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**President's Convocation Address 2004 – "What Shall We Do And How Shall We Live?" -
The Ethical Aim of Education**

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In his book *The Company We Keep*, Wayne Booth tells this story:

"Some years ago three college students in Indiana got drunk, raided a pigsty, tortured a sow with African spears they had stolen, put out the eyes of the piglets, then set fire to the horror they had created. The ringleader, a junior English major, said in his defense that he had been reading William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, along with great swathes of what he called 'existentialist' literature -- works by Gide, Kafka, and Sartre -- that he claimed had led him to assert his existence with a little *acte gratuit* of his own. These authors were thus to blame for his actions, he said (if the notion of blame made any sense, which he said he doubted.) Many fellow students and faculty members believed his explanation, and one dean even proposed that such works should be banned from the freshman reading list." (p. 165)

Loyola Marymount University proclaims its mission to be: the encouragement of learning, the education of the whole person, the service of faith and the promotion of justice. This afternoon I want to speak with you about the "promotion of justice." I want to locate the topic, however, within a longer and larger educational tradition. To be precise, I want to speak about the ethical aim of education, its role in forming character, a role far stronger and more significant, I'll suggest, than simply "avoid certain books," "do no harm." Education's ancient aims today demand the promotion of justice.

As a prenote, a warning and a disclaimer. Nothing in this talk should imply that the shaping of character and the promotion of justice exhaust the purposes of education. Imagining education in terms only of its ethical effects would be as utilitarian as thinking of it only as job preparation. The university's mission is fourfold: the encouragement of learning, the education of the whole person, the service of faith and the promotion of justice. These elements may blend, but none alone explains an LMU education.

So much for prenote. Not surprisingly, this address has three parts. First, I'd like to glance at the past, particularly at the American, Christian, and Classical tradition in education. Secondly, I'll look at why the present-day finds this tradition weakened, challenged, or ignored. Finally, I'd like to discuss LMU, and those reflections will lead to some dreaming about the future. So the talk's three divisions might be characterized, slightly forced for ease of expression, as: past, present, and future.

PAST

A nineteenth-century president of Brown University, Francis Wayland, neatly summarizes an earlier era's view of education's aim. "The most important end to be secured in the education of the young," he observed, "is moral character." James McCosh, President of Princeton, even believed that moral development was the justification for studying mathematics: "Having seen that there are *a priori* truths in mathematics," he observed, "the mind will be better prepared to admit that there are eternal and unchangeable principles lying at the basis of morality and religion, and guaranteeing to us the immutable character of the law and of the justice of God."

Whatever curriculum a nineteenth-century undergraduate followed, its capstone was not a senior seminar but a course on moral philosophy taught by the college's president. We get some sense of that awesome experience from a student's recollection of such a course at Brown taught by President Wayland:

"The members of the class in succession [first] recited the lecture of the preceding day ... This exercise concluded, there was a rustling all around the room; papers were adjusted and preparation was made for writing. The President's manuscript was offered and the well-known *ahem* was the signal for all to be ready and for the work of the hour to begin. He read slowly and the class copied. All were intent to catch the thought, at any rate, and the exact phraseology, if possible. The lecture was written in full by the students in their rooms ... These lectures seemed to us more wonderful than anything we had ever heard."

Enough about the President's role, appropriately important! A word about faculty and students. In his inaugural address as president of Yale in 1871, Noah Porter stated: "The most efficient of all moral influences in a college are those which proceed from the personal characters of the instructors." Not far removed is Woodrow Wilson's remark, while president of Princeton, that given a choice when hiring a faculty member between a scholar and a gentleman, he would easily select the latter.

As for the students, detailed prescriptions governed their lives, for, as Yale's Porter observed, "To hold the student to minute fidelity in little things is an enforcement of one of the most significant maxims of the Gospel." Among *The Laws of Yale College*, published in 1868, one reads: "If any Student shall profess or endeavor to propagate a disbelief in the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and shall persist therein after admonition, he shall no longer be a member of the College." Yale even imposed, for a while, a loyalty oath – to the Yale administration! – upon all its students.

