



 **Deusto 2018**

TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD TOGETHER

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Father General Arturo Sosa SJ. Address, July 10, 2018, Santuario de Loyola.

1. The University: Wellspring of Reconciled life

Through our commitment to higher education, the Society of Jesus seeks to help the words of Jesus, I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10) take flesh in our place and time. Where life is, reconciliation can happen, for life itself gives birth to reconciliation. In turn, reconciliation makes life abundant: it is how we come back to life and make life grow towards fullness. An abundant life is one in which love gives life to others, so that all may have life. The Society of Jesus is deepening our commitments to higher education because we want to contribute effectively to making it possible for each and every human being to live their life, fully and with dignity – now as well as in the future.

“Having life abundantly” means becoming part of and entering deeply into the span of peoples and cultures that make up humanity. It involves delving into those deep, complex and large-scale social changes that are taking place in our world. Those changes are happening at such different speeds that looking at a future that is increasingly difficult to imagine fills us with uncertainty. The kind of universities that we wish to see — institutions which are a wellspring of life and deeply committed to reconciliation — are going to experience daily the complex social and cultural tensions of the societies where they live and work. Universities share in the uncertainties of the time in which they operate. They experience in their very being that life is fragile: they feel and recognize their own fragility as universities.

I am truly grateful for this opportunity to come together in a place that means so much for those of us who want to make the deep human and spiritual experiences of Ignatius of Loyola and the first companions, founders of the Society of Jesus, who inspired the path along which we walk, real in our world. Special thanks are due to those who have planned this meeting with so much care and thought: Fr. Michael Garanzini and his Steering Committee, and the Task Forces who have reflected and are having us reflect now on the crucial issues of our work in higher Jesuit education.

Thanks too to the University of Deusto for hosting us all at this meeting, and to the Shrine of Loyola for making us this wonderful day possible.

2. Why we are here

As Jesuit universities, we have been building up towards this encounter for a long time. The University of Deusto and the Shrine of Loyola are aligned with the world-wide university mission of the Society of Jesus—as were the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City in 2010 and the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne in 2015. Physical locations like these allow us to create the spiritual arenas where we educators can pay attention to the mission of higher education to make life fully human.

We are here at Deusto and Loyola because they are places of spiritual as well as educational importance. We feel that we can grow here in awareness of the global dimension of Jesuit higher education, inspired as it is by the Ignatian charism of striving to make our whole world better, through reconciliation and justice. Together, we can become more global, one world-wide apostolic Ignatian body united in the rich intellectual heritage of Christian humanism.¹ We have gathered to contemplate the events of our time in the same way as we find the Gospel and the Spiritual Exercises.² Looking at the world and what happens in it, as the Trinity lovingly does, means allowing ourselves to be moved by the cry of the millions of migrants seeking a better way of life; by victims of violence; by the poor who seek justice; by people who are despised because of the color of their skin or the faith they profess; and by those who are denied their rights to participate democratically in public life because people who are indifferent to the common good and the protection of the environment have monopolized power and are serving themselves instead.

For us as academics, looking upon the world that way is a real challenge, as we try to understand reality more fully, discover the roots of injustice, and help come up with different solutions to help transform our societies and our economies. That viewpoint—contemplating on the world as God does, with a loving gaze—also challenges for the way we teach, for it will bring us to strive to pass on the life that flows from that perspective on reality. That way of seeing, placing the world in front of our eyes, should bring us to take up a preferential option for the poor. That will make the

¹ See http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Christian_Humanism

² Fr. Sosa is making a reference to a key passage in the *Spiritual Exercises*, a Contemplation on the Incarnation, in which Ignatius invites the person doing the Exercises to imagine the Three Persons of the Trinity "looking on all the surface and circuit of the earth, and all the people in such blindness, and how they are dying and going down to Hell and saying, 'Let Us work the redemption of the Human race.'"

university a venture aimed at transforming society³, an institution that generates life in abundance.

