

**The development of JPIC in the Society**  
**A reflection on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation**  
**in General Chapters from 1967–2016**

*In 2012, Mary Hinde rscj (ENW) was asked to give a reflection on how the Society's understanding of JPIC has developed, as reflected in the General Chapters 1967-2008. Her presentation was subsequently formatted for the Society's ENW website by Silvana Dallanegra rscj (ENW), can be found at <https://www.societysacredheart.org.uk/Being-RSCJ/Fully-apostolic/Our-commitment-to-JPIC/The-development-of-JPIC-in-the-Society>. It is further updated below by Sheila Smith rscj (USC) to include the 2016 Chapter. The entire time-line is a working document and is not meant to be the final word on this topic in the Society.*

The province has been engaging in a life-long learning programme aimed at deepening our understanding of JPIC and stimulating our desire to respond as best and authentically as we can. This article uses material from a presentation by Mary Hinde RSCJ: it is a "re-membering" of our journey and the place that justice, peace and integrity of creation has come to take in the living of our charism of discovering and manifesting the Love of the Heart of Jesus.

**General Chapters** are a discernment or reflection on where we are, providing an articulation of what is heard during the intervening years and our response to the Spirit.

They are a dynamic movement: threads are woven into the tapestry of our journey together - some get developed, some fade, some repeat and get deeper in tone.

**Justice as a noun, is in God.** For us, it is always paradoxical: what is "just" for one group often is "unjust" for another - what includes one can exclude another. We can only try to act justly in each situation. The word Justice produces different effects in different people; in some it evokes fear and resistance, in others deep passion and conviction.

**"There will arise the sun of justice with its healing rays."** Malachi 3:20

Sun... giving life, warmth and energy... Different suns at different times: a morning sun, tentative and misty; a blazing sun casting deep shadows; the sun rising with newness of dawn, or setting in deep colours and reflections...how has the Sun of Justice been and changed for you, in these years...?

Now let us look at how it has evolved in our Society...

*By Mary Hinde RSCJ*

## **Chapter 1967**

**Pre-1967:** Madeleine Sophie didn't speak much of justice but the spirit is there, in love and care for the individual and the desire to be fair towards those who worked for us. She clearly had a great love and desire to serve those who are poor, for example in the poor schools established by the Society.

**The reason for this Chapter was the orientations for renewal of our religious life after Vatican II. The context was one of a world in profound change at all levels –**

**Church** – ideas emerging from Vatican II (subsidiarity, dialogue, collegiality); Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio* focussing on social development and transformation, and the plight of the world's poor; the "signs of the times"

**Socio-political** – civil rights movements; the 1960s sexual revolution; growing emancipation of women; student revolts

**Global politics** – the Cold War; independence movements and the breaking up of empires

### **Key themes**

"alive to the **needs of the world today**"

"It is in the very heart of the Society and of each religious that **an insatiable desire for unity and justice must be intensified** so that our *Cor Unum* and *Anima Una* will be an efficacious reality"

**Working towards the unity of human family** - "urgent need to help developing nations"

**In a world where hunger and ignorance can be overcome only by education** we should ask ourselves:

If our pupils leave us with a real sense of social justice and the determination to change the world

If we ourselves educate the children who have the greatest need of us

**A world that calls us to new tasks...**not only in schools and universities but to parishes, poorer districts, to social work...to sum up, **every work of education as the need arises.**

*Populorum Progressio* highlights the plight of world's poorest...**It is an exigency of justice and love to strip ourselves of things not necessary for our apostolate and to share... to regroup our forces and go to those less favoured with this world's goods** ..we will have to suppress some works in order to develop others where the need is more gravely felt. (three lines that were dynamite!..)

## Chapter 1970

### Context

**Strong Latin American influence**, arising from the Medellin Conference in 1968

The methodology of liberation theology:

- See (historical awareness)
- Judge (socio/historical analysis and discernment of ideologies)
- Act (rights of the poor > option for the poor)

Turning Vatican II's theology on head – not starting with Bible and church tradition but with LIFE read in the light of Bible and tradition. Justice as the indispensable condition of peace

Mother Bulto in her opening address to the Chapter said “the times call for evangelical daring, broad vision and courageous listening”...“The gospel challenge is addressed in the first place to each one of us. For if the Society exists at all it is through each individual God-given call. This... demands of **each member a tremendous effort of conversion** in humility, faith and trust, to rediscover the freshness, the inner thrust of our first encounter with Jesus when He invited us to leave all for Him and for His Kingdom.”

