

Patna, February 10, 2023

Opening Speech
10th JAAI Congress
Patna, India
February 10-12, 2023

FRANCISCO GUARNER, WUJA President

Dear Indian Jesuit alumni, dear friends, thank you for being here together today celebrating the JAAI congress in this spirit of community and unity.

In the words that Father Arrupe addressed the Jesuit alumni 50 years ago, *“we are men and women to others”, “men and women to and with others”* as Father Kolvenbach reminded us, we are members of a community without which, individually, we have no meaning.

I thank Neel Mani Rangesh, Secretary of JAAI and President of the Organizing Committee, Chentil Kumar, President of JAAI and the whole team for the organization of this 10th National Congress of Jesuit Alumni of India. I also sincerely thank Provincial Father and the Jesuit Fathers for their presence and accompaniment in every moment.

Your country, India, is important to you, to your associations and your provinces, but it is also very important to the Society of Jesus and the Ignatian community in the world that we all belong to. You are one of the major centers of formation and education in Jesuit schools and universities.

You are and form a major collective of WUJA, my thanks and appreciation to Naresh Gupta Vice-President of WUJA, to Devendra Singh and to Pradeep Kumar Madhavan who represent South Asia in the Council.

Thank you for inviting us, members of the WUJA Council, to take part in your Congress and for your great welcome to hold our annual face-to-face meeting in your land, and thus be able to discover more, in detail and depth, your character and hospitality, your culture and diversity.

It is also time to remember the months and years that have passed since 2020 when we started to resume our pre-pandemic activities. After all these months and years of difficulties and pain around us, on a personal and professional level, let us sincerely and thoughtfully thank the challenges and doubts that have helped us to mature as people.

Now that we begin a new time, let us pray to St. Ignatius of Loyola to accompany us on this new journey, with a renewed spirit of solidarity and commitment, of listening and dialogue, seeing all things new in Christ.

May the education we have received distinguish us and help us get closer, understand, and accept others. Let us Listen, Discuss, and Accept.

Let us reinforce our responsibility and our commitment, as Father Adolfo Nicolas told us, with appreciation and gratitude for this education, sharing love and service, as Father General told us last July during the World Congress in Barcelona.

Let us remember his clear and inspirational message, which in Barcelona opened our hearts and our sense of Jesuit alumni, those words of hope and commitment that we all listen to in an atmosphere of friendship, of solidarity and respect "*let us walk together as true companions, in the mission of reconciliation and justice ...*".

Father General has given it to us, he has asked for it and he is waiting for it, let us be mature adults, let us share this mission.

We are and feel very close, here today, we meet and socialize, especially after years of Pandemic and isolation, but the message of Father General went further, asking us to overcome nostalgia and to act.

Together we responded to his message in our conclusions – the strength lies in local associations, in youth, in a wider and more global sense of belonging, in collaboration with other Ignatian entities and networks, supporting him and Pope Francis in their messages and in their paths. Now is the time for each and every one of us: we cannot remain motionless personally and within our associations. We should offer and give our individual and collective response.

We have guidelines and lines of action in the Apostolic Preferences. Let us follow these steps on the path of solidarity and justice towards the most deprived, in defending and protecting our common home and together with youth, giving them from the World Union and our Associations all the pertinence and the front to guide our future, in the inner remembrance and value of the spirituality framed in the spiritual exercises that Ignatius of Loyola taught us.

Those days in Barcelona, in my words, I have mentioned you, and today, I wish to recall, the will of WUJA to promote the union of all of us with the same simplicity with which we lived those days in Barcelona and with which we shall live these days here in Patna, with the will to listen and to share the experiences among ourselves, to take further actions and become aware of the strength of our belonging to a global community.

Today we inaugurate your Congress "Techade", which will open and present the new challenges and opportunities that the world of the future poses to us. I want that to leave us with an impact, and a message, in us and in our associations.

Your motto says " give - without asking for anything in return". Let us therefore seek excellence not only in success and in personal and professional advancement, but in our Ignatian condition which will allow us to help and think about other people.

Let us remember today in this school that gave its name, to Saint Francis Xavier one of the closest friends of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and founder of the Society of Jesus with him, who came to this land to share his love and his message.

With the words of Saint Ignatius of Loyola "en todo amar y servir ", have a nice Congress.