This challenge to our universities to look at the world differently takes on wider dimensions when we think of them in terms of global transformation. Today the commitment of universities to transforming the world is not only local and regional, but also global. Transformation involves complex and interdependent processes. So we are here to find together a way forward beyond what we can do in our local contexts, so that together we can make the deepest regional and global impact. A university that sees itself as a venture aimed at transforming society will gravitate towards the margins of society, i.e. to the people who are left out by the structures and interests that dominate in our world. Such a university will throw open its doors and windows to the people at the margins, who will in turn bring with them a new breath of life that will be source of life in abundance for what we are doing to try and transform the world/

3. A just and peaceful life

The 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus invites us to focus on the work of the universities as contributors to the mission of justice and reconciliation:

Our educational apostolates at all levels and our centers for communication and social research should help form men and women committed to reconciliation, who can confront obstacles to reconciliation and come up with solutions. The intellectual apostolate should be strengthened so that it can help in the transformation of our cultures and societies.⁴

Reconciliation is a message of hope based on a deep conviction about how the Holy Trinity acts throughout human history. The Father reconciles all things through the Incarnation, life, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He has sent us the gift of his Spirit to make us fellow-laborers in the task of reconciliation which is the mission entrusted to the community of the followers of Jesus, i.e. the Church. The Society of Jesus was born and finds its own identity as a partner in the work of reconciliation that comes by way of establishing social justice.

In our daily lives, we who share in the world-wide Jesuit mission can see that our world is nowhere near providing the conditions for peace and truly human life so deeply desired by individuals and whole peoples. We are living in the midst of large-scale

³ Translator's note: this is an attempted rendering of "proyecto de transformación social." The term "proyecto social" derives from Latin American social studies, is widely used in Latin American university circles and has a semantic field intimately connected with that continent. "Social project" is not an adequate rendering of the rich nuances of the Spanish term.

⁴ GC36, Decree 1, n.34.

historical shifts; we are witnessing a degree of inequality that is increasing poverty to undesirable levels. Various forms of authoritarianism and populism offer false promises of freedom. We note with sadness that there is not sufficient co-responsibility for caring for the earth, our common home, and that makes halting the deterioration of the environment impossible. Reconciliation with the natural world is an unfinished business - something we and our institutions need to be more responsible about.

We are anxious about the diminishment in social conscience, democratic political systems, and public decision-making mechanisms. In the middle of all that, we are also facing the enormous challenge of sharing in the new digital culture that is rapidly changing how human beings relate to each other and think. This development is not simply a revolution in technology. Rather, it is bringing about a new world which we must inhabit. The digital ecosystem is radically shifting what human culture is all about. It challenges the creativity of our Jesuit educational tradition, called upon as we are to bring to this new world the good news of humankind reconciled in Jesus through his loving and self-giving life.

Historically, Jesuit universities as institutions and ministries, have creatively risen to the challenge of difficult and complex situations by being loyal to their charism, their *raison d'être*. A university is a community of spiritual concern and dedicated to seeking truth. It knows that it engages in that search because it is convinced that truth is something humans can really access. A Jesuit university will always be open to recognizing intelligently that the knowledge it uses to try and express truth is always developing, and to persisting in the search for truth.

Catholic universities have an essential commitment to that search. As Pope Benedict XVI reminded us in Havana

God created humanity with an innate commitment to truth, which is why He gave us the ability to reason. To be sure, the Christian faith does not promote irrationality but rather the yearning for truth. Each human being has to seek the truth and choose to follow it when he or she finds it — despite the potential sacrifices that that involves.⁵

The Society of Jesus knows universities to be exceptionally effective platforms for putting into practice the mission to foster social justice and environmental sustainability through encounter with different cultures and religions – a mission that comes from the Gospel and is inspired by it. Universities encourage the production of knowledge. One element in integral human development is producing and acquiring knowledge we need to explain and communicate what a reconciled and peaceful life looks like.

The tension between secularism and religious and ideological fundamentalism is a characteristic of our time. As a result the catholic character of universities is taking on a

⁵ Eucharis, 28 March 2012.

new meaning and importance.⁶ Universities are diverse environments where people can dialogue about and come to understand historical, human, and intellectual changes deeply. They are special arenas for practicing freedom - freedom to seek and find ⁷ ways of transforming society through research and teaching. In universities, the Gospel message of freedom can help identify better ways to foster human flourishing in the midst of the uncertainties and difficulties which seem to be overwhelming most people — and so bring hope to their daily lives.

