Jesuits Finding LIGHT IN DARK PLACES
Dear Friends,

Last October, Jesuits from around the world participated in the election of a new Superior General, Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ. A month later, we laid to rest a former Superior General, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ. Saying farewell to a beloved Father General, just weeks after welcoming a new one, was a poignant reminder that the Society of Jesus is entering a new chapter—holding ever true to the Ignatian way of discernment and social justice. While our mission to serve the marginalized, to educate students in the Jesuit tradition, and to proclaim the Gospel through Ignatian Spirituality remains steadfast, the challenges we are called to meet are both changing and growing.

Whether tirelessly working to meet the increasing humanitarian and educational needs of refugees, committing more of our resources to help inner-city families, or ministering to the poor and imprisoned, Jesuits have never shied away from bringing the light of Christ into some rather dark places. In fact, not long after the Society was founded nearly 500 years ago, Jesuits were missioned to places others dared not tread—areas of hopelessness, spiritual solitude and oppression. This issue of JESUITS offers a small glimpse into some of the ways that, today, the Jesuits and lay colleagues of the Maryland and USA Northeast Provinces work to make life brighter for those who find themselves lost, forgotten, or in need of a comforting hand when few are reaching out for them.

One of the most famous quotes attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola is, “Go forth and set the world on fire.” So much of our world remains dark and in need of light. We pray that you had a blessed Easter, and that the infinite love of our risen Jesus will move your heart to share the light of Christ with others.

Sincerely in Christ,

FROM OUR PROVINCIALS

Very Rev. Robert M. Hussey, SJ
Provincial, Maryland Province

Very Rev. John J. Cecero, SJ
Provincial, USA Northeast Province

“We hear Christ summon us anew to a ministry of justice and peace, serving the poor and the excluded and helping build peace.”

—Decrees of General Congregation 36
ABOUT OUR COVER
Zach Presutti, SJ, is a Jesuit scholastic in formation who heads the THRIVE for Life program, ministering to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated men and women, and their family members.

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In Martin Scorsese’s “Silence,” Andrew Garfield plays a Jesuit missionary traveling through 17th century Japan.
Fr. Philip Florio, SJ, has been named provincial assistant for vocation ministry for the Maryland and USA Northeast Provinces, effective June 15, 2017. Father Florio has served the past two years as pastor and superior at Old St. Joseph’s Church in Philadelphia. Prior to that, he was a campus minister at Loyola University Maryland.

Adam Lewis was named the next principal of Loyola School in New York City. Lewis, a native of Australia, has served as director of senior campus for Xavier College in Melbourne since 2015. From 2010 to 2015, he was deputy principal of St. Ignatius College in Sydney. Mr. Lewis holds a B.A. and B.S. from the Australian National University, a graduate diploma in education from the University of Canberra and a Master of Arts in applied developmental and educational psychology from Boston College.

Fr. Charles Frederico, SJ, will begin his new role as director of mission at St. Joseph’s Prep in June 2017. He has served for the last eight years as provincial assistant for vocation ministry for the Maryland and USA Northeast Provinces. Prior to that, he was a campus minister at Fordham University. Fr. Florio is eager to work with the many men who are discerning a vocation to the Society of Jesus.

St. Joseph’s Prep has announced that John Petruzzelli will be the high school’s new principal, effective July 1, 2017. Mr. Petruzzelli was most recently principal of Bethlehem Catholic High School but is no stranger to St. Joe’s Prep. He has served in the past as dean of students and as director of the Ignatian Service Program. He holds an M.Ed. from Wilmington University and a B.A. in History from Saint Joseph’s University.

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Patrick T. Maloney, has been named president of Nativity School of Worcester, effective immediately. Mr. Maloney first came to Worcester in 2012 as director of advancement. He was promoted to vice president of advancement in 2015 and served in that role until he was named interim president in 2016. He is a lifelong resident of Worcester and graduated from the College of the Holy Cross in 2002. His late uncle, Fr. Robert E. Maloney, SJ, was a member of the New England Province.

Fr. Walter Modrys, SJ, has been appointed pastor at Old St. Joseph’s Church in Philadelphia, effective June 2017. Fr. Modrys currently serves as assistant pastor of St. Clare’s Parish in Staten Island. Prior to that, he was treasurer of the New York Province and pastor of St. Ignatius Loyola Church in New York City.

Fr. Joseph Sands, SJ, was appointed director of novices for the Maryland and USA Northeast Provinces. Fr. Sands will also serve as the
Superior General, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ

On November 26, 2016, just a month after the Society of Jesus elected Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ, as the new Superior General, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, Superior General from 1983 to 2008, passed away, four days shy of his 88th birthday. He had been in the Society of Jesus for 68 years and was a Jesuit priest for 55 years.

Before his election as Superior General, Fr. Kolvenbach was the vice-provincial of the Near East, covering Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. Upon his election as Superior General, Fr. Kolvenbach carried out his responsibilities with energy and compassion. He visited as many Jesuit provinces and individual Jesuits as he could. His was a calming presence amid many questions the Jesuits faced both within and outside the Church. In 1995, he directed the 34th General Congregation of the Jesuits, which addressed issues including the mission of the Society in the modern world and the impact of the revision of Canon Law.

With the consent of Pope Benedict to step down in 2008, Fr. Kolvenbach’s resignation was accepted at the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus. When asked about his plans for retirement, he expressed a desire to join the Jesuits in the Near East and be a help in that war-torn region. He died in Beirut, Lebanon, serving as an assistant librarian for his Jesuit community.

Fr. Walter Smith, SJ, was named the next superior of the Campion Center Jesuit Community, effective June 1, 2017. For 24 years, he served as president and CEO of the HealthCare Chaplaincy Network (NCCN), a NYC-based nonprofit health care organization that connects spiritual resources with the world of health care. Fr. Smith holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Boston University. He was previously dean of the Weston Jesuit School of Theology and a professor of psychology and department chair at Fairfield University.

