

SECULARISM AND THE MISSION OF CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES
INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF JESUIT UNIVERSITIES
UNIVERSIDAD JAVERIANA, BOGOTÀ, COLOMBIA
30.06.2025 – 01.07.2025

1. INTRODUCTION: WORKPLAN AND ASSUMPTIONS

Dear Rectors, Deans and Professors, Dear Friends all,

You have asked me to say a few words on the issue of secularism and its impact on the identity and mission of the Catholic Universities. I propose to you today to follow a general scheme to address this issue, before we open up the floor to a discussion. I am here to learn from your experiences and not just to provide you with some fundamental guidelines that the Dicastery for Cultural and Education (DCE) proposes. Exercise like the one will conduct now, especially in the context of the International Association of Jesuit Universities (IAJU), provide the DCE with an indispensable wealth of knowledge and experience that you, the IAJU have collected thanks to your hard work.

Firstly, to examine the very many facets of secularism today, using a rather broad approach, which will not limit us to the experience of one specific Country or one region of the World. Secondly, to study how this very different forms of secularism affect what we do and who we are as Catholic Universities, in accordance with our identity and our mission.

Before I get going, let me point out three biases of my talk. The first bias regards my approach to secularism. It presumes that religions are a universal anthropological phenomenon which serves many purposes, amongst these: providing individuals with a transcendent meaning for their existence and ensuring a social cohesion through a set of ethical rules of behavior and a sense of social identity. Secularism, thus, can be intended as any social movement directed to limit, reduce or cancel these functions of religion, both on the individual and the collective level.

Secondly, in this talk, I will not distinguish between Universities and Colleges. However, during our discussion, you may or you should make that distinction, in so far as the actions to be undertaken, may differ from students who come to you to get a bachelor's degree from those who pursue post-graduate studies.

2. A CULTURAL APPROACH TO THE ISSUE OF SECULARIZATION

2.a. Secularism in the broad framework of how cultures interact

Jesuit Universities are amongst the largest education purveyors in the world. You serve thousands of students on the five continents of our planet. This diversity implies that the challenges Jesuit Universities face are rather diverse, since the situation of education in the Indian Subcontinent, for instance, can hardly be considered similar to the one in Eastern Africa. Thus, the issue of "secularism" cannot be considered the same in all geographical areas. In this sense, to tackle the issue of secularism, one must be able to use a wider framework of understanding this phenomenon

Maybe the issue can be presented considering the coming together, the fusion and the separation of different cultures that continually occurs in history. Accordingly one may divide this in three phases: the ac-culturation phase (two cultures come in contact and start exchanging elements of their own tradition), in-culturation phase (the cultures integrate the elements of the one with the others) and de-culturation phases (one culture removes the elements belonging to another from its elements). Christianity knows these phases rather well.

Consider the History of the Catholic Church in Europe from the II to the IX Century of our era. Until 313, and the Edict of Milan, Christianity lived, with respect to the culture dominating the Roman Empire, a phase of ac-culturation. Although often persecuted, Christians lived side by side with the pagans; their values withstood their ground long enough to prepare a period of in-culturation of Christianity into Neo-Classical thought, as witnessed, eminently, in writings of St. Augustine. With the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the birth of the Barbaric Kingdoms, a temporary process of de-culturation occurred, soon followed by a new period, in the early Middle-Ages, of a long process of ac-culturation and in-culturation of Christianity with the new Barbaric cultures.

Using this framework, any given Catholic university, may want to determine if Christianity is, in the context of the society it lives in, in ac-, in- or de- culturation phase¹. Is a given University operating in a period of ac-culturation: Christian culture is side-by side with the dominant culture? Or, of in-culturation: Christian culture is gaining ground by assimilating and transforming culture paradigms of the society it is living in? Or, of de-culturation: Christianity is being removed from the same cultural paradigm, often, after years of cultural domination. Let's illustrate these stages with simple examples.