4. The ministry of Jesuit Higher Education: a search for wisdom

For Jesuit universities, it is not enough to develop intellectual depth and share it as an element in human education and development. Jesuit universities are also called to be a form of ministry — that is, a way of announcing the Good News of the Gospel more effectively and of becoming aware of God's presence in the world and the action of his Spirit in history so that we can we can join in what the Spirit is doing and help in spreading freedom.

By working at this intellectual ministry, we are joining in the creative work of Jesus the Word by whom all things were made.⁸ Jesuit universities are therefore called upon to create. Universities show special creativity through being several steps ahead of their time. Cherishing their history which nourishes, inspires and guides them enables them to see beyond the limits of the present day.

Jesuit universities are important places for the intellectual dimension of all the ministries of the Society of Jesus. As we know, intellectual depth doesn't produce itself automatically. Neither does the mere label "university" or "research institute" necessarily guarantee that deep thinking is going on there. The work of the mind requires effort and dedication, and includes periods of dryness that can be challenging for those who are engaged in it. Intellectual work needs to be aware of the situations of individuals and societies alike: this means that a university should look beyond its own walls and be present to the complex workings of history. Simply thinking deeply is not enough, either. The purpose of the work of the mind lies beyond the realm of thought: it is made manifest when learning makes effective contributions to making the world a better place to live.

Intellectual work is Jesuit when it is carried out, as it were, in the open air, i.e., not shut away in an office or the comfort of its own certainties and convictions; when it can

⁶ Translator's note: the word "católico" in this context conveys both "Catholic" (i.e. connected to the Catholic Church) and "catholic" (all-embracing, universal, inclusive).

⁷ A reference to St. Ignatius' famous phrase, "seeking and finding God's will in everything."

⁸ Jn 1,1-4.

dialogue with other disciplines, allowing its own position to be enriched by other perspectives and a range of worldviews, and by science and culture; when it is not shut up in its own version of the truth; when it is lived as a mission, i.e. as having been sent to help build a freer world. This ministry of intellectual work does not seek plaudits or esteem from individuals or institutions. It seeks not its own glory – but the greater glory of God.

The ministry of intellectual work involves going out in search of wisdom. Fr. Adolfo Nicolás defines wisdom as

a higher, all-embracing, profound kind of knowing, one that brings about transformation. So it is not merely scientific knowledge, i.e., knowledge *about* something, but rather *a specific kind of knowing*, a way that leads the individual to the big questions; to empathy; to dealing with other human beings compassionately and treating nature respectfully as God's gift; and even more, to the Ignatian principle of seeking and finding God in all things.⁹

Wisdom takes flesh in the persons of the wise, who make wisdom present among us. Acquiring wisdom doesn't mean gathering together a sum of pieces of knowledge to be stored away in the mind, books, virtual memories, libraries or mega-servers. We recognize wisdom in those individuals who think and feel with such maturity that when we encounter them, we can see in more than ordinary ways what is around and within us. Wise people love: they go out in search of the wisdom that is waiting for us to discover it, in creation and human history.

The ministry of higher education impels us towards wisdom, which involves discernment by which we come to recognize where God is “passing by,”¹⁰ across the world as well as locally. When we discern, we choose what is for the greater glory of God, i.e. the human person fully alive. And that brings up the inescapable question of whether a university makes room for discernment in its normal decision-making process.

5. University education for world citizenship

By “citizenship” I mean recognizing that we are part of a complex set of relationships with other people, and that together we are community. Citizens know that each individual has an essential and active part to play in the “city” (of which we are

⁹ Fr Adolfo Nicolás SJ, *Lectio Inauguralis*, 9 September 2011. University of Deusto

¹⁰ A reference to Ex 33:22 and 1Kg 11: 19.

'citizens'), in the "polis"¹¹ (which gives us the word "political"). Being a citizen involves identifying with something all-embracing, something greater than our own individual interests, which are always partial and limited. Being aware that we are citizens opens us up to a wide horizon that embraces the local community, wider society, and the environment. It means looking at things from the perspective of the common good and taking personal responsibility for the *res publica*—the things that concern and benefit a community as a whole.