Fr. Stephen Surovick, SJ, will become socius to the director of novices in August 2017 when Fr. Joseph Sands, SJ, assumes his role as director of novices. Fr. Surovick currently teaches theology and is chaplain at St. Joseph’s Prep in Philadelphia. Prior to that, he spent a year at Holy Trinity Parish in Washington, D.C. He was ordained in 2013.

Fr. Thomas Worcester, SJ, has been appointed as the next president of Regis College in Toronto, Canada. Regis College is the theological school of the Society of Jesus in Canada, affiliated with the University of Toronto through the ecumenical Toronto School of Theology. Fr. Worcester was born and raised in Burlington, VT, 50 miles south of the Canadian border. He has served as a professor at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass.
In our Fall/Winter issue of JESUITS magazine, we covered the election of the new Superior General for the Society of Jesus—Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ—elected at the 36th General Congregation in Rome. We provided his background and listed his accomplishments. But what about the Jesuit delegates who elected Fr. Sosa? Were there other attributes they perceived in this Venezuelan priest who most recently oversaw the international Jesuit houses in Rome? Br. Guy Consolmagno, SJ, a Maryland Province Jesuit, GC36 delegate, and the director of the Vatican Observatory, lives in one of the houses Fr. Sosa cared for. Here is his reflection.
The international Jesuit houses—including places in Rome like the Gregorian University or the Vatican Observatory, as well as sites in Jerusalem and elsewhere—draw on the whole Society. At the Vatican Observatory, for example, the dozen Jesuits in our community come from four continents, representing eight different Jesuit provinces. Among us, a dozen languages can be spoken. For that reason, our care does not fall under any particular provincial but directly under Father General. In practice, of course, Father General appoints a “delegate” to watch over us.

For the past two years, that Father Delegate was Fr. Arturo Sosa. And so I’ve gotten to know Fr. Sosa as closely as a typical Jesuit might know his provincial. Closer, in fact... he’s the one who nominated me to be the director of the Observatory, and after my appointment he taught me how to function not only in the Jesuit curia but also in the Vatican.

Some of the qualities that make him outstanding are his wide experience in so many different parts of the Society. He has worked with the poor; he has worked at universities. He understands all of our different kinds of works; he understands all of our different social settings and the different assumptions that each of us makes about what we expect in our Jesuit lives and work. More importantly, he knows how to listen.

Without being more specific, let’s just say that all the international houses provide great opportunities to test one’s abilities to listen and act. The differences in “languages” can lead to great misunderstandings even when everyone is speaking the same tongue! But I have seen how Fr. Sosa has navigated these sometimes-treacherous waters with great success and worked to achieve the common good.

One of the themes that I heard at the General Congregations was that when looking for a Father General, one might search for a mystic; or a visionary; or a king. There are times when you want someone to envision new directions, or someone who will lead us closer to our religious roots. But at GC36, the running joke went that we really only needed to issue one document, one that said merely, “Please implement all the previous documents!” At this moment, we know we need someone who can guide us to the places where we know we need to be.

What sort of “king” will Fr. Sosa be? One of his first actions was, literally, to install a round table in his office at the Curia. Around that table he has already gathered a number of different groups within the Society. For instance, the six brothers elected to the General Congregation (I was one) had an hour with him sitting around that table, talking frankly among ourselves (and him) about our hopes and needs.

A round table. Not a bad idea for a “king” named Arturo!
Arrupe College: Jesuit Father Stephen Katsouros, dean and executive director of Arrupe College, with a student on his first day of class.

All photos courtesy of Arrupe College of Loyola University Chicago.
The world’s first Jesuit community college is in its second year.

By Ann Christenson

No one was more excited to receive an acceptance letter to Arrupe College in Chicago than the mother of Jontae Thomas.

“She called me and said I should receive the notification today,” Jontae recalled. When the envelope arrived, he called his mother back to share the good news. “She screamed for joy,” he said.

“I just like that school,” Jontae’s mother told him. Jontae understood why: Classes are small, and the teachers know their students by name. They also serve as student advisers and “would always have their door open to us,” Jontae says. Most attractive of all was the opportunity to earn an associate degree without incurring financial debt.

Arrupe College is a junior college that’s an extension of Loyola University Chicago and was created expressly to address the lack of accessible higher education for low-income families. Arrupe’s founder, Jesuit Father Michael Garanzini, former president and current chancellor of Loyola Chicago, hatched the idea as a timely, necessary way to improve the college’s graduation rates of students from challenged economic backgrounds. Father Stephen Katsouros, SJ, a USA Northeast Province Jesuit, and former president of Loyola School in New York City, serves as the college’s dean and executive director.

Fr. Garanzini designed Arrupe as part of a long-range plan to offer affordable education to students with limited financial means, with the university absorbing the costs. He ran the proposal past administrators of various Chicago high schools, where “it was met with great excitement,” said Fr. Katsouros.

Students would attend classes 40 weeks out of the year, three to four days per week, and each class would be eight weeks in duration, followed by a two-week break. The ongoing nature of classes without an extended summer break would help keep students engaged. Class sizes would be small, with fewer than 30 students, to eliminate disconnect between the students and faculty.

The goal is for students to graduate with little or no debt. They could live at home, commute to school and be encouraged to work part-time jobs to offset tuition costs and personal expenses. Students are required to apply for federal student aid and are expected to receive other aid and grants, which brings the per-year tuition cost down to approximately $2,000 per year. Integral to the creation of Arrupe was an available building, Maguire Hall, at Loyola’s downtown campus.

The interest in Arrupe College was immediate and strong, according to Fr.
Katsouros. The school’s first-year class had 159 students, and 131 returned for their second year of college this past fall, along with a new incoming freshman class of 187 students.

Bringing faculty on board was not a burden either, thanks to the model’s focus on teaching and advising. Each faculty member serves as an adviser to 20 students and sets aside at least 10 hours a week for office hours. “All [faculty] are really turned on by this program,” Fr. Katsouros says.

Offering a Path to Success

The other key component was addressing the question: How can we help these students flourish? The answer was to build a strong support network of professionals—six full-time faculty, as well as a licensed social worker, two associate deans and a career coordinator.

