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Dear Friends,

In my office in Portland, there is a photo I cherish. Taken in 1988, it is a snapshot of me and my four female housemates on the front steps of the house we shared in Newark, New Jersey. We were all working post-college for a year for Jesuit Volunteer Corps. Before long, it felt like a family, one that worked hard, had fun and challenged each other.

The main challenge was not about whose turn it was to do the dishes. (Though, that was an issue at times — I am not going to lie!) Our conversations were what mainly challenged us. We talked about God, politics and life, and the housemates never gave me a free pass. This community of lay women helped me understand what partnership means, and I have been thinking about them and so many other remarkable people who have partnered with the Jesuits as I read this latest issue of our magazine.

At the Jesuits’ last General Congregation in 2016, Superior General Arturo Sosa talked about the paradigm shift that had taken place when it comes to collaboration for mission. Years ago, lay collaborators acted as partners with the Jesuits in mission; these days the Jesuits are acting as the partners of lay collaborators, as more and more of our apostolates are being run not by Jesuits, but by lay women and men who share our Ignatian vision.

Our cover story highlights partners who are helping advance the Jesuits’ mission at our middle and high schools. While the women profiled on page 12 lead schools that have historically had a strong Jesuit presence, I recently visited Xavier College Preparatory High School in Palm Desert, California, which was founded in 2006 by lay partners and is 100 percent lay run and managed. While there are no Jesuits at Xavier, the Jesuit mission is palpably felt on campus.

Lay partnership will be essential as the worldwide Society of Jesus embraces our four new Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP) that were recently promulgated by Fr. Sosa. After a 16-month discernment, Fr. Sosa has given us four solid landmarks on the horizon to guide us into the future. These clearly resonate with our own Vision, Mission and Values document issued at the founding of Jesuits West in 2017 and are reflective of the most fundamental parts of our vocations as Jesuits.

It is also lay partners who form our very competent Review Board which continues to guide us through the current chapter of the sexual abuse crisis. I want you all to know that Jesuits West remains committed to the continual healing of the wounded Body of Christ.

A final word. This issue’s cover photo shows a group of lay leaders of Jesuit schools gathered around a statue of the Holy Family at Brophy College Preparatory in Phoenix. A group of lay collaborators encircling a statue of the Holy Family — what a hopeful, beautiful image of our Jesuit family.

With prayers for you and your family,

Fr. Scott Santarosa, SJ
Provincial, Jesuits West
The Society of Jesus has four new core preferences that will guide its mission for the next decade. Jesuit Superior General Father Arturo Sosa, SJ, announced the preferences, called “Universal Apostolic Preferences” (UAP), in February. Crafted through a 16-month dialogue process with Jesuits around the world, the UAP include promoting discernment and the Spiritual Exercises; walking with the excluded; caring for our common home; and journeying with youth.

“Our desire has been to find the best way to collaborate in the Lord’s mission, 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,” Fr. Sosa wrote in a letter introducing the UAP to the whole Society of Jesus. “We have lived through a process that has produced, step-by-step, a consensus that we believe is guided by the Holy Spirit.”

“I hope the UAP will challenge Jesuits and our collaborators to think critically about our work and to take bold action in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ,” said Fr. Scott Santarosa, SJ, provincial of Jesuits West. “The UAP should help sharpen our focus on what’s really central to our mission at this point in history.”

Father General shared the four new preferences with Pope Francis earlier this year. After a period of prayer and reflection, Pope Francis returned the UAP to Fr. Sosa — not just as a document, but as a mission to the Jesuits from the Holy Father himself.

“The preferences seek to unleash a process of apostolic revitalization and creativity that makes us better servants of reconciliation and justice,” Fr. Sosa wrote. “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.”
76 YEARS LATER, 
FR. BARNEY COUGHLIN, SJ, STILL ANSWERING GOD’S CALL

By Tracey Primrose

By all accounts, it’s been an extraordinary life and Jesuit vocation for Fr. Bernard Coughlin, SJ. The longest-serving president of Gonzaga University, Fr. Coughlin helped turn Gonzaga around when the school faced financial calamity in the early 1970s. He has received countless honors, served on blue-ribbon commissions, traveled the world, and befriended high-ranking public officials. He gained such prominence in Spokane, where Gonzaga is located, that the business community called on him to serve as chairman of the city’s Chamber of Commerce (a call he accepted, in the late 1980s).

Fr. Barney, as he’s called, has done it all. But in some ways, the work he’s doing today at the age of 96 is just as important. In 2017, after serving as Gonzaga’s chancellor for 20 years and earlier as its president from 1974 to 1996, Fr. Barney moved to the Jesuits West Province’s retirement and healthcare facility, Sacred Heart Jesuit Center, in Los Gatos, California. As the elder statesman of the facility, Fr. Barney’s ministry of support and encouragement is a grace for the community he calls home.

Bette Davis famously said that getting old is not for sissies. Fr. Barney, who uses a walker and has periods of forgetfulness, has a slightly different take. “Aging can be hard, but you can make it hard on yourself.”

Chalk at least half of that up to pure Texas grit. Born in 1922, Bernard Coughlin was one of five children growing up in Galveston, Texas, during the Great Depression. He attended a Christian Brothers high school but knew nothing of the Jesuits until he read a book about various religious orders. He was powerfully drawn to the Society of Jesus.

