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To All Major Superiors

Reverend and Dear Father,

P.C.,

Since the publication seven years ago of **The Characteristics of Jesuit Education**, many people working in Jesuit education around the world have expressed their gratitude for this document. For lay and Jesuit educators alike, it has provided a new vision of renewal which is contemporary, yet rooted in Ignatian spirituality. Above all, **The Characteristics** have established goals and objectives against which schools and universities can measure their efforts in this all-important ministry of education.

While **The Characteristics** have offered a fresh statement of our inspiration in Jesuit education, in the last few years many Jesuits and their colleagues have asked for help in translating them into action. Frequently, the question has been - how do we incorporate these values, principles, guidelines into our classrooms? How can we help ourselves and our companions in ministry to attain these splendid ideals in practice? How can we insert the spirituality of **The Characteristics** into the practical matters of our daily lives?

The International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education (ICAJE) has been working on a practical response to these questions for some time. They realized early in their deliberations that any effective practical renewal must be addressed to the educational community and especially to teachers. Indeed, ICAJE needed a model, a paradigm, that would both promote the goals of Jesuit education and speak to the practicalities of the **teaching-learning process** in the classroom. Decree 1 of the 33rd General Congregation suggested a way to approach an answer. Here the Congregation, in calling for a review of all the Society's ministries, spoke of the need for "a transformation of our habitual patterns of thought through a constant interplay of experience, reflection, and action." (Paragraph 43) True to our Ignatian way of proceeding, this threefold interaction suggested an avenue for implementing **The Characteristics** in the everyday school setting.

In their efforts to develop this Paradigm, ICAJE realized that, to be truly comprehensive, the new model must also take into consideration both the context of the students' experiences and evaluation as the essential stage of completing any learning cycle. These five steps, then, comprise the full Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm - Context, Experience, Reflection, Action, and Evaluation. I enclose a copy of **Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach** which introduces the Ignatian Paradigm as well as the project ahead.

ICAJE wisely judged that an Ignatian Pedagogical Project must involve more than an introductory document. In order to be effective, teachers will need to learn and become comfortable with the pedagogical methods involved. Thus, with the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm in place, ICAJE had two further tasks to perform. The first was to formulate a statement explaining the rationale and processes of the Paradigm to which this letter is an introduction. The second was to initiate a program of staff development to teach and multiply the Ignatian pedagogy involved at regional, province and school levels around the world. Such was the purpose of the recent international workshop at Villa Cavalletti, Rome, April 20-30. Designed specifically to launch this world-wide staff development program, delegates from 26 countries gathered to learn about the Paradigm, practice using its various component parts, and devise three to four year strategic plans for training others to teach the Paradigm in their own countries.

With this important background, I now make two requests of you. First, I invite you to read this document - **Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach** - which situates the Paradigm clearly within our Ignatian heritage of spiritual and educational writings. As with its predecessor, **The Characteristics of Jesuit Education**, I ask that you ensure it receives maximum exposure amongst Jesuits and their professional colleagues in your educational institutions and informal learning centers. I would suggest, therefore, that a personal copy of **Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach** be made available to all teachers, administrators and members of governing boards - both Jesuit and lay - in the Jesuit educational institutions as well as our colleagues in informal and non-formal educational settings of your Province. A summary of the document could be distributed to the parents of the students. In many cases this will require translation; in all cases it will require the printing of multiple copies in an attractive form suitable for convenient reading. To accomplish this task, you may wish to call on the help of your Province Delegate for Education, and you may wish to work together with other Major Superiors in your country or Assistency.

The true worth of this document, of course, will not be the extent of its readership, but the degree to which it inspires a renewal of the teaching-learning process in the actual classroom situation. Thus, my second request is perhaps even more important. I

ask that you give your strongest support and encouragement to those regional or province teams which are planning and conducting long term staff development programs in Jesuit schools, colleges, and universities as well as informal and non-formal educational settings, for the purpose of training teachers in using the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm. Implementation of the Ignatian Pedagogy Project must take account of "continually changing" local circumstances: individual countries or regions should reflect on the meaning and implications of Ignatian Pedagogy for their own local situations, and should then develop supplementary materials that apply this present universal document and program to their own concrete and specific needs.

I wish finally to thank the members of the International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education for their work in establishing this project and devising plans for its dissemination throughout the world. It is a unique example of "the multiplier effect" and, as such, is truly Ignatian. While this document has already gone through several drafts in formulation, it can only be final when its message captivates and inspires the hearts and minds of teachers and students in our Jesuit educational apostolate. In commending this document to you, I pray that it will be another important step towards achieving our goal as educators to form men and women of competence, conscience, and compassionate commitment.

Fraternally in Christ,

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.
Superior General

Rome, July 31, 1993

Enclosure