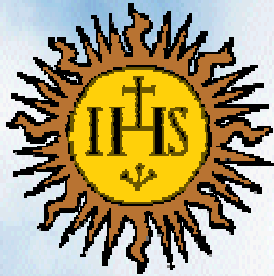


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JESUIT CENTRE
FOR CATHOLIC STUDIES
ST. PAUL'S COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

PERSPECTIVE

*A semi-annual examination
and application of Catholic
and Ignatian thought*

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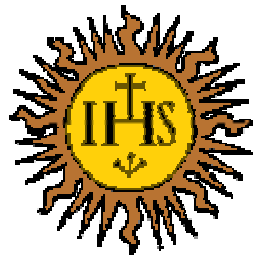
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LETTER FROM DR. LENOSKI

In his book *High Touch High Tech*, using some of the ideas of pediatrician Victor Strasburger, John Naisbitt points out that by allowing a third electronic parent with its "Military-Nintendo Complex" into our North American family environments we are educating our children from the age of about seven not only to become insensitive to the suffering of others, but also to promote that suffering. Parents and educators are involved in a conflict with a secularized and powerful modern technology for the ethical and spiritual well-being of children, the traditional symbols of hope for the future. Intoxicated by technology, they are becoming "distanced and distracted" while the human spirit is squeezed out of them.



As a Catholic college with Jesuit ties to the ideas in the *Ratio Studiorum* of alleviating suffering and oppression through social justice and holistic education, St. Paul's College has a tradition of challenging those mercenary and mercantile forces in the secular world that would oppose the cause of just and loving treatment for those such as children who are weak or marginalized. In the principal article of this issue of *Perspective* devoted to social justice, Dr. Don Fuchs, the Dean of Social Work here at the University of Manitoba and the author of many papers on child maltreatment, focuses on child poverty in Canada. He dovetails his analysis of the present situation in Canada and to some degree in the world with the thoughts on social justice that were integrated throughout the Thirty Fourth Congregation of the Jesuits in 1995. Like the latter, Don Fuchs' article suggests a broadening of definitions of social justice. In examining some of the general causes and results of child poverty, he also moves us in the direction of tactics for a remedy.

Dr. Christine Butterill's review of *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning* by Janet Eyler and Dwight E. Gyles Jr. deals with attempts to get some of the ideas within the Academy about such things as social justice out of the classroom and onto the street. It discusses attempts by educators through *service-learning* to collapse the distance between the abstract or distracted and the human in order to improve the humanity of society at large. While describing Gyles and Eyler's research, she recounts some of the versions of service-learning she has witnessed in her role as Dean at St. Paul's and a scholar in Medieval History at the University of Manitoba.

The third article in this issue of *Perspective* is Dr. Philip Clark's review of the Spanish novel *La Piel del Tambor* (in English known as *The Seville Communion*) by Arturo Pérez-Reverte. The end of Philip Clark's review is especially interesting. He has chosen to end by emphasizing to us not the words of the more modern, more sophisticated, and also more distanced and distracted Father Quart, but those of his contrary, the older religious warrior, Father Ferro. And such words emphasize the importance of retaining the human when the world revolutionizes itself institutionally and technologically. Only through human love, compassion and humility on a personal level will the mercy and justice of God be drummed into the new Millennium.

Let me close by mentioning that the tradition of St. Paul's College has placed a good deal of emphasis on social justice. This motif is sustained at the present time through such activities as our Faith Action Demonstrations in the community against murder and violence and our Prison Ministry, both organized by our Chaplains; and by our Social Justice Award, which is advertised on page 13. Our new strategic plan embodies the theme of social justice in the section entitled "Values." Our Religion in the Modern World series of lectures this year also highlights the theme of social justice. In fact, the 6th Archbishop of Winnipeg, the most Reverend V. James Weisgerber, will be one of the featured speakers on Wednesday, March 14, 2001.

Readers have been very positive so far in their responses to earlier issues of *Perspective*. We especially look forward to suggestions for topics of future issues. If we have so far been successful, it is largely due to the hard work of our contributors and especially to the support of the Jesuits of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba and I wish to acknowledge and thank them sincerely.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Daniel S. Lenoski".

Daniel S. Lenoski, Ph.D.
Acting Rector, St. Paul's College

**The Eradication of Child Poverty
A Compelling Social Justice
Necessity for the New Millennium**



INTRODUCTION

As we begin the new millennium, we mark the eleventh year since the House of Commons unanimously resolved to achieve the goal of eliminating child poverty by the year 2000. Yet in every province and territory in Canada high levels of child poverty persist. Child poverty affects all Canadians, it hurts communities and our economies but most important it hurts our children and future (Social Planning Council, 2000). Now as we move into the new millennium there is a renewed awareness of the concern about the negative personal, social and economic impact of child poverty. There is growing interest, as economies begin to strengthen, in taking solutions that will begin to tackle child poverty. Unfortunately, these strategies, which have been tied to economic growth, have often been built on superficial analysis and simplistic perspectives of social justice. They often propose solutions that are well intentioned but only directed at the narrowly defined symptoms and not at the structural dimensions of our social and economic institutions which maintain and perpetuate child poverty. These myopic strategies lead to social policies and programs that are short lived, ineffective, and often perpetuating or exacerbating social inequities that marginalize poor children.

This article describes the magnitude of the problem of child poverty provincially and nationally in Canada. It builds on the exhortations of Pope John Paul II and the Documents of the Thirty-Fourth General Congregation of the Society of Jesus which highlight the pressing need for structural analysis and transformation of the social and economic institutions that perpetuate the injustices of child poverty. Finally, the article provides some future direction for a series of strategies aimed at bringing about the structural changes that would work effectively toward the elimination of child poverty in Canada and other parts of the world.

Extent of Child Poverty In Canada

In examining the status of child poverty across Canada, both locally and nationally, it is increasingly clear that the conditions for poor children and families have been deteriorating over the past two decades. In reviewing earnings trends over the past 25 years, Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC, 2000) found that income inequality among families with children has become worse.

