

IGNATIAN PEDAGOGY TODAY

An Address by
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Delivered to the Participants at the
International Workshop on
"IGNATIAN PEDAGOGY: A PRACTICAL APPROACH"
Villa Cavalletti, April 29, 1993

CONTEXT: CHRISTIAN HUMANISM TODAY

- (116) I begin by setting our efforts today within the context of the tradition of Jesuit Education. From its origins in the 16th century, Jesuit education has been dedicated to the development and transmission of a genuine Christian humanism. This humanism had two roots: the distinctive spiritual experiences of Ignatius Loyola, and the cultural, social and religious challenges of Renaissance and Reformation Europe.
- (117) The spiritual root of this humanism is indicated in the final contemplation of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Here Ignatius has the retreatant ask for an intimate knowledge of how God dwells in persons, giving them understanding and making them in God's own image and likeness, and to consider how God works and labors in all created things on behalf of each person. This understanding of God's relation to the world implies that faith in God and affirmation of all that is truly human are inseparable from each other. This spirituality enabled the first Jesuits to appropriate the humanism of the Renaissance and to found a network of educational institutions that were innovative and responsive to the urgent needs of their time. Faith and the enhancement of humanitas went hand in hand.
- (118) Since the Second Vatican Council we have been recognizing a profound new challenge that calls for a new form of Christian humanism with a distinctively societal emphasis. The Council stated that the "split between the faith that many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age" (GS 43). The world appears to us in pieces, chopped up, broken.
- (119) The root issue is this: what does faith in God mean in the face of Bosnia and Sudan, Guatemala and Haiti, Auschwitz and Hiroshima, the teeming streets of Calcutta and the broken bodies in Tiananmen Square? What is Christian humanism in the face of starving millions of men, women and children in Africa? What is Christian humanism as we view millions of people uprooted from their own countries by persecution and terror, and forced to seek a new life in foreign lands? What is Christian humanism when we see the homeless that roam our cities and the growing underclass who are reduced to permanent hopelessness. What is humanistic education in this context? A disciplined sensitivity to human misery and exploitation is not a single political doctrine or a system of economics. It is a humanism, a humane sensibility to be achieved anew within the demands of our

own times and as a product of an education whose ideal continues to be motivated by the great commandments --love of God and love of neighbor.

- (120) In other words, late twentieth-century Christian humanism necessarily includes social humanism. As such it shares much with the ideals of other faiths in bringing God's love to effective expression in building a just and peaceful kingdom of God on earth. Just as the early Jesuits made distinctive contributions to the humanism of the 16th century through their educational innovations, we are called to a similar endeavor today. This calls for creativity in every area of thought, education, and spirituality. It will also be the product of an Ignatian pedagogy that serves faith through reflective inquiry into the full meaning of the Christian message and its exigencies for our time. Such a service of faith, and the promotion of justice which it entails, is the fundament of contemporary Christian humanism. It is at the heart of the enterprise of Catholic and Jesuit education today. This is what *The Characteristics of Jesuit Education* refer to as "human excellence". This is what we mean when we say that the goal of Jesuit education is the formation of men and women for others, people of competence, conscience and compassionate commitment.

THE SOCIETY'S REPLY TO THIS CONTEXT

- (121) Just a decade ago a request came from many parts of the world for a more contemporary statement of the essential principles of Jesuit pedagogy. The need was felt in light of notable changes and emerging new governmental regulations concerning curriculum, student body composition, and the like; in light of the felt need to share our pedagogy with increasing numbers of lay teachers who were unfamiliar with Jesuit education, in light of the Society's mission in the Church today, and especially in light of the changing, ever more bewildering context in which young people are growing up today. Our response was the document describing the *Characteristics of Jesuit Education* today. But that document which was very well received throughout the world of Jesuit education provoked a more urgent question. How? How do we move from an understanding of the principles guiding Jesuit education today to the practical level of making these principles real in the daily interaction between teachers and students? For it is here in the challenge and the excitement of the teaching-learning process that these principles can have effect. This workshop in which you are participating seeks to provide the practical pedagogical methods that can answer the crucial question: how do we make the *Characteristics of Jesuit Education* real in the classroom? The *Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm* presents a framework to incorporate the crucial element of reflection into learning. Reflection can provide the opportunity for students themselves to consider the human meaning and the implications of what they study.
- (122) Amid all the conflicting demands on their time and energies your students are searching for meaning for their lives. They know that nuclear holocaust is more than a madman's dream. Unconsciously at least, they suffer from fear of life in a world held together by a balance of terror more than by bonds of love. Already many young people have been exposed to very cynical interpretations of man: he is a sack of egoistic drives, each demanding instant gratification; he is the innocent victim of inhuman systems over which he has no control. Due to mounting economic pressures in many countries around the world, many students in developed countries seem excessively preoccupied with career training and self-fulfillment to the exclusion of broader human growth. Does this not point to their excessive insecurity? But beneath their fears, often covered over with an air of bravado, and beneath their bewilderment at the differing interpretations of man, is their

