibility? Working in Ireland Today*. Dublin: TASC
19. Collins, M. (2015) *Earnings and Low Pay in the Republic of Ireland: A Profile and Some Policy Issues.* Dublin: Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI Working Paper Series, No. 29).
20. Wickham, J. and Bobek, A. (2016) *Enforced Flexibility? Working in Ireland Today*. Dublin: TASC
21. Kalleberg, A. L. (2013) *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: The Rise of Polarized and Precarious Employment Systems in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
22. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2011) *Divided We Stand: Why Inequality Keeps Rising*. Paris: OECD.

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Justice in the Global Economy: What It Means for Earth-Care

Catherine Devitt

Introduction

The Report, *Justice in the Global Economy*, highlights the inter-relationship between environmental justice and economic justice. It points out that 'the rate of extraction of natural resources cannot be sustained' and warns that if consumption continues at the current pace 'we face severe menaces to both ecological stability and human well-being'. It notes also that: 'The harmful consequences of over-use and misuse of resources are ... unequally distributed'.[1]

Emphasising the need to respond, the Report states: 'Response to the challenges of economic justice should therefore be linked with a deepening of ecological and environmental responsibility'.[2]

This article expands on the main points in the Report regarding what it terms 'the unattended fragility of our common home'.[3] The article presents key research findings showing the impact of economic activity on the environment over the last number of decades; it raises concerns regarding the threat to social justice arising out of the environmental crisis; and highlights the growing trend towards relegating society's response to environmental challenges to market-based policies. The article concludes with a look at how the Ignatian family can respond.

Consuming Infinitely on a Planet with Finite Resources

Economic development and globalisation have generated considerable benefits for humanity, not least in terms of human communication and interconnectedness. However, these processes are also pushing our planetary system towards breaking point. Since the middle of the twentieth century, the global economic system – driven by international trade, resource extraction, and consumption (predominantly by the OECD countries) – has ousted all other factors as the primary force of Earth-system change.[4] In other words, human activity has become the main driver of climatic and environmental change, prompting some scientists to propose that the planet has entered a new geological epoch, which they term the Anthropocene.[5]

Although the Anthropocene is generally regarded as starting with the onset of industrialisation, half of the total rise in atmospheric CO_2 (since the preindustrial era) has occurred in the last thirty years.[6] A number of socio-economic indicators underpin this recent change: dramatic increases in population, primary energy use, fertilizer consumption, real GDP and foreign direct investment, water use and the number of large dams, paper production, telecommunications and transportation, and international tourism.[7,8]

Economic growth, as generally measured, is very unevenly distributed. In 2010, OECD countries comprised just 18 percent of the world's population, yet accounted for 74 percent of global GDP.[9] Furthermore, and crucially, the upward trajectory of indicators of output and consumption over recent decades reflects an economic model that presumes infinite growth within a system which has, in fact, limited and finite resources bounded by ecological thresholds.[10]

In 2009, the concept of 'planetary boundaries' was adopted by 28 scientists to refer to the biophysical and self-regulating processes of the Earth's system.[11] Nine boundaries were identified: climate change, ocean acidification, stratospheric ozone, global phosphorus and nitrogen cycles, atmospheric aerosol loading, freshwater use, land use change, biosphere integrity, and chemical pollution. Four of these boundaries – climate change, loss in biosphere integrity, land system change, and phosphorus and nitrogen cycles – have now been crossed as a result of human activity.[12] Crossing these boundaries can not only cause irreversible environmental change, but also create significant risks to human society.

The resulting environmental harm often goes unchecked by governments. In some cases, the pursuit of profit is incentivised through the extension of special privileges to companies (for example, tax breaks and subsidies, relaxed planning laws, privatisation, the leasing of public lands), with these measures in many cases reflecting how policy-making can be 'captured' by special interests. Over the last two decades, the level of

investment across the world in public transport, renewable energy and improved energy efficiency, ecosystem conservation, and sustainable food production pales in comparison to the flow of capital and policy support directed towards fossil fuels, property and financial assets, and specific business interests.[13,14] This is despite widespread scientific agreement regarding the human-induced nature of climate change and environmental decline.

Of course, none of this can be disassociated from how and what society consumes. In his encyclical, *Laudato Si': Care for our Common Home*, Pope Francis talks of the 'whirlwind of needless buying and spending' (§ 203). The Indian eco-activist and feminist, Vandana Shiva, argues that short-life consumer products are destroying our future, have a harmful effect on poorer communities and, as she puts it, lubricate 'a war against the earth'.[15]

The Cry of the Poor, the Cry of the Earth

Some of the current patterns of economic development and resource use have significant implications for human rights, social equity and democracy. Over the last decade, increasing demand for food, fuel and commodities has resulted in a surge in land acquisition, often without the consent of people living and working on that land.[16]

In 2016, Global Witness, the non-governmental organisation which investigates instances of environmental and human rights abuses, reported that 2015 was the worst year on record for the killing of environmental activists – with 185 such deaths recorded in over 16 countries.[17] Indigenous people are worst hit, and most of the killings in 2015 were linked to the mining and extractive industries, followed by agribusiness, logging and hydroelectric dams. Many of these industries are highly dependent on foreign exports and capital from counties such as the United States, Australia, Canada, and China, and the bulk of their products (for example, those derived from intensive logging and agribusiness, including pulp and paper, sugar and coffee, soybean and grain) are exported to the US and to EU destinations.[18]

Generally, poorer communities are more likely to be exposed to air pollution (increasing the risk of asthma, cardiovascular problems and cancer),[19,20] to poor water quality and water contamination,[21] and, increasingly, to the effects of climate change because of locational vulnerability.[22,23] Proximity to what are often framed as 'environmental risks' – flooding, drought, air pollution, water contamination – is uneven, and often those most affected are communities which are already vulnerable and marginalised, and lack the capacity to protect or adapt.[24]

Justice in the Global Economy notes that the pursuit of profit by powerful business interests, and the reluctance of governments to regulate the activities of these groups, can 'effectively displace local people, forcing them to migrate'; those displaced often include 'indigenous people, landless settlers, farmers and the rural poor'.[25] For such people, migration reflects their struggle for survival and the absence of any real choice in their lives – choice which is typically afforded to those who contribute the greatest, in the first instance, to the ecological and social harm that excludes and displaces poorer communities. There is also a gender dimension – as acknowledged in *Justice in the Global Economy*: 'Women are more prone to poverty and unequal economic opportunity than are men'.[26] With climate change this exposure is amplified.[27,28] Even in the environmental sciences, decision-making and policy-formation, women's voices do not always feature.[29,30]

The choices made in responding to social and environmental crises can result in the further entrenching of certain economic paradigms and social inequalities. In the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, for instance, critics condemned the neoliberal agenda underpinning reconstruction efforts within the country as consolidating poverty and social inequality across the Haitian population.[31,32] New Orleans – pre and post-Hurricane Katrina – provides another example.[33,34]

