

Meeting on mission at the frontiers

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1. It is a great joy to be with you here in Yogyakarta, gathered for the XI Congress of the World Union of Jesuit Alumni and Alumnae. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Mr Francisco Guarner, President of WUJA, and to Mr Elman Sunarlio, Chairperson of the Steering Committee, for their tireless work in bringing us together. I am equally grateful to Fr Benedictus Hari Juliawan, S.J., the outgoing Provincial of the Indonesian Province, and to the incoming Provincial, Fr Albertus Bagus Laksana, S.J., who have so graciously welcomed us. I extend particular thanks to the University of Sanata Dharma and all who made this Congress possible. I thank each of you who has travelled from near and far, from different cultures, professions and walks of life, all present and those who in some way contributed to this fraternal gathering. Together we thank the Lord for so much goodness received.

2. This XI WUJA Congress bears a title that is both an invitation and a challenge: *United in Spirit, Leading with Purpose*. These words call us to go beyond the nostalgia of our shared school years at some educational institution of the Society of Jesus, to embrace and answer a demanding call: to be companions in a mission of reconciliation and justice. Companions **united by the one Spirit** that animates the whole body of Christ, and not only by a past and/or present connection with some educational institution of Jesuit identity. **United by one and the same purpose**: to collaborate in the reconciliation of all things in Christ. The invitation is to let ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit who dwells in every human person. The challenge is to do so as members of the same body.

I. The Mission Entrusted to the Society of Jesus

3. The most recent General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (the 36th, in October–November 2016) called for the Universal Apostolic Preferences to be examined. It proposed something unprecedented: a shared discernment involving the whole apostolic body of the Society of Jesus, including Jesuit communities, apostolic works, Jesuits and companions in mission. Pope Francis was involved from the very start of the discernment, first by approving

the decrees of the General Congregation — and thus the mandate to review the Apostolic Preferences — then by taking part in designing the process to be carried out, in monitoring it, and finally in confirming its fruits. Over more than two years, a complex and consoling process of shared discernment was carried out in the communities, apostolic works, Provinces, Conferences of Major Superiors and the Council of Fr General. In a letter dated 6 February 2019, Pope Francis confirmed the discernment and **handed down the Universal Apostolic Preferences 2019–2029 as the mission entrusted by the Church to the Society of Jesus**, which were promulgated on 19 February 2019. It is worth recalling them once again, paying special attention to the verbs used in their wording:

- 4. A. **To show** the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment;*
- B. **To walk** with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice;*
- C. **To accompany** young people in the creation of a hope-filled future;*
- D. **To collaborate** in the care of our Common Home.*

5. The Holy Father placed special emphasis on the first of the preferences, highlighting its **foundational** character. Christian life, Pope Francis stressed, presupposes as a fundamental **condition** a personal and communal relationship with the Lord in prayer and discernment. Without that foundation, the rest will bear no fruit.¹

6. More recently, during his meeting with all Major Superiors of the Society of Jesus in October 2025, Pope Leo XIV **confirmed this mission** and renewed the mandate that the Society be present at the frontiers — "whether they be geographical, cultural, intellectual or spiritual."² Pope Leo XIV confirms what every Supreme Pontiff since the Second Vatican Council has entrusted to the Society of Jesus. Paul VI did so at the 32nd General Congregation (1974): that wherever in the Church there may be "the most difficult and extreme fields, at the crossroads of ideologies," there the Jesuits are to be found. Pope Benedict XVI, in a similar spirit, called for Jesuits to be "men with deep faith, sound culture, and genuine human and social sensitivity" at the frontiers where faith and reason intersect. Leo XIV takes a step further, turning the sending to the frontiers into a genuine challenge:

¹ Pope Francis, Letter to Fr Arturo Sosa, S.J., 6 February 2019.

² Pope Leo XIV, Address to the Major Superiors of the Society of Jesus, Synod Hall, 24 October 2025.

