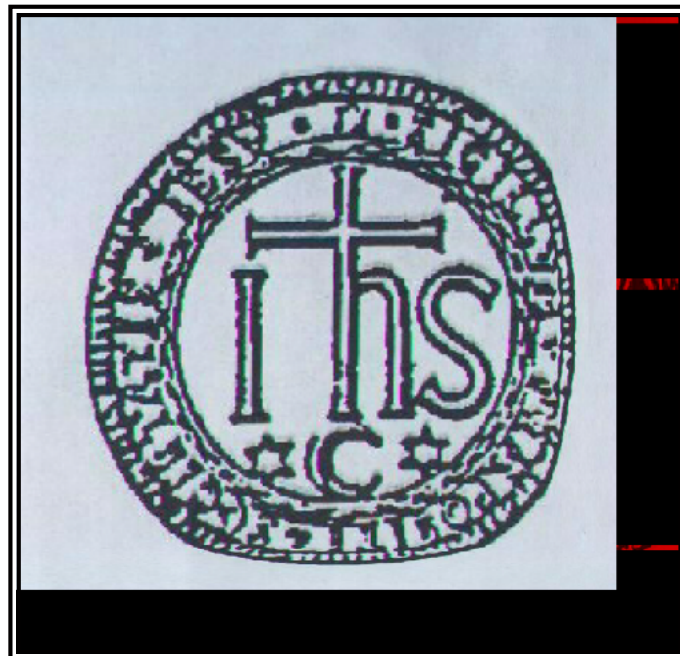


**COMING TO TERMS WITH THE MISSION:
THE *CATHOLIC* AND *JESUIT* UNIVERSITY IN AMERICA**

A STUDY IN JESUIT EDUCATION



JOHN J.

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PART I: THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC, JESUIT UNIVERSITY

Coming to Terms with the Mission

We all know that to have an intelligent conversation, indeed to have any kind of rational communication at all, we need symbols or words and some agreement on what they mean. This is especially important when defining or “coming to terms” with the mission of an institution.

For example, if asked what the terms *Catholic* and *Jesuit* mean in the context of a college or university, there would probably be as many definitions of each of these words as there were people asked. What is even more problematic is that these words often bring about emotional responses as well as intellectual ones. Responses can also arise from different perspectives: “What do I feel?” or “What is the correct answer?” or “What is my experience?”

Another way of “coming to terms,” besides the definitional one, is the question “So what?” or “What do these terms mean for me and what I do?”

There are many ways we in Jesuit education might formulate our “So what?” questions:

How does the mission affect the attitudes we bring to our work? Is the mission part of what explains what is best in our corporate culture? What are the key characteristics of Catholic and Jesuit education and how are they incorporated into our curricula? How does academic freedom mesh with the mission of Catholic education? What is the role of the reduced number of Jesuits in an institution which is “Jesuit” yet independent of the Society of Jesus? What is the role of the Catholic and the non-Catholic, the Christian and the non-Christian, in furthering Catholic and Jesuit education?

These questions raise issues of institutional identity as well as of personal integrity. How they are dealt with, personally and institutionally, will determine whether or not Catholic, Jesuit colleges and universities will continue to sustain and foster their distinctive character.

Speaking of terms, note that *Catholic* and *Jesuit* are adjectives which distinguish the noun *university*. Though the meaning of *university* may be shaded by its adjectives, a university does not cease to be what it is: a learning community -- a place for ideas (old and new), a place for the search, discovery, preservation, and communication of what is included in the classic categories of “The One,” “The True,” “The Good,” and “The Beautiful.” (We Americans might add “The Workable.”) So the question is what coloration the adjectives *Catholic* and *Jesuit* add to the learning community we know as a college or university.

Before moving on, however, another adjective must be included. What does the adjective *American* add to the meaning of the *Catholic* and *Jesuit* university?

