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Address to the Georgetown University Board of Directors  
Given at the Pontifical Gregorian University  
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First, let me extend to you a warm welcome to Rome on the occasion of your first Board meeting here. I am most grateful for this opportunity to speak with you, and I am especially pleased to meet with you here at the Pontifical Gregorian University, which St. Ignatius of Loyola originally inaugurated as the Roman College in 1551, as Dr. DeGioia mentioned. Although Georgetown was founded a few years later (238 years later to be exact!), both institutions share the same mission and identity described by Saint Ignatius when he envisioned “a university of all nations, for the defence and propagation of the faith and for the training of wise and qualified leaders of the Church and society.”<sup>1</sup>

As members of the Board of Directors, the ultimate academic authority of Georgetown University, you have yourselves chosen to use the word Jesuit in your mission statement. You have pledged to adapt the characteristics of Jesuit education to your unique circumstances as Americans at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many contemporary charters of Jesuit universities and colleges in the United States and around the world find the original description of these Jesuit characteristics in a strange document composed by Father Diego de Ledesma, a Jesuit professor and principal of the Roman College. Born in Spain in 1524, Ledesma died here in Rome the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 1575 and was known as a “trouble shooter.” His field of training and expertise was theology, and some of his fellow Jesuits who criticised his ideas about Jesuit education would have preferred that he limit himself to theological speculation which was his field. Nevertheless, his idea of what a Jesuit institution should be has been repeated in many editions of the famous *Ratio Studiorum* since the version of 1586.

Addressing the criticism of those who thought Jesuits should only work in explicitly spiritual ministries, Father Ledesma answered the question why the Society of Jesus should conduct educational institutions in these words:

First, because they supply people with many advantages for practical living; secondly, because they contribute to the right government of public affairs and to the proper making of laws; third, because they give ornament, splendour, and perfection to our rational nature, and fourth, in what is most important, because they are the bulwark of religion and guide us most surely and easily in the achievement of our last end.<sup>2</sup>

This quite baroque language was reworked by The Middle States Working Group on Jesuit and Catholic Identity in November 1998, which tried to rephrase and update Ledesma's expression this way, using American terminology in our times to describe Jesuit education:

1) it is eminently practical, focused on providing students with the knowledge and skills to excel in whatever field they choose; 2) it is not merely practical, but concerns itself also with questions of values, with educating men and women to be good citizens and good leaders, concerned with the common good, and able to use their education for the service of faith and promotion of justice; 3) it celebrates the full range of human intellectual power and achievement, confidently affirming reason, not as opposed to faith, but as its necessary complement; 4) it places all that it does firmly within a Christian understanding of the human person as a creature of God whose ultimate destiny is beyond the human.<sup>3</sup>

This short version was not simple enough for Father Padberg who has simplified all these phrases into four key words: a Jesuit education should develop four purposes: practical and social, humanistic and religious.<sup>4</sup> But because of where we gather today, perhaps it would be best to use four Latin words dear to the Gregorian: *Utilitas, Justitia, Humanitas et Fides*.

How is the Jesuit university today still moved by the four characteristics originally articulated by Father Ledesma almost five centuries ago? I want to invite you to take time for a kind of evaluation recommended by Saint Ignatius for the purpose of discovering how one has responded to the Lord's presence and how one might respond in the future to the invitation of the Lord to act in this world. This evaluation cannot be made in general by a Superior General, who suddenly descends from the lofty heights of the ideal into the complexities of a local situation. Rather, it is something that those most intimately and specifically involved with an institution—you yourselves—must undertake. My remarks about these characteristics of Jesuit education are merely intended to help frame a conversation and discussion for you to have among yourselves and with those most knowledgeable about Georgetown university. It is also important to keep in mind throughout this talk that according to the paradigm of Jesuit education, the purpose of evaluation is not only to detect mistakes and errors made in decision-making, but also to reach out for the *magis*, the more, in order to face new challenges and to welcome new opportunities.