His father had a good job with the Santa Fe Railroad and Barney, at 20, was working there too. He might have made a fine railroad man, but “God started poking at me to enter religious life.” The timing wasn’t perfect. There was a girl he was smitten with, but in the end, he told himself, “You’re a fool if God is calling you for something, and you don’t accept. God, after all, is God.”
In September of 1942, he said goodbye to his family in Galveston and headed to the Jesuit novitiate in Florissant, Missouri. He later earned both a bachelor’s degree and two graduate degrees (one in philosophy and one in theology) at Saint Louis University. In between, he taught for three years at a now-closed Jesuit boarding school in Wisconsin. He loved teaching but remembers being anxious to move things along. Jesuit formation is a long road, and he wanted to be ordained.

Thirteen long years after he entered the Jesuits, Fr. Barney was ordained in 1955. But it was right back to the books for the young Jesuit as his first mission was to earn a master’s in social work and a doctorate in social welfare. It wasn’t because he was attracted to the discipline or because he had a particular aptitude. The reality was more practical: The Jesuit dean of the School of Social Work at Saint Louis University was nearing retirement, and the Jesuits needed a replacement.

Fr. Barney turned out to be the right man for the job. He was an exceptional dean for a dozen years at Saint Louis University before being tapped for the presidency of Gonzaga University.

Under his watch, Gonzaga achieved financial security, its endowment skyrocketed, enrollment increased and the campus underwent a dramatic transformation. In addition to being a natural dean and administrator, it turns out that Fr. Barney was a very good businessman.

These days, Fr. Barney’s life is quieter, but it suits him. When the weather permits, he likes to walk around the grounds of Sacred Heart Jesuit Center. The campus, which is home to approximately 80 Jesuits, is on a hillside with stunning views of Santa Clara Valley and the Diablo Mountains. The expansive grounds include a beautiful grotto with a statue of the Blessed Mother, fragrant gardens and quiet areas for contemplation and prayer.

“THERE COMES A TIME WHEN YOU HAVE TO MOVE OUT OF THE DRIVER’S SEAT, WHERE YOU HAVE TO MOVE OVER TO DO A JOB OF PRAYING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF JESUITS OR HELPING OTHER PEOPLE WHO MOVED INTO YOUR DRIVER’S SEAT.”

— Fr. Barney Coughlin, SJ
Although Sacred Heart Jesuit Center is technically a retirement center, Jesuits never truly retire. Everyone has a mission. Fr. Barney’s mission, like many of the men at the center, is to pray for the Church and the Society of Jesus. He never misses daily Mass and takes his mission very seriously.

A regular at the social hour that precedes dinner every night, he enjoys the company of his Jesuit brothers and is quick to express gratitude for the exceptional staff at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center who care for him and his fellow Jesuits like family.

“I THINK GOD IS JUST LOVING ME AND ASKING FOR MY LOVE, AND I HOPE I’M RESPONDING BY THANKING HIM FOR EVERYTHING HE’S GIVEN ME — SO FAR.”

— Fr. Barney Coughlin, SJ
Fr. Barney has been a Jesuit for 76 years. When asked to name his favorite moment, he says it’s impossible because he has loved every step of the journey, including now. “There comes a time when you have to move out of the driver’s seat, where you have to move over to do a job of praying for the next generation of Jesuits or helping other people who moved into your driver’s seat,” he says.

And although losing friends is a painful fact of life at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center, Fr. Barney responds to that reality with well-worn practicality and optimism.

“God calls us to work for him and with him. He calls us to live for him and with him. You have to resign yourself to the reality of what life is — you come and go, and you do your darndest. And tomorrow I may pass away, but when I do, I hope it’s in God’s good hands.”

Fr. Barney’s vocation started with a “poke” from God. When asked if he’s still being prodded, he says, “I think God is just loving me and asking for my love, and I hope I’m responding by thanking him for everything he’s given me — so far.”
ROOM WITH A VIEW: FR. TERRANCE MAHAN, SJ, ON COMING FULL CIRCLE

By Tracey Primrose

From the window of his second-floor room at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center in Los Gatos, California, Fr. Terrance Mahan, SJ, has a bird’s-eye view of a jaw-droppingly beautiful vista. In the distance, Santa Clara Valley unfurls like a blanket anchored by the Diablo Mountains, but it’s the foreground where Fr. Mahan has fixed his eyes for nearly eight decades.

Fr. Mahan first saw the striking cast-iron statue of the Sacred Heart, which adorns the front lawn of the 165-acre center, when he arrived in the summer of 1941 as a 17-year-old Jesuit novice. At the time, the sprawling hilltop building housed the California Province novitiate, the juniorate (where Jesuits continued their studies after the novitiate) and the infirmary. While the novitiate is now in Culver City, California, Sacred Heart Jesuit Center is still home to the Province’s retirement facility and infirmary. Fr. Mahan has returned to the place where his Jesuit vocation began, a vocation still inspired by the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

“IT IS OVERWHELMING TO EXPERIENCE THE LOVE AND CARE OF THE PEOPLE WE HAVE HERE AT SACRED HEART JESUIT CENTER. THE WHOLE STAFF IS WONDERFUL.”

— Fr. Terrance Mahan, SJ
Terry Mahan grew up 300 miles south of Los Gatos, in Los Angeles. His dad was a superb salesman, but the family struggled during the Depression. At Loyola High School, he met the Jesuits and was “mesmerized” by the young scholastics who taught classes and coached baseball. He felt strongly drawn to the Society of Jesus. Of the 24 novices who entered that summer in 1941, he is the only one left. “I have had lots of good friends who have gone home to God,” he says.

Like all the novices of that era, he picked grapes for two months each fall to help support the Province’s altar winemaking business. The scholastics were fairly cloistered at that time, so he didn’t mind the long hours in the fields. “We enjoyed every minute of it — we got out of the house.”