In Winnipeg, the Social Planning Council recently reported that 47,365 children were living in poverty in Winnipeg in 1996; 22.5% of all children (SPC, 1999). The 1996 census data indicated that child poverty was concentrated in, but not limited to, Winnipeg's inner city. The most recent data available revealed that 52.8% of all children in Winnipeg's inner city lived in poverty in 1996. The inner city rate was more than double the city rate of 22.5%. The child poverty rate among two parent families in 1996 was 14.9% for Winnipeg but climbs to 40.7% in Winnipeg's inner city. Child poverty rates in 1996 among single parent families reached 51.4% citywide and 73.1% in the inner city. In 1996, more than half (52.6%) of all poor children in Winnipeg lived in a two parent family. In the inner city, the majority of poor children lived in single parent families (51.9%) (Social Planning Council, 1999).

In the Province of Manitoba, the National Council of Welfare Data (1998) indicated that, in 1997, 22.1% of Manitoba children, an estimated 60,000, lived in poverty (Social Planning Council, 1999). While this number had decreased from the previous year (as it had in Canada as a whole), Manitoba still has one of the highest child poverty rates among the provinces. Manitoba currently has the third highest child poverty rate, however, there is only a .7% difference between Manitoba and Newfoundland, the province with the highest rate. Manitoba ranks behind Newfoundland (22.8%) and Nova Scotia (22.4%). The social safety net was less effective in reducing the depth of poverty in 1997 than in 1989 (reduced by 28% in 1997, by 31.8% in 1989). In 1997, poor taxpayers in Manitoba were paying 45.2% more in personal income tax than in 1989.

Further, the National Council of Welfare (1998) research showed that women and children have suffered, particularly, over the past generation of social policy changes. As recent research indicates, the number of poor children in Canada grew from 1.36 million in 1994 to 1.5 million in 1996, raising the child poverty rate from 19.5% to 21%. An estimated 57,000 Canadian children under 12 experienced hunger due to lack of food or money in 1994. The majority of hungry children lived with one parent and the largest proportion were Aboriginal. During the 1990's, Social Policy changes leading to cut backs in social allowance and other services to single parents, presented a major contradiction to the country's alleged commitment by all parties in the house of Commons in 1989 to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000 (Graham, Swift & Delaney, 2000).

Clearly, over the last generation, the gap between rich and poor has deepened. In 1971, the richest 10% in Canadian society were earning 21 times that of the poorest 10%; prior to government support programs (HRDC, 2000). By 1996, Canada's richest were making 314 times that of the poorest. This gap has an insidious marginalizing effect on the most vulnerable members of Canadian society, particularly the children in at risk families.

Negative Impacts of Child Poverty

Ross and Roberts (2000) indicate that the most well-documented negative effect of childhood poverty is on educational achievement. The lack of educational achievement has a cascade effect on children's life chances because those who grow up poor have lower literacy rates, higher rates of dropping out of school and higher delinquency rates. Further, Ross and Roberts found that research shows very clearly that illiteracy is strongly correlated to delinquency and criminal behaviour. Another major consequence of poverty is that low income leads to residence in extremely poor neighbourhoods characterized by social disorganization and few resources for child development.

Other well documented insidious effects of child poverty are on nutrition and overall health and well being. Research shows clearly that poor children experience diminished physical and mental health (HRDC, 2000; National Welfare Council, 1999; Ross & Roberts, 2000).

While few children in North America starve, nutritional deficits have marked effects on the growth, eventual height and possibly cognitive development of children in poverty. Poor children suffer from emotional and behavioural problems more often than non poor children.

With regard to family earnings, parents with low levels of education and skills are still lagging behind in employment and wages.

Child poverty is really family

poverty. Ross and Roberts (2000) found that family income is strongly linked to child development outcomes and living conditions in families and neighbourhoods. They found that children living in families with lower incomes are at greater risk of experiencing negative outcomes and poor living conditions than those in higher income families.

With regard to family earnings, parents with low levels of education and skills are still lagging behind in employment and wages. Social benefits have fallen over the years relative to the increases in the cost of living and certain groups-notably young and single parents, people with disabilities and those belonging to ethnic minorities-face particular difficulties trying to earn enough money to raise their incomes to reasonable levels of adequacy.

Graham, Swift & Delaney (2000) indicate that the results of retrenchment over the 1990's have been bitter in their impact, particularly on women and children. There have been major cuts to Employment Insurance, Social Allowance, Health Care, and many other family support programs across Canada over the last decade. These have succeeded in exacerbating the conditions of hardship and social exclusion of poor children.

Social Justice and Child Poverty Issues

In a strongly worded statement, Pope John Paul II admonishes developing countries for their failures to address the structural concerns of poverty. His encyclical letter *Sollicitud Rei Socialis* (On Social Concern) draws attention to the failure of the developed nations to address the deteriorating conditions of poor children and families. He writes, "It should be noted that in spite of the praiseworthy efforts made in the last two decades by the more developed or developing nations and the international organizations to find a way out of the situation, or at least to remedy some of its symptoms, the conditions have become notably worse." He attributed responsibility for this deterioration to various causes. Notable among these were "grave instances of omissions on the part of . . . those holding economic and political power." Moreover, "one must denounce the existence of economic, financial and social mechanisms which, although they are manipulated by people, often functioned almost automatically, thus accentuating the situation of wealth for some and poverty for the rest. These mechanisms, which are manoeuvred directly or indirectly by the more developed countries, by their very functioning favour the interests of the people manipulating them" (John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Sollicitud Rei Socialis*, n. 16)

Pope John Paul II indicated that among the specific signs of underdevelopment, which increasingly affect both the developed and underdeveloped countries, there are two in particular that reveal a tragic situation and consequences for poor children.

The first is the housing crisis. He noted, "The lack of housing is being experienced *universally* and is due in large measure to the growing phenomenon of urbanization. Even the most highly developed peoples present the sad spectacle of individuals and families literally struggling to survive without a *roof* over their heads or with a roof so *inadequate* as to constitute no roof at all" (n. 17). He indicated that the lack of housing, an extremely serious problem in itself, should be seen as a sign and summing-up of a whole series of shortcomings; economic, social, cultural, or simply human, in nature (refer, n. 17).

According to Pope John Paul II, the second sign of underdevelopment "common to the vast majority of nations, is the phenomenon of *unemployment* and *underemployment*" (n.18). He indicated that for large numbers of young people, and adult child-bearing age women, in the countries of high economic development, the sources of work seem to be shrinking and thus opportunities for employment are decreasing rather than increasing.

