Independent Jesuit Region of Malaysia-Singapore (MAS)

MAS Apostolic Plan 2027-2031

Collaborating for Christ's Mission

PREAMBLE

Our Mission
The Society of Jesus is called to be on mission with Christ the reconciler, to share and collaborate in God's work of reconciliation in a broken world, by working for reconciliation with God, with one another, and with creation.

Our Vision
Constantly discerning and drawing from the flow of God's grace, and remaining ever rooted in our Jesuit Way of Proceeding, we bear witness to and work for the fruit of Christ's reconciliation in our world today. We do this through our Life and Mission in, with and for the Church, always in partnership with others.

PRIORITIES

The Regional plan, as presented and elaborated, does not set out major innovations in ministry or even the forging of novel frontiers. The focus of the plan is less of *what* we are to do but *how* we are to do what we have been called to do. Just as the disciples were called to put out into the deep (GC 36, cf Luke 5:4) in a lake that they were very familiar with, our plan seeks to lead us into the depths of our ministries, to delve deeper into the essence of what we do.

The process of deepening how we engage in our apostolates and ministries must also take into consideration the call from both GC 36 (General Congregation 36, 2016) and the DSS (De Statu Societatis Iesu 2023 Report) for greater collaboration in ministry. It is from this that the first of our Region's priorities emerges – to build firm connections among the apostolates and ministries that we are involved in, creating synergies and interactions that can enhance and deepen. The other regional priority flows from these connections as we seek to engage more deeply with the youth and

those who may be on the margins. The final priority recognises the fundamental needs for all our ministries, needs that are both existential and very practical – Vocation Promotion and Safeguarding which undergird all our apostolates and ministries.

A further note about the priorities has to be made about collaboration. We embrace collaboration as a process, not a task to be accomplished. This begins with collaboration *ad intra* among Jesuits in all our ministries which is enhanced with collaboration *ad extra* with others whom we work with – lay partners, other religious, clergy, bishops. "The Society of Jesus has experienced the collaboration of others in its apostolate as a grace that has allowed it to improve and multiply its presence in the various fields in which it works" (DSS V, p 82). Collaboration thus becomes firmly integrated into our way of proceeding, allowing us to truly share the mission that comes from the Lord. Collaboration thus allows us to build, deepen and strengthen our capacity to engage with the Lord in our mission.

Priority 1: Building Firm Connections

We are a pilgrim Church that journeys together towards the kingdom, a *koinonia* or community that exists because the Lord has drawn us together. Despite the varied areas in which the Jesuits operate within Malaysia-Singapore, the call is for us to make connections between the ministries so as to create viable networks within the Region to better respond to current needs. Just as collaboration is the process, the connections are the effects and results of collaborative efforts, building bridges so as they bring the Lord to all. Here, the connections are built between units, ministries and groups, forming networks within the Region and beyond.

Priority 2: Deepening Ministry to Young People and those on Margins

The connections made are not for their own sake but have a focus that flows from the Society's UAP (Universal Apostolic Preferences). In identifying young people and those on the margins as priorities, the Region renews its commitment to forming young people for the future while also reaching out to those who are most in need. This priority cuts across all ministries and apostolates, grounded in our common desire to reach out to those most in need of our presence.

Priority 3: Strengthening Essential Bases

While the essential priorities of Vocation Promotion and Safeguarding may seem like things to do, there are deeper and more existential reasons for this as a priority. One points to our continued presence in our Region as it is imperative that good new vocations to the Society in the Region are found so that the work that the Lord calls us to can continue. The other points to the essential quality of ministry to create safe environments within which those whom we minister to can flourish. Both provide the basic orientations for how we can operate.

THE REGIONAL PLAN: AN ELABORATION

The Regional Plan is animated first by the call from GC 36 for deeper discernment, collaboration and networking in our approach to mission and is guided by the UAP (Universal Apostolic Preferences) as we seek to labour with the Lord in God's Kingdom here in Malaysia and Singapore. The three Priorities of the Region orient our actions in the implementation of the plan, which will be presented in three parts.

The first part details the realities of our ministries articulated in the various Clusters which allow units and individuals who work in similar apostolic areas to communicate and collaborate more effectively. The second part details the plans for collaboration and connections between the Clusters, leveraging on synergies and building networks to better respond to current needs. And the third part details the elaboration on the third priority on the essential bases for the Region.

I: APOSTOLATES AND CLUSTERS

Our Apostolates

The mission that we receive from the Lord is diverse and responsive to the needs of the Region. In Malaysia-Singapore, the bulk of our apostolic ministries are in spirituality, parish/pastoral, education and the social apostolate. These ministries form the institutional and apostolic spine from which we operate and it is from these ministries that further engagement occurs. In the process of providing better support for Jesuits and our partners working with us in the Lord's vineyard, apostolic clusters have been formed to allow for better planning and collaboration given the limited resources.

The Apostolic Clusters

The four Apostolic Clusters of the MAS Region, with elaborations on the direct works of the Region along with our ministries in the clusters are:

<u>Spirituality Cluster</u>

- Works: Kingsmead Centre (KC), Singapore; and Maranatha House of Prayer (MHP), Janda Baik, Malaysia.
- Ministries: Christian Life Community (CLC) groups, Jesuits and mission partners working in retreat ministry

The Spirituality Cluster's focus will be on formation and the cultivation and spreading of Ignatian tools like the Spiritual Exercises (SpEx) and the Examen. The broad approach involves a mix of direct service – such as offering seasonal retreats and spiritual direction at centres like Kingsmead Centre (KC) and long-term capacity building. This includes identifying and training new spiritual directors and retreat directors (specifically those who can give the full Exercises) and inviting local or

foreign speakers to provide specialised formation for volunteers, benefactors, and parishioners. Outreach programmes will provide spirituality experiences to those who might not have the opportunity to do so, like some young people, migrants and those on the margins.

