

**Jesuit alumni invited to be partners
in the mission of reconciliation and justice in today's world**

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Introduction

1. I would like first of all to greet warmly each one of you. Especially to those who have travelled from near and far to attend this congress in the friendly and welcoming city of Barcelona. I also greet all the former students of the highly valued College of Saint Ignatius of Sarriá, full of Ignatian history and spirit, who have so generously agreed to host this meeting. I also greet the families dear to them.

2. My sincere gratitude goes to the organizing committee of this congress headed by Mr Francisco Guarner who has managed to overcome the challenges of our pandemic times to bring us together here and to discern possible ways of responding to the challenges and opportunities of our time. I also thank the entire executive committee of the World Union of Alumni/ae who have been an important part of this process and with whose president, Mr. Alain Deneef, I have been able to discuss the meaning and future of the associations of former students. I further thank the Father Provincial of Spain and all his staff for their kind welcome and for their work, which has enabled us all to be here together today.

1. We are continuing a conversation

3. Nearly 50 years ago, Pedro Arrupe, then General of the Society of Jesus, gave in this very country and not far from here, an inspiring and prophetic speech in which he summed up masterfully the purpose of Jesuit education: *to become persons for others*. We are well aware of the controversy and unease that his words aroused in some, but also of the invaluable service that Fr Arrupe, as a prophet and visionary of our time, has performed with his humble but challenging words and witness. Fr Arrupe's beatification process provides us with the appropriate framework to consider the impact of his words on both our educational institutions and on our associations of former students. Arrupe was aware of the enormous apostolic potential that these associations represented and despite all the possible limitations in the education received he was optimistic about their benefits, for as he stated: "That confidence and optimism are based on the following: despite our historical limitations and shortcomings, I believe that the Society has transmitted to you... something which constitutes the very essence of the Ignatian spirit and which enables us to renew ourselves continually: a spirit of continual search for the will of God" (# 11). Later, Fr Arrupe will employ the term "*Ignacianidad*" to describe this spirit (Our Schools Today and Tomorrow, 1980, No. 10).

4. In that famous speech to the former students gathered at the European Congress of former students, Fr Arrupe makes his attitude clear at the beginning when he says: "I am not speaking to you as a father, but as a simple companion. We are all school fellows, who together try to

listen to the Lord, sitting on the same benches". (#16) Today too I come as a travelling companion and as an alumnus of another St Ignatius College, the one in Caracas a few months short of celebrating the centenary of its foundation, to share with you some reflections and to continue this dialogue in the spirit of "*Ignacianidad*" that Fr Arrupe began.

5. I do so in the context of the experience of faith that Ignatius of Loyola opened up for many of us when he began his journey of conversion after the cannon fire of Pamplona, and which was consolidated in these dear Catalan lands in his deep spiritual experience in Manresa and Montserrat and during his stay in this city of Barcelona. Hence, my reflections draw on the generous source of the Ignatian tradition. I offer them with great respect because I feel a deep joy in knowing that our schools also educate people with other religious experiences or world views. It is precisely drinking from the Ignatian source that allows us to welcome diversity and, with respect, to stimulate fraternal dialogue with our spiritual tradition. We can do this because our common humanity unites us all. The situations that affect us are part of it, and we all share the desire to contribute to a better, more just and fraternal society. It is the challenges of the future that move us to pursue this shared horizon.

6. In 1973, Father Arrupe, with his characteristic humility and sincerity, acknowledged that Jesuit education had not prepared the students of his time for the contemporary challenge of working for justice. "Have we educated you for justice... Are you educated for justice... we Jesuits must answer in all humility that we have not..." (# 10) However, Fr Arrupe as a man of faith was not there simply to acknowledge the difficulty, but as a spiritually free man, he wanted to invite us to a process of renewal in order to catch up and respond to the new challenges.

7. Thanks to Fr Arrupe's sincere analysis, our apostolic works in general and our educational institutions in particular have advanced enormously on this path of educating for the justice that is born of and enlightened by faith, and of inviting our students to be agents of change in the construction of more just and fraternal societies. Today many identify Jesuit education by its clear commitment to justice. Our educational works have developed numerous programmes, projects, and action groups so that our students develop a critical judgment that penetrates to the deep and structural roots of our social and political problems, and can act accordingly. There is certainly much to be done in this field, and we will have to continue to discern how to respond to the ever new challenges that education for justice and reconciliation put before us.