In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Pope John Paul II attempts to shift from the neo-conservative individualistic emphasis which blames poor children and families for their poverty to an emphasis on the social and economic *structures* that cause and perpetuate poverty as the targets for social change.

Differing Perspectives of Social Justice and their Influences on Perpetuating Child Poverty

Pope John Paul II's analysis of society highlights the importance of broadening our understanding of social justice to include an analysis of those structural conditions within economic and social institutions that promote inequality, marginalization, and the social exclusion of poor children and families.

Young (1990, p. 15) broadens the definition of social justice to include "the elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression." She contends that contemporary philosophical theories of justice do not conceive justice broadly enough. Instead, they restrict themselves to an interpretation of social justice as the morally proper distribution of benefits and burdens among all society's members. The benefits to be distributed would include both material resources, such as wealth and income, and nonmaterial social goods, such as rights, opportunities, and power.

Further, Young (1990, p. 23) maintains that "economic domination in our society occurs not simply because persons have more wealth and income than others, as important as this is. Economic domination derives at least as much from the corporate and legal structures and procedures that give some persons the power to make decisions about investment, production, marketing, employment, interest rates and wages that affect millions of other people. Not all who make these decisions are wealthy or even privileged, but the decision-making structure operates to reproduce distributive inequality and the unjust constraints on people's lives."

Millaly (1997) indicates that people may have certain rights but be unable to exercise them because of particular social constraints based on class, gender, race, and so on. For example, a poor person may have the right to a fair trial but may be unable to afford to hire proper legal counsel.

Young argues that this broader conception of justice shifts the focus from the distribution issues to procedural issues of participation in deliberation and decision making. Social injustice from this perspective entails not only an unfair distribution of goods and resources but includes a social condition, social process or social practice that interferes with or constrains one from fully participating in society; i.e., from becoming a full citizen.

This concept of social justice is empowering because it goes beyond a concern with distribution to include institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation (Mullaly, 1997). Oppression consists of institutional conditions that inhibit or prevent one from becoming a full participant in society. A society may be evaluated as "just" to the degree that it contains and supports the institutional conditions necessary for the promotion of the universal value that everyone is of equal intrinsic worth. Mullaly maintains that for all those concerned with developing an adequate conception of social justice, and for those committed to social justice in practice, oppression must be a central concern.

Young argues that a goal of social justice is social equality. Social equality not only refers to an equitable distribution of social goods but to full participation of everyone in society's major institutions and to the socially supported opportunity for all to develop and exercise their inherent capacities. She indicates that groups cannot be socially equal unless their specific experience, culture, and social contributions are publicly affirmed and recognized" (Young, 1990, p. 174 as quoted in Mullaly, p. 158).

This form of structural analysis promotes respect for diversity and social inclusion as essential elements in the elimination of structural inequities and institutional oppression that perpetuates child poverty in our society.

Foundations for Structural Strategies Aimed at Promoting the Social Rights of Poor Children and Families

Although the social rights of citizens have been protected to some extent through federal social programs, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides no protection of social rights of children and families. These social rights were extended in the 20th century as basic social and economic security was administered through the developing welfare state. Since there are no protections of social rights under the Canadian Charter, at risk children and families tend to continue to be marginalized and oppressed as necessary health and social services have been cut over the past decade (Rioux, 1997).

As indicated in the previous section, it is clear that underlining any strategy for promoting social justice, there must be broader understanding of social rights and social justice. Stogre (1998) indicated that social justice in its present understanding in Catholic thinking does not have to do with getting a fair share of the pie or economic wealth but rather, means "participation" and includes the notions of voice, agency, entitlement, security, and responsibility. It has to do with citizenship and social inclusion. Strategies aimed at the eradication of child poverty must be built on this notion of social justice and social inclusion.

Recognizing the need for broader social strategies aimed at promoting social rights, Jesuits, at their Thirty-Fourth General Congregation, incorporated their commitment to social justice in all their works, seeking to address poverty through societal transformation. The Jesuit Congregation's directions for the transformation of poverty serve as a sound basis for strategies aimed at eradicating child poverty.

The Society of Jesus reaffirmed the need to work for structural changes in the socio-economic and political orders as an important dimension of the promotion of justice. It identified child poverty, homeless street children, and youth unemployment as critical priorities which "cry out for urgent attention" (G.C. 34, Decree 3, n. 11).

The General Congregation saw persons and communities as intertwined and emphasized the need for attention being directed to social rights of individuals within their communities as foundational for approaches to eradicating poverty.

Structural Strategies for Social Transformation and the Eradication of Child Poverty

The Social Apostolate Secretariat of the Society of Jesus identified some of the strategies essential in the promotion of social justice and the eradication of child poverty. It took as its starting point the need to transform social and economic institutional domination and oppression through action strategies that promote the increased participation of marginalized groups within society. Further, it indicated the need to conduct socio-cultural, economic, political, and religious analysis as part of any structural strategy. The Secretariat maintains that this involves critically analysing the structural conditions that perpetuate child poverty and promoting actions aimed at building partnerships.

The Secretariat emphasizes the need for informed action and suggests three types of complementary analysis, each having its own link to social action. The first they refer to as "rational critical analysis." This tries to examine, critically, social and cultural problems through different interpretive frameworks provided by the human and social sciences. In addition, Mullaney (1997) and Mishra (1995) indicate that this type of analysis must also include an ideological analysis of Social Policy. Such analysis must respect the criteria of evidence and coherence established by the interpretive framework being used. Further, they argue that this analysis must engage poor families and communities in the analysis and need/resource definition.

The second has to do with Policy and Planning. Two kinds of analysis come under this heading. The first involves preparing informational reports and action plans on particular issues of concern to bring about specific changes at a political or structural level. This type of analysis focuses on supporting action to campaign for change. It is motivated by the scandal of injustice and aims to persuade those who can bring about change. It also contests and opposes views that condone ongoing injustice and accepts the need to propose practical solutions or ways forward. The second kind of analysis is meant for planning and prioritizing: e.g., a refuge for the homeless needs better to understand the phenomenon of homelessness so as to decide what type of service to extend or phase out.