Defining the Evolving

The Catholic, Jesuit university in the United States today is deeply embedded in American culture. This inculturation (a term often used in Catholic Church documents) is not to be decried. Rather, it is to be celebrated. In fact, *it is precisely because the Catholic, Jesuit university is part of American culture that it can speak to that culture.* It is in this way that Catholic higher education fulfills its particular mission of being a beacon of faith and religious and ethical values in an educational community which is predominantly secular.

The appraisal of American culture which may arise from an *American* Catholic, Jesuit university has a credibility and an influence on the larger society far greater than if the university were somehow seen to be vaguely un-university-like, or un-American.

The supposition, of course, is that *the mission of a Catholic, Jesuit university is to have a positive influence on the greater American society as well as to support and enhance Catholic culture.*

This was not always the case. Historically, Catholic colleges and universities were founded in the United States as a defensive strategy -- to preserve and transmit the Catholic faith among an immigrant faithful who were often discriminated against because of their faith. American histories often forget the burning of Catholic churches and convents in the nineteenth century or the fact that the Ku Klux Klan had, as one of its aims, the preservation of "a white, Christian, Protestant America." Neither do people remember today that prayers in the public schools of those days would refer to Catholics in general and the Pope in particular as the "anti-Christ." Nowadays such references are left to the intolerance of only the most noisy of tent and television preachers.

Over the years the mission of Catholic universities underwent a subtle change. As Catholic immigrants and their progeny became more educated (and less threatening to the establishments of the day) and more a part of American society, they and their schools began to contribute to the American scene rather than just defend themselves from its real and perceived evils.

At the end of World War II the GI Bill brought a huge influx of both Catholic and non-Catholic students into Catholic universities. There followed more and more lay faculty and then faculty who were not Catholic. Mandatory religious practices were gradually dropped. Academic quality became a major goal as well as "sound teaching" in the faith. Academic credentials, not religious belief, became determinative in hiring faculty. By the time the United States elected a Catholic president in 1960, Catholics felt accepted by American society and thus became much less defensive.

Almost at the same time Catholic universities were buffeted by the cultural upheaval of the sixties, the civil rights movement, the Cuban missile crisis, the Vietnamese war, Vatican Council II, political assassinations, the landing on the moon, and Watergate. And then there are the events of the last twenty-five years!

As a result of all these traumatic events, neither American culture nor the Catholic Church, neither Catholic universities nor the Jesuits are the same as they were in the nineteen-fifties or even the nineteen-seventies. This means that, today, while the tradition is very much alive, the term *Catholic, Jesuit university* simply does not mean the same as it once did.

If one should wish to define Catholic colleges and universities in terms of what such schools looked like in the nineteen-fifties, there would be but a handful of “real” Catholic colleges and universities in the United States today -- and none of them would be Jesuit.

On the other hand, if one defines Catholic colleges and universities in terms no different from those used today by strictly secular institutions, in what sense would the term *Catholic* be anything but a misleading label or, at best, only a reverential nod to the past?

It is incumbent upon Catholic institutions and their academic communities to respond to these definitional concerns, for unless they do, others *outside the experience* of today’s American Catholic university will define the terms, determine the issues, and set the agenda.

What the American University is Not

To a great extent the various ways we think and act come out of our culture. In fact, we do not see the world in the same way as a Russian or an Australian. Even in America our cultural images shift, the move from seeing ourselves as a “melting pot” to viewing ourselves as a “stew” with many different textures and flavors is but one example. It should not be a surprise to us that in the United States being a university means to be and to act according to certain expectations. To fail to meet these expectations means losing credibility as a university.

To the point, a college does not act as a grade school or high school. Neither does a college consider its students as children. Rather, students are adults, free and, it is hoped, responsible. Neither (in American society) does a university act as a political party or as a direct agent of social change, though it may influence political and social activities and movements.