8. Fr Arrupe in his discourse put the reason for this continuous discernment well: "If the Society wants to be faithful to itself, if it does not want to change and betray the deepest characteristic of its spirit, paradoxically, it must change profoundly in most of the ways it currently appears" (# 14).

9. Something similar could be said of our educational works. If they want to remain faithful to their long educational tradition, there is no other way forward than, from the inner freedom proper to the Ignatian experience, to innovate without fear and to redesign the methods that will allow new generations to recognize and face challenges with their eyes fixed on the future.

10. The recent document *A Living Tradition (2019)* tries to make tradition a source of inspiration for the current challenges of Jesuit education. It reminds us that to be faithful to our tradition means to be always in an attitude of discernment or, as Pope Francis often repeats with reference to the Church, our educational institutions and programmes must be on the move... searching... continually discerning to "seek and find" what is most appropriate at each moment,

places to help persons grow. We do not create fortress schools to build walls and not let the others and their reality enter.

2. Invitation to be partners in the mission of justice and reconciliation

11. Sitting, as we are, on the very benches that identify us as former students, I take this opportunity to reiterate the invitation to join with passion, creativity and energy, engaging your particular personality in the mission of reconciliation and justice that the Church has entrusted to the Society of Jesus today.

12. What is this invitation? Let us go back to Ignatius, the man who with his inner quests unleashed by the cannonball in Pamplona has shown us the way to what it truly means to be a person for others; a person who, as Fr Peter-Hans Kolvenbach rightly pointed out, is also a person *with* others, highlighting something on which Fr Arrupe insisted so much: *we can no longer be without others*. The life of the solitary, individualistic human being, so often idealized in our present-day cultures, is a life deprived of the colour and depth that life-with-others, in community, gives us. The personal encounter with Jesus leads us to relate to others as brothers and sisters, to constitute the community, within which we learn to confront differences, to recognize gifts and problems and to settle conflicts through dialogue, justice and reconciliation.

13. The experience of the Covid-19 pandemic and the repeated failures to overcome violence, with war seen as a means for settling conflicts, to find a way to stop environmental degradation... can be lived as an opportunity to change attitudes, methods of collective decision-making and social structures to ensure the Common Good. We are well aware that both Ignatius and Arrupe discovered that the true person for others was fully revealed in Jesus, the man who went about doing good, and who went to the extreme of giving his life for others so as to open to us all the doors of life in its fullness. During this Ignatian year we are celebrating, we have set out *to see all things new in Christ*, for only in this way can we seize the historic opportunity before us and offer the hope of moving towards a humanity reconciled with each other, with the environment and with God, one of the central themes of this congress. As the 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (2016) states "while we speak of three forms of reconciliation, all three are, in reality, one work of God, interconnected and inseparable." (D. 1, No. 21)

14. The Congregation is therefore showing its wish to take an important step in the direction marked out by Fathers Arrupe and Kolvenbach, in the expression, persons for and with others. It is the practical way of recognizing how the gift received through the education of the Society of Jesus is to be shared with all people who wish to work in this project of reconciliation and justice. To be clear, we are in tune with the inspiration that the Holy Spirit gave to the Church through the Second Vatican Council, which Fr. Arrupe turned into a project for the Society of Jesus that has been deepened, adapted and renewed to respond to the continuous challenges of the changing times in which humanity lives. Ignatian spirituality always calls us to this continuous discernment that begins with the recognition of our context, of its challenges and opportunities.

