**Address for Opening the Academic Year 2022-23**

Good morning!

I welcome you all to Arrupe Jesuit University. As you may already notice, we have a significant change on the face of the University. Our lecturers and administrative personnel have significantly increased and more diversified. More Jesuits have joined the teaching and administration and we are very grateful for their generosity, especially their Major Superiors who have made them available that they join into this treasured enterprise. I welcome you all to Arrupe Jesuit University.

May I welcome our new students and thank you for choosing to come to Arrupe. May I thank your sponsors and guardians who directed you and entrusted you to be under our care. As you enter this Jesuit higher education intuition, I would like to draw your attention to our expectations that ultimately, “…we are looking for human excellence in our students by training them to be men and women of conscience, competence, compassion and commitment. ... It is this integral human excellence that gives purpose to academic excellence” (Arturo Sosa, 2017, p. 2). We must put all our energies to realize this objective.

**Diversified Composition**

The composition of the new students is more diversified. We have more female students joining us especially in the programs other than Philosophy. We are aware that the economic situation of Zimbabwe is hard. Many families cannot afford sending their sons and daughters for higher education. Having weighed the situation, we decided that we need to give such individuals opportunity to pursue higher education at Arrupe. It is in this line that we sourced for resources to make this possibility a reality. We are grateful to our benefactors who have made this possible. I encourage the beneficiaries, whether they have received partial or full tuition scholarship that it is conditioned on good performance and availability to help the most vulnerable in our society. Our gratitude therefore must be evident in our performance and outcome.

**Collaboration with the Local Church**

“The mission of the Society today is participation in the total evangelizing mission of the Church” (CN 245§1). Enabling good formation for the evangelizing agents that includes; priests, catechists, and religious is an appropriate mission of the Society. The formators and pastoral agents ought to have “special training, especially in such skills as homiletics, catechesis, sociocultural analysis, social communication, and conflict management” (CN 274§3). Pope Francis reminds us, “Proclaiming the Gospel message to different cultures also involves proclaiming it to professional, scientific and academic circles” (EG 132). Such evangelizing agents require appropriate preparations so that they engage in authentic dialogue from the perspective of knowledge.

Having recognized the deficiencies in formation houses, especially of the National Major Seminaries in AMECEA and IMBISA, Arrupe Jesuit University has taken up this task of forming the individuals identified by Bishops or Episcopal Conferences to prepare them for this mission. In this regard, we have received eight priests for both Masters and Doctorate in Philosophy to study so that they can later support formation in the Seminaries. In keeping with the “Ignatian commitment that leads to integral attention to persons in all dimensions of ‘personal and social life and in all that they need” (Arturo Sosa, 2022), we shall continue making effort to have more students have the opportunity to study in Arrupe in spite of their humble background.

Furthermore, the Tanzanian Episcopal Conference (TEC) has also requested us to be involved in the formation of their formators for the Major Seminaries. This year, we have received four priests who are residing in the Jesuit Community to be prepared to fulfil this mission. We hope that these priests will fully utilize the opportunity that they have been given, constantly “…open …to something new” (Arturo Sosa, 2022) in their experience as they ready themselves to collaborate in this mission. Pope Francis emphasizes:

This means an encounter between faith, reason and the sciences with a view to developing new approaches and arguments on the issue of credibility, a creative apologetics which would encourage greater openness to the Gospel on the part of all. When certain categories of reason and the sciences are taken up into the proclamation of the message, these categories then become tools of evangelization; water is changed into wine. Whatever is taken up is not just redeemed, but becomes an instrument of the Spirit for enlightening and renewing the world (EG 132).

There are more institutions that are asking to collaborate with us in different fields. Responding to the local and emerging needs is a way that we shall remain contextualized, relevant and credible in our mission. It is therefore a path less travelled that we shall continue to follow.