Neither does a college or university act as a seminary. Although many of the same things may go on in a seminary as in a university, a seminary has entirely different purposes and goals -- the education and ministerial training of individuals according to a given creedal belief and tradition. One purpose of a seminary, for example, is to maintain doctrinal orthodoxy over time. A key purpose of a university, on the other hand, is to search for and test new knowledge. Even though a university may have “seminary classes,” an understanding of the distinction between seminary and university needs to be clear. They differ as to purpose, methods, evidentiary criteria, and what is considered appropriate academic discourse. For example, arguments based on authority or tradition tend to carry great weight in the context of a seminary but much less so in a university.

One of the causes of tension between church and academe over the centuries in many different cultures is the confusion which arises when (a) one sees the university (or its cultural equivalent) as a place to teach the truth to the young rather than as a place for adults to search for the truth or (b) when one sees the university as a place to teach ministers, priests, rabbis, or mullahs orthodox doctrine and practice rather than as a place for all (“cleric” and “lay” alike) to pursue and test all ideas, secular and religious, in the search for the new and for a greater insight into and appreciation of the old.

What the American University Is

If American culture has certain expectations as to what a university is not, it also has expectations that the university will reflect what is considered best in the culture.

Fr. Joseph Tetlow has outlined certain aspects of American culture which have a direct bearing on any definition of an “American university:”

The United States is a diverse, pluralistic society and proud of it. It is dedicated to the democratic process. It prides itself on its efficiency and on its business practices.

The most educated religious believers that the world has ever known -- laity as well as clergy -- exist in the United States. Despite its many faults, America fusses over morality, moral issues, and rights. It is a country genuinely concerned that it does the right thing and not just the expedient thing.

The United States is a place where significant space (compared to other nations) is given to religious issues in the intellectual life of the culture. While the government is officially neutral concerning religion, most of the population is not. America is also a place where religion has learned “best practices” from disciplines such as psychology and the social sciences.

The United States is a place where men and women of faith -- of whatever belief system -- live together and work together on common projects. It is a place where religious toleration has developed into religious respect.

In America authority is always questioned, never automatically accepted. It is a place where religious leaders are looked to for leadership, not for command. It is a place where individual conscience is held supreme, even at times to the detriment of the common good. The United States is a place where, culturally, truth is sought and tested and not imposed. It is a place where force of any kind against an individual is limited, controlled, monitored, and suspect.

And, as “American universities,” Catholic, Jesuit colleges and universities reflect these aspects of the culture. It is part of what it means to be a university in the United States today.

In summary, we can list five characteristics of the Catholic, Jesuit university which arise because it is *American*:

The Catholic, Jesuit university in the United States

- ☐ reflects the pluralism of American society -- open to all, not pervasively sectarian
- ☐ serves the general public as well as the Church
- ☐ values freedom of religion and religious practice on the part of faculty, staff, and students

- ☐ prides itself on the cultural, racial, ethnic, political, and religious diversity of its members and sees men and women as equal partners in the educational endeavor
- ☐ operates collegially rather than on an authoritarian model in its academic governance.

PART II: THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

The Church proposes; she imposes nothing. She respects individuals and cultures, and she honors the sanctity of conscience...

-- John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, 1990

EX CORDE ECCLESIAE

Nature and objectives. What does the Roman Church say that Catholic education is? The most recent authoritative statement on Catholic universities was made by Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Constitution, *Ex corde ecclesiae* ("From the Heart of the Church"), dated August 15, 1990, and issued after extensive consultation with Catholic universities around the world, in particular, with those in the United States.

As is the case with many an official document, *Ex corde* is much discussed and little read. This is unfortunate, for though it suffers from trying to encompass all situations everywhere, the document is a positive description of the nature and purpose of Catholic higher education in today's world.

The document describes the essential characteristics of a Catholic university:

Every Catholic university, *as a university*, is an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching, and various services offered to the local, national, and international communities. It possesses that institutional autonomy necessary to perform its functions effectively and guarantees its members academic freedom, so long as the rights of the individual person and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good. Since the objective of a Catholic university is to assure in an institutional manner a Christian presence in the university world confronting the great problems of society and culture, every Catholic university, *as Catholic*, must have the following characteristics:

1. A Christian inspiration not only of individuals but of the university community as such
2. A continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research
3. Fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church
4. An institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning to life.

