

# Mission and universities: What future do we want?

## 1. ESADE at this moment in time

It is a great pleasure for me to be at ESADE and in Barcelona today. As some of you may know, I spent some years here during my childhood, before becoming a Jesuit. I learnt Catalan, a language I still speak despite all the years that have passed, although I don't master it completely. It was the beginning of a life in which I have been invited to delve into several cultures: Japanese culture, of course, and also East Asian cultures as a whole. These successive "immersions" have brought me to experience the huge human wealth of different cultures and they have made me feel the desire to disdain nothing and learn from everyone. As I say, for me it is a great pleasure to come back to Catalonia, where this long journey started.

It is also a great pleasure to be here at ESADE. It is said of the Jesuits that our mission takes us to the "frontiers", to those places where debate and practical work is carried out to solve humanity's big problems: how to overcome poverty and progress towards human development, how to organise coexistence according to criteria of solidarity, justice and mutual respect, how to seek on a practical level the values that humanise people and societies.

Well, ESADE clearly stands on a frontier, which is why I really feel at home here. First of all, ESADE is an increasingly international place: faculty and students come here from all over the world to teach and learn, overcoming cultural and social barriers. Furthermore, in an organisational society, law and business management are decisive for organising a more humane world. In your research and teaching, debate is conducted around the overriding values that should preside over development specifically at the service of the human being. And lastly, ESADEFORUM's determination to be a platform for dialogue and public influence in important issues for society likewise places you at a crossroads. You – we – are working on a decisive frontier.

I said "you", but immediately corrected myself to "we", because at ESADE laypeople and Jesuits, believers and non-believers, work together; we share the values expressed in ESADE's Mission and the Statement of Values you passed and published recently. This too is a frontier situation: in your 50 years of history, you have built an environment of coexistence that has overcome age-old barriers that have done so much damage in Spain and the world over. At ESADE, pluralism, including religious pluralism, has given rise to extremely productive coexistence around shared values, in a climate of freedom, tolerance and mutual respect.

In addition, ESADE forms part of Ramon Llull University, and this affiliation also entails a frontier: the University acknowledges "Christian inspiration" and embraces a wide range of centres arising out of various religious and lay

initiatives. Neither ESADE nor the Jesuits have the final say there, and this is shown by our common vocation to serve, with no desire for power.

I would like to take advantage of this moment to digress and congratulate the Catholic Institute of Arts and Industries (ICAI), a centre belonging to the Society of Jesus that is celebrating its centenary this year. Since its foundation, in 1908, it has strived to support the underprivileged classes through education and provide the majority of the population with access to a good technical training. That initial ICAI has become a school of engineering and also houses ICADE, both institutions belonging to Comillas University, the Rector of which is here today. Congratulations!

ESADE too stands at an important moment of its history: I must congratulate you for this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of yours that we are celebrating. Along with these congratulations I would like to add my recognition of the huge effort you are making to orient the institution towards several decisive lines, all of them necessary in a good university, especially a university linked to the Society of Jesus.

Firstly, you are spearheading an intense process of internationalisation: faculty, non-teaching staff and students of all the programmes increasingly come from very diverse countries. You have an institutional presence in Argentina and are present on an occasional basis in many parts of Asia and, in an incipient fashion, in Africa. In the age of the internet and fast transport, internationalisation is undoubtedly a requirement for the survival and development of a university centre, but it is also an appeal that all the universities linked to the Society of Jesus must heed in order to pool the world's resources at the service of human development and foster a profound dialogue between cultures. In this respect, I believe that internationalisation should not benefit the rule of one culture over the rest: on the contrary, it should give all cultures the opportunity to contribute, from out of their own values, to the construction of a corpus of knowledge placed at the service of a human development rooted in the concrete and universal.