15. In your invitation, you referred to some important points in the challenges we face as humanity today: migration, the ecological crisis, the challenge of technology, the role of women. Our recent General Congregation also acknowledged our challenging context:

“On the one hand, we see the vibrancy of youth, yearning to better their lives. We see people enjoying the beauty of creation. We see

the many ways in which people use their gifts for the sake of others. And yet, our world faces so many needs today, so many challenges. We have images in our minds of people humiliated, struck by violence, excluded from society, and on the margins. The earth bears the weight of the damage human beings have wrought. Hope itself seems threatened; in place of hope, we find fear and anger.” (D.1, No. 1)

16. The COVID-19 pandemic that still affects us has exacerbated the wounds of the planet and humanity to such an extent that, while on the one hand we celebrate with pride the incredible technological progress, which has made possible the development of vaccines in record time, on the other hand we find a humanity exhausted, without horizon, devoid of true hope and joy. It is indeed a wounded humanity that, despite its progress, seems to be unable to find its way. The profound ecological crisis we are experiencing, with its attendant climate change and enormous challenges, contributes to this sense of hopelessness. Pope Francis has made a prophetic analysis in his encyclical *Laudato Si'* and reminded us that the ecological and social crises should not be separated but understood as "one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.” (LS 139)

17. Today, then, the commitment to justice also takes on an environmental dimension that it did not have before. Mother Earth, as Pope Francis affirms, "cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life." (LS 2)

18. Today, then, *the person for and with others* must also be *a person for and with creation*. A person for and with others is a person who discovers the face of God in everything created. Pope Francis took his name from that man, Francis of Assisi, who knew how to discover in the sun and the moon, in the wolf and the lamb, his brothers and sisters. The invitation is therefore to become people for and with other human beings and all creation. Just as we can no longer be without others, so we can no longer be without a more harmonious relationship with creation. This will lead us to the ecological conversion of which Pope Francis speaks, a conversion "whereby the effects of [our] encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in [our] relationship with the world around [us]. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience". (LS 217) But the Pope rightly warns that this conversion requires an effort that goes beyond individual effort. "The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion." (LS 219)

19. In *Fratelli Tutti* the pontiff explains that "[t]o care for the world in which we live means to care for ourselves. Yet we need to think of ourselves more and more as a single family dwelling in a common home." (FT 17) Later in the same encyclical the Pope explains that this 'single family' does not refer to a closed group of friends or self-referential groups but to an expanding 'single family' that comes to embrace everyone and that in the international concert implies accepting the common destiny that we all share as humanity: "the ever-increasing number of interconnections and communications in today's world makes us powerfully aware of the unity and common destiny of the nations." (FT 96)

3. Cooperation at the heart of mission

20. All of the above brings us to an important point about which I want to be quite frank. It is something that I feel deeply in my heart. The invitation the Lord is extending to you and to us, that is, the Society of Jesus and its former students, is to learn to cooperate as partners in shared mission. I have to be honest, it has not been easy for us Jesuits to see that the Lord has been calling us to share what we came to believe was uniquely ours, to share our mission with others. As usual, the Lord has been patient with us and has been teaching us that we are *the least Society* and that we have to learn to work with many others in the mission that God has entrusted to his Son Jesus and he to the Church.

21. The learning process has not been easy. At first, we opened the doors of our apostolic works to others out of sheer necessity. It has taken us time to realize that our works and schools could be better if other religious and lay people joined us in our work and contributed their gifts. We closed works and schools because we did not have enough Jesuits, even though many others were willing to cooperate in the mission. It is true that large-scale involvement of the laity began in many cases as a response to a crisis in vocations. In other cases, given the magnitude of the needs of the educational or pastoral ministry, we began to work in larger teams. Today we see that this situation has given us the opportunity to work with many other people who have enriched our works, given them impetus and made them better. That is why today, beyond the numbers, we have understood that God was calling us to a culture of cooperation in which each one contributes his or her gifts in a beautiful expression of the apostolic body where everyone carries out complementary and mutually enriching work.

22. At this point, we cannot even imagine educational institutions or apostolic works without pluralistic teams in which different vocations of service converge alongside Jesuits. And in many cases, it is rather we Jesuits who join with others to carry out the works. Cooperation is a practical way of living the ecclesiology expressed in the Second Vatican Council, that is to say, a Church that knows and understands itself as the People of God on the move, where each one contributes out of his or her identity and talents. No one is superfluous or dispensable. We are all involved in the mission of Christ. This is a key dimension of our identity.

23. The call to cooperate certainly includes recognizing the immense apostolic potential found in you alumni and alumnae. What if we let our imaginations run wild and consider the opportunities that would open up if we both decided to join forces more effectively, to link our dreams and our work and join up in building "a new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation 21:1) as Scripture invites us to do?