Derek Bok has remarked:

"In sum, the entire undergraduate experience reflected the overriding commitment of the nineteenth-century college to strengthen the character of its students and thereby produce an educated class committed to a principled life in the service of society. While formal instruction in moral philosophy played an important role in this effort, it was only part of a much larger undertaking that affected faculty hiring, student discipline, and every other aspect of college life."

This moral thrust in nineteenth-century American education represents a particularly Protestant, better Puritan, take on a Christian view of education nearly two-millennia older. From the famous Catechetical School of Alexandria (founded 190 A.D.) through the monastic, cathedral and professional schools of the Middle Ages the Church nurtured the creation of universities as places not only to reconcile reason and revelation but also to think through the living out of the Gospels amidst the complexities of life. From the beginning, the Church saw schools as shapers of character.

This thrust is particularly clear from the story of the Jesuits getting involved in – and, more importantly, staying involved in – schools.

Jesuits ended up in education by accident. Truth to tell, Ignatius first saw running schools as a fundraising opportunity. He and his companions knew that those joining the order would need training and so they established "colleges" near universities. These colleges housed the young Jesuits who would actually take all of their classes at the university or at one of its other colleges. By 1544 there were seven such colleges, all but one financially unstable. Why, after all, would people contribute to an institution reserved exclusively for Jesuits, a new and unknown religious order?

On December 19, 1547, Ignatius received an early Christmas gift: officials of the city of Messina, in Sicily, formally asked him to send ten Jesuit scholastics there, five to study and five to teach. The officials would take care of food, lodging and clothing for the Jesuits.

This "arrangement solved the problem of how to fund the education of the younger members of the Society." The energies of the young Jesuits, though, not surprisingly, "got directed to teaching other students rather than to their own education."

More and more towns and cities began asking the order to open schools, and at Ignatius' death the Society operated roughly thirty-five colleges. We are often tempted, though we know better, to think of past ages as "golden." The early period was clearly not. As one Jesuit administrator observed at the time, "The Society is being ruined by taking on so many schools."

In his book *The First Jesuits*, John O'Malley catalogs the complaints:

"In order to ensure a supply of teachers, the Jesuits accepted unsuitable candidates into the Society; for the same reason they tolerated within their midst even rogues; there were too few Jesuits for the number of schools, as well as for other commitments. Many among those few performed badly in the classroom, either because they did not know the subject or because they were incompetent pedagogues. Practically none were ready by training and temperament to assume the administrative duties these institutions required. ... Foreigners sometimes had only a rudimentary grasp of the local language and spoke Latin with accents to which the natives were unaccustomed; older Jesuits began to complain that

the scholastics sent to the colleges, especially from the highly touted Collegio Romano, knew their Terence better than their Aquinas. The scholastics had become accustomed to niceties in food and clothing, showed favoritism in dealing with students, had little interest in teaching, were 'arid in the things of the spirit,' and dreamed of the 'honor of a chair'."

These problems surely spotlight similarities across the centuries, but, more importantly, they show how committed the Society became to educating the young. Without such a commitment the frustrations, failures, and headaches of staffing and running schools would quickly have led the early Jesuits out the door. Why did they keep at it, make education their principal priority?

Not by any *a priori* plan deduced from certain principles. Indeed the early Jesuits, following Ignatius' example, had thought of themselves as "pilgrims," itinerant preachers without institutional commitments. So running schools required a radical re-imagining of themselves and their mission.

The Jesuits deepened and extended their involvement in education because of their experience. They saw that schools shaped character. Their favorite description of their ministries was "the help of souls." It is not a term we would use. But we can embrace what it meant. "Helping souls" meant helping people to escape ignorance and to develop their talents, to dream large about the possibilities for their own lives and for the world around them, and to place their freer and more developed selves at the service of their fellow men and women. The Jesuits ended up doing what the Church had done from shortly after its beginning: running schools, moulding character.