In a word, being both a university and Catholic, it must be both a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge, and an institution in which Catholicism is vitally present and operative. (#12 -14. Italics are the editor's)

The task of the Catholic university, "as Catholic," is to promote the dialogue between faith and culture. The dialogue called for in *Ex corde* is based on a premise which is at the foundation of the centuries old Catholic intellectual tradition: the intrinsic value of human reason and knowledge (#15). While the revealed truths of faith are paramount, human reason is also a gift of God. Accordingly, there cannot be a contradiction between the "truth of faith" and the "truth of earth." If there does seem to be a conflict between the two, in principle it will be resolved with a

better understanding of the faith, a further development in science, or both. (See # 4-6 which assume this approach.)

While each academic discipline retains its own integrity and has its own methods, this dialogue demonstrates that methodical research within every branch of learning, when carried out in a truly scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, can never truly conflict with faith. For the things of the earth and the concerns of faith derive from the same God (#17).

Theology plays a central role in this dialogue between faith and reason:

It serves all other disciplines in their search for meaning, not only by helping them to investigate how their discoveries will affect individuals and society, but also by bringing a perspective and an orientation not contained within their own methodologies. In turn, interaction with these other disciplines and their discoveries enriches theology, offering it a better understanding of the world today, and making theological research more relevant to current needs (#19).

Because knowledge is always meant to serve the human person, research should always be carried out “with a concern for the ethical and moral implications both of its methods and of its discoveries (#18).”

Furthermore, in regard to teaching:

the moral implications that are present in each discipline are examined as an integral part of the teaching of that discipline so that the entire educative process be directed toward the whole development of the person (#20).

The university community. As a result of its Christian inspiration, the university community

is animated by a spirit of freedom and charity; it is characterized by mutual respect, sincere dialogue, and protection of the rights of individuals. It assists each of its members to achieve wholeness as human persons; in turn, everyone in the community helps in promoting unity, and each one, according to his or her role and capacity, contributes toward decisions which affect the community, and also toward maintaining and strengthening the distinctive Catholic character of the institution (#21).

University teachers should seek to improve their competence and endeavor to set the content, objectives, methods, and results of research in an individual discipline within the framework of a coherent world vision. Christians among teachers are called to be witnesses and educators of authentic Christian life, which evidences an attained integration between faith and life, and between professional competence and Christian wisdom. All teachers are to be inspired by academic ideals and by the principles of an authentically human life (#22).

Students, as well, are challenged to continue the “search for truth and for meaning” throughout their lives, since

the human spirit must be cultivated in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate, to make personal judgments, and to develop a religious, moral, and social sense (#23).

University and Church. The Catholic university must have an “institutional fidelity to the Christian message [which] includes a recognition of and adherence to the teaching authority of the church in matters of faith and morals (#27).” Catholic members of the community are called to the personal fidelity which this implies. Non-Catholic members are asked to “respect the Catholic character of the university while the university in turn respects their religious liberty

(#27).”

Service. Research is encouraged in areas such as the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice, the quality of personal and family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability, and a new economic and political order that will better serve the human community. “If need be, the Catholic university must have the courage to speak uncomfortable truths which do not please public opinion, but which are necessary to safeguard the authentic good of society (#32).”

A specific priority is the need to examine and evaluate the predominant values and norms of modern society and culture in a Christian perspective, and the responsibility to try to communicate to society those ethical and religious principles which give full meaning to human life (#33).

The Christian spirit of service to others for the promotion of social justice is of particular importance for each Catholic university, to be shared by its teachers and developed by its students. (#34).

Ministry. There should be an opportunity for the whole university community to integrate religious and moral principles with academic study and nonacademic activities, “thus integrating faith with life (#38).”