His Jesuit formation took Fr. Mahan to Spokane, Washington, for philosophy studies; to Loyola High School (his alma mater) to teach Latin; to Santa Clara University to teach philosophy; to the University of San Francisco for a master’s degree in history; to Alma College in Alma, California, for a Master of Divinity degree; and finally to Port Townsend, Washington, for tertianship, the program that concludes a Jesuit’s formation.

Those 13 years might have made others happy to exit the classroom, but Fr. Mahan was thrilled with his next assignment to the University of Wisconsin, where he earned a doctorate in history. He taught for one year at Loyola University (now Loyola Marymount University) before being plucked to serve as the dean of the school’s College of Arts and Sciences. The rookie professor protested, saying he didn’t know anything about being a dean. In typical Jesuit fashion, his rector said, “You’ll learn.”
He did learn. Fr. Mahan served for seven years as dean and, just as he was ready to take a sabbatical, had the opportunity of a lifetime. His friend, Fr. Charles Casassa, SJ, the visionary president of Loyola University, was stepping down after two decades as president. The board of trustees had given Fr. Casassa a round-the-world trip for two as a thank you gift, and Fr. Casassa asked Fr. Mahan to come along for the adventure. For four months, they traveled the globe, with visits to Europe, Thailand, India and Hawaii. Fifty years later, the memory hasn’t dimmed.

When he returned to Loyola, Fr. Mahan taught history again and served as rector of the Jesuit community. Out of the blue, he received a letter from the Superior General of the Society of Jesus saying that he had been selected to serve as the provincial of the California Province. Fr. Mahan wrote to the Superior General, telling him that there were more qualified men for the job. Fr. Mahan recalls that the General responded something like this: “I am amazed and edified by your humility. Everything you said is very fine and very beautiful, but you are still the provincial.” The Superior General who wrote the letter: Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, the beloved Jesuit leader whose cause for canonization officially opened earlier this year.

"IT’S AN ADVENTURE. YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BRING, SO YOU BETTER BE READY FOR EVERYTHING. THE KEY IS THE SPIRITUAL LIFE — NOT ONLY DOES IT KEEP YOU GOING, IT MAKES YOU HAPPY."

— Fr. Terrance Mahan, SJ
Today, the memory of that letter and his friendship with Fr. Arrupe brings Fr. Mahan to tears. “Knowing him was a blessing,” the priest recalls. “I was at the General Congregation when he had to resign because of his health. It was difficult.”

Fr. Mahan served as provincial for 5½ years. At its core, the job of provincial is about *cura personalis*, care of the person. “I found it humbling. I learned an awful lot. There were hard days and hard things you had to do, but it was a great grace.” And it helped that from his office on the fourth floor of the Sacred Heart Jesuit Center, Fr. Mahan could see the statue he loved.

During the years that followed, Fr. Mahan served as superior of a retreat house in Southern California before returning to Los Angeles to teach, once again, at Loyola Marymount University. After a combined 30-plus years of service to the university, Fr. Mahan moved to Sacred Heart Jesuit Center in 2012.

He turns 95 this summer. His mind is sharp, but his legs are tired. “I’ve been walking around on these feet for 94 years.” When he speaks of his gratitude for the lay men and women who care for the Jesuits, he is filled with emotion. “It is overwhelming to experience the love and care of the people we have here at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center. The whole staff is wonderful.”

As he walks the same halls he walked as a teenager, Fr. Mahan is both filled with memories and reflective. “My fellow novices and the many men and women who have influenced my life over these many years are with me always.”

When asked what this self-proclaimed “old man” would tell his 17-year-old self, Fr. Mahan says, “It’s an adventure. You do not know what the future will bring, so you better be ready for everything. The key is the spiritual life — not only does it keep you going, it makes you happy.”
LOVE, HOPE AND MISSION: WOMEN AT THE HELM IN JESUIT MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

By William Bole

In early February, a few dozen leaders of Jesuit secondary and pre-secondary schools converged in Arizona — where they posed for a picture that tells a tale of change and renewal in the Society of Jesus. In the not-too-distant past, the photo would have depicted an assemblage of men, likely sporting clerical collars; fewer than three decades ago, there wasn’t a single lay person, male or female, among the presidents and principals of schools in the California Province of Jesuits (although a few lay people held those positions in the Oregon Province). But in the photo taken earlier this year at Brophy College Preparatory in Phoenix, the presence of lay collaborators in Jesuit education was palpable — with more than a dozen women arrayed among them.

The principals and presidents had come together for a February 6-8 gathering under the banner of Companions in School Leadership, comprised of leaders from the 18 Jesuit secondary and pre-secondary schools in Jesuits West, which encompasses ten states in the former California and Oregon Provinces. These companions are playing no small part in fleshing out a pronouncement made at the 35th General Congregation of the Jesuits in Rome, which called attention to lay collaborators. “We must ... look to our collaborators in mission and say, with gratitude and affection, that the call we have received is a call shared by us together,” the Congregation declared in 2006. On Brophy’s picturesque campus, a separate photo taken at the meeting offered a glimpse into the particular story — 13 women, clustered around a statue of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, touching each other and the Holy Family. They, plus another woman not present, have answered the shared call to serve as leaders of Jesuit middle and high schools from Alaska on down to Arizona.
Nationally, it was in the mid-to-late 1980s that lay people began surfacing in the ranks of Jesuit school principals, and lay presidents (whose overseeing role extends to fundraising, campus ministries, admissions and other non-academic activities) started appearing in the 1990s, according to Fr. Bill Muller, SJ, executive director of the Jesuit Schools Network. Based in Washington, D.C., the network has 81 member secondary and pre-secondary schools, mostly in the United States with several in Canada and a scattering elsewhere. Today, aside from the more numerous principals, there are eight women presidents of these schools across the U.S. Fully half are now serving in Jesuits West.