desire for a unifying vision of the meaning of life and of their own selves. In many developing countries, the young people with whom you work experience the threat of famine and the terrors of war. They struggle to hope that human life has value and a future in the ashes of devastation which is the only world they have ever experienced. In other countries where poverty grinds the human spirit, modern media cynically project the good life in terms of opulence and consumerism. Is it any wonder that our students in all parts of the world are confused, uncertain about life's meaning?

- (123) During their years in a secondary school, young men and women are still relatively free to listen and to explore. The world has not yet closed in on them. They are concerned about the deeper questions of the "why" and "wherefore" of life. They can dream impossible dreams and be stirred by the vision of what might be. The Society has committed so much of its personnel and resources to the education of young people precisely because they are questing for the sources of life "beyond academic excellence." Surely, every teacher worthy of the name must believe in young people and want to encourage their reaching for the stars. This means that your own unifying vision of life must be tantalizingly attractive to your students, inviting them to dialogue on the things that count. It must encourage them to internalize attitudes of deep and universal compassion for their suffering fellow men and women and to transform themselves into men and women of peace and justice, committed to be agents of change in a world which recognizes how widespread is injustice, how pervasive the forces of oppression, selfishness and consumerism.
- (124) Admittedly, this is not an easy task. Like all of us in our pre-reflective years, your students have unconsciously accepted values which are incompatible with what truly leads to human happiness. More than young people of a previous generation, your students have more "reasons" for walking away in sadness when they see the implications of a Christian vision of life and basic change of worldview which leads to rejection of softness and the distortedly glamorous image of life purveyed in slick magazines and cheap films. They are exposed, as perhaps no generation in history, to the lure of drugs and the flight from painful reality which they promise.
- (125) These young men and women need confidence as they look to their future; they need strength as they face their own weakness; they need mature understanding and love in the teachers of all areas of the curriculum with whom they explore the awesome mystery of life. Do they not remind us of that young student of the University of Paris of four and one-half centuries ago whom Inigo befriended and transformed into the Apostle of the Indies?
- (126) These are the young men and women whom you are called to lead to be open to the Spirit, willing to accept the seeming defeat of redemptive love; in short, eventually to become principled leaders ready to shoulder society's heavier burdens and to witness to the faith that does justice.
- (127) I urge you to have great confidence that your students are called to be leaders in their world; help them to know that they are respected and loveable. Freed from the fetters of ideology and insecurity, introduce them to a more complete vision of the meaning of man

and woman, and equip them for service to their brothers and sisters, sensitive to and deeply concerned about using their influence to right social wrongs and to bring wholesome values into each of their professional, social and private lines. The example of your own social sensitivity and concern will be a major source of inspiration for them.

