

Rome, March 27, 2009

BAM 09/01

Subject: World Social Forum

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Dear F. Regional Superior

Thank you for your letter of March 23, 2009, describing the Society's participation in the World Social Forum, and the accompanying letter about the Pre-forum and the Ignatian Day. Together they give me an idea of the relevance of those meetings, which seem to me have been in close accordance with our last General Congregation.

The General Congregation, seeing the challenges our world presents to us, explicated our apostolic response under three great reconciliations: with God, with one another, and with Creation. These three reconciliations cannot be promoted or lived separately; each one demands the other two.

The experience you have lived in those encounters was an intense experience of universality and collaboration with others, marked by a search for alternatives to the present systems, which have manifested themselves as keepers of injustice, incapable of solidarity or of surmounting poverty, and squanderers of Nature to the point that they have become a threat to the future of the planet.

Your letter stresses the importance of the presence of the Society in the big international events in search of global solutions for global problems. As long ago as forty years ago, Fr. Arrupe had already felt the need to “contribute through the Society and its members for the presence of the Church in the big international organizations and meetings which search to promote progress in these fields [related to socioeconomic development]”. He set this contribution down as one of the goals of the Social Secretariat (*AR*, Vol. XV, p. 330). The globalization process makes this need even more urgent today.

In the process of looking for alternatives, which was the goal of your encounter, I highlight three themes, closely related, which have focused the meetings: ecology, indigenous peoples and the Amazon. When we decide to put into practice the apostolic response that the General Congregation requires, these three issues claim an urgent response.

Ecology as an area of disquietude modifying our way of life and action ought to be present in every Jesuit and in all our works and communities. The Society has an urgent task to discharge if it is to embody what the GC proclaims regarding this subject. The ecology goal comprises a group of attitudes and actions that every Jesuit must personally assume, and which must also be adopted at every level of government.

The empowerment of indigenous peoples has been a mission of the greatest importance all through the history of the Society. These people, who suffer injustice and who are, at the same time, keepers of a different and alternative culture, rich in human wisdom, especially ecological wisdom, are now, more than in the past, a source of inspiration in the search for alternatives to prevalent systems. We now understand more clearly how much they have enriched us in our relationship with God, with others and with Creation, whenever we are with them in our apostolic work. The 34th General Congregation considered the situation of indigenous peoples as one of the five critical situations “especially relevant for the Society as an international apostolic body”, and invited “the universal Society to renew its traditional commitment with these peoples”. This invitation is still valid today. In this regard I do not want to miss this opportunity to congratulate you for having facilitated a meeting of indigenous people from Asia with indigenous people of the American continent.

In the Amazon is being fought one of the great battles to preserve the ecological balance of the world. The habitat of a great variety of indigenous peoples who as a group constitute a great cultural and human richness terribly threatened, the Amazon must be preserved. This is a battle which humanity cannot afford to lose, and the Society must continue to fight for this cause. It is rightly said that CPAL considers the Amazon one of its priorities (*Princípio e Horizonte*, n. 29, 9). The Amazon Region (BAM), less than four years in existence, needs support in material and human resources to fulfill its mission. Several provinces, from Latin America and outside gave, and continue to give this support generously. I invite others to follow this example, and ask them to consider the fact that, by so doing, they are contributing for the mission of the universal Society to promote just relations with Creation.

May our Creator and Lord, who “dwells in creatures”, make us “in all to love and serve His Divine Majesty”.

I greet you fraternally in the Lord.

P. A. Nicolás, S.J.
Superior Geral