7. "These are places of risk, where familiar maps are no longer sufficient. There, like Ignatius and the Jesuit martyrs who followed him, you are called to discern, innovate and trust in Christ."³

8. The first preference regards the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola as the founding experience for discerning one's personal vocation. The Spiritual Exercises lead to the free and conscious choice of responding to the call each person has received. They are also the source of communal discernment. For this reason, one consequence of putting this preference into practice is the commitment to offer the Spiritual Exercises in as many forms as possible, giving many people, especially young people, the opportunity to make them.

9. Without a deep grounding in prayer leading to an intimate encounter with the Lord and to personal or communal discernment, there is a risk of understanding the preferences as a whole as "strategic plans" or "service projects", dissolving their profound sense of collaboration in the mission of Jesus Christ entrusted to the Church and to each of its members. As Ignatius himself discovered on his own spiritual path, it is only when we let God truly act within us that we can become authentic apostles.

10. Dear alumni and alumnae, we become companions in mission when we share the spiritual experience of setting out on the path towards God and commit ourselves to showing that path to others. It is the Spirit, with a capital S, the Holy Spirit — not just any "spirit" — who makes it possible for the diverse vocations he awakens in humanity to be joined together as a body in mission, whose head is the Lord Jesus, the crucified and risen one. The mission opens the way of justice and reconciliation for all human beings and for their relationship with the natural environment created to sustain the life that God desires.

11. I invite you to seek the opportunity to make the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius in one of the many forms in which they are offered everywhere today. What is more, I invite those who feel that call to train as guides of the Spiritual Exercises and so multiply the benefit of this wonderful apostolic instrument, which is not the monopoly of the Jesuits or of the Society of Jesus, but a gift to the Church for the better service of the redemption of humankind.

³ Ibid.

12. The experience of the Spiritual Exercises and its fruits in everyday life is the best preparation for making discernment in common the way of taking decisions by following the signs of the Holy Spirit in history.

13. We know that a good many alumni and alumnae of Jesuit educational institutions profess religions other than Christianity, or are non-believers, or have ceased to practise their religion. Many of them take an active part in the apostolic works of the Society of Jesus, united by the Spirit and sharing the same purpose. This is a sign of openness to the mystery of God, who makes no distinctions, and whose call to fullness of life is addressed, as Pope Francis never tired of repeating, to all, all, all.

II. Called to Be at the Frontiers

14. Pope Leo XIV's address to the Major Superiors of the Society was a call to apostolic imagination, courage and creativity. He placed before us a world marked by what many describe as a "change of epoch" — changes that are not only rapid but profound, in culture, economics, technology and politics — and he reminded us that into this world Christ continues to send his disciples.⁴

15. Among the frontiers proper to this change of epoch to which he sends the Society of Jesus, the Holy Father pointed to the development of technology, of which artificial intelligence is an important instance. "Technology, especially artificial intelligence," he stated, "is also an important frontier. It holds potential for human flourishing, but also carries risks of isolation, loss of work and new forms of manipulation. The Church must help guide these developments ethically, defending human dignity and promoting the common good."⁵

16. This call has found its fullest magisterial expression in Pope Leo XIV's recent encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* (15 May 2026), dedicated to safeguarding the centrality of the human person in the era of artificial intelligence.⁶ The encyclical is both a warning and an inspiration. It describes with clarity how digitalization, artificial intelligence and robotics are "already part of our daily lives," reshaping decision-making processes and profoundly affecting the

⁴ Ibid. "Today, I repeat: the Church needs you at the frontiers — whether they be geographical, cultural, intellectual or spiritual."

⁵ Ibid. "Technology, especially artificial intelligence, is also an important frontier... The Church must help guide these developments ethically, defending human dignity and promoting the common good."

⁶ Pope Leo XIV, Encyclical Letter *Magnifica Humanitas* (15 May 2026), no. 4. Hereafter cited as MH

collective imagination. Technology is not, in itself, an enemy of humanity. But neither is it neutral; it takes on the characteristics of those who devise, finance and use it.

17. To understand the possible consequences of the change humanity is undergoing, the encyclical proposes two biblical images. One is the *Tower of Babel* — a project of human self-assertion that sacrifices dignity for efficiency and seeks to dominate without God. The other is the *rebuilding of Jerusalem* under Nehemiah — a work of shared responsibility, rooted in prayer, that transforms diversity into communion and builds a city in which all have a place.⁷ Let us heed this anguished call to choose the path of Nehemiah as the way to rebuild the social fabric of humanity at the present time.