As an expression of its Catholic identity, the university should provide opportunities for reflection and prayer:

Catholic members of this community will be offered opportunities to assimilate Catholic teaching and practice into their lives. . . . When the academic community includes members of other churches, ecclesial communities, or religions, their initiatives for reflection and prayer in accordance with their own beliefs are to be respected (#39).

Cultural Dialogue. A university is open to all human experiences and is ready to dialogue with and learn from any culture. A Catholic university “is a primary and privileged place for a fruitful dialogue between the Gospel and culture (#43).” While it is true that the Gospel transcends all cultures

A faith that places itself on the margin of what is human, of what is therefore culture, would be a faith unfaithful to the fullness of what the word of God manifests and reveals, a decapitated faith, worse still, a faith in the process of self-annihilation (#44).

The Catholic university should carry on a dialogue with the cultures of the world in terms of the meaning of the human person, liberty, dignity, and openness to the transcendent. It should be deeply concerned over the impact of technology and the defense of traditional cultures, helping them to receive modern values without sacrificing their own heritage (#45).

In addition, the Catholic university can offer professional training “that incorporates ethical values and a sense of service to individuals and to society (#48).” It can contribute to the ecumenical dialogue to further unity among Christians and the interreligious dialogue to assist in discerning the spiritual values that are present in all religions (#47).

General norms. Following this description of the Catholic university, *Ex corde* concludes with a series of general norms for implementation. Among these is that the Catholic university should

make known its identity in its mission statement and provide means for the expression and preservation of its Catholic identity (Art 2: 2 & 3).

The norms also address the important balance between institutional commitment and the academic freedom of the individual by stating that, “while the freedom of conscience of each person is to be fully respected,” any official action or commitment of the university “is to be in accord with its Catholic identity” and that “freedom in research and teaching is recognized and respected.” (Art 2: 4 & 5).

Serious conversation on the application of these norms in the United States continues. A central concern is that decrees implementing the norms may offset the positive delineation of Catholic higher education in the document itself and/or separate Catholic higher education from what is viewed as a genuine American university.

THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

Catholicism has an intellectual tradition which goes back almost two thousand years, a tradition which emphasizes not only God’s sovereignty but also the intellectual dimension of faith and the intertwined relationship between faith and reason.

A Catholic university invites both faculty and students to an *intellectual* understanding of an individual’s faith, no matter in what religious tradition that faith is grounded. As Fr. John Padberg has said, “Politics, sex, and religion are the three topics on which Americans do as little thinking as possible.” “Yes,” he says, “we talk about them, imagine a lot about them, fear them, and emote about them. But to we *think* about them?” He continues

A Catholic university has the responsibility of reflecting on the intellectual traditions of the Catholic faith -- its doctrines, philosophical underpinnings, history, current practices, artistic expressions, music, poetry, literature, architecture, etc. It also has the responsibility of showing, through experiences, how the faith and intellect illuminate and enrich each other. It is here that the Catholic university serves the church best -- the intellectual pursuit of the theory and practice which best inculturates the faith in this time and place.

Why is it important to stress this relationship between faith and reason? Because it is this tradition which distinguishes the Catholic intellectual tradition from fundamentalism of any stripe, including Catholic.

What is also so important in an increasingly secular age is that the Catholic university is becoming more and more a place where people of other faiths and beliefs come to explore their own values and traditions and to search for meaning in their life and culture.

This is where “catholic” comes to mean “universal.” This is where the Catholic university makes an important contribution to the diversity of an increasingly homogeneous American higher education system.

