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(Address delivered by the Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., President, University of Notre Dame, at the 9th General Assembly of the International Federation of Catholic Universities, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, August 26, 1970)

This is the third and last time that I am honored and privileged to speak to the General Conference of the International Federation of Catholic Universities as your President. The first time was at Sophia University in Tokyo, two years after the Washington General Conference at which I was elected in 1963. The second time was three years later at Lovanium University in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, in 1968. Now two years later we are meeting again at Boston College. I like to believe that much has happened since our Washington Conference in 1963. I am convinced that much is yet to be done. My remarks today will be a look backward and a look forward: to see where we have been and, hopefully, where we are going.

The Washington Conference took place during Vatican Council II. Catholic university rectors, as such, had not been invited to attend the Council so that, in effect, the Washington Conference of 1963 became our council of reform and restructuring. It was good that this was so, because, in fact, Vatican Council II was not going to say very much in detail about Catholic higher education and, besides, it was the conviction of the rectors and delegates that they should have a large part in discussing what should be said, since they alone were, with their faculties and students, living in the world of higher education and facing its growing problems. It seemed to many of those

assembled in Washington that our Federation was the proper vehicle for this task, but it was likewise very apparent that the Federation would and could never revitalize the notion and reality of Catholic higher education unless the Federation itself were restructured and revitalized.

To do just this, to restructure and revitalize the Federation, was the task assigned to the President and his Council, newly elected in Washington in 1963.

The task appeared rather impossible at that time. For the past three years, since the Conference in Rio de Janeiro, ^{IN 1960} there had been one letter addressed to the membership by the then President. It was about five lines long and written in Latin. I simply forget the subject matter of that letter, but that, too, is symptomatic of where we were. In the years previous to Rio, the Federation had been held together by the heroic efforts of the then Secretary-General, Father Paul Dezza, S.J., former Rector of the Gregorian, who had periodically sent a Federation newsletter to the membership. It was a one-man show, however, and when the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities forced his resignation in 1960, after he had been re-elected despite the previous word against this from the Congregation, the one sign of life in the Federation died out. So we did, in fact, inherit a Federation in Washington that had for three years been largely moribund, if not already dead.

Because of its lifelessness and inactivity, very few members were paying their dues. One might have asked legitimately, "What for?"

Perhaps the best description of the then state of the Federation is the fact that the elections of the September 1963 General Conference were repudiated in November of that year by the Congregation. The newly-elected President and Secretary-General were simply called to Rome and told to submit to a new form of governance in which they might participate with a majority of others, not elected, but appointed by the Congregation. When they refused, a second form of governance by all rectors of pontifical universities was suggested to these rectors. After they had largely refused to repudiate their own election of the past September, in January of 1964, after the timely intervention of our Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, the elections of Washington were finally approved. It was to be the last time that the Congregation was to act in such a capacity, for we were then instructed, again thanks to Pope Paul VI who wanted an active and vital Federation, to rewrite our Constitution and thereby restructure the Federation in such a way that it would be comparable to other international educational organizations that function in collaboration with UNESCO, although independently.

The years preceding the 1965 Tokyo General Conference saw many meetings of the Council of the Federation largely dedicated to the rewriting of the Constitution of the Federation in collaboration with all the membership. The Council in this process had fruitful meetings with Pope Paul who welcomed and supported all of our new initiatives. Whereas the Congregation had been mentioned, restrictively, in every article of the old Constitution, it was not mentioned at all

in any article in the new Constitution. The membership voted for the adoption of this new Constitution for the Federation as the most important item of our Tokyo General Conference in September of 1965.

While structure is important to the life and vitality of an organization, the Federation could not live by structure alone. Two other activities were inaugurated during this period: The Paris Secretariat and the Jerusalem Ecumenical Institute.

The Paris office was essential to our having a presence near UNESCO, which presence was also necessary if we were to obtain consultative status in this United Nations center for education, science, and culture. The Federation's Paris center was and is modest, but it has kept Catholic higher education in the main stream of development. We are now invited to every significant international educational conference and our Secretariat officials are known and seen by their opposite numbers at UNESCO. We have also thus been in contact with other international Catholic and secular educational organizations clustered around UNESCO and have been able to keep our membership informed of all new developments in higher education around the world. One other obvious advantage to the Paris Secretariat has been its new capability to organize better our General Conferences, Council and Commission meetings, to edit the minutes of all such meetings for our membership, to expedite an increasing flow of official correspondence, to arrange representation at worldwide conferences, and a whole host of other activities that

have given new visibility to the Federation and have given us a real and vital presence, not only in Paris, but in the whole world of higher education.