Although lay men are preponderant, women have arrived more recently to these posts, and their numbers are expanding. Many of these women have years of experience in Jesuit education and lay formation programs that are focused on Jesuit identity.

What follows are stories of three women — leading three different kinds of Jesuit schools.
About a decade ago, Margaret Higgins read an article about an archdiocesan (non-Jesuit) school in San Francisco joining the Cristo Rey network. This is the network of Catholic high schools (numbering 35 nationwide) that integrates academic and professional work as part of a college preparatory program geared exclusively to students from low-income families. Higgins, who at the time was serving as the University of San Francisco’s vice president of student affairs, was deeply moved by this model of secondary education. “I remember my heart stirring at the time,” Higgins says. She felt drawn to the idea of serving this population of students but she also had no desire to leave the Jesuit world that she was part of at USF. “I was at home in Jesuit education,” she recalls. “Once the Jesuits get you and break your heart, you’re done.”

In 2017, a recently established Cristo Rey school in San José was searching for a president. This time it was a Jesuit Cristo Rey school, and Higgins — then serving as development director at Santa Clara University, another Jesuit institution — took the leap. She became president in December of that year.

Cristo Rey San José Jesuit High School opened five years ago with 130 students from underserved communities and now enrolls more than 450. Students, male and female, work one day a week at a participating company, which not only helps finance the college prep education but also provides them with professional experience. “It’s a population that God has called us to serve,” says Higgins, referring to people doing this work in the context of the Jesuit mission. And the students are being served well: Last year, every single member of the inaugural graduating class enrolled in a college or university. All are first-generation college students.

Asked about her leadership role models, Higgins points to two women: her mother, a middle school secretary in New York who faithfully exhibited “ingenuity, creativity and unconditional love,” and the Blessed Mother, an unwed teenager who hesitated momentarily but joyously accepted God’s call to bear the child Jesus. “You talk about jumping in without a safety net!” she says of Mary. “I think as leaders, we have to deliberate and all that, but we also have to trust in God, and sometimes, we really just have to say ‘Yes’.”

“IT’S A POPULATION THAT GOD HAS CALLED US TO SERVE.”

— Margaret Higgins
I FELL IN LOVE WITH THE MISSION

Having slowly nurtured an interest in Catholic education, Erin Luby dove in, headfirst, after graduating from Notre Dame: she taught for two years at a diocesan school in Phoenix through Notre Dame’s Alliance for Catholic Education program, and then for a year and a half in Santiago, Chile, at a Congregation of the Holy Cross school. But her full calling did not become apparent until she returned to her hometown, Chicago, and began teaching English at a Jesuit school, St. Ignatius College Prep.

“I didn’t realize how profoundly it—Jesuit education—would impact my life,” says Luby, who went on to serve in other roles at St. Ignatius including assistant principal for student services. “I fell in love with the mission.” The familiar phrases—“finding God in all things,” “men and women for others,” “cura personalis,” or care for the whole person—took on a deep and personal meaning for her. “That’s what grabbed me. It’s what gave me a sense of vocation and kept me in Jesuit education.”

After a while (Luby spent 12 years at St. Ignatius), friends began urging her to consider becoming a principal somewhere. “Then it was just a matter of time, trusting that this is what God wanted me to do,” she explains. At the time, she didn’t give deep thought to the reality that she was a woman aspiring to such a position in Jesuit secondary education. “My normal was really strong female leadership. That’s what I saw at St. Ignatius. That’s all I knew in Jesuit education,” Luby relates.

Ultimately, she trusted that Seattle Preparatory School was the place for her to continue pursuing her vocation—she assumed the role of principal in 2016. The idea of living roughly 2,000 miles from family and friends was daunting, but Luby says she felt at home when she arrived at Seattle Prep and encountered “a vibrant school culture with students who care deeply for each other” as well as teachers and staff who are “laser-focused on how to live our mission.” She feels grateful also that her journey took her from a school in Chicago that makes ample room for women leaders to a Jesuit Province that does the same, in its schools.

Among the new initiatives at Seattle Prep during Luby’s tenure is the Ignatian Leadership Conference, held for two days at the end of the school year. It’s designed to help juniors become discerning and transformational leaders guided by the example of St. Ignatius Loyola, visionary founder of the Society of Jesus.

There are many other plans and hopes for the 128-year-old high school, but what ties all of the initiatives together is the mission, as Luby sees it. “It’s a mission of helping to form whole persons, critical thinkers who are open to growth, spiritually alive and committed to justice,” she says. “That’s what grounds me.”

“MY NORMAL WAS REALLY STRONG FEMALE LEADERSHIP. THAT’S ALL I KNEW IN JESUIT EDUCATION.”

— Erin Luby
Kendra Krause has the distinction of being the first leader of a first-of-its-kind Jesuit school. She directs Loyola Academy, which opened in 2011 as the middle school at Brophy College Preparatory in Phoenix. The innovation is that it’s both a full-scholarship academy reserved exclusively for underserved boys — and part of a long-established Jesuit high school.

“I HAVE 70 BOYS IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL. THEY’RE ALL HOPE PERSONIFIED. THEY’RE YOUNG, SMART, SWEET AND RESILIENT, AND THEY ALL HAVE BIG DREAMS.”

— Kendra Krause

“Our goal is to take kids who wouldn’t go to Brophy, and make sure they do,” says Krause. Her 70 boys — they’re called “scholars” — receive a high-quality private education with an extended school day and, even more notably, an extended school year. They take summer trips to colleges in Arizona and California as well as to Washington, D.C., and to other destinations for both enrichment and fun. Nearly all of them do wind up attending Brophy, which enrolls 1,350 young men altogether.