Reaffirmed **our mission as educators**...”Let us work towards...the development of a social conscience which impels to action”

Affirmed our **solidarity with the poor**... “committed to this (Christ's) work of liberation we want, wherever we are, to be one with the poor”.

In a world hungry and thirsty for justice, our attitude must be one of **solidarity with the Third World** suffering from poverty and oppression... solidarity which must shake ourselves out of ourselves...serious effort to work for a **better distribution of the goods of this world**. It will also lead us to take a firm stand in face of the **dehumanising structures of a consumer society**.

**“Each community, conscious of its mission to follow Jesus Christ poor, and to serve him in**

**his members, will use the resources entrusted to its stewardship of our resources for the service of those most in need.**

**Christ present hidden in the heart of the world...**present in the unconscious waiting of creation in travail; **at work in the efforts of man to build a world of justice and brotherly love.**

**Chapter 1976**

**Context:**

**The 1971 Bishop's Synod on justice** declared "justice is a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel".

**World oil crisis and recession**

**Integrative Chapter:** going to fundamentals: charism, spirituality and mission, contemplation and communion; discernment, education and justice linked to the more traditional idea of reparation. 'Madeleine Sophie listening to the calls of her day, saw the Body of Christ "outraged" by "impiety" (Const 1815 344). Today, we contemplate the wounded Heart of Christ in His Body, torn apart by the injustice of the world.'

In her opening address, Concha Camacho said:

"With discernment, and in obedience to the Spirit, we must as a body, learn to see...how to glorify the Heart of Jesus suffering in humanity"

She talked of how "our eyes have been opened to the injustice and inhumanity of the society in which we live and of which we are a part." P. 5

This opening to the word's suffering, this contemplation of the Heart of Christ through the pierced heart of humanity "has made us more conscious of oppression, of injustice and of the suffering of our fellow men and women and to feel more strongly the weakness of our response..." p.16

For the first time there is a **section on Justice which states that "the educational dimension of our mission is inseparable from the call to work for justice"**

And in the section entitled "our commitments for mission" there is a list of exigencies to be lived by all of us:

to live the demands of contemplation;

to build communion;

**to search for justice with the heart of an educator.**

## **Chapter 1982: Re-writing the Constitutions**

A symbol of our differences with Vatican theology as represented by the Congregation of Religious, who required that we amend what was passed by the 90+ capitulants unanimously: namely in the opening paragraph “God’s mercy and faithfulness shine forth in a world **wounded by injustice...**” was replaced by the words “wounded by sin” – thus a theological terminology replaces a secular one.

### **Para 7:**

Caught up in the **desires of His Heart**,  
we want young people to grow in dignity...

### **Our starting point is the Gospel**

with all that it demands from us of **love, forgiveness and justice,**  
**and of solidarity with the poor ...**

### **Para 13:**

We are sent to carry out this work of education:

-especially in teaching and formation

**-in other activities of human development and the promotion of justice...**

Wherever we are sent, whatever may be our work, our lives are inspired by the love of the Heart of Jesus and the desire to make him known, expressed in

Concern for growth of whole person

**A thirst for working towards justice and peace in the world in response to the cry of the poor... - (justice is NOT an add-on!)**

### **The section on Vows:**

“Through **contemplating Jesus in his poverty**, both in the Gospel and in the poor of today’s world, we learn to open our hearts to the needy, to be at their service and .. to make their cause our own.” (55)

"The Society may possess and administer goods in view of its mission and for the support of its members. It will not accumulate them unnecessarily and will put them at the service of others in

an attitude of sharing, aware that the gifts of creation belong to all." (59)

“we shall strive to reduce our needs, to have less in order to share.” (56)

### **Paras 170 – 178 Financial Administration**

“In a world that hungers and thirsts for justice, our following of Jesus Christ in his poverty... This world calls into shanty town question our own way of living so that a lasting mark is made upon us and upon the way we use financial resources... We want to make a genuine effort to bring about a more just distribution of the world’s resources... In solidarity with all who suffer... We build communion with them... By sharing at every level of the Society, by depriving ourselves for the benefit of those who have need of everything.”

