Saint Thomas Universities and the university spirit[1]

Benito Baranda F. ICUSTA Meeting, U. St. Tomás, Santiago de Chile, September 2015

I.   Provocation

Thank you very much for the invitation and for allowing me to share these thoughts with you. It is an honor to be among you and I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Chancellor Jaime Vatter for thinking of me.

The world is constantly challenging us and placing hurdles in our way, and, in particular, along the path of Catholic universities. In fact, we have seen today that "for many, the church's doctrine is very much removed from the real world. There is a 'practical schism' of sorts. There is an issue that warrants deliberation but no one talks about it today." This is how Cardinal Walter Kasper, the German theologist, described the current situation faced by the church today during his recent visit to Buenos Aires.[2] Earlier this year, the Archbishop of Dublin Diarmund Martin spoke in similar terms when stating that the referendum on homosexual marriage—in a predominantly Catholic country—had an adverse effect on what the Vatican doctrine postulates, and this and several other issues were addressed by Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini when referring to how the church was suspended in time, 600 years ago, and needs to catch up. We often see that the same occurs with universities that stray from reality, distancing themselves from the everyday needs of individuals and clinging to their paradigms and comfort zones.

We are aware that, to a great extent, our existence is a social construct, as are our development models and, accordingly, our social relationship patterns. We could call this the sociocultural paradigm. Those of us here have received an education on the basis of which we develop a calling; we have let ourselves be seduced by our science and this social and cultural heritage bequeathed unto us. Nonetheless, we haven't ventured down this path to sit quietly; instead, the actual nature of our calling, has extended us an invitation to revitalize society, question the patterns encasing us, create awareness from within reality and attempt to act with this reality while preserving the dignity, autonomy and interdependence of humankind. We are here to make this place a healthier, more just, beautiful, reliable, safe and trusting community.

However, the recent history of humanity has placed gigantic barriers along our way, preventing us from reaching our goals. Often, these obstacles are amplified by the knowhow of intellectuals who only see a part of reality—and who are blinded by their own personal life experiences—and weave their theories and paradigms on the basis of this incomplete, fragmented perspective, unaware of the bigger picture yet trying to provide a comprehensive explanation for or come with answers to—like a recipe— the

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[1] Cfr. Francisco I , 2015. Encíclica Laudato si', nº 50 y ss.
[2] Diario La Nación, 6 de septiembre 2015.

complex, multidimensional human experience. This also happens to theologists. In fact, Gabriela Mistral, the Chilean poet, said that we should spend more time contemplating the universe than reading about theology. Pope Francis was quoted as saying *"the fragmentation of knowledge and the isolation of bits of information can actually become a form of ignorance, unless they are integrated into a broader vision of reality."* (Encyclical Letter, Laudato si', 160).

Allow me to briefly reflect upon two processes which I consider fundamental in today's times—even more so for universities, which are *full of stones* and where a growing social malcontent is brewing, to wit: **the torturous path toward recognizing that all human beings are equally dignified and the complex task of creating a world of globalization based on solidarity and fairness**.

As a backdrop, however, I would like to caution you that I have identified the roots of said malcontent on the basis of my own experience, of how I view reality, and from living side by side individuals, families and communities dwelling in geographically excluded areas fraught with economic poverty and deprived of opportunities (while at the same time socializing with the rest of the members of our society). One of the roots of malcontent, strain and sickness lies in the tension between security and freedom, between 'the collective' and 'the individual.' This view was posited by Zigmunt Bauman who, in recalling Freud, reflects on how, back then, too much freedom was sacrificed in favor of security, whereas, today, the situation is reversed: too much security is sacrificed in favor of freedom. From this angle I would like to spell out the following provocation:[3]

- **The torturous path of recognizing that all human beings are equally dignified**

Universities, cradles of so much wisdom and knowledge, have a mission here, since it is there where we are able to conceive the avenues toward recovering dignity and other forms of imprisonment, alienation and trampling of dignity. Let's not abandon this fundamental chore.

Freedom implies accepting other people's dignity and equality, and this is extremely complex and difficult in any culture and at any point in our humanity. A recent example occurring in our own backyard here in the Southern Cone is an excerpt from the latest book published by José Luis Alonso entitled '*Menéndez rey de la Patagonia*'[4] (Menéndez King of Patagonia) in which the author reminds us of what the ethnographers of the times thought of the Kawésqar (and other native peoples of Patagonia). He quotes the French ethnographer Girad, who, in 1881, remarked upon the heart-rending human zoos of the era, saying that they [The Kawesqar] were "the most wretched and pitiful savages we have ever had the chance to meet" (pg. 55).

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[3] Bauman, Zigmunt (2012) Múltiples culturas, una sola humanidad, Ed. Katz, Buenos Aires. García Roca, Joaquín (2006) El mito de la seguridad, PPC, Madrid.
[4] Alonso Marcahante, José Luis (2014) Menéndez Rey de la Patagonia, Catalonia, Santiago.

Sixty years later in that same region—going back to Alonso's remarks—the most saddening massacres of laborers in the history of that region occurred in 1920 and 1921. Most of the victims were Chileans (natives form the Island of Chiloé), shot down by the Argentine army in cahoots with the big landowners. The author writes that '*a veritable slaughter took place, leaving a death toll of hundreds of peons who were brutally murdered*' (p. 184), and to make matters worse, '*the Chilean government collaborated with the Argentine forces by closing the border and thereby preventing the strikers from fleeing [Argentina]*' (page 185).

If we really want freedom, then we must sincerely acknowledge that in today's social and cultural context, this freedom is cut short by the practices that cause indignity, and we have yet to reach a high enough level of awareness to change them. Our quest for freedom implies behaving fairly, having honest relationships, and a higher commitment to human dignity.

Every now and again, history teaches us grand and dramatic lessons on these matters, brought on by ourselves. I urge you to recall that even Father Bartolomé Las Casas fought for society to recognize that the indigenous 'did have a soul.' However, he did not do the same for African slaves and only acknowledged this injustice later on[5].