18. At the heart of *Magnifica Humanitas* is an insistence on the inalienable dignity of every human being. Every person possesses an infinite dignity, grounded in their very being, which "prevails in and beyond every circumstance, state, or situation the person may ever encounter."⁸ In the era of AI, the temptation arises to reduce persons to data and to measure human value by efficiency and output. The Church speaks with unambiguous clarity to reaffirm that the human person is always the end, never the means.

19. As Alumni and Alumnae who have drunk from Ignatian sources, each one of us is called to live and to promote the teachings of *Magnifica Humanitas* in our professional lives, in our workplaces, in our public responsibilities, in our family life. In particular, we are invited to promote the Church's social teachings, which advocate ethical frameworks for the use of Artificial Intelligence. Therefore, we are called to promote resistance to every form of algorithmic discrimination, and to insist on transparency and accountability on the part of those who manage technological tools such as Artificial Intelligence. Likewise, we are called to defend the dignity of workers whose livelihoods and working conditions are threatened by the growing use of technological tools in production tasks. Above all, we are called never to cease cultivating those irreplaceable dimensions of human life: love, friendship, conscience, and affective relationship. No machine invented by human beings will ever be able to simulate them, still less replace them.⁹

⁷ MH, no 10

⁸ MH, no 53 (citing the Declaration *Dignitas Infinita*, 2024).

⁹ MH, no 15: "In the era of artificial intelligence, when human dignity is threatened by new forms of dehumanisation, ours is the pressing duty to remain profoundly human."

20. We live in a world torn apart by wars and many forms of violence, growing political polarisation, populisms sustaining personalist and authoritarian leaderships, the creation of false realities leading to the misnamed post-truth, and profound divisions of every kind. We are sent on a mission of justice and reconciliation in that context. *Magnifica Humanitas* invites us to become **artisans of dialogue** as a means of fostering fraternity and contributing to the building of a civilisation of love.

21. Dialogue is not weakness. On the contrary, it is the courageous act of recognising the other as brother or sister. To you, as Alumni and Alumnae of Jesuit educational institutes and universities, formed in the Ignatian tradition, this call is addressed in a special way: to be bridges between cultures, between generations, between the powerful and the vulnerable. To be a bridge is a way of risking one's own life. A bridge works when people can cross over it. Jesus on the cross is the bridge between every age of history, every culture, all humanity, and the God who is all love.

III. Companions in a mission of reconciliation and justice

22. "United in the Spirit" is not merely a beautiful phrase to inspire so important a Congress. It refers to something very fundamental, namely, to that which gives meaning to the Associations of Alumni and Alumnae, and to their World Federation. It refers to that which goes beyond having spent much or little time in educational institutions inspired by the charism of the Society of Jesus. It refers to sharing that charism, transformed into a bond of union that makes us companions in the mission of reconciliation and justice.

23. Because I carry them in my heart, I reiterate today, with greater conviction and greater force, the words I spoke on the occasion of the 10th WUJA Congress in Barcelona in 2022: "The invitation that the Lord is making to us, that is, to you and to us — the Society of Jesus and its Alumni and Alumnae — is that we learn to collaborate as companions in a shared mission."¹⁰

24. Jesuits, and so many other people who meet day by day in the Society's apostolates, have progressed over these four years in the difficult process of learning to relate to one another as companions in mission. As I said then: "we have come to understand that God was calling us to a culture of collaboration in which each person contributes his or her gifts, in a most beautiful

¹⁰ Sosa, S.J., Arturo, Address at the 10th WUJA Congress, Barcelona, 14 July 2022, no. 20.

