



Inauguration Ceremony: Inaugural Address

Tuesday, October 11, 2005

Thank you all for joining us today for this celebration of a new stage in the long life of this university. I am grateful to Fr. Joel Tabora for coming from the Philippines to be with us and for his thoughtful reflection on global citizenship last evening. I am especially grateful to our Bishop Anthony Pilla for his welcome to the local church and for presiding at our Eucharist earlier today, and also to my friend Archbishop Patrick Pinder for his inspiring homily, which challenged us regarding the effects of globalization.

My mother is not able to be with us today. She promised her prayers. My mother often asks me what I do all day, and you know I ask my self that same question some days, but I never have a good response. This is one of those jobs that you really cannot explain. The closest I have come to an explanation is: I get thanked for the work of others and I often hear first when anything at the university goes wrong. On the whole, I now realize, I get thanked more often than not and that is a good thing.

Today I am grateful to my friends and family who are here to share in this celebration, especially those who traveled from afar.

Early in June, my Jesuit friend and mentor for more than 30 years, Pat Ford, died suddenly. I know that Pat looked forward to being here today and that he is here with us. Today I see his smile and hear his laugh in my mind. I also welcome the university community and thank them for the welcome I have received these past weeks. I am more confident than ever that we can build a stronger John Carroll through our common effort in the coming years.

I'd like to recognize and to thank the Board of Directors and Bud Koch, the chair, for their support. I am grateful that they have accepted responsibility for John Carroll's future - its Catholic, Jesuit character and tradition and its commitment to be a center of learning, a great university. I will say on this occasion that I am certainly delighted to join you in our common effort.

The provincial of the Detroit Province, Fr. Bob Scullin, is here and I am grateful that he and the Oregon Provincial, my provincial, Fr. John Whitney, have interrupted the U.S. Provincials meeting to join us today.

Today, as we begin a new stage in the life of John Carroll we are conscious of those great Jesuits and companions who have labored to build this fine university. I have been hearing their names as I learn the John Carroll story. Names like the Jesuits, Henry Birkenhauer, Mike Lavelle, James Mackin, and Joe Schell; but also, lay leaders such as Kathleen Barber, Vincent Klein, Francis McGurr, Lillian Thomey, and Art Noetzel. I understand that Art has been with at John Carroll more than 70 years. That is more than half of our history.

We all are building upon the accomplishments of so many others who have labored here before us. Our task, no matter our role, is to leave this university enriched by what we have learned, by our accomplishments, achieved through a total commitment of our energies. We are also formed by our relationships: those with friends, fellow students, teachers, administrators, staff members, alumni, mentors, and coaches in every sense of that word. These relationships define the John Carroll experience for each one of us.

My comments today are going to be a little different from some inaugural addresses. I would like to spend some time today reflecting upon the college experience, more specifically the John Carroll experience. I want to pose the questions: Why are we here? What will be the result of our time at John Carroll University ? How will we know that we have succeeded?

We all know that education, and especially completing college, results in economic and social advancement. During the dot.com craze of the late '90's the staff at some universities left higher education in order to pursue their dream of becoming the next Bill Gates. Not a few students also made the economic choice to forgo higher education for the world of technology. For a few, their dreams of becoming the next "Big Bill" may have happened. But it did not happen for all. Many of those individuals returned to continue where they left off before their "excursion of dreams." We are here and not just for economic advancement.

So why are we here?

Nearly every person who talks about their college experience talks about the relationships that were developed with classmates, faculty, mentors and others. Often they talk about how they changed, what a broadening experience it was to learn about something new, how knowledge and relationships changed them forever! It is no accident that education has become one of the central missions for Jesuits.