The Church itself, of course, was young in light of a tradition far older, that of the Greeks. The Greeks believed in ideals, and education was the community's way of shaping the young to the ideal. Werner Jaeger observed that the Greeks "were the first to recognize that education means deliberately moulding human character in accordance with an ideal." This ideal was not static and changed over time. Whatever its particular features, though, it formed the basis for the educational enterprise in Greece and later in Rome.

In short, over many millennia, across many cultures, education aimed to improve character. In America today, however, aside from leaders of church-related institutions, few college or university presidents would agree with Brown's Wayland that "the most important end to be secured in the education of the young is moral character." "Critical thinking", yes; "preparation for citizenship", maybe; but not "moral character." How did we rather quickly reach this point?

PRESENT

The factors that motivate societal change are numerous, complex, and blurred. I'd like to try to isolate a few. The last century or so has seen a fundamental shift in the self-conception of universities and colleges. These institutions now take as one of their principal purposes, in some cases their main purpose, the creation of new knowledge, and with that has come an attendant emphasis on research and scholarship.

In the sweep of history, this is a fairly new development. In the preface to *The Idea of a University*, for instance, Newman wrote:

"The view taken of a university in these Discourses is the following – that it is a place of *teaching universal knowledge* ... If its object were scientific and philosophical discovery, I do not see why a university should have students..."

He observes further:

"The nature of the case and the history of philosophy combine to recommend to us this division of intellectual labour between Academies and Universities. To discover and to teach are distinct functions; they are also distinct gifts, and are not commonly found united in the same person. He, too, who spends his day in dispensing his existing knowledge to all comers is unlikely to have either leisure or energy to acquire new. The common sense of mankind has associated the search after truth with seclusion and quiet."

As Robert Bellah has pointed out:

"Since the rise of the research universities at the end of the nineteenth century, the purpose of higher education has been seen as the disciplined search for new knowledge, in a broad sense of the term, science, and not the transmission and interpretation of tradition central to classical liberal arts education. It is worth remembering that early modern natural science was pursued largely outside the universities, and that it was only late in the nineteenth century that science began to be central in higher education. But the

idea of the disciplined pursuit of new knowledge spread from the natural sciences to the other disciplines, even the humanities, as the central concern of higher education.”

Education’s new emphasis has brought a new set of virtues: detachment, skepticism, objectivity, virtues not easily integrated into an agenda with any moral urgency. And it’s more complicated than that.

The last half-century has increasingly laid siege to the very notion of objectivity. We are now exquisitely aware of how our personality, past, and cultural background determine the questions we ask and the answers we find. In our world, relativism reigns; “whatever -- live and let live” seems like a sensible moral guide. Moreover, higher education, at least the liberal arts part of it, can be viewed chiefly as refining our skills at playing an advanced intellectual game.

A scene in Alan Bennett’s recent play, *The History Boys*, makes my point. Irwin, a young teacher recently hired to help the students get into Oxford and Cambridge, is handing back some papers; the young men had not done well. He gives them advice.

Irwin ...The wrong end of the stick is the right one. A question has a front door and a back door. Go in the back, or better still, the side.
Flee the crowd. Follow Orwell. Be perverse.
And since I mention Orwell, take Stalin. Generally agreed to be a monster, and rightly. So dissent. Find something, anything, to say in his defence.
History nowadays is not a matter of conviction.
It’s a performance. It’s entertainment. And if it isn’t, make it so.

Lest the scene seem far-fetched, here’s an excerpt from R. W. Johnson’s review of Niall Ferguson’s *The Pity of War* in the *London Review of Books*.