The Jerusalem Ecumenical Institute, confided to the Federation by Pope Paul VI, gave us a new and important role, both international, ecumenical, and educational, beyond the introspective tasks of restructuring and revitalizing that occupied the Council prior to the Tokyo Conference of 1965. It took the better part of two years to accomplish the research, planning, and worldwide visitation of Christian theologians and theological faculties, Protestant, Catholic, Anglican, and Orthodox, before the initial invitations were ready for the thirty theologians who were to form the Academic Council for the educational and research administration of the Jerusalem Institute. The final list was decided upon at our Tokyo Conference and the initial meeting of the Council was held the following November of 1965 at the Villa Serbelloni in Bellagio, Italy. There have been many meetings of the Academic Council since then -- in Jerusalem, Thessaloniki, Istanbul, Westminster Abbey, London, Notre Dame, Rome, and again next month in Jerusalem -- the final preparatory meeting before the opening of the Institute in October, 1971.

As the legal, financial, architectural, and organizational matters became more complex, it was necessary for the Federation to constitute one of its members, the University of Notre Dame, as its official agent to continue this work. However, without the initial

two years work of the Federation Council and the preparatory Commission, the Jerusalem Institute would have only remained a great idea without substance.

I would characterize the three year period between the Tokyo and Kinshasa Conferences, 1965-68, as the fruitful years when the Federation, acting through its four great regions, began to identify the nature, the purposes, the means, and the concrete existence of the Catholic university. Curiously enough, although Catholic universities had been founded throughout the world, especially during the last century, there was a very slim and scanty literature regarding the nature, purposes, and means of the Catholic university, particularly the role of theology within the Catholic university. Vatican Council II had vindicated the importance of a new and vital theology, pioneered mainly by the periti, the most fruitful of whom were in large measure university theologians.

This 1965-68 period saw the new statements on the Catholic university from the Federation's European group at Paris, the Latin American group at Buga, Colombia, the Far Eastern group at Manila, and the North American group at Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin. This worldwide discussion on our most essential topic of interest came into closer focus at our Kinshasa Conference which elaborated its own statement which, in turn, led to the April 1969 meeting in Rome hosted by the Congregation, now called "of Christian Education". The Roman statement has been further discussed by the Fathers of

the Congregation, and their comments are still being discussed by all of us. Thus, the dialogue continues.

I did not recount the often sad details of our earlier relationships with the Congregation to be sensational or abrasive. It simply seemed important historically to indicate where we were then and where we are now. It must be added here, to balance that picture, that since the appointment of His Eminence Gabriel Cardinal Garrone, as Prefect, and His Excellency Bishop Joseph Schröffer as Secretary of the Congregation, the relationships between the Congregation and the Federation have been most cordial and fruitful. Cardinal Garrone attended our Kinshasa Conference, addressed our Assembly, and followed up the theme of that meeting by convoking the Rome meeting with its continuing dialogue. Bishop Schröffer is with us at this Boston Conference. I shall have more to say later of this fruitful present relationship between the Congregation and the Federation when looking to future developments.

The Kinshasa Conference also established a Development Committee which met in Paris last January and contributed greatly to the intellectual preparation of this Boston Conference. It also developed some new ideas for the further growth of the Federation and its activities.

I would not want anyone to conclude from this account of the Federation under my three terms as President that this has been due solely to the activity of the President. Many people have

contributed time, talent, effort, and financial backing to make this restructuring and revitalization possible.

Our Secretary-General, Monsignor Georges Leclercq, and I have established a new level of Franco-American relationships with an enormously generous and intelligent effort on his part, supplemented by his former Vice Rector and now successor as Rector of the Catholic University of Lille, Chanoine Gerard Lepoutre. Our Paris Secretariat was organized and operated for years without salary by Mrs. Jean Moreau, Chère Odile to all of us.

The Council of the Federation, our two Vice Presidents and three Councilors, were most generous in their attendance at meetings of the Council, coming long distances from places like Manila, Congo, Lima, Bogota, Quebec, Paris, and Lille, at their own expense and with faithful regularity. Our new Commission members serve in the same tradition -- to the ultimate good of the Federation. Our members, whose number is growing each year, have likewise changed from a group wherein almost nobody paid dues to a group where practically everybody does. Our members attendance at the General Conferences and interest in contributing to the intellectual preparation, continuing discussion, and ultimate editing of our documents have brought new vitality, not only to the Federation, but to the many other conferences at which our members represent Catholic higher education.

I should add to this long list of thanks our very special gratitude to Our Holy Father, without whose wise and courageous interest, our Federation could not have survived, and without which

it certainly would not have begun to prosper. Cardinal Garrone and Bishop Schröffer have, of course, our continual affection and thanks as well. In mentioning persons who have contributed to the growth of our Federation, I must make special mention of Monsignor Vachon, Monsignor Gillon, Fathers Mac Gregor and Diaz. They have all been especially generous and faithful.

So much for the past. Now we must look ahead. Difficult as has been the task of restructuring and revitalization of the Federation during the past years, I believe that the task ahead is yet more difficult, since we now face both a crisis of identity within the whole field of higher education, as well as a crisis of survival for each of the institutions who are members of the Federation. The Federation's health and survival cannot be dissociated from the life and survival of its members, and the whole intellectual and moral climate in the world of higher learning. This whole matter is so large that it is difficult to discuss it unless it is reduced to several subsidiary propositions.

