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‘When God closes the doors He opens many windows’

– how the pandemic changed our understanding of global citizenship

(Jesuit High School in Gdynia, Poland)

Before the pandemic the Jesuit High School in Gdynia had several international projects where our students visited and welcomed students and teachers from Jesuit schools in Europe, USA and Australia. Due to the pandemic all the projects that demanded travelling were suspended, so we started to seek for new opportunities. Our students invented a project – “**Jesuit students together in spirit**”, where they had 4 online meetings with schools from USA, England, Italy and Malta and they could talk about how they were dealing with the pandemic. Then the ideas evolved, and we started other meetings, like **historical meetings** with Argentina, and for younger learners, **cultural meetings** with Spain and Russia, where students presented their countries and talked about their customs. We took part in the **Jesuit Global Activism Leadership Summit** organised by Robert Chura from SLUH in USA. With two other Jesuit schools in Poland (from Nowy Sącz and Kraków) we organised online **Oxford debates** and an online **Chess Tournament**. We made many new friends who shared their ideas and experience with us.

We participated in a two-week project, **Common lessons** with a Jesuit school in Chile. For the Polish students it provided an opportunity to participate in English and Philosophy lessons with the school in Chile and for students from Chile they had the possibility to participate in Geography, Chemistry, Philosophy and even Spanish lessons in Poland 😊

Another creative way we learned how to connect with others was by participating in an exercise called **Mystery Call**. The basic idea is that one group of students is connected with another group but they have no idea who they have connected with. The aim of the meeting is to guess the location of the other group by only asking ‘yes’ and ‘no’ questions. This is a very good team-building activity for a group, as students have to work together to guess. It is also engaging as there is a mystery to solve and an element of competition as to who will guess first. After guessing the identity of the group(s) the students can talk freely about the places they live.

We also had some **friendship meetings with a school from Zambia**, where students made presentations about their countries and customs and also played some guessing games to get to know their culture better.

Meetings online doesn't mean that students just spend time in front of computers. This year we have started a new project called "**Social Responsibility**" which is designed to make students aware of social problems in their surroundings and also to help them make a practical response in the real world. Students from Gdynia met with students from the Philippines to share social problems in both our countries. Students exchanged ideas of what they can do and how they can have an impact on their environment. They shared their ideas, put them into action, and then reflected on what they did after their experience.

This project is still in progress. We are waiting for the final meeting to take place where students can work on last improvements and where we can make an evaluation and reflection of the whole programme.

The Ignatian Year motivated us to do something more Ignatian! One of the initiatives was the international meetings for students: "Decision Making" (by Fr Damian Czerniak SJ) and ... for parents! – "Ignatian Spirituality for Parents" (by Fr Rafał Huzarski SJ).

The aim of the **Decision Making** project is to introduce students to the spiritual and practical aspects of the decision making process. We asked Jesuits from Poland, USA and Canada to provide lectures to students from Chile, USA, Malta, Italy and Poland. During each meeting students practiced particular aspects of the decision making process. Firstly, a Jesuit gave a theoretical input which students, in online international groups, then discussed and applied to case studies. We plan a new edition of this project in April with schools from Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Russia and the Philippines.

In this anniversary year we have also decided to invite parents to participate in international meetings with parents from other countries, where they can not only gain a basic knowledge of Ignatian spirituality, but also understand the context of the global aspects of our schools. This is what our students learn during international projects and we wanted parents to share in this experience as well. The First edition was called: **Ignatian Spirituality for Parents**. The project consisted of 4 online meetings, where we created an opportunity for parents to meet and get to know each other, then to listen to an input (in lecture format), and finally to work in small groups where parents could talk and share.

Parents really enjoyed participating in these meetings and they have asked us for a follow-up programme. Hopefully, in March of this year we will have a second edition: "**Guided meditations for parents**". This will be held over 4 Wednesday evenings where parents will have the opportunity to meet with one another, to get some direction on how to meditate and then time to practice and share in small groups.