“Anyone who has been a victim, let alone a perpetrator, of the Oxbridge system will recognize Niall Ferguson’s book for what it is: an extended and argumentative tutorial from a self-consciously clever, confrontational young don, determined to stand everything on its head and argue with vehemence against what he sees as the conventional wisdom – or worse still, the fashion – of the time. The idea is to teach the young to think and argue, and the real past masters at it ... were those who first argued undergraduates out of their received opinions, then turned around after a time and argued them out of their newfound radicalism, leaving them mystified as to what they believed and suspended in a free-floating state of cleverness.”

We’re a long way from “those who are ignorant of the mistakes of the past are bound to repeat them” or Bloch’s more profound “all study of history is an attempt at self-understanding.”

Compared with “cleverness,” “detachment,” “skepticism,” and “objectivity” seem almost middle-class virtues!

To summarize, the modern university’s role as creator of new knowledge and its sensitivity to the complexities of knowing have generated attitudes and assumptions that are not comfortable with a sense of responsibility for forming moral character. And two other modern realizations increase this discomfort: our appreciation of the role of the unconscious in our lives and development and our awareness of the extent and intricacy of social systems. A word about each.

“More tortuous than all else is the human heart, beyond remedy, who can understand it?”, wrote the prophet Jeremiah. And over the centuries, storytellers, playwrights and novelists have created imaginary worlds where we see the complexity of our lives as in a mirror, even when self-examination fails. But not until Freud did we sense the strength of hidden currents running through our hearts. Why do we do what we do? Are we moral out of principle or repression? Can the examined life reach into the unconscious?

After Freud, it is not easy for an institution to feel confident about crafting character. Holding “the student to minute fidelity in little things” rather than “an enforcement of one of the most significant maxims of the Gospel” might really be the reinforcement of an obsessive-compulsive disorder! And, in the end, maybe it’s all about neurons anyway. Prozac might be more important than prophets.

And if each of us as individuals is beyond understanding, how can we intelligently grasp the intricately woven texture of society-at-large and failing that, how can we make moral judgments, shape it for the good? And if this is true as we study the structures of our own society, what about those imbedded in other cultures? And what are appropriate moral considerations and actions in a global economy that cuts across cultures?

And yet we want to do something. When Voltaire heard the news of the earthquake that destroyed Lisbon on November 1, 1755, he wrote, "Lisbon lies in ruins, and here in Paris we dance." How often we have similar feelings, as modern media bring news and pictures of tragedies around the world, while we jog and surf and dine alfresco with an ocean breeze. What are we to do? And is it any wonder that universities feel helpless to prepare people for this task? Isn't that the job of parents, or religion, or the individual alone?

But surely colleges and universities cannot avoid what Tolstoy calls "the only question important for us 'What shall we do and how shall we live?'" I'd like to suggest that higher education should still strive to shape character, although that role is more challenging than ever. And LMU can show the way, avoiding both the tendency of most universities to abnegate this responsibility and the temptation of religious colleges and universities to a moral fundamentalism held captive by easy answers. Let's turn to LMU – present and future.

PRESENT AND FUTURE – LMU

Ethical issues can be complicated. Recognizing this, the University began years ago establishing Ethics Chairs in the various Schools and Colleges. In addition to their own teaching and research, these chairs serve as catalysts for engaging the tangle of complex ethical issues raised by disciplines and professions. In its legal system a society concretely works out what is just, right, and fair, and Loyola Law School and its graduates bring the University into the thick of this arena.

Ethical issues, of course, do not respect our academic boundaries. Here LMU's size is an advantage, big enough to have experts in diverse areas, small enough for them to work together across departments.

Professional ethicists are not alone in probing moral questions. Martha Nussbaum has argued, for example, that certain works of fiction can do what philosophy never can; they

"display to us the complexity, the indeterminacy, the sheer difficulty of moral choice.... This task cannot be easily accomplished by texts which speak in universal terms – for one of the difficulties of deliberation ... is that of grasping the uniqueness of the new particular. Nor can it be easily done by texts which speak with the hardness or plainness which moral philosophy has traditionally chosen for its style – for how can this style at all convey the way in which the 'matter of the practical' appears before the agent in all of its bewildering complexity, without its morally salient features stamped on its face? And how, without conveying this, can it convey the active adventure of the deliberative intelligence, the 'yearnings of thought and excursions of sympathy' [James] that make up much of our actual moral life?"