The mission of Jesuit education, although not in the early plans St. Ignatius had for the Society of Jesus, soon became a major enterprise because Ignatius saw knowledge as one more way for the transcendent to act upon the person (though I suspect Ignatius would have said "soul"). For Ignatius himself, the spiritual conversion came first, then the desire for knowledge to be of "greater" service. I imagine that Ignatius would be very comfortable with the thought that it could be in the acquisition of knowledge that a person would be intrigued by the immensity of the challenge and thus called to conversion and service. This path of education to service was clearly the pattern of St.

Ignatius and his first companions - those with whom he formed the Society of Jesus. It is perhaps best exemplified by St. Francis Xavier, the patron of the missions, a man who clearly engaged the world.

Global education helps us to engage the tremendous needs in our world. No matter where the insight or call to service comes - in the classroom, in the residence hall, in a student service project or in the *Spiritual Exercises* - the call is often expressed as a personal call to respond to the needs we see in the world. The last edition of *Company* magazine carried a story about an international immersion program at Saint John's High School in Toledo . After encountering the life of the people working and living in a Guatemalan garbage dump, the St. John's students asked, "Isn't there anything we can do about this?" Students from St. John's are now engaged in an on-going program of service to the people of Guatemala . (*Company* , Summer 2005)

Such was the response of this community in the face of the destruction in New Orleans just a few weeks ago. The day after we began to see the seriousness of the tragedy on every news program, I began to receive e-mails from students asking me when they could go and where they could help. "Can't I do something?" was their question as well.

John Carroll exists in order to provide our students with the opportunity to engage in a collegiate and graduate studies experience foundationally grounded in the liberal arts, which, to quote our 23rd president, Fr. Glynn, "encourage[s] academic excellence and challenges our students to raise the questions of justice and fairness that confront our age and to use their knowledge and ability in service to the world (Glynn, 2005)." John Carroll University exists in order to provide our students with the skills to analyze the real needs of our world and to open their hearts to the many individuals in our world who live lives of struggle, in situations which seem intractable as the result both of human action and inaction - hunger, disease, human rights abuses, illiteracy, discrimination or violence -- and often lead to a lack of hope.

Work still remains for each of us and for our world. None of us will leave John Carroll with a comprehensive plan that will address the world's needs; it is my fervent hope, however, that none of us will leave here without the world's needs being on our minds as constant reminders of the nagging questions of justice and fairness. We can see desire for justice, and our lack of satisfaction in accepting things as they are now, as the spirit of God working in us, and, when the time is right, through us.

We address these challenges together with other universities, organizations and institutions. Our commitment to the city of Cleveland and northeast Ohio we share with, among others, the Diocese of Cleveland. The diocese has a long history of commitment to and with the city of Cleveland . In his Spring 2000 reflection on the *The Church, the City and the University* , Bishop Pilla said:

I thought that the various parts of the overall Church of Cleveland were too often not in touch with one another, not sufficiently aware of the different gifts and needs present in the various diverse people of God living in our region. . . . I believe that it is foolish to

think that we can have a thriving region and a declining urban core. I am convinced that, at this time in American history, and with the emergence of a global economy, regions that are divided against themselves will languish and decline. We miss a critical opportunity in carrying forth our responsibility to build a good and just society when we do not recognize the practical, as well as spiritual, benefits of preserving and redeveloping urban communities. The wisdom, talents, and resources of all people in our cities, suburbs, and rural areas need to be appreciated and shared in the service of the common good of our region. (*The Church, the City and the University: Reflections on Some Challenges and Opportunities, Conversations* , Spring 2000, p. 13-14)

We all know that the Diocese of Cleveland has been busy not just in Ohio but that it has a long history of service in Central America . This fall we mark the 25 th anniversary of the murders of Archbishop Romero and of the four church women in El Salvador . The commitment to justice and fairness is never just for ourselves or our community. Any real commitment to justice is a commitment to justice for all. Such a commitment has been lived out by many people in this local church. Jean Donovan, Sisters Ita Ford, MM, Maura Clarke, MM, and Cleveland's own, Dorothy Kazel, OSU, now called the Four Church Women of El Salvador, lived that call to the end and died a few months after Archbishop Romero. Our Jesuit brothers, their cook and her daughter died nine years later. Ultimately, and through the efforts of others, these tragic deaths led to a mobilization of pressure that eventually led to peace.