In order to be present in the international arena, you have had to make – and you are making – a huge effort in the field of research. And that also puts you on a frontier, or perhaps more accurately, at a crossroads. Because the spontaneous logic of a university centre is to conduct research into what it can get resources for. Following this logic, research may be done into things that are useful, but only for certain social groups, or research that is immediately practical may take precedence over other research that deals with fundamental problems of the economy, enterprise and justice. The creation of research institutes specialising in social innovation and public administrations shows your commitment to detecting the key problems for the governance of a complex world. In short, in order to be consistent with proclaimed values, you cannot see

research as just an instrument of prestige and survival, but above all as the work that enables you to talk authoritatively in the forums and debates that really matter in the economic and legal world: those that affect human development for all.

In the educational field, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary has brought you an awkward “present”: the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). As I will outline presently, Jesuit teaching at all levels has sought to be useful and practical: it has always been concerned with focusing on the student, on his or her all-round development. In this respect, the new orientation of university teaching in Europe may be a good opportunity to advance and elaborate on a comprehensive and integrated pedagogy, geared towards the student as an individual. This undoubtedly requires an enormous effort of creativity and change that may yield very positive outcomes for your students. But the implementation of the EHEA also lies on a frontier, because the task of skills learning can be focused solely on meeting the immediate needs of the market, or on the other hand it can also propound reaching a comprehensive and integrated development of the student, attending to a conception of a person who is capable of coping with the underlying needs of today’s society. As my predecessor, Fr. Kolvenbach, used to say, ultimately the success of an educational centre should be measured by what its students become once they have left it. In this respect, the new teaching guidelines can help these students in a deeper, more personalised way, so that they can become people with human quality, committed citizens and great professionals.

As I mentioned at the beginning, ESADE stands by nature at a crossroads and on a frontier. For this reason, we Jesuits feel at home here: it is a good place for our mission. And at the same time we feel co-responsible, together with all of you, for the correct orientation of ESADE’s capacity to influence society.

To quote the motto that has presided over the celebration of your 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, you want to “inspire futures”, and I sincerely believe that you have the capacity to do so. The inevitable question is: What sort of future do you want to inspire? I would like to reflect with you on this point.

## **2. “Inspiring futures”**

Indeed, “Inspiring futures” is a motto that, so I have been told, was chosen by a large majority out of several proposals. To me it seems a fitting motto and, if you will pardon the repetition, an “inspiring” one.

The word *inspire* has the same root as *spirit*, which originally meant “wind, breath”. But in our world there are many “spirits”, that is to say, many values, which are sometimes contradictory. Max Weber talked of the “spirit” of

capitalism and nowadays many people talk of a spirit of neoliberalism. In fact, business schools and law schools can choose between many spirits. If we wish to “inspire futures”, what “spirit”, what wind, do we want to fill our sails? What values do we want to shape the future?

Allow me to ask just one more question. There is an old adage whereby “nobody gives what they don’t have.” If you wish to “inspire futures”, does that mean you want to work on your “spirit” in order to be able to communicate it? But “spirit” is a polysemous word, with multiple meanings, as in our world “spirits”, i.e., very different and even opposed values, coexist and sometimes clash. What spirit do you wish to cultivate? And whom do you wish to inspire?

Fortunately, the “spirit” and spirituality are gradually ceasing to be the sole preserve of religions and believers. Many men and women of our time, far removed for various reasons from the great religious traditions, nevertheless do not turn their back on cultivating their spirit. We live in a plural and changing world and the definition of the spirit is therefore difficult to pinpoint. But the different paths seem to converge at a few strong points: the cultivation of a profound human sensitivity that in turn gives empathy and power of discernment; an escape from the spontaneously egocentric perspective from which we face people and indeed all reality; the search for a way of seeing and experiencing the world through peace, *compassion and solidarity*. Working on the spirit can also mean “developing human quality”. In any event, a “spiritual” person is someone who searches for, discerns and tries to give substance to the great options of life, from a great freedom inspired by love.