- (128) This apostolic aim needs, however, to be translated into practical programs and appropriate methods in the real world of the school. One of the characteristic Ignatian qualities, revealed in the *Spiritual Exercises*, the 4th part of the *Constitutions*, and in many of his letters is Ignatius' insistence simultaneously upon the highest ideals and the most concrete means to achieve them. Vision without appropriate method may be perceived as sterile platitude; while method without unifying vision is frequently passing fashion or gadgetry.
- (129) An example of this Ignatian integration in teaching is found in the *Protrepticon* or *Exhortation to the Teachers in the Secondary Schools of the Society of Jesus* written by Fr. Francesco Sacchini, the second official historian of the Society a few years after the publication of the *Ratio* of 1599. In the Preface he remarks: "Among us the education of youth is not limited to imparting the rudiments of grammar, but extends simultaneously to Christian formation." The Epitome, adopting the distinction between "instruction" and "education" understood as character formation, lays it down that schoolmasters are to be properly prepared in methods of instruction **and** in the art of **educating**. The Jesuit educational tradition has always insisted that the adequate criterion for success in Jesuit schools is not simply mastery of propositions, formulae, philosophies and the like. The test is in deeds, not words: what will our students **do** with the empowerment which is their education? Ignatius was interested in getting educated men and women to work for the betterment of others, and erudition is not enough for this purpose. If the effectiveness of one's education is to be employed generously, a person has to be both good and learned. If she is not educated, she cannot help her neighbors as effectively she might; if not good, she will not help them, or at least she cannot be relied upon to do so consistently. This implies clearly that Jesuit education must go beyond cognitive growth to human growth which involves understanding, motivation and conviction.

PEDAGOGICAL GUIDELINES

- (130) In accord with this goal to **educate** effectively, St. Ignatius and his successors formulated overriding pedagogical guidelines. Here I mention a few of them:
- (131) a) Ignatius conceived of man's stance as being one of awe and wonder in appreciation for God's gifts of creation, the universe, and human existence itself. In his key meditation on God's Presence in creation Ignatius would have us move beyond logical analysis to affective response to God who is active for us in all of reality. By finding God in all things we discover God's loving plan for us. The role of imagination, affection, will, as well as intellect are central to an Ignatian approach. Thus Jesuit education involves **formation of the whole person**. In our schools we are asked to integrate this fuller dimension precisely to enable students to discover the realm of meaning in life, which can in turn give direction to our understanding of who we are and why we are here. It can provide criteria for our priorities and crucial choices at turning points in our lives. Specific methods in teaching thus are chosen which foster both rigorous investigation, understanding and reflection.

- (132) b) In this adventure of finding God, Ignatius respects human **freedom**. This rules out any semblance of indoctrination or manipulation in Jesuit education. Jesuit pedagogy should enable students to explore reality with open hearts and minds. And in an effort to be honest, it should alert the learner to possible entrapment by one's assumptions and prejudices, as well as by the intricate networks of popular values that can blind one to the truth. Thus Jesuit education urges students to know and to love the truth. It aims to enable people to be critical of their societies in a positive as well as negative sense, embracing wholesome values proposed, while rejecting specious values and practices.
- (133) Our institutions make their essential contribution to society by embodying in our educational process a rigorous, probing study of crucial human problems and concerns. It is for this reason that Jesuit schools must strive for high academic quality. So we are speaking of something far removed from the facile and superficial world of slogans or ideology, of purely emotional and self-centered responses; and of instant, simplistic solutions. Teaching and research and all that goes into the educational process are of the highest importance in our institutions because they reject and refute any partial or deformed vision of the human person. This is in sharp contrast to educational institutions which often unwittingly sidestep the central concern for the human person because of fragmented approaches to specializations.
- (134) c) And Ignatius holds out the ideal of the fullest development of the human person. Typically he insists on the "magis", the more, the greater glory of God. Thus in education Loyola demands that our expectations go beyond mastery of the skills and understandings normally found in the well informed and competent students. Magis refers not only to academics, but also to action. In their training Jesuits are traditionally encouraged by various experiences to explore the dimensions and expressions of Christian service as a means of developing a spirit of generosity. Our schools should develop this thrust of the Ignatian vision into programs of service which would encourage the student to actively experience and test his or her acceptance of the magis. By this service the student can be led to discover the dialectic of action and contemplation.
- (135) d) But not every action is truly for God's greater glory. Consequently, Ignatius offers a way to discover and choose God's will. "Discernment" is pivotal. And so in our schools, colleges and universities **reflection and discernment** must be taught and practiced. With all the competing values that bombard us today, making free human choice is never easy. We very rarely find that all of the reasons for a decision are on one side. There is always a pull and tug. This is where **discernment** becomes crucial. Discernment requires getting the facts and then reflecting, sorting out the motives that impel us, weighing values and priorities, considering how significant decisions will impact on the poor, deciding, and living with our decisions.
- (136) e) Furthermore, response to the call of Jesus may not be self-centered; it demands that we be and teach our students to be **for others**. The worldview of Ignatius is centered on the person of Christ. The reality of the Incarnation affects Jesuit education at its core. For the ultimate purpose, the very reason for the existence of schools is to form