Around the world and, as such, throughout the Americas as well, on countless occasions the dignity of our fellow citizens has been trampled, specifically those who are marginalized and forgotten. Our history of abuse, humiliation and cultural destruction continues to haunt us even today (and include a long litany of cases!). In the second half of the 19th century Jose Marti was instrumental in opening our eyes to this reality and sententiously declared, "as long as there is slavery in America, everyone's freedom is at risk!" (Page 65)[6].

In a 1843 text published by Víctor Schoelcher referring to what took place in Haiti in the 1500s, he writes that "the first colonists quickly wiped out the indigenous; in their greed, they watched these desperate people disappear without giving a thought to the future. In Vano, in 1503, they began bringing in blacks as victims to replace the expired victims, and the excesses soon thereafter did away with their strength (…) Black slavery essentially sums up all the concerns, *and modern civilization will never redeem itself in the eyes of future generations for not having known how to colonize without breaking every single law of fairness and humanity*" (pages 69-70; 78)[7].

The Mapuche people were also embroiled in a deeply regrettable tragedy as described by José Bengoa in his book entitled "Conquista y barbarie,"[8] where he quotes, word for word, a 1582 text written by Brother Antonio de San Miguel, Bishop of Imperial

[5] De las Casas, Fray Bartolomé (2004) Brevísima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias, Ed. 29, Barcelona.
[6] Martí, José (1970) Nuestra América. Ed. Ariel, Barcelona.
[7] Schoelcher, Víctor (2009) Haití (1492-1825), Ambos ed., Isla Negra-Chile.
[8] Bengoa, José (1992) Conquista y barbarie, Ed. Sur, Santiago.

(Araucanía, Chile): *"and they treat them like slaves and as such many of them are bought and sold by the colonists and some are killed, and the women perish and collapse under the heavy weight and their children are forced to work their farms and sleep in the field and there they give birth and raise their children among the venomous critters and many of them hang themselves or starve themselves to death while others take poisonous herbs and there are even some women who take their own children's lives to save them from the life of harsh work that they had to endure…"* (Pg. 44)

In Chile, at the turn of the Twentieth century, we experienced a new expression of human indignity, but not in the south. This time around the stage was northern Chile where one of Chile's most widespread and upsetting examples of worker exploitation would unfold. The profits of the nitrate mines were founded on abuse. In his novel, *Tarapaca*, Juanito Zola (the pseudonym of Osvaldo López and Nicanor Polo) describes this Dantean scenario[9]. Only a few years later, just prior to the 1907 Christmas season, the blood of these laborers was cause for national shame when word spread of the Santa María School massacre in Iquique[10].

This is the wretched journey we call life to which we have subjected so many groups of individuals (and on their own lands!), and in Chile their social status, ethnicity, beliefs, etc., were the reasons why. On a side bar, for example, is the story told by Guillermo Felié from his research on the abolition of slavery[11].

Past and recent history has proven that it isn't all that easy to acknowledge someone else's dignity (when they are 'different', let alone treat them as equals (this even occurs within our own churches). This happens to intellectuals and scientists from our own universities, eminent academics and researchers. What about behaving justly? We see it happening with unfair pay, right under our own noses. Repeatedly throughout the entire 20th century and, so far, into the 21st century, there are numerous examples of exclusion, contempt, violations of rights, forced migration, etc. Let's recall WWII, the genocide in Ruanda, the Balkan Wars, the Guatemalan scorched earth policy, the events of 1973 in our own country and the ensuing repression in subsequent years, and today's plight of Syrians and neighboring nations enduring mass migrations of millions of individuals entrapped in a world of distressing violence. Closer to home, we have examples of daily suffering endured by socially marginalized groups, migrants, individuals with different capacities. What about the wages we pay them, the places we force them to live, the education and healthcare we provide them…on and on, not to mention the remains of contempt, feelings of superiority, labels of 'illiterate and underdeveloped' or 'ignorant' that agonizingly form part of our lives. Doing away with all of this is one of modern society's unresolved issues since it is deeply rooted in our culture.

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[9] Zola, Juanito (1903) Tarapacá. Imprenta del Pueblo, Iquique.
[10] Deves, Eduardo (2002) Los que van a morir te saludan. LOM Ed., Santiago.
[11] Feliú, Guillermo (2013) La abolición de la esclavitud en Chile. Ambos Ed., Isla Negra.

This is one field in which universities have fallen short as hot beds of research, reflection, teaching, etc., particularly those that are founded on Christian anthropology that are fraught with discrimination and contempt for not being inclusive and not making service a priority. We cannot turn a blind eye on all of this. Our energy, intelligence and will should be strongly directed into mobilizing resources and interest.

- **The complex task of creating a world of globalization based on solidarity and fairness**

It is difficult to create a world under these conditions, but inevitably we must. We are called to task here, to become involved in this effort. Science can contribute a great deal as well. Contemporary philosopher Roger Scruton reminds us *"the human realm is social in nature and is built on social constructs. This does not mean, however, that there is only one way to create it, nor does it mean that it can be created according to our whim. Human nature consists of a constant flow of morality, aesthetics and politics, which may be challenged at our own risk, and we must try to obey."*[12]

Where else would we find a more ideal setting, other than within the university walls, to discuss issues and form ideas about what is going on and unfolding around us? Universities are precisely one of the vehicles for change that can mobilize humanizing networks, given the growing number international ties today. In fact, your presence here today and the existence of ICUSTA are a testament to this.