The word *spirit* is full of symbolic suggestions. In the Bible, the spirit is the wind that pushes forcefully and whose direction cannot be engaged within a set of preconceived rules. In the Pentecost scene, the Holy Spirit is a “wind” and also “fire” that transforms people: the outcome is that Jesus’s friends overcome their fear, go out into the street and preach the astounding message of their friend and master with conviction and freedom. Symptomatically, at our last General Congregation, we Jesuits chose this metaphor of fire (and the Spirit) as a symbol that sums up what we feel is our mission: “to be a fire that kindles other fires”, that is, that “inspires”. “To inspire” is entirely the opposite of coercing, imposing or indoctrinating. It is to suggest, appealing to best in the other person. It is to engage in dialogue to invite each of us towards our own autonomous development.

In a world in which fundamentalisms of all sorts – religious and ideological – divide, confront and even justify violence, the true Spirit sets in motion processes of respectful dialogue. Spirituality, that is, the cultivation of the spirit, is the best soil in which to grow the seed of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, which is a decisive element for a freer, fairer and more peaceful economic and political future. We Jesuits are believers who, while

acknowledging that we are imperfect and selfish, feel called to be companions of Jesus, as Saint Ignatius was (GC 32, d. 2, n. 1). This means that we want to be moved by the Spirit of Jesus: his manner of being, his attitude, his values, his preferences. We say this with great humility, because it is a daring pretension. Nevertheless, for us, it is a call and a gift that makes us grateful and triggers our response, which we want to be total and unconditional.

This aspiration is marked by a search, a discernment. Saint Ignatius, who lived on the cultural frontier between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and between the Roman Church and the Reformation, had to face up to the need to discern, among the many “spirits” of his time, to decide which of them he wanted to be “inspired” by.

Perhaps we Jesuits and our tradition can assist, then, in this identification of the spirit we want to shape the educational practice of the universities that are linked to the Society of Jesus.

In this respect, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Jesuit teacher and rector of the Roman College (now the Gregorian University in Rome) Diego de Ledesma advanced four reasons for Jesuits to work in educational institutions.

“First, because they provide people with many advantages for practical life; second, because they contribute to the correct governance of public affairs and appropriate law-making; third, because they give decorum, splendour and perfection to our rational nature, and fourth and most importantly, because they are the defence of religion and guide us with great confidence and ease in the achievement of our ultimate end.”

These four reasons were interpreted and developed by my predecessor, Fr. Kolvenbach, as four ultimate aims of Jesuit education. In condensed form, Fr. Kolvenbach referred to them by their Latin names: *utilitas*, *iustitia*, *humanitas* and *fides* (usefulness, justice, humanity and faith).

The reflection on these four dimensions constitutes a fundamental core of Fr. Kolvenbach’s university thinking, which I assume as one of the characteristics of Jesuit universities. I would now like to reflect with you about how these four dimensions can define the “spirit” you want to “inspire” in the world’s “futures”.

### **3. Inspiring futures with a spirit of *utilitas*, *iustitia*, *humanitas* and *fides***

#### *a. A “useful” spirit*

The spirit that inspires futures is, first of all, a “useful” spirit. A spirit that seeks to solve the problems and meet the needs of concrete people, especially the poorest people.

Jesuit education has always sought to be a practice-oriented education, in research and teaching alike. But usefulness and practicality cannot be short-sighted. Research, as I stressed earlier, must seek not just to solve short-term problems but also to help towards solving the great problems that face humanity today: sustainable and fair development, intercultural coexistence, the values that give meaning to society-transforming action.

Truly practical teaching must be oriented towards training good professionals who, in addition to being technically competent, know how to discover and experience the social meaning of all professions: expert service to society in a particular field. In the case of ESADE, you are working in the fields of organisational management and law. Professionalism that not only adapts to the world as it stands, but “aspires” (again, a word that alludes to the spirit) to transform it, making it more humane.

The spirit of *utilitas* is a spirit that engenders professionals who are aware of the diversity of wealths that the pursuit of a career can bring about: economic wealth; ecologically sustainable satisfaction of vital needs; and also bringing meaning to existence and building a human community that is more respectful of human dignity. This awareness of the multiple repercussions that professional practice has on society necessarily makes the professional humble, makes him or her open to teamwork, and lastly encourages him or her to reach a consensus when it comes to making decisions and taking action. These decisions are immersed in complex and difficult contexts, because crossroads and frontiers approach and multiply around us.