24. What if the Universal Apostolic Preferences were to guide the work of both the Society of Jesus and the World Union of Jesuit Alumni/ae (WUJA) and each of the associations of former students? What if we shared our creativity and efforts to show the way to God in a world where smiles are fleeting, hope is scarce and the hunger for meaning grows? What if everyone, from their own situation and condition, could walk together with the poor of the world to promote social justice and change in the structures that are stifling us as humanity? What if we could accompany young people in our educational works, in their families and in our world in order to create a truly hopeful future where being is more important than having? What if we joined together and included many others in caring for the common home and turned our schools,

communities and homes into alternative models of a life that shows the true ecological conversion that Pope Francis calls for in *Laudato Si'*?

25. This would be a new journey for all of us. It would be as the poet put it so well an opportunity "to make the road as we go." Just as Fr Arrupe in 1973 recognized that we had not prepared our students for justice, today we would have to recognize with the same sincerity and humility that we have not prepared them to become apostolic companions in the shared mission. But today as yesterday we trust that all of us have been sufficiently infected with the virus of "*Ignacianidad*", as Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, S.J. expressed it, so that we can be bold and generously walk the path of cooperation in mission.

26. This is the great challenge that lies before you and before us. I have the impression that many of our former students, especially the younger ones, are thirsty and ready for a relationship with the Society that goes beyond nostalgia and grateful remembrance of the past. The Lord is insistently calling us Jesuits and the apostolic body of the Society to be open to more extensive cooperation with others, to share what we are and what we have, to learn from others, and to be enriched by the wonderful diversity that shows the generosity of God's gifts to all humanity. You have imbibed Ignatian spirituality and the Ignatian *magis* that leads us to be dissatisfied with things as they are when they could be better. How do we put into practice fresh ways of engaging together in reconciling all things in Christ?

27. I am sure that both the WUJA Executive Committee and the organizing committee of this congress want to move in this direction. You have expressed your desire to work more closely with the Society of Jesus as an apostolic force at the service of a common mission. How much good could result from a culture of cooperation between former students and the Society of Jesus in multiplying apostolic work together in the style of Jesus inspired by Ignatius of Loyola?

28. I truly feel that we can no longer ignore this clear and insistent call. Let us have the audacity that Ignatius had when he chose to follow the call that he felt strongly in these Catalan lands of Manresa and Monserrat, in his times of prayer before the image of Santa Maria del Mar, here in Barcelona, where yesterday we also invoked her to ask for her protection and her guidance and intercession to obtain the grace necessary for the success of this congress. It is worth remembering that when Ignatius walked, prayed, discerned and chose a new way of life in these lands, he was a layman who let himself be led by a great desire to be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

29. In recent years, you like the Society of Jesus, have been moving in this direction of working together in generous cooperation in the mission of Jesus Christ. On its website, WUJA states that its purpose is to foster international contacts among former students and "to contribute to the mission of the Society of Jesus and to promote the universal dynamic of Jesuit education". The executive committee that has been elected in this occasion has, therefore, a clear signal for the way ahead. Along with congratulating you on your election, thanking you for your generosity in giving your time and energy, I confirm you on the path to follow the calls you have received.

30. The path of renewal will be deeper and more efficient the better we incorporate younger people, especially the numerous alumnae who, with their feminine sensibility, wisdom, and experience, can enrich local and international associations in so many ways. This is what is happening in the educational work of our institutions since the contribution of women has been incorporated into their everyday life. Education under the inspiration of the Society of Jesus is

unthinkable today without the qualitative contribution, without the dedication and the human and spiritual depth of the thousands of women involved in it.

4. Towards a global community

31. For some years now, our educational works, and in general all our works, have been learning to operate in networks and to go beyond institutional, local or national frontiers. For many of our educational institutions the challenge has not been easy. Many of our schools have flourished thanks to their deep local roots. Those local roots remain a condition without which it is not possible to imagine the educational work we do. But we are also located in a tradition that has always had the universal perspective of the mission that derives from the Gospel. Today we have abundant resources to consolidate regional and global networks that help us to put into practice what Pope Francis has expressed so well in his encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, the profound desire to recognize that we are all members of a worldwide brotherhood: "Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all." (FT 8).