We have seen the misery of today's societies. Despite the high levels of schooling and life expectancy in today's more developed and economically-poised Western societies, there are still individuals, families and social groups who are socially excluded, marginalized and living dignity-deprived lives[13], not to mention the 'pilgrimage' of 'undocumented' workers and immigrants and the sundry misfortunes they must face, making matters worse[14]. We don't even have to travel so far from home to come up with an example. The Bangladeshi women sewing our clothes earn US$30 a month; and the wretched factory workers in China who make our sneakers live in squalor; or even our neighbors who work in our fields or clean our homes, our streets, watching over our houses, etc. The breadth of situations and stories experienced by these individuals cannot merely be categorized or identified on the basis of common, everyday attributes shared by them all. Nor can we simply tag them as the 'poor and disenfranchised.'

In contemporary society, our daily routine (being set in our ways) and the actual culture into which we settle and by which we have been shaped, blind us to other

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[12] Scruton, Roger (1999) Filosofía Moderna, ed. Cuatro Vientos, Santiago.

[13] George, Susan (1980) Cómo muere la otra mitad del mundo. Ed. Siglo XXI, México.

[14] Bauman, Zigmunt (2008) Trabajo, consumismo y nuevos pobres. Ed. Gedisa, Barcelona.

realities, especially those that cause grief, guilt or fear or that simply *make noise* and distract us from what we know. I'm reminded of the theories spun by Hull-Spencer on the *force of habit*. Muhammad Yunus (1988) said in reference to Daka, the capital of his country, that in order to live there *you have to turn a blind eye on all the human suffering surrounding you*[15]. Saramago made similar remarks in his 1995 essay on blindness in which he drew the conclusion that "*I don't think we did go blind, I think we are blind, Blind but seeing.*"[16](Page 373)

Getting back this *vision* is what enables us to do away with the paradigms that alienate us, thereby allowing us to innovate and truly create, taking a *new step* toward acknowledging the dignity of others, and being able to see beyond—with our hearts— the humanity of others. The latter calls for more drastic steps: take a look at ourselves, set aside some time and space for introspection since Socrates reminds us that "the unexamined life is not worth living."[17] In other words, accepting our own opinions of others, the way we pigeonhole people into precast molds, the way we repress them by pegging them into tight spaces and, by doing so, cheapening the ties we will later forge with them. By not seeing the treasure in each of us, we end up preventing ourselves from truly seeing others and *forming humanity*.

With regard to exclusionary outlooks—that is, the perspective of the *social construct of punishing those who are different* and not accepting human dignity in all its diverse forms—several individuals have shown us how to appreciate others in a different light, creating tension and controversy, chipping away at the cultural structures and questioning socials habits. Accordingly, several thinkers have successfully addressed human dignity from a space of greater recognition of dignity, to wit, Basaglia, Freire, Luther King, Bourdieu, Vanier, Montessori, Bauman, Alberto Hurtado, Yunus, Fromm, Mother Teresa, García Roca and Sen, among many others[18]. The latter have brought down paradigms, questioned *sacred* scientific truths, and have finally put us in the other person's shoes without disguises or masks.

Our world has changed! Today, globalization has handed us the highly complex challenge of meeting the needs of humankind, and our daily actions, relationships and coexistence, which are the basis of our individual and social development, have suffered greatly. You can make a difference seated at your desk, by adopting a human being-centered approach to your community and surrounding. In a report published by the UNDP in 1999[19], the organization states that "*working with and caring for others— children, the sick and the elderly, not to mention the rest of us who are exhausted from*

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[15] Yunus, Muhammad (1998) Hacia un mundo sin pobreza. Andrés Bello, Santiago.

[16]Saramago, Antonio (1995) Ensayo sobre la ceguera, Ed. Alfaguara, Barcelona.

[17]Dijo también Sócrates: "sólo el conocimiento que llega desde dentro es el verdadero conocimiento", algo que en este apartado es muy aplicable por el análisis planteado.

[18] Todos ellos lograron vincularse con las personas en situación de exclusión social desde el reconocimiento de su dignidad de personas, y gracias a ello nos entregaron una 'nueva mirada' de aquellos que sufren la marginación, abriendo las puertas para una relación´ de igualdad y 'prácticas' sociales promocionales y liberadoras, que permiten construir confianzas y ampliar las libertades.

[19] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1999) Human Development Report 1999. Ed. Mundi-Prensa, Madrid.

the rigor of daily life—is crucial to the development of human capacity. Moreover, it is a capacity in and of itself. And it is special to nourish human relations with love, reciprocity and trust. Individuals do not flourish without enough attention. Babies languish and do not reach their full potential without the love, attention and stimulation of their families, and children do poorly in school when not cared for by their families. Supporting others is fundamental to social cohesion and strong community. It is also essential for economic growth."(Page 7)

Today, freedom and security, the quest for self-fulfillment, and building trust are colliding and the impact of said collision has worsened the lives of "the excluded," in Chile and around the globe (affecting the so-called *included* as well). Our interconnected 'global village' refuses to coexist with those who are 'different.' It would seem as though today's maxim is: *help others but don't include them*. No one wants his or her precious individual freedom to be *impinged.* Even though this would mean having a less secure and less safe world, many see this as cost of "doing business" but in the end, we all lose out…we become less human!

Zigmunt Bauman has insisted that *"there are two things that the community must do in order to address the pathologies of today's broken society, to wit: equality and the resources required to change the fate of* de jure *individuals into the capacities of* de facto *individuals and, provide collective guarantees in the event of individual incapacities and misfortunes (…) If there is going to be community in a world of individuals, then it can only be (and has to be) a community shaped by mutual sharing and; a community that sees to, and is accountable for, ensuring equal rights for all and equal opportunities to exercise said rights."* As far as academia/universities are concerned, this calls for studying the 'ethical ruptures' that have led us to create a world such as this one.

At the university we truly have our work cut out for us!

II.   The path of hope and the university spirit

Impoverished and marginalized communities have received the brunt of it all. They urgently require decisive, quality solutions that truly reflect real respect for the individual dignity of every individual and honestly promote integral development.

I believe that among the myriad dimensions at hand, at least two call for a more careful, multidimensional, in-depth, cautious approach: **inequality and social inclusion** with an impact on that which is inherent to being human and the **'existential ruptures'** of today's society that deprive us of a raison d'être and fulfillment.