The first of Ledesma's purposes is not in danger of disappearing. On the contrary, the practical purpose of the university, the *Utilitas*, sometimes threatens to overwhelm everything else. To focus exclusively on the pragmatic elements of education, only on economic advancement, merely on scientific technological progress, solely on business interests, can easily isolate the practical purpose of a university to a narrow academic perspective that turns the three other purposes of university life into mere abstractions. Rather, a Jesuit university will be eminently practical when it continues to insist upon an integral formation and a holistic approach to education as you are doing so well. It has *Utilitas* because it addresses the obvious need for human society to consider technological progress and all the scientific specialities in the light of deeper human, ethical, and social implications, so that science and technology serve humanity and do not lead to its destruction. It is the university that has to take the lead in promoting this holistic approach in the service of mankind and Georgetown, thanks to your efforts, is doing that.

The term *Justitia* expresses Ledesma's stress on the need to educate women and men so they can embrace and promote readily and willingly all that must be done to build up just social, economic and political structures that preserve our common humanity. In spite of the strong individualistic impulses in us, a Jesuit university should succeed in transforming its students into women and men for others as Father Arrupe so often repeated, but also and even more these days into women and men with others. Indeed, impelled by the positive effects of globalization, the accent now falls heavily and happily on the preposition "with" — on fruitful partnership — not only from the side of the individual person but also from the side of the university itself. More than ever, the university cannot be just an isolated island or an ivory tower: it has to reach out and make its specific academic ways of doing things available to enrich educational systems locally, nationally, and internationally, quite aware that all these initiatives will ultimately enhance the institution itself. Georgetown, because of its location in the capital city of the United States, has particular international responsibilities. And I am grateful to Georgetown for reaching out to more and more countries in need.

Much more complex is Father Ledesma's third purpose: to give ornament, splendor, and perfection to our rational nature. With this grandiose expression Father Ledesma tells us that he believed passionately that Jesuit education was and is about the formation of more fully human persons and that this humanistic creed and tradition should have impact on every aspect and every discipline of the Jesuit educational enterprise. This humanistic tradition does not limit itself to a *mens sana in corpore sano*, a healthy mind in a healthy body. Instead, right from its beginning, Jesuit education has consisted in a struggle for human dignity and human rights, enlightened freedom of conscience and responsible freedom of speech, respectful dialogue and patient promotion of justice.

The best way to achieve this purpose in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was through the broadly humanising potential of the humanities. Father John O'Malley, in one of his many interesting writings, recalls that during his own Jesuit training, superiors stated with conviction that the intensive study of the classics was the best means for training the human mind. In the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, in spite of the official backing of the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum*, the *Studia Humanitatis*—humanities studies—in actual fact were quickly shrinking as they were absorbed by other faculties or as they became one speciality among many other specialities. They were more or less saved by a compulsory *studium generale* and this still exists in many of our universities. Already in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in this holy building, the Jesuit Christopher Clavius (1537 – 1612) fought against the philosophers who taught, and they were Jesuits, that “mathematical sciences are not sciences.” Clavius insisted that science and technology should be seen in the same humanistic tradition, stating that since “the mathematical disciplines in fact require truth, delight in truth, and honour truth . . . there can be no doubt that they must be conceded the first place among all the other sciences.”<sup>5</sup> Today, when the scholar committed to solving speculative intellectual problems through study and research encounters on the same campus the skilled professional who has mastered all the technicalities of his or her speciality including technical jargon, both should give thanks to their *alma mater* for the ornament, splendor, and perfection to their rational nature, the *Humanitas* of Ledesma's vision.

This openness and willingness to explore scientifically all that is human leads logically to the fourth purpose of a university: the religious dimension. In the most profound sense, *Fides* is commitment to the search for the fullness of truth. In the wording of Ledesma, the rigorous intellectual activity it presupposes shines beyond the mere presence of a university chapel, a department of religious sciences, or even a faculty of theology. The university as university should propose and defend the Christian faith as a bulwark of religion, and it should shine as a beacon that helps every human being encounter The Lord who stands at the beginning of every human life and who will be there to welcome us at the end. In the case of a Jesuit university that seeks to be faithful to its name, this ultimate purpose of the university's activities should be explicitly present in all its options and choices, all its projects and plans.