We can also look at countries with advanced economies, including Ireland, where householder protection against flooding (which may be a regular occurrence in certain areas) is channelled through the realm of private insurance, with little consideration for important questions regarding vulnerability, or government responsibility in providing individual household protection.[35,36,37]

Social and financial crises, such as the financial collapse of 2008, can reduce and erode the adaptive capacity of communities to respond to environmental problems.[38,39] This is especially the case in societies where the rate of environmental change is occurring far more rapidly than is any increase in the ability of communities to respond; the implications in terms of poverty

and social inequality are significant.[40,41] Yet increasingly (certainly in Western societies at least), pro-environmental behaviour and protection against environmental problems is framed as the responsibility of the *individual* – regardless of their capacity to respond, their ecological footprint, or their exposure to injustices.[42]

Communities are locked into a cycle of poverty and vulnerability, and the ability to avoid or escape this cycle or attempt to mitigate or adapt to environmental problems depends on adaptive capacity. As one commentary has noted, adaptive capacity depends on 'how much income we have, where we live, which social class we belong to and whether we suffer discrimination in other areas of our lives'.[43]

The Problem of 'the Market Knowing Best'

A number of examples show how, increasingly, market principles are being applied to the natural world and to the management of environmental problems.[44] A clear trend has emerged towards 'putting a price' on nature (or, rather, those aspects of nature deemed to be desirable and valuable) and on the social, economic and cultural functions that arise from 'ecosystem services' (i.e., the social, cultural, spiritual and economic services that nature offers). Thus 'conservation management' based on market principles is put forward as having the potential to achieve what politics has failed to do in terms of ensuring environmental protection.[45]

In his book on the historical trajectory of money and economics (*Sacred Economics*, 2011), author Charles Eisenstein argues that in contemporary society money is made sacred 'by backing it with the things that have become sacred to us ... [Money is aligned] with the things we hold sacred'.[47] Writer and environmental activist, George Monbiot, argues that, through the processes of ecological modernisation, soil, rivers, hills, forests, grasslands are now seen as offering 'ecosystem services', 'green infrastructure', and are considered 'asset classes' within an 'ecosystem market'.

Nature – the interconnected web of life – becomes 'natural capital', and market principles and mechanisms provide the preferred solution for setting the price that correctly reflects the value of protecting the environment or using it sustainably. In this model, nature can now be 'offset', enabling its monetary value to be compensated for elsewhere and, in effect, allowing for a continuance of business-as-usual.[48]

The cap and trade-based emissions trading scheme provides another example of relegating environmental problems to the market. Aspects that lead to the failure of this approach have been criticised by a number of commentators, including Pope Francis who regards the emissions scheme as providing a new form of speculation, which fails to allow for the radical and deep transformation that is now so urgently required (*Laudato Si'*, §171). Francis directs similar criticism towards the reliance on technology as a means of mitigating climate change:

Technology, which, linked to business interests, is presented as the only way of solving these problems, in fact proves incapable of seeing the mysterious network of relations between things and so sometimes solves one problem only to create others.(*Laudato Si'*, §20)

There is no planet B! *© iStock photo*

This raises the question: are the technological solutions mentioned in the Paris Agreement on climate change (2015) simply a greening of business-as-usual – 'bio-fuelling the Hummer', as political scientist John Barry puts it – allowing the persistence of what is an unsustainable system, responding to the problem without tackling the cause?[49] As Barry argues, what is absent are not the relevant technologies but rather political will, leadership and public pressure.

Relegating society's response to environmental challenges to market principles may reduce the potential opportunity for societal transformation. Ireland's long-awaited legislation on climate, the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015*, is framed as a response to an economic challenge: the word 'society' does not appear in the Act. The current government's plan to use monoculture forestry as a form of carbon sequestration (while continuing the harvesting of peatland carbon sinks for industrial purposes),

reflects a perspective which sees climate change as an opportunity for market investment with little room for consideration of what might be the wider social or biodiversity impacts of the solutions being put forward.[50] In many of the political conversations on solutions to climate change, there is a notable absence of any reference to the need to reduce consumption.

Justice in the Global Economy points out that:

Markets do not have the social conscience, environmental ethic, or long-term vision needed to promote the common good of a stable environment that is shared inclusively and fairly ...[51]

It needs to be borne in mind also that commitments made by government and industry to take action in response to environmental problems cannot necessarily be taken as indicators of success by social and environmental groups which have advocated for environmental justice. Commonly used concepts such as 'sustainable development' and 'low carbon transition' need to be critically appraised by asking who development is for, by whom, and at what cost to social equity and environmental protection.

Where Do We Go from Here?

We are invited to balance our existential need to view the world as a collection of means for meeting our ends with not forgetting the Earth is also a realm of meaning, of moral and spiritual significance.[52]

Improving and sustaining human well-being and simultaneously protecting the environment require us to rethink how we organise ourselves economically and socially in contemporary society. This vision needs to allow for a just and socially inclusive transition to a low carbon system.[53]

Undoubtedly, better public policies and regulation are required, aimed at correcting market forces which ignore or neglect social and environmental costs, while decoupling economic activity from environmental decline. While some policies have been successful – for example, in addressing acidification and ambient air pollution – much more substantial progress is urgently required in reducing greenhouse gas emissions (and tackling climate injustice) and in ensuring the protection and promotion of biodiversity.

If we are to meaningfully respond to the unfolding implications of climate change, in terms of scale, scope and interconnectedness, a radical transformation in economic and social structures is needed – and in the words of Davoudi *et al*. (2013) this will require a 'high degree of imagination, creativity and political will'.[54]

Time for a New Story

While the inter-relationship between poverty and environmental decline is evident, it must be recognised that efforts to address the latter often run the risk of reinforcing cycles of poverty. For example, environmental conservation policies can result in population displacement, and measures to effect the transition to a low carbon society mean that many communities around the world dependent on the fossil fuel industry for employment face the prospect of job losses.

As the world sets to reduce carbon emissions under the Paris Agreement, meaningful employment alternatives developed through social dialogue and participation will be necessary. This is where the concept of a 'just transition' is important: as highlighted in *Justice in the Global Economy*, local communities must be protected and decent jobs provided.

Today's challenges reflect an economic model that is no longer socially and ecologically sustainable. It is necessary to tell ourselves a new story. *Justice in the Global Economy* echoes *Laudato Si'* in suggesting that 'education' and 'action' are essential elements of a response aimed at averting ecological and social breakdown. It is here that Jesuit institutions – schools, universities, centres and ministries – can play an important role, as acknowledged in the Report.

