

## Personal Approach to UAP

### Texts:

- **Matthew 5:1-12 or Luke 6:20-26**
  - *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*
  - *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
  - *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God*
  - *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*
- **Fr. General: Part I: Universal Apostolic Preferences 2019-2029.**

The UAP are the fruit of an election... Our desire has been to find the best way to serve the Church at this time the best contribution we can make with what we are and have, seeking to do what is for the greater divine service and the more universal good

  - To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment;
  - To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice;
  - To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future;
  - To collaborate in the care of our Common Home.
- **Pope Francis:** The first preference is crucial because it presupposes as a basic condition the Jesuit's relationship with the Lord in a personal and communal life of prayer and discernment... Without this prayerful attitude the other preferences will not bear fruit.
- **Saint Ignatius:** "Eternal Lord of all things, I make my oblation with Thy favor and help, ... that I want and desire, and it is my deliberate determination, if only it be Thy greater service and praise, to imitate Thee in bearing all injuries and all abuse and all poverty of spirit, and actual poverty, too, if Thy most Holy Majesty wants to choose and receive me to such life and state." *Spiritual Exercises 98*

### The image

- I imagine my self on the mountainside listening to Jesus in the midst of the crowd.

### Asking for Grace

- I ask God for inner knowledge of His preferences and my own desire to follow Him.

### Guidance for prayer

- Read the text and imagine the scene. Contemplate the way Jesus looks at the crowd and how he asks his disciples to collaborate in his mission.
- Look at the verbs of the preferences: to show the way, to walk with, to accompany, to collaborate in, ... Go through the first part of Fr. General's letter and imagine yourself doing these actions.
- The UAP are the first fruit of a long process of discernment which will continue now in our apostolic planning. How have I felt part of this process until now and for the near future?
- Imagine your life as an answer to Jesus' programme expressed in the beatitudes: Are the preferences of Jesus my own preferences? Are the preferences given to the Society of Jesus my preferences? What desires move within me in favour (and against)? What are my longings and my reluctances?

### Conversation with God

Present your desires to Jesus, like a friend talks to another friend.

## ***Institutional Approach to UAP***

### **Texts:**

- **Luke 4:16-21**

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

- **Mark 4:35-41**

*That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.*

- **Fr. General: Part II: Guided by the Spirit**

**We are deeply convinced that the preferences will help the apostolic body of the Society if they maintain a clear unity between life and mission;** if we understand them as orientations that go beyond "doing something" and enable us to achieve our transformation as persons, as religious communities, and as apostolic works and institutions in which we collaborate with others... **The preferences seek to embody concretely the mission received as the Lord's response to the cry of a wounded world;** the cry of the most vulnerable, who have been displaced and marginalized; the empty rhetoric that divides and dismantles our cultures; the growing chasm between rich and poor; the cry of the young in search of hope and meaning; the cry of the earth and its peoples, who have been degraded to the point of having their very existence put at risk. The preferences seek to respond to a world in which entire generations have never heard about Jesus and his Gospel. (Pg. 7)

**The universal apostolic preferences seek to deepen these processes of personal, communal, and institutional conversion.** They are orientations for improving both the apostolic work of the whole body of the Society and the ways in which we accomplish our ministries, in which the preferences are expressed. At the same time, they seek to help Jesuits and our companions in mission to make their apostolic lives a pathway to God. We want to invite all people to follow the path opened up by Jesus of Nazareth, a path on which we ourselves are walking, following in his footsteps, encouraged by his Spirit. (Pg. 8)

**They are not our preferences.** We have followed the Holy Spirit, who has guided and inspired us. (Pg. 8)

- **Saint Ignatius:** " On another occasion, while sailing from Valencia to Italy, in the midst of a violent storm, the rudder was broken, and he and every one on board were convinced that the ship must founder unless help came from above. Then, as he examined his conscience and prepared for death, he had no dread on account of past sins, nor fear of eternal punishment, but he experienced intense shame and sorrow at the thought of not having made a good use of the favors and graces which God had bestowed upon him.." Autob. Ch. 3

### **The image**

- I imagine my self on the boat (the Church, the Society, the institution where I work,...), sailing with others (Jesuits, partners in mission, people of good will), and Jesus is with me in the middle of the storm.