In 2016, Jesuits West launched a second middle school on this model: Fr. Sauer, SJ, Academy at St. Ignatius College Preparatory in San Francisco. The notion is spreading. Recently, St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland announced that it too will be opening such an academy this coming August.

Krause also serves Brophy College Preparatory (the high school affiliated with Loyola Academy) as assistant principal for faculty development. Four years ago, she took the further initiative to launch a program to bolster awareness of sexual assault on college campuses. The idea is that each year, Brophy sends approximately 350 young men to those campuses. She wants Brophy’s future undergraduates to be the ones who speak up and intervene when a troubling incident is looming, so the school introduced an annual daylong training workshop called “Moral Courage: Taking a Stand Against Sexual Assault.” It’s mandatory for seniors.

Along with Higgins and Luby, Krause has well-founded hopes for her students. All three say they hope, most of all, for the students to grow spiritually, intellectually and socially as men and women for others.

“‘I have 70 boys in the middle school. They’re all hope personified. They’re young, smart, sweet and resilient, and they all have big dreams,’” says Krause. (Then there’s the bracing ambition that Higgins has: “I would like to be the receptionist for the first Cristo Rey graduate who takes over Google or Apple.”

For his part, Fr. Muller of the Jesuit Schools Network points to those like the 14 women presidents and principals in Jesuits West, who are helping to shape and reshape the Society of Jesus’ educational mission. “That gives me a hopeful sense for the future.” ■
PRESIDENTS AND PRINCIPALS

These are the 14 women serving as presidents and principals of Jesuits West schools:

CINDY REOPELLE Principal, Gonzaga Preparatory School, Spokane.
ERIN LUBY Principal, Seattle Preparatory School, Seattle.
CINDY DAVIS Principal, Bellarmine Preparatory School, Tacoma.
KRISTINA LUSCHER Principal, Bellarmine College Preparatory, San Jose.
ADRIA RENKE President, Brophy College Preparatory, Phoenix.
KATHY SCHNEIDER Interim President/Principal, Loyola Sacred Heart High School, Missoula.
NANCY HANSON President, Catholic Schools of Fairbanks.
AMANDA ANGAIK Principal, Immaculate Conception School; and President-elect, Catholic Schools of Fairbanks.
MARGARET HIGGINS President, Cristo Rey San José Jesuit High School.
BRANDI ODOM-LUCAS Principal, Verbum Dei High School, Los Angeles.
CAROLYN BECIC President, Saint Andrew Nativity School, Portland.
LORRAINE SHEPHERD Principal, Sacred Heart Nativity Schools, San Jose.
KENDRA KRAUSE Director, Loyola Academy at Brophy College Preparatory, Phoenix.
KAREN HAMMEN Director, Fr. Sauer, SJ, Academy at Saint Ignatius College Preparatory, San Francisco.
On Thanksgiving weekend, while other families were shopping for holiday bargains or huddled around watching football, the Llaneras came together for a joyful purpose: to celebrate the ordination of one of their own.

At St. Ignatius Loyola Church in Sacramento, on Saturday, November 24, Alex Llanera, SJ, became Fr. Alex Llanera, SJ, surrounded by dozens of family members, some of whom had traveled from as far away as Europe and Asia to witness the event.

At 31, Alex Llanera is the youngest priest in the Jesuits West Province, and while the roots of his vocation were sown at St. Rose in Sacramento, where he served on the altar, it was his time at Jesuit High School in Carmichael, California, where his call came into sharper focus.

FR. ALEX LLANERA, SJ:
THE QUESTION THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING
By Tracey Primrose

The decision to attend Jesuit High was a foregone conclusion. Alex’s mother, who immigrated to the U.S. from the Philippines with Alex’s father, had attended a Jesuit college, the Ateneo, in Davao. When it was time for her son to select a high school, she told Alex that the other Catholic schools in town were not an option. He could go to Jesuit High or to the local public school.

After attending an open house at Jesuit High, Alex was sold, and that feeling of belonging became even stronger when, as a freshman, he met the five Jesuits serving on staff at the school. Alex was struck by their joyfulness. “Seeing how much they enjoyed their lives and what they were doing, I remember telling myself, ‘Whatever they have, I want that.’”
As a senior serving on the Student Council, Alex was responsible for Jesuit High’s morning prayer. One day after finishing the prayer, Fr. John McGarry, SJ, who was then the principal and is now the president of Jesuit High, asked Alex if he had ever considered a Jesuit vocation. Years earlier, as an altar server, Alex was fascinated with the ritual and the mystery of the Mass, but he had never been asked the question before. “You would be a good one,” Fr. McGarry said, “and you should think about it.” Remembering the moment, Alex sees it today as a turning point. “Fr. McGarry saw something in me that I didn’t see in myself.”

The question about a Jesuit vocation never left Alex. In fact, it grew stronger as he was asked the same question by Jesuit High’s director of campus ministry and, later, by a classmate’s mother. The third time was indeed a charm.
“THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE AIR ABOUT HOW GOD WAS CALLING US AT THIS MOMENT, AND I FELT VERY SUPPORTED.”

— Fr. Alex Llanera, SJ

Fr. Alex Llanera, SJ:
The Question that Changed Everything

because by that fall, Alex was headed to Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, intent on discerning a Jesuit vocation.