expression of the apostolic body, where everyone carries out complementary and mutually enriching work."¹¹ Four years ago I put it as a challenge: "To us, Jesuits and the apostolic body of the Society, the Lord is insistently calling us to open ourselves to a broad collaboration with others, to share what we are and what we have, to learn from others and to be enriched by the rich diversity that reflects the generosity of the gifts God bestows upon all humanity. You have drunk from Ignatian spirituality and from that Ignatian *magis* that leads us to be dissatisfied with things as they are when they could be better. Let us keep asking how we can put into practice new ways of working together in the reconciliation of all things in Christ."¹²

25. *United in the Spirit* means being part of the same apostolic body, which also has a clearly defined purpose. The image of the body can help us understand the beauty of this invitation. St Paul uses it to explain what being united in spirit means: "There are different gifts, but the same Spirit; there are different ministries, but the same Lord; there are different works, but the same God who accomplishes all things in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."¹³ And he explains further:

26. "For all of us, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, were baptised in one Spirit so as to form one body, and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. The body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I do not need you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I do not need you.'"¹⁴

27. Ignatius of Loyola uses the image of the body to explain how the Society of Jesus is made up of such varied persons, engaged in very diverse apostolic works... deeply united in mind and heart. The Society of Jesus, like the Church, is not an organisation that reproduces exactly the same operating model in each of the many places where it is present. It is *universal* because

¹¹ Ibid. nr 21

¹² Ibid. nr 26

¹³ 1Cor 12, 4-7

¹⁴ 1Cor 12, 13-22

it recognises diversity as God's gift for constituting a complete body, capable of carrying out complex actions. Building a body out of diverse persons, with different characteristics, is possible if they are united by the spirit in a unity of purpose, complementing one another. The universal body of the Society has Jesus as its head and as the guarantee of a leadership with purpose.

28. Earlier, I referred to the Universal Apostolic Preferences as the concrete expression of the shared purpose in which we are united in spirit. We have received them from the Holy Father as our specific way of collaborating in the mission of Christ as members of the Church: "we have followed the Holy Spirit, who has guided and inspired us... The universal apostolic preferences will help us overcome every form of self-centredness and corporatism, so that we may become authentic collaborators in the Lord's mission, which we share with so many people within and outside the Church."¹⁵

29. If we choose to respond to the call contained in this invitation, we become part of one and the same body. Each of our persons, cultures, groups, associations... possesses diverse gifts that can complement one another to form a body capable of collaborating in the one mission of Christ. It is important to understand this properly: we do not simply work together. We are companions in the deepest sense of the word: we share the same bread, we walk the same path, we serve the same Lord. Collaboration is not merely a practical arrangement born of necessity; it belongs to the very nature of our vocation and expresses something essential about who we are as Church.

30. The Society of Jesus contributes its specific charism, which includes the life of prayer, the Spiritual Exercises, apostolic discernment in common, intellectual rigour, and, for those called to religious life, a particular way of proceeding according to its Constitutions and Complementary Norms. Sharing the charism from the lay vocation brings to the apostolate of the body professional experience, creativity, and a presence in family life and in the worlds of culture, politics, economics, science and the arts. Neither is complete without the other. Each vocation enriches the other, and together we form an apostolic body that is greater than the sum of its parts. Both Jesuits and laypeople are called by the Lord to serve the one mission of Christ

¹⁵ Sosa, S.J., Arturo, Address at the 10th WUJA Congress, Barcelona, 14 July 2022, no. 37.

entrusted to the Church, each according to the vocation to which they have been called and the state of life chosen to respond to it. Becoming companions is not a strategy; it is a grace.

31. In recent decades, our schools and apostolic works have evolved into genuinely collaborative communities, in which laypeople, Jesuits, and other religious men and women work together as true partners in mission. Many Alumni and Alumnae hold positions of leadership in Jesuit institutions. This is not simply a response to the declining number of Jesuits; it is a sign of the times, a movement of the Spirit, and a fruit of the vision of the Second Vatican Council. What began as practical collaboration has revealed itself to be something deeper: a shared sense of mission that is itself a form of apostolate, a living witness to the communion that lies at the heart of the Gospel.