Recognizing that many Arrupe students face more roadblocks to success in terms of their personal lives, this education model is tasked with addressing the whole person.

The fledgling school’s commitment to evolving methods of cultivating a climate of success is critical. Yolanda Golden, Arrupe’s associate dean of student success, oversees the college’s career counseling strategy, keeping students academically and socially on course. This formally began in July 2015, the month before Arrupe classes were in session, with a three-week Summer Enrichment Program, which is mandatory for all students.

Besides a time to register for classes, meet the faculty and learn how to maneuver through the hurdles of financial aid, the summer program includes a two-day retreat where students participate in team-building activities that enable them to start building friendships with each other.

The credits earned in Arrupe’s two-year program award students with an associate degree in arts and humanities, business, or social and behavioral sciences. Those credits are transferable to more than 100 four-year Illinois universities. “I think it’s going to be a game-changer in higher ed,” says Fr. Katsouros.
Anyone who has ever eaten a fresh vegetable from a garden he or she cultivated knows the difference in taste. Fresh produce that one harvests and eats right away is still living, the nutrients still coursing through its cells. There is, as well, the immense satisfaction of knowing that you labored creatively with God’s abundant earth to bring forth this simple healthy goodness. Gardens, by nature, make us generous.

Eden, a word which means “delight,” was inhabited by Adam (soil) and Eve (life). In the beginning, God gets dirty, and, with a hand in the soil, gives us the breath of life. God is intensely involved in the world. Life with and in God commences with our inseparable bond to the earth. How could it be otherwise? If one eats, one must also “tend and till” soil, gratefully receiving back the life it yields.

Ignatian spirituality could be likened to that garden. It is a spirituality that engages and delights in a world full of beauty, goodness, and justice. At the same time, it demands that one “get dirty,” laboring in places and in circumstances that are ugly, sad, evil, and unjust, that challenge people’s hope and joy.

At the core of this spirituality is Jesus who steps into the beauty and brokenness of the world. He gets his hands in dirt and spit and makes it something sacramental and healing (Jn. 9). He restores broken people to wholeness, community, and God. Jesus wraps his hands around bread—fruit of the earth, work of human hands—and blesses it, making ordinary food something more that also restores people to wholeness, community, and God. Ignatian spirituality delights in the good and does not shy away from getting dirty. One dwells and labors with God in this beautiful and fragmented world, reconciling people and...
creation to God. Ignatian spirituality is eminently incarnational and sacramental, and thus redemptive.

My work at Wheeling Jesuit University (WJU) enables me to engage this beautiful, broken world in many ways. I say, half jokingly, that I have my dream job: “I keep a hand in the classroom (teaching theology) and a hand in the soil (farming), I try to keep us from trashing the planet (sustainability programs), and I remain close to God’s poor.” For me, this combination of academic, pastoral, and social justice work gives concrete expression to what Pope Francis calls integral ecology and fulfills the Jesuit call to reconcile creation and people with God.

My central passion, however, relates to food justice. For the last year, I’ve worked with Grow Ohio Valley (GOV), a local non-profit founded by Danny Swan, a WJU alum and recent recipient of the Moira Erin O’Donnell Emerging Leaders for Justice award. The program reclaims abandoned city lots, grows good, healthy food, and seeks to make that food accessible to all, especially those in the struggling Ohio Valley, part of the depressed Rust Belt.

Our work is focused in East Wheeling, but it is a place indicative of other urban areas, a food-insecure neighborhood and region. At GOV, I am one of the farm hands, tending and tilling the gardens. I absolutely love this aspect of my work, being outside and working hard, close to God’s beautiful creation, cultivating good, healthy vegetables, ultimately destined for those who hunger—not only for food, but also for health and community, wholeness. This makes me rejoice. One of the great joys is being at our Mobile Farmer’s Market, a converted food truck, seeing the life and excitement on people’s faces at the abundance of God’s good earth, while knowing that we worked hard to bring that all to market. While GOV is neither religious nor Christian in its vision, I am convinced that it is a work of the Kingdom of God.

One of the four East Wheeling lots reclaimed by GOV, and on which we now grow food, was once an entire city block with a thriving ethnic community. People lived, worked, played, fought, and rejoiced there for over 150 years! In the early 1970s, eminent domain was invoked—the people relocated, their homes demolished—and a highway overpass was built. The abandoned lot became overrun with weeds and trash. It played host to all sorts of drug activity, prostitution, and the homeless.

About six years ago, Danny asked the
city if he could use it to put in a few raised bed gardens. It is located on 18th Street, and so it was affectionately called “Farm 18.” Here you have this abandoned parcel of land with very little soil depth, let alone good soil, degraded in all sorts of ways. We still pull lots of rocks and debris, left over from the demolition of homes, out of the soil. You have a poor community, also degraded in too many ways.

You should see Farm 18 now! It is a veritable urban Eden. For six years, GOV has been rebuilding the soil through the constant task of adding organic matter, such as compost, leaves, wood chips, and chicken manure (on site). “O God, how I thank Thee for this chicken manure!” In places where there were just a few inches of topsoil, one now finds this rich, black, nutrient dense soil, more than a foot deep in some beds. Billions of microorganisms live in this soil—they too are our farm hands! What was a rather haphazard use of the irregularly shaped lot, on a slope, is now a maximized growing space of over 8,000 square feet of intensely cultivated beds. At the height of the growing season, this garden is lush and abundant. And it is shared! The creation that groaned here (Rom. 8:22) has experienced redemption, restoring health to land and people.

In addition to getting this food to market, GOV has several other programs. For eight weeks last fall, on Wednesday evenings at Northern Community College, about ten single mothers gathered for “Dinner in a SNAP.” SNAP stands for Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program and is a crucial federal program that helps low-income persons purchase food. Chef-instructor Gene Evans leads the group, teaching them to prepare simple, healthy crock-pot dishes—cut it up and throw it in the pot! Many of the vegetables come from our GOV Market traveled to Health Right in South Wheeling, a medical clinic serving low-income persons. Thanks to a grant procured by Dr. Sue Greco through a program called “Pharmacy,” some thirty households receive $25 per week to spend at our market. When the patron-eaters arrive, they report to the “doctor” who greets them, chats a bit, and then promptly writes them a “prescription,” which is a recipe for healthy eating. They then go to our Mobile Market truck to purchase some of the necessary vegetables and other ingredients to take home. But before they depart, and thanks to West Virginia University Extension, the dish they will prepare at home can be tasted there. It is delicious, healthy food, grown on an abandoned, degraded parcel of land, destined for the bellies of the poor, who experience a sense of belonging, care, and community. This is true health.