- **The inequality of opportunities[20] and social exclusion: freedom and security**

Coming face to face with human misery is the passageway to all fairness, particularly when addressed from an interdisciplinary approach, which can contribute greatly to the realms of freedom and security by way of analysis, comprehension and action.

Opportunities that are a concrete expression of respect for dignity make way for the greatest degree of freedom since they acknowledge equal rights. Therein lies the source of authentic progress and social mobility, to wit, education and employment opportunities that allow people to grow, along with access to healthcare and housing that foster healthy inclusion. Being deprived of quality opportunities is synonymous with being deprived of freedom. In fact, Amartya Sen (1999) draws our attention to how *there are good reasons to conceive poverty as the deprivation of basic capacities and not just a matter of low income.*[21] Poverty is a multidimensional, multifactorial, multiarchetypical reality, which, in addition to its harshest manifestations in people, affects their homes and drastically impacts their communities; it feeds social exclusion and eats away at the lives of nations by preventing them from creating essential communities, which are the result of social cohesion.[22]

Inequality begins at birth. As such, from a social ethics perspective, one of the most harrowing aspects [of poverty] is the injustice caused by poor nutrition and a lack of early stimulation in newborns, especially during the critical phases of growth, learning and skill development. According to international estimates, nearly 70% of all children aged two present some degree of deficiency in their cognitive development due to poor nutrition and stimulation during the first few years of life[23]. They have a short lease on life, *their wings are clipped*, and they end up being alienated from birth. We have heard this for quite awhile now but for some reason policy makers have had such a difficult time doing something about it. However, earlier in the 21st Century, all it took was for an economist to show the 'return' on 'investing' in early childhood for everyone to accept its worth[24]. The irony of life!

Unequal societies tend to limit the socioeconomic and cultural rights and freedoms of their citizens; they are known for having unfair policies and practices based on discrimination and for having weak States in social policy matters. They tend to be unhappier,[25] with less social cohesion and a higher level of psychosocial and cultural

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[20]Senado de Chile (2012) Retrato de la desigualdad en Chile. Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional, Valparaíso.

[21]Sen, A., 1999. Development as Freedom, Knopf, New York.

[22] Sen, Amartya & Kliksberg, Bernardo (2007) Primero la gente. Ed. Deusto, Barcelona. Ponencias I Congreso Internacional sobre Desarrollo Humano (2006) Pobres en ciudades pobres. Cooperación Ciudad de Madrid. Sabatini, Francisco; Wormald, Guillermo & Rasse, Alejandra (2013) Segregación de la vivienda social. Estudios Urbanos UC, Santiago. Comisión Presidencial para la Medición de la Pobreza (2014) Informe Final, Ministerio de Desarrollo Social, Santiago.

[23]Unicef (2006). Excluidos e invisibles, Estado Mundial de la Infancia 2006. Consejo Asesor Presidencial para la Reforma de las Políticas de Infancia, 2006. El futuro de los niños es siempre hoy, Chile.

[24] Heckman, James (2011) El poder de los primeros años: políticas para fomentar el desarrollo humano. Ponencia presentada en el lanzamiento del programa de atención integral a la primera infancia "De cero a siempre" de la Alta Consejería para programas especiales de la Presidencia de la República de Colombia. Febrero 21 de 2011.

stress.[26] Some well-intended public policies aim to counteract inequalities, as do actions taken by some grassroots and business organizations; however in the end, they merely give rise to more social differences, widening the class gap and eroding the very foundations of society.

Therefore, there can be no freedom, happiness, progress or social mobility without equal opportunity for all citizens,[27] since equal opportunity is what enables freedom to be exercised in a safe and trusting context that is ripe for comprehensive human progress, and not just favorable for the powerful and privileged. In terms of social policies and when addressed from our scientific perspective, the latter implies understanding the multiple dimensions of social exclusion and developing a system of explicit social guarantees that ensure opportunities and quality for all, particularly, the most under protected groups[28]. Over the last two decades, the world has curbed the social mobility previously gained by many communities through better schooling. The most disenfranchised groups have made little progress in twenty years, and women have come to a standstill in the process of labor and economic recognition and involvement, especially in developing and underdeveloped countries, causing serious difficulties in this realm[29].

The aforementioned is brought on by—and also exacerbated—by profound ruptures in the lives of individuals, their homes and communities, giving rise to economic, social, cultural and existential chasms, lives void of meaning and hope. Robert Castel[30] opens our eyes to a new perspective in his analysis of how our labor ties in this 'modern world' are changing, and how these relations are 'being torn apart' and the ensuing result of these 'ruptures' on the fragile bonds holding us together.

Pope Francis mentions, "The difficulty in taking this challenge seriously, has to do with an ethical and cultural erosion…many of our social woes are related to today's selfish immediatism, to a crisis of family and social ties, to difficulties in acknowledging others."[31]

[26] Wilkinson, R. & Pickett, K. (2009) Desigualdad: un análisis de la (in)felicidad colectiva. Ed. SL., Madrid. Sobre datos actuales de América Latina ver el análisis de Clarisa Hardy en "Estratificación social en América Latina: retos de cohesión social", LOM Ed., Santiago.
[27] Wilkinson, R. 2005. The impact of inequality. The New Press, New York.
[28] Fundación para la Superación de la Pobreza (2009). Umbrales sociales para Chile: hacia una futura política social. Chile.
[29] www.eclac.cl/mujer/direccion/cumbres_genero.pdf. www.eclac.org/oig/. www.pnud.cl/areas/6.asp.
[30] Castel, Robert (2009) La metamorfosis de la cuestión social. Ed. Paidós, Buenos Aires.
[31] Francisco I, 2015. Laudato si', nº 162

- **Ethical ruptures[32] or breakdowns**

In view of this situation, humankind has experienced some "ethical ruptures"[33] that must be addressed;[34] I will limit myself to pointing out the following four:

- Breakdown of "bonds"[35]
- Breakdown of "meaning"[36]
- Breakdown of "the collective"[37]
- Breakdown of "testimony and trust"[38]

Contemporary society has 'liquidated' our ties, making them fragile, vulnerable and often traumatic. Moreover, this process of 'profiteering' has given rise to a 'misappropriation' of the meaning of life, contextualizing it only in terms of immediate benefit, profit and efficiency. This two-pronged loss—of our ties and the meaning of life—is closely linked to negating the value of social life, of human ties, and the exacerbation of risky individualism; if we lose touch with the collective realm and its richness, then the value of a 'life well-lived and honorably-led" simply evaporates, leaving us without any role models of full, enriching lives; without any stories or experiences to cradle and convey that which is authentically human. Bauman remarks on how "human ties today are fragile, transitory and easily torn (…) they only last to the extent that the persons involved in the relationship are satisfied with it."[39]

César Vallejo depicts the most existential aspect of these 'ruptured' lives—of the excluded—dramatically in his poem *The Black Heralds*[40]:

There are blows in life, so powerful…I don't know!
Blows as from the hatred of God; as if, facing them,
The undertow of everything suffered
Welled up in the soul…I don't know!
They are few; but they are…. They open dark trenches
In the fiercest face and in the strongest back.
Perhaps they are the colts of barbaric Attilas;

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[32]Kateb, G. 2011. Dignidad Humana. Cambridge, Massachussetts y Londres. Harvard University Press (2011). Los Obispos chilenos ante los atropellos a la dignidad de la personas ocurridos en la dictadura militar (1973-1990), señalaban que "la tortura produjo un quiebre existencial de muy difícil superación en las víctimas", documento "Momento de dignidad", noviembre del 2004, Santiago de Chile. Me pregunto muchas veces si eso mismo no ocurre con al permanente violencia, exclusión y rechazo que experimentan las personas sin hogar, ¿no será que sus vidas persistentemente torturadas terminan con quiebres de envergaduras mayores a lo observable?

[33] Márquez, F. & Toledo, P. eds. (2010). Vagabundos y andantes. Etnografías en Santiago, Valparaíso y Temuco. Ed. Universidad Academia de Humanismo Cristiano, Santiago. p. 20.
[34]Liebow, E. (1993). Tell them who I am: the lives of homeless women. Simon & Schuster, p. 82.
[35] Paugam, S. (2008), Le lien Social. PUF, Paris.
[36] Frankl, V. (1979) El hombre en busca de sentido. Herder Barcelona. Hurtado, A. (1994), Humanismo Social. Ed. Los Andes , Santiago-Chile. Mifsud, T. (2005) El sentido social: el legado ético del Padre Hurtado, Centro Espiritualidad Ignaciana, U. Alberto Hurtado, Santiago de Chile.
[37] Bauman, Z. (2009) Confianza y temor en la ciudad: vivir con extranjeros. Arcadia, Barcelona.
[38] García Roca, J. (2001) El tránsito hacia los últimos. Sal Terrae, Bilbao.
[39] Bauman, Z. (2012) Múltiples culturas, una sola humanidad" Katz Editores, Buenos Aires.
[40] Vallejo, C. (1985), Obra poética completa. Ayacucho ed., Caracas.

or the black heralds sent to us by Death.
They are the deep falls of the Christs of the soul,
of some adored faith blasphemed by Destiny.
Those bloodstained blows are the crackling of
bread burning up at the oven door.
And man…. Poor…poor! He turns his eyes, as
when a slap on the shoulder summons us;
turns his crazed eyes, and everything lived
wells up, like a pool of guilt, in his look… (1985, 3).

In light of the above, humankind has the ability to contrive a coherent and consistent response, and therefor must do so, first, by working together to socially reconstruct our ties and give rise to meaningful experiences that set us back on the course to dignity. Maturana (1991) reminded us that love is the emotional foundation of social phenomena; every time love is destroyed, social coexistence disappears along with it, which is why the first step must consist of rebuilding relationships founded on love, which goes hand in hand with fairness.[41] We can help each other out with this chore, by forming these social ties at an early age, by creating community and fostering and nurturing social life, which undoubtedly contributes to equal human development and, accordingly, social mobility. It entails having inclusive and socially integrated families, neighborhoods, services, etc.

The "horizontal existences" of our individual lives emerge from these meaningful bonds, which in turn constitute the framework of our community, society and humanity. Bauman recalls this aspect when underscoring how individuals tend to weave the fabric of their lives out of their experiences. Just as we gain meaning from bonds, this same quest for meaning leads us to form human bonds that, in turn, create the community ties that keep us together and that are essential to our existence. Keeping this social structure firmly in place is difficult if we are unable to find coherency in life at large or consistency in our own daily existence, in other words, evidence of our devotion and commitment to each other. This is how we are able to cast and mold our communities, towns, cities, nations, and a *universe of people*.

Subirats et al. (2004) talks about how the concept of social exclusion is employed to address and capture certain aspects of inequality inherent to the economic realm, along with many other characteristics of inequality such as job insecurity, educational gaps, a lack of dignified housing or lack of access to the latter, poor health conditions, a lack of stable and sound social bonds, broken family ties and bonds, etc.[42]

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[41]Maturana, H. (1991), El sentido de lo humano. Ed. Hachette. Ver también en: Maturana, H. (1993) Desde la biología a la psicología. Synthesis Editorial, Viña del Mar, Chile.
[42]Subirats, J. (dir.) (2004) Pobreza y exclusión social. Fundación La Caixa, Barcelona.