In the initial stages of acculturation, certain elements of Christian tradition are received. This results in a cultural modification of individuals or groups who adapt or borrow traits coming from Christianity. These may not be profound or fully understood. Decorations using Christmas trees are now customary even in Asian countries, in which Christians are a minute percentage of the population. Such signs originating from a Christian background may be a *preambula fidei*, but in themselves they only offer the possibility of an acceptance of Christian values.

In the stage of inculturation a fusion occurs. Often, non-Christian cultural elements are accepted and transformed, thereby blending into a new Christian culture. Throughout history, the Church has often integrated pagan traditions, rebranding them, into Christian culture. The Christmas tree (the *Tannenbaum* associated with Pagan rituals) and even date of Christmas (originally connected with *Sol Invictus*), were Pagan symbols incorporated by Christianity to point to the mystery of Incarnation, because that had to do with the possibility of immortality (the evergreen tree, the winter solstice).

And finally, societies which have had a long Christian tradition may enter the stage of de-culturation. Intentional or unintentional social and intellectual processes appear and result in Christian beliefs or practices dying out, being eliminated and replaced by a non-Christian dominant culture. Modern practices of Halloween – derived from the ancient Celtic pagan ritual – for instance, overshadow or are completely disconnected the meaning of All Saints and All Souls.

Using this, albeit imperfect, scheme of ac-, in- or de- culturation scheme to frame secularism – allows one to avoid major pitfalls. If a Catholic University were to find itself immersed in a society marked by ac-culturation in reference to Christianity, its efforts arguably would be different ways than those of a Catholic University immersed in a society marked by in-culturalism and of those of a Catholic University immersed in a society marked de-culturalism of Christian values. One may over-simplify the issue by saying that, in first scenario, an expansive cultural strategy needs to be adopted; in the second, a consolidating strategy; and in the third, a more defensive one. But things are not so simple, because secularism is far from being a homogeneous phenomenon.

2.b. Secularism or secularisms?

Notwithstanding the potential usefulness of framework just exposed, secularism need to be considered and analyzed not just from a Christian perspective but as a complex phenomenon all religions have had to face. So it may be useful to delineate some major experiences of secularism². In its European form, classical – and by classical, I mean enlightenment secularism – was probably born after the Peace of Westphalia, and saw in philosophers like Denis Diderot, Jean-Baptiste D'Alembert and Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), its forefathers.

¹ International Theological Commission, *Faith and Inculturation*, 1988.

² The issue of secularism, culture and different religions is extremely intricate. A very novel approach was outlined by Oliver Roy in "Holy Ingonrace.. When religions and cultures diverge" (Hurst, 2010)

With different degrees of intensity, *les illuministes*, although often granting religion a practical social function, held that the Church embodied in its structure and its beliefs a rather retrograde approach to the natural development of the freedom of human conscience and its right to search for the Truth. Under the influence of successive ideologies, such as Rationalism, secularism, especially in the XIX Century, developed a more aggressive approach towards Christianity, often defending atheism, materialism and outright opposition for religion.

Today, new forms of Western secularism have developed under the impulse of the domination of technology and science and the rise of a postmodern and liquid society³. A good example are the defenders of singulitarianists theories⁴, which seek to make of the *homo sapiens* to be the first species to determine its evolution. This approach is not wide-spread, but rather wide-spread is, in the Western world, a generic form of secularism dubbed “apathesim” (a porte-manteau expression used to fuse apathy and atheism). As the rise of the so-called “nones”, especially in younger generation shows, “apatheism” regards religion as a rather irrelevant and *dépassé* choice of behavior, which is to be confined, by the guarantees of the separation between Church and State, to the private sphere. In many ways, the Western secularized world is presently indifferent to the theological input in the understanding of humanity.

One may discuss the validity of this analysis⁵, but one cannot deny that other Continents live out secularism in very different forms. In many Latin American nations, the response to secularism, for instance, has to consider the success of Protestant expansion at the expense of the Catholic Church. Even more so, other religions do not deal, and certainly have not dealt with secularism, in the same way Christianity has. Let’s consider Islam: the secularism introduced in the Turkish modern Constitution by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, is not the same as secularism entrenched in the Indonesian Constitution. And certainly, the Islamic resistance to secularism, especially in nations where the political authority and the religious authority are intertwined – one may think to how different as Marocco, Saudia Arabia and Iran – is very articulated.