I have used the word “health” several times. The Latin word for health is salus, which is where we get the word salvation. This word is all encompassing, implying wholeness and healing. In my view, this makes the work of Farm 18 a salvific one, in which creation and people are redeemed and brought to a fuller life.

If this is not a Kingdom work, nothing is. Come and see for yourself and, with God, get your hands in the soil. Our salvation depends on it.

Father Mike Woods, SJ, serves as sustainability program coordinator for the Appalachian Institute. He is also a part-time faculty member at Wheeling Jesuit University, teaching religious studies, philosophy and sustainability.
Putting Fifth First

Two Jesuit Middle Schools Add Fifth Grade for Greater Impact

By Mike Gabriele

“I was excited!”
This simple but enthusiastic response came from Eric Harris, a student in the pioneer fifth grade at St. Ignatius Loyola Academy in Baltimore, when asked how he felt about leaving his old school to come to the Academy. Eric made a substantial leap to a new school—a completely new environment that has become, in so many ways, home. This excitement, this impartiality with which Eric approached leaving his normal routine to accept the unfamiliar, is not uncommon in his other classmates who make up the Academy’s very first fifth-grade class.

The transition from a public city elementary school to a private Jesuit middle school, especially for students from lower-income families, can be quite daunting, if not downright demanding. Academically, new sixth graders entering St. Ignatius Loyola Academy were often one to two years behind where they should have been to adequately begin preparing for high school admission. And beyond scholastic aptitude, many incoming sixth graders find acclimating into the Academy’s environment more difficult than they might have a year earlier.

“You’d be surprised the difference a
year makes,” said John Ciccone, president of St. Ignatius Loyola Academy. “Fifth graders are still young children. They’re more inquisitive, more open to different environments and new experiences.” The Academy moved from its original location at St. Ignatius Church in Baltimore to a bigger building south of the Inner Harbor in 2013 with the specific hopes and plans of adding a fifth grade to the curriculum. That hope became a reality last fall. “We have 15 students in our inaugural fifth-grade class,” said Ciccone. “Next year we plan to double that. We had 55 families hoping to fill these first 15 desks, so the need is obviously there.”

While St. Ignatius Loyola Academy is a school for boys, Brooklyn Jesuit Prep in New York City is a co-ed Jesuit middle school. When it first opened in 2003, BJP included a fifth grade, but due to financial difficulties faced by the Nativity Schools of New York in 2013, they reluctantly chose to become strictly sixth through eighth in order to remain open. In the fall of this year, however, Brooklyn Jesuit Prep will add back their fifth-grade curriculum. “Not having our fifth grade took a year off our ability to reach these kids and work with them,” said Patricia Gauvey, president at Brooklyn Jesuit Prep. “Seventh-grade report cards are so very important for high school admissions; we need that extra year to better prepare our students.” BJP also sees the same transition issues
between fifth and sixth grade that St. Ignatius Loyola Academy experiences. “Fifth graders are generally more malleable than sixth graders,” Gauvey said. “They adapt better to the high expectations we set. New sixth graders often see themselves already as cliques rather than as a unified class.”

Both Brooklyn Jesuit Prep and St. Ignatius Loyola Academy utilize their older students to help welcome and acclimate incoming fifth graders to the new environment. “Our summer camp will mix the fifth graders with other students, who will continue to meet with them once a week throughout the year,” explained Gauvey.

“We have advisory periods instead of homerooms so that our fifth graders can interact with upper classmates,” added Ciccone. “This is one reason we launched our fifth grade with only 15 students. We want to evolve and adjust as we go before growing to full capacity.”

A seventh-grade student at Brooklyn Jesuit Prep understands the important role of older classmates. “I know that next year we will need to step up even more as leaders because we will have more students to set an example for,” said the student.

As for the new fifth graders already enrolled at St. Ignatius Loyola Academy, the experience has been an exciting challenge. “We work much harder here, and the teachers don’t treat us like kids,” said Eric Harris. “I like that.”

“Fifth graders are generally more malleable than sixth graders. They adapt better to the high expectations we set.”

— Patricia Gauvey, president, BJP
Jesuits have always heeded the call to explore the frontiers of mission and ministry—to go where the needs are greatest. Along their journey of discernment, scholastics in formation willfully escape their comfort zones, traveling to the edges of the globe and to the margins of society.
For nearly 500 years, Jesuits have served in countries all over the world, working for social justice and bringing the hope of Christ to those who struggle for peace, dignity and comfort—things so many of us take for granted.

In 1947, the Maryland Province Jesuits embarked on a new call to Jamshedpur, India, establishing a mission dedicated to helping those in need, especially the indigenous, tribal people. They started schools, cared for the sick, ministered the Gospel and, most importantly, recruited other Jesuits from all over the world to come join them. What started as a small mission of Jesuit priests from the Maryland Province, is today a thriving province of its own with more than 200 Jesuits.

Last year, three pioneer Jesuits from the Maryland Province remained in India—Fr. Carl Dincher, SJ; Fr. Richard Kenna, SJ; and Fr. Ed McGrath, SJ—each having served more than 50 years. The newly appointed socius of the Jamshedpur Province, Fr. Jerome Sequeira, SJ, wrote a letter to the Maryland Province, thanking God for its contributions over the last six decades and expressing a continued blessing at having three of our pioneering Jesuits still with them. Sadly, we have since lost both Fr. Kenna and Fr. Dincher, but their legacies live on through the many good works in and around Jamshedpur that provide care and education to those in need.

