A question that runs through this video is, “What does it means to be Catholic, to be Jesuit, and to be a university?” Putting these all together has in the past been a source of some tension in the church and the Society of Jesus. The resolution of this tension will be settled only in the late 20th century with the papal encyclical *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, in which Pope John Paul II declared that a Catholic university is first and foremost a university. “Catholic” describes the way it is a university. The question created some strong disagreement during the writing of the encyclical. For our purposes the Gonzaga University *Statement of Affirmation* spells out what being Catholic, Jesuit, and humanistic means for us, by articulating the underlying values of each of these dimensions.

A huge watershed for the Catholic Church and the Society of Jesus was the **Second Vatican Council**, which took place between 1962 and 1965. That Council opened the Church to the Modern World and transformed Jesuit Education from a rather rigid system of courses to an approach that is more open to the world – to changing contexts, new experiences, reflection on these experiences, some decision and action in their respect and a constant attitude of evaluation in order to discover new manifestations of truth. In the years that followed the Council, the Jesuits have held 5 **General Congregations**, international gatherings of *ex officio* and elected delegates who meet about every 10-12 years to elect a new Father General, if necessary, and to discuss and discern the Society’s proper role in the world and the church. At the last four of these General Congregations (GC 32-35) the Society’s articulation of its mission in the world and the church has evolved and matured: GC32: “Service of faith and the promotion of justice”; GC33 “rooted and grounded in love”; GC34 “servants of Christ’s mission: mission and justice, mission and culture, mission and interreligious dialogue”; GC35: “in a globalized world the reconciliation of relationships between individuals and God, individuals and other persons, between individuals and creation.”

The Video:

We considered in the second video, *Transformation*, two ways the early Society of Jesus embodied its spirituality in service of the world’s greatest needs – missionary work, and education. The Jesuits had also been engaged by the Pope to try to win Protestant Europe back to the Church through what was known as the **Counterreformation**. These efforts, as could be expected, engendered sentiments of resentment and anti-Catholicism, first in Europe at the heart of the Enlightenment, but also in the new world as the early Jesuits’ experienced it in Maryland attests.
The Enlightenment glorified the power of the human mind to answer life’s deepest questions, replacing for many the need for a God to explain reality and suppressing the religious dimension that had undergirded earlier European society. Europe was moving away from Church teaching and, even more, was ever more strongly resistant to papal authority. Meanwhile Jesuits continued to teach in their schools bridging, in a sense, the sacred and the secular. Before long the Jesuits had generated enough animosity that they were suppressed in one nation after another until the pope himself issued a decree of suppression in 1773. They were too spiritual for their secular enemies and too secular for the religious authorities (a mark that will brand us again after the Second Vatican Council in places like Latin America).

During the Suppression the Jesuits of Maryland, known more popularly as “the gentlemen of Maryland,” disbanded. Many became diocesan priests, among whom was the famous John Carroll, the first bishop of Baltimore and the founder of Georgetown College, which later became Georgetown University.

When the Pope lifted the Suppression in 1814, restoring the Society of Jesus, Jesuits began arriving in great numbers in the United States, to the displeasure of many of our nation’s founding fathers, such as John Adams:

> I do not like the Resurrection of the Jesuits. . . . Shall We not have Swarms of them here? In as many shapes and disguises as ever a King of the Gypsies, Bamfield More Carew himself, assumed? In the shape of Printers, Editors, Writers, School masters, etc. If ever any Congregation of Men could merit eternal Perdition on Earth and in Hell, . . . it is this Company of Loiola. Our System however of Religious Liberty must afford them an Asylum.

The Society opened a good number of colleges and universities in the 19th century, largely in response to huge wave of immigrant Catholics wanting their children educated in their faith and in moral values, but also through a strong academic curriculum in the arts and sciences. Up until the 1960’s these Catholic schools and Catholic education in general served as a defense of the faith against a growing secular, modernist culture. (Anti-Catholicism was alive and well during my youth.)

Modernism, which had grown out of the Enlightenment, was condemned by Church authorities, but that didn’t eradicate its influence in Catholic intellectual life, and some Jesuits, in a sort of Ignatian openness to the world, found the movement intriguing to say the least, but had to keep their interests in wraps. For the Church modernism represented a genuine threat of advancing Marxism, Socialism, and Communism. The very early Social Encyclicals were as much statements against these movements as calls to improve the lot of labor and the lower
classes. These –ism’s, including Nazism, deeply scarred European society in the first half of the 20th century, and the cold war continued up to the end of the century.

In the first half of the 20th century the Catholic schools, including Jesuit universities, displayed a defensive ghetto mentality, and we were still educating the children of immigrant families. With the end of World War II and the passing of the G.I. Bill, suddenly our universities burgeoned as the returning veterans used this benefit for their educational development and advancement in U.S. society. And as the universities grew the number of lay professors grew as well; we were entering the era of collaboration between the laity and the Jesuits, something that has expanded and deepened to the point that the Jesuits are now collaborating with the laity in our schools, supporting them in their vocation of service.

The 1960’s brought dramatic change to the Jesuit higher education scene. The election of JFK and the election of Pope John XXIII effectively marked a huge softening of the anti-Catholicism of earlier decades. The Second Vatican Council opened the Church to the modern world in ways that were startling to many Catholics and most welcome to others. In 1965 Fr. Pedro Arrupe was elected the Jesuit Father General and became a very charismatic leader within the Church and the Society of Jesus.

A number of themes that we almost take for granted today weave through the last part of the video: whole-person education; teaching as a 2-way street; Jesuit identity articulating shared values whatever the religious beliefs of the faculty and staff; diversity in its many aspects; desire for interdisciplinary study; collaboration; increased role of women; spirituality at the heart of what the Jesuits bring to the enterprise.

The video was produced in 1995. Since then there have been a few new and effective articulations of what Jesuit education should entail. Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach, the Father General from 1983 to 2008, gave a memorable talk at Santa Clara in 2000 on Social Justice in Jesuit Higher Education in the U.S. Here are some brief excerpts:

- The measure of a Jesuit University is not what our students do but what they become, whole persons for tomorrow with an “educated awareness of society and culture with which to contribute socially, generously, in the real world. Tomorrow’s whole person must have, in brief, a well-educated solidarity.”
- “Solidarity is learned through ‘contact’ rather than through ‘concepts’ . . . . When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change.”
- Students need to encounter the “gritty reality” of life.
- If the measure of the Jesuit university is what our students become, “the faculty are at the heart of our universities.”
• “University knowledge is valuable for its own sake and at the same time is knowledge that must ask itself ‘For whom? For what?’”.
• A faculty is more than the sum of its individual professors. “It is a sustained interdisciplinary dialogue of research and reflection...”
• “A Jesuit university must be faithful to both the noun ‘university’ and to the adjective ‘Jesuit’”.

More recently Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, the current Father General, has described the role of the Jesuit and Catholic university as the place where the “Church enters into dialogue with culture.”