The same could be said for Hinduism, the best example being India, a land which saw the birth of many religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism), while importing many others (Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Judaism) over the Centuries. In this particular case, secularism is seen by many Hindi as damaging to the original cultural identity of their country; yet it attracts laicized Hindi for which secularism is a safe haven to ensure that all citizens are governed equally without religious bias.

These remarks lead to one simple conclusion. Catholic University would be well advised to study – in a polyhedric fashion using history, politics, sociology, religions and economics – secularism in the shape and form the latter are presently embodied in the specific socio-cultural context they live in. This effort of analysis is extremely important and was underlined in the last Synod⁶. There is no denial that in a globalized world, some elements will be recurrent in many forms of secularism; but we would be ill advised to consider Eurocentric parameters as universal, rather that analyzing how different religions and cultures face the challenge of secularism.

This is why, I would like to thank you and to thank all the Catholic Universities who are leading this effort. A very recent example was given to me by the Universidad Católica de Honduras. The Unicach conducted two statistical studies in the religious affiliations and the religious practices⁷, observing that, in younger population, the sum of all believers affiliated to Protestant denominations is superior to the one in Catholic, and also, that for the absolute majority of the same population, the issue of being affiliated to any specific form of Christianity is unimportant.

³ Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2006).

⁴ Raymond Kurzweil, *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*, (Viking, 2005).

⁵ And many others, such as Emmanuel Todd, *La défatigue de l’Occident*, Gallimard (2024)

⁶ Pope Francis, Final Document of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*, N. 40.

⁷ Universidad Católica de Honduras “Nuestra Señora de la Paz *Sondeo Sobre Prácticas Religiosas y Espirituales* (2024); *Censo sobre las Prácticas religiosas*” (2024).

Observations like these are treasurable. They open new investigations, which could tackle more fundamental issues, such as: does secularization in the Central American context, passes first with sentiment of irrelevancy of pertain to the Catholic Church vs. professing some form of Christian belief?

3. WHAT A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES IS AND DOES

3.a. The teachings of the Council Vatican II and Pope Francis

The approach we have undertaken so far also carries other advantages. To understand the phenomenon of secularism primarily as a cultural phenomenon, allow one to establish the basis of the link between education and culture properly. One cannot never stress enough the words in the Introduction of the Conciliar Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis* (which will soon celebrate its 70th anniversary) which frame education as the tool allowing all men and women to attain «more easily their cultural and spiritual inheritance»⁸. And one cannot never stress enough that, to ask every University to study the forms of secularism in a specific cultural context, finds its roots in the beginning of the same Document, dealing with the Universal Right to Education: «All men of every race, condition and age... have an inalienable right to an education that is keeping with their ultimate goal, their ability, their sex and the culture and tradition of their country»⁹.

The aforementioned right is ultimately entrenched in the right of freedom of belief, defended in the Conciliar Declaration on Religious Freedom: «the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power [...]; the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person»¹⁰.

This is why, a certain extreme form of secularism itself has been addressed by the Council Vatican II directly: «For it must be admitted that the temporal sphere is governed by its own principles, since it is rightly concerned with the interests of this world. But that ominous doctrine which attempts to build a society with no regard whatever for religion, and which attacks and destroys the religious liberty of its citizens, is rightly to be rejected»¹¹.

This also why the *Gaudium et Spes*¹² did not hesitate to analyze some of the aspects of secularism when dealing with forms of atheism by distinguishing the outright negation of God, from the lack of interest for the divine, from the putting aside of the Christian revelation¹³. The Council also did not hesitate in stating that the ultimate response to atheism, and there fore to secularizing, is the emergence of an adult faith¹⁴. There is no doubt that the Catholic Church's position on secularism is complex. In broad strokes, one could say that Church is critical of forms of secularism that push for the complete exclusion of religion from public life or try to marginalize religious voices in political and social debates; but one should also say that the Church's view on secularism not necessarily see as a threat, but rather as a challenge for Catholics to engage more effectively in promoting Christian values.