According to Amartya Sen, this perspective must bear in mind that "*an approach to fairness and development that is centered on our fundamental freedoms must invariably focus its attention on the agency and criteria of individuals (…). Accountable adults must take responsibility for their own wellbeing; they must decide how to make use of their skills.*"[43]

Sometimes there are things we don't want to see because they *bring fear into our daily lives,*[44] making us question psychosocial and socio-health intervention models, pedagogical routines, and social insertion/inclusion methodologies, and create uncertainty as to the real value our research, and our work and efforts have for society. We are always overwhelmed by reality; however, more than fear the world to come, we would have to ask ourselves daily whether the solutions our universities are providing are actually what people and communities honestly need today to manage their bitter, marginalized existence, and whether they are adequate enough in quality and quantity also confront what lies ahead with greater certainty and dignity. For centuries, these individuals and communities have been waiting; they live on the fringes of society, not figuratively, but literally, *on the inside but not within,*[45] in other words, *marginalized from society* or *included but not under the same conditions.*[46]

They (men and women alike) are excluded, i.e., they have gradually or traumatically and violently broken their social and symbolic ties to a larger community (local and national), a community in which society itself has created mechanisms aimed at segregating, dividing and marginalizing them and thus hindering their reintegration. These barriers progressively build up over time. They may be social or media-driven, such as prejudice and stigma—two of the most powerful mechanisms of exclusion—or political and economic in nature where a disregard for the excluded is at the very foundation of States' actions within the strict confines of the prevailing socio-economic model[47].

Bauman's views on this matter are both (2005:16) harsh and clear when he talks about the excluded and refers to them as so-called "human waste." He states that the "*production of 'human waste' or, to be more exact, wasted human beings (the 'leftover' and 'superfluous,' that is, the society of individuals who did not want to be acknowledged or who [society] did not want to acknowledge or who were not allowed to belong), is an inevitable consequence of modernization and inseparable part of modernity. It is an inescapable side effect of creating order (every order assigns the role of "outcast" or "unfit" or "unwanted" to certain parts of society) and economic progress (incapable of proceeding without debasing or devaluating the age-old,*

[43] Sen, Amartya FUSUPO pobreza…umbrales…
[44] Cooper, D. "Delirio" (2007), Andrés Bello. Santiago, Chile.
[45] Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (2007), "¿Los de afuera?", Informe 2008 BID.
[46] Sen, A. & Kliksberg, B.(2007). Primero la Gente. Bilbao: Deusto.
[47] Stiglitz, J. (2002). El malestar de la globalización. Ed. Taurus, Buenos Aires.

effective ways of "making a living," which, accordingly, can only deprive said parts of participation)."[48]

Exclusion leads to alienation, separation and a new breed of slavery, which, in the end, means doing away with the other person's experience, a "disentitlement,"[49] a distancing, which, under the conditions of today's society, gives rise to a growing—at times dramatic—social disintegration. Above and beyond the gross social inequalities of our times, not to mention the plethora of other inequalities associated with unequal access to opportunities experienced by many, the most dangerous aspect of it all is what has occurred over the last ten years, to wit: **we have increasingly loosened the ties tethering us to the various groups making up our communities**, resulting in more and more emotional suffering amidst an ever opulent society[50]. Recent events in Haiti in 2010 exemplify that it is not just a matter of certain individuals or communities being excluded but entire groups and nations of people are discriminated and disregarded. Entire countries are considered to be 'human waste.' Following the 2010 earthquake in Chile we witnessed how entire age groups have been disenfranchised and hidden away, such as the elderly who depend on others to care for them and who live miserable, anonymous lives, especially in rural areas.

In Chile, Latin America and around the world we have created a *ghettoized society[51] feed by prejudice, stigmatization, discrimination,* by the uncontrollable desire to find scapegoats for the dramatic existence we call our daily lives where, clearly, many feel as though their dignity has been hijacked. Today, we face new challenges—and opportunities—to build community. There is a hunger and desire for something new. Without question, this is the first time in our history when so many of us have been so close to each other yet feel so distant and unfamiliar.[52] Events condition [us], cultures marginalize [us], and societies exclude [us][53]. Isolation, a lack of social fiber, violence, abuse, and conflict are gaining influence over the universe of the excluded, who are increasingly imprisoned and who pay the enormous social cost of economic violence. Even in the 1960s, Basaglia (1968) repeatedly said how "*violence and exclusion are at*

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[48]Bauman, Z. (2005), "Vidas desperdiciadas: la modernidad y sus parias", Paidós.

[49]El término desafiliación, lo emplea por primera vez Howard M. Bahr *Skid Row- An Introduction to Disaffiliation* New York: Oxford University Press, 1973. Posteriormente Robert Castel lo desarrolla más: "*hay riesgos de desafiliación cuando el conjunto de las relaciones de proximidad que mantienen a un individuo sobre la base de una inscripción territorial, que es también una inscripción familiar y social, tiene una falla que impide reproducir su existencia y asegurar su protección*"(Castel, R. (1997) "La metamorfosis de la cuestión social", Paidós).

[50] Como recuerda Jilek (2000) en el siglo diecinueve algunos psiquiatras franceses fueron los primeros en percibir que la rápida industrialización y urbanización estaban asociadas con un aumento significativo de desórdenes mentales, Rev. Psiquiatría Facultad de Medicina Barcelona 2000, 27(2) 80-85. Cfr. OMS, 2003. "El contexto de la Salud Mental", Edimsa, 2005. También Foucault en 'los anormales' (1999, EFE 2009) se refiere a los 'dispositivos de domesticación' y a la asociación entre 'persona peligrosa y anormal'.

[51] Bourdieu, P. ed. (1999) La miseria del mundo. Fondo de Cultura Económica, Argentina. Bauman, Z. (2008) Trabajo, consumismo y nuevos pobres. Gedisa, Barcelona. Lewis, O. (1965) Los hijos de Sánchez. Mortiz, México. Alvarez, J. (1984) Los hijos de la erradicación. PREALC, Santiago-Chile. Márquez, G. & colaboradores (2007) ¿Los de afuera?. BID, Nueva York.

