

# Fu Jen Catholic University Challenged to Live Up to Its Name

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## 【Abstract】

Catholic universities worldwide are challenged to find ways and means to live up to their mission as ‘light and salt of the world’, which might involve choosing the narrow path of walking on counter-cultural terrain. In addition, universities in Taiwan are involved in a competitive struggle for survival due to the country’s extreme low fertility rate plus a disproportionate high number of colleges and universities, a situation which endangers academic standards and quality of education by compromising their original mission and core values in favor of short-term gains. Fu Jen Catholic University, furthermore, faces the additional problem of maintaining a critical minority of deeply committed Catholic/Christian administrators, faculty and staff so as to maintain her identity as ‘Catholic’ in fidelity to her Church-given mission.

Faced with these g/local challenges, this inquiry - after a brief overview of the unique history and development of Fu Jen Catholic University, followed by a reflection on some of its ‘Strengths and Weaknesses’ related to her identity as ‘Catholic’ - aims at proposing concrete ‘Opportunities’ whereby to manage some of the multiple changes and threats so as to live up to her ‘Catholic’ name and identity instead of being overwhelmed by their onslaught. The ‘Opportunities’ discussed are based on Fu Jen University’s recently revised Mission Statement with its Seven Major Goals and the newly formulated Motto. Various new and earlier relevant Church documents and exhortations of recent popes are employed to enlighten the discussion.

Keywords: Catholic university, Fu Jen University, mission statement, missionary transformation.

## Introduction

Catholic universities worldwide - faced with rapidly and profoundly changing social, cultural and global contexts, and marked by market-driven demands, pragmatic philosophies, secular values and pursuits - are challenged to find ways and means to live up to their universal and unique local cultural mission by means of providing an education aimed at holistic human development and the cultivation of professional talent, so as to develop leaders with a social conscience for a better tomorrow. Given the challenges and pressures of today's g/local secularized environments, Catholic universities, to be faithful to their God-given mission as 'light and salt of the world', are bound to choose the 'narrow path', which often enough means may mean walking on counter-cultural terrain.

In addition to the general challenges worldwide, universities in Taiwan - in particular private universities - are more seriously affected, not only due to the country's extreme low fertility rate (with 1.13 estimated as the 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest among 224 countries in the world for 2017), but even more so due to short-sighted government policies starting two decades ago, which gave rise to a disproportionate high number of new colleges and universities. In consequence, this nationwide situation causes fierce inter-institutional competition in terms of student recruitment despite a 100% admission rate. Under such circumstances, no institution is spared to make drastic adjustments.

The overall impact of this situation endangers the academic standard and quality of university education, negatively affects the cultural climate in and among competing local universities, creates a sense of insecurity among faculty and staff, and entails the temptation to compromise institutions' original mission and core values in favor of short-term gains in as much as the financial imbalance might become unbearable with survival is at stake.

In addition of being impacted by the overall struggle for survival, Fu Jen moreover is faced with the fact of rapid decline of the re-founding generation of missionary priests, brothers and sisters and their like-minded collaborators. The challenge to be faced is how to maintain a critical minority of administrators, faculty and staff deeply committed to Fu Jen's Catholic identity and Church-given mission so as to fulfill her function as 'spiritual leaven' in a social and cultural environment which, more than ever is in need of academic institutions inspired by sound Gospel values translated into education as holistic development. In other words, given the above global and local panorama, Fu Jen finds itself standing at the threshold of a new historical phase, one of down-sizing and re-formation instead of expansion, of discerning the signs of the time so as to 'manage change' more courageously and effectively, rather than being swept away by its torrents

and turbulences.

Accordingly, this inquiry - after a brief overview of the unique history and development of Fu Jen Catholic University, followed by a reflection on some of its 'Strengths and Weaknesses' related to her identity as 'Catholic' - aims at proposing concrete 'Opportunities' whereby to cope with the multiple g/local changes and threats in fidelity to her Church-given mission. The 'Opportunities' discussed are based on Fu Jen's newly revised Mission Statement, Seven Core Goals and the University Motto. Various relevant documents and exhortations of recent popes - in particular Pope Francis' call for a 'missionary transformation' of Catholic universities worldwide - are employed to strengthen the proposals offered.

