

With the purpose to address **the problem of refugees and contribute to provide some help in their dramatic and desperate situation**, the week of September 12, 2016, in Rome was organized the European Encounters of Jesuit Alumni with the focus on "**Global Migration and Refugees Crisis - time to contemplate and act**" with large participation of representatives ex alumni from several European countries, members of the World Union Jesuits Alumni (WUJA) and others.

In this note, we summarize the most relevant messages and agreements: the words that HH Pope Francis address to us at the end of the encounter of encouragement, expectations and commitment; the overview/summary that present to Pope Francis our European President, and also the proposed actions agreed by the working Groups. During the sessions

In the appendix are included the presentations available and some significant addresses of networks as well as the announcement of the next congress of WUJA in June 2017 US

The ENCOUNTER

The encounter began Wednesday September 14th with a **Mass at the Jesuit Curia** held by our European consiglieri (**Father Fernando Meseguer S.J.**) - in the previous days some participants went on **pilgrimage to Asis**.

The **first day**, Sept 15th we had the opportunity to listen the experiences and reflections with the refugees from **Mauro Garofalo, Pep Boades S.J.¹ and Alain Deneef** at the LUMSA University – place of the Congress - followed by several "field examples" or working sessions for sensitization: Visit to Ignatian Places, working group to develop proposals, **interactions with Refugee** and visit to "**Rome in the Eyes of the Refugees**" options available also in the afternoon of the second day.

The **second day** was focused on the **experiences of the Jesuit Refugee Service of Astali Central Italy**, that works on refugee integration from the moment Integration begins from the moment an asylum seeker, refugee or migrant arrives in Italy, in an environment of respect for diversity and equality ... ^[2] "the impact on the **mental health of refugees**"^[3] causing trauma from the country of origin; the journey to "safety" and The trauma of the relocation/ integration it was presented a view from Islam by Italian Muslim (attached for its interest a paper presented this week in Lyon / France^[4] Boades J, D Alfonso-Lasheras, Bruno Martin and Alberto Priego: Islam: Economy, Society and Politics)

We like to highlight the words of **Tom Smolich S.J., global Director of JRS** explaining the activities of JRS Created by father Arrupe SJ thirty years ago where Jesuits, lay and religious are working with the displaced - accompanying, serving and defending the right justice to be protected - rely on faith, spiritual values and inspired by the example of Jesus and his compassion and love for the poor of all races, cultures and religions in an open and respectful way to overcome borders and geographical, racial, cultural and religious divisions.

On Saturday the Holy Father had the courtesy to grant a private audience to transmit to us a message as committed -Christian and Ignatian. in this audience, our president on behalf of all us summarized our commitment.

¹ Presentación de Pep Boades " Actuando como Cristianos... Que nos dice la Iglesia?"

^[2] Presentación del C Astali JRS Servicio Del Gesuiti per Rifugiati in Italia

^[3] The Tripe Trauma paradigm

^[4] Islam: Economy, Society and Politics 7-9 Sept 2016

1.- ADDRESS OF HH POPE FRANCIS

The Humanitarian Crisis -

More than sixty-five million persons are forcibly displaced around the globe, a number larger than the entire population of Italy! Refugees are women and men, boys and girls who are no different than our own family members and friends. **It the greatest humanitarian crisis, after the Second World War.**

More than ever today, many refugees die trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea – which has become a cemetery – and refugees spend years and years languishing in camps, **the Church needs you to draw on the bravery and example of Father Pedro Arrupe.**

Our Mission As Ex Alumni Of The Jesuits Schools

You, Graduates of Jesuit schools as “**men and women for others**”, have come to Rome to explore o the roots of forced migration, To “**to contemplate and act**” contemplate your responsibility in response to the current situation and act as promoters of change in your home communities.

- Many doors have been opened for you through your Jesuit education while refugees find many doors closed to them.
- Through your Jesuit education, you have been invited to become “**companions of Jesus**” and, with Saint Ignatius Loyola as your guide, you have been sent into the world to **be women and men for and with others**
- At this place and time in history, **there is great need for men and women who hear the cry of the poor and respond with mercy and generosity**
- You also must know how **be brave in responding to the needs of refugees** in today's world.
- You must offer the Lord “**all your liberty, your memory, your understanding and your entire will**” as you continue to understand the causes of forced migration and serve refugees in your countries.