The Jesuit Superior General, Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, has addressed this call to justice. In his October 2000 address at Santa Clara University , he outlined the task of educating for justice by noting that this individual call comes to us within the context of educating the whole person, I quote Father Kolvenbach:

"For four hundred and fifty years, Jesuit education has sought to educate 'the whole person' intellectually and professionally, psychologically, morally and spiritually. But in the emerging global reality, with its great possibilities and deep contradictions..., [t]omorrow's 'whole person' cannot be whole without an educated awareness of society and culture with which to contribute socially, generously, in the real world."

Tomorrow's whole person must have [he said] . . . a well-educated solidarity. Fr. Kolvenbach goes on to suggest that educating the whole person and a well-educated solidarity with others includes learning not just about the world, but also includes building relationships with those who suffer. An international experience that engages the life and reality of the poor characterizes what he means by education in solidarity. Such solidarity with one another and with the world is "learned through 'contact' rather than through "concepts." Fr. Kolvenbach continues:

"When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. Personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustice others suffer, is the catalyst for solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry and moral reflection. Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into

their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering and engage it constructively. " (Kolvenbach, October 2000, III A and B)

It is in this process of personal involvement that international immersion and study projects move from powerful personal tourism experiences to a reflective learning experience which challenges our values, personal commitments and ultimately our world view.

If learning in solidarity cannot happen without engaging the whole person, such learning will also not take place without a faculty who share the same values, personal commitments and hope in a world where justice is universal. Our faculty and staff are, in fact, the model of learning for students. Our faculty and staff *must be the change they want to see in the world* . Educating the whole person will happen only if we all share and model this commitment to learning and service.

Educating the whole person can only happen in an inclusive and diverse community. John Carroll is not as diverse as it should be. We must diversify our faculty and staff in order to create the learning environment that engages our world. This is not an easy task in higher education or in Cleveland . However, the racial incident that took place on campus two weeks ago calls us to a new vigilance. Until we become a more diverse university community, we will continue to provide the opportunity for individuals to avoid the learning that comes from being with people who are different from ourselves . *Can't I do something ?* Yes, you can. I invite you today to commit yourselves to making Carroll a community of justice and inclusiveness. We have the good will we need to begin. Let us work to build an inclusive community. Let us work to build a Carroll more engaged with our city and our world. This will mean confronting our fears and reaching out. Let us engage the world together.

Some time ago I discovered a pastoral letter on racism written in the Fall of 2003 by Archbishop Harry Flynn of St. Paul . He states: "Racism is a form of xenophobia, a fear or dislike of those who are different from us. Each of us has some element of this fear within our hearts." This fear does not have to control us. We can and we must move to become and more open and inclusive university.

The Bishops of the United States in their 1979 pastoral letter *Brothers and Sisters To Us* state:

[Racism] mocks the words of Jesus: 'Treat others the way you would have them treat you.' Indeed, racism is more than a disregard for the words of Jesus; it is a denial of the truth of the dignity of each human being revealed by the mystery of the Incarnation.

Responding to this sin, we are challenged to provide an environment at John Carroll where all are invited, respected and included. Developing an appreciation of diversity will help us to build such a community.

Nelson Robinson is an employee of our custodial services contractor and he work with us on the night shift. Nelson was the individual who was the target of the racial incident. I met with Nelson last night and apologized for the university. Nelson indicated to me that he was hurt even more by this incident because he cares for this university. I indicated to Nelson that I am committed to building a more inclusive community where all are valued.

Nelson, in the name of the university, I apologize for the racism you experienced on our campus. We do not condone and will not permit such behavior. Individuals who disrespect members of our community will be asked to leave the university. I promise that we stand with you, Nelson, and I thank you for your contribution to the university.