In summary, a Catholic university is:

- ☐ a learning community where men and women of different traditions foster the search for meaning and the continuing dialogue between faith and culture
 - ☐ Christian in inspiration and grounded in an institutional fidelity to the Christian message as transmitted by Catholic teaching
 - ☐ faithful to the centuries old intellectual tradition which asserts the intrinsic value of human reason and maintains that faith and intellect illuminate each other
 - ☐ pledged to academic freedom and freedom of conscience within a framework of moral values, ethical behavior, civility, and mutual respect
- respect by the individual for the Catholic identity of the institution and by the institution for the freedom of conscience and religious liberty of the individual
- ☐ committed to integrating faith with life, to examining the moral and ethical implications present in each discipline, and to viewing religious experience and questions as integral to the understanding of human existence and culture.

PART III: THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY

FOUNDATIONS

It might be good at this time to reflect a moment on what it means to be a member of a family. Basically, it means that we are not alone. We are “rooted” in our family culture and history. Our grandparents and parents tell stories and we repeat them. We come from somewhere. We not only have a personal history but a family history which makes us who and what we are. We are different. We do things our way. As others do, we celebrate the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving, but we do it the way *we* do it. Objectively, we may be neither better nor worse than other families, but we instinctively know that our “way of proceeding” is best. At the same time we are developing new ways and traditions which *we* will pass on.

So, among all the families of Catholic universities around the world we find ourselves as members of the national and international family of Jesuit higher education. We may admit, on our better days, that the Benedictines at Collegeville, the Dominicans at Dubuque and Chicago, or (even) the Holy Cross Fathers at South Bend may have something to offer that is as good as or even better than what we do, but we are loyal and proud to be who we are. (And, in fine Jesuit practice, we’ll steal any good idea!).

As a Catholic, Jesuit university we are a member of a higher education family which has its own origins, its own insights, its own way of doing things, its own hopes, and its own ways of expressing them and living them. We have our own gifts – our own *charism*.

That *charism*, that characteristic way of thought and action, has its origin in the *charism* of St. Ignatius Loyola who established the first forty Jesuit schools. In his life, his experience, his insights, and his “way of proceeding” we find the origin of and the spirit behind what we do and who we are.

A good place to start in our understanding of *Jesuit* education is to consider Ignatius’ great legacy, his book entitled *Spiritual Exercises*. Jesuit education is based on the religious world view of the saint who founded it.

The *Spiritual Exercises* is a book of directions to help one person guide another through a series of spiritual experiences which are based on the Christian scriptures and on Ignatius’ own spiritual journey. As a book of directions, it is a book to be done, not a book to be read. Ignatius began to write down his spiritual experiences at his home at Loyola while recovering from a battle injury in 1521. After many “adventures,” the book was finally published with papal approval in 1548. It became one of the classics of Western spirituality.

The world view found in the *Exercises* is both profoundly spiritual and profoundly worldly. It reflects the fact that Ignatius was a layperson who grew up surrounded by the deep religious faith and intense worldliness of the Spanish court of King Ferdinand.

The result was a spirituality which stressed the “worldliness of God.” God’s continuing love and power are revealed in all of creation. In the words of the nineteenth century Jesuit poet Gerard

Manly Hopkins, “The world is charged with the grandeur of God.”

Since God is found in every thing, in every circumstance, in every movement of the heart, seeking to know ourselves and the world becomes a *religious* act. No wonder the Jesuits found a home in the work of learning and education! No wonder they felt there was no room for mediocrity -- in either life or in study. In Ignatian spirituality, teaching the humanities, science, and technology is teaching about God’s partnership with human beings in creating an ever better and more just world.

The way a person becomes a more conscious participant in this process of making a better world is by discerning and following God’s desires. One finds “God’s will” in faith, in reason, and in one’s own deepest desires. According to Ignatius, a person does this best by praying for the gift of knowing Jesus *more* (“*magis*”), becoming *more* united with his mind and heart, and following him *more* closely in his love and service. In the *Spiritual Exercises*, the invitation of God is to know, love, and follow Christ in transforming the world.

