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For Openers

Editorial Board

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The title of this issue plays upon the meaning of the word "after." Temporally this issue helps commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of General Congregation 32 and its Decree # 4 on Justice. It is also temporally "after" a conference on Justice at Santa Clara University in October of last year. This conference was itself a culmination, "after" a two-year process of discussions and conferences at a number of Jesuit campuses.

A second meaning of "after" is found in the Gospel beatitude: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice." In this sense "after" means in search of, seeking for something. I call attention to the quotation on the back cover, "after" the end of the issue, a kind of "afterword," if you will. It derives from the talk given at Santa Clara University in October, 2000 by Father General of the Society of Jesus, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. It states succinctly the importance of justice in every Jesuit college or university's mission

This issue began with the working title, "Practicing Justice." In the course of discussing and developing the issue, seminar members were taken with the suggested title, "After Justice." Deriving from Alisdair MacIntyre's book, *After Virtue*, the title therefore reminds us of MacIntyre's work and another book of his titled *Whose Justice?*

As to the question of whether "justice" is an appropriate concern of university faculty, administrators and staff: that is answered by Fr. Kolvenbach himself:

All professors, in spite of the cliché of the ivory tower, are in contact with the world. But no point of view is ever neutral or value-free. By preference, by option, our Jesuit point of view is that of the poor. So our professors' commitment to faith and justice entails a most significant shift in viewpoint and choice of values. Adopting the point of view of those who suffer injustice, our professors seek the truth and share their search and its results with our students. . . . To expect our professors to make such an explicit option and speak about it is obviously not easy; it entails risks. But I do believe that this is what Jesuit

educators have publicly stated, in Church and in society, to be our defining commitment.

The articles in this issue derive from several sources. As one of the conference's organizers, William Spohn speaks with authority and wide knowledge in an overview that provides the perspective from which to view the process and read the remaining essays. As Professor Spohn points out, Fr. Daoust's essay was first presented at Santa Clara University in October of 1999. That conference was one of three that then culminated in the October, 2000 conference at Santa Clara.

The next four articles, by Professors Schervish, Brand, Baird, and Tucker, represent perspectives from within a number of separate disciplines. Three of the four papers were adapted from talks given at other "Justice" conferences. For this issue of *Conversations*, contributors were asked to conclude by asking a few pointed questions which might stimulate discussion among readers of *Conversations* and so aid the ongoing process which the conferences envision. The responses by Professors Rose and Gordon represent a sample of the varied reflections of participants from different parts of the country. Professor Gordon speaks from her experience with justice issues at Fairfield University, and Professor Rose from his position in the "heartland," at Loyola Chicago.

A special feature of this issue are the numerous photos of the Santa Clara conference. Taken by photographer John Quinn, S.J., they are a further commemoration of the event whose focus gave direction to this issue.

Included in this issue is a department the seminar hopes to include in future issues. "Response" is where reactions to previous issues -- in this case our "Living the Mission" issue of fall, 2000 -- will be printed.

We also continue to hope that we can find place for the occasional unsolicited article or essay which -- though it does not fit with an issue's particular thematic focus -- merits the attention and will stimulate particular interest in the readership of *Conversations*.