First, may I note that Catholic universities do not share in the promise of survival granted the Church by her Founder. Of all the Mediaeval Catholic universities, only one, Louvain, survives as Catholic today. Most of our Catholic universities today were founded within the past century or so. Within the totality of universities, all grouped variously by geography, political structure, language, etc., we are grouped by a Faith, an adherence to a special religious tradition. To the extent that this Faith and tradition

are a vital force within the institution, our universities will have a special and positive character that justifies our existence as a special group within the larger university world. We must be recognizable as something special if our existence is to be justified. We must also make a special contribution to the university world, and to the Church, that would not be made did we not exist.

In my Kinshasa address, I spoke of the role of theology within the Catholic university to assure this special identity, this special contribution. I also noted the tension that is bound to exist between the essential university requirement of freedom and autonomy and the yet largely undefined relationship between university theology and the Magisterium -- which seems to complicate complete freedom and autonomy for the Catholic university, at least in much current theory, if not in practice. Yet the requirements are clear and must be met if the Catholic university is to exist and have its true identity, much less survive. The university must have a strong theological faculty in vital relationship with all other faculties to be Catholic, and theology must be free and autonomous to be a true university discipline. I am, of course, referring here to graduate theology in the main.

This problem runs all through the Kinshasa discussion, the Land O'Lakes and Roman statements. The same problem is the core of a book just published, "The Catholic University - A Modern Appraisal" by Father Neil McCluskey, S.J., Dean of Education at Notre Dame and the historian of our Kinshasa Conference.

Can the problem be solved? In practice, I believe it is already solved in many institutions, but not without some occasional anguish on the part of persons representing the Magisterium. One great result of our continuing discussions with the Congregation should be an ultimate theoretical solution officially recognized by the Church. Until that happens, there will still be those who say that a Catholic university is a contradiction in terms.

Personally, I am optimistic about an ultimate theoretical solution, especially when I remember the Declaration on Human Freedom in Vatican Council II, and the difficulties that attended it right up to the moment of its passage. This problem facing us is not dissimilar.

Freedom is a large part of human dignity and it was the Fathers of the Council who proclaimed: "A sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man". (Abbott and Gallagher, Documents of Vatican II, New York America Press, 1966, p. 675).

If any institution in the Church should be totally sensitive to the dignity and freedom of human persons, it is the Catholic university. For all these reasons, dialogue on this problem of reconciling the freedom of university theology and the Magisterium will continue to loom large in the intellectual endeavors of this Federation in the years ahead.

Earlier, I promised to speak further on the future relationships of the Federation and the Congregation. Here, I have a

positive suggestion to make. Just as the United Nations, through UNESCO, uses the International Association of Universities to organize and plan activities in the field of higher education, it would seem to me appropriate that the Catholic Church, through the Congregation for Christian Education, use the International Federation of Catholic Universities to organize and plan the Church's activities in Catholic higher education. Thus, the Congregation would immediately acquire -- through the membership and, especially, through the Council of the Federation -- all the professional expertise and help it needs, on an international basis as well, and with complete access to the differing cultural and regional roots of problems in Catholic higher education.

This would represent a kind of educational collegiality towards which Cardinal Garrone has been reaching -- especially by the April 1969 Rome meeting and the activities that have followed it. Actually, we in the United States responded to his invitation through the mechanism of the Federation -- because it seemed like the most natural and obvious thing to do. I have not discussed this suggestion with Cardinal Garrone, but it does seem that we are gradually moving in this direction and, to me at least, it seems a good direction for the Church, the Congregation, and the Federation. It does raise some obvious problems as well, but I believe they are soluble.

In my opening words, I mentioned that this would be my last address to the Federation as President. Some of you will recall that

in Tokyo, after considerable debating, it was decided not to limit constitutionally the number of terms the President might serve. Actually, our first President served for many, many years and my predecessor for only one. Personally, I believe two or three terms to be a good limit for several reasons: 1) It allows for new ideas and new initiatives that come best with a new President; 2) I was, with the new Council, given in Washington a very special kind of mandate for restructurizing and revitalization of the Federation -- as described above -- and, in my judgment, that mandate has been largely fulfilled; 3) There are new challenges now facing the Federation and I believe these will be fulfilled better with new and fresh leadership and the enthusiasm that comes with beginnings.

Having said all of this, may I add that I do not believe that these reasons necessarily apply to the task of Secretary-General where continuity of style and high performance, in the fashion so well portrayed by Monsignor Georges Leclercq, would be a continuing asset to the Federation. Also, he has more time now and lives in close proximity to our Paris Secretariat which he supervises and through which he performs his official functions as Secretary-General.

May I conclude by reiterating the thanks expressed above to so many people, to all of you. I am proud of this Federation and its works, proud to have been your President during these past

years, and most hopeful for the future growth and prosperity of
the Federation to which I commit any personal help possible in the
years ahead.