Fr. Joseph Lacey, SJ, pastor of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Church in Woodstock, Md., spent 22 years in Jamshedpur, eight of those years helping people afflicted with leprosy. Still capable of speaking Hindi, Fr. Lacey took a group of teenage parishioners on a pilgrimage to Jamshedpur during Christmas break. They even got to spend New Year’s Eve with Fr. Ed McGrath, our last remaining Maryland Jesuit in India, who turned 94 several days later. “What a wonderful experience,” said Fr. Lacey. “The kids hooked up with a Project in Patna, gaining a first-hand look at the needs of those in extreme poverty. We visited our sister parish in Rerua, St. Francis Xavier, and the Loyola School that serves the local tribal children.” Fr. Lacey set time aside each night for reflection with his group, allowing them to share their experiences, feelings and reactions. “You really can’t leave this place without being changed.”

This is precisely why many Maryland Province Jesuits chose to spend much, if not all, of their lives serving in India. And although only one remains, our Jesuits in formation are seeking new missions of their own—shining their light of faith through justice—following Pope Francis’ call for those in consecrated life to “fly the nest and go to the frontiers of the world.”

Fr. Joe Lacey, SJ, gathers with his high school and college pilgrims at the Loyola School in Jamshedpur.
The True Story of the Jesuits in Japan

By Doris Yu

Thirty years after Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons portrayed Jesuits in the Academy Award-winning movie “The Mission,” the Society of Jesus figures prominently in a new film that opened in theaters this past December.

Decades in the making, Martin Scorsese’s “Silence” tells the story of Portuguese Jesuit missionaries in 17th century Japan. Although the film is based on a fictional novel by the Japanese author Shusaku Endo, many of the events and people depicted in “Silence” are real.

The film does not sugarcoat the brutal nature of this chapter of Jesuit history. Once welcome in Japan, missionaries were officially expelled from the country by the 1620s. A number of priests, however, went underground to minister to the Christian community. Among them was Fr. Cristóvão Ferreira, the Portuguese provincial superior of the Jesuit mission.

“Ferreira’s story is one of the most dramatic stories of Christianity and missionary history of all time,” says Fr. M. Antoni J. Ucerler, SJ, a professor at the University of San Francisco and an expert in Japanese Christian history. “He was the great missionary, the superior of all Jesuit missionaries, and the first to renounce his faith under torture.”

Fr. Ucerler has a unique vantage point on “Silence.” His spiritual adviser for many years was Jesuit Father William Johnston, who translated Endo’s book from Japanese into English.
Fr. Johnston, an Irish Jesuit working in Japan, was a close friend of Endo’s and “was with Endo on his deathbed,” Fr. Ucerler says. “Silence’ asks some of the most difficult questions about human life and death and faith. What does it mean to be loyal? What does it mean to have a belief? What does it mean to live and die for that belief? And what happens when you don’t always succeed? Did Jesus succeed by dying on the cross? That’s the mystery that Endo was trying to understand.”

The Jesuits were responsible for planting the seeds of Christianity in Japan, through the missionary efforts of St. Francis Xavier, SJ, one of the founding members of the Society of Jesus. Xavier and the Jesuits landed there in 1549, establishing several Jesuit communities. A steady stream of Jesuits, mainly Portuguese, continued to arrive in the country through the 1570s.

This was the golden age of the Jesuits’ evangelization in Japan. According to Fr. Ucerler, an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 Japanese were baptized as Christians.

“Perhaps a certain number of these Christians were not really believers. Some did abandon the faith when commanded to do so, but many others held fast to their faith,” he explains. “That is comprehensible, because those were the days when, just as in Europe, if your feudal lord told you to do something, you did it.”

The mission, which included a Jesuit college, several schools and a novitiate, grew until the martyrdom of St. Paul Miki, SJ, and his companions in 1597—the 26 martyrs of Japan—by the feudal lord Toyotomi Hideyoshi. In 1600, the shogun (military dictator) Tokugawa Ieyasu unified Japan; but, beginning in 1614, he ordered all missionaries out of the country, issuing a decree forbidding the practice of Christianity.

Suspected Christians were required to step on likenesses of the Virgin Mary or Christ, called fumie, to prove they were not believers. Those who resisted were tortured or executed. Many fumie were made of copper, carved out of stone or wooden blocks, or painted. The surviving fumie that exist today are smoothed and worn down by the trampling of thousands of feet.

The shogunate devised more and more painful ways of killing the Christians, including slow-burning at the stake and “the pit,” a torture method featured in Endo’s novel. Victims were bound and hung upside down in a deep hole, with their heads stuck in excrement. A small cut was made near the temple or forehead so blood could drip out, instead of pooling in the head and making the person unconscious too quickly. This way, the torture was prolonged and it could take days before the victim died. The captors would end the torture if the victims signaled that they apostatized, or renounced their faith, by raising one arm, which was left unbound. But the shogunate soon felt that persecuting the converts was not enough.

“Silence” at the Vatican for 300 Jesuits

Fr. Martin says. “I hope every Catholic sees this film.”

Scorsese’s work examines God’s mercy. His passion project finally a reality, the filmmaker recently screened “Silence” at the Vatican for 300 Jesuits and met Pope Francis, who once dreamed of becoming a missionary in Japan himself.

Father James Martin, SJ, editor-at-large of the Jesuit magazine America, served as a spiritual adviser to the cast. “Silence’ is like living inside a prayer,” Fr. Martin says. “I hope every Catholic sees this film.”

In the present day, surrounded by an abundance of religiously fueled persecution, violence and conflict worldwide, this film may be our best attempt at understanding what is all too often the only response: silence.