The third type of cultural analysis is built on social awareness and cultural sensitivity. This emerges from the base (or the source). It involves meeting, listening to, and dialoguing with the marginalized about their culture, the structures of injustice they experience, and the kind of society they hope for. This type of analysis is also educational. It shapes and enhances culture in a process of learning together. It is also mobilizing as it enables the marginalized in their struggle to articulate their needs and to work for more justice. This type of analysis is necessary for effective strategies aimed at involving marginalized children and families in the process of social transformation.

In addition to cultural analysis, the Jesuits suggest that it is important to conduct economic and political analysis to ensure that the process of action, whether it be in the form of change

in social policy or programs, contributes to the *solution*, rather than adding to the problems of those who live in poverty. Perhaps most importantly is to engage with poor families and communities in mutual partnerships to work for social justice oriented changes in social policy and social programs.

Millaly (1997) argues that in moving the planning and analysis into action, there must be real efforts to engage poor families as equal partners in the collective actions and policy programs that ensue from the change process.

THE NEW MILLENNIUM: A Time To End Child Poverty

In September 2000, The United Nations held a world summit to work on ending poverty as part of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006). The Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, indicated that for the eradication of poverty there was a need for designing poverty alleviation strategies that cover a comprehensive mix of policies and programs which have an impact on the poor (United Nations, 1999, p. 2). He maintained that countries should set poverty-reduction goals, while promoting and sustaining economic growth, based on macroeconomic policies that create an enabling environment for poverty reduction.

Kofi Annan identified five important measures which should be taken at the local and national level as essential structural strategies in working towards the eradication of child and family poverty. Firstly, he indicated that it is essential to increase the income and participation of the poor in the economy through expanding employment, increasing productivity and skills, as well as widening their access to land, credit and other productive assets. Secondly, there is a need to empower and organize the poor themselves, individually or collectively. Mutual aid or self-help initiatives, such as cooperatives, develop their capacities to participate effectively in social, economic and political processes. Thirdly, the U.N. General Assembly Committee identified the need to target programs to the poorest localities and groups so as to improve their development needs within wider regional and national development programs. Fourthly, they recommended fair social protection schemes, wherever possible, to meet the basic needs of the poor and further recommended the development of strategies which augment community, national, and voluntary funds for anti-poverty programs.

In addition, Kofi Annan indicated that there must be strategies that empower women and promote gender equality of opportunity. Baines, Evans & Neysmith, (1998) indicate that to eradicate child poverty it will be essential to empower women and to address structurally the issue of gender inequality. The United Nations Security Council indicated that gender inequalities, at both the national and international levels, could be reduced substantially by main-streaming gender perspectives into all policies and programs aimed at poverty eradication. It recommended that, to ensure greater participation of women in the development process, there is a need for sustained investment in education, health, and nutrition programs; as well as the empowerment of women marginalized by race, class, or income. This is necessary so that they may expand their economic and social participation through community-based projects and other schemes that give them greater control over their destinies.

At a more local level, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg identifies a number of short term and long term strategies that would begin to address the structural inequality which perpetuates and exacerbates the problems of child and family poverty. It advocates strategies

that focus on enhancing the capacity of poor families to meet their basic needs in the short term as a first priority for action. These would focus on food and income adequacy, employment, as well as stronger and safer neighbourhoods (Social Planning Council, 1999).

The Social Planning Council suggests a series of mid and long-term structural strategies aimed at eradicating child poverty in Manitoba. These include mobilizing communities, strengthening child care resources, improving housing, developing community schools, improving educational and training programs targeted for those who are most marginalized (children and families), supporting parents in training, providing employment aimed at strengthening communities, and neighbourhood directed community centres (Social Planning Council, 1999).

CONCLUSIONS

Child Poverty is endemic in the structure of Canadian society. The eradication of child and family poverty is a moral and economic imperative for the creation of a civil and healthy society. The dismantling of essential health and social services throughout the 1990's, based on the pursuit of profit and artificially inflated fears relating to government debt, has led to a greater gap between rich and poor families. Effective child poverty reduction strategies are now necessary to preserve and strengthen the fabric of Canadian society. These strategies must not be tied to economic growth but must be built on principles of social inclusion and social justice which promote full participation of poor children and families as valued members of a civil and healthy Canadian society.



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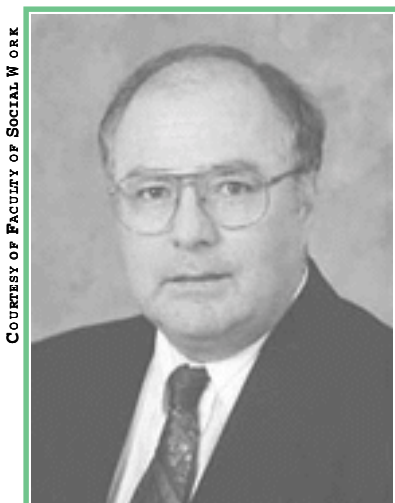
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Don M. Fuchs, Ph.D
Professor & Dean
Faculty of Social Work

SOCIAL JUSTICE RESEARCH AWARD

**A
W
A
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D**

Eligibility - Research eligible to be considered for this Award will:

- have addressed some aspect of social justice, especially those areas related to poverty as experienced by marginalized peoples in Manitoba
- have incorporated either a quantitative or qualitative research methodology
- have been completed as part of a graduate degree requirement or as an independent research project
- have been published in calendar years 1999 or 2000
- have been completed in partial fulfillment of a degree that was conferred in 1999 or 2000

The Award will consist of a Certificate of Merit and a cash award of \$500

The Award will be presented in a public forum in March 2001, at which time the recipient will give an address about the research. A panel discussion will follow.

We are interested in hearing from readers about possible nominees.

Submit Applications By DECEMBER 15, 2000 to:

**Dr. David Creamer, S.J.
Room 118, Jesuit Centre for Catholic Studies
St. Paul's College, University of Manitoba**

**The
2000–2001**

**Jesuit
Lecture
Series**

Lecture By Dr. Michael Higgins, Title: TBA
Monday, **February 19**, 2001, 7:00 p.m.
Jensen Theatre 100, St. Paul's College

“Science & the Quest for Cosmic Purpose”
Lecture By Dr. John Haught
Monday, **March 19**, 2001, 7:00 p.m.
Jensen Theatre 100, St. Paul's College

ST. PAUL'S COLLEGE ALUMNI & FRIENDS' ANNUAL DINNER

Saturday, **January 20**, 2001

Fr. John Pungente, S.J., will be the after dinner speaker. Host of the television show, “Scanning the Movies,” and co-author of *More Than Meets the Eye: Watching Television Watching Us*, 1999.