### **Asking for Grace**

- I ask God to increase my faith, my hope and my love for sailing with Him in deep and stormy waters, in the company of others.

### **Guidance for prayer**

- Read the Gospel text and imagine the scene. Contemplate the way Jesus and I are in the same boat: the Church, the Society of Jesus, or my apostolic work, with the people He called to labour in His mission.
- What are the storms threatening this boat? At what moments do I feel as if Jesus were asleep?
- How have I received the UAP in my apostolic work? Does the same Spirit guide the preferences on "my boat"? Fr. General's letter is an invitation for Jesuits and Jesuit organizations to not just stamp "UAP-approved" on their existing ministries, but to ensure depth and credibility to their commitments.
- Read the second part of Fr. General's letter. How do we need to adjust the direction of our boat according to the UAP?

**Conversation with God:** Present each person on your boat, with their desires and preferences to Jesus. Share with Him your feelings, fears and hopes in the light of the UAP.

## Communal Approach to UAP

### Texts:

- **John 21:1-17**
  - "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you."
  - He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"
  - Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.
  - Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep".
- **Fr. General: Part III: The necessary personal, communal, and institutional conversion**

Receiving the preferences means that we initiate their implementation immediately by changing any styles of life or work that hinder the renewal of the persons, communities, and works committed to mission. We are inspired by the response of the first apostles, who promptly abandoned their nets and their lives as fishermen in order to set out on the path of discipleship following Jesus. (Pg. 8)

**Making our communities spaces for communal discernment** where a life of prayer is encouraged, the Eucharist is shared and spiritual conversation is practiced enables us to share the gift of discernment as a way of letting ourselves be guided by the Spirit in apostolic works and in all ministries. Living simply, close to the poor, awakens the creativity we need to do more with less, and it gives greater credibility to our apostolic work offered freely to others. (Pg. 9)

It corresponds to us, as a body obedient to the Holy Spirit, to plan with diligence the implementation of the preferences in every dimension of our life-mission. **The preferences seek to unleash a process of apostolic revitalization and creativity that makes us better servants of reconciliation and justice.** (Pg. 9)

Let us undertake this process, designing it and assessing it *in accord with persons, times, and places* in the light of the Church's orientations and the Spirit's guidance. (Pg. 10)
- **Saint Ignatius:** "Love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words." Contemplation to Attain Love -Spiritual Exercises 230- 237

### The image

- I imagine my community in a moment of rest with the Lord, invited to rest with Him and to share the fruit of our work.

### Asking for Grace

- I ask God for interior knowledge of such great good received, so that, being moved to profound gratitude, our community may be able in all to love and serve His Divine Majesty.

### Guidance for prayer

- Read the Gospel text and imagine the scene. Contemplate the way Jesus gathers the community of disciples around the work, the Eucharist and the personal relationship with each one of us.
- Like St. Peter there are times when we jump into the water to look for Jesus, but at other times we get distracted, counting fish when Jesus is beside us. The new approach to the UAP focuses not on "action", but on "conversion" that leads to action. Are there distractions, which we can refocus in our personal and community life to embrace the conversion that the UAPs ask of us?
- Read the third part of Fr. General's letter, and imagine possible steps, which could help our community to share the spiritual path, opened with the UAP for our Jesuit life.
- Only recognition and gratitude for so much good received can help us to follow Jesus closely. More than three times we will ask ourselves if, in spite of everything, we love Him; and He will continue giving us a mission saying "feed my sheep".

### Conversation with God

Present to God your lights and shadows, your certainties and distractions, both in personal and community life, and ask for the grace to live the conversion that enables us to participate in Christ's mission. Ask the intercession of Our Lady to help us in the development of the UAP close to Her Son.