These kinds of texts, I hasten to add, as well as other forms of artistic expression, can transport us into other cultures and times and raise important questions about the hidden assumptions of our ethical judgments.

Ethics is not just about particular choices at important moments. It should also inform one's whole view of one's profession. Our professional schools encourage students to think larger about their careers, seeing them not simply as about mastery of techniques but also as a means of ethically serving society. The School of Education's new Ed.D. program in Educational Leadership for Social Justice, the Law School's Center for Ethical Lawyering, and the College of Business Administration's R. Chad Dreier Chair in Accounting (with an ethics emphasis), exemplify how the University emphasizes a noble view of the professions.

In the raising and exploring of ethical issues, as in all that the University does, freedom of thought and expression is necessary. This means that there will always be some relatively incorrect notions alive on the campus. The search for truth is long and messy and usually involves error along the way. And how students at any given period in their lives, with their own particular preoccupations, intersect with these ideas is beyond our control. So sometimes wrong-headed ideas will captivate our students' minds, lead them even to foolish acts, more foolish than killing a sow after reading *Lord of the Flies*. When Emma Bovary was fifteen, she secretly read novels, the narrator tells us, that were:

"invariably about love affairs, lovers, mistresses, harassed ladies swooning in remote pavilions ... there were gloomy forests, broken hearts, vows, sobs, tears and kisses ... the noblemen were all brave as lions, gentle as lambs, incredibly virtuous, always beautifully dressed, and wept copiously on every occasion She worshipped Mary Queen of Scots, and venerated (fictional) women illustrious or ill-starred ... and now she could not bring herself to believe that the uneventful life she was leading was the happiness of which she had dreamed."

These images from her reading hastened Emma toward destruction, and Flaubert's own book was attacked for corrupting its readers. We know that ideas and images can be dangerous, that they can mislead and destroy. But those of us involved at universities also believe passionately in their value as guides toward the truth that sets us free. Education is an ethical enterprise, unavoidably risky, but worth the risk.

Students, moreover, are not simply engaging ideas while at a university. They are living in residence halls, active on sports teams, involved in extracurricular activities, relating to one another – and to various versions of themselves. There was a day when faculty oversaw all of this. In 1939, a Yale alumnus, William Phelps, described his undergraduate days:

“when I was an undergraduate, it was part of every instructor’s duty, if he had a room on campus, to maintain order. It was not an uncommon sight, in the midst of an uproar at night, to spot a professor in his nightgown hiding behind a tree, and taking down names of those unfortunate students who were revealed by the bonfire.”

In our post-Freudian world, we realize that helping students live ethically in the many actual aspects of their lives together requires expertise, and so we are indebted to the people who work in all the areas of Student Affairs. And I underscore all. Whether with students in the residence halls, on the sports fields, in extracurriculars, and even at parties, Student Affairs is helping our young adults relate to themselves, others and the community. The Center for Service and Action helps them to carry out their yearning to serve the community and through its various immersion and service/learning programs expands and deepens their view of community. Student Psychological Services offers expert help when a life becomes too tangled to sort out alone.

Campus Ministry, through the CLC program, retreats, liturgies and other offerings, encourages us to bring our particular, concrete lives before the face of God and to ask what God might want of us.