In the transformation towards caring for our common home, there are a number of fundamental, related questions. How do we create an economic model that integrates environmental protection, promotes social equity and encourages self-imposed limits as being a fundamental part of what it means to be human? How do we unravel the thinking that positions humankind as 'agent', in control of and in domination over nature, as 'object'? How do we create an eco-centric awareness of our own humble position within a much larger planetary community? How do we start seeing environmental problems, not as single issues, but as representing much broader considerations for human security and justice, ethics, moral responsibility and democracy?[55]

Conclusion: The Ignatian Response

What is clear is the need for us to be awakened by the greater realisation that, in the words of American academic, Mary E. Tucker, 'in rethinking the various interrelated strands of globalisation now engulfing the planet, it is critical that we recognize that our common future rests ... on our common ground – the planet itself'.[56]

Elements of this rethinking are already apparent in an expanding global awareness of the gravity of the situation, and a willingness to accept that action is required. Yet, arguably, this awareness has not yet translated into the kind of radical response that is needed to effectively challenge the prevailing orthodoxy.

Religious communities potentially have an important role to play. Such communities '... have always shared and dynamized civilisations...'; they can encourage 'civil societies in their efforts to create institutions and programs promoting sustainability'; and they 'can make a contribution to reshaping current globalization trends within this framework of an emerging global ethics and an attempt to create a sustainable planetary civilisation'.[57]

Catholic social teaching – with its emphasis on core principles such as human dignity, the common good, human flourishing, and social solidarity – provides a solid basis to help bring about the much-needed interior, community and ecological conversion that Pope Francis regards as essential.

In environmental terms, we are embedded in a web of ecological relationships essential to our well-being and life-chances. Moreover, this web extends indefinitely in time, and must be sustained over generations: the injunction to love thy neighbour can be seen as part of a covenant that enjoins us to ensure that the conditions for human flourishing extend beyond our own place and time.[58]

Although environmental issues were referred to in 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (an assembly of Jesuit representatives from around the world), held in 1995, concern for ecology was given greater emphasis at the 35th General Congregation in 2008. Under the broad theme of 'Reconciliation', and right or just relationships, care for creation was incorporated into the Society's Mission, based on the understanding that ecological concern and care for the earth are necessary components of a just relationship with each other, and with God, and are fundamental to the Christian experience.

By highlighting the gravity of the socio-ecological crisis, *Justice in the Global Economy* follows on from earlier Jesuit publications including *Healing a Broken World* (2011) and *A Spirituality that Reconciles us with Creation* (2013). *Healing a Broken World* especially provides a useful guide to inspire action, particularly among Jesuit organisations, and complements the recommendations presented in *Justice in the Global Economy*.

People and places have value beyond measure, and rescuing them from commercial exploitation is crucial to human flourishing. As a response to the Report's call for a new spirituality and a new way of understanding personal well-being, Ignatian spirituality can offer to help realise the *inner peace* that Pope Francis believes is so closely related to Earth-care. Joseph Carver SJ and other Jesuits have already considered this potential in reflections on ecology and Ignatian spirituality.[59,60,61]

The various resources, networks and institutions available worldwide to the Jesuits can help the Ignatian family strengthen its position as an instrument for economic and environmental justice and reconciliation. But while education and awareness-raising for individuals are important aspects of a response to the environmental crisis, their impact will be limited if questions relating to structural issues and policy frameworks are not addressed through research and advocacy. Work already taking place across Jesuits communities offers reasons to feel hopeful – for example (to name just a few):

- the Justice in Mining network (a global Ignatian advocacy network defending communities affected by mining activities);
- the 'sustainability' and 'green campus' initiatives at Loyola University Chicago;
- the decision (announced 14 October 2016) by Jesuits in the English Canada Province to divest from investments in fossil fuel industries;
- the ecology focus at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre in Guelph, Ontario, Canada:
- the work of 'Ecology and Jesuits in Communication' (EcoJesuit);
- *Healing Earth*, an online textbook for students;

- Pan-Amazonian project – a joint venture of Jesuits working with indigenous communities;
- Flights for Forests – a carbon offset initiative by the Jesuits in the Asia Pacific.

We are all called to help realise the dream of American Jesuit, John Surette SJ, who wrote:

In my dream, this future begins with embedding our passionate love of humanity within an equally passionate love of Earth and its web of life. This love will lead us into working with others to bring about a mutually enhancing relationship between Earth and its human community.[62]

Notes

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Justice in the Global Economy: A Theological Reflection

Gerry O'Hanlon SJ

Introduction

Justice in the Global Economy is a concise account of the crisis which humanity is currently facing: 'We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental' (*Laudato Si'*, § 139). Of particular interest is the recommendation that Jesuits and colleagues have direct engagement with poorer communities and, in particular, that we turn 'our institutions into instruments for economic justice'.[1] The latter is spelled out in terms of harnessing research resources and advancing knowledge in favour of poorer people, networking to focus on policy issues, lobbying in this direction, and realising the potential of our professional schools in faculty, students and alumni to bring about changes to the *status quo*.[2]

It will be interesting to see what traction this particular call to action achieves: in the past, while undoubtedly there has been much progress in all Jesuit institutions (including schools and centres of spirituality) in taking on board the social justice agenda, still there has been a resistance to what has been seen as an 'instrumentalisation' of any apostolate, which might take it away from its own particular goal. And so, for example, Jesuit educationalists have often understood their tradition in the light of a Christian humanism which cannot be reduced to a social justice agenda alone.

Theologically, this was the kind of war of ideas carried out by and within Liberation Theology and, in particular, by Ignacio Ellacuria in El Salvador with his notion of the Jesuit university in service of the option for people who are poor. We have had our own version of this war in terms of the debate among Jesuits and colleagues about fee-paying schools and other related issues in Ireland. *Justice in the Global Economy* may be an opportunity to revisit these debates in a more constructive way.

In this reflection, however, I have chosen a different focus. The Report is a 'call to action', and part of the action envisaged is an identification of particular challenges arising in 'different regions and local situations'. It seems to me that one of the key challenges in our Irish situation is that as believers – or people struggling with questions of faith – we often know the scientific/secular analysis quite well, but we have difficulties in linking it with our operative grasp of faith and spirituality. Jesus remains a powerful ethical model, but somehow we do not easily connect him with God or with traditional theological categories, such as *sin and salvation* that are the common language of Church. This means that our faith is not the dynamic motivation it might be in the struggle for a better world, and we remain mostly unconverted and somewhat sluggish in our response.

One important aspect of this phenomenon is captured by Gladys Ganiel in her recent study, where she uses the term 'post-Catholic' to describe our situation in Ireland, defining it in terms of *a shift in consciousness* in which the Catholic Church, as an institution, is no longer held in high esteem by most of the population and can no longer expect to exert a monopoly influence in social and political life in Ireland.[3] However, the problem has to do not just with the Church as institution, but with theology as a means of articulating an understanding that can resonate with contemporary experience.

