



**JPIC International Meeting
Closing remarks
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Tagaytay, 24 November 2018

Dear friends,

I am privileged to give this closing remark to this wonderful and fruitful conference. It is a little odd for me to give the closing remarks even when I was not physically present in the conference all the time. However, I assure you that I was following from the distance what was happening in this room. I so much wish, I were here as much as you!

The JPIC journey is not new to the Society of Sacred Heart. It is at the very core of our spirituality and charism. JPIC is at the heart of our Constitutions and every General Chapter underlined it one way or other. Maybe we named it differently at different times.

Then what is new? The context today is new. The world agenda has changed, the socio-political situation urges us to function differently. We are called to live the same spirituality and charism with new eyes and new expressions, and as One Body. We have ever more responsibility to stand with our people with compassion, to help them, to see the relationship between what is happening locally and globally, and what needs to happen. We along with our collaborators are agents of transformation.

The meeting very aptly began with our own journeys recognizing our personal vulnerabilities and situating ourselves in the vulnerabilities of the world as individuals and together as a group. What happened in this room over the past 10 days is very significant in the life of the Society of Sacred Heart.

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I know that you have been engaged in a very deep process. You were invited to enter a cave like Elijah, not to hide, but to live a deep JPIC process together with our sisters from across the Society. Many of our sisters sent messages of solidarity and prayer for this meeting. You have been here with and for the whole Society.

You began with a retreat, and were invited to enter a “cave” within yourselves, to listen deeply and to experience sheer silence and the presence of the Lord in our journey. You listened to each other’s stories, deepened relationships, made new friends, gained new insights, and have come to know something about each other’s existence at depth level. At the same time, you gained a heightened awareness from learning about each one’s local experiences, which allowed you to touch unique experiences of the global situations that affect us all in different ways.

You went from your personal and local experiences of vulnerability and compassion to global perspectives when you received input from the 2 keynote speakers, Mr. Thomas Gass, and Mr. Juan Luis Hernandez, who delivered their speeches via video conference on JPIC, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, faith, and theology of hope.

Together, you told history of the Society’s JPIC in a very interactive way and re-discovered that, since our foundation, the search for justice and peace has always been a part of who we are as the Society of the Sacred Heart. Meanwhile, you received input from Anne, Sheila, and Yolanda about our international JPIC and UN-NGO Services and the JPIC Database.

After the retreat and days of rich input, but still in the cave, you moved out from your home groups to work in working groups. Your work flowed from the days of retreat that I too lived with you. With your lived experience, and the help of the process so well prepared and facilitated by Imma and Reyna, you identified some emerging JPIC themes in Society. These emerging themes were confirmed in the summary letter from the input of the Provinces and included: Care for our common home, Migration, Local and Global Action, Complicity in unjust structures (including in the Society), and Systemic Transformation.

Your task was to find concrete ways by first identifying objectives and lines of action as concrete means for addressing these themes. You also met in regions to discuss ways beyond Provincial actions. You entrusted a synthesis group, to help shape a new articulation of JPIC as a statement of commitment of the whole congregation.

During your 11 days of togetherness, you celebrated several significant events. There were field trips on the Feast of Philippine and on many evenings you gathered after long days of work to hear stories from your sisters about their realities in Poland, Fukushima in Japan, and our new missions in Asia. You gathered in the mornings and evenings for prayer, thoughtfully prepared by the Liturgy Group.

Congratulations! You have done the work you came for and we are grateful. As for the Society process, the next step is left in the hands of the capable writing group. They will take all that you have offered as concrete articulations and lines of action, and will synthesize into a JPIC document, keeping in mind that the One Body of the Society of the Sacred Heart lives in many diverse contexts. The whole Society looks forward to receiving that direction for us to move ahead.

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I would like to make three remarks as we conclude this conference

- 1) The deliberations at the conference invite us to create more space in our heart for the world around us that needs to live in hope. In my own culture there is a saying, that if you have space in your heart you can accommodate ten people in one room but if you do not have space in your heart accommodating one person in ten rooms is difficult. The world is somewhat in this situation over many issues. Generosity is the hallmark of the Society of Sacred Heart. We have to be careful that we do not get influenced by the negative values and hopelessness of the world. Rather, we are called to intervene and to offer hope to the world around us by our spirituality of the Pierced Heart.
- 2) Being part of this conference you have been personally enriched with depth experiences of God and of the society of which you are an integral part. You are each changed by this experience and leave with new understandings of JPIC. As we leave this room and the conference it becomes overwhelmingly mandatory that each of us deepen that experience in our personal prayer and reflections. which will enable us to relate with (to)our brothers and sisters with compassion. We can draw from our wells only if we have wellsprings flowing into our well. Let us make efforts to fill our hearts constantly in order that it may overflow to others.
- 3) Participation in the conference enthuses us and calls us not to keep that enthusiasm locked in our hearts but allow it to overflow to others, enriching their life. You have prayed together, danced, sang, shared stories, had meals together, worked, and celebrated. The International JPIC meeting does not end here. You are the ambassadors of hope for JPIC in your Provinces, Commissions, and Society Networks. You were sent here to participate in this meeting. Now that you have come down from the mountain, again like Elijah, with renewed purpose and reinvigorated for mission. You are now called to go forth, to share not only about what you have lived here, but to motivate transformation and in action by animating JPIC in the Provinces, Commissions, or local contexts, always keeping in mind the global reality in which we all live.

Finally, as we close this meaningful and significant meeting on behalf of the central team, I would like to express our heart filled gratitude to Anne Corry and the International JPIC Coordinating Committee, the Steering Committee, and the facilitators Imma and Reyna for all the trouble they have taken to make the Society walk this journey not only over these ten days but for many months with all the preparation. Our heartfelt gratitude to Digna and the wonderful team of sisters from the Philippine District for their generosity for successfully hosting and coordinating, this conference. Many thanks to the interpreters, translators, FusionWorks, and the Carmelite Missionaries who have welcomed all of us into their Center.

Our sincere gratitude to all of you for participating wholeheartedly in this meeting, and for carrying JPIC forward with renewed energy to the One Body of the Society in the radical style of Jesus of Nazareth as true daughters of M. Sophie.