In many ways, secularism may be seen as a positive phenomenon, because as a side effect, it ensure a certain beneficial with the de-clericalization of the Church, allowing the laity to find its justified place, in accord with its dignity, competence and autonomy. The excessive clerical predominance of the past that was rejected by the Second Vatican Council¹⁵ since it was tied with an ecclesiology that denied the baptized their vocation, which included their responsibility to develop an individual perception of challenges and creative virtuous responses¹⁶.

⁸ *Gravissimum Educationis*, Introduction.

⁹ *Gravissimum Educationis*, N. 1.

¹⁰ *Dignitatis Humanae*, N. 2.

¹¹ *Lumen Gentium*, N. 36.

¹² *Gaudium et Spes*, N. 7.

¹³ *Gaudium et Spes*, Nn. 19-20.

¹⁴ *Gaudium et Spes*, N. 19-21.

¹⁵ *Lumen Gentium*, N. 32 and *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, N. 9.

¹⁶ Pierre d'Ornellas, *Liberté, que dis-tu de toi-même ? Vatican II 1959-1965*, (Saint-Maur: École Cathédrale, Parole et Silence, 1999).

With post-Conciliar Pontiffs, this perception was reinforced¹⁷ and a more definitive response to secularism was defined. Pope Francis has spoken extensively on secularism, often warning against its extreme forms, while advocating for a dialogue between faith and the secular world. The Holy Father has repeatedly denounced a secularism, which denies the transcendent aspiration of men and women¹⁸, because the latter endangers the aspirations of individuals and search of the common good of society¹⁹.

Nonetheless, the Holy Father has often called out for a renewed dialogue between religion and society: «It is important that evangelization is not thought of as proselytism, because proselytism is always restricting. Pope Benedict said that faith does not grow by proselytism but by attraction. The proclamation of the Gospel enters into dialogue with culture. There is an evangelization of culture and also an inculturation of the Gospel, for Christians also express their values with the culture of their own people»²⁰. His well known position that we are not just in epoch of changes, but in change of epoch should therefore also apply to the way we tackle the issue of proselytism: «what we are experiencing is not simply an epoch of changes, but an epochal change. We find ourselves living at a time when change is no longer linear, but epochal. It entails decisions that rapidly transform our ways of living, of relating to one another, of communicating and thinking, of how different generations relate to one another and how we understand and experience faith and science»²¹.

To recap what we have said so far let us simply say that

- a) the responsibility to give an answer to the secularization stems from the upholding of a fundamental right belonging to every human person, a universal right to profess one's beliefs;
- b) that extreme forms of secularism which deny this right, are unacceptable and should be confronted;
- c) that secularism can have positive effects such as to empower the laity to participate in the development of society and strengthening the Church itself;
- d) that a proselyte attitude is uncalled for in the debates on secularization and
- e) that the challenge of secularization will be particularly shaped in this era of change of epoch.

3.b. Secularism, the identity and the mission of Catholic Universities

There is no doubt that, with regard to secularism, the call «euntes ergo docete omnes gentes»²² is the responsibility of all baptized, but for Christian educators, this responsibility takes more specific form²³. To outline this specific call, one should consider the teachings included in documents which present the identity and the mission of Catholic schools and universities, namely the *Veritatis Gaudium* and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, respectively.

The latter (which will soon celebrate its 35th Anniversary) recognizing that the search for truth is an essential trademark of Catholic education²⁴, states: «Through the encounter which it establishes between the unfathomable richness of the salvific message of the Gospel and the variety and immensity of the fields of knowledge in which that richness is incarnated by it, a Catholic University enables the Church to institute an incomparably fertile dialogue with people of every culture»²⁵.

¹⁷ St. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, N. 10: "The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly-and not just in accordance with immediate, partial, often superficial, and even illusory standards and measures of his being-he must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death, draw near to Christ".