32. This common mission demands of all of us — Jesuits and laypersons alike — a genuine formation of the spirit: personal commitment to gospel values, familiarity with the Ignatian spiritual tradition, and a practice of discernment, both personal and communal. It calls us to move beyond a merely professional relationship towards something that can be understood as a vocational relationship, in which each person understands that they have been called by God, through their particular gifts and circumstances, to this apostolic service. Sharing work and formation among laypersons, religious and Jesuits makes possible the complementarity needed to function as a body, to which each one contributes their specific gifts in a communion born of union in spirit.

33. The Second Vatican Council expressed this vision with great clarity. *Apostolicam Actuositatem* teaches that the laity "are given this special vocation: to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where only through them can she become the salt of the earth."¹⁶ And *Lumen Gentium* insists that the whole People of God — not only the clergy and religious — shares in the prophetic, priestly and kingly mission of Christ.¹⁷ We cannot fulfil this mission without one another. The lay vocation is neither secondary nor derivative; it is a full and irreplaceable participation in the mission of Christ, exercised

¹⁶ Second Vatican Council, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, no. 2.

¹⁷ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 31.

precisely in the midst of the world which the whole Church is sent to serve through the mission of redemption.

34. Among the Alumni and Alumnae, as I have already noted, there are a considerable number who do not profess the Catholic faith. Nonetheless, inspired by the values of the Jesuit education they have received, they commit themselves wholeheartedly to justice, solidarity and care for the natural environment. Quite a few of them collaborate generously in the service of humanity and are truly welcome partners in this common endeavour. The Ignatian tradition has always been universal and inclusive in its reach; it has sought to find God in all things and to serve the human family in all its magnificent diversity. Our apostolic body is enriched by every person of goodwill who contributes their gifts, their conscience and their commitment to this shared work.

35. Christianity became a universal experience when the apostles and the first communities experienced how the Holy Spirit acted freely and everywhere. It is worth recalling the experience of the apostle Peter, called to step outside the boundaries of his own religious tradition and recognise the presence of the Holy Spirit in the house of the centurion Cornelius in Caesarea. From the account in the Acts of the Apostles, I take these lines:

36. Peter then said: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but accepts anyone, from any nation, who fears him and does what is right.

(...) While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening. The believers who had come from Judaism were astonished to see that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said: "Can anyone withhold the water for baptising these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"¹⁸

37. Among the challenges of this change of era for our discernment is that of perceiving where the Holy Spirit is active and evident today. The Society on mission requires, concretely, a culture of discernment in common — that is, acquiring a permanent disposition to listen to one another, developing the sensitivity that allows us to perceive the *signs of the times*, the habit of making decisions together, learning to be accountable, and recognising that the Spirit of God acts in every member of the apostolic body. It requires us to move beyond individualism and institutional self-sufficiency towards a genuine interdependence, in which Jesuits and laypeople, men and women, people of different beliefs and backgrounds, discover that they

¹⁸ Acts 10:34-35, 44-47.

need one another in order to contribute in the best possible way to the mission. This is the kind of apostolic collaboration to which the Society's General Congregations have insistently called us, and it is the kind that WUJA is especially well placed to model and promote.

IV. The Synodal Way

38. Pope Leo XIV, at the Meeting of Major Superiors, observed: “An important frontier today is the path of synodality within the Church. The synodal path calls us all to listen more deeply to the Holy Spirit and to one another, so that our structures and ministries may become more agile, more transparent and more responsive to the Gospel.”

39. The path towards a synodal Church is not understood or accepted by everyone. The synodal path seeks to put into practice the way in which the Second Vatican Council understands the Church, namely, as the People of God gathered to carry forward together the evangelising mission entrusted by Jesus himself, the crucified and risen one, to the followers whom he made apostles. Using the words that inspire this XI Congress, we might say that it is a matter of walking with purpose, united in the Spirit. Walking together is the way of recognising the newness that Jesus Christ brings to history: the gift of his life opens the way to Life for all human beings, and it is on this that we found our Hope.