men and women for others in imitation of Christ Jesus --the Son of God, the Man for Others par excellence. Thus Jesuit education, faithful to the Incarnational principle, is humanistic. Fr. Arrupe wrote:

- (137) "What is it to humanize the world if not to put it at the service of mankind?" But the egoist not only does not humanize the material creation, he dehumanizes people themselves. He changes people into things by dominating them, exploiting them, and taking to himself the fruit of their labor. The tragedy of it all is that by doing this the egoist dehumanizes himself: He surrenders himself to the possessions he covets; he becomes their slave --no longer a person self-possessed but an un-person, a thing driven by his blind desires and their objects.
- (138) In our own day, we are beginning to understand that education does not inevitably humanize or Christianize. We are losing faith in the notion that all education, regardless of its quality or thrust or purpose, will lead to virtue. Increasingly, it becomes clear that if we are to exercise a moral force in society, we must insist that the process of education takes place in a moral context. This is not to suggest a program of indoctrination that suffocates the spirit, nor does it mean theory courses that become only speculative and remote. What is called for is a framework of inquiry in which the process of wrestling with big issues and complex values is made fully legitimate.
- (139) f) In this whole effort to form men and women of competence, conscience and compassion. Ignatius never lost sight of the individual human person. He knew that God gives different gifts to each of us. One of the overriding principles of Jesuit pedagogy derives directly from this, namely, alumnorum cura personalis, a genuine love and personal care for each of our students.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IS CRITICAL

- (140) In a Jesuit school, the chief responsibility for moral as well as for intellectual formation rests finally not upon any procedure or curricular or extra-curricular activity, but upon the teacher, under God. A Jesuit school is to be a face-to-face community in which an authentic personal relationship between teachers and students may flourish. Without such a relation of friendship, in fact, much of the unique force of our education would be lost. For an authentic relationship of trust and friendship between the teacher and pupil is an invaluable dispositive condition for any genuine growth in commitment to values.
- (141) And so the *Ratio* of 1591 insists that teachers first need to know their students. It recommends that the masters study their pupils at length and reflect upon their aptitudes, their defects and the implications of their classroom behavior. And at least some of the teachers, it remarks, ought to be well acquainted with the student's home background. Teachers are always to respect the dignity and personality of the pupils. In the classroom, the *Ratio* advises, that teachers should be patient with students and know how to overlook certain mistakes or put off their correction until the apt psychological moment. They should be much readier with praise than blame, and if correction is required it should be made without bitterness. The friendly spirit which is nourished by frequent, casual counselling of the students, perhaps outside class hours, will greatly help this aim along. Even these bits of advice serve only to apply that underlying concept of the very nature of the school as a community and of the teacher's role as crucial within it.

- (142) In the Preamble to the Fourth Part of the *Constitutions* Ignatius appears to place **teachers' personal example** ahead of learning or rhetoric as an apostolic means to help students grow in values. Within this school community, the teacher will persuasively influence character, for better or for worse, by the example of what he himself is. In our own day Pope Paul VI observed incisively in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that "Today students do not listen seriously to teachers but to witnesses; and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."
- (143) As teachers, in a Jesuit school then, beyond being qualified professionals in education, you are called to be men and women of the Spirit. Whether you like it or not, you are a city resting on a hill. What you are speaks louder than what you do or say. In today's image-culture, young people learn to respond to the **living** image of those ideals which they dimly sense in their heart. Words about total dedication, service of the poor, a just social order, a non-racist society, openness to the Spirit, and the like may lead them to reflection. A living example will lead them beyond reflection to aspire to live what the words mean. Hence, our continuing growth in the realm of the Spirit of Truth must lead us to a **life** of such compelling wholeness and goodness that the example we set will challenge our students to grow as men and women of competence, conscience and compassion.