And in the midst of this complexity, a simple form of *utilitas* may pick its way: service. To train people in *utilitas*, to train “useful” people, is perhaps to train servers. Not to train the best *in* the world, but to train the best *for* the world. Consequently, the excellence of a professional is measured, above anything else, using the parameter of greater service to the human family.

This description of the professional might seem to be over-idealised and “impractical”. However, how “useful” to society is a professional who seeks only the external benefits of the profession: financial reward, prestige and power? Does not society actually need this other type of professionals? Are they not the really “useful” ones?

But training professionals of this sort is not possible unless we also cultivate in them the “spirit” of justice and that of humanity.

#### *b. A spirit of “justice”*

The future-inspiring spirit is, secondly, a spirit of justice. The fostering of justice is a dimension of the Jesuits’ mission that became especially explicit as of the 32<sup>nd</sup> General Congregation, a meeting of Jesuit leaders that took place in Rome

in 1975 and deeply marked our identity and our mission. Subsequent general congregations have confirmed, time and time again, this commitment to justice as a requirement of our spirituality.

What has been said in these general congregations is that our faith is faith in the God of Jesus who desires good for all the men and women in the world, and that we can only say that we experience it if our love for concrete people brings us to defend their rights, in other words, to foster a fairer society. This simple discovery has changed our perspective: it has accustomed us to look at the world from the perspective of the poor, of those who suffer injustice. For this reason, our commitment to justice is also a preferential commitment to the poor.

These choices have signified a great transformation for the Society of Jesus. A transformation that at times is difficult. You are experts in organisation and you know that transformations of “organisational culture” are not achieved without difficulties and tensions. But at present it is a change that is assumed, although we are aware that we must renew it daily, because the world we live in does not help to maintain this option.

In any event, we Jesuits cannot forget that the commitment to justice has had painful consequences for us, including bloodshed for fellow Jesuits and many friends of ours. For this reason, we are convinced that no institution linked to the Society of Jesus can ignore this commitment: and that includes universities, and the law schools and business schools that form part of them.

The economic root of the unjust inequality that dramatically divides the world is obvious, although it is not the only one. And the role played by business and law in both the creation of unjust situations and the promotion of fair and sustainable economic development is also obvious. Therefore, it is the responsibility of a school like ESADE to ensure not to separate the creation of wealth from its fair distribution. We must overcome the division of knowledge that makes it possible to ignore the social and human repercussion of the functioning of businesses in the market. Nowadays, large corporations talk about “social responsibility”. The most important social responsibility of a university centre such as ESADE is to promote justice, at all levels: in individual relationships, in organisations and also in the societies in which it operates, with a local and at the same time global vision. Justice that, as our most recent general congregations have emphasised, must include new dimensions: sustainability in the form of environmental justice, the gender dimension and human coexistence in a multicultural world.

A university centre should promote justice in all its activities. Naturally, in its internal organisation and with its own stakeholders. In research on the major problems of humanity, as I mentioned earlier. In its work as a catalyst and driver of ideas and projects that change society towards greater justice. In teaching, by raising students’ awareness. To quote Fr. Kolvenbach:

“Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering and engage it constructively. They should learn to perceive, think, judge, choose and act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged.”<sup>1</sup>

Students not only need awareness, but also academic rigour, to get the right focus on social issues throughout their future professional life. Again in the words of Fr. Kolvenbach, they need “a well-educated solidarity”.

In this sense, the spirit of justice is already acting at ESADE. The spirit invites close collaboration between the Business School in all its programmes, the Law School and the Executive Language Center. It also requires joint work by organisations of various sorts: companies, public administrations and NGOs. And lastly it brings us to empower global networks (including the network of Jesuit business schools and the network of Jesuit law schools), to enable them to give appropriate responses to increasingly planetary challenges.