**Educational Facilities, Student Support and Challenges Ahead**

As we start this new academic year, I would encourage all our students to use the resources that have been put at your disposal. We shall continue improving our facilities and resources so that we continue having conducive environment for teaching and learning processes. It goes without saying that these facilities are for those who have been appropriately admitted to Arrupe. Whereas it is good to be compassionate and sympathize with the situations in other institutions, it helps to remind all that non-members of Arrupe need appropriate authorization.

Jesuits have been reminded that “our institutions of university education are constantly threatened by three stains of virus with highly contagious variants: fragmentation, superficiality, and instrumentality. The illness that these viruses produce threatens the identity that unites us” (Arturo Sosa, 2022).We are therefore expected to be attentive to what is going on around us. How are we prepared to address these challenges? We need to be appropriately prepared to adequately deal with the emerging issues. It however requires prudence, discretion and patience.

As a Jesuit institution, we are to continue keeping focus on how best we can help our students realize their maximum potential. This is possible with mentorship where the student takes the initiative to seek help of the faculty. As members of Arrupe Jesuit University, you are encouraged to take “opportunities such as the Christian Life Communities… available for those students and adults who want to know Christ more completely and model their lives on his more closely. Similar opportunities are offered to members of other faiths who wish to deepen their faith commitment” ( Society of Jesus, 2014, p. 20). Moreover, opportunities for engaging in institutional activities, community service and spiritual renewal will help each individual to realize his/her maximum potential. “The pursuit of academic excellence is appropriate in a Jesuit school, but only within the larger context of human excellence” ( Society of Jesus, 2014, p. 21). Father Adolfo Nicolas of Happy Memories said that as Jesuits and Jesuit institutions, we do not compete with anybody. We only try our best with the constant desire to improve.

**Towards Excellence, Authenticity and Personal Potential**

The way towards attaining academic excellence rests on the shoulders of each individual. The practice of academic advising that is so typical of Jesuit education is greatly encouraged. Each student needs to contact the Dean of their school and seek this assistance. It must however be used beyond correcting grammar and spellings in assignments. Moreover, every talent can have its place in this institution especially when you are open to show what you have. The whole matter begins with being familiar with what the school is demanding from you. Further, you need to show a sense of gratitude to those who are supporting your education, not with words but with consistent hard work and commitment. I therefore encourage you to work closely with the Students’ Association, the Dean of Students and any other University Official that can help you in this advancement.

Moreover, the universal apostolic preferences of the Society of Jesus encouraged us to make spiritual exercises more available saying, “Give our partners in mission real opportunities to enter into the experience of the Spiritual Exercises. This means, among other resources, to have spiritual directors available, and to reserve time in the yearly calendar and in schedules of work”. I therefore encourage you to take the advantage of the many Jesuits, religious and lay brothers and sisters who are experienced in spiritual direction and directing retreats that you get appropriate accompaniment. The Chaplain of the University will coordinate this process, offering opportunities that those who desire may pursue the course on Ignatian Spirituality in a paced manner.

**Integrity**

We expect a level of honesty among our students. Situations of dishonesty have been experienced in paper writing where a person copies another person’s work without any acknowledgement. I am also aware of some students who take assignments of their seniors or students who have since left Arrupe and they hand them in as their work for particular core courses. I would urge lecturers to be attentive to these bad academic practices. Our students need to recognize that any plagiarism will be severely treated to the extent that it can lead to termination of your studies.

Another area where dishonesty has been experienced are situations where a student continues studies without paying a single cent and then they plead for sympathy when we finally catch up with them. Justice and fairness to all is part of our characteristic. I therefore advise all the students that when you encounter difficulties, seeking advice from appropriate officials will really save you embarrassment.

**Conclusion**

As I have expressed earlier, we appreciate your choosing to come to Arrupe Jesuit University. Please take the advantage of the opportunities that you have here strengthening your friendship and using the facilities availed to you. You are to know that we shall give you the necessary support that you need to accomplish your desires. May the Lord continue to bless you all throughout the academic year 2022/2023.

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