Source: Jesuit Conference

To view Fr. James Martin, SJ’s interview with director Martin Scorsese, visit www.JesuitsEast.org/silence.
alter’s seven months in prison began and ended with a prayer.
He had moved to New York from his home country a year after graduating college and had held a corporate job for 15 years. But by winter several years ago, Walter was 35 and had lost his job and even his apartment to addiction. Living homeless, on a January night, high and with nowhere left to go, he wandered into a church. “When you’re in addict mode,” Walter would later say, “your spiritual life is non-existent.” Yet he prayed that night, for the first time in so long. Several hours later, he had handcuffs around his wrists.
Walter was brought to the Manhattan Detention Center (MDC), a facility commonly known as the Tombs, which houses some 670 male detainees. As opposed to a state or federal prison, almost none of the men at the MDC have been sentenced yet for the crimes they were charged with. Some arrive just days after being arrested, residing in a temporary holding section until posting bail or being released. Those who don’t make bail live with up to 40 other detainees in one of a dozen or so “houses,” two-story units. Most exist in a holding pattern, waiting for court dates, dealing with lawyers, working on their case, struggling through life in jail.

Though this was his first arrest, a judge set Walter’s bail astronomically high, citing
Walter’s status as a foreign citizen and the chance he might flee overseas. The amount was impossible for him to pay.

He spent much of the first two weeks sleeping. When he slowly began to venture out of his cell, fear set in.

“I’m sure they could tell I was scared to death, because I was,” Walter said. Others seemed to know how the system worked, but he had no idea. “I’d sit on the staircase on my own, and then people would come to talk to me. I think none of them understood my accent or believed my story because everybody lies. Everybody’s innocent in jail. Everyone.”

A few detainees began to show Walter the ropes: how the food line worked, who’s in charge of what, and which prisoners to avoid. After a friend wired him money for phone services and began visiting, he learned how to operate in the underground economy, trading calls for soup or candy bars. The environment was unstable. The experience of being locked in a cell was painful; there were men so mentally ill that they wasted their allotted phone time standing with a dead receiver, to delay and upset their rivals, and, by extension, everyone in line.

Walter had grown up Catholic, and three weeks into his stay, he spotted a young man, Zach Presutti, SJ, wearing a Roman collar. It was the man who ran the Catholic retreat on Friday nights, he learned. And he was a Jesuit, which astounded Walter.

One of Walter’s family members overseas had graduated from a Jesuit high school and college. His mother was also familiar and even friendly with Jesuits in their home town. “I remember the first time I saw him,” Walter said. “I said, ‘I’m going to be safe now.’ I was convinced that it did not happen by coincidence.”

Missioned to the Margins

It was no coincidence that a Jesuit was walking the common area at the MDC that day. St. Ignatius himself, founder of the Society of Jesus, envisioned a religious order of men whose cloister was the world. As the Jesuit historian John O’Malley, SJ, notes, even the earliest members of the Society would have been found in places like hospitals, prisons, orphanages, and places of refuge for vulnerable women.

As the United States developed, Jesuits in the Northeast consoled the sick and dying in hospitals and institutions, served the poor living in crowded sections of Boston and New York City, and ministered in asylums for the chronically sick and mentally ill.

Over the years, Jesuits became popularly known as educators, but providing spiritual and social relief for the needy remains very much at the heart of Ignatian spirituality, intrinsic, in fact, to the pastoral understanding of Jesuits.

The roots of THRIVE for Life stem back to 2011. As a Jesuit novice, Zach, was sent to work in a jail. He took phone numbers down for people and made phone calls to their loved ones. “I fell in love with it,” he said. “I found the conversations and encounters I was having to be so profound and so deep, so quickly.”

Soon after, the Jesuit provincial asked Zach to get a master’s degree in social work. He managed to do clinical work in a prison near St. Louis University, and when he returned to the Northeast, his superiors supported his desire to focus on ministering to the incarcerated.

“I didn’t wake up one day and say it’s a great idea to do criminal justice reform,” Zach admits. “I was transformed by the people that I met—their names, their faces and their stories. These were relationships I was building, and that’s why I felt myself coming toward this work, to empower others to thrive.”

Volunteers like Tracey Tynan and Patty Hughes, who head the social justice committees at St. Francis Xavier and St. Ignatius Loyola, Manhattan’s two Jesuit parishes, were eager to become involved. Several months after Pope Francis’ U.S. visit, Tracey still felt inspired by the fact that the pope had made deliberate stops to pray with incarcerated men and women in each major city.

When Tracey and Patty met up with Zach, he was still in the early stages of envisioning a program that would entail two components: contemplation and action. The project was...
still without a name when they joined Zach for the very first Friday night retreat at the MDC, in January 2016.

Close Your Eyes

The sights and sounds of jail are as traumatic as one might expect. “It’s an assault on your senses,” Tracey said, recalling her first volunteer experience.

A loud tone sounds each time the guard buzzes someone into the drafty White Street entryway. Volunteers stuff their personal items into small lockers and join others—lawyers, visitors and newly released individuals seeking Metrocards—waiting for the loud pop of an electronic bolt door, giving them entry into the check-in area. They turn over their last remaining possession, their ID, to the guard for a guest pass and walk through a metal detector. Hands are stamped, several more doors are unlocked. An escort brings visitors into an elevator and down a small hallway that offers only fleeting glimpses of men in tan jail uniforms down other hallways, through reinforced glass windows.

Then, the experience upturns just about every expectation.

They are chatty and warm as they bring out Bibles and prayer cards, and rearrange seating in the chapel, a small cinder block room with painted murals and bench seating. The volunteers are people like Sabina, from Italy, who attends St. Ignatius Loyola Parish, John, a lawyer and the director of the Spiritual Exercises program at St. Francis Xavier Church, and Mary, a Xavier parishioner.

The corrections officers outside of the chapel and the nearby law library strike you as just people from throughout the boroughs. There isn’t any resentful tone toward volunteers coming in to serve the men whose behavior they oversee. They stop what they’re doing to meet each volunteer and shake hands.

The detainees arrive. They look you in the eye, smile and shake hands as they enter. They remember the names of even brand new volunteers. There are no handcuffs or shackles, but, in matching uniforms, they take seats quietly throughout the room. Some steal a few moments alone; others read the Bible or get up to greet fellow detainees, handshakes coming in for a short pound.

