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Dream Fulfilled

Twelve-plus Years of Gratitude

By Fred Kammer, S.J., J.D.

Take Five For Social Justice



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JSRI Future Activities

July 31

Fr. Fred Kammer, SJ, will complete his service as Director of JSRI and begin a one-year sabbatical before being missioned to a new ministry.

August 1

Fr. Chris Kellerman, SJ, will begin his term as Interim Director of JSRI for the 2021-22 academic year.

JSRI Recent Activities

May 14

JSRI was awarded a Loyola Mission Integration Grant to provide four Ignatian Teach-Ins on Immigration for the Ignatian Year.

May 17

Dr. Sue Weishar participated in the monthly meeting of the Louisiana Stop Solitary Coalition.

May 19

Dr. Weishar participated in a meeting organized by the Orleans Parish Prison Reform Coalition to develop a platform of reforms for candidates to consider endorsing in the sheriff's election this fall.

May 26

Dr. Dennis Kalob participated in the monthly membership meeting of the social justice organization Step Up Louisiana.

June 6-24

Members of the JSRI staff attended (virtually) various sessions of the Commitment to Justice in Jesuit Higher Education Conference, which was held over six days during the month.

June 8

A short [video](#) created by Dr. Weishar about JSRI's Ignatian Teach-In on Mass Incarceration was a Poster Presentation for this year's Commitment to Justice in Jesuit Higher Education Conference.

June 12

Fr. Kellerman was ordained a priest, together with three others, in Holy Name of Jesus Church by Archbishop Gregory Aymond, DD. He celebrated his Mass of Thanksgiving the following morning, again at HNJ Church.

June 14

Fr. Kammer participated in his final national board meeting for the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, where he served as Vice-Chairperson.

June 22

Fr. Kammer discussed the social realities of New Orleans with four men participating in the "Three Weeks a Jesuit" program.

For those of us who have sat at the feet of Ignatius of Loyola, he taught us that ingratitude was the greatest of sins and that it was the source of all other sins, because it means forgetting all the benefits received in life and the Grand Giver of everything good. Now, as I winnow my files, pack boxes, prepare hard and digital copies for Loyola and Jesuit archives, and prepare to "retire" from JSRI, I can see clearly the rich veins of goodness that have coursed through my twelve-plus years here at the Jesuit Social Research Institute (JSRI).



First, I think of the [staff](#) with whom I have co-labored and how they brought to us their experience, expertise, and deep desires for a more just and compassionate Gulf South and nation. They have written creatively and passionately for our [JustSouth Quarterly](#) and [JustSouth Monthly](#), shared their wisdom with Loyola, the New Orleans community, and audiences across the nation and the world, and tenaciously advocated for the justice that faith demands. With them, our associates in Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, and elsewhere have brought JSRI's mission to life outside New Orleans and Louisiana.

Our very generous individual and institutional donors have provided the fuel for our engines and, in the members of our [Advisory Board](#), their considered wisdom has helped guide our labors and at times challenged our sense of direction. Loyola's faculty, staff, and leaders and those of the Central and Southern Jesuit Province have combined to support and champion our work and help us hew closely to our mission. My personal gratitude for all of them will be a rich memory as I leave here.

No one who has ever worked effectively for justice has done so alone. We have been bolstered by so many colleagues from the faith and civic communities in [research projects](#) and [advocacy](#) for the human dignity and rights of prisoners, immigrants, low-income families, and those marginalized in so many ways in our society.

The post-Katrina dream of the Jesuit New Orleans Province [1] that birthed JSRI in partnership with Loyola University was simple and far reaching:

If there ever were a time when the Jesuits of the New Orleans Province were called to accompany the poor and act on the faith that does justice, it is now. Through the establishment of the Jesuit Social Research Institute (JSRI), we propose to apply our theological and intellectual traditions, our commitment to the option for the poor, reliance on sound social science evidence, and Catholic social teaching to analyze, educate and advocate, and ultimately make a tangible contribution to solving the problems that continue to plague the region that Jesuits have called home for almost 300 years. [2]

Since Katrina, all of us in the Gulf South and the nation have been confronted repeatedly with the disturbing realities of poverty, inequality, racial injustice, immigrant exclusion, and so much more that mars the face of God's creation. These experiences have reinforced the need for JSRI as one way for Loyola and the Central and Southern Jesuit Province to work together to foster the faith-that-does-justice in this region. For me, it has been a priceless opportunity to contribute my own experience to a modest and important work close to the heart of the contemporary mission of the Society of Jesus. I know it will be so for the others who will continue JSRI into the coming years.

[1] In 2014, the New Orleans Province and the Missouri Province merged to form the Jesuit Central and Southern Province.

[2] New Orleans Province. (2007, April 11). Establishing the Jesuit Social Research Institute: A Concept Paper for Discussion and Action, p.1.



Monthly articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Loyola University New Orleans.

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