So LMU, in many, many ways tries to shape character. But it is not just the institution that is important. Yale’s Noal Porter: “The most efficient of all moral influences in a college are those which proceed from the personal characters of the instructors.” And it is not only professors who are instructors; each of us is. No matter whether a university accepts an ethical mission or not, students are at an age when they are intensely asking moral questions. “What shall we do and how shall we live?” They are asking questions and looking at us. Whether we are a Professor, an RD, or custodian, whether we work the Registrar’s office, financial aid, development or outside on the grounds, whether our paycheck comes from LMU, Sodexo, or Collegis, students are looking at us, earthen vessels though we be, as they figure out how they would like to live.

And we are listening to them. The events of the past weeks reveal how much richer a university’s reality is than the neat categories of a speech can convey. Racial incidents and a hate crime have prompted all of us to take deeper soundings of our own values, of how we want to live as individuals, of the kind of community we want to make. Across the traditional boundaries of staff, faculty, students, administrators, people have shared their experiences of discrimination, their dreams for a better world, their thoughts about how we can do better here. LMU has been shaping all our characters. Because of all of you, this university is a wonderful place for our students, indeed for all of us, as we struggle “to see life steady and to see it whole.”

It would not be a good moral lesson, though, for me to end this Convocation on a note of institutional self-congratulation. So as I move to conclude, I’d like to flag a challenge for the future and then say a personal word or two.

Our great challenge is to let the city into our university even more than we do now. LMU/LA must be more than a logo. Los Angeles is becoming the great world city of this still new millennium, the place where the promise and peril of the modern world live most intensely. Ours is the most diverse city in the history of the planet. Groups, ethnic, religious, professional, must here learn to think beyond themselves and grow responsible for the *whole* community. And isn’t this the lesson the world must learn as well?

Probably in no other city is the span between surpassing wealth and severe poverty so wide. This city raises acutely the question: What are the obligations of the privileged toward those not so fortunate? And this is a question the world faces. Los Angeles sits in one of the loveliest settings the imagination can frame, surrounded by ocean, mountains and desert, in weather as close to perfection as this world allows. How do we respect this extraordinary environment and yet build the infrastructure for living and working? A world question too.

Precisely because of our environment there are always wonderful things to do, ways to recreate and relax. So this city raises to a high pitch a modern tension, the competition between work and play. What is the relationship between high ambition and great achievement and the enthusiastic enjoyment of this one life we’ll have?

And, of course, in no other city are the modern values of beauty, youth, and health so seductive. What does any of this have to do with eternity -- or with simply being a good person?

By letting this great city, with all its yearnings and confusion, more and more into our hearts and minds, we will better enable our students – and ourselves – to consider aright “What shall we do and how shall we live?” And the consideration cannot be merely intellectual. It must lead to action.

We are educating our students to be sure to be good friends and lovers, wives and husbands, employees and citizens. But we aim for more. We are also shaping them to be responsible for the city and the world. In short, we are educating them to be the makers of Los Angeles, and this planet, and the future, creating perhaps at last the new Jerusalem of which the prophets dreamed, a city and a world where peace and prosperity, justice and a concern for the marginalized flourish. To do this we must help our students develop the intellect and skills to analyze problems, the sensitivity to see the interdependence of social systems, the will and patience to engage the political process, the talents and personal traits that will enable them to effect change. In all of this, of course, we will also learn from them. Perhaps put best, we will learn together. And always and in everything we must strive to see the moral dimension. As Václav Havel has remarked:

“If we examine all the problems facing the world today, be they economic, social, ecological, or general problems of civilization, we will always – whether we want to or not – come up against the problem of whether a course of action is proper or not, or whether, from the long-term planetary point of view, it is responsible. The moral order and its sources, human rights and the sources of people’s right to human rights, human responsibility and its origins, human conscience and the penetrating view of that from which nothing can be hidden with a curtain of noble words – these are, in my deepest convictions and in all my experience, the most important political themes of our times.”

Blessed by advantages of place and time, LMU should be one of the world’s leading universities in shaping character to serve and to lead a complex world. It is our moral responsibility to help it fulfill that promise.

The ethical aim of education has obviously captivated me, both as a topic and a task. The reason is simple. Universities shape my character.