## A. Fu Jen Catholic University in historical perspective

### 1. Origin and development in Beijing: 1925- 1950

The history of Fu Jen Catholic University is certainly very unique among Catholic universities worldwide. It can be roughly divided into two major phases, namely the founding and development stage in Beijing from 1925 to 1950, a total of barely 25 years, and re-founding and development stage on Taiwan from 1961 onward, amounting to 57 years.

The preparatory stage of Fu Jen University in Beijing rests upon the initiative

of two engaged Catholic laymen, who in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century approached the Vatican concerning the desirability of a Catholic university in Beijing, which was to serve the following needs: 1. Advancement of traditional Chinese culture; 2. Injection of new life into Chinese education; 3. Knowledge of the modern world; 4. Upholding the spirit of the Catholic mission. (1)

Eventually, their initiatives led to the establishment of the 'Fu Jen Academy' which eventually obtained official recognition from the Ministry of Education in 1929 under the name 'Fu Jen Catholic University'. The Vatican had entrusted the founding and development of this Catholic University to the American Benedictine Order of St. Vincent Arch Abbey, Pennsylvania, USA. In 1933, due to financial difficulties, the Vatican called upon the Divine Word Missionary Society (SVD) to assume the leadership of the University in collaboration with the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters (SSpS) who in 1938 assumed responsibility for the establishment and development of the so-called 'Women's Section' of the University on an adjacent campus.

After defeating the Nationalist government in 1950, the Communist regime dispelled all

foreign missionaries, most of whom took refuge in neighboring Asian countries, while some were retained, maltreated, even put into prison. By 1952 the Communist regime had merged Fu Jen into Beijing Normal University.

At the time of closure, after 25 years of existence, Fu Jen had offered a university education to a total of 36,182 students, including 21,715 men and 14,467 women in the Colleges of Humanities (6 departments), Science (5 departments), and Education (4 departments). In her short history, Fu Jen Catholic University became known as one of China's top universities with a remarkable impact on Chinese society, a reputation that still lingers in the memory of Mainlanders today.

A brief reflection on the 'Strengths and Weaknesses' of Fu Jen University during this first phase of development, seen from the perspective of its missionary role will prepare the way for subsequent identification and discussion of some 'Opportunities' for meeting present-day challenges.

#### a) Strengths:

- Profound missionary motivation from the outset with two committed Catholic laymen taking the initiative to dialogue and convince the Vatican of the need for a Catholic university in Beijing.
- Choice of the three colleges to be opened in direct response to the socio-cultural and religious needs and goals perceived.
- Missionary spirit of inculturation evident in the choice of the name 'Fu Jen': a clear sign of sincere appreciation for Chinese culture and commitment to inter-cultural dialogue in the Confucian spirit of *'fu jen yi you, hwei you yi wen'*, i.e. 'creating friendships through solidarity and learning (or culture) (2)
- Missionary wisdom revealed in admitting and opening up all departments to women with astonishing success, thereby filling a serious social need.
- Architecture and campus design revealing preference for Chinese cultural aesthetics manifested in the style of buildings and landscaping conducive to community-building with many faculty members and students residing on campus.

- Distinctive positive impact on Chinese society through hiring renowned professors and forming graduates with leadership influence, which gained Fu Jen an outstanding reputation extending to the present; simultaneously fostering alumni pride in their Alma Mater.
- Sense of social responsibility unafraid of publicly demonstrating a spirit of patriotism in the face of Japanese aggression; as well as involving students in serving the poor, the under-nourished, wounded soldiers, and the sick, especially in the Women's Section of the University.
- Supporting the Catholic mission through the training of teachers and clergy.
- Development of favorable international relations, in particular between China and the Vatican.

## b) Weaknesses:

- Insufficient financial resources;
- Recruitment of qualified personnel;
- Serious gap between numbers of students' enrollment and graduation due to various reasons;
- Continuous political unrest and tension;
- Time too short to implement development plans;
- Break-down of Vatican-China diplomatic relations.