Some elements of the *Exercises* which provide the foundation of Jesuit education:

- C To know and love the world is to know and love the God creating it
- C Finding God in all things, we are partners with God in making the world
- C God’s love is more powerful than human weakness and evil
- C The concept of freedom includes freedom from sin, ignorance, prejudice, limited horizons, and distorted values and desires
- C A person can discern what is *better* to do, distinct from one’s own present activities and inclinations (which may, in fact, be good) by listening to God in the Scriptures, tradition, the believing community, the circumstances of one’s life, in reason and imagination, and in the deep desires of the heart
- C All are asked what *more* they can do in serving God and others
- C love (and faith as well) is shown in deeds more than in words
- C With Jesus Christ as model, everyone is called to compassionate action.

Also, with its constant use of the imagination, reflection on experience, repetition of material, and the relationship between the director and directee, even the “method” of the *Spiritual Exercises* has influenced the teaching methods selected by Jesuit educators throughout the centuries.

PRACTICE

Arrupe. “Passing over in silence” 400 years of the practice and methodology of Jesuit education, we turn to Father Pedro Arrupe who is called by many the “re-founder” of the Jesuits after Vatican II. In an address to the Tenth International Congress of Jesuit Alumni of Europe in Valencia, Spain, in 1973, the then Superior General (“General”) of the Society of Jesus essentially redefined the mission of Jesuit education in contemporary times.

Today our prime educational objective must be to form *men and women for others*; men and women who will live not for themselves, who cannot even conceive of a love of God which does not include a love for the least of their neighbors, and who are completely convinced that a love of God which does not result in justice for all is a farce. . .

We must also determine the character of the type of men and women we want to form, the type of persons into which we must be changed, and the type of persons which the generations succeeding us must be encouraged to develop. . . *Only by being a man or woman for others does a person become fully human.*

Kolvenbach. It is in this spirit that Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, on the 200th anniversary of Jesuit education in the United States celebrated at Georgetown in 1989, described the character of the graduate Father Arrupe called for:

Our purpose in education, then, is to form men and women “for others.” The Society of Jesus has always sought to imbue students with values that transcend the goals of money, fame, and success. We want graduates who will be leaders concerned about society and the world in which they live. We want graduates who desire to eliminate hunger and conflict in the world and who are sensitive to the need for more equitable distribution of the world’s goods. We want graduates who seek to end sexual and social discrimination and who are eager to share their faith with others.

In short, we want our graduates to be *leaders-in-service*. That has been the goal of Jesuit education since the sixteenth century. It remains so today.

In his address at Georgetown Father Kolvenbach went on to describe four “characteristic themes” of Jesuit education:

1. **Jesuit education is value oriented.** The education process must rigorously probe crucial human problems and reflect on the value implications of what is studied. This is to be done in every course (e.g., the uses of technology) on a consistent basis so as to develop the *habit* of reflecting on values and of assessing values and their consequences not only for oneself but for others.

2. **Jesuit education is committed to the promotion of justice.** This includes efforts to make Jesuit education available as much as possible to everyone and the education of *all* classes -- rich, middle class, and poor -- from a perspective of justice. Students should be challenged to not make a significant decision (theoretical or practical) without first thinking of how the results would impact those in society with little or no control or influence.

3. **Jesuit education is interdisciplinary.** The responses to the crucial questions of our times require not only empirical data and technological know-how. They require consideration of sociological, psychological, and theological perspectives if the solutions proposed are to demonstrate moral responsibility and sensitivity. *Jesuit education attempts to integrate religious, humanitarian, and technological values.*

4. Jesuit education is international. Not only is Jesuit education international in scope, located on every populated continent, but also international in viewpoint. This means education for the “global village,” curricula which include major world cultures, diversity in the cultural background of our students, international exchanges, and incorporation of a global dimension into educational programs is part of the fiber of a Jesuit college or university.

Father Kolvenbach concluded with two observations:

A. Staffing. The key challenge in maintaining and developing Jesuit education in the future is how the hiring and promotional practices of the institutions reflect the priority of the Ignatian vision while being just to potential colleagues and protective of academic standards. It is an *obligation in justice* to acquaint prospective administrators, professors, and staff with the spirit of the institution and to ask if they can share in its spirit and contribute to its mission.