40. In other words, the Holy Father is asking us to live this shared mission in a synodal manner, that is, by listening to everyone, including all people of goodwill, and by walking together in a spirit of discernment and communion. Pope Leo XIV, from the very first moment of his pontificate, placed the synodal journey at the centre of his vision of the Church, describing it as "a missionary Church, a Church that builds bridges and fosters dialogue, a Church always open to welcoming... all those who need our charity, our presence, our willingness to dialogue, and our love."¹⁹

41. The path of synodality calls for generously sharing the experience of discernment that has formed part of the charism and way of proceeding of the Society of Jesus since its foundation. The more Jesuits and laypeople, including Alumni and Alumnae, are formed in the art of spiritual discernment — both personal and communal — the more we shall be able to help

¹⁹ General Secretariat of the Synod, *Pathways for the Implementation Phase of the Synod 2025–2028* (29 June 2025), p. 3.

build a Church and a world that truly listens, that perceives the movements of the Spirit, and that makes decisions not by the logic of power but by the logic of love.

42. Pope Francis warned us time and time again against the dangers of clericalism, that tendency by which some — almost always ordained ministers, but laypeople too — act as though only they had the answer, closing themselves off from the gifts of others. Synodality is the genuine antidote to clericalism, for it recognises that the Holy Spirit speaks through all the baptised, and that the whole People of God has the task of discerning the signs of the times.

43. I should like to draw your attention to a specific initiative called "Ignite the Way", a programme designed to form laypeople, Jesuits, priests and religious of other congregations in the practice of discernment, both at a personal and at a communal level. Making use of this initiative to strengthen unity in the Spirit around our shared purpose can be a contribution of Alumni and Alumnae to the synodal path. The formation of discerning communities is one of the most urgent contributions we can make to the Church and to the world today.

V. Interculturality: Frontier and Grace

44. Looking around this hall, I see a beautiful image of humanity in its diversity: men and women from different nations, languages, cultures and backgrounds, gathered by a common formation and a common call. This is not accidental. It reflects what I have called, in a reflection some years ago, the vocation of interculturality, in which the various members of the universal body are not only complementary to one another, but mutually enrich one another.

45. Interculturality is not merely the peaceful coexistence of people from different backgrounds under one roof. It is a deeper and more demanding gift: "a mutual exchange between cultures that can lead to the transformation and enrichment of all those involved."²⁰ It begins with acquiring a critical awareness of one's own culture, and moves forward through genuine encounter with the other from a different culture, creating solid human bonds that allow us to share life's purpose, united in the spirit, each contributing their own cultural heritage to the pluralistic unity of a world in which every culture and every person finds a place. The universality to which the Gospel calls us can only be lived out through interculturality.

²⁰ Arturo Sosa, S.J., "Interculturality, Catholicity and Consecrated Life," 24 May 2017.

46. For WUJA, interculturality is both a frontier and a grace. It is a frontier because it demands that we move beyond the comfortable familiarity of our own institution, our own nation, our own class, opening ourselves to encounter with other environments and to respond to the wider needs of humanity. It is a grace, because when we truly open ourselves to encounter with different persons or cultures, we grow in our humanity and become sensitive to discovering the action of the Holy Spirit in new faces, new cultures, new ways of being human. The Spirit is not confined to any particular culture; the Spirit is capable of fostering encounter and enriching exchange between diverse cultures.

47. The Apostolic Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* of the Second Vatican Council expressed this with memorable words: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ."²¹ This is the intercultural heart of the Gospel: nothing genuinely human is foreign to those who open themselves to the Spirit that unites. The Society of Jesus desires that those who receive an education inspired by its tradition should acquire sensitivity and openness to the gift of interculturality as a dimension of feeling ourselves united in the Spirit and directing our lives towards a shared purpose: reconciliation, justice and peace.

48. Indeed, interculturality is a powerful contribution to world peace. A world torn apart by ideological conflicts, religious fundamentalism and political polarisation desperately needs of people who have learnt to relate to the other with openness and respect, capable of being enriched by encounter and of offering their own experience in turn. This is precisely what Jesuit education proposes, at its best: men and women capable of dialogue, of building bridges, of listening before speaking.²² In your professional lives, in your communities, in your civic and political responsibilities, be those bridges.

VI. An educational tradition with a past, a present and a future

49. In an inspiring address on education at Santa Clara University (13 May 2000), Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach insisted that the true test of Jesuit education lies in what its Alumni and Alumnae go on to become. We might say, in the context of this XI Congress, that it is the

²¹ Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 1.