There’s a famous interchange between Nora and her husband Torvald at the conclusion of Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*. Nora has just told Torvald that she will be leaving him.

Torvald: But this is monstrous! Can you neglect your most sacred duties?

Nora: What do you call my most sacred duties?

Torvald: Do I have to tell you? Your duties towards your husband, and your children.

Nora: I have another duty which is equally sacred.

Torvald: You have not. What on earth could that be?

Nora: My duty towards myself.

Torvald: First and foremost you are a wife and a mother.

Nora: I don’t believe that any longer. I believe that I am first and foremost a human being, like you – or anyway, that I must try to become one. I know most people think as you do, Torvald, and I know there’s something of the sort to be found in books. But I’m no longer prepared to accept what people say and what’s written in books. I must think things out for myself, and try to find my own answer.

Torvald: Do you need to ask where your duty lies in your home? Haven’t you an infallible guide in such matters – your religion?

Nora: Oh, Torvald, I don’t really know what religion means?

Torvald: What are you saying?

Nora: I only know what Pastor Hansen told me when I went to confirmation. He explained that religion meant this and that. When I get away from all this and can think things out on my own, that’s one of the questions I want to look into. I want to find out whether what Pastor Hansen said was right - or, anyway, whether it is right for me.

First and foremost I’m not a President, scholar, or priest, or even a Catholic. “I am first and foremost a human being, like you” -- or at least I am trying to become one. So I’m thinking things out for myself, trying to find my own answers.

Our lives take on patterns as we look back. In college, I majored in classics; in graduate school I studied Old Testament literature and history. These choices have proven symbolic, for, as I’ve tried to think things out, I’ve pondered knowledge both secular and sacred, have at times set these claims in contest. That’s why I love Catholic universities. From all the ideas that thrive in such a setting, I construct myself. I’ve been often in error, at times confidently so, but it’s been at universities that I’ve also heard the ideas that have challenged and corrected me.

My biggest complaint about institutions of higher learning is how often people treat those who disagree with them derisively or harshly. I find most important matters pretty complicated and appreciate Aquinas' words.

"We must love them both – those whose opinions we share, and those whose opinions we reject. For both have labored in the search for truth and both have helped us in the finding of it."

Universities, of course, are privileged places. Even as I've relished the leisure and space they've given to think things out, Voltaire's words have haunted me

"Lisbon lies in ruins, and here in Paris we dance." What about the world and all its problems? What am I to do?

The problems are many and complex, with no easy solutions. Addressing them often demands years of preparation and a lifetime of work. That's another reason I love Catholic universities. Our students will go on to become engineers, business people, educators, filmmakers, builders, entrepreneurs, politicians, diplomats, social workers, philosophers, doctors. If while they are with us we can sharpen their intelligence, refine their skills, nurture their sense of moral purpose, then in countless ways, through them, we are helping to make a better city, a more prosperous and just world, a new Jerusalem.

So Catholic universities allow me both to think things out and morally to engage, even if indirectly through our students, the world's great and many problems in a way that respects their complexity. But there's a final way these institutions touch my heart.

My faith holds out the promise of eternal life. But I yearn as well for a more worldly immortality. At the very end of *The History Boys*, Hector, the teacher who wasn't good at getting his students into Oxford and Cambridge, speaks from the dead to his students:

Hector: Pass the parcel

That's sometimes all you can do

Take it, feel it and pass it on.

Not for me, not for you, but for someone, somewhere, one day.

Pass it on, boys.

That's the game I wanted you to learn.

Pass it on.

Caring for LMU as a shaper of character, working that this great university might be ever more a place where people can bring developing intelligence, sensitivity, and skill to the enduring question "What shall we do and how shall we live?"; in all of this we are not simply engaging the present, we are keeping alive a tradition to reach far into the future, farther than we can see, "for someone, somewhere, one day."

It's a privilege to share LMU and its mission with all of you.

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