### *c. A humanist spirit*

As we mentioned earlier, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Diego de Ledesma referred to *humanitas* as the attribute that “gives decorum, splendour and perfection to our rational nature”.

We Jesuits have a hopeful (not always optimistic) vision of the human being because we firmly believe in “the kindness and love of God” (Epistle of Paul to Titus, 3:4; text for Christmas mass). The latest general congregation says that our way of proceeding is “to trace the footprints of God *everywhere*, knowing that the Spirit of Christ is at work in all places and situations and in all activities and mediations that seek to make him more present in the world” (“A Fire That Kindles Other Fires”, GC 35, d. 2, n. 8). We are invited to be aware of God’s action in places and people we would never have imagined, to discover him to be “interested in every parched area of the world” (ibid. n. 12). Because of all this, we want to help in the all-round development of the men and women of our time.

So, in our university centres, we seek to receive each student in his or her concrete reality. These students are marked, in the Western world, by the culture of rich consumer societies. With difficulties getting their bearings in life in pluralistic and individualistic societies. With all the positive and negative trappings of postmodernity. We want to help these students to discover all their dimensions, including those that are often silenced in our society. The work of the person’s spiritual dimension must be offered freely in our centres so that it can be developed by those who embrace it.

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<sup>1</sup> KOLVENBACH, *University of Santa Clara address*, n. 42.

The European Higher Education Area guides universities in organising students' learning by developing their skills. Skills can be purely market-oriented, but they can also be understood in the framework of a humanism that can lead them to be elements of an integrated and comprehensive education of the human person.

Nowadays, Jesuits and laypeople involved in university education talk of four characteristics of the full and comprehensive human person, using four qualities that start with the letter C. In effect, the humanist spirit generates *conscious*, *competent*, *compassionate*, *committed* people. Conscious of themselves and the world they live in, with its dramas, but also its joys and hopes. Competent to face the technical, social and human problems a professional comes up against. People moved also by a strong compassion. This word has frequently been misused, and applied to a superficial sentimentalism that humiliates the person that one supposedly wants to help. But in fact *com-compassion*, with a hyphen separating the two parts of the word, means something deeper and very human: the capacity to feel other people's pleasure and pain as one's own; the ability to put oneself in their shoes; the capacity to accompany and help them from inside the situation; the knowledge that the other, any other, especially one who is suffering, is my brother or sister. This compassion is the long-term driving force of commitment: the form of love in which the human being not only gives something but gives to him or herself over the course of time.

Deep down in the humanist spirit there is the conviction and the experience that we human beings can be transformed at a level that goes beyond morals and the good intentions of the moment. That we can develop what some have called "human quality". It is hard to define, but we easily recognise people who have it. There is nothing elitist about it and we often find it in very simple people. In the Statement of Values you have drawn up, you have defined it as a "combination of knowledge, judgement, sensitivity, balance and depth that produces serene, consistent, trustworthy individuals capable of living" – and here I would add "passionately" – "in accordance with the fundamental values that make us more human."

#### *d. A spirit of faith*

The last dimension of the spirit, according to the characterisation made by the Jesuit Diego de Ledesma, is *fides*. It is particularly delicate to talk about *fides*, faith. It is delicate because nowadays, at ESADE and most of the universities that are linked to the Jesuits, a significant part of the non-teaching and teaching staff do not fully share our faith. It might seem as if to talk of faith is to talk, again, of what separates and divides us. Yet, nevertheless, I think it is necessary to talk about faith. Because we Jesuits are believers and we want to lay our cards on the table: to say clearly why we feel part of the mission that

brings us all together, and also to express what we modestly think we can contribute from our experience.

Furthermore, it is difficult to talk about faith because, in this world where political borders are breaking down, religions sometimes become an excuse to put up new borders, in order to lock oneself up in fear and lock out the different.

Faith is an experience that is hard to formulate and to which I wish to refer “with fear and trembling”, because other formulations of this experience generate, in fact, inhumanity and violence.