Citizenship involves recognizing that other people have equal rights and equal human dignity too. When we do that, we become a full person. Others can no longer be considered as deplorable inferiors, un-deserving nuisances to be got rid of or excluded, competitors, or as potentially threatening enemies who should be wiped out. Rather, when we recognize that we are all members of a community, then we will look on others as fellow-travelers. For everyone to live life in all its fullness, we need a rich span of other people to build up our common life.

Globalization is a characteristic of this era. It has negative and positive aspects. Some scholars distinguish between globalization and "mundialization."¹² Globalization refers to the pressures that to homogenize people's behavior and culture across the world. Fruit of deep change, it reduces cultural diversity and replaces it with a mono-cultural world. In this pattern, forms of economic organization and socio-political interaction that ultimately favor transnational capital dominate, and strive vigorously to impose themselves throughout the world.

In contrast "mundialization" recognizes the creative value of cultural diversity. That creativity is the most valuable element in the exponentially increasing encounter between cultures across the planet. I understand "mundialization"—also referred to as universalization—as increased interaction among different cultural groups who nonetheless share a common vision for all humanity.

Whatever the terms and concepts we employ, we clearly need to discern the patterns and possible outcomes of the various currents of worldwide change, in order to support the ones that lead to an abundant life for all. Whether we think of these changes as globalization or mundialization, the reality is that the global flow of migrants has increased. If this increased movement of peoples also ends up homogenizing different ways of life, it will gradually impoverish the encounter between different peoples, and put multiculturalism at risk. A shift of that sort would be analogous to the

¹¹ Polis = "city" in Greek.

¹² Translator's note: this neologism is a borrowing from "mundialización," which is sometimes rendered as "being a global/world citizen." See Ron Israel, *Global Citizenship: A Path to Building Identity and Community in a Globalized World*: "a world citizen identifies with being part of an emerging world community and ... contribute to building this community's values and practice." <http://www.theglobalcitizensinitiative.org/member-projects/about/>

impact of environmental change on biodiversity. In contrast, “mundialization” would make inter-cultural encounter more common. In the process, it would also provide an arena for spiritual experience (as an element of culture) that could help overcome fundamentalism in its various manifestations. In 2008, the General Congregation of the Society of Jesus expressed it this way:

We live in a world of many religions and cultures. The erosion of traditional religious beliefs and the tendency to homogenize culture has resulted in greater religious fundamentalism. Faith in God is increasingly being used by some to divide people and communities, to create polarities and tensions which tear at the very fabric of our common life. All these changes call us to the frontiers of culture and religion.¹³

Educating people to be world citizens involves laying great stress on the fact that fully human life needs a variety of cultures. The experience of cultural diversity is an opportunity for enriching human life. We want to educate people who are intelligent about and conscious of their own culture (inculturation) and who therefore know and feel that they are members of the whole human community; people who can joyfully accept the cultures of other human beings (multiculturalism) and relate to them; and people whose lives are enriched by the span of cultures that includes their own (inter-culturalism). Viewed from this angle, universality (which is another way of saying world citizenship or mundialization) can be a force for social justice, fraternity, and peace.

Seeing ourselves as world citizens should be one of the outcomes of studying or working in a Jesuit university. It is an essential element in the kind of humanity that Jesuit education seeks to support and foster. We must also make it possible for our students to hear the call to serve society as a personal commitment. Direct involvement in the political sphere means putting oneself at the service of reconciliation and justice – something both necessary and complex. Making that possible for at least some is part of our work in education. Educating political leaders is one of the most important things we can do to improve societies across the globe.

6. Who we are is what we do to help

In the changing realities of our current university environment, merely feeling or proclaiming that we have inherited the rich patrimony of Jesuit educational does not mean that that fact is actually true. Living in the tension between loyalty and creativity will make demands on the magis of our religious inspiration. Loyalty means more than just holding on to the names of our institutions or symbols from the long tradition that we wish to continue to belong to. Real loyalty shows itself when we find new ways of

¹³ GC 35. Decree 3, n. 22.

addressing the challenges of our times. Being loyal to our historical tradition means responding to the signs of the times creatively, by drawing on the identity that binds us to that tradition.