For, when all is said and done, the cornerstone of Jesuit education is finally not a manual or a charter, but a Person, a Person who taught, by word and by life-style, God's vision and values, in order to build up and to save humanity in all things. In this sense Jesuit universities remain crucial institutional settings in human society. After centuries of unflagging commitment from the Society of Jesus, a Jesuit university does not stand in need of any fresh defence; however, the way a university's Jesuit identity will be lived out does need, always, ever new structures and expressions in research and in teaching, in academic organization and in the

many forms of science, all situated in a particular socio-political place and cultural mission.

In the never-ending process of discerning how to make better the practical, social, humanistic, and religious dimensions of a Jesuit university, leadership plays a decisive role. Your leadership as members of the Board of Directors is clearly crucial as you ask yourselves again and again, "How effectively does Georgetown incarnate Father Ledesma's four characteristics? What programs and policies does it have in place to support, promote, and extend the commitment to its Catholic and Jesuit character? What resources need to be available to accomplish the mission? What obstacles must be removed in order to free the energies required to enable Georgetown to become more and more what it claims to be? As you ask these questions, I hope and pray you are particularly demanding of your Jesuit Board Members in insisting that they help you use the Ignatian Examen as a tool for your governance.

As you know, in addition to decisive leadership, personnel play a crucial role in Jesuit education. We all know that there is simply no substitute for good teachers, good staff members, and good administrators at a good university. You as Board Members make sure that the pieces are in place for the selection, training, and retention of the finest possible faculty, staff, and administration. When the Roman College, the mother of the Gregoriana, started, the staff was exclusively Jesuit. In the four handbooks and charters – the *Ratios* produced by the Jesuits between 1565 and 1599—only Jesuits are mentioned, except in the method of punishment. The Jesuit professor "should not himself [use the] whip[,] for the disciplinarian ought to take care of that."<sup>6</sup> Thus we can see that the first instance of Jesuit—Lay partnership was born out of a need to have the laity do the dirty work. Later, there was a need to ask non-Jesuits to join the faculty in order to address governmental regulations and to cover specialisations for which no Jesuit was trained. Later still, the starkly decreasing numbers of competent Jesuits led to the inclusion of non-Jesuits in order to assure the survival of many contemporary universities.

It took us some time, but eventually we hard-headed Jesuits began to realize that the hand of the Lord might be directing us to realize that selecting the finest possible faculty, staff, and administration might involve people outside the Society of Jesus. Just as the instinct that Jesuits should not administer corporal punishment grew into the conviction that no one should use corporal punishment in a Jesuit school, so too the instinct grew that Jesuit education was considerably better if Jesuits and non-Jesuits worked together as partners, as colleagues in a common enterprise. There is no doubt that Vatican II led the whole Church to recognize that the needs of our world required increasing participation and contribution by the laity in real partnership. The Council's graced insights and our own lived experience have led us

to recognize the innate richness of collaboration, of partnership in ministry. Providing access to Ignatian spirituality for everyone involved in Jesuit education presents important opportunities to those willing to respond generously to its promptings.

The characteristics of Jesuit education flourish as never before on the level of higher learning. Our experience reveals that Jesuit institutions around the world have been revitalised as they have worked to make Ignatian spirituality and the insights of Jesuit education available to more and more people in new and exciting ways and also to learn from our partners in these enterprises. In the process, the identities and vocations appropriate to each, lay and Jesuit, have been enhanced. The General Congregation coming up in January 2008 will look again at the issue of how Jesuits can support the laity in our common mission in a partnership that is essential for the future and how we can really learn from one another in our own charisms.

A preliminary report in anticipation of General Congregation 35, based on responses from throughout the world, showed clearly that laypersons and Jesuits have been learning to cooperate with each other in a common task, a common mission. At the same time, mutual enrichment as real partners has taken place so that each person understands and appreciates his or her unique vocation in a deeper way. This process of growth in partnership is still going on; hence, its future developments may have even more surprises for us. In any case, what is already clear is the impossibility of using only one monolithic paradigm of Jesuit-lay partnership, because the wide diversity of works and ministries, tasks and challenges, contextualised by quite different civil statutes and cultural traditions, makes this impossible. The motivation to work together can be very different, from sharing a common faith to solidarity in a common cause. The mode of involvement is different as well: counsellor, advisor, director, volunteer, paid employee, and part-time worker only begin to suggest the variety of partnership that is possible. Different religious convictions or different humanistic outlooks are not necessarily reasons to be excluded from this partnership. What is central is mutual respect of each person's unique identity. In addition, the distinctiveness of the religious and the lay vocation has to be preserved. In a genuine Ignatian partnership of laity and Jesuits, each of the two partner groups must act according to its proper vocation.