## 2. Origin and development on Taiwan: 1961 till today

A decade after the forced closure of Fu Jen University in Beijing, Fu Jen graduates, who had fled to Taiwan together with the Chinese Nationalist army, organized themselves into the Fu Jen Alumni Association so as to facilitate the re-opening process of Fu Jen Catholic University on Taiwan in 1961 under the leadership of Cardinal Paul Yu Pin, a member of the former Beijing Fu Jen University Board of Trustees. At this time the majority of foreign Fu Jen missionaries returned from their dispersions, while a host of new and younger missionaries arrived from a various countries. In unison with former Fu Jen faculty, alumni and local academics they joined minds, heart and hands to rebuild Fu Jen on a spacious thirty hectare piece of land in Xinzhuang, now part of New Taipei City. Together they formed the re-founding generation of Fu Jen Catholic

University on Taiwan, resuming its role and mission among the Chinese/Taiwanese and Aborigines population of the island.

Fu Jen's history on Taiwan may be divided into the 'Trinitarian' and the 'Unification' stage of development. The Trinitarian Phase 1961-2002 – unlike the old Fu Jen – consisted of a three-party collaboration involving not only the SVD and SSpS, (in charge of the former Beijing Fu Jen), but also the Society of Jesus (SJ), with the diocesan clergy of the local Church as third administrative partner. Each of the three bodies was individually responsible for the further development of the colleges entrusted to its care, including recruitment of personnel and the supply of financial resources. It was this 'Trinitarian Partnership' which made the fast expansion of Fu Jen possible with President Cardinal Paul Yu Pin and his successors serving as official leaders representing the three administrative bodies toward the local Ministry of Education, the Vatican Bureau of Education, and the public.

In 2002, after 41 years of collaboration, the 'Trinitarian Partnership' phase of Fu Jen was succeeded by the 'Unification Phase', due to increasing financial imbalance among the colleges of the three administrative bodies, lack of administrative efficiency, and the need for integrated centralized planning. As a result, the two collaborating missionary orders handed over ownership and administrative power of their respective Section of the University to the University's Board of Trustees resulting in a more centralized administration with greater authority and power presiding in the office of the president. Hereafter, the SVD/SSpS and SJ missionary societies retained some moral and missionary/pastoral influence through membership on the Board of Trustees, and through their respective 'Mission Offices' and 'Section Representatives'.

As of now, the university operates twelve colleges including a Medical College with a Teaching Hospital, a School of Continuing Education (evening division) and the Fu Jen Extension Educational Program with a total student population of around 27000. An independently administered Faculty of Theology, located next to the University's campus, provides mutual benefits. As such, Fu Jen is one of the largest comprehensive universities in Taiwan.

Given the multi-faceted challenges pointed out in the Introduction, Fu Jen now faces a third historical and critical stage, namely one of diminishment or downsizing with an entire new set of problems and uncertainties. Again, we now proceed to identify some of the 'Strengths and Weaknesses' marking Fu Jen's historical experience on Taiwan as far as they relate to her role and mission. In doing so, we will be in a better position to highlight a number of 'Opportunities' to be proposed subsequently.

a) Strengths:

- Missionary-inspired initiative from devoted lay persons, similar to the preparatory stage of Fu Jen in Beijing; this time emerging from the united strength and influence of the Beijing Fu Jen Alumni Association under the leadership of a member of the Peking Fu Jen board of Trustees: Cardinal Paul Yu Pin.
- Readiness of three religious bodies to share responsibility and resources with each of them utilizing their international connections and resources to contribute to the astonishing expansion and development of the University.
- Cross-national, -cultural and -religious collaboration with old and young religious missionaries, Christian and non-Christian teachers and staff, foreigners and locals, all joining hands, minds and hearts to physically, academically and spiritually re-build Fu Jen Catholic University, resulting in a highly distinctive international faculty.
- Well-planned campus design with architectures in a unified modern style, incorporating concepts and modern interpretations of Chinese traditional features.
- Continuity of founding spirit, role and mission of the Beijing Fu Jen guaranteed by her leadership, returning missionaries, and former Fu Jen alumni: same name, same commitment to holistic education now explicitly anchored in the four foundational universal value pillars of Truth, Goodness, Beauty, Holiness, same intention to promote inter-cultural dialogue and inculturation, so well captured in the text of our University Hymn composed by Cardinal Yu Pin himself.
- Formulation of an explicit Mission Statement with Seven Major Goals in 1994 by a special committee working for more than a year to review Fu Jen's role and mission in the light of the new papal document: *'Ex corda ecclesia'*, thereby affirming its identity and missionary role vis-à-vis the fast increase of new non-Christian faculty and staff serving the needs of the ever expanding student population.
- President Cardinal Yu Pin enhancing the University's image by means of a feminine touch in choosing Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as the University's Patron under the title of the 'Immaculate Conception', with the 8<sup>th</sup> of December celebrated as the University's Foundation Day. Moreover, the University Chapel completed in 1979 was dedicated to the 'Immaculate Heart of Mary'.

- Addition of two Fu Jen prescribed courses in 1995 to strengthen the holistic human development of all students by adding four more credits to the already existing four credits 'Philosophy of Life' course, namely the two credits 'Introduction to University Studies' and two credits 'Professional Ethics' courses.
- Serving the needs of the Catholic mission on Taiwan as well as China by means of a variety of academic program, elective course offerings, research centers, international conferences and, in a special way, through the services of the Fu Jen Theological Faculty.
- Revision and simplification of the 1994 Mission Statement in 2017, inspired by the Church's promotion of the spirit of 'new evangelization' in response to a radically changing global context. The revised Mission Statement includes new keywords such as more directly address critical issues of our day and age. Of special significance in terms of promoting the identity and role of Fu Jen is the newly created University Motto: *'Inspired by the universal love of Jesus Christ, we are committed to become a university with a positive impact on society'*.
- Ministry of Education insistence on the consistency of each university's short- and long-term development plans based on its Mission Statement and Goals in order to facilitate the integration of planning and development on all levels and as a strategy whereby to promote each university's distinct character and identity.
- Increasing global networking among members of Fu Jen Alumni Association worldwide, noteworthy in particular is the establishment of the USA Fu Jen Foundation (FJAF), with a representative on the Fu Jen Board of Trustees.
- Religious freedom and diplomatic relations between the Republic of China and the Vatican.

**b) Weaknesses:**

- Declining administrative efficiency and financial imbalance of the Trinitarian administrative model. Initially a great asset, the Trinitarian Partnership increasingly became a liability resulting in administrative inefficiency, lack of integration of services, lack of central planning based on a 'master plan' whereby to integrate the development of each of the three administrative Sections of the university. In fact the unification act was overdue, and somehow forced upon the Partnership by a majority vote decision of the University Council in 1999. Because of lack of preparation for this major change, the following years, although peaceful and cooperative, nevertheless became a laborious process.



- Missed opportunity for university-wide systematic implementation of the 1994 approved first Mission Statement. The formulation of this first Mission Statement and Major Goals took nearly one and a half years of intensive committee work to complete, yet after its approval by the Board of Trustees no systematic and in-depth communication on the college and departmental levels was undertaken.
  
- Today we are still struggling with the implementation of the revised 2017 approved Mission Statement. It took more than a year of broad-based intensive committee work to complete the task. As of now, we still have not found ways and means for its systematic implementation so as to strengthen university-wide consciousness of the role and mission of Fu Jen Catholic University at a time when it really matters.
  
- Tendency to operate similar to state-sponsored universities. As a private institution in a democratic and multi-cultural country with limited government funding, Fu Jen ought to enjoy greater flexibility to assert its Catholic identity, autonomy, and academic freedom.
  
- Absence of an integrated campus design master plan: As a result, problems of infra-structure, traffic, building maintenance and gardening are increasing and signs of neglect are observable all around, which are incompatible with Fu Jen's commitment to 'Beauty' as one of her principle ideals.
  