²² Sosa, S.J., Arturo, "Interculturality, Catholicity and Consecrated Life," 24 May 2017.

commitment of the Alumni and Alumnae of the Society of Jesus to the transformation of social relationships — making possible a dignified life for all human beings, lived in healthy harmony with the environment — that gives meaning to the educational endeavour to which the apostolic body is committed.

50. In an earlier address on Ignatian pedagogy, Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach (1993) recalled that: “the aim of Jesuit education is the formation of men and women for others, people of competence, conscience and compassionate commitment.”²³ These four qualities — widely known as **the 4Cs** — express the human excellence that Jesuit institutions seek to cultivate in all who pass through them.

51. The International Seminar on Ignatian Pedagogy and Spirituality (SIPEI), held in Manresa in 2014, explored in depth what these four qualities mean in the context of our rapidly changing world. A *competent* person is one who possesses not only academic knowledge, but the capacity to learn, to question, to act wisely, and to serve others with their abilities. A person of *conscience* is one who has cultivated an interior life, capable of distinguishing between good and evil, and who is guided not merely by social pressure but by the deeper movements of the Spirit within them. A *compassionate* person is one who has opened their heart to the suffering of others, recognising in every person the face of God. And a *committed* person is one who moves from feeling to action, working with courage and perseverance to transform unjust structures and build a more fraternal world.

52. In the light of *Magnifica Humanitas*, **the 4Cs** open new perspectives for an education that forms, in the present, for the future. *Competence* now includes digital literacy and choosing the ethical use of technology. *Conscience* must also extend into the digital realm, with the capacity to discern what truly serves human dignity. *Compassion* must reach those excluded by the digital divide, as well as by other forms of social exclusion. And *commitment* must include the struggle for just regulation of the use of artificial intelligence and of the whole digital world.

53. This year also marks the 40th anniversary of the document *Characteristics of Jesuit Education*, coming almost four centuries after the publication of the *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599. The characteristics identified in that document remain valid and vital today. They have since been deepened and expanded in *Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach* (1993) and *Jesuit*

²³ Kolvenbach, S.J., Peter-Hans, "Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach," Villa Cavalletti, 29 April 1993.

Education: A Living Tradition (2019). Taken together, these documents offer a rich vision of the education proposed in the educational institutions under the responsibility of the Society of Jesus — an education that seeks to go beyond the mere transmission of knowledge, offering instead the conditions for the integral formation of the whole person, heart, mind and will, and promoting the commitment to serve others for the glory of God.

Concluding words

54. I am confident that this XI WUJA Congress will gather in the fruits of the road travelled so far, and will sow the seeds of what is to be harvested in the future. You have come here hearing a call and ready to answer it by helping to make use of every available resource to make this *change of era* an advance in humanity — overcoming every kind of discrimination, exclusion, domination or instrumentalization of other persons, cultures or peoples. The "law of the strongest", expressed in so many forms of violence and in endless wars, cannot continue to prevail; we wish to help replace it with **dialogue** among those who recognise one another as brothers and sisters, capable of finding ways to resolve conflicts that lead to peaceful coexistence and to harmony with nature.

55. WUJA will emerge strengthened from this XI Congress if it sets itself concrete and achievable steps for advancing, in the years ahead, in union in the Spirit and in shared purpose — steps that can be taken up and put into practice at every level of the organisation. In this way, WUJA can grow in its contribution to the mission of reconciliation and justice. We are well aware of how complex and how long the road to peace is. One essential requirement is the patient and persistent commitment of those who know that, ultimately, it is the Lord who is at work. He is the protagonist, and he calls us to cooperate.

56. I am deeply grateful to the Lord for all that is being achieved through WUJA in so many parts of the world. I am especially grateful for what we continue to advance as *partners* in the mission entrusted to the Society of Jesus.

57. Thank you very much, too, for having reserved this space for me to share with you, reflections, concerns, and a desire to grow together in better service to humanity, to the Church, and to the Lord who gave his life for each and every one of us.

(Original: Spanish)

