

**ADDRESS OF POPE LEO XIV
TO MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION
OF JESUIT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

*Consistory Hall
Thursday, 25 June 2026*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Peace be with you.

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am pleased to welcome all of you here this morning, Presidents and representatives from the Jesuit Colleges and Universities of North America, and I thank you for your presence. I trust that your visit to Rome and to the Vatican will serve to strengthen your bonds both with the Successor of Peter as well as with the leadership of the Society of Jesus, which has been involved in the field of education for centuries.

While we can look to the past with gratitude for all that has been accomplished in the history of each of your educational institutions, we are also well aware of the multitude of challenges facing humanity today. Indeed, our time has called an age of epochal change. Societies are becoming even more secularized, with many seeking to push any mention of God out of the public sphere and beyond popular culture. Political systems frequently do not respond to the cry of the poor, migrants and those whom the world considers to be outcasts. Often times young people are left without hope in a world that seems to lack the promise of a better future, and the natural environment continues to be degraded by those who would use the planet's resources for their own interests instead of for the common good. Our world is also increasingly aware of the growing impact of artificial intelligence, and the wider-ranging effects it can have on humanity.

In this regard, the Society of Jesus' four Universal Apostolic Preferences, which were confirmed by my predecessor in 2019, propose paths that might help to address these challenges at the level of higher education. I would like to reflect on these four Preferences with you. The first of these, showing the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment, naturally complements your scholarly

endeavors. Those who conduct research, those who pursue studies and those who seek the truth are ultimately seeking God, whether they realize it or not (cf. ***Pastoral Visit to Sapienza University in Rome***, 14 May 2026). It is therefore essential to provide ways for members of your academic communities to come to know the One who is Truth. Indeed, in our own time, as I recently observed in the recent visit to Spain, “many young people and adults are rediscovering the Christian faith, sometimes after having drifted away from God over a period of time” (***Prayer Vigil***, 9 June 2026). Given this palpable and growing hunger for God among the youth, I would therefore encourage you to continue to make available opportunities for participation in the Exercises on your campuses. In this way, members of your academic communities may be able to have a personal encounter with our Lord and freely seek to serve him in their daily lives. Likewise, the principles of the Exercises regarding discernment can be helpful tools for you to be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in your daily decision-making.

The second preference of the Society, to walk with the poor and the outcasts of the world, is particularly important in a time when record numbers of our brothers and sisters are living in poverty. Many are ultimately forced to leave their homes for various reasons, such as war, religious or political persecution, hunger and the effects of climate change. Your institutions are called not only to teach your students about the injustices faced by those on the margins of society, but also to be powerful channels in promoting systemic change through proposing new models rooted in solidarity and the common good (cf. ***Address to the Major Superiors of the Society of Jesus***, 24 October 2025). It is likewise important to offer opportunities for immigrants, refugees and those of a lower socioeconomic status to have the benefit of an advanced education. In this way, they will be able to integrate more fully into the societies in which they live as well as enrich the wider student bodies with their diverse experiences and perspectives.

Your colleges and universities are likewise natural places for accompanying young people in the creation of a hope-filled future, which is the third preference. Students normally begin their academic careers full of idealism and energy, often seeking to serve the needs of others. The studies that take place on your campuses, the friendships that naturally blossom there and the opportunity for all in your academic communities to encounter the thought and research of great scholars,

both past and present, can bring a sense of hope and the promise of what could change for the better. (cf. **Address to Professors and Students, Sapienza University** 14 May 2026). I invite you to continue to foster that sense of hope among those in your communities through opportunities for dialogue, service and prayer, remembering always that the resurrection of Christ is the ultimate source of hope (cf. *1 Pet* 1:3), and that with him all things are possible (cf. *Mt* 19:26).

The fourth preference speaks to another urgent duty, namely working together in the care of creation. This is a task that is particularly important given the realities we are experiencing daily of the effects of climate change, as well as the exploitation of resources by a few at the expense of the common good. In this regard, I encourage you to persevere with your efforts to educate those on your campuses regarding these current dangers, but also to “let your communities be examples of ecological sustainability, simplicity and gratitude for God’s gifts” (**Address to the Major Superiors of the Society of Jesus**, 24 October 2025). In this way, your institutions will be able to instruct by example, and not solely in theory.

Finally, our time is one that is becoming increasingly impacted by artificial intelligence, with which other “new technologies open up a horizon extending in directions that are imaginable but not yet fully predictable” (Encyclical Letter **Magnifica Humanitas**, 15 May 2026, 4). It is important to begin now to address the consequences, both positive and negative, that come from these advances. Colleges and universities have a special role to play in this regard, especially through giving fresh impetus to the principles of the Church’s Social Doctrine “in a way that will be relevant and effective in addressing the digital revolution” (**ibid.**, no. 47).

My dear friends, with these thoughts I express gratitude for all that you do in your important educational endeavors. With the help of the prayers of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, may you continue the Jesuit tradition of forming those entrusted to your care to be “men and women for others.” I gladly impart my Apostolic Blessing to each of you, which I willingly extend to your loved ones and to the communities of the institutions that you represent. Thank you.