- Financial stress for years to come for a variety of reasons: Despite the many donations received from alumni and benefactors, financial concerns have become more acute than ever, partially due to the financial burden resulting from the construction of the newly opened teaching hospital.

## B. Opportunities for Fu Jen University to live up to its Catholic identity

After having named some of our University's historic and present 'Strengths and Weaknesses', we do well to remind ourselves that crisis situations are also times of opportunities and new creativity. No doubt, periods of radical changes like ours, call for an equally radical response, one which according to Pope Francis consists in the need for Catholic universities to undergo a '*missionary conversion*' in line with the so-called 'New Evangelization' movement which, in his own words, consists in '*a courageous renewal required by the missionary transformation of an outward-bound Church...capable of transforming everything*'. (3). In accordance with this spirit, and with the awareness that our University's need to deal with multi-faceted challenges related to the phase of down-sizing, this investigation now proceeds to

propose some ‘Opportunities’. They are meant as a response to the question: What more can Fu Jen University do today to live up to her ‘Catholic’ identity?

The ‘Opportunities’ pointed out and discussed below are based on the 2017 revised Mission Statement and Major Goals, enriched through insertion of a number of new keywords such as: justice, sustainable development, common good, academic freedom vs professional ethics, culture of care, and a repeated emphasis on dialogue.

### 1. Radical reaffirmation and return to the roots of our Catholic belief:

To answer the question posted above, we need not start from zero, but have unique resources to draw on. First of all, our faith in the ‘good news’ of Jesus Christ is the ultimate source from which we are to draw inspiration and strength to remain true to our name. Pope Francis in his call on all Catholic universities to undergo a ‘missionary transformation’, first of all emphasizes a radical return to the kerygma, the ‘good news’ of the Gospel which commissions universities to be ‘light and salt’ for the world in which we find ourselves today. It is ‘good news’ also in as much as it reminds us of the important fact that we are here, not in our own name – as may be the case with other private universities - rather we are ‘sent’ to continue the Lord’s mission entrusted to his Church and guided by the Holy Spirit, whose collaborators and servants we are called to be. This consciousness ought to fill us with unrivaled confidence and courage, especially in times of crisis like ours. Our newly formulated University Motto sums up this call to radical missionary conversion as follows: *‘Inspired by the universal love of Jesus Christ, we are a university committed to the betterment of society’*.

As members of Christ’s missionary Church we, moreover, can confidently draw on the principles and guidelines offered to us by the magisterium of the present and previous popes, which directly address issues related to Catholic university education in the modern world such as: *Ex corda ecclesiae*, *Laudate si, Evangelii gaudium*, and most recently *Veritatis gaudium*.

Thirdly, we are heirs to the evolving historic consciousness of our University’s identity and role as captured in our Mission Statement and its accompanying Seven Core Goals, which constitute an application of relevant Church documents to our local cultural context. All of these valuable resources ‘graciously given’ to us ought to empower us in discerning the signs of the time, ready to undergo the missionary transformation’ by embracing the ‘Opportunities’ at hand so as to win the battle.

## 2. Need for administrative leadership development:

As regards the challenge of maintaining a critical minority of committed Catholic/Christian administrators, faculty and staff - due to the fast dwindling presence of missionaries and members of the re-founding generation on campus - one of the most urgent needs to be faced is a 'systematic and ongoing' formation program for potential future administrative personnel. Fortunately, the University's Board of Trustees has recently approved such a leadership development initiative for volunteers and recommended faculty members under the guidance of the Vice Presidents for Mission assisted by the Office of Human Resources. To serve its purpose, this initiative must go beyond familiarity with university structures, organizational procedures, or administrative skills. It needs to incorporate awareness of Fu Jen's unique history, the meaning and relevance of our Motto and Mission Statement as derived and enlightened by relevant Church documents. Moreover, leadership development at our University ought to be inspired by the Christian concept of 'servant leadership', a core concern strongly promoted by the University's Graduate Institute of Educational Leadership and Development.

There is a noteworthy historical aspect worth considering at this point, namely the fact that the founding and re-founding of our University greatly depended on the initiatives of committed laypeople and alumni, namely two committed Catholics in Beijing, and the