Without this theology, as Christians in Ireland – and elsewhere in Europe – we run the risk of remaining somewhat one-speed and contradictory in response to the crises facing humankind, our scientific understanding hampered by our lack of a corresponding intellectual grasp of how this matters to faith. By theology I am referring here not just to academic theology, but to the operative and spontaneous theology or world view of people of faith. The posthumously published words of Seamus Heaney come to mind: 'Christian myth is so contentious and exhausted'.[4]

I will suggest some lines here along which theology at all levels might explore new idioms and a new way of translating traditional theological categories into terms which might ignite our imaginations and move us more urgently along the path of that 'ecological conversion' seen as so crucial by Pope Francis (*Laudato Si'*, § 216–221).

The Irish Context

The dialogue between faith and culture has been there from the birth of Christianity and is part of the logic of the Incarnation – God taking flesh, becoming one with humankind. Biblical scholars note the crucial importance of the Jewish background of Jesus for his life and teaching, as well as his closeness to nature and rural life. They suggest too that he may well have learned the more universal dimensions of his mission from encounters with the likes of the Syro-Phoenician woman.[5] Paul famously dialogued with the wisdom of the Greeks on the Areopagus. This dialogue with the Greco–Roman world became a standard feature of theological and popular thought in the first few centuries of the Church, culminating in the necessity and appropriateness (for those times) of defining the identity of Jesus Christ as being 'consubstantial with the Father' in the Council of Nicea. What is there in our contemporary culture that faith and theology would do well to take on board if it wishes to be truly 'incarnated'? What in that culture needs to be considered if faith wishes to speak the message of 'justice in the global economy' more tellingly to people of our times?

Dermot Lane, drawing principally on the analysis of the Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor, presents a succinct diagnosis.[6] The process of secularisation (a characteristic of modernity now well advanced in Ireland) has resulted in the emergence of a purely 'immanent frame' of reference, an 'exclusive humanism', a 'disenchanted universe' without reference to the Transcendent.

Within this new 'social imaginary', there has arisen the anthropological notion of the 'buffered self', disembodied, closed off from the world (the natural world in particular) and any transcendent horizon. Post-modernity has engaged in a critique of this 'disenchanted' world. However, with its own relativism and fragile subjectivity, post-modernity has failed to find much objective traction in its search for a 're-enchantment' of our world. A common characteristic of both modernity and post-modernity is a high esteem for freedom – often, however, limited to a reductively liberal notion of 'freedom from' without much agreement on what a 'freedom for' might look like.

What all this means is that faith now is experienced within a cultural context which is challenging in its complexity. One cannot anymore, for example, presume a pre-Enlightenment world in which salvation could easily be understood as freedom from the fear of hell. As science and technology have led to a deeper understanding and mastery of so many of the previously feared forces of nature, as human autonomy and democracy have liberated us from many of the chains of despotic rule and – more problematically – imbued in us a suspicion of all authority, a God of Fear no longer resonates with our culture.

And yet, with all its good points, we can see how the 'buffered self' of modernity, with its excessive individualisation and anthropocentric focus, has little sense of either the common good or of intrinsic links with nature. It follows that we have fertile grounds for the excesses of a neo-liberal economic model and a failure of ecological engagement. Post-modernity is aware of this and has critiqued many of the presumed certainties of modernity by its inclusion of minority voices and opinions, allowing for the legitimacy of feeling and sensibility as sources of knowledge, and also by its intuition that ultimately a more transcendent frame of reference is required.

How then do we go about constructing a faith narrative which can integrate what is good in the ambient culture and critique what is deficient?

Post-modernity understands that we have become over-impressed with scientific and technological progress to the extent that we have an operative epistemology which gives weight only to the empirically verifiable, a kind of rationalism which disqualifies the spiritual, the poetic, and the artistic from being legitimate sources of human knowledge. Its critique of the 'magic' which modernity sees in economic markets, in naked power and violence, is cogent. But its own antipathy to 'meta-narratives' and its de-construction of the self have led it into a kind of banal trivialisation and drift, including a cult of celebrity, which are unlikely to lead to a re-constructed world view. In a stimulating piece likening Disneyland Paris to the ancient practice of religious pilgrimage, Mark Faulkner observes what G.K. Chesterton once said: 'When men choose not to believe in God, they do not thereafter believe in nothing, they then become capable of believing in anything'.[7]

How then do we go about constructing a faith narrative which can integrate what is good in the ambient culture and critique what is deficient? This narrative might seek to re-present Jesus Christ not just as one other ethical model, but also as Son of God who answers the post-modern call for 're-enchantment' by revealing a sphere of mystery, not magic, a sphere which is both transcendent and respectful of the imminent.

Writing in the 1950s about the German Catholic Church, Karl Rahner notes the sullen, dejected feel of a Church out of touch with the world, peopled by half-hearted Christians, an institution to which the 'world' is kinder simply because it no longer provides any challenge or threat, already a symptom of 'tired old Europe'.[8] Could the same be said of the Church in Ireland today, and, if so, is it any wonder that our faith fails to inspire the intelligence and energy required to grapple with the issues raised by a document like *Justice in the Global Economy*?

And how different the tone of this woe-begone situation is to the urgency of the liberation promised by Jesus Christ when he said: 'I have come to cast fire on the earth and how I wish it were blazing already!'[9]

How then might we go about weaving a narrative of faith, hope and purpose into this secularised fabric of, at best, practical love and, at worst, drifting harmful immediacy, a fabric indifferent to questions about ultimate meaning or purpose.

Steps Towards a Renewed Theology

It might be good to begin with the kind of shared starting point that people of faith, no faith, and all in-between could share – for example, the common human instinct that human beings matter, and that, for example, some response is called for when we witness the terrible insecurity and suffering of so many migrants today.[10] Of course, some people will feel this instinct more strongly than others, and there will be disagreement about how to respond. But the point is that the instinct is there, we share it, and it has become enshrined in international treaties safeguarding human rights.

But what is this instinct based on? Is it due to biological determinism, chance, or does it have a more purposeful foundation? Or, is there simply no explanation, is it just a 'given'? When you push a little further, inevitably the question arises: is our universe just 'there', based on chance and determinism, without any deeper intelligibility? Is there any reason for any 'before' 'the Big Bang'? Or – the most basic philosophical question of all – why is there *something* rather than *nothing*?

These are the kinds of questions which our culture today is not so interested in, preferring instead to remain at the level of what is scientifically provable. This world view has not been the usual mode of human civilisation – the ancients appreciated the need for good 'physics', but knew that 'meta-physics' was also important if our primary intuitions about human life were to be sustainable in the long term. Over the centuries, mythology, philosophy, poetry, art, and religion all dialogued with 'physics' in an attempt to answer more ultimate questions and to ground our basic values and attitudes.

Stepping towards a renewed theology *© iStock photo*

In the Christian understanding, this human search for meaning has been aided by a divine revelation in the Judaeo–Christian tradition (seeds of which are present in other religious traditions) which, *inter alia*, posits God as the source and energy of our universe. This God is not simply a bigger A.N. Other than the rest of us, another being, but rather is Being Itself, Mystery, more unlike than like us, and, therefore, about whom we can say relatively little, a heuristic notion in this sense. But, thanks to revelation, what we can say is that this Mystery is benign and benevolent, is purposeful Creator and Providential shaper of our world which itself is shot through with fixed laws, but also with randomness – a randomness in that way of 'emergent probability' which philosopher Bernard Lonergan outlines,[11] and which is altogether compatible with a scientific, evolutionary perspective.