Welcome , Support on Education and Collaboration

Encourage us to wellcome

- **With your help, the Church will be able to respond more fully to the human tragedy of refugees** through acts of mercy that promote their integration into the European context and beyond.
- **I encourage you to welcome refugees into your homes and communities**, so that their first experience of Europe is not the traumatic experience of sleeping cold on the streets, but one of warm human welcome.
- **authentic hospitality is a profound gospel value** that nurtures love and is our greatest security against hateful acts of terrorism

Support to Education

- Less than fifty percent of child refugees have access to primary education, that number drops to twenty-two percent for adolescents enrolled in secondary schools and less than one percent have access to a university education.
- I urge you to **draw on the joys and successes that your Jesuit education has given you by supporting the education of refugees throughout the world. Together with the Jesuit Refugee Service, put your mercy in motion** and help transform this educational reality.

Colaboration with others

- Sometimes we can feel that we are alone as we try to put mercy into action. Know, however, that you **join your work with that of many ecclesial organizations which work for humanitarian causes and which dedicate themselves to the excluded and marginalized**

- Remember that the love of God accompanies you in this work. **You are God's eyes, mouth, hands and heart in this world.**
- Many doors have been opened for you through your Jesuit education while refugees find many doors closed to them.
- **I urge you to help transform your communities into places of welcome where all God's children have the opportunity not simply to survive, but to grow, flourish and bear fruit.**
- think of the Holy Family — Mary, Joseph, and the Child Jesus — on their long journey to Egypt as refugees, fleeing violence and finding refuge among strangers.

Remember as well the words of Jesus: "**For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me**" (Mt 25:35). Take these words and these gestures with you today. May they bring you encouragement and consolation.

2.- KIKE REBES (President European Confederation) REAFFIRMS OUR COMMITMENT: OPEN HEART AND DOORS

- We are **conscious of our privileged position** as European citizens, Jesuit schools education and therefore we cannot allow such suffering to occur
- The European Confederation and the WUJA World Union of Jesuit alumni **are committed to this mission on behalf of refugees and of those who suffer**
- We feel the need to **collaborate in the mission of the Jesuits** when **working with people who are in the "frontier"** and also to **engage us in the activities of SJR (Jesuits Refugee Service) in each country, supporting our efforts in Jesuits** social and cooperation organizations that can be also – the key and source for our continuous development as ex alumni.
- We must be realistic also and thus **we see the high value of the political dimension** in the problems that suffer the refugees. **We believe that the ex-alumni have to play a role in this debate** and also **in the political process for decision-making** in order to ensure that is managed as deserves in the current European environment: **Humanitarian assistance on arrival, Integration in the hosting societies** and, above all, **preventing situations that force people to leave their countries**

3.- WORKING GROUPS: PROPOSED ACTIONS

The working group- Considering HH Pope Francisco's Message, the reality and our compromise as Ignatians we have seen in the various presentations and our commitment- has proposed the following actions to implement in each organization

- Remind all us the role we can (and should) play as Christians with refugees (as defined by the Church)
- **An internal reflection process (discernment) on the position/ on Refugees** to avoid oversimplification and unprecise positions currently existing in the media public debate;
- The work done by JRS has been well appreciated and the Alumni could work in tandem with the JRS to strengthen their efforts. **Learn, Understand, Collaborate and Support the JRS work** .
- Work to develop a **clear action plan with compromises** considering **the local context** in tandem with JRS and other Church's organizations – Focus our efforts
- Look for the political engagement of Jesuit Alumni in the favor of Refugees and get support of the Alumnus who are in influential positions and beurocratically

In summary an **internal process of discernment and reflection about the refugees, our position as Christian and Ignatians** to fight the oversimplification, unprecise and erroneous positions currently existing in the media and public debate **to help the change;**

In the words of San Francisco, "**Begin doing what is necessary, then what's possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible.**" We have the tools available...