[52] Bauman, Z. (2003) hace referencia a los obstáculos y contradicciones contemporáneas para constituir comunidad humana, "el problema es que la fórmula a partir de la cual se construyen las "comunidades realmente existentes" sólo hace más paralizante y difícil de corregir la contradicción existente entre seguridad y libertad", Comunidad: en busca de seguridad en un mundo hostil, Siglo XXI, 3°. 2008, p. IX.

[53]Salazar, G. (2000), Labradores, Peones y Proletarios. LOM 2000, Santiago.

the base of every relationship we form in our society"[54] and the only way to revert this is by truly involving others and not through a patronizing paternalism that slowly oppresses and tortures humankind, adding yet more suffering to those who already bend beneath the weight of agony and indignity.

To a great extent, these policies have led to a miserable "*ghettoization*" of the poor[55]. Bourdieu (1999) pointed out how "*stigmatized communities or neighborhoods symbolically degrade their residents, who, in turn, do the same to their environment. By not holding the right cards in their hands to be able to play at the table, they merely share their common excommunication, abandonment and exclusion.*" (124) Concentrating a homogenous groups of individuals in a single place deprives them of opportunities, leads to dispossession, and reinforces their marginalization, particularly in cultural matters and customs. In the same manner as the housing policy was drafted, "*there was a veritable policy drafting of physical space,*" (124)[56] which has been the case in most contemporary urban settings, resulting in at-risk neighborhoods and areas left to their own devices, *the poverty-stricken in impoverished cities*[57].

There is a great deal of empirical evidence[58] of the consequences of the widespread edification of walls that divide [us] and the "new cities of misery," and of the increasing number of barriers to integration that these phenomena put up and—unfortunately—of the far-reaching psychosocial problems they engender (conflict, insecurity, distrust, isolation, domestic violence, drug abuse, and street violence). In order to carry out the vast array of psychosocial programs and interventions aimed at addressing social inclusion, it is fundamental for us to become personally involved, and forge meaningful ties among social, ethnic, cultural, religious and other groups, because this is the path of social change. In other words, be the change you want to see!

III.   Epilogue: be the change you want to see

The vicious cycle of exclusion is broken by picking up the threads of our social fiber and "resuming contact with others,"[59] by acknowledging their dignity and respecting it, at home, in the neighborhood, at church, at school, at work, in parks, at university, etc. These bonds are the building blocks of trust, autonomy and interdependence. Many

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[54]Basaglia, F. (1968). L'istituzione negata. Baldini & Castoldi 1998 Milano.

[55]Katzman, R. (2001), Seducidos y abandonados: el aislamiento social de los pobres urbanos. Revista CEPAL, 75 pp.171-189.

[56]Bourdieu, P. (1999). La miseria en el mundo. EFE, Buenos Aires. En esta misma dirección hace unos días la prensa mostraba los muros que se están construyendo alrededor de las favelas de Río de Janeiro (Brasil) por "razones de seguridad", estos traerán nuevos sufrimientos y exclusiones para miles de familias ya estigmatizadas.

[57]Ponencias del I Congreso Internacional sobre Desarrollo urbano, (2006). Pobres en ciudades Pobres, Madrid, Edita Cyan 2009. Hay numerosos estudios al respecto, entre ellos destacan los de Loïc Wacquant sobre las similitudes y diferencias entre el gueto americano y la segregación urbana en las ciudades europeas, http://sociology.berkeley.edu/faculty/wacquant/

[58]Bourdieu, P. (1999) op. cit.; Katzman, R. (2001), op. cit.

[59]Basaglia, F., (1968). Op. Cit.

marvelous efforts of communities and others working alongside them to reconstruct a sense of social inclusion end up aborted, after suffering the consequences of misguided urban development and housing policies that plunged the community right back into a state of profound withdrawal and deterioration of ties.[60]

The slippery slope of social exclusion further exacerbates marginalization and disintegration, giving rise to broken bonds and a lack of unity which, in turn, set the stage for the injustice and lack of freedom that are suffocating us. Truly seeing this daily reality—happening everywhere—is quite an eye-opener, and is vitally urgent for our social lives. However, what often occurs afterwards is a gradual seeping in of rational fear because [we think] this might be detrimental to us or hurt us, or expose us to greater insecurity, uncertainty or doubt, which, in turn, trigger more anxiety or an existential void. But we must not wait any longer; all of this is necessary if we are to act soon and make up for lost time, and given meaning to what we have taught at our universities, which is later put into practice in our professional lives, in academia, in our contribution to overcoming injustice and making better public policies; we need this for life itself, in order to find the truth in each of us, which has so often been denied and trampled.

This more than exemplifies the urgent need to work on understanding humankind from a multidimensional perspective, which implies studying the matter in an interdisciplinary fashion, from the outlook of excluded individuals, families and communities, and alongside them. Nevertheless, the 'welfare' remains continue to linger in the action strategies of interventions; in order words, that is where people are *seen as inferior, dependent and needy*, particularly when this is part of the general framework for many countries' social policies, and, consequently, the paradigm on which the systems base interventions and the ties between professionals and the excluded. As a result, interventions are directly affected by the ***viewpoint*** the rest of the people have on the phenomenon, and said personal—and collective— perspective conditions the daily ***interactions*** with people on the street (both by the State and by organizations' programs), and inevitably serves as a model for ***practices***, thereby giving shape to a specific way of working that generally acquires more influence than the actual methodologies and/or programs planned. In actuality, viewpoints do condition relationships and serve as models for practices. A more radical glimpse of this can be seen in how society treats the 'mentally disabled.' Garcia (1996) remarks on this by pointing out the "three main phases in the evolution of mental disability: exclusion, reclusion and integration," (page 25)[61] and we could further extend this analysis to what occurs to the homeless. (Cabrera, 1998, pp.17-90)[62]

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[60] Lechner, N.(1997) Tres formas de coordinación social. En revista de la CEPAL (Chile) p. 7 – 18.

[61] Gracia, D. (1996) El retraso mental en la historia. En: Gafo, J. (Ed.) (1996) La ética del ante el trabajo del deficiente mental, PROMI-Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid.