A self-professed political junkie who watched C-SPAN as an eight-year-old, Alex studied political science at LMU. He also engaged immediately with the Jesuit community on campus, leading retreats, working with the Magis service club and meeting with Fr. Tri Dinh, SJ, who served as Alex’s spiritual director. Alex became friends with several other students who were part of a discernment group, and it was a graced time. “There was something in

the air about how God was calling us at this moment, and I felt very supported,” Alex recalls. His discernment over, Alex applied to the Jesuits.

Graduating in 2008 after only three years, Alex was accepted to the Jesuits and headed to the novitiate in Culver City, California. His experiences as a novice, including the long retreat and poverty pilgrimage, helped confirm his vocation and opened his eyes to what God has planned for his life.

At Saint Louis University, he earned a master’s in American politics before being missioned to St. Ignatius College Preparatory in San Francisco for two years for a period of Jesuit formation called regency. At SI, he taught religion and government, led retreats and coached golf. He loved every minute of it.

For his last year of regency, his provincial proposed something unique: a job in the legal services department of Homeboy Industries, an organization founded by Fr. Greg Boyle, SJ, that provides training and support to formerly gang-involved and previously incarcerated men and women. Alex calls it, “one the most powerful experiences of my life.” Working with families and

Alex Llanera, SJ, with students at St. Ignatius College Prep in San Francisco.
interviewing clients reminded him of the sanctity of the confessional, and helping people navigate complex legal situations while experiencing their pain was transformative.

When the year concluded, Alex’s formation continued at Toronto’s Regis College, where he earned a Master of Divinity degree before being ordained a deacon at St. Paul’s Basilica. Currently studying at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, he is working toward a Licentiate in Sacred Theology.

He calls his Jesuit vocation an affirmation of his deepening trust and love for God. God, he says, “has given everything to me.”

Among those gifts is the mother who steered him to a Jesuit high school. Jesa Llanera was among the first to receive a blessing from newly ordained Fr. Llanera. The moment was bittersweet. Alex’s mother is battling advanced kidney cancer, and both mother and son realized the enormity of the simple but beautiful gesture of the son laying his hands on his mother’s shoulders and asking for God’s blessing. It was a moment of thanksgiving on a Thanksgiving weekend to remember.
Fr. Tri Dinh, SJ, and Jen Coito co-founded Christus Ministries in Culver City, California, five years ago with the goal of giving young adults a home in Catholic parishes. And they’re redefining what young adult ministry means.

“Some people think of it as a singles club for Christians,” says Coito. “But we actually joke that more relationships end after our retreats than begin!” That’s because people learn about love, relationships and God and open their eyes to unhealthy patterns in their lives, explains Coito.

The co-founders first met while Coito was a student at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, where Fr. Dinh was working with Christian Life Communities (CLC), a group of lay Christians who have adopted an Ignatian model of spiritual life. CLC members are encouraged to have a simple, Gospel-based lifestyle,
Fr. Dinh (center) has been working with young adults for more than 30 years.

Christus Ministries offers a variety of retreats for young adults, including the Caritas retreat, which over 1,800 people have attended.

The more we were working with young adults in CLC, the more we were convinced we could be doing more — and we were called to do more — to connect young adults to parishes,” says Coito. “Retreats and small groups are great, but for us the frontier we were called to was helping parishes that desired to be more young adult friendly.”

“IT’S MORE ABOUT, HERE’S WHERE YOU ARE IN THIS STATE IN LIFE, AS YOU’RE SETTING UP A LIFESTYLE, AS YOU’RE ESTABLISHING A HOME, WHATEVER THAT LOOKS LIKE. THERE ARE COMMON QUESTIONS THAT ALL OF US HAVE AT THAT STAGE, WHATEVER LIFE WE’RE CALLED TO.”

— Jen Coito

Fr. Dinh’s work with young adults goes back 30 years, and his vocation to the Jesuits began when he attended his first silent retreat after his freshman year in college. “That’s when Jesus became a friend,” he says.

He continued attending Ignatian retreats for the next four years and then joined the Society of Jesus in 1989.

“I’m drawn to Ignatian spirituality because of the importance of spiritual freedom and the ability and willingness to respond to however God calls. This is a lot of what’s behind Christus Ministries and its conception.”

Around 2002, while Fr. Dinh was still at Loyola Marymount, he began to notice a trend: many LMU alums and former Jesuit Volunteers shared with him that they found it difficult to connect with parishes. “Seeing that the least consistently engaged sector in the Catholic Church are people in their 20s and 30s, I saw a huge need.”

As a response to these disconnected young adults, Christus Ministries emerged in 2013, first as a pilot program before becoming an independent, non-profit ministry in 2016.

“Young adults are spiritually homeless in the Catholic Church,” says Fr. Dinh. “At the heart of it, Christus Ministries is about creating a sense of community in our parishes so that people, particularly in their 20s and 30s, can discover their calling in life.”
Christus Ministries

"CHRISTUS MINISTRIES EXPANDED MY APPROACH TO YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY AND GAVE ME THE TOOLS TO ACCOMPANY PEOPLE IN THE WAY THAT POPE FRANCIS ENVISIONS. DOING SO HELPED ME DISCOVER MY DEEPEST CALLING, AND I‘M NOW BEING FORMED TO BECOME A JESUIT PRIEST."

— Tony Cortese, SJ

Changing Perceptions: Not Just for Singles
Coito says that of those involved in youth ministry as teens, less than one-third stay involved as young adults, whether it’s because of doctrinal or lifestyle reasons. Christus is working to change that by shifting the concept from young adult groups to young adult ministry. That means programs are geared toward people in their 20s, 30s and even 40s; for single, married and divorced; for those with kids and without; and for straight and gay people.