For more information please call 474-8582

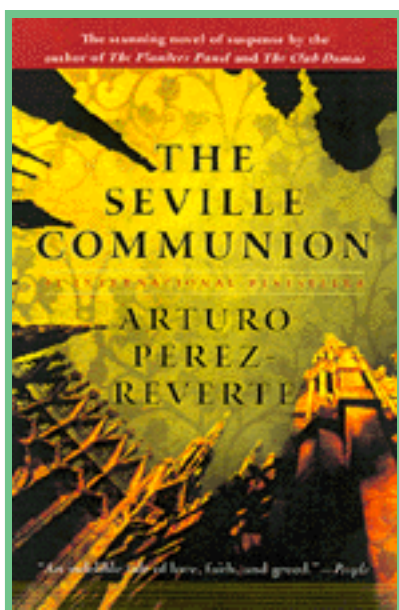
REVIEW OF

ARTURO PÉREZ-REVERTE

The Seville Communion

(La Piel del Tambor
Translated from Spanish
by Sonia Soto)

ISBN: 0-15-100283-5
(375 pages) \$34.00



The Seville Communion (a translation of *La Piel del Tambor*—[The Drum Skin]) is one of four major detective thrillers published by the Spanish author Arturo Pérez-Reverte in the 1990's. Described in *Kirkus Reviews* as a thinking man's Robert Ludlum, it would be appropriate to add the names of John Le Carré and even David Baldacci. For those who love the genre this is a fascinating read even if only followed on its most elementary level as a fast-paced and tightly woven thriller. *The Seville Communion* adds another dimension. It is also a tale of two churches and two priests bound together in one great solitude.

Set partly in Rome, but mainly in the southern Spanish city of Seville, the novel is a tale of intrigue. At the close of the millennium a very good pot-boiler develops within the context of the challenges facing Catholicism in general and the Spanish church in particular. In fifteen chapters and a prologue, *The Seville Communion* challenges the Church and its beliefs at all levels and from all sides while never ceasing to be entertaining. Yet this is essentially a novel about the solitude of spirituality where even the Pope is said to no longer believe in God. It is a novel which savages the Liberals, the Conservatives, the Polish team, as well as the arrogant and the disobedient. It confronts cynicism, Jesuitical waffle, maddening orthodoxy, rugged adherence to old dogma, celibacy, abortion, birth control—all wrapped in images of the solitary soldier, the pawn standing firm on his forgotten square wondering if there is still a king to believe in. It is a novel which has at its core the image of the solitary Knight Templar, his sword broken and his chain mail torn. It is an outstanding portrait of the crisis of the contemporary church disguised in the appealing page-turning vestments of a well-crafted detective novel. Conservative and liberal, orthodox and liberationist, traditionalist and modernist should all read very carefully and resist the temptation to close the book when it comes time for their individual cause to take the hit. Before the surprise ending there is scarcely an unregarded ox in the vicinity.

WHO IS VESPERS?

Code named Vespers, a computer hacker has broken into the personal computer of the Holy Father. The message alludes to the plight of a small church in Seville called Our Lady of the Tears. Two deaths are referred to as the workings of a church that kills to defend itself. Father Lorenzo Quart, an immaculately groomed and extremely handsome prelate assigned to the IFA security wing of the Vatican Secretariat of State, is sent to Seville to discover the identity of Vespers and to report back to Rome. In the same way that the Saul who left for Tarsus never returned, this urbane and intellectual symbol of the modern priest encounters forces that shatter the underpinnings of his view of himself as a Knight Templar and soldier of the church. The Father Lorenzo Quart who leaves Rome does not return either.

Once in Seville we are introduced to a gallery of fascinating characters who fall into two camps: those who wish to save the small crumbling baroque church from the wrecking ball and those for whom centuries of tradition mean little when compared to a new banking and hotel complex. In the bank's corner we find Don Octavio Machuca, his second in command Pencho Gavira, and Aquilino Corvo, Archbishop of Seville. In Our Lady of the Tears' corner are found well defined characters like Gris Marsala, an American nun in charge of the restoration work; Father Priamo Ferro a hardened old Aragonese priest whose time travel Catholicism plunges us both backward and forward in time; Macarana Bruner, a wealthy young aristocrat willing to use every weapon in her arsenal including seduction; and her mother, Cruz Bruner, duchess of El Nuevo Extremo, a frail old lady with a string of pearls who has lived to see both her class and her church outlive their relevancy to much of contemporary Spain. As comic relief we meet the trio-a picaresque assortment of losers drawn straight from the well of Don Quixote where fake lawyers, failed bullfighters and aging flamenco singers contribute a uniquely Spanish flavour to the novel.

Can good triumph over evil in a world where even the priests don't believe in God? Can Our Lady of the Tears with its peeling frescos, damp rot and headless Virgin stand against the might of the Vatican and the corporate elite of a modern secular Spain? Who is Vespers and why do people keep dying in the church? Pérez-Reverte keeps his secrets well into the eleventh hour.

TWO CHURCHES, ONE SOLITUDE

The Seville Communion, despite its many qualities, falls at times into the facile world of anti-clericalism. In this regard, Arturo Pérez-Reverte continues an unbroken stream of anti-clerical and anti-establishment views that run deep throughout centuries of Spanish literature. Father Lorenzo Quart is first and foremost the man from Rome and the Vatican. In Pérez-Reverte's opening portraits it is a church of power and might where three thousand employees and three thousand bishops hold the responsibility for a billion souls; it is forty hectares containing the most powerful state on earth, but with the structure of an absolutist medieval monarchy; it is a throne bolstered by a religion that has become little more than a show and televised Papal visits underneath which lies a reactionary fanaticism of the Polish crew which has taken control of the levers of power; it is a church where senior prelates frequent the finest tailors; it is a church which has resolved its struggles over the centuries, and which continues today, by silencing the disobedient or eliminating them with the traditional methods of defamation, excommunication, and the stake; it is a church of cynicism where truth, particularly the truth that is made public, does not always set us free. With all this power the church seeks other powerful allies in the civic and business worlds. United, they throw their combined imperial and secular might at a small band of warriors defending the crumbling dignity of Our Lady of the Tears. Had Pérez-Reverte gone no further, *The Seville Communion* would still have been an interesting thriller. Fortunately, the author resists the temptation to create simplistic antagonisms.

