**Jesuit University Vision and the Opportunities Ahead**
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**Intro:** It’s good to be back at SLU. I have five degrees from this university. So most of what I’ll say today is stolen from your predecessors.

**Original Sin:**
St. Augustine, Martin Luther, some of today’s evangelical colleges (“...Christian College”)
You can’t trust reason; only Scripture is reliable (in psych, you teach the parts of Freud that seem consistent with the Bible). Science, literature, philosophy all are deceptive.

St. Ignatius followed St. Thomas Aquinas (and Aristotle)
You can trust reason, but be careful about false reasoning and about misleading emotions.

[Thumbnail distinction: For St. Augustine, Original sin leaves us depraved.
For Aquinas (and Ignatius), Original sin leaves us deprived.]

**Ignatian attitude:** God made a good but incomplete world & left His creatures to finish it.

[New York Deli News: Can’t get good Jewish Rye in Denver. So they have a New York Jewish bakery mix the dough (“It’s the New York water that makes the difference.”) and start the loaf. Then they pull it from the oven when partially baked, flash freeze it, and fly it to Denver where the Deli bakes it the rest of the way. God is the Jewish baker; the folks in Denver are His co-creators as they finish His job. My Jesuit friends in Denver call this, “Sheeran’s half-baked theory of creation.”]

To be called into existence is to be called to make a good world better.

For a Jesuit, research & teaching involves a religious reverence for the life of the mind.

The human vocation is to become Co-creators with God. Research, teaching, study, even cleaning and repairing a university building has meaning because it is bringing the good world to its perfection.

:. In a Jesuit university, all disciplines belong. They aren’t tested against Scripture.

A Jesuit University is like an Ignatian retreat stretched over four years. The student learns the disciplines, the different ways of knowing. She learns how to let them each cast its own light on an event in history or a decision to be made. She learns to draw her conclusions in light of all the different perspectives. If you teach effectively, with perspective on the limits as well as the insights of your own field, the student realizes that no discipline simply trumps the others, not economics or sociology or literature or philosophy. Gradually the student learns the art of integrating the different insights of the different disciplines into a solid conclusion, a reliable decision. And, since the goal is to make a good world better, most decisions will have a moral component.
An Ignatian University offers both information and formation. That’s where the development of the life of the mind blends with developing emotional maturity, so the student learns when to distrust emotions and when to rely on them. The student learns to spot unfreedoms (what St. Ignatius called “inordinate affections” and what the Quakers describe as “disorderly walking.”)

That’s why the student life office at a Jesuit university is part of the education, not just a way to prevent riots!

The student attending a good non-Jesuit University gets the abundance of disciplines. He doesn’t get the modeling of how to integrate the disciplines because so many faculty know only the discipline they teach and don’t realize that any one discipline yields only partial insight into the truth. And there is little of morality in what is trumpeted as a “value free” education. And the student doesn’t get the deliberate formation of self-disciplined living that comes from a serious Jesuit Student Life program.

Steve Privett’s story:

Imagine you’re walking around a medieval construction site. A workman is mixing water and dirt and sand and pieces of rock in a little tub. You ask the man, “What are you doing.” And he says, “I’m mixing mortar.” You go a little further around the site and find another man mixing the same sort of stuff. You ask the second what he’s doing and he says, “I’m building a wall.” As you wander around the construction site, you come upon a third man who is doing the same sort of mixing. So you ask him what he’s doing. “I’m building a Cathedral,” he says.

Being part of a university is pretty similar. The physics professor, the literature teacher, the data entry clerk and the parking control officer are all doing separate tasks. But each of them is building the cathedral. What a shame it would be if they didn’t know it. The university itself is a cathedral, but the integrating mind of each student you all turn out is a cathedral, too. It would be a shame to work at SLU all your career and not see beyond the immediate tasks you do to realize that you are together building a Cathedral.

When you get 28 schools that share the Ignatian worldview I’ve described, they have lots of opportunities to make an impact on the bigger world. And the Jesuit universities all over the rest of the world make a natural network of collaboration. Some examples:

At SLU, you have trained so many Jesuit doctoral students for 3rd world universities that I suspect you have stopped noticing the impact you make on education around the world.

Your Chinese students may be good sources of revenue, but you are sending each of them back as leaven for the Chinese loaf.

SLU in Madrid has a real impact on Europe by modeling American-style Jesuit education in the heart of Europe.

Growing right now among US Jesuit schools are research interchanges with Jesuit schools in the Third world, in Latin America, in Europe. These collaborations are facilitated by that international Jesuit
network of higher education. [The practical thing these days, as expansion of 24/7 broadband happens in 3rd world countries, is that such research collaboration becomes easier and easier. ]

There’s an initiative in three huge refugee camps in Africa in which faculty from U.S. Jesuit schools – there are surely some from SLU involved – package online courses for refugees. The courses are online, with refugee tutors in every camp. Students can get a 45 credit certificate for taking fifteen courses over a three year period. When they can finally go home – typically after 15 to 18 years in the camp – they will become the schoolteachers and postmasters and government workers because only they among their generation will have an education.

We’re exploring at AJCU how to reserve two or three seats in every U.S. Jesuit school’s online nursing and MBA and IT master’s degrees for faculty without a master’s who are teaching in 3rd world colleges. In one experiment, five of six faculty at Nairobi’s Loretto College completed Master’s in 2 years without stopping their teaching or moving their families or being tempted NOT to return to Africa upon completing the degree in a first world country. And it cost much less than bringing them to the U.S. to get the same degree.

We’re exploring how to develop content clusters like 5 minute lectures and demonstrations for many of our present courses to let the “on campus” U.S. Jesuit university faculty members create hybrid versions of their existing courses. [All of the content units would come from Jesuit universities that share the same expectation that disciplinary knowledge needs integration with other disciplines to be of maximal use to the learner or decision maker, and that decision making has a moral dimension.]

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So let me wrap up: In common SLU and the 27 other US Jesuit universities have a mission of turning out graduates who will deliberately leave God’s world better than they found it. All 28 have faculty in very disparate disciplines. But always they are about the same task. They are building a cathedral. The cathedral is a particular type of school, the cathedral is a particular type of graduate, the cathedral is a better world.