God, then, is not like an obtrusive Big Brother, much less a harsh Judge or capricious and cruel dispenser of fate, and above all, does not crowd out human individuality and freedom – but rather, in the words of Augustine, God is more intimate to

me than I am to myself, and higher than the highest I can reach (*intimior intimo meo, superior summo meo*). In other words, it is my relationship with God which frees me to be most myself and to reach the heights to which I have been called. This claim to a more authentic and adult freedom, issuing in responsible action, is what counters the assertions of wishful thinking, regression, nihilism, and resignation to fate characteristic of the influential critique of the Modern 'masters of suspicion' such as Feuerbach, Freud, Nietzsche, and Marx.

Christianity revealed this God in terms of a differentiated unity – the Father (associated particularly with creation), the Son (with salvation) and the Holy Spirit (through an ongoing presence in the world and in the Church). This mysterious Trinity, when you explore a little further, is non-sexist and non-patriarchal and, more positively, is a model of unity-in-difference/relationship/equality which is paradigmatic for the inter-connectedness of all created reality, natural and human. And so, along these lines and contrary to the operative spirit of the age, Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* can speak of the natural world as having an intrinsic dignity and value not simply in relation to humankind but in itself – because in itself, it mirrors and reveals something of the immensity of God which human beings (who are 'in the image and likeness of God'[12]) cannot do on their own. And of course, with regard to humankind, the Christian world view is pointing to the dignity and meaning of the individual human person as being intrinsically relational. Hence, this world view opens up notions such as the *common good* and *solidarity* that are so central to Catholic social teaching, and also deeply rooted in human instinct and experience, as we noted above.

The philosophically heuristic notion of God as Being Itself yields to a more relational world view or ontology with the revelation of Jesus Christ, image of God. Consequently, the Mystery of God as solitary power and transcendence is transformed into the relational God of self-emptying love, tender and close, loving us to death. The kenotic image of Jesus on the Cross is God's glory revealed, less as fearsome power, and more as vulnerable, almost incomprehensible, love. How could God love me/us so much? This is Mystery not as mystification, but as more profound depths of a love which we catch glimpses of in our own deepest human relationships.

And this is a mystery which enters deeply into what theology speaks of as sin and what all language knows of as *suffering*. We tread on sacred ground here: no glib responses are possible to the grave and often terrible consequences of even petty human acts of malice and spite, not to mention more serious breaches that often occur as the result of omission as much as commission. Nor to the seemingly intractable web of unjust social structures which blight the lives of so many. Nor to the havoc wreaked by natural disasters, such as earthquakes and tsunamis. Nor, indeed, to the grievous failures of Christian Churches, including the Catholic Church through the ages – and more recently in, for example, the ongoing unconscionable treatment of women and the terrible consequences of clerical sexual abuse and its mishandling by authorities.

God wants not sin, but salvation ... not suffering and evil, but happiness, liberation and flourishing ... for all creation.

The ravages of evil are as old and well-known as Job, and we know that we share in their roots in our own hearts, as we struggle through life to free ourselves from egoism and self-delusion. What we can say with reverence and humility is that Jesus Christ shows that God wants not sin, but salvation – in other words, not suffering and evil, but happiness, liberation and flourishing for humankind and for all of creation. That evil is a surd, parasitic on the good, that good which is the norm. That as is seen in the life of Jesus, God is particularly close to those who suffer, and that, in fact, God takes that suffering into God's own self, shares it, and carries it (this is the Christian branch of theology called soteriology). And that God, mindful of natural evolution and human freedom, is all the time luring us, and creation, to better places ('all creation groans in coming to birth'[13]), and through the mysteries of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, has indicated that truth, beauty and love will win out. With our help, we can experience anticipations of this victory already in this life (otherwise known as eschatology).

And so, as human beings, we have the immense dignity not just of being born in the image and likeness of God, but also of being called to participate in the building up of the Kingdom of

God preached by Jesus – a kingdom of peace and justice for all, with care for our created environment as an integral part of this call in today's world. We are called then to be free, to a growing ability to be less self-absorbed and – mysteriously and entirely unexpectedly – to experience the full flowering of our humanity in becoming sons and daughters of God, god-like, holy, 'divinised/deified', as Eastern theology preferentially puts it (that is, grace).

If God is source of all this and Jesus effective exemplar, it is the Holy Spirit who now acts in our world according to the Christian understanding, drawing all individuals into this journey towards justice and love. It is the Holy Spirit who, for Christians, acts through God's word in Scripture and God's presence in Church, sacraments, liturgy and prayer to lead us along the way to a less 'buffered self', and to a greater opening to the infinite possibilities of a share in divine life offered to humankind.

We are called to be radically practical about this: prosaically, we need to immerse ourselves in the day-to-day realities of human work and struggle. We need to learn how our world works and how we may bring about change – helped by the likes of Catholic social teaching – together with unbelievers. We need to work for a Church which is more just and, in line with Pope Francis' own thinking, more collegial, synodical and dialogical in nature, a better expression of God's Trinitarian nature and a more apt instrument for evangelization in today's less authoritarian world.

But we will be helped to carry out this prosaic work by being imbued with the poetry of God's Good News of divine presence and effective engagement with our world, engendering in us trust that fills our imaginations, hope that gives energy, and a joyous wonder which sustains and nourishes us on that onerous long march through the institutions, and towards our own liberation, as part of everyone's story.

Conclusion

I began with mention of a 'post-Catholic Ireland'. It should be noted also that the eminent German political philosopher, Jurgen Habermas, has spoken increasingly of 'post-secular Europe'. *Irish Times* journalist Joe Humphreys has often written of the need, in Ireland, for progressive secular thinkers to avoid adopting a reflex antipathy to all things religious but instead to seek allies among religious people seeking the same ends. Writing in July 2016, he noted the observations of the late legal scholar and secular humanist, Ronald Dworkins, in his book *Religion without God* (2013), that people of all faiths and none can find common ground by adopting a 'religious attitude' which accepts the truth of two central judgements: 'The first holds that human life has objective meaning or importance ... The second holds that what we call "nature" – the universe as a whole and all its parts – is not just a matter of fact but is itself sublime: something of intrinsic value and wonder'.[14]

I have tried to indicate some of the steps towards an articulation of a theology, both academic and popular, which might speak to our culture's lack of curiosity about transcendence (and the basis of objective meaning), as well as its truncated notion of the individual and of human freedom, with the well-known consequences for our sense of the common good and for care for our common home. Each of these steps would, of course, require much more detailed treatment:[15] this has been more in the way of map-making, in the hope that it may stimulate others to make better maps and fill in the terrain appropriately.