Even Zach doesn’t fit the expectation for a prison chaplain. He’s 33 and grew up in upstate New York. With a beard and glasses, he looks more like someone you’d see walking the street in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, instead of rearranging the MDC chapel. To detainees, it doesn’t matter that he’s a Jesuit regent in formation, someone not yet a priest. He’s Brother Zach, or Father Zach, or, as some have called him, “the hipster priest that talks about love all the time.”

When the room is full, Brother Zach comes to life.

“I’m going to ask you to do something I know you’re not used to doing, especially here,” he begins. “Close your eyes for a moment. Now, imagine you’re on a beach,” he begins. “Your feet are in the sand, and it’s quiet and warm. You feel the sun shining on your skin, and it’s just you and the ocean. You begin to feel the presence of God there with you, a comforting presence in this beautiful setting.”

For several minutes, Zach’s voice lets the men transcend cinder block walls, the guards in the hallway, and the half dozen or more locked doors between them and the outside. All 20 men sit silently on chairs packed close to one another. In these moments, crimes don’t matter. Court dates don’t matter. All eyes are closed, including Zach’s. There’s a palpable peace.

Zach slowly guides them back to their presence in the room. Eyes open, and after breathing exercises, the Ignatian Examen—a reflection process penned by the founder of the Jesuits nearly 500 years ago—continues.

The men are asked to review their week, to discover the ways they saw God at work in their life. They’re invited, and are often
eager, to share their stories—about a former rival asking to borrow a phone call, or a charge being downgraded to a misdemeanor.

Then they’re asked to explore their challenges. In hearing their struggles, they let those in the room bear witness to their burdens and their humanity—waiting six weeks for a 15-second appearance before a judge, the looming threat of being transferred somewhere else like Riker’s Island, the sorrows that come from a second or third incarceration after years living on the outside.

The Examen ends with an exploration of what they can do the next day to be more generous and loving. After a scripture reading and a short reflection, Zach reminds them that God loves them more than they will ever know. The retreat closes with a group prayer, done in a circle holding hands.

All of this in an environment where exploring feelings and expressing joy are completely foreign—even unwelcomed—concepts.

Walter joined Zach and the volunteers at some point in February 2016, about four weeks into his stay in jail. “With my story and the last few years of my life, that first message that Zach shared, that you are still loved, was something that I forgot,” he said. “This was one hour where I forgot where I was. It gave me hope at that time.”

He attended Zach’s weekly retreats through the entire progression of his court case. By the time of Walter’s plea deal, he had been doing the Examen alone each night in his cell for four months.

**THRIVE for Life**

A full year after its start, the prison ministry program has a name—THRIVE for Life—and is housed in an office at Xavier High School in New York City. Zach and volunteers continue the regularly scheduled, weekly retreats for detainees at the MDC and have expanded to serve five other jails and prisons throughout New York State on a steady basis.

Oftentimes, there is very little time for volunteers to speak individually with the prisoners, but the act of remembering names, stories, struggles has brought meaning to detainees’ lives. “Many times, we’re the only people from the outside that they will see during their whole time in jail,” Tracey said.

It is not uncommon for Zach and several volunteers to rent a car and book hotel rooms, hosting weekend retreats for inmates at Sing Sing Correctional Facility, or those imprisoned elsewhere in places like Otisville, N.Y.

Over the past year, THRIVE has partnered not only with parishioners and other volunteers, but also with students at New York’s Regis High School, who have made several trips to Riker’s Island.

Aside from the retreats, which fulfill the contemplation portion of THRIVE’s mission,
the program has expanded to include life skills programs for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. THRIVE also aids family members of those imprisoned.

Today, Walter lives in New York City. He attends mandatory narcotics counseling and is still connected with THRIVE. On one afternoon in January, he joined Zach for a long subway ride, delivering a clothing donation to a man who had just been released from prison. He recently accepted a scholarship to begin studies at a local college and is excited about the prospect of beginning a career in graphic design.

With the cooperation of MDC leadership, THRIVE has established a learning and resource center at the detention center. In February, a pile of boxes took up a corner of the THRIVE office, filled with books that had been donated by others. This spring, THRIVE will become an independent 501 (c)(3) organization.

“When I see Zach doing something that has meaning for him, I’ve never had that in my life, but I know that I can get there,” Walter said. “THRIVE could be the platform that helps me find what’s meaningful for me. Right now, it makes sense in my life. I have a long way to go, but THRIVE brought me a sense of higher power, of community and hope.”

When Tracey talks about THRIVE, she takes on an energetic air. But when pressed for what deeper meaning she might see in her service, she becomes more pensive.

“Anyone can go astray, even the privileged” she said. “But for someone who’s had very few chances in life, or whose parents forced them to sell drugs at age 10, they simply deserve a shot. THRIVE shows detainees that God loves them, and if you go through the retreats with us, you’ll see that there is nothing you can do that will make God not love you. Every human being is worthy of God’s love. All you have to do is accept.”

For more information on the THRIVE program, visit THRIVE’s website at www.thriveforlife.org or email zpresutti@thriveforlife.org.
When those gathered at this year’s Jesuit GALA on April 25 leave Boston’s Marriott Copley Place, they will walk away feeling inspired and energized—not only by the dozens of Jesuits there, the many volunteers present or the countless friends filling the room, but also by this year’s honorees, John and Mary Power.

John and Mary have been transformed by Ignatian values, and they both have deep Jesuit roots, dating back more than 50 years. In fact, more than 60 of their combined family members have graduated from Jesuit institutions.

John, a 1980 graduate of the College of the Holy Cross, has worked in the commercial real estate industry for almost 30 years. A principal at Farley White Interests, John assisted the province with the successful Eastern Point Retreat House renovation project and is the vice chair of the Lowell Plan. Mary graduated from Holy Cross in 1983 and has been a member of several community and school boards. Both Mary and John have served on the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation’s Fellowship reconstruction task force and have been loyal friends of the Jesuits for many years.

“The Jesuits have been heroes to us,” John and Mary said. “They encourage us to dig deeper and they help us to discover our best selves. In our lives, they’ve truly been a constant presence, guiding us, shaping our spirituality and inspiring us to give back to others with the gifts we’ve been given.”