Sharing as an expression of our communion and this is the spirit in which we want to live our community of goods. (170 - 171)

“alert both to the needs of the Congregation and the cry of the poor.” (175)

Although we have to own goods, we hold them only as stewards, but never forgetting that God destined the world and all that it contains for the use of everyone and for all peoples. Consequently, in a world full of ambiguities, justice and charity impel us to direct our administration towards the realisation of this global destiny and to live our special responsibility through community of goods. (178)

### **Conclusion:**

“we take to heart our responsibility to intensify our inner life, to live discernment and obedience, **to animate our apostolic courage so that we may build a more just world.** (180)

## **Chapter 1988**

The context for this arose from the 5 years of “ad intra” reflection with the Congregation for Religious, concerning matters such as habit, office, education/instruction, life style...

The Chapter identified the call arising from the **world situation of the time**: identified as “economic and debt crisis; widening gap between rich and poor nations; war and arms trade; destruction of the environment “disorders that threaten our world”.

The **political dimension of our apostolic life**, influenced by the papal encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (social concerns).

“we have come to understand that our call to be women of communion has a political dimension” p.5 ie to change unjust structures.

Recognise “our need to become aware of our preconception and assumptions if we want to be free to discern” “we cannot separate proclamation of the Kingdom from ethical evaluation of the socio-economic and political structures of our world.” (ie media, the company we move in) - this was the natural consequence of incarnational spirituality.

Re-emphasis on solidarity with the poor “solidarity is at the heart of our charism”.

Living this solidarity requires working for justice and peace. With the aim of transforming unjust structures...

“Working for change in our own outlooks and attitudes, racism, domineering attitudes, racist attitudes, structures and unjust laws”

“Putting the institutional power that is ours at the service of migrant peoples especially refugees, in order to influence public opinion, government policies and legislation” to promote the acceptance of the fundamental equality of women and men and assume our responsibility for this in the church.

**The International Education Commission document emphasised and recapitulated all these themes.**

## **Chapter 1994**

### **Context:**

**Collapse of communism** in 1989 and the opening of USSR and Eastern Europe

**Africa** - Sub Saharan Africa in crisis; Central Africa proxy war for natural resources (Congo, Rwanda, Burundi),

Growing violence, AIDS and external debt, arms proliferation

The **rich getting richer and poor poorer** as result of neo liberal economics (Thatcherism and Reaganism)

Environmental crisis... Secularist culture

**“a world in profound transition” has left us “without a compass”**

### **Themes:**

**The thread which integrates all the themes - the desire to nourish, nurture and defend life through violence against persons and the earth.** Feminine imagery of justice as reconciliation

in the face of war and ecological crisis(open table, rekindling hope)

Going to the **roots of problems** is “the asceticism of the RSCJ educator”. Call to be aware and informed of structural injustice

How can we make the Society’s **internationality “good news for the poor?”** In our efforts to become an international community can we see a parable of what it could mean if the human community were to make of our world an international society?

The prophetic role in the church of religious orders

Educating to reconciliation in truth and justice

Women of communion, compassion and reconciliation

One of strategies was the mandate to the General Council to set up the international JPIC Network and to investigate NGO status. Call to the whole Society and associates, alumnae and schools to get behind debt relief campaign.

## **Chapter 2000**

### **Context**

Chile meeting of provincials in 1997 – converged on the need to profess again our commitment to participate in the action of God through our service of education “a pathway to discover, a space to announce the love of the Heart of Jesus”.

In 2000 we celebrated the bicentenary of Society, and held the Chapter at Amiens – a symbolic move, recalling our roots. We lived a spiritual itinerary to prepare for this.

For the first time there were lay people at a chapter, as observers - an emphasis on collaboration in reciprocity

### **Re-articulation of our educational mission as an education that transforms persons and societies: we renew our commitment to the service of education lived as a process of transformation**

The call to look again at the elements of a transformative education (whatever our ministry or contacts)

Eg to learn to read the Word of God from the perspective of those who are excluded...