Parish/Pastoral Cluster

- Works: St Francis Xavier Church, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia and St Ignatius Church, Singapore
- Ministries: Jesuits working in individual parishes (Melaka-Johor Diocese) and mission partners working in various parishes

The Parish Cluster aims to embed Ignatian identity into the everyday life and administration of local faith communities. The approach is characterised by a way of proceeding which values consultative decision-making and the Synodal process. Specific pastoral priorities include outreach to the elderly, fostering social mission awareness, and creating specialised formation for youth, introducing the Examen and Ignatian Spirituality so as to keep them engaged in faith. Social outreach in direct service and in indirect assistance will also form part of the parish plans.

Education Cluster

- Work: St Joseph's Private Secondary School, Kuching, Malaysia (Companion School)
- Ministries: Jesuits working in chaplaincy roles in Catholic schools (Kuala Lumpur Archdiocese and Penang Dioceses); Jesuits working in Higher Education; Mission partners working in teaching or administrative roles in schools and universities.

The Education Cluster prioritises the integration of Jesuit identity and values into the academic environment through both formal chaplaincy and student engagement. The strategy involves training teachers and staff in Ignatian spirituality to ensure they can 'synchronise and synergise' their work with the Jesuit mission. Key initiatives include broadening the use of the Examen and Ignatian values, celebrating St Ignatius and fostering collaboration between different Jesuit-linked schools to share resources. School social outreach to communities that are in need also form part of the curriculum.

Social Apostolate Cluster

- Work: PERCH (Peter Favre Refugee Convalescence Home), Batu Arang, Malaysia
- Ministries: Jesuits and mission partners working in social and ecology ministries.

The Social Cluster focuses on providing spiritual and practical accompaniment to marginalised groups, particularly migrants and refugees through JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) and PERCH. Their approach blends spiritual support, such as annual retreats for collaborators, with social advocacy and environmental stewardship. Notable plans

include residential training for mission methods and implementing ecological audits for both parish-based ministries and individual Jesuits to assess their environmental impact.

II: THE CONNECTIONS

The Connections

In planning and in reality, there is a need for ours to look outside the clusters to recognise the broader mission of the Region and the Society as a whole. As a clear expression of the first two Priorities of the Region, there is a need to foster connections among the Clusters which serve as spaces for collaboration and networking while also expressing the major priorities of the Region at the present. These connections are described as means of journeying with each other and with God's people, emphasising the importance of synodality and accompaniment of all of us as pilgrims like St Ignatius was.

Journeying with Ignatian Spirituality and Well-being

The approach to Ignatian Spirituality emphasises deep integration across all ministries, specifically by sharing resource persons and formation modules among clusters. This should go beyond resource sharing as there is a need to foster more permanent and sustained connections across ministries through Ignatian Spirituality. Another focus is making spiritual resources more accessible, such as offering subsidies or affordable programmes at spirituality centres for students, retirees, and parishioners. Furthermore, there is a distinct effort to link spirituality with mental health and the holistic development of mission partners, ensuring that collaborators and aging Jesuits alike receive appropriate accompaniment and well-being support.

Journeying with and Forming Our Partners

The formation of mission partners is viewed as a collective responsibility involving every Jesuit, not just a dedicated formation team. The broad approach includes creating structured 'progression modules' for Ignatian prayer and sharing these specialised training resources across all the Clusters. There should also be an emphasis on coordinating with visiting Jesuits to provide talks and recollections, ensuring that lay collaborators, religious, and clergy are all included in the ongoing formation process.

Care for Our Common Home and the Marginalised

Environmental stewardship and service to the marginalised are addressed through both institutional policies and individual lifestyle changes. Inter-cluster initiatives include establishing 'green policies' for centres like PERCH, conducting eco-spirituality workshops in parishes. To support the marginalised, the clusters should focus on

providing financial subsidies for retreats and framing social outreach within the context of Ignatian spirituality to deepen the impact of parish social mission teams.

III: ESSENTIAL BASES

In addition to these connections, there are two essential realities that undergird our apostolic mission as Jesuits – realities that we feel are critically important to acknowledge and attend to. The first is the reminder for all Jesuits to fully live their vocation as witnesses and examples for those to whom we minister and for those with whom we labour. The second is the recognition of the importance of safeguarding and the protection of those who are most vulnerable. These are the essential bases for us to operate because they represent more fundamental realities that infuse and animate our ministries in the Clusters.

Vocation Promotion

The broad approach to vocation promotion centres on intentional presence and authentic storytelling within existing ministries. Strategies include deepening community spirit to project a positive image of Jesuit life, sharing personal vocation stories, and utilising spiritual direction and retreats as tools for discernment. There should be a strong emphasis on collaborative animation among Jesuits and possibly with other religious or diocesan teams. Youth programmes at our spirituality centres would be good too.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding focuses on promoting a consistent culture of protection through both physical environmental standards and continuous formation. Practical measures and audits to ensure these measures are implemented will ensure professional standards and protection are kept at a good standard. The strategy also involves building expertise by inviting experienced Jesuits to share local safeguarding resources and talks, while simultaneously looking outward to see how these protective practices can better support local schools and parishes.