¹⁸ Pope Francis: «A secularism that does not accept openness to transcendence proves itself to be a suffocating vision which reduces human existence to earthly realities and denies hope» (Address to the European Parliament, 2014).

¹⁹ Pope Francis: «A healthy secularity does not consider religion merely as an individual sentiment that may be confined to the private sphere, but as a reality which, while fully respecting the civil order and the pluralism of thought, contributes to the building up of society» (Address to Italian President Giorgio Napolitano, 2013).

²⁰ Pope Francis, Interview with Accredited Journalist on the Flight back from Mongolia, 2023.

²¹ Pope Francis, Address to the Roman Curia on Christmas Greetings, 2019.

²² Mt. 28-19-20.

²³ For a general overview, one may consider the Instruction of the former Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue* (2002).

²⁴ St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, N. 2.

²⁵ St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, N. 6.

Today, this particularly true: «In the world today, characterized by such rapid developments in science and technology, the tasks of a Catholic University assume an ever greater importance and urgency. Scientific and technological discoveries create an enormous economic and industrial growth, but they also inescapably require the correspondingly necessary *search for meaning* in order to guarantee that the new discoveries be used for the authentic good of individuals and of human society as a whole.

If it is the responsibility of every University to search for such meaning, a Catholic University is called in a particular way to respond to this need: its Christian inspiration enables it to include the moral, spiritual and religious dimension in its research, and to evaluate the attainments of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the human person»²⁶.

With regard to secularization, «Every Catholic University, *as a university*, is an academic community which, in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching and various services offered to the local, national and international communities»²⁷ but also as every Catholic University has the obligation «to assure in an institutional manner a Christian presence in the university world confronting the great problems of society and culture»²⁸.

This implies that education in a Catholic university is called to undertake a process of incorporation of these goals: a) the search for an integration of knowledge, b) a dialogue between faith and reason; and c) ethical concern, and c) a theological perspective²⁹, bearing in mind that: «In promoting this integration of knowledge, a specific part of a Catholic University's task is to promote *dialogue between faith and reason*, so that it can be seen more profoundly how faith and reason bear harmonious witness to the unity of all truth»³⁰. One should be mindful that Catholic Universities are an indispensable contribution to the mission of the Church in so far as they allow «men and women who, inspired by Christian principles and helped to live their Christian vocation in a mature and responsible manner, will be able to assume positions of responsibility in the Church. Moreover, by offering the results of its scientific research, a Catholic University will be able to help the Church respond to the problems and needs of this age»³¹. Working in the understanding and to valuable responses to secularism is a concrete way in which a Catholic University is «as an extension of its service to the Church, and always within its proper competence, it is called on to become an ever more effective instrument of cultural progress for individuals as well as for society. Included among its research activities, therefore, will be a study of serious contemporary problems»³².

These principles are valid in considering the mission of a Jesuit University in general. Thus, any Catholic University should understand its mission always:

- a) as an extension of the mission of the Church, which implies that a strong coordination between the efforts of the University and the local Church is to be established
- b) creating a dialogue between faith and reason, which implies an effort of interchange of knowledge between these two fields avoiding an attitude of domination or submission of one towards the other
- c) having as a main focus ethic and theological concerns, which implies a particular focus in the area of moral theology

But more specifically there are at least two key points that provide a direct bearing in the dealings with secularisms.

The first one is: «If need be, a Catholic University must have the courage to speak uncomfortable truths which do not please public opinion, but which are necessary to safeguard the authentic good of society»³³.

²⁶ St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, N. 7.

²⁷ St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, N. 12.

²⁸ St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, N. 13.

²⁹ St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, N. 15.

³⁰ St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, N. 17.

³¹ St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, N. 31.

³² St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, N. 32.

³³ Ibid.

The second one is: «A Catholic University must become more attentive to the cultures of the world of today, and to the various cultural traditions existing within the Church in a way that will promote a continuous and profitable dialogue between the Gospel and modern society. Among the criteria that characterize the values of a culture are above all, the meaning of the human person, his or her liberty, dignity, sense of responsibility, and openness to the transcendent»³⁴.