We Jesuits have heard the Good News that Jesus announced: God is close to every man and every woman. And when people open up to this closeness of love, they come out of themselves and look at everyone else and the world “differently”: as brothers and sisters of everyone, as God’s creation. Our God is not a warring, intransigent or exclusive God. He is, according to Jesus’s parables, like a father who joyfully celebrates his son’s return, like a good Samaritan who gives concrete help to the victims of human violence along the world’s roads.

We do not believe that our faith makes us better than the rest. Because we believe and experience that we are weak and fragile. And my fellow Jesuits at ESADE show you their weakness and fragility every day. However, our experience is one of gratuity: the best of what we are was given to us. And we feel that faith has helped us to “grow in humanity”. Because it gives us confidence that all human beings have a potential that transcends them and can always develop and grow. Faith brings us out of ourselves and helps us to love selflessly... patiently accepting our limits. And because of this, faith invites us to overcome the fears that are inherent in our human condition: fear, pain, illness, insecurity, poverty, loneliness.

This spirit of faith encourages us to patiently and passionately develop *utilitas*, *iustitia* and *humanitas*. *Utilitas* is also service to the ongoing Creation of the world. *Iustitia* is to embrace what Jesus called “the Kingdom of God”: the call to transform the world in favour of solidarity and reconciliation. *Humanitas* is to believe deeply in God’s love for human beings and their capacity for transcendence.

As a result of all this, we Jesuits feel comfortable working hand in hand with people who share passion for *utilitas*, *iustitia* and *humanitas*, even if they do not share our faith. We listen to the voice of Jesus, who said that when the good of humanity is at stake, “whoever is not against you is for you” (Luke 9:51). Because the criterion of authenticity of our faith is work for the good of human beings.

We believe that together we can work on the “human spirit”. This means working on our capacity to love. Our profound freedom. The quality of our relationships. It means working to make people, groups and societies more sensitive and mature, fairer and more caring.

#### **4. Vision and commitments**

Cultivating, experiencing and developing these four dimensions of the spirit is no easy task. The social and cultural context in which you move in Catalonia and Spain poses challenges of another order, but which need to be taken into account.

First, we live in a secular culture which is often secularistic, i.e., it relegates the matter of faith and religion to a strictly individual and private level. We consider that ESADE can be a good “experimental laboratory” for living a “positive secularism”, in which secular and religious positions engage in dialogue publicly, on equal terms, on the great challenges facing humanity today.

This public dialogue is necessary because ESADE’s reality (like that of the Western world as a whole) is the coexistence of individuals who define their fundamental options in the face of life in very different ways. For this reason, we believe it is necessary to clarify what it means to work together in running a university. Men and women, believers and non-believers, believers of different religious confessions, all collaborate in Jesuit universities worldwide. And they do so from different perspectives. For some it is a professional commitment. Others identify profoundly with the shared mission in Jesuit university centres (like UNJES). For others, this mission is an experience from a believer’s standpoint. In any event, what matters is that we feel committed to a great common cause: quality university education, presided over by the “spirit” of the four dimensions I have just defined.

Vision and mission are of very little use unless they take the form of specific strategic projects that can be assessed. As a result, it is important for the UNJES centres in Spain to match, as far as possible, their goals, methods and assessment processes.

Lastly, a reflection that takes into account the postmodern times in which we live. In a complex and changing world, flexibility and the capacity for change and innovation matter a great deal. But they matter insofar as they are at the service of long-range goals and serious commitments that overcome the difficulties, disappointments and tempting offers that divert us from the objective we pursue. Research and teaching are long-range tasks that require lasting commitment.

## 5. Conclusions

Allow me to express a wish and a recommendation. In a society that is overwhelmed by stimuli, interiority is important, as is the work of the human spirit that opens us up to the Spirit with a capital S. Modestly, we Jesuits believe that we can contribute something in this field. Ignatian spirituality (which is rooted in the personal experience of our founder, Saint Ignatius) is a gift that we have received and that we Jesuits offer, convinced of its value for anyone who is searching in the world of today.

