

IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY IN JESUIT BUSINESS SCHOOLS

Précis. This address was given by the president of the World Union of Jesuit Alumni/ae. Invited to address the International Association of Jesuit Business Schools (IAJBS), he videotaped his presentation. It was presented as the keynote address at the IAJBS's Seventh International World Forum in Puebla, Mexico, this year. The forum's theme, "Finances in the global economy: How the deans of the Jesuit business schools could make the difference," gave scope to reflections on faith and justice. The following is a transcription of excerpts from the video presentation.

Distinguished delegates: It is honour for me to address you at the kind invitation of Mr. Tom Bausch.

Allow me to make a short presentation of the World Union of Jesuit Alumni/ae. The organization was founded in Bilbao in 1956 during the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the death of Saint Ignatius, to create a forum open to the Jesuit alumni and alumnae all over the world. We hold a World Congress every five or six years where we gather around our ignatian values. We have held five of these congresses, the most recent one in July of 1997 in Sydney. The next one will take place in Calcutta in 2003.

On the best estimate, the alumni and alumnae of Jesuit institutions now number around 3.5 million. We alumni and alumnae are organized first of all in the associations of our own schools or universities. These associations, in turn, are organized into national federations and in some instances, into continental confederations like those in Latin America and Europe. We have Jesuit alumni/ae associations in more than fifty-three countries.

The World Union is a virtual organization. The president lives in Bogotá, Colombia; The Vice President lives in England; the Secretary, in Luxembourg; the Treasurer, in France. And the twelve current council members come from all five continents. The Jesuit Counsellor is Fr. Vincent Duminuco, who lives in New York. Our work these days is made possible by the internet.

To give you a better picture of our organization, let me read you our *Vision and Mission Statement*.

The Vision

By the year 2003, the World Union movement will be consolidated in every country and continent in ways consonant with its ignatian inspiration. The Union will include the majority of all the alumni and alumnae in the world. The World Union of Jesuit Alumni/ae will become effectively an extension of the lay work of the Society of Jesus, and as such the Union will labor along in a shared vision.

The Mission

The World Union works among Jesuit alumni and alumnae everywhere to promote the ideals and worldview of the Society of Jesus, namely to advocate the development of men and women for and with others. To accomplish this task, each association shall work to support the marginalized in the societies in which they live. They shall strive to further their own steady growth in their awareness of issues, opportunities, and challenges through their experiences of study, seminars, and service, and also through relationships with other Jesuit alumni and alumnae organizations around the world.

The World Union shall regard its work as an ongoing education activity of the Society of Jesus. It shall search out alumni and alumnae to participate in programs that develop the ethical and professional values current among them, giving them a chance to grow through service to others.

In accordance with this, we shall hold our ignatian values defined according to *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, the symbolic AMDG: Accountability, Morality, Decisiveness, and Generosity.

The secular and spiritual challenge

Now, if I am going to challenge the Deans of the Faculties of the Jesuit Business Schools, let me be bold enough to say something like this:

- Search out and deal preferentially with the ignatian alumni and alumnae from any Jesuit educational institution. They share the same vision and the values that we were taught, following Ignatius. We have the same beliefs and ideals.

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- Jesuit Business Schools must have a *soul*. There is a lot of talk today about neoliberalism and how it discounts the poor and how it does not care about our nations' needy. You must teach your students that they will be able to make decisions which may be legal in the situation but which they cannot think ethical. Business decisions in today's marketplace should not be merely what the numbers add up to or what best serves a company's bottom line. We have a moral obligation towards the needy of our nations.
- According to the latest reports, more than a billion people live in this world on an income of less than one dollar a day. This is not justice, from any point of view; and in the comprehensive view, it is not a sustainable situation. You have to tutor your students how they are to see and acknowledge their social obligations.

- The Jesuit Business School must educate “Men and Women for others” as Fr. Arrupe proclaimed when he was General of the Society. Producing profit is fine; it is the main obligation of anyone who runs a business. Well—and producing profit does not clash with social justice. More wealth is always welcome, we can believe, provided that we share it with others.
- Our World Union, as our *Vision* would have it, hopes to become effectively an extension of the lay work of the Society of Jesus. As deans, you could well use our Union to spread what you are teaching. I invite you to use our bulletin, our website (www.jesuitalumni.org) and, of course, our chain of associations.
- And finally, I would urge you to work ignatian values and ignatian thought into you universities, not only to form better business men and women, but also to become, yourselves, more deeply human.

Here is something that Fr William Byron of Georgetown University said in his opening address to our World Congress in Sydney: “We have to live with the conviction that life is only lived well when it is lived generously in the service of others.” I believe that the time has come to teach students of business administration that they have to live up to the values they learned in their homes and in their Jesuit schools. They have to live what they believe.

Together, we can make this a better world.

Reprint from the internal notices of the World Union, *Ensemble Together Concordes*.