I am grateful for all that is being done to foster more and more of this partnership. It presupposes a clear charter, a clear mission-statement, as the basis and foundation for a common venture. At the same time, it requires carefully conceived programs that empower all those involved in Jesuit education to acquire greater knowledge about the profound meaning of the university and its commitment to Ignatian values. However, real partnerships will only grow through shared discernment in bodies like the Board of Directors, the Board of Trustees and

through participative decision-making in the school's governing bodies. It is a sense of co-responsibility for the university that in a large variety of ways transforms the desired partnership into a reality.

I now quote from ten years ago,

Georgetown seeks to be a place where understanding is joined to commitment; where the search for truth is informed by a sense of responsibility for the life of society; where academic excellence in teaching and research is joined with the cultivation of virtue; and where a community is formed which sustains men and women in their education and their conviction that life is only lived when it is lived generously in the service of others.<sup>7</sup>

This quotation does not contain the word "partnership," but without the reality this term signifies, Georgetown would not be able to make this idea-statement a reality that motivates staff—the teaching one and the administrative one—to join in partnership with the Jesuits who have a specific responsibility to guarantee what Jesuit education means at Georgetown in solidarity with all their lay partners. For that reason the next General Congregation will, I hope, explore all that still has to be fostered and promoted so that Jesuits can be more effectively with others in mission; your input will be most welcomed. In our initial Jesuit formation and in our ongoing formation, in offering more generously the experience of the *Spiritual Exercises* to lay persons, in cooperating more collegially in mission, in investing more in the formation of lay leadership through new proposals and new initiatives, we Jesuits want to do whatever we can to share our Ignatian heritage and tradition, our educational and spiritual birthright, in the interests of promoting the common mission we share with you, our colleagues.

In the history of American Jesuit higher education, there is much to be grateful for; first to the Lord and to the Church and surely to you, to the many teachers, students, administrators, benefactors, and board members who have made it what it is today. We Jesuits thank you, our partners in mission. We are grateful for your ongoing work to deepen your knowledge of and commitment to the charisms of the Ignatian heritage. This is a life long journey. And as Ignatius said himself, it is only one among many ways to the Lord, but it is a way that many have walked before us. We Jesuits thank you for the tremendous skills and talents you bring to our work together. We owe you our deepest gratitude and support. Today, the Society of Jesus renews its pledge to walk with you Board members along what will no doubt frequently be a difficult and challenging path. But we will not walk alone. The Lord who calls us, the Lord for whom the Society of Jesus is named, will be walking with us as our Companion. Thank you so much for your patience.

#### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> See Philip Caraman, S.J., *University of the Nations*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1981).
- <sup>2</sup> *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*, (Roma: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974), vol. 107, pp. 528-9.
- <sup>3</sup> *Middle States Working Group on Jesuit and Catholic Identity*, (Loyola College, Baltimore: 20 November 1998). See William J. Byron, S.J., *Jesuit Saturdays: Sharing the Ignatian Spirit with Lay Colleagues and Friends*, (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2000).
- <sup>4</sup> Vincent J. Duminuco, S.J. (ed.), *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum, 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Perspectives*, p. 98, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000).
- <sup>5</sup> Christopher Clavius, *Opera Mathematica*, (Roma: Reinhard Eltz, 1612), vol. I, p. 5.
- <sup>6</sup> Claude Pavur, S.J. (trans.), *The Ratio Studiorum: The Official Plan for Jesuit Education*, (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2005), n. 364.
- <sup>7</sup> August 1992 Discussion Paper drafted by Georgetown Faculty and Administrators. Quoted in *Living Generously in the Service of Others*, Keynote Address to Jesuit Alumni/ae delivered by Rev. William J. Byron, S.J., Sidney, Australia, 9 July 1997.