Moving from the abstract to the personal we see that there is nobility and weakness on both sides. This is revealed most movingly in the number of character creations within the novel of which the portraits of the fiercely intelligent Lorenzo Quart and the intensely humanitarian old Aragonese priest are the high points.

Through them we see to what extent Pérez-Reverte has mastered the artist's craft of creating living entities that go beyond the limitations of the page.

At the centre of the thriller as well as the spiritual anxiety is Father Lorenzo Quart. At

age 38 he is smartly dressed with gray hair cut short like a soldier's. He is very tall, slim, sure of himself and perfectly aware of his failings as a priest. He knows he lacks charity, compassion and humility. He is a man of great self-discipline to whom faith is relative. His creed does not consist of revealed truths but rests on the assumption that one has faith and acts accordingly. He is aware that his iron self-discipline has replaced faith. And the paradox, which his superior Monsignor Spado detects, is that it is precisely the lack of faith, with all the pride and rigour needed to sustain it, that made Quart so good at his job. Quart's is a life that revolves around regulations; he accepts Church discipline as an efficient way of organizing his life: "Some things don't function without discipline, and the firm I work for is one of them." In Quart's case, only willpower, expressed as self-discipline, offers protection from the naked truth that gives rise to apathy and despair. His antagonist, Father Ferro views him as a perfect policeman working for a powerful corporation that serves God, a man who has never loved a woman or hated a man or felt sympathy for a miserable wretch, a man whose definitions of love and hate are

theological definitions or whispers in the confessional, a man whose sins are those of omission, a man who follows orders like the good soldier and nothing more. What sets Lorenzo Quart apart is that he is even more aware of his own failings than his adversaries.

In his worn cassock Father Ferro embodies everything Quart hates—the poverty and stubborn wariness of the rough village priest who threatens with the torments of hell and who hears confessions from pious old women from whom he differs only in that he has spent a few years in the seminary and has a smattering of Latin.

No more worthy adversary is found than Don Priamo Ferro Ordás, parish priest of Our Lady of the Tears. Ferro's appearance is as rough as his voice. He is small and thin with poorly cut and untidy hair.

His face is full of marks, lines and small scars which give him a harsh tormented look. His black defiant eyes peer out at the world with little sympathy. In his worn cassock Father Ferro embodies everything Quart hates—the poverty and stubborn wariness of the rough village priest who threatens with the torments of hell and who hears confessions from pious old women from whom he differs only in that he has spent a few years in the seminary and has a smattering of Latin. He is a contradiction: a priest who celebrates Mass in Latin because, in his view, it inspires more respect, yet whose modern views on contraception, homosexuality, celibacy, divorce and adultery are far removed from Church teaching. In the words of his Archbishop: "Mass at Our Lady of the Tears is like travelling in a time machine that jumps backward and forward." Yet Ferro, like Quart, is most aware of himself. Quart describes him as consciously reactionary, fully aware of his actions, a man who has chosen his flag with as great a precision as Quart had chosen his, a man who, despite his clumsy movements, and his slovenliness, inspires dignity through his unpleasant manner and rough appearance.

As the two antagonists face each other Quart feels the instinctive solidarity between priests. "Exhausted warriors, each standing on his own square on the board, isolated, far from kings and princes. He would have liked to put his hand on the old man's shoulder, but he didn't." That we come to love both men and both extremes is one of the results of *The Seville Communion*. We come also to share the solitude that surrounds all the characters in the novel and covers both Quart and Ferro like a shroud. Seeming to set out a defence of the modern as opposed to the medieval, the novel adds layer after layer of complex and contradictory longings—best expressed in one of Father Ferro's observations: "I know only one thing: when the seduction is over, we'll be finished too. Logic and reason will mean the end. But so long as some poor woman needs to kneel in my small church in search of comfort, the church must remain standing. . . . Burdened as we are by our miserable condition, priests like me are still needed . . . We're the old, patched drum skin on which the glory of God still thunders. And only a madman would envy our secret. 'We know,' said the old priest darkly, 'the angel who holds the key to the abyss.'"

Entertainment and challenge. In short, no one returns unchanged from Tarsus in this novel. Who is Vespers? Why are people dying in *Our Lady of the Tears*? Even if we were never to know the answers we would still have the tale of these two great literary creations standing on the squares that they have chosen, wanting to reach out and touch each other, yet unable.

COURTESY OF B. WSIANKI



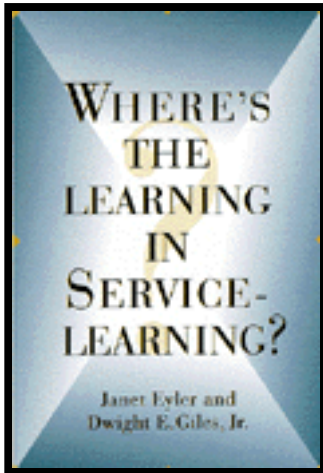
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Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?

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Many closely associated with academia whether students, faculty, or administrators have heard the term 'service-learning.' According to Bringle and Hatcher, service-learning (s-l) differs from volunteer community service in that students participate in an "organized service activity" and earn credit for a course. The service activity not only meets a community need but deepens students' understanding and appreciation of the course content and academic discipline while heightening their "sense of civic responsibility" (R. G. Bringle and J. A. Hatcher "Implementing Service Learning in Higher Education" *Journal of Higher Education* 67, 1996, p. 222). Bringle and Hatcher also stress that s-l is unlike *practica* or internships because s-l is not always "skill-based within the context of professional education" (p. 222). It also differs from 'outreach' activities which leave educational core functions unaffected.



The last ten years in the United States have witnessed an upsurge of service-learning courses as adjunct or alternatives to traditional lecture/seminar format classes. Advocates for s-l at the post-secondary level claim that properly designed programs of s-l engage students, utilize classroom theory, and motivate learning. They assert that s-l creates better student-citizens and helps institutions of higher learning rediscover the important role of *community and community service* (R. G. Bringle, R. Games, E. A. Malloy, *Colleges and Universities as Citizens*, Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999, p. 4). And, according to an earlier champion of the academy's involvement in community service, Ernest Boyer, this "scholarship of engagement" can connect "the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems" (E. L. Boyer "The Scholarship of Engagement," *Journal of Public Service and Outreach* 1(1) 1996, p. 18).