“A home for everyone in the church,” is how the team describes Christus. “You can offer all different programs that speak to the state of life that they’re in, but that all address the common themes of young adulthood,” says Coito.

“It’s more about, here’s where you are in this state in life, as you’re setting up a lifestyle, as you’re establishing a home, whatever that looks like,” says Coito. “There are common questions that all of us have at that stage, whatever life we’re called to.”

Engaging Young Adults over a Cup of Joe with Jesus
Christus tailors its programs to young adults’ varying lifestyles. For instance, “A Moment to Pause” is a half-day prayer break for those who might be more likely to fit a shorter retreat into their schedule. Another program, “Java, Jazz, and Jesus,” has a coffeehouse atmosphere and a speaker on a topic, such as “God thank you, but …”

The most consistent entry points to faith for young adults are retreats and service trips/justice immersions, says Fr. Dinh. Christus hosts these experiences, and after people go, “we invite them to do more in the parish and build up the young adult presence there.”
Service is part of Christus Ministries, which offers weekend immersions trips to Tijuana, Mexico.

Inside a parish, Christus advises and consults with parish leadership on how to build an integrated young adult ministry, which includes helping to form both older adults and younger adults in the parish with the skillset to engage the young adult population; prayer programs for adults and young adults in the parish; and various programming such as the Java evenings and various workshops.

Fr. Dinh stresses that many of these programs are not just for young adults, “because if it’s just for young adults only, it can’t be a bridge.”

In the past five years, Christus has worked with 15 parishes in 12 dioceses. Because they seek to find the best solution for each parish, it’s not a cookie-cutter model. “We’re really trying to listen to how we can best help parishes find their own solutions,” says Coito. “We tell them, ‘Here are some key ingredients, key tools, but you are the ones who can best serve your community.’”

Christus has also been working with Jesuits West to expand its outreach in rural Alaska to serve Yupik young adults. “We work with the Jesuits in Alaska on leadership formation and the goal is to help parishes develop young adult ministries to draw more young Yupik people into parish life,” Fr. Dinh says.

Fr. Dinh notes that despite the cultural differences one might see between a parish of 4,000 families in Pasadena, California, vs. a small parish in a rural Alaskan village, the needs are often the same, because, Fr. Dinh says, so little is being done for young adults and young families.

“We are called to be a life-giving, joyful missionary church. When I begin to see pockets of churches with spiritually-engaged young adults, it never ceases to bring tears of joy to my eyes. That gets me up in the morning every day.”

— Fr. Tri Dinh, SJ

Christus Ministries is working with Jesuits West to serve more Yupik young adults in rural Alaska.
Finding Your Calling
Helping young adults discover their callings in life is integral to Christus Ministries’ formation strategy. One of the happy byproducts of that mission: Jesuit vocations. In the past five years, Christus has significantly inspired eight young men to join the Jesuits, seven who entered Jesuits West and one who joined the Jesuits’ Central and Southern Province.

“Christus Ministries expanded my approach to young adult ministry and gave me the tools to accompany people in the way that Pope Francis envisions,” says Tony Cortese, SJ, a Jesuits West scholastic who is currently in Formation at Fordham University in the Bronx, New York. “Doing so helped me discover my deepest calling, and I’m now being formed to become a Jesuit priest.”

For this reason, another focus area for Christus has been creating more programming for young families. These include events such as Beyond Survival Mode, which helps young families encounter God, not just survive Mass; Backpack Building, which helps young families create a culture of encounter by serving together; and Project Gratitude, which shows how cultivating gratitude through minor shifts can have a big impact on family life.

Coito adds that it’s also important to look beyond the parish level. For instance, Jesuits working at a high school can be attentive not just to the students but to the young adults serving in their schools. Coito says it’s a matter of asking, “How can I be more present to those on the fringes of the church?”

Christus’ Beyond Survival Mode program teaches parents how to help themselves and their children be more fully present at Mass.
Christus has also had women participants respond to the call of religious life and has seen young couples find greater appreciation in married life.

“Our formation focuses on building community that helps people discover and live out their calling,” says Fr. Dinh.

Both Coito and Fr. Dinh are inspired by their work. Coito says her favorite part is seeing lives changed. “We have the privilege to witness people’s deep reconciliation of past wounds and to also see people who have just been maintaining a relationship with God or the church and then all of a sudden really thriving.”

“We are called to be a life-giving, joyful missionary church,” says Fr. Dinh. “When I begin to see pockets of churches with spiritually-engaged young adults, it never ceases to bring tears of joy to my eyes. That gets me up in the morning every day.”

For more, visit www.ChristusMinistries.org

Fr. Dinh’s work focuses on people in their 20s and 30s.
The Sangiacomo family has a distinguished Jesuit pedigree. Great-great uncle Fr. Angelo Affranchino, SJ, who died in 1879, emigrated from Borlasca, Italy, to the Bay Area to join fellow Jesuits of the California Mission of the Turin Province of Italy. He was a respected musician, composer and teacher, but his descendants locate their Jesuit roots not at Santa Clara’s Mission Cemetery, where he is buried, but between 9th and 10th Avenues in San Francisco’s Richmond District.

It was here, in the 1930s, that Angelo Sangiacomo and John Lo Schiavo began a friendship that would last a lifetime. Two sons of immigrant families, Angelo lived on 9th Avenue and John on 10th. They met in Catechism class.

Although they had similar backgrounds, they were polar opposites. Angelo, a bold extrovert, liked to build things; he would go on to create one of San Francisco’s largest real estate development firms. John, quiet and cerebral, was an academic; he became a Jesuit priest and a much-loved president of the University of San Francisco.

