



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF LOYOLA UNIVERSITY, CHICAGO**

*Hall of Popes
Monday, 20 May 2024*

[Multimedia]

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

I greet your President and all of you, members of the Board of Trustees of Loyola University in Chicago, who are on pilgrimage to the places where Saint Ignatius of Loyola was born and grew up. “Setting out on a journey is traditionally associated with our human quest for meaning in life” (*Spes Non Confundit*, 5): always keep alive in you this desire to go on a journey, on pilgrimage. Your experience of visiting the places that shaped Ignatius’ life and spirituality has surely enriched and inspired you on your path of academic and personal formation. This has been a visit to your roots.

In order to move forward, you should always go back to your roots. You cannot move forward without roots, from which you draw your strength: you draw your strength from the roots. So go back to your roots in order to move forward. The roots of your institution lie in the experience of the Founder, Saint Ignatius, who always put God first and was constantly seeking God’s will. This resulted in his diligent striving for service. Move forward in order *to serve*. May his spiritual path, marked by discernment and commitment to justice, continue to inspire and guide your life and activity.

Indeed, Loyola University is inspired by the tradition of the Society of Jesus, founded on discernment and action. This tradition nowadays calls you to search for the truth through deep reflection, attentive listening and courageous action. I encourage you to persevere on this path, to

be witnesses of hope in a world often marked by division and conflict. Thank God there are conflicts, yet conflicts are resolved on another, higher level. Conflicts cause us to walk in mazes, and you get out of a maze from above and not on your own. Conflict encourages us to cooperate. So persevere on this path, which teaches you to cultivate a critical sense, the capacity for discernment and sensitivity to global challenges. Always ask yourselves the question: how can our university contribute to making our world a better place? Always strive for the best!

At a time in history marked by rapid changes and increasingly complex challenges, the role of academic institutions is essential. Yours is the task not only of forming fine minds, but also of developing generous hearts and consciences attentive to the dignity of every person. Education happens on three levels: the head, the heart and the hands. Think about what you feel and do, feel what you think and do, and do what you think and feel. Yet these three things should always be in harmony. Education is not just a transmission of knowledge, but a commitment and method of forming people who are able to embody the values of reconciliation and justice in every aspect of their lives. The mind must be formed so that the heart can be generous, able to engage with reality and the demands of the times, and the hands must be able to work actively. Form hard-working dreamers! And above all, be so yourselves! To move forward in life, we need to dream. A person who has lost the ability to dream lacks creativity, lacks poetry, and life without poetry does not work.

I encourage you to cultivate your intellectual curiosity – which is not idle chatter or gossip, which is harmful, no, cultivate intellectual curiosity – your spirit of cooperation and your sensitivity to the challenges of contemporary times, carrying on the legacy of Saint Ignatius. We need men and women who are ready to put their skills at the service of others, to work for a future in which each person can achieve his or her potential and live with dignity and respect, and in which the world can find peace. I am very much struck by this today: amidst the crisis in the global order the thought of a possible future seems to be lacking. And without hope we cannot live. Let us not forget hope, which is an anchor on the shore and we cling to its rope. Hope never disappoints!

I commend to you especially intercultural and interreligious dialogue as a means of fostering mutual understanding, cooperation and the building of bridges between different traditions, cultures and worldviews.

May God bless you and accompany you in your journey, a journey of knowledge and service. I pray for you, but, please, pray for me, because this job is not easy! I will remember you in my prayers and I ask you, please, to pray for me as well. Thank you!