On the other hand, skeptics seriously doubt the value of service-learning. They ask: 'Does it water down intellectual engagement?' 'Is it a viable approach to academic learning?' And more immediately: 'How can the college and university evaluate student progress and assign a grade?' 'If it is not clearly measurable does s-l belong in institutions of higher learning?' But then one can argue that all learning is subjective and never easy to measure.

Then there are countless others who have never even heard of or read about service-learning. When asked they may say: 'What's that? Is this some new kind of educational experiment, a pedagogical fad, or part of a field trip for students? In any case, I'm sure it has no relevance to my micro-biology, physics, history, or sociology research and teaching. Probably it is best left to the social work faculty.'

In *Where's the Learning in Service Learning?*, Janet Eyler and Dwight E. Giles, Jr. explain that their book should appeal to all higher education constituents including faculty, campus community service centres, presidents, deans, students, community agencies, and researchers whether they be skeptics of s-l or believers. For the authors, s-l is a powerful tool in education in that it "creates connections-between feelings and thoughts," "between studies and life, between self and others, and between college and community" (p. xiv). They are confident that good s-l programs promote better learning which in turn "leads to more effective community service" (p.xiv). A major goal of this book is to address the concerns of higher educational professionals about the importance of s-l programs to their academic mission.

Convinced of the benefits of service-learning from experiences with organizing and teaching such programs, Eyler and Giles were aware however of doubters and the tendencies of academic institutions

to marginalize s-l programs. When budgets are constrained, staff and other resources for s-l are often a casualty (T. K. Stanton, D. E. Giles, and N. Craig, *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on its Origins, Practice, and Future*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999). The authors found that despite the difficulties, s-l programs have increased dramatically over the last fifteen years with a parallel demand for more information that would "justify and sustain" them (p. xv). But Eyler and Giles realized that few had studied the nature of academic learning produced by s-l. Consequently, they undertook a six-year "journey of discovery" (p. 19) with two national research projects, the results of which they report in this book.

Service-learning presents a connected view of learning, engages students, and encourages them to use problem-solving skills to aid communities through social action.

The first project surveyed more than fifteen hundred students from twenty U.S. colleges and universities, eleven hundred of whom had participated in service-learning. The surveys, conducted before and after a semester of community service, examined the impact on students and the effect of particular s-l program characteristics on student academic outcomes. The authors also conducted intensive interviews with sixty-six students from six colleges before and after a service semester to assess "changes in students' problem-solving and critical thinking abilities, and the complexity of their thinking about social issues" (p. xvii).

The second project interviewed sixty-seven students from seven colleges and universities who had participated in curricular based service-learning courses or in volunteer activities. The interviews concentrated on student experiences with "reflection"—a major component of s-l practice. Students reported a higher appreciation for the experience when given opportunities for formal reflection. Some kept journals to which faculty responded; some gave class presentations; others participated in discussions to share their feelings. The authors' findings echo the importance of action and reflection earlier stressed by Robert A. Rhoads (*Community Service and Higher Learning*, State University of New York Press, 1997, p. 184). Rhoads drew on Paulo Freire's 1970 work which claimed that action without reflection is mere "activism" and reflection without action is "verbalism" (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1970, p. 75). Most students also expressed a desire to relate the service to what they were learning in the course.

Combined, the two studies have produced both quantitative and qualitative data sets showing student assessment of service-learning's impact on student thinking. Students rated high the increased ability to interact personally with faculty members and to develop closer relationships with other students. These experiences produced stronger leadership and critical thinking skills, a greater awareness of social justice and public policy issues, and feelings of contributing to the well-being of a community.

Having clarified the book's objectives, the authors proceed to lay out their research and analyses in nine chapters. The first chapter, "Identifying the Learning Outcome of Service" raises the questions: 'What is service-learning?' and 'What is the learning in s-l?' They bolster claims of an increasing popularity in America of s-l with impressive statistics such as the 575 campuses now offering s-l courses, and the 50 to 85 percent increase in campuses giving tangible support to faculty conducting s-l courses between 1994 and 1998. Many would agree that s-l is important because people learn from experience. Service-learning presents a connected view of learning, engages students, and encourages them to use problem-solving skills to aid communities through social action. In identifying the benefits of s-l, the authors explore important attributes of learning: it begins with personal connections, is useful, is developmental, is transforming, and citizenship rests on learning. Eyler and Giles support the interactive theory of V. Tinto (*Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*, University of Chicago Press, 1993) that students, socially and academically engaged in college, are more likely to graduate and see s-l as contributing to their success (p. 53).

Chapters two through seven expand on these learning attributes trying to connect them to curricular-based service to the community. Much of the discussion though is repetitive (see p. 40) and

predictable, and the reader keeps hoping to find something new. The chapters are heavily laden with verbatim reports from the student interviews. It is not surprising that in chapter two, "Personal and Interpersonal Development," the authors explain that students reported a greater awareness of diversity in the community through participation in s-l and that they developed a greater appreciation and tolerance for other cultures. Students also reported an increase in self-knowledge, in spiritual growth, and an awareness of value in helping others and of future career benefits from service experience.

The final chapter, "Strengthening the Role of Service in the College Curriculum," insists that institutions should make s-l programs a priority and that service with all its benefits should "form the core of the student's educational experience" (p. 188). The programs and student placements must be of the highest quality, and Eyster and Giles' list provides criteria by which to measure the quality. Important components of s-l must be faculty involvement and coaching, coupled with opportunities for critical reflection by students before, during, and after service placement. The authors close promising a future guide for designing effective s-l experiences.

The authors offer a helpful two to four page summary at each chapter's end, but much of the book, with its copious short sections and even shorter subsections, reads like an extended report to a funding agency to ensure that the grant was well spent. Several pages offer useful tables (pp. 75, 111, 110, 140, 168), but the authors omitted the usual list at the beginning to help locate the information. The six appendices called 'Resources' (A to F) supply the reader with names of the colleges and universities which participated in the studies, the studies' sample and methods, survey and interview instruments, survey regression tables showing the impact of s-l and program characteristics, and interview regression tables showing the impact of well-integrated s-l. These resources should be helpful to future researchers conducting related studies.