What binds us to our tradition is what has been called Jesuit educational humanism. Our education is humanist because it supports the growth of each person and cares for him or her as a unique individual. That then helps them to go beyond themselves, can take up responsibility for all humankind, and open themselves up to the transcendent.

Drawing on our identity allows us to help people commit to building a more humane world, through fostering justice and reconciliation among individuals, peoples, and the environment. That task needs spiritual and intellectual depth to understand people in their particular contexts and rejoice that we are part of and can interact with the world's span of cultures. Our humanist tradition is inculturated, because it has roots in every place. It is also a form of dialogue, because it is about connecting with other cultures and traditions; and it is inter-cultural, because the encounter between cultures enriches it. Openly exchanging ideas between cultures and religious traditions, Jesuit educational humanism weaves together the strands of personal and local relationships with the complex realities of the world.

That is why the very core of our university work is not simply the development of the professional skills of each individual but rather their overall education. We hope that graduates of Jesuit universities are recognized not only for their ability to work at high standards in a competitive market, but also for their human qualities. At a time when life-opportunities for entire peoples are being thwarted, we do our best to open up new avenues for reconciliation. We seek both to be and to form what Jon Sobrino, S.J.¹⁴ calls people who are poor with Spirit, who freely give of their very selves and who enrich everyone's existence by making life more human. Our intention is to educate persons of integrity who will take up responsibility for themselves, for others, and for the earth that we all inhabit.

The entire university community is called upon to embody the identity that guarantees creative loyalty to the Jesuit educational tradition. Universities are educational communities made up of researchers, professors, staff, administrative leaders, students, and alumni. As a Jesuit university meets new situations, each person and each sector has different and complementary responsibilities for living out that identity and sharing it in such a way as to keep the tension between credibility and loyalty to tradition vibrant.

The identity of a Jesuit university does not correlate directly with how many Jesuits work there. Rather it is about sharing the spirit that moves in a university, its common culture, and unity in a shared mission. We hope that many Jesuits will indeed engage

¹⁴ <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-voices/21st-century-ignatian-voices/jon-sobrino-sj>

in all the complex dimensions of university work, in collegueship with the many people who have been called upon to further this fruitful educational tradition in a spirit of creative loyalty. Above all, we Jesuits hope to have many lay colleagues with whom we can together advance the work of our universities.

The university work we have been sent to engage in is an aspect of the reconciliation of all things in Christ. Jesuit universities can be a wellspring of life because they have received that gift from Jesus who sacrificed his own life. Being aware of the missionary nature of university work, maintaining it, and developing produces intellectual and pedagogical fecundity. The service that our universities provides to society is a dimension of what Jesus tells his disciples: ‘Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15).

The magis ¹⁵ that is essential to who we are should inspire us to make the university more of a generator of action to fulfil its mission better. Let me mention two current challenges facing the magis as it relates to our universities. The first one is overcoming geographic and social limitations. We have been sent to places that are not easy to reach and where others have not gone. Jesuit university education should to be open to all. We have been particularly called to reach out to the marginalized and impoverished, to refugees and people who have been displaced due to the influence of unjust political relations. A new era of knowledge-sharing is now giving us the educational tools to reach remote or socially marginalized locations. A few months ago, I was able to join in the smiles of a group of young people in the north of Sri Lanka who have graduated from college, thanks to the joint efforts of the Jesuit community in the area and Jesuit Worldwide Learning. I am sure that many of you have had similar experiences, in refugee camps, rural areas or deprived neighborhoods in the major cities around the world. Places in our world where there is social limitation are signs of the times that challenge us to put a spirituality molded by the magis to work. In this domain, what more can our universities do? What can they do better?

The second challenge has been given us by the 36th General Congregation, which has invited us to develop a culture of protecting the vulnerable. This may be the most complex mandate given by GC36 to the whole of the Society of Jesus. To bring about a cultural change to the point that each and every human being can enjoy a secure, healthy environment is going to be a long-term endeavor. Success will require us to reflect deeply and discern carefully about how to make the best use of our particular gifts and abilities. Making that cultural change happen will involve confronting the unjust structures of today’s societies—with all the risks that that involves.

A culture that emphasizes safeguarding would be a shining example of paying attention to human rights. Universities bring about cultural change. The call to build a culture that protects the vulnerable is an opportunity for us to engage in practical, long-

¹⁵ For various definitions, see <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/what-is-ignatian-spirituality/magis-video>

term work in this important aspect of fostering reconciliation and justice, and providing the conditions for integral human flourishing. I have tasked the Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology with coordinating the work of the entire Society of Jesus in this area.

7. Joining together to be more—and better

GC 36 also provides some guidelines for enhancing the impact of universities as wellsprings of life and reconciliation:

Discernment, collaboration and working in networks offer three important perspectives on our contemporary way of proceeding. As the Society of Jesus is an ‘international and multicultural body’ in a complex, ‘fragmented and divided world’, attention to these perspectives helps to streamline governance and make it more flexible and apostolically effective.¹⁶

Jesuit universities make visible the fact that the whole Society of Jesus is international and multicultural. They exist and work in the midst of a fragmented and divided world. When our universities practice discernment, they gain access to the source of the life that they strive to pass on to others. They grow in freedom to follow the way of life that flows from that same wellspring. Discernment keeps us in touch with our dreams of that better world which research, knowledge, teaching and social engagement all aim at creating. Discernment guides and gives meaning to our plans for making the best use of a university’s resources.

Universities can only function when people work together: that is why we stress that universities are communities. We all know that collaboration is an unfinished task, both within our universities and between our different universities and with the host of potential groups and institutions that await our becoming partners with them.

The General Congregations of the Society of Jesus that have come after the Second Vatican Council¹⁷ have defined collaboration as part of Jesuit identity. We are aware that as “this least and collaborative Society”¹⁸ we work together with something much greater than ourselves and which does not depend on us. As an apostolic body, the Society of Jesus tries to work together to the best of our abilities in the mission of justice and reconciliation. We share that mission with the members of the Church and

¹⁶ GC 36, Decree 2, n. 3.

¹⁷ Translator’s note: following the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the Society of Jesus has held General Congregations in 1965-66 (GC 31), 1974-5 (GC 32), 1983 (GC 33), 1995 (GC 34), 2008 (GC 35), 2016 (GC 36).

¹⁸ An adaptation of a famous phrase of St Ignatius.

with all people of good will whose hearts are set on making life truly human and caring for our common home, the earth. Universities are fellow-workers in this most complex and comprehensive mission entrusted to the Society of Jesus, which sees itself as at the service of reconciled life.

Collaboration is also a key feature of university culture, where teamwork is necessary as well as important. Forming leaders who can foster and make the best use of team work will mean better and more efficient use of available resources. However, we have a long way to go when it comes to incorporating this collaborative way of proceeding deeply in each of our universities. We also need our universities to collaborate with each other more, and more deeply, and also with other institutions, projects and groups that share goals with us.

Making use of what we already have at hand, we can work together more. Collaboration will be more effective when we create networks between our schools. Overcoming the tendency to shepherd and strengthen resources for the use of each individual university alone will require a culture of generosity which is at the heart of doing more and greater things—and of a life lived in abundance. We educate our students according to these principles.

In this path that involves discernment, apostolic planning, collaboration, and trans-institutional networks, this world meeting of Jesuit universities at Loyola and Bilbao is seeking to make history. In setting up the International Association of Jesuit Universities (IAJU), we are beginning a new era and a new style of practical work in our universities. The fact that we are here together shows our desire to work together to bear more fruit, something that will take shape in commitments that make new connections within our universities and between them.

The path we've been on for centuries includes achievements in the face of many challenges. That journey promises to continue for a long time to come. The next steps on the road ahead are unknown to us just as previous steps were to previous generation. We are doing well by coming together at this time to make the best use of who we are and what we have, so that we may become the wellspring of a reconciled life lived in all its richness.

(Unofficial translation and notes, Dorian Llywelyn SJ, September 1, 2018.)