B. The role of the Jesuits. In his address Father Kolvenbach pointed out that the institution is independent of the group of Jesuits who work within it. *The distinctive role of the Jesuits in a Jesuit university is to share the basic Ignatian purpose and thrust of Jesuit education.* This is done in official ways by the proper university authorities, but more importantly, through the multiple relationships and activities which form the fabric of university life. It is a role in which the members of the Jesuit community become resources for the transmission of the values of Jesuit education and the spirituality from which they flow.

Religious Diversity. Religious diversity within Jesuit colleges and universities is not based solely on the basic pluralism of the United States nor only on the benefit of having a diversity of views within the educational community.

This diversity is also based on a special commission given to the Society of Jesus. For over forty years, John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II have asked the Jesuits to take on as a special work dialogue with three general groups: Christians who are not united with Rome, members of other religions, and those who do not believe in God. This commission was again mentioned in the Allocution of John Paul II to the 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus in 1995:

The Church asks that unity among all Christians might increase. This priority extends to interreligious dialogue and inspires the service of human rights and peace as the foundation of civilization. In this the Church ought to find the Society of Jesus in the vanguard.

This charge includes ecumenical dialogue among Christians, interreligious dialogue (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, etc.), dialogue with the secular, especially in the areas of human rights and peace, and, we might add, dialogue among differing perspectives within the Catholic Church.

A Jesuit university, then, is

- ☐ a university based on St. Ignatius Loyola’s vision of the fundamental goodness of the world and his view of human endeavor as a partnership with the creating God
- ☐ committed to a search for knowledge which demands academic excellence and to a love

of the world which leads to the desire to create a better and more just existence

- ☐ pledged to forming men and women who seek to transform the world by being leaders in the service of others
- ☐ dedicated to developing the critical thinking and habit of reflecting on values which are necessary to make sound judgments
- ☐ supportive of religious diversity within the university community as a condition for genuine dialogue: Catholic, ecumenical, interreligious, and secular.

PART IV: CONCLUSION

More questions. As we started off with a set of introductory questions, it might be good (Jesuit) practice to end with some:

Do we see the search for meaning as primary in our work? Do faith and culture meet and engage at our schools or just look at each other in an irresolute silence? Do we *think* about our values and beliefs and actively assist others to do the same?

Do we model service to others? How just are we in our relationships and institutional procedures? Are there regular conversations relating mission to work? Is mission a factor in hiring and promotion and part of faculty and staff development?

How do academic and administrative units grapple with mission issues in curricula, budgets and strategic plans? Do stated goals and outcomes match the mission?

How does the mission reach students “where they live?”

Concluding remarks. Though every Jesuit school lives out its Catholic and Jesuit character in its own distinctive way, each has inherited the Ignatian vision. This vision provides us with principles of action and with goals not yet completely achieved. It is a profoundly human vision, open to all, based on Ignatius’ conviction that the world is good and that human beings can, in partnership with God, make it better.

Ignatius was a man of deep faith. To him there was no difference between the highest of human goals and the loving desires of God.

We in Jesuit education may be more like Ignatius than we may realize. As Ignatius

We are people of faith: faith in humankind, faith in a loving God. Perhaps, too, those of us in the Christian tradition can fall in love with the person of Jesus Christ, dedicating ourselves to the values he lived.

We are learners in love with the universe. We are in love with the glories of the world and with the wonders of the human heart and mind.

We serve. Our work is not only to free ourselves from whatever limits our own horizons, but also to bring others to that same freedom.

We work in community. We are much more than a collection of individuals. We are colleagues in (yes) a noble enterprise, whether our particular labor be behind a desk, in a classroom, or in the

raking of leaves.

We live according to a vision. This vision is the family story which tells us who we are and leads us to the future. This Ignatian vision is ours -- in this time and place. It belongs to us and to the students we teach and with whom we learn.