



JESUITS

Euro-Mediterranean Province of the Society of Jesus
Albania - Italy - Malta - Romania
Provincial

To all members of the EUM Province
To all collaborators and friends

EUM Prov. Prot. 20/77

Rome, 25 April 2020

Subject: a new land to reach

Dear Brothers and dear Collaborators,

I'm writing to you again, wishing you an experience of Resurrection, during this Easter time which, as Pope Francis said, rather sees the world as suspended, as in a long Holy Saturday, between the acute phase of the epidemic and the still undefined time that follows.

At this unprecedented time of Easter, the Gospel we heard last Sunday is an invitation, addressed to all of us, to welcome the Risen Jesus in our personal, family and community condition of "closed doors" and "fear", which is so similar to that of the disciples. I invite you to contemplate this text in the hope and conviction that, as I wrote to you in my last letter, this time can be propitious for us, if we can accept that this infirmity and paralysis, as St Ignatius explains in the Constitutions, are "a gift no less than is health" and that we can "draw fruit from them, not only for ourselves, but for the edification of others" [Const. 272].

The Risen Jesus, in fact, offers Peace to His disciples, sends them to the world, renews his call to the Church and bestows the Holy Spirit to guide and sanctify them. We too cannot think of going out renewed and reaffirmed by this time without the gift and grace of the Spirit.

I would therefore like to invite you to a process of **Listening to the Spirit**, that involves each one of us, our communities, our works and the whole Body of the Province, Jesuits and lay people.

Let us make our own the words of Pope Francis: *«It is urgent to discern and identify the vitality of the Spirit in order to promote, together with others, the dynamics that can bear witness to and direct the new life that the Lord wants to raise up at this concrete moment in history. This is the favorable time of the Lord, who asks us not to be satisfied and, even less, to justify ourselves with substitutive or palliative logics that prevent us from taking on the impact and serious consequences of what we are experiencing. This is the right time to encourage us to a new imagination of what is possible with the realism that only the Gospel can offer. The Spirit does not allow himself to be closed or manipulated by fixed or outdated schemes, modalities or structures, and is inviting us to adhere to his movement capable of "making all things new" (Rev 21:5)».*¹

¹ <https://www.vidanuevadigital.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/UN-PLAN-PARA-RESUCITAR-PAPA-FRANCISCO-VIDA-NUEVA.pdf>



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I propose, therefore, that we all undertake together a journey of spiritual listening and open communication among us, to share how the Spirit is at work in us and what He will guide us to identify as the Father's will. It is a journey that, in the coming months, could lead to appointments between us, in forms that have yet to be defined and on which we are working. It is a different process from the one experienced recently for our common apostolic planning; it is a call to mutual confidence and courage, given the situation we are experiencing; it is also a beautiful opportunity for us to help each other to discern the way forward for our "renewed" mission, in a world that has "its side and hands wounded" by the effects of this crisis; it is an opportunity about not losing anything of the mysterious fruitfulness of this time.

I therefore ask you to share with me the fruits of the spiritual listening to which I have invited you. For all of us, I ask for the grace not to be unbelieving and timid in responding to the call to collaborate in His Kingdom and not to be afraid to put our finger in our wounds and those of the world, so that we may experience the depth of His mercy and the strength of His peace.

I ask you to respond to this invitation, in this first phase, also making use of the following questions, by May 8, 2020, by sending an email to the Father Socius or in a different way, as you prefer. I would like everyone, even those who are less familiar with very modern technological means, to be able to participate.

1. How are you experiencing this period? Which hopes and which aridity?
2. What do you think this period is revealing about our living?
3. And what could it tell us about the time to come?
4. In which aspects has your vision been confirmed and in which aspects has it been questioned?
5. How would you define Ignatian spirituality today? In which issues is it most solicited?
6. How do you imagine our mission and our being "Friends in the Lord" after the pandemic?
7. To what kind of conversion do you experience being called?
8. In what aspect of your journey have you felt most challenged?

After this first phase, I will inform you on the issues to focus on later and on how we intend to proceed.

In Christ,

Fr. Gianfranco Matarazzo SJ