METHODS

- (144) His own painful educational experience had proven to Ignatius that enthusiasm was not enough for success in study. How a student was directed, the method of teaching employed were crucial. When we page through the *Ratio*, our first impression is that of a welter of regulations for time schedules; for careful gradation of classes; for the selection of authors to be read; for the diversified methods to be employed at various times of the morning and afternoon; for correction of papers and the assignment of written work; for the precise degree of skill which the students of each class will be expected to possess before moving upward. But all these particulars were designed to create a firm and reassuring framework of order and clarity within which both teacher and student could securely pursue their objectives. Here I mention just a few of the typical methods employed in Jesuit education.
- (145) 1) Given this sort of environment of order and care for method, it would be relatively easy to determine **precise** and limited academic **objectives** for the individual classes. It was felt that this was the first requirement of any good learning situation --to know just what one sought and how to seek it. The characteristic tool employed here was the **Prelection** in which the teacher carefully prepared students for their own subsequent immanent activity which alone could generate true learning and firm habits.
- (146) 2) But learning objectives needed to be selected and adapted to the students. The first Jesuit teachers believed that even little boys could learn a good deal if they were not overwhelmed with too much at one time. Thus concern for **scope and sequence** became prominent **according to the abilities of each learner**. A century after the *Ratio* was published, Jouvancy remarked that youthful talents are like narrow-

necked vessels. You cannot fill them by splashing everything in at once. You can, if you pour it in carefully drop-by-drop.

- (147) 3) Because he knew human nature well, Ignatius realized that even well ordered experience in prayer or in academic study could not really help a person to grow unless the individual actively participated. In the *Spiritual Exercises* Ignatius proposes the importance of **self-activity** on the part of the exercitant. The second Annotation enjoins the director to be brief in his proposal of matter for each meditation so that by his own activity in prayer the exercitant may discover the truths and practices to which God calls him. This discovery tends to produce delight for the exercitant and greater "understanding and relish of the truth than if one in giving the *Exercises* had explained and developed the meaning at great length". In Annotation fifteen, he writes, "Allow the Creator to deal directly with the creature, and the creature directly with His Creator and Lord." Ignatius knew the tendency of all teachers, whether in teaching prayer, history, or science, to discourse at great length about their views of the matter at hand. Ignatius realized that no learning occurs without the learner's own intelligent activity. Thus in numerous exercises and study, **student activities** were seen as important.
- (148) 4) The principle of self-activity on the part of the learner reinforced the *Ratio's* detailed instructions for **repetitions** --daily, weekly, monthly, annually. For these were further devices for stimulating, guiding and sustaining that student exercise which is aimed at mastery. But repetitions were not meant to be boring re-presentation of memorized material. Rather they were to be occasions when personal reflection and appropriation could occur by reflecting on what troubled or excited the student in the lesson.
- (149) 5) If, as we have seen, there is no mastery without action, so too there is no successful action without **motivation**. Ignatius noted that those who studied should never go beyond two hours without taking a break. He prescribed variety in classroom activities, "for nothing does more to make the energy of youth flag than too much of the same thing." As far as possible, learning should be pleasant both intrinsically and extrinsically. By making an initial effort to orient students to the matter at hand, their interests in the subject may be engaged. In this spirit, plays and pageants were produced by the students, aimed at stimulating the study of literature, since "Friget enim Poesis sine theatro." Then too, contests, games, etc. were suggested so that the adolescent's desire to excel might help him to progress in learning. These practices demonstrate a prime concern to make learning interesting, and thereby to engage youthful attention and application to study.
- (150) **All these pedagogical principles are, then, closely linked together.** The learning outcome sought is genuine growth which is conceived in terms of abiding habits or skills. Habits are generated not simply by understanding facts or procedures, but by mastery and personal appropriation which makes them one's own. Mastery is the product of continual intellectual effort and exercise; but fruitful effort of this sort is impossible without adequate motivation and a reflective humane milieu. No part of this chain is particularly original, although the strict concatenation had novelty in its day.
- (151) Accordingly, to help students develop a commitment to apostolic action, Jesuit schools should offer them opportunities to explore human values critically and to test their own