Thus, a response to secularism is to be formed in the context:

- 1) having the courage to speak uncomfortable truths, pointing out the shortcomings of a secularized view when they endanger the common good, be it on an individual or social level
- 2) being attentive, on one hand to the culture of the world today and on the other, to the various cultural traditions existing in the world today³⁵.

Having laid out these principles, one may also look at the *Veritatis Gaudium* as a guide for further important specification of the latter. Especially in the case of secularism, the action of the Church and of Catholic Universities, dialogue is not to be understood «not as a mere strategy but as a true «wide-ranging dialogue, not as a mere tactical approach, but as an intrinsic requirement for experiencing in community the joy of the Truth and appreciating more fully its meaning and practical implications»³⁶.

In many ways, secularism is the litmus test for our desire and commitment to develop a culture of encounter, which needs to start between our own institution with a true effort in networking so information on the various forms of secularism can be shared and valued by all³⁷.

Together and only together, we will be able to create what Pope Francis calls a true “creative apologetics” that can encourage openness to the values of the Gospel even in non-believers³⁸. This task «taking shape before us today is a great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal»³⁹.

Thus, the path to deal with the challenges of secularism is actually well indicated in the aforementioned texts. But, at least one more element needs underscoring.

3.b. Secularism, who we serve

A Catholic university should not focus uniquely on preparing students for a given profession, but to prepare Catholic students to be true witness of their faith in the world. Therefore, it should also not attempt to fit into the standards, customs and intellectual ideologies of the secular academia. It should have the courage to be different. St. John Henry Newman insisted that a university should primarily educate a gentleman⁴⁰. In spite of varying cultural contexts and local social imaginaries, it can be generally said that everywhere university students are at the stage of life when young people form their personal adult identities. They go beyond what they have inherited from their background and extend their horizon. They need to acquire a synthesis of mind, heart, emotions and decision-making. If in this moment they discover the role of faith that attaches the soul to God and opens up to divine grace, the ordering of their lives will have a supernatural foundation. With respect to secularism, if they are properly and intelligently introduced into the works of great Catholic thinkers, then they will have a secure point of reference in life. They will then be able to articulate the implications of engaging with God within their personal life, in the families that they will establish, in the social and cultural life of their country.

³⁴ St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, N. 31.

³⁴ St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, N. 45.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Pope Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, N. 4. b).

³⁷ Pope Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, N. 4. d).

³⁸ Pope Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, N. 5.

³⁹ Pope Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, N. 6.

⁴⁰ *The Idea of a University*, (Aeterna Press, 2015), p. 84, 88: “It is more correct, as well as more usual to speak of a University as a place of education, than of instruction (...). But education is a higher word; it implies an action upon our mental nature, and the formation of character; it is something individual and permanent, and is commonly spoken of in connexion with religion and virtue. (...) It is well to be a gentleman, it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life; - these are the connatural qualities of a large knowledge; they are the objects of a University”.

Ideally, it would be great if they would have access to some great Master of the faith who would form their thinking, especially those, like for instance St. Augustine or St. Ignatius, who embody the challenge in choosing between the values of the world and the values of our faith. This will contribute to the formation of a generation of a new Catholic intelligentsia that will impact the local society and Church.

How is this to be done in Catholic University? There are chaplaincies for the students, there may be courses in philosophy and theology, and there may be introductions to great thinkers of the past. It would be good if those employed in the Catholic teaching institutions, both at the academic level and as auxiliary staff, would be authentic Catholics, having a personal prayer life and upright ethos. The ensuring of this is not easy, and obviously a witch-hunt among the staff has to be avoided, but nevertheless, it is good to remember that all members of the Academic Community are responsible not only of their scientific competence but also of the example they set with their lives to younger generations.

Our services, the Chaplaincies and our persons, Professors, staff, are the first response to secularism. This implies that a true response to secularism for our students should begin not only in what we teach or what we investigate, but especially on who we are and the living example we give of our faith.