The book never does quite answer the question: 'What is service-learning?' For that the reader must go to other works such as Bringle *et al* (*Colleges and Universities as Citizens* 1999) who explain the role of s-l as part of an integral whole which can engage the faculty in the community or to the work of Edward Zlotkowski ("Pedagogy and Engagement" in *Colleges and Universities*, pp. 97-120) which shows a helpful matrix of how students and faculty engage in sl.

What the book does do is stimulate readers to search for any service-learning programs at their institutions. At the University of Manitoba and one of its affiliated colleges, St. Paul's College, for example, there are indeed s-l projects. During the 1999-2000 academic year a new initiative to assist students improve their academic writing skills came from the University of Manitoba's Learning Assistance Centre (LAC). Granted the community being helped was internal to the university but it was and is a community of need. Under the direction of the Centre's coordinator, Professor Barbara Rudyk, seven senior students were recruited from a Faculty of Education course conducted by and in cooperation with Professor Roy Graham and two senior psychology majors volunteered from the Faculty of Arts. These students gave up their Saturdays once a month to undergo an intensive training program which included lectures, films, role playing, interviewing techniques, and discussions on how to be effective writing tutors.



Volunteer Writing Tutors: back row (l to r) Barbara Rudyk, Chris McNabb, John McVagh, Natalie Isford; front row (l to r) Darcy Smyth, Andrew Maksymetz, Shari Sawchuk, missing - Anthony Clark. Photo courtesy of Barbara Rudyk

Since many of the expected tutees needing guidance in writing academic papers would come from the more than 3,000 first-year students, the University One office, which assists first year students with programming and course selections, provided space for the tutors and tutees to meet. The University One office also supported the service with time-tabling and scheduling while the IAC, circulated posters and advertised the service throughout the campus. Each of the tutors volunteered two to six hours per week so as to be available for students every day of the week. Some tutees needed only one session with a tutor, others needed more. Not all tutees were first-year students, so clearly the service was reaching a wider community within the university. The service grew to be so popular that this academic year, 2000-2001, new tutors are being trained, and the service has moved to the main campus Elizabeth Dafoe Library.

Tutees exiting from the writing service, when surveyed, said they appreciated the help from a tutor who could challenge their ideas, suggest research strategies, and encourage their writing projects. The tutors benefited from the opportunities to reflect on the service they were providing. At the end-of-term meeting with the IAC coordinator, the education seniors felt they were better equipped to work with students in their future teaching roles and were including reports from the project in their teaching portfolios. The psychology seniors felt better able to work with people in their future clinical careers. All felt they had grown and gained confidence since they began the project, that their target 'community' had profited from their efforts, and all reported a new appreciation of how difficult the academic writing process can be for many students.

St. Paul's College's Intercommunity Program is another project that fits many elements of the service-learning profile. Since 1986 the College has annually recruited and sponsored students who spend the month of August in the Dominican Republic participating in a service project coordinated by Fr. Luis Quinn, s.f.m., a Canadian Scarborough Foreign missionary serving in San Jose de Ocoa, Dominican Republic. This past year Fr. Quinn's coordination saw 85 different groups from Canada and the United States arrive in the Dominican Republic and travel to remote areas to assist local communities with building projects such as digging wells, laying aqueducts, building schools, community centres, and libraries. St. Paul's College, directed by the Rector and his secretary Fern Lewis, recruits the students, screens them, assists with fund raising, and coordinates travel to the Dominican Republic. The College is the liaison between Fr. Quinn's project and the Manitoba volunteers and for the students' parents while their sons and daughters are away. In August 2000, one male and eight female participants from Winnipeg and Brandon, Manitoba spent the month in the small mountainous area of El Bejucal, building a schoolhouse with the local community (see photos to right).



After their return, the 'reflection' meeting with these volunteers took place at the College one evening, as three had to commute the 288 kms. from Brandon. What the students reported supports the findings of Eyster and Giles. The students gave helpful recommendations for next year's contingent to the Dominican Republic. All stressed they had personally grown and learned from the experience in El Bejucal. They felt the changes in themselves were profound. They were certainly engaged and want to learn more. Any course they study now or in the future will be coloured by and seen through the lenses of their experience. One student, Claire Gagné, has written an article about the project, complete with photos, for her local community newspaper. These participants loved the people of the El Bejucal community they worked with and enjoyed sharing their sense of peace, tranquility, and happiness; they have matured greatly from the experience. They have made personal and hopefully lasting friendships with each other, are more aware of social justice issues, and have a very different perspective on issues of materialism. At home, relationships with family and other friends have matured. They have devised plans to thank the businesses who helped sponsor them. Three are now studying Spanish. They know they made a difference to the people of El Bejucal. Some of the nine will give time to help recruit and train the next group who will go down to the Dominican Republic in the summer of 2001. Plans are underway to explore ways in which St. Paul's can broaden the Intercommunity Program and assist first nations' communities in remote regions of Manitoba. Though not tied to a specific academic course with academic credit given for their efforts, clearly service-learning was taking place here for these students.

The University of Manitoba and St. Paul's College have assumed a role in community service and both the students and communities served have benefited and many 'connections' have been made. These are two of many examples of success with service-learning, but how many college/university faculty are willing to invest the extensive time and effort required to implement a s-l course? How many institutions are willing to put the resources into devoting the personnel and other measures to support s-l programming? According to Eyster and Giles in *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?*, the number grows every day. Soon very few colleges and universities will be without s-l programs as an accepted part of their academic mission.



COURTESY OF JOSEPHS, MFG.

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next issue:

As we send this fifth issue of **Perspective** to the press, we want to invite your comments and suggestions. We welcome your letters, e-mail, and voice mail!

Our next issue (March, 2001) will contain an article on Catholic literature by Dr. Dan Lenoski, and a book review by Michael Caligiuri (*Virtual Faith* by Tom Beaudoin).

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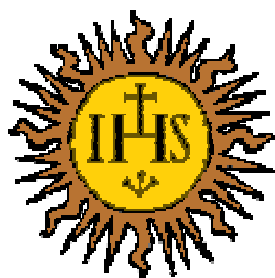
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