values experientially. Personal integration of ethical and religious values which leads to action is far more important than the ability to memorize facts and opinions of others. It is becoming clear that men and women of the third millenium will require new technological skills, no doubt; but more important, they will require skills to lovingly understand and critique all aspects of life in order to make decisions (personal, social, moral, professional, religious) that will impact all of our lives for the better. Criteria for such growth (through study, reflection, analysis, judgement, and development of effective alternatives) are inevitably founded on values. This is true whether or not such values are made explicit in the learning process. In Jesuit education Gospel values as focused in the *Spiritual Exercises* are the guiding norms for integral human development.

- (152) The importance of method as well as substance to achieve this purpose is evident. For a value-oriented educational goal like ours --forming men and women for others-- will not be realized unless, infused within our educational programs at every level, we challenge our students to reflect upon the value implication of what they study. We have learned to our regret that mere appropriation of knowledge does not inevitably humanize. One would hope that we have also learned that there is no value-free education. But the values imbedded in many areas in life today are presented subtly. So there is need to discover ways that will enable students to form habits of reflection, to assess values and their consequences for human beings in the positive and human sciences they study, the technology being developed, and the whole spectrum of social and political programs suggested by both prophets and politicians. Habits are not formed only by chance occasional happenings. Habits develop only by consistent, planned practice. And so the goal of forming habits of reflection needs to be worked on by all teachers in Jesuit schools, colleges and universities in all subjects, in ways appropriate to the maturity of students at different levels.

CONCLUSION

- (153) In our contemporary mission the basic pedagogy of Ignatius can be an immense help in winning the minds and hearts of new generations. For Ignatian pedagogy focuses upon formation of the whole person, heart, mind and will, not just the intellect; it challenges students to discernment of meaning in what they study through reflection rather than rote memory; it encourages adaptation which demands openness to growth in all of us. It demands that we respect the capacities of students at varied levels of their growth; and the entire process is nurtured in a school environment of care, respect and trust wherein the person can honestly face the often painful challenges to being human with and for others.
- (154) To be sure, our success will always fall short of the ideal. But it is the striving for that ideal, the greater glory of God, that has always been the hallmark of the Jesuit enterprise.
- (155) If you feel a bit uneasy today --about how you can ever measure up to the challenges of your responsibilities as you begin this process of sharing Ignatian Pedagogy with teachers on your continents, know that you do not stand alone! Know, also, that for every doubt there is an affirmation that can be made. For the ironies of Charles Dickens'

time are with us even now. "It was the worst of times, the best of times, the spring of hope, the winter of despair." And I am personally greatly encouraged by what I sense as a growing desire on the part of many in countries around the globe to pursue more vigorously the ends of Jesuit education which, if properly understood, will lead our students to unity, not fragmentation; to faith, not cynicism; to respect for life, not the raping of our planet; to responsible action based on moral judgement, not to timorous retreat or reckless attack.

- (156) I'm sure you know that the best things about any school are not what is said about it, but what is lived out by its students. The ideal of Jesuit education calls for a life of intellect, a life of integrity, and a life of justice and loving service to our fellow men and women and to our God. This is the call of Christ to us today --a call to growth, a call to life. Who will answer? Who if not you? When if not now?
- (157) In concluding I recall that when Christ left his disciples, He said: "Go and teach!" He gave them a mission. But He also realized that they and we are human beings; and God knows, we often lose confidence in our ourselves. So He continued: "Remember you are not alone! You are never going to be alone because **I shall be with you**. In your ministry, in difficult times as well as in the times of joy and elation, I shall be with you all days, even to the end of time." Let us not fall into the trap of Pelagianism, putting all the weight on ourselves and not realizing that we are in the hands of God and working hand in hand with God in this, God's Ministry of the Word.
- (158) God bless you in this cooperative effort. I look forward to receiving reports on the progress of the Ignatian Pedagogy Project throughout the world. Thank you for all you will do!