32. The invitation of GC 35 to walk as a universal body with a universal mission stimulated this new awareness of our common humanity and our mutual responsibility even for those who do not belong to our circles or cultures. Colleges and universities, inspired by the Society of Jesus, have moved rapidly in this direction in recent years. The universities created the International Association of Jesuit Universities (IAJU) in 2018. The colleges launched their own global network last year as the culmination of a long journey of global networking that is helping our schools to implement the immense apostolic potential that develops when working in international networks.

33. Important programmes have been developed that we did not have before: education for global citizenship, care for the environment, policies for the creation of healthy and protected environments, global communities such as *Educate Magis* and many others. The opportunities for the cooperation of alumni and alumnae in these areas are immense, but it also requires moving from the mind-set of *my association* to a global community that is able to work together without local boundaries. I want to encourage you to continue the experience of opening the associations to all alumni and alumnae in a geographical area, of creating new structures in which all those who have passed through any of the institutions supported by the Society of Jesus, and even those who feel called to join as partners in the common mission, find space. You expressed it clearly when you convened this congress: alumni and alumnae must see themselves as members of a global community, serving at local, national and international level.

34. Pope Francis has called for a *new global educational compact* to chart new paths for an education that can respond to the challenges we have been talking about. This new educational covenant wants to promote quality education as a human right, a quality education "to join forces in order to achieve a broad educational covenant aimed at forming mature persons capable of mending, mending the fabric of human relationships and creating a more fraternal world", a fairer and more caring world (Speech 7 February 2020).

35. Participating in this compact is an enormous opportunity for you as former students and for us as the Society of Jesus to contribute our experience and ideas for a quality education that reaches out to all, especially the most marginalized in the world. I know that many of our alumni

and alumnae have been enthusiastic about these opportunities and have offered their expertise, time and resources to make it happen. I have seen our alumni and alumnae involved with loving care and professionally in the educational projects of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) refugee camps, in our *Fe y Alegría* schools, *Cristo Rey*, *Nativity*... and many other projects that seek to implement and respond to the Pope's call for a new educational compact, which UNESCO has also joined with its own call for *a new social contract for education*. There is no better way to be grateful for the quality of education received than to share it with others and to work so that all people can have access to quality education.

5. The Universal Apostolic Preferences, the way of serving our mission of reconciliation and justice.

36. After a long and fruitful discernment and in response to a request from our last general congregation I presented to Pope Francis, who confirmed and approved them, four universal apostolic preferences for the decade 2019-2029. I will briefly recall them:

- 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.*

37. These preferences are orientations that seek to help us in the process of personal and institutional transformation necessary for serving the mission of reconciliation and justice required in the wounded world in which we live. The preferences are the way to follow Jesus today and to share with others his message of life in its fullness as expressed in the gospels. As I stated in my introductory letter:

“They are not our preferences. We have followed the Holy Spirit, who has guided and inspired us. We receive them confirmed by the Pope, trusting, like Ignatius and the first companions, that he is the one who has the best vision of the needs of the world and of the Church. The universal apostolic preferences will help us to overcome every form of self-centeredness and corporatism, so that we may become authentic collaborators in the Lord's mission, which we share with so many people inside and outside the Church. The preferences are an opportunity for us to feel that we are *the least Society in collaboration with others*.”

38. The preferences, if taken seriously, require us to enter into a process of personal, community and institutional conversion, which ought to be reflected in our life and work styles. In this sense, they call for the same ecological and integral conversion of which we have been speaking. It is therefore very important to devote the necessary time and discernment to avoid turning preferences into mere tasks, actions or a checklist.

39. St. Ignatius wanted to move quickly from his wounded state in Pamplona to the new man he was reading about in the lives of the saints. However, in a process that was even painful, he realized that this was not possible unless he let God truly touch his inner self and purify his desires. We may also recall that, in Manresa, on the verge of despair at not achieving what he wanted, he considered taking his own life. Only when he finally realized that everything

depended on God and that what he needed was to place himself in his hands in an attitude of humility and gratitude was he able to gain the inner peace and strength to become a true apostle.

