

The best advice I could offer to the Sister Superiors and Novice Mistresses at this Institute of Spirituality is to ponder the lessons that have, by the grace of God and the abiding providence of Our Lady, been incarnated in the life of Notre Dame. This place was hallowed from the earliest days of America by the saintly lives of the early missionaries. Long before anyone dreamed of a university here, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered here for the Indians and the Hail Mary was fervently recited along the wooded shores of these lakes, by a tiny mission station called Sainte Marie des lacs - Our Lady of the Lakes. I do not think that what is here today would ever have come to be unless the early founders of Notre Dame had kept faith with the substance of that early tradition. The physical growth of the University and its intellectual maturity have furthered, rather than impaired, the spiritual heart of this place.

Today, more than a hundred Masses are offered daily in some thirty chapels. Who can count the Hail Marys that are murmured daily by thousands of boys who are at times not too far removed from the category of Indians. The old proud name of the tiny mission station finds a new, but familiar, cadence in its new title: Universitas Nostrae Dominae a Lacu - The University of Our Lady of the Lakes.

If there is any lesson in all of this that applies to you and your many foundations it is simply this: We can be as typically, every-day Americans as the split T-formation, and yet retain and develop the inner spiritual strengths that, most of all, account for our being here. Changes will of necessity come with the passing of time. What is needed most is the wisdom and prudence to guide the changes so that they represent, not a perversion, but a steady and healthy growth of what is substantial in our lives and our missions - to restore all things, today, in Christ.