[62] Cabrera, Pedro (1998) Huéspedes del aire: sociología de las personas sin hogar. UP Comillas, Madrid.

Pope Francis states that "the imperative need of Humanism is here and now, and, alone, calls upon different teachings, as well as the economic realm, to adopt a more integral and integrating approach…the consumerist viewpoint of humankind, spurred on by the moving gears of today's global economy, tends to homogenize our cultures and dilute the immense cultural variety [of the world], which is a treasure of humanity…"[63]

We must emphasize the freedom in all of us and in all of its dimensions, but balance it with security, where trust is built. Trust has made it possible for us to move forward in the past—as Alain Peyrefitte[64] reminds us—trust in ourselves, in each other and in our institutions; however, with the arrival of a crushing anthropocentrism, fear and insecurity made their star appearance, giving way to socio-cultural instability, joblessness, geographic exclusion and blocked opportunities.

The existential reality is challenging for universities, there is much to do! As Merton said: "*it doesn't matter how badly ruined mankind or society may appear, and regardless of how horrible the disappearance of man may seem, as long as mankind continues to be mankind, his own humanity will continue to show him that there is meaning to life.*"[65] The road ahead is very long and we can lend each other a hand along the way by coming down to earth and being grounded, connecting with reality and others ('contact is the only possible cure'[66]), and recognizing the wealth and richness among the ruin!

Hence, and in view of the realistic pain and suffering experienced by hundreds of millions of people, we cannot put them out of our minds or cease to be *incensed[67]* or *committed;[68]* we must act to bring about change from the deepest depths, starting with our own behavior, values, and lives while simultaneously mobilizing greater social change through social policy, programs and strategies, and the university has an irreplaceable—potentially prophetic—role in this difficult process. The current state of affairs of these hundreds of millions of individuals around the globe is rife with vulnerability, routinely coupled with clear violations of their fundamental human rights, and often very little recognition of their status as citizens.[69] The latter calls for a

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[63] Francisco I, 2015. Laudato si', nº 141-144

[64] Peyrefitte, Alain (1996) La sociedad de la confianza, Ed. Andrés Bello, Santiago.

[65] Merton, Thomas (1998) Los hombres no son islas. Ed. Sudamericana, Buenos Aires

[66] Basaglia, Franco (1998) L' Istituzione negata. Ed. Baldini & Castoldi, Milano.

[67] Hessel, Stéphane (2011) ¡Indignaos!, Destino, Barcelona. "A los jóvenes, les digo: mirad a vuestro alrededor, encontraréis los hechos que justifiquen vuestra indignación –el trato a los inmigrantes, a los sin papeles, a los gitanos-. Encontraréis situaciones concretas que os llevarán a emprender una acción ciudadana fuerte. ¡Buscad y encontraréis!" (p. 35).

[68] Hessel, Stéphane (2011) ¡Comprometeos!, Ed, Destino, Barcelona. "Nuestra capacidad de indignarnos puede y debe llevarnos a acciones constructivas, motivadas por el rechazo de la pasividad y dela indiferencia (…)Rechazar la imposición del beneficio y del dinero, indignarse contra la coexistencia de una extrema pobreza y una riqueza prepotente, rechazar las feudalidades económicas, reafirmar la necesidad de una prensa realmente independiente, garantizar la seguridad social en todas sus formas…resistir supone que hay cosas escandalosas a nuestro alrededor que deben ser combatidas con vigor" (p. 11 y 23).

[69] Basta identificar cómo son tratados por la prensa, por ejemplo en Chile desde el período de la Independencia nacional, ver en: Fundación Superación de la Pobreza y Escuela de Periodismo Universidad Diego Portales, 2011. Pobreza: 200 años en la prensa escrita. Santiago: Programa Comunicación y Pobreza.

firm commitment by our schools, researchers, professors, as well as a greater connection to the real world and the consequences of what our actions have had thus far on humanity.

There is certain richness to exclusion, to abandonment, and this must be recognized and accepted; however, it coexists with pain, exclusion and abandonment. As stated by Federico Carrasquilla[70] "not only is there death and destruction in the lives of the poor because of poverty, but the poor developed an entire realm of humanism, not because they are poor but precisely by being poor."

In today's world we can change the course of things and you hold the reigns, you are not bystanders in this process. Solidarity and relationships shaped from empathy and based on justice and love are extremely urgent. Bauman states "solidarity is based on being together, helping each other and caring for each other mutually. We are only human to the extent that we are in the company of other humans, but it's not merely about being in the physical presence of other humans; company is necessary. Undoubtedly, the liquid nature of our world prevents us from attaining this community, but the mere existence of the concept encourages us to try. "[71]

Our great national poet Gabriela Mistral challenges us by pointing out the profound spirit of Catholic universities, when saying that "our century cannot turn its back on freedom and return to servitude. Peasants, workers, women, students are much better served by learning how to be free because their dignity is respected. The earth is the end-all source of sustenance and we haven't created another earth yet… (…) Humanity is something we still need to humanize."[72]

This is your legacy. This is what is expected of you: leave the world a better place than you found it, and, to that end, be the change you want to see!

Thank you very much!

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[70] El Padre Federico Carrasquilla es reconocido en Colombia y en América Latina como un sacerdote dedicado al servicio de los más excluidos, cuya mirada –fundada en una antropología teológica muy profunda- es de dignidad, autonomía, protagonismo y por lo tanto de 'escucha' y respeto a las personas en situación de pobreza material. Nacido en 1935, cercano a la Teología de la liberación. Entre sus escritos –numerosos en artículos y charlas- los más significativos para esta Tesis son: 'La otra riqueza', 1997, Ed. Prensa Creativa, y 'Escuchemos a los pobres', 2000, Ed. Tierra Nueva, Bogotá.
[71] Bauman, Z. 2012. Múltiples culturas, una sola humanidad. P. 55.
[72] http://www.letras.s5.com/documistral2.htm