“To work for a change in attitudes and ideas with respect to unequal relationships between men and women, among ethnic groups, religions, cultures, social classes, generations and the environment.”

An emphasis on the importance of **corporate witness** - “to act together to contribute to a



reconciled world, one where justice, peace, love and solidarity are made a reality”

The source of our common vision is our spirituality that “orients our commitment to education from the perspective of those who suffer inequality and injustice, and is always lived in the light of the Gospel”.

## **Chapter 2008**

Held in Lima – emphasising a diversity of cultures

### **Context**

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism, 9/11 and war in Iraq

Clash of civilisations

Emerging economic power of China and India

Global culture marked by dominance and exclusion

Reassertion of fundamentals especially Contemplation and Community

And a re-emphasis on **Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in Solidarity with those who are most vulnerable**

Recognising the **interconnectedness of the whole of creation** with the events which mark our world: the most obvious, the effects of human activity on the environment (global warming) and the effect of that on the poorest in desertification, leading to famine, natural disasters (flooding, drought, ocean and volcanic movements of the earth, tsunamis etc.)

Recognising that “to educate is an act of justice”... Orienting all our educative endeavours towards creating relationships of equality, inclusion, non-violence and harmony

“the pursuit of justice, peace and integrity of creation **permeates all aspects of our lives**. They must be criteria for discerning our relationships, our commitments so that all our choices may be marked by Gospel values.”

**Leading to change in our personal and community lifestyles** with regard to:

the environment, living our vows and community of goods more congruently, new ways to relate with ourselves, with others and with all of creation.

One of the recommendations was headed Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation:

It reads: that the General Council discern and implement the best way possible of coordinating JPIC at the international level.

The 2012 Lent to Pentecost process is their response – not an organisation, or “a doing” but rather a deep call to live JPIC as integral to our charism, spirituality and mission as close to the dream of God for this world God so loves.

## Chapter 2016

Held in Nemi, Italy – emphasising to be and to act as One Body

### Context

Pope Francis’s Encyclical *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*

UN Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030

Columbia and FARC peace process

Britain votes to leave the EU

Global rise in nationalisms

Terror attacks in France, Belgium, Pakistan, USA

Boko Haram kidnappings in Nigeria

North Korean nuclear missile tests

As much of the world becomes more divided, the Church through *Laudato Si’* and the United Nations through the Sustainable Development Goals emphasize the need for social, political, economic and ecological integration, sustainability, and international cooperation.

In this context, Chapter 2016 reasserted JPIC as integral to our charism through four calls:

- 1) **To reach new frontiers: To go out, to “set sail” as a Society and go with others to new geographic and existential peripheries** to accompany the life that is emerging there, to defend justice, peace, and the integrity of creation in response to all of those who are searching for meaning in their lives, those who have been wounded, displaced, and excluded because of poverty, violence, and environmental degradation.
- 2) **To live more humanly: In the radical style of Jesus of Nazareth**, we wish to be in closer relationship as sisters with one another and with others; we wish to be simpler, more human and closer to people and their experience, in order to show forth the joyful and compassionate face of God and to be at the service of Life, wherever we are sent.
- 3) **To create silence: To deepen our interior life**, our capacity for contemplation and for listening to the heartbeat of God in ourselves and in our world; to discern in silence and welcome the action of the Spirit that transforms us, energizes us, and calls us to live our prophetic and educational mission.
- 4) **To be and to act as one Body: To revitalize our unity in diversity and to act as one Body**, dynamic, interconnected, linked with other bodies, in the world and as Church, in order to share, collaborate, and be in solidarity among ourselves and with others.

In addition, the Chapter named our JPIC Intention as, “to be One Body which loves, practices and gives witness to justice, peace and integrity of creation at all levels of our life and mission.”

Orientations and actions for carrying out the JPIC intention were outlined in the Chapter 2016 document. To assist in this direction, an International JPIC meeting was convened.

### **International JPIC Meeting**

In 2018, the Society of the Sacred Heart held an international JPIC Meeting in Tagaytay, in the Philippines. The purpose of the meeting was to assist members and partners to live our JPIC mission as One Body. Four imperatives comprise the direction from that meeting. They are developed in the document, *Being Artisans of Hope in Our Blessed and Broken World*.