Let us as a university community commit ourselves to building a diverse community on this campus where all are respected and supported. *We must be the change we wish to see.*

On Thursday, John Carroll University is privileged to host the third conference of faculty, staff and students from the 28 American Jesuit Colleges and Universities. At this conference we will share and further define our corporate responses to Fr. Kolvenbach's challenge: Can we educate our students in solidarity with our world?

There is no one path toward this knowledge. Although Fr. Kolvenbach was addressing a predominantly faculty group at the time, we all know that educating the whole person requires all of us on campus to work together to achieve his vision.

What will be the result of our time at John Carroll?

One of the things I was impressed by in the interview process was the passion of the JCU community and board members. JCU alumni speak of the ways in which the Carroll experience changed them: how they think, what they value and what they hope for. Very key to this experience is the Carroll community that supported their learning: the faculty, staff, and other students.

We are proud of what of students accomplish on campus and after they leave us. The choices we make over the coming years will determine the results of our time here at John Carroll. Students, faculty and staff from previous generations have left us the Carroll legacy. Many of them have shown us that JCU makes a difference.

What will our choices leave for those who follow us? Each of us has a role in helping to define our experience and our future. We can be the university community we want. The results will be determined by our personal and collective choices.

How will we know that we have succeeded at Carroll?

Unfortunately the results of our experience cannot be measured very accurately while we are here on campus. We can tally up what our students do here at JCU and track them

when they leave campus, but we cannot accurately determine today who our students will become. We cannot easily measure those things that take a lifetime to accomplish.

In the end, the willingness to take on a world vision is a choice we make, and it is not just the result of our experience. Without the opportunity to know people whose lived experience is very different from our own, the option of choosing to embrace the world and to include that reality in our vision and choices is difficult.

This is not to say that engaging the world is easy. Often engaging injustice challenges us to the core because there are no quick fixes or easy answers. We slowly come to see that the quick fix or easy answer is an illusion.

Early in the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius has us engage a meditation he calls the *Call of the King*. This is one of the world vision meditations that Ignatius includes in the *Exercises*. In this meditation, we are asked to imagine how Jesus would see the world, what God might want to happen in the world, and whether we wish to join in the mission of Jesus, keeping in mind what the Gospel says is likely to be the result of actually following Jesus: rejection, persecution, and denial of friendship.

I am always intrigued that we seem to have such a difficult time remembering this fact: If we choose to follow the Lord, our human lives might not end up much differently than his! The *Call of the King* does not focus on the fact of suffering but focuses on that idealistic view of a person choosing to follow Jesus because he or she might be able to help, to do some good, to make a difference.

I would like to conclude with a story by a now deceased Jesuit from India. Tony de Mello collected these stories from many different cultures and faith traditions of the east.

Each story shows us some reality of human nature and invites us to look more deeply at ourselves. This story, called *The Salt Doll* is a reminder that we cannot engage the world and make it different by ourselves. We can create the community we want through our choices. We can engage the world by becoming the change we wanted to see in our world.

The Salt Doll

A salt doll journeyed for thousands of miles over land, until it finally came to the sea.

It was fascinated by this strange moving mass, quite unlike anything it had ever seen before.

"Who are you?" said the salt doll to the sea.

The sea smilingly replied, "Come in and see."

So the doll waded in. The farther it walked into the sea the more it dissolved, until there was only very little of it left. Before that last bit dissolved, the doll exclaimed in wonder, "Now I know what I am!"

My friends let us walk into this sea together. Let us learn from each other, let us challenge each other to live fully our opportunity to make John Carroll a community of learning and compassion. Let us keep refining our vision for John Carroll, for we cannot waste this opportunity. Let us inspire each other to keep growing. Let us pray for ourselves and each other, as we engage our world together. Let us be the change we want to see. May we believe what the prophet Micah tells us: "This is what God, asks of you, only this. That you love tenderly, act justly and walk humbly with your God (Micah 8:6)."