

The Old and the New Universidad del Salvador: Its Continuity in the Jesuitic Spirit According to Jorge Mario Bergoglio, SJ. Provincial

Summary of the “History And Change” Charter of Principles
(Buenos Aires, August 27, 1974)

1. The Fight Against Atheism

Putting current main ideologies into practice makes it necessary to set their boundaries towards improvement. While main ideologies were only suggested, it was believed that their immanent dynamics would set their boundaries, but when they have been put into practice, the situation is completely different.

The immanent has not fulfilled its goals, in consequence, a different view that may transcend them is required: a transcendent criterion, a religious attitude to be able to judge History. Without the transcendent the inert forces of technological progress, and not men, are, in fact, the ones that urge History.

At present any critical thought bears that transcendent feature; it is the only one able to critically innovate historical experiences which, due to their imminence, have evolved into something merely quantitative.

In short, the fight against atheism does not differ from transcendent criticism to contemporary world. Through discernment we can incorporate those components of atheism which criticise alienating manifestations and the swindling use of religious issues. Religious renaissance will return to the essential through the critical sieve of modern atheism, taking the best and the most valid of it.

Within this scope, the Universidad del Salvador will start working: it will constitute a university based on Faith, i.e. a critical and innovative one.

2. Progress through the return to our sources

The future is reached when the distance travelled has been thoroughly analysed. It does

not involve any external criticism, it means to assume that a venture has been undertaken. That is the reason why the servile imitation of foreign models is of no use, what is relevant is the critical continuity of national movements, the protagonists of modern Argentina. It is thus necessary to return to the indigenous-Hispanic tradition in Latin America as the foundation of a future in which we can recognise each other. Exactly the same criterion must be applied to the building of the new Universidad del Salvador. Hence, the spirit that must govern it shall be the same as that which the Society of Jesus has reconsidered as its comprehensive apostolic mission.

3. Universalism through differences

Since its creation, the Society of Jesus has understood and respected historical, cultural and psychological differences which bestow their intransferable trait to every people on earth. Encouraged by the evangelical spirit of its founder, the Society of Jesus affirms, from its creation, the universalist content of its action. Truth is elicited from diversity. Christ's truth is just one, but there are multiple historical and human manifestations of it.

Among the Church most important missionary experiences, the ones of the Society of Jesus must be pointed out, for when the missionised peoples got the necessary organisational and social tools, they were able to develop their cultural individuality which, in turn, became universal when they accepted such Faith as their own.

Mons. Bergoglio points out some corollaries of this doctrine

- The reassertion of the concept of “person”—to consider the human being as a person. The effort made whether as directors or professors on behalf of our students must not be oriented to “all of them” in general but to “each of them” in particular by taking them into account as persons who belong to a community.

- Generation reconciliation: the abrupt changes we have to face and the misleading belief that the human being himself is able to develop a new culture just by means of his own decision and rationality, without taking into account any other values, has resulted or may result in a generation crack that interrupts the transmission of values. On the other hand, the family hierarchical structure is disrupted; the family is converted into a mere social agreement or—even worse—into a community of “friends.” Consequently, as parents’ role is not assumed and children’s role fades away, these will not know how to be good parents in the future. Both kinds of generation gaps are based on an underlying aggression to the young, who are also attacked when we treat them as adults, as if it were compulsory for the adult to learn everything from them or else, when we keep on treating them as children without allowing them to grow up. This fundamental aggression derives from the consideration of the young as a political, isolated and manipulatable force instead of a social one. All of this involves egoism.

- The correction of egoism: The modern individual is unable to be alone with himself. It takes him a lifetime to travel along the road that eradicates egoism but it has to be proclaimed as a feasible road, the sole feasible road through the continuous growth of moral conscience, mainly based on the knowledge of himself, of his own inwardness, “insisting”

on it and discovering in it the natural law given by God. For the educator there is only one way to fight against atheism: his personal example.

- The social and national feeling: The supreme good is achieved within the social framework; the ethical reflection of the individual ends up in a political vocation which seeks the general welfare of a particular environment and through it, the universal one. We must always bear in mind that knowledge and training have to be based on ethics and morality to enable the achievement of social/national goals.

These reflections affect our behaviour, administration and management of academic units, teaching and the whole education process. A new sense must be given to our work. This new sense brings about austerity, dedication and sacrifice which, in turn, will make our activity humble and modest.

The University is full of life, life that must be preserved on all levels: director, professors, administrative staff, graduates and students. Wherever there is life, problems arise; but they are “good problems,” those arising out of growth from which bountiful harvests are reaped. We shall sow the seed in our students who constitute the most important and the most “transient” issue. We have very little time for each student, so we have to spend it wisely for his education to go beyond that restricted period of time.

**Summary of the Speech Delivered by Rvd. Jorge M. Bergoglio, SJ,
President of the San Miguel Area, on December 19, 1984**

Since its creation the Universidad del Salvador has borne a distinguishing feature: it has never succumbed to the temptation of “copying” university structures and organisations if not in accordance with our religious and national feelings. It has not evolved, however, into an institution closed in a rhetorical or narcissistic nationalism.

Bearing in mind the principles of the University Charter (1974) we can better understand our mission, mission that has been received from the Church and that now challenges us to turn the University—day by day—into one of the architects of Argentinian identity and culture; into an effective tool for the education and renewing of Argentinian ruling groups; into a research and analysis centre in accordance with the above mentioned principles; into a pattern for Latin America.

The Universidad del Salvador has been privileged with the performance of that mission. For ten years now, the laymen governing it have borne the responsibility of putting their “History and Change” Charter of Principles into practice.

These last ten years enabled the University to make History, they also contributed to its growth. During that period it faced favourable and unfavourable situations, all of them belonging to its history. They constitute something that we now own and that we cannot deny if we are determined to go on. Any growth, any path towards maturity is somewhat traumatic, as it implies to make a step that, as Catholics, we know it must be based on the Cross. And the Cross always involves a trauma. Hence, growing up requires a progressive unification of men around the mission and the guiding principles that summon them, together with the objectives they share. An institution without a doctrine is a body without a soul.

Traducción de alumnos de 3° y 4° año de Lenguas Modernas