No one knows if John urged Angelo to consider a Jesuit vocation, but it was not in the cards — not with Yvonne Giuntoli in the picture. She stole Angelo’s heart in 1956.
In addition to being beautiful, Yvonne had an ace in the hole: she was born on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, and Angelo had a lifelong devotion to the Blessed Mother.

They were married by Fr. Lo Schiavo (newly ordained, it was his first ceremony), and soon Anna came along, followed by Sandro, Jim, Mark, Maryanne, Mia and Susan. There were seven children in nine years. The family said the rosary together, and very often Fr. Lo (as the family called him) came for dinner.

When it was time for the children to go to high school, there was no question that the boys would attend St. Ignatius College Preparatory, where Fr. Lo had been an all-city basketball player. The girls headed to the Dominican Sisters’ St. Rose Academy but matriculated at Jesuit colleges, just like their brothers and their dad, who attended Gonzaga University through the Navy’s V-12 program before graduating from USF.

The Sangiacomos can’t pinpoint the exact moment when the family philanthropy began, but it might have coincided with Fr. Lo Schiavo’s installation as president of USF in 1977. At the time, USF was struggling financially, and Fr. Lo tapped Angelo to serve on the university’s board of trustees. Angelo and Yvonne became generous benefactors, and today one of their sons serves on the board.

Angelo and Yvonne were a perfect team. A devoted wife and mother, she ran the household and raised the children, but she had a vision for the business, and Angelo never shied away from her big ideas. After naming their company Angelo Sangiacomo Builders, the business was renamed Trinity Properties as a thank you for the many gifts the Holy Spirit bestowed upon the family.

Together, Yvonne and Angelo created a foundation to support Catholic organizations, education and the aging. Among many other beneficiaries, the foundation has donated to Jesuit causes, including Jesuits West Province, the University of San Francisco, Santa Clara University, St. Ignatius College Preparatory, St. Ignatius Parish in San Francisco and the Jesuit School of Theology.

Asked why the Sangiacomos have supported the Jesuits so generously through the years, Jim Sangiacomo, speaking on behalf of the family, said, “It’s about the Holy Spirit. We know the money will be spent wisely, and it’s in good hands. The world needs it. Thank God for the Jesuits and Jesuit education.”

Fr. Lo Schiavo went home to God in May of 2015, and Angelo Sangiacomo died seven months later. At 87, Yvonne, the family matriarch, is still active with the foundation and the proud grandmother of 13. Twelve of those grandchildren have attended or are attending Jesuit colleges. Nearly 90 years after two boys from the Avenues began their friendship, an impressive Jesuit legacy carries on.
THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS TRY THEIR LUCK
The teaching Sisters at St. Francis Mission, South Dakota, are shown enjoying a picnic outing in this undated glass slide from the early 20th century.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Stella Niagara, New York, began teaching at St. Francis Mission on the Rosebud Reservation, South Dakota, in 1888, two years after the arrival of the Jesuits. They educated generations of Lakota children, teaching the girls and the younger boys. (The older boys were taught by the Jesuits.) The Sisters endured many hardships, including a disastrous fire in 1916, which destroyed most of the mission, including their convent. They squeezed into a classroom converted into an emergency dormitory until new facilities could be built. Two years later, the influenza epidemic struck the school, and the Sisters helped care for the children, 43 of whom died from the contagion. The Sisters no longer serve at the school, which, since 1974, has been operated by the Lakota people independent of the mission, now staffed by Jesuits of the Midwest Province.
THE SURPRISING AND INSPIRING PERKS OF THE JOB

There are many wonderful aspects of my job as Jesuits West’s Provincial Assistant for Advancement. I meet lovely, generous benefactors who are deeply committed to our mission. I work for an organization that makes me proud and inspires my faith. And, I get to have lunch Monday through Friday with more than 80 men.

I realize that last part is a bit of a non sequitur, but for me, it is a real perk of the job. My office is on the fourth floor of the Jesuits West Province’s retirement and healthcare facility, Sacred Heart Jesuit Center in Los Gatos, California. This is the place where senior and infirmed Jesuits come to live, most after decades of service to the church and to the Society of Jesus.

Hospitality is an important part of Jesuit life. Because it is a worldwide order, the Jesuits are quick to open their homes to fellow Jesuits who may be visiting from far-flung places. Likewise, the Jesuits at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center have opened their home to me. They invite me to share lunch with them, which I do whenever I can, to pray with them at daily Mass and to help them say goodbye when one of them is called home to God.

I now know many of these men, and I am humbled by their dignity, prayerfulness and devotion. Our infirmary is on the main floor of Sacred Heart Jesuit Center, three floors below my office. When a Jesuit in the infirmary is near death, the community gathers for an anointing and to say goodbye. The community surrounds the Jesuit and prayerfully lays hands on him. The line of those wishing to bid the Jesuit farewell often snakes out the door and far down the corridor.

I have participated in this Sacrament of the Sick on several occasions, and I am always amazed by how uplifting it is. There’s no hint of sadness, just a beautiful passage animated by grace.

In this issue, we introduce you to Frs. Barney Coughlin, SJ, and Terry Mahan, SJ. They are just two of the remarkable Jesuits who make their home at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center, and I look forward to profiling other residents in upcoming issues.

The Jesuits who live at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center never tire of expressing their thanks for our benefactors, several of whom are pictured on the right. They enjoy welcoming donors to their home and pray for all of you who have supported the Province with such generosity.

On behalf of the Jesuits at Sacred Heart Jesuit Center, thank you for walking with Jesuits West.

Most gratefully,

Siobhán Lawlor
Provincial Assistant for Advancement
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