There are different levels in the approach taken. A first level tries, somewhat in the mode of traditional apologetics, to create a certain plausibility structure within the Christian narrative to make it more accessible, without compromising it to our contemporary culture. What emerges here is the somewhat surprising (to many contemporaries) conclusion that the Gospels are in fact a pre-eminently Enlightenment, liberationist document, making freedom and individualism more sustainable by placing them in a relational and transcendent context where the common good also embraces the good of nature.

The second tries to appeal to believers themselves to understand that their faith in Jesus Christ, and the discipleship and ecclesial belonging it entails, shows a God deeply involved in our world, dreaming and working to bring about a better world in the face of enormous challenges and opposition, calling on us to be the divine hands and feet to bring about the realisation of these dreams. This is the God illustrated powerfully in the New Testament figure of Mary, disciple *par excellence*, not least in the profoundly liberationist sentiments she proclaimed during her pregnancy in her Magnificat.[16] This is the God too of the Ignatian spiritual exercises, labouring in our world, working as Trinity for our salvation, aware of sin and evil,

but always drawing us toward the Kingdom. This is already achieved in principle through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, so that in the end we can begin to see God in all things, and see our world primarily in the light of God's love.

Above all, this essay has been an attempt to respond to the Report, *Justice in the Global Economy*, by identifying, as the document asks us to do, a particular challenge that arises in our own region. Clearly a renewed theology on its own will not suffice: we need ongoing conversation with the best scientific analysis, we need the spur of effective leadership, engaged spirituality, and prophetic action in order to reawaken our need for salvation and the Good News of the Gospels within a culture which experiences and sees no such need. But it has been my contention that a renewed theology, if not a sufficient condition on its own, is a necessary condition for the effective reception and implementation of the 'call to action' in this Report. If we continue to understand our world in traditional theological and ecclesial categories, at variance with our contemporary culture, we are like spancelled, three-legged runners, racing to keep up with an increasingly frenetic world sprinting to God-knows-where, and increasingly tempted to drop out into our own nostalgic cul-de-sac.

Notes

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9. Luke 12: 49.
10. Of course, there are many other possible starting points – consider the depth of dimension of common human experiences like falling in love, victory and celebration, failure and disappointment, decisions of conscience, guilt and forgiveness, illness, bereavement and death. This approach is along the lines of Karl Rahner's idea of 'mystagogy', where we learn to see the deeper dimensions of human experience not by appeal to magic (based on illusion and trickery) or mystification (based on deliberate obfuscation to conceal lack of rational engagement and ignorance), but mystery (the more we know, the more we marvel – for example, the universe, or the depths of love).
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13. Romans 8: 22.
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15. For a slightly more extended, but still far from exhaustive, treatment see: O'Hanlon, G. (2010) 'The Recession and God: Reading the Signs of the Times' in *Theology in the Irish Public Square*, Dublin: Columba Press, pp. 12–64, especially pp. 39–61.
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Reflections from an Ignatian Educational Perspective

Brian Flannery

Introduction

The Report, *Justice in the Global Economy*, is a call to action. Whilst it combines the clarity and scholarship of an academic paper, its underlying tone conveys urgency. The Report calls on all of us in Jesuit works to wake up to the realities that humankind is facing and asks that as individuals, organisations, and institutions we turn our attention and energy to addressing these global challenges immediately.

This study and the urgency of its message is clearly stimulated by various statements of Pope Francis who is quoted as calling on all Christians to fight against 'an economy that kills' and to address 'the structural causes of inequality'.[1] The Pope sees humankind as being at a pivotal point in history where, despite economic advancements, sizeable parts of the world's population are excluded from economic prosperity, are socially isolated and live in poverty.

Pedro Arrupe's *Men for Others* had a profound effect on how Jesuits (and lay colleagues) saw their ministry. The promotion of justice became integral to the work of the Jesuits who were convinced 'that love of God which does not issue in justice for men is a farce'.[2] *Justice in the Global Economy* is an amplification of this sentiment and calls similarly for a 'dismantling of unjust social structures so that the weak, the oppressed, the marginalized of this world may be set free'.[3]

There is no doubt that the political, social and economic realities described in *Justice in the Global Economy* cry out for a courageous response and that schools as nurseries for the next generation have a critical role to play. For somebody who has responsibility for schools in the Irish Jesuit Province, I feel the challenge of what is described in the Report, but also an excitement that resonates with Pope Francis' call for the Church to have 'the smell of the sheep', to be 'hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets'.[4]

Justice in the Global Economy recommends that Jesuit institutions, including our schools, be turned into forces for economic justice so that they powerfully impact on the status quo. It is recommended that: 'Advocacy for government action, for corporate responsibility, for inter-institutional cooperation must be characteristic of our response as individuals and as institutions. It should impact on who we admit to our schools, what we teach, who we hire, and what we do with the resources of our institutions.'[5]

This recommendation forces us to question and reflect on what we are already doing in our schools in response to the specific challenges posed by the Report. How, in our programmes, our school policies and structures, are we helping to alleviate the suffering of poorer communities? How are we helping to reduce inequality between those who are rich and those who are poor? How are we educating for ecological responsibility and preparing our students to be active agents for transformative political, social and economic change?

The following is a reflection on the Ignatian educational perspective from the viewpoint of the author who is delegate for education in the Irish Province. The point of interest for the reader will, I expect, be in what ways our students are being educated into an awareness of the *major challenges of today* presented in the Report, and what values and skills are they being equipped with to respond to these challenges.

Justice and Jesuit Education

For centuries, the only formal statement of what a Jesuit education aspired to be was found in the *Ratio Studiorum*. This statement was more a collection of regulations for school officials and teachers than an explicit statement of an educational philosophy. Nevertheless, the *Ratio* (or Plan of Studies) drew implicitly from the Christian humanist tradition of the time and its aim was the development of eloquence in the use of Latin. The *Ratio* was later revised (1832) to include the study of languages, history, geography, mathematics, and the natural sciences. However, it was not until Pedro Arrupe's *Men for Others* (1973) that the Jesuits began to articulate a vision of education for our times. In what was a very new and challenging statement, Arrupe declared:

Education for justice has become in recent years one of the chief concerns of the Church. Why? Because there is a new awareness in the Church that participation in the promotion of justice and the liberation of the oppressed is a constitutive element of the mission which Our Lord has entrusted to her ...

Today our prime educational objective must be to form men-and-women-for-others; men and women ... who cannot even conceive of love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbours; men and women completely convinced that love of God which does not issue in justice for others is a farce.[6]

In 1993, Fr. Kolvenbach (29th Superior General of the Jesuits) ratified Arrupe's formulation and amplified its meaning, stating that our goal as educators is '… to form men and women of *Competence, Conscience, and Compassionate Commitment*' (otherwise known as the 4Cs). More recently, this formula has come to express the 'human excellence that the Society of Jesus wants for the youth that society has entrusted to us'.[7]

These qualities emphasise all that Jesuit education aspires to be. The *competent person* refers to the traditional academic dimension that leads to solid knowledge, to an adequate development of skills and abilities to reach an effective performance that can contribute to human fulfilment. The competent person is someone who is capable of creating, understanding and using knowledge and skills to live in his/her own context and transform it. In general terms, we can say that the emphasis here is on the development of the intellectual, *the head*.