40. The preferences also call us to this spiritual conversion that requires us to overcome the initial temptation to act without first truly being... the preferences are a call to incarnate in our lives and actions a new outlook, a new attitude in society and towards all creation; they aim to trigger a process, as in the case of Ignatius after Pamplona, that led him to see all things in Christ and to assume a life guided by values different from those that had guided him up to that time. Values that can respond to the invitation that Pope Francis has offered to all humanity in *Laudato Si'* as a response to the ecological and social crisis of our time:

"I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all." (LS 14)

41. As he further states:

"Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal." (LS 202).

42. The preferences are a spiritual path open to all those who want to live their lives according to the Gospel values we hope to have shared with you in your formative years, when we shared the spirituality we inherited from Ignatius and a long line of companions over more than five centuries. These preferences are well embodied in Fr Arrupe's inspiring message to be persons with and for others and to be truly agents of hope and reconciliation in our world where so many people feel overwhelmed and burdened by the difficulties we face. The preferences help to embody the *cura mundi*, the care for all creation, which is an extension of the true *cura personalis* that is a central feature of our education.

43. In the process of appropriating and putting into practice the universal apostolic preferences, I have invited Jesuits and our companions in mission to undertake this process of renewal by drinking from the spiritual sources that Ignatius found in his life, and which remain extraordinarily effective means for really transforming the world and our lives. We have first of all the Spiritual Exercises. Many of you had the opportunity of a first contact with them during your school years. I invite you to continue to make them through your associations in the many different ways that have been created in recent decades. There is no more powerful tool in Ignatian spirituality than the Spiritual Exercises. Over the years, many people have experienced the transformation they bring and have made discernment of spirits the normal way of taking personal and communal decisions.

44. For some years now the great majority of the colleges have been offering students the opportunity for an examination of conscience to stop the mad pace of doing things and to recognize God's pace in their lives. In recent years we have also rediscovered the power of spiritual conversations, prayer and of course discernment of which St Ignatius was a disciple, teacher and a leading promoter. As Pope Francis put it in his letter approving and confirming the preferences, without a proper attitude of prayer "the rest does not work." In Manresa St Ignatius at last discovered that the path of conversion he was experiencing was in the end a call to be and not simply to do.... Yes, it is true that Ignatius will become the disciple of apostolic

action in a way hitherto unheard of in religious life, but this doing was the consequence of a new being and not of heroic voluntarism or disoriented activism.

6. In the context of Gratitude

45. Adolfo Nicolás shared with you during the VIII Alumni Congress in Medellín, Colombia, (2013) a beautiful reflection on social responsibility and what it means to be a believer today. In his address he emphasized gratitude as the ultimate source of social responsibility for the believer. He stated:

"The Ignatian tradition, for its part, has wanted to place the human being not in the orbit of responsibility but in the orbit of gratitude... only one who has gained an 'inner awareness of so much good received', and fully appreciates it, can feel the longing so to order his life that he can 'in all things love and serve' (Ex, 233)."

46. I want to reaffirm this Ignatian conviction that gratitude is the ultimate driving force of our actions. In the universal apostolic preferences, we recognize God's love and care for all of us, for creation and especially for the young and the outcasts of the world. It is in line with this Ignatian conviction that I wanted to invite you today to walk together as true partners in the mission of reconciliation and justice with others, with creation and with God. It is only when we recognize that God has first loved us and blessed us with everything that is good, that we can become true agents of reconciliation and justice in our wounded world.

47. Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* also affirmed the important role of gratitude in the ecological conversion we spoke of earlier, to recognize "that the world is God's loving gift, and that we are called quietly to imitate his generosity in self-sacrifice and good works." (LS 220)

48. I would like to conclude by invoking Our Lady so that, as Ignatius asked, she may place us with her Son. In Monserrat, at the feet of Our Lady of Montserrat, the *Moreneta*, Ignatius left his sword and with it his old condition as a wilful knight who wanted to conquer the world with his weapons and the hearts of women with his exploits. There he assumed the garb of a beggar and set out for Manresa, where the Lord would accompany him with patience and love in a profound process of inner transformation that continues to enlighten us today so that we can see all things new in Christ.

49. Our Lady of Monserrat, accompany us on our journey, receive us as partners in the mission of hope that your Son Jesus is bringing to the world!

(Original: Spanish)