Two years ago, historian Karen Armstrong wrote the book *The Great Transformation*. I found it very thought-provoking. In it she analyses the spiritual path followed by four cultures that produced, between the fifth and third centuries before Christ, a change in human awareness of such scope that Karl Jaspers called this period "the Axial Age". Well, Karen Armstrong considers that she has discovered in the spiritual path of five centuries that led up to the Axial Age the laborious march and intense search to find the key to overcoming the violence, inhumanity and suffering we inflict on each other through injustice, exclusion, prejudice and war.

The intuitions of the Axial Age can be summed up as a return to the inner path. This intuition, shared by Confucius, Laozi, Mencius, Buddha, the mystics of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Socrates and Plato, emerges after four centuries of searching for external solutions, rituals, substitutes for a radical change of mentality and heart.

Unfortunately, these intuitions were lost with the manipulative symbiosis of the religious and the political; the manipulation of authentically religious searching and true political concern with ideologies and other innumerable interests. It comes back again with Jesus and Paul, later with Muhammad... and, I believe, with Ignatius of Loyola.

It is my deep desire that we too can integrate this path of inner life and transformation with the other academic and social concerns that lie at the root of the project of ESADE, and that give historical shape to the most profound and concrete concerns of the religious spirit. The particular community, church or confession can help to define the identity and the tradition; but it is the open and transformed heart that gives substance, in the workplace, in the company, in technology or in government, to the age-old quest for a fairer, more humane and fraternal world, something that Jesus announced in terms of the Kingdom of God.

We Jesuits have recently been through the experience of a general congregation (the 35<sup>th</sup> in our history). In it, we have tried to reflect on our identity, our mission, our collaboration with others, our management of planning and governance. The General Congregation has set us many challenges. And

we hope we have the understanding and the wherewithal to face them. I am taking this opportunity to talk in front of so many of you who see us and accompany us closely, who share our vision and are sometimes concerned about our spiritual consistency and our future, to ask for your help. I am not talking only about the support you already give us with your intelligent and generous total dedication to the work we do and which contributes to its proper running and even to its success. We are asking for your help to accompany us on the deeper road in faithfulness to the inner path received from Saint Ignatius. Do not be afraid to challenge us when you see that we are confused in our religious or ecclesial identity; do not hesitate to put us right when we think we are better, when we are too much masters of what belongs to everyone; support the daily and convincing visibility of our life in the Spirit; dissuade us with determination from all that which blurs the vision and motivation of serving humanity in the humility of research, teaching and work, to make our world a little better.

Allow me to repeat here what I said in my last homily at the end of the General Congregation. Both the mission to which we are committed and our Ignatian legacy belong to the Church and humanity. All those who participate in them are our collaborators. And when others go further than we do in heart and spirit, then we are their collaborators. This is the only ground on which it is honest to compete for those of us who have Christ as our Model and Master.

Furthermore, however much we have all received a special influence from this or that professor or teacher in our university years, we all know that true education is the result of the coordinated and complementary work of all. Greater universality – which is what universities are all about – requires greater collaboration and offers greater wealth of personal and social training. The danger of the excessive influence of globalisation on a way of living and thinking should be balanced by the original and creative solidarity of the university. Through many contributions and services, the university prepares individuals and groups for a truly responsible freedom.

At the conclusion of this long exposition, I wish to express a hope. The General Congregation has left us with a mandate to conduct a thorough revision of our governance structures. This is no easy task, and we do not have the sort of know-how, experience or wisdom to carry out this mandate. It is my hope that we can count on you for it. I have become acquainted with ESADE's high academic standards from Asia (China and the Philippines) and I hope that from closer by, in Rome, we will also be able to benefit from this same wisdom in the form of consultancy, while you accompany us in the new governance and planning tasks.

It is time to conclude my words in order to begin our dialogue. Firstly, I would like to thank you all, because your daily efforts and enthusiasm are making

possible the training of people at the service of others. And secondly, I want to humbly convey to you my support and prayers so that you may tenaciously continue this taxing yet exciting task.

Thank you very much.