A person of conscience discerns what is right, good and true and has the courage to act, takes a stand when necessary, has a passion for social justice and is an influential leader in the community. Here, the emphasis is on the *heart* – as it is informed by the *head* and *moved* by sensible experience. A compassionate and committed person responds to those in greatest need and walks with others to empower them, in solidarity and empathy. Such a person manifests a preferential love of the poor, which 'ought to manifest itself in deeds rather than words'.[8]

Reflection on lived and deeply felt experiences is always geared towards making a response, about moving to action. It is about empowering young people to realise that their efforts can make a difference. The focus for educators here is on the development of *the hand*.

In all, the intention is the *full development of the person* – in service of creating a just world. The framework of the 4Cs supplies a very practical means for engaging with the issues: *competence* related to gaining a clear understanding of structural injustices and global concerns; *conscience* related to both the need for and the proper mode of response to these challenges, and the *compassionate commitment*, to the actual process of responding in whatever form is possible and appropriate. If these then are the aims of Jesuit education, it can be seen how our schools are perfectly placed to be informed and exercised by the contents and challenges of *Justice in the Global Economy*.

The Ignatian Pedagogic Paradigm (IPP)

The dynamic of the Ignatian paradigm is critical. The process employed in the schools is one that involves the dynamic of the IPP – a paradigm based on *experience, reflection and action* – which combines processes of reflection and an active stance against social injustice. This pedagogic paradigm engages the intellect of the student (which we can understand as *the head*), moves *the heart*, and impels the person towards action (*the hand*). Within the context of the 4Cs (as detailed above), the movement is always towards action in the understanding that the compassionate person is capable of evolving from feelings of apathy towards a sense of justice, charity and solidarity.

As Christians, our educational reference for the compassionate person is the figure of Jesus, in his most human form: the one who is understanding of our personal weaknesses but steadfast in denouncing injustice. Our hope as educators is to aspire to developing the students to the point that they 'feel inhabited and accompanied by God the father, who sends us his spirit to help us discover and discern our life's trials …'

Education for Justice

Central to the schools' mission and vision is the recognition of a 'faith that does justice'. As part of this, the schools have an active, collaborative relationship with the justice sector of the Jesuit Province in Ireland – the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice (which focuses on penal reform, housing and homelessness, economic justice, church structural renewal, and environmental justice), the Jesuit Refugee Service, and the Irish Jesuit

Missions office. Drawing on this collaborative relationship, a justice education coordinator incorporates four key areas of justice: development education, environmental justice, migrants and refugees, and social inequality. The programme seeks to embed justice across all areas of Jesuit school life from school programmes (curricular and co-curricular), teacher formation, and school policy and school structures.

Educating at the Margins

Justice in the Global Economy recommends that the Ignatian family should begin by 'directly engaging the poor and their causes' – by listening to the voices of poorer communities and communities on the margin, becoming companions, collaborating with their causes, and allowing poorer communities to 'teach us how we can best serve them'.[9] Complementing the academic work of the classroom is a range of activities that allow students to become companions, to listen and give voice to, to become conscientised to the realities of life for people who are excluded, disadvantaged, and vulnerable in society. For example, students in Jesuit schools in Ireland:

- undertake placements in hospital and home settings for older people, in support centres for people with disabilities and for youth groups, in refugee centres (Direct Provision Centres);
- participate in workshops on the journey of refugees, modules on development education, and provide English language classes to people who have newly arrived into Ireland seeking asylum;
- organise and undertake fundraising events (for agencies such as COPE, Focus Ireland and the Peter McVerry Trust – agencies working with people affected by homelessness)[10] and food distribution events,[11] as well as home refurbishment projects for vulnerable people in their local communities.

These activities usually take place in collaboration with non-governmental organisations, such as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (charitable Catholic organisation dedicated to tackling poverty), and the Peter McVerry Trust.

Our students show a keen awareness of the gravity of the world's ecological problems, and in response to these problems, Jesuits schools in Ireland are increasingly exploring ways of responding to the unfolding environmental crisis. Notable programmes include an award-winning urban farm project,[12] and participation in the student-led Green-Schools programme,[13] which embraces long-term, whole-school environmental action.

Two-week immersion programmes involve student and teacher visits to Lesotho, Kolkata (Calcutta), or Zambia, providing powerful experiences for all involved. During these visits, participants work, for example, in schools and orphanages, in hospitals for people who are dying, and in building programmes. Living with local families (where possible) and regular opportunities for reflection are critical elements of these experiences.

The 'doing of justice' in these circumstances enables students to gain a unique insight into their own faith; they see Christ's message for the poor with new eyes and they experience 'Church' in a fresh and dynamic way – on the margins, with poor communities, being the support and comfort that the Gospel speaks of.

For the teachers in our schools there is a capacity-building programme where they live and work in a partnered Jesuit school in Gulu, Uganda. The teachers are exposed to the realities of life for local communities, and for the students and teachers in the school, and have the opportunity to reflect on the mission and praxis of Jesuit education.

A New Spirituality

Justice in the Global Economy recommends a new spirituality, a new way of understanding personal well-being, based on a concern for justice and solidarity with people.

The schools aspire to conscientising students, helping them grow into 'compassionate and committed' human beings. Students study scripture, Catholic social teaching, various methods of prayer, and an exploration of other faiths. They also participate in an annual retreat experience which allows them time to reflect on their relationship with God, their sense of self and their relationship with others. Many retreat opportunities follow a 'magis' style[14] related to themes on homelessness, prisons, and the plight of refugees. A number of senior students undertake a diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes, accompanying and meeting the needs of people who are ill.

Teacher formation is a key challenge that the Province faces: how can we find and work with teachers who share in the values and priorities that

animate the Society? Programmes of induction and formation are available; however, these need to resonate with an individual's sense of God, and their sense of idealism. Maintaining and developing a culture in the schools where this kind of discourse is normal and even attractive is an ongoing challenge.

The Challenges Ahead

The analysis and the response outlined in *Justice in the Global Economy* are clearly through a Gospel lens. The inspiration is Christian; the call to action is informed by a conviction that as brothers and sisters in the Lord we have a responsibility to one another that transcends national borders, religious creed and ethnic differences. Preserving this global perspective and inculcating it in the future generation cannot be presumed upon. In Ireland, the push towards secularisation of the school system means that, increasingly, the Irish State's Department of Education and Skills is involved in the management of schools, formerly left to school boards and trustees. This involvement compromises the school's ability to determine its own 'religious' culture.

