



CURIA GENERALIZIA DELLA COMPAGNIA DI GESÙ

OFFICIAL NEW CAMPUS INAUGURATION SPEECH

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Universidad Loyola, Seville, Spain

20th of November 2019

Mr. Archbishop of Seville

Mr. President of the Junta de Andalucía

Mr. Mayor of Dos Hermanas

Dear Father Provincial

Dear representatives of the Board of Trustees of the University

Rectors, academic, civil and military authorities

Loyola University Community

Ladies and gentlemen, friends all:

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all of you for accompanying us, for being so close to us in this important moment, the inauguration of the new campus of Universidad Loyola, and also in a moment when we are facing great challenges: the social, political and Church contexts in which we want to serve. Thank you for accompanying us on our journey.

2. MISSION AND APOSTOLIC PREFERENCES AS A RESPONSE TO TODAY'S WORLD

May I say a few words to give meaning to the inauguration of this new campus.

We live in a complex world that faces new uncertainties every day. " We are in the midst of incredible transformations that affect all dimensions of our personal life and the basic ways of proceeding of organizations. We are part of the birth of a new era, a radical transformation of our social, cultural, and economic terrain. All these changes are bringing uncertainty and volatility to our, considered solid, mindset, yet at the same time

are opening new scenarios and opportunities to those that are able to go through internal transformation both in persons and institutions."¹

In this complex world, each one of us, our works and our institutions are becoming an ever-smaller part of the world. The growth in demographics, in the economy, in relations, in the communications, the flow of goods, etc. make us smaller, because each one of us is a small piece of our environment. As the world globalizes and our individual possibilities grow, we become smaller in relative terms, we become more insignificant.

In the midst of this increasingly complex and uncertain world, the Mission of the Society of Jesus and of each of its works continue being relevant, because the Mission of the Church, spreading the message of reconciliation of Jesus of Nazareth is, today, as necessary as it has always been as it constitutes a response to the problems of the world.

In order to carry out this Mission, the Society has chosen four options in which this service is materialized:

The first is to show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment, perhaps the most valuable contributions that the Society has made throughout its history, and which represent the essence of the Society, its identity.

The second option is to walk with the poor, the outcast of the world, those whose dignity has been violated. It is a path that we want to walk by promoting social justice and the change of the economic, political and social structures that cause injustice, as a necessary dimension of the reconciliation of human beings, peoples and their cultures among themselves, with nature and God. This involves a commitment to care for migrants, displaced persons, refugees, victims of wars and human trafficking; the defence of culture and the dignified existence of native peoples. Accompanying the poor implies improving our studies, analysis and reflection in order to understand in depth the economic, political and social processes that generate so much injustice, and to contribute to the generation of alternative models.

The third is to accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future. It is the young people, with their perspective, who can help us to better understand the change of era we are living in and its hopeful newness. Today, young people are the main agents of the anthropological transformation generated by the digital culture of our time and that opens humanity to a new era in history. This change of era we are living leads to a new human being and a new way of structuring personal and social dimensions in our lives. Young people are the holders of this new way of life that can even lead to, in the experience of the encounter with the Lord Jesus, a light to illuminate the way towards justice, reconciliation and peace.

Creating and maintaining open spaces for young people in society and the Church is a contribution that the apostolic works of the Society of Jesus can make. They are intended to be spaces open to youthful creativity in which the encounter with the God of life, revealed by Jesus, and the deepening of the Christian faith are fostered. Spaces in which

¹ Jesuit Networking. (2018). *Prophetic Networks for a Universal Mission*. Washington DC.

the discernment of the way by which each person can reach their happiness by contributing to the well-being of all humanity is promoted.

And, finally, the fourth option is to collaborate in the care of the common home which is the Earth. We propose, from what we are and with the means at our disposal, to collaborate with others in the construction of alternative life models based on respect for the creation of a sustainable development capable of producing goods which, if fairly distributed, ensures a dignified life for all human beings on our planet. The conservation of the planet's living conditions over time is a human responsibility charged with an ethical and spiritual sense. Our collaboration includes participating in efforts to investigate and analyse in depth, supporting a reflection and discernment that will lead to making the right decisions to heal the wounds already infringed on the ecological balance. We take special care in crucial areas to maintain the balance of nature that makes life possible, such as the Amazon, the Congo basins, India and Indonesia, as well as large marine areas. Doing so is a way of genuinely worshipping God's creative work. Bold decisions are needed to avoid further damage and to initiate the change of life model necessary to harness the goods of creation for the benefit of all. In this process we want to be actively present.