In recognition of their selfless efforts for the Jesuits and for others, the USA Northeast Province will honor Mary and John Power with its Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam Award at this year’s GALA.
The St. Ignatius Loyola community, located within the Jesuit Center, will be a residence that is tailored to suit modern needs of Jesuit life, yet firmly rooted in prayer, discernment and community living—cornerstones of the Society of Jesus. This home for 20 priests, brothers and scholastics will feature new bedrooms, each with its own bathroom, an open layout dining space and kitchen area, and a beautiful chapel for Mass and daily prayer.

The administrative spaces on the first and second floors will feature upgrades that will foster greater partnerships among Jesuit ministries throughout the region and enhance collaboration among Jesuits and lay partners. With the creation of the USA East Province in 2020, these offices will eventually house more than 40 staff members who guide Jesuit ministries from Maine to Georgia.

When the Jesuit Center opens later this year, the priests, brothers and scholastics and lay colleagues moving into the new space on Manhattan’s 83rd Street will find a completely renovated living and apostolic space, built to enhance the ways the Jesuits respond to today’s critical needs.

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The Jesuit Center Campaign
launched last fall, with momentum quickly gathering among committee members, staff and generous donors who helped this fundraising effort gain an incredible start.

Shortly after the start of the New Year, Fr. John J. Cecero, SJ, provincial of the USA Northeast Province, announced that John C. Meditz, campaign co-chair, had pledged a very generous $2.5 million lead gift. One week later, Mario Gabelli and his wife, Regina Pitaro, visited The Jesuit Center and committed to a $500,000 gift for The Gabelli Conference Room on the center’s first floor.

“Both of these outstanding leadership gifts inspire us, will ensure our continued success, and will help us engage more donors in support of this critical work for the province,” said Fr. James F. Keenan, SJ, campaign co-chair.

To date, The Jesuit Center Campaign has raised more than $3.5 million in cash and pledges.

In January, members of the Jesuit Center campaign committee gathered at the Xavier Jesuit Community on New York’s 16th Street to celebrate Mass with Fr. Cecero, SJ, and many of the priests, brothers and scholastics who live there. At the event, committee members and guests toured the residence, which, after consultation with the Jesuits who live there, was designed by architectural firm Beyer, Blinder and Belle. The residence reopened in 2014, and the Jesuit Center has been designed by the same firm.

“It is incredible to see the way this campaign has engaged those in this room, and so many others we are reaching out to,” Dan Denihan, campaign co-chair, said at the January dinner. “This is a real opportunity to help enhance the work of the Society of Jesus and to help the Jesuits, who give so much and rarely, if ever, ask for anything in return.”

Throughout the winter, drywall was added to rooms on most floors within The Jesuit Center. Plumbing outlets are being installed throughout the residential sections, and workers have finished shaping and drying the curved ceiling which will adorn the community chapel space and surrounding rooms.

“The Jesuit Center Campaign
For more information on the Jesuit Center, including construction updates, naming and endowment opportunities, and ways to support this important project, visit www.JesuitCenterCampaign.org or contact Joe Naylor at jnaylor@Jesuits.org or Jim Skurka at jskurka@Jesuits.org.

“This is a real opportunity to help enhance the work of the Society of Jesus and to help the Jesuits, who give so much and rarely, if ever, ask for anything in return.”

—Dan Denihan, campaign co-chair

Maureen Power (left), wife of committee member Jim Power, joins with Dan Denihan, co-chair (right) at a Mass and dinner held at the Xavier Jesuit Community.
Join us for an Ignatian Journey to Spain and Lourdes

Key sites in the lives of Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier

October 1–11, 2017

Under the Spiritual Direction of Fr. George Witt, SJ.

For more info, visit www.JesuitsEast.org/Spain2017 or contact Mr. Joe Naylor at 212-774-5529 or jnaylor@Jesuits.org.

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For information, contact James Skurka at jskurka@Jesuits.org 212-774-5544 or Liz Cunningham at lcunningham@Jesuits.org 617-607-2893

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Fr. James Keenan, SJ

This year’s Friends of the Jesuits Golf Outing and dinner will recognize Fr. James Keenan, SJ, who is celebrating his 80th birthday and marking 60 years since entering the Society of Jesus!
A lifetime of support for our Jesuits in India

By Sherri Weil

To the great sorrow of friends and family, last year, two of the remaining three Jesuits originally from the Maryland Province were called to eternal life from their adopted country of India. Fr. Carl Dincher, SJ, died on Oct. 10th and Fr. Richard Kenna, SJ, on Nov. 13th. Fr. Edward McGrath, SJ, is the last American priest in Jamshedpur. He turned 94 in January.

These three Jesuits left their home country decades ago, having to adapt to the new languages, climate and diet of India. Over time, they became one with the people of India. They helped heal their physical and spiritual wounds, educated their children, and brought the light of Christ to many who had lost hope.

These Jesuits have been supported by a cadre of loyal donors throughout their 50+ years in the “land of the Indies.” As inspiring as these men for others have been, the contributions from their benefactors are equally so. For years, hundreds of contributions have been sent to the Maryland Province from family members, descendants, friends, and even friends of friends. The list would fill too many pages of this magazine.

At the memorial service for Fr. Dincher, held at his home parish of St. Boniface Church in Williamsport, Pa., hundreds of friends and family were in attendance. Many who supported him throughout his life told stories of his work as an advisor to Saint Mother Teresa. Fr. Dincher met Mother Teresa in 1961, and he was impressed by both her compassion and wisdom. He is quoted as saying, “For Mother Teresa and myself, we see Jesus in each of our brothers and sisters. There is something tremendously fulfilling being amongst the poorest of the poor.”

Fortunately, many patrons of the Province are now supporting the Jesuits in formation, who, inspired by their forefathers, are serving the poor domestically and internationally.
Have you ever thought about being a Jesuit?

Meet and talk with Jesuits. If their stories resonate with you, then it’s probably something you should consider.
—Danny Gustafson, SJ

I figured there was a common bond all Jesuits had. Now I know, it’s Jesus.
—Pat Nolan, SJ

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