A faith-based school works with the conviction that all aspects of the school experience are imbued with a spirit that shapes the mind and hearts of the students. Liturgy, chaplaincy, spiritual retreats, social outreach, co-curricular activity are all essential aspects of this educational focus – not optional extras. At present, the general drift of government policy is to neutralise the religious dimension. In Ireland, at least, this raises the important question of how can our schools preserve their unique faith-based characteristics and pursue their own particular mission.

Is Our Fee-paying School System Part of the Problem?

In his theological reflection in this issue of *Working Notes*, Gerry O'Hanlon SJ acknowledges that *Justice in the Global Economy* may provide an opportunity to revisit debates among Jesuits and colleagues about fee-paying schools.

Admission to a number of the Jesuit schools in Ireland is based on a fee-paying structure. For many, fee-paying private schools equate with elitism and are at odds with the Christian values that these same schools endeavour to espouse. The charge is often raised that fee-paying schools confer further advantage on those who already enjoy a considerable amount of privilege in our society. In other words, the charge is that the schools, for all their rhetoric and endeavours in the area of justice and equality, are arguably social instruments for preserving unjust social structures, contributing to and amplifying the inequalities documented in *Justice in the Global Economy*.

There is a tension between serving the most privileged in society and the document's call for our schools to be institutions that champion the cause of people who are living in poverty. This line of argument is valid and raises hard questions about our role and involvement in education: do our schools reinforce structural inequalities across wider society? Who is being served, and what values are ultimately transmitted?

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This is a complex topic. In Ireland, there is a demand for private schools that provide additional resources for their students. At one level, the option of a fee-paying education certainly helps amplify social inequality – students from a background with the necessary financial means are awarded the opportunity to avail of a well-resourced learning experience, furthering their potential in a system that values academic progress and achievement over other aspects of learning.

Yet, the issue is not just specific to fee-paying schools. Our non-fee paying schools also attract students with a similar socio-economic profile. Parents opt for these schools with the belief that they are good in terms of helping to realise the students' academic ability (and, with that, their entry into third-level education and future career progression). Part of the problem, therefore, lies with a wider societal context that measures the success of a school system by its academic results and bases personal achievement on academic success.

Our schools aspire to conscientise our students to

the realities of injustice, poverty and environmental degradation, and we hope that they leave our schools as idealistic men and women with a deep commitment to justice. However, in a society where economic and financial markets have become increasingly significant in shaping our lives, individual success is often measured by the degree of participation in contributing to economic growth, and the types of employment activities that people engage in. This inevitably shapes and influences societal expectations of the role and responsibility of schools, as well as the employment opportunities available to students when they leave school.

Further, the pressured demands of academic studies, the competitiveness of the workplace and the hyper-stimulation of characteristics of contemporary society may provide little opportunity to actively live out a deep commitment to justice. Our students may also find themselves on university courses and in employment settings that neither nourish nor value the attitudes of mind and heart that were developed in school. The challenges that our students encounter, and the challenges to living out a sense of justice, are touched upon in other articles in this issue, in particular, articles from Catherine Devitt and Gerry O'Hanlon SJ.

Acknowledging the Tensions

At present, we live with these tensions knowing that schools provide unparalleled access to the possibility of influence. Our schools want to nurture critical thinkers who understand that with privilege comes responsibility. Therefore, at this critical juncture in history, we need to question whether the challenges of our time require – as Arrupe suggests in *Men for Others* and *Justice in the Global Economy* makes clear in its recommendations – a more radical response and commitment than has been demonstrated to date. As institutions of the Jesuits and as affirmed within the document, we need to evaluate whether or not we are creating leaders of positive change – and if not, why not.

The vast majority of fee-paying schools in Ireland have a Christian value base. Therefore, we also need to consider that if the various religious orders decided to make a strategic decision to depart what would fill the vacuum?

Overall, while we need to reflect on 'who we admit to our schools', Jesuit schools must acknowledge their power and privilege and utilise this platform for the wider common good. The challenges raised in this article bolster the need for our schools to work even more closely with Jesuit centres and ministries to 'turn a spotlight on significant policy issues and to pressure for greater international cooperation in reforms that would make the lives of people living in poorer communities more humane and just.'[15] This should include advocacy for a fairer, inclusive and more equal educational system for all.

Conclusion

Our schools aspire to provide students with academic and experiential exposure to the issues of poverty, injustice and environmental degradation. Students are encouraged to reflect on their experience and to respond in considered and practical ways. The hope is that these habits of careful reflection and compassionate response will become deeply embedded, informing students' attitudes and values throughout their lifetime, their lifestyles, work choices, and relationships. The ultimate hope is that our students will become men and women for others, and that their education puts them at the service of the world.

Justice in the Global Economy calls on us to revisit how we are contributing to or challenging those who are the most privileged in Irish society. To evaluate our efforts, we need to acknowledge the tensions and work to improve our impact in challenging and responding to injustice.

Notes

1. Pope Francis (2014), *Evangelii Gaudium*, Vatican City: Vatican Press. (Available at: https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html)
2. Arrupe SJ, P. (1973) *Men and Women for Others*. (Available at: http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/men-for-others.html)
3. *Ibid*.
4. Pope Francis (2013), *Evangelii Gaudium*: *Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World*. Vatican City: Vatican Press.
5. Promotio Iustitiae (2016) *Justice in the Global Economy*, No. 121, 2016/1. Rome: Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, p. 32. (Available at: http://www.sjweb.info/documents/sjs/pj/docs_pdf/PJ_121_ENG.pdf)
6. Arrupe SJ, P. (1973) *Men and Women for Others* (Available at: http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/men-for-others.html)
7. Secretariat for Education, Society of Jesus. (2015) *Jesuit Education Aims to Human Excellence*. (Available at: http://h2020.fje.edu/en/docs/Human%20Excellence%20ENG.pdf)
8. Ivens, SJ, M. and Hughes, SJ, G. (2004) *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*. London: Newton Printing Ltd.

9. *Justice in the Global Economy*, p. 32.
10. Initiatives include a 'Fast and sleep-out' involving senior and former students during the Christmas period, as a way of drawing attention to the plight of homeless people.
11. Every Wednesday afternoon teams of pupils go out on soup runs. Sandwiches are made in the school canteen and these are distributed with soup in Dublin city centre. This activity runs right throughout the year and is student-led. The emphasis is not so much about giving people food as communicating respectfully with them and restoring a sense of dignity.
12. The Urban Farm Project in Belvedere school (Dublin city) is perhaps the most innovative of the measures to-date in relation to education for sustainability in our schools. On the rooftop of the school, students grow vegetables, farm fish and keep beehives.
13. This programme is operated and co-ordinated by the Environmental Education Unit of An Taisce (leading environmental NGO in Ireland).
14. 'Magis' is the Latin for 'more', calling us to depth and quality in what we do.
15. *Justice in the Global Economy*, p. 33.

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