These are the four options that will guide the action of the Society and its works in the coming years where universities are a privileged place for action. "The Society of Jesus has found in the University a formidable space to put into practice the mission received from and inspired by the Gospel, to determinedly promote social justice and environmental sustainability through dialogue with cultures and religions. The University promotes processes of knowledge creation and accompanies processes of human education in which, together with knowledge, transmits the meaning of a reconciled and peaceful life."²

Four options that I ask the Universidad Loyola Community to interiorize to guide their action in teaching, in research, in their public presence, in their way of doing things.

3. NETWORKS AS AN INSTRUMENT

But, faced with the magnitude of the world's problems and the overwhelming communicative ecosystem that information technologies and social networks are creating, how can we spread the Gospel message? How can we fulfil our Mission in a world that shrinks us and generates so many messages and so much noise?

How can the voice of universities be heard in a university world made up of almost 20,000 university centres all over the world? Even the largest and most prestigious universities are small voices, which become smaller every day.

The answer to these questions lies in the choice of our works, and for that sake we have discernment, and in following what the 35th General Congregation of the Society established in 2008: working within networks. Networking because we have a shared Mission. Being both local and cosmopolitan. Establishing bonds and strong relationships. Feeling part of Humanity because we are critically aware of our own culture, while at the

² Sosa SJ, A. (2018). *The University: Wellspring of Reconciled Life*. Bilbao: IAJU

same time we are able to joyfully recognize that of other human beings, with whom we establish relationships and enrich ourselves in diversity.³

The Society of Jesus was one of the first institutions to operate as a global unit. In fact, from the beginning, Saint Ignatius included in his way of proceeding many of the characteristics that remind us of networks: orientation towards a universal Mission; with solid nodes but connected by strong and flexible ties; autonomy combined with hierarchy... (Georgetown 2018). In the new era in which we live, before a history that shrinks us, the Society wants to pay special attention to the creation of ever more dense networks as a way of being more effective in the fulfilment of its mission.

One of the last networks created was the IAJU. The International Association of Jesuit Universities is a global network of networks that was established in 2018 in Loyola, Basque Country, and that brings together more than 200 universities and centres of Higher Education that the Society of Jesus has under its responsibility in the world.

A network that was created so that the commitment assumed by the universities of the Society of Jesus to be agents of social transformation takes on new dimensions and is a commitment to global transformation. Because we do not only want to be transformers of the closest realities, but to go further and transform the world. And for this, it is necessary to work within networks.

I encourage everyone, but especially Universidad Loyola, to deepen their work within networks. Not only in the university networks, but also in others in which it can contribute its knowledge and learn from them, the networks of schools, of cooperation, of apostolate. This is my message: work within networks, work with others. Work together.

4. LOYOLA ANDALUCÍA AS A SHARED MISSION AND NODE OF THE NETWORK

Today we are inaugurating this campus of Universidad Loyola Andalucía.

Andalucía... a beautiful, ancient and diverse region. A region on the border, in the broad sense. A Border between two different demographic contexts but yet complementary to each other, because you are the bridge region between the young, thriving, growing, but poor, Africa, and the solid, rich and now disoriented Europe. A region of deep religiosity that is living a growing secularization, but the same time has the challenge of dialoguing with other religions on the other side of the Strait. A region of a Mediterranean civilization, but open to the Atlantic and, to America and the Pacific, to the world in all its roundness, in this year that celebrates the first voyage around the world. Andalucía, a region with problems and, at the same time, with enormous potential.

It is in this region, where the presence of the Society is intense, through schools, university centres, apostolate, and a long history since the time of Saint Ignatius, that Universidad Loyola has been born.

³ Sosa SJ, A. (2018). *The University: Wellspring of Reconciled Life*. Bilbao: IAJU

A university created from the firm self-confidence that Father Kolvenbach recognized ETEA in his 1992⁴ visit. A university, which is fruit of the collaboration of people, linked to the Society of Jesus and committed to its works. A fast-growing university thanks to the support of the universities and sister centres of Deusto, Comillas, ESADE, IQS, INEA, etc. A university that has developed its international DNA thanks to Loyola Chicago and, through it, with the Society's network of Universities around the world. A university committed for more than 30 years to international cooperation through its foundation, while working intensely on social and economic transformation in the cities from which it operates. A university that will complete its identity when, God willing, it will integrate the knowledge cultivated by the Facultad de Teología de Granada.

That is the university whose campus, one more milestone in its brief history, we inaugurate today.

The university that I encourage to continue growing in voice, in university excellence and, above all, in fidelity to the Mission. And to do so, being aware of its smallness, aspiring to be, in a frontier region and in a frontier time, the node of the international network of universities of the Society of Jesus.

A network of universities which, like Loyola, wants to "Love and Serve" in all things always doing everything "Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam".

Thank you very much.

Arturo Sosa, S.J.

20.11.2019

⁴ Kolvenbach SJ, P. H. (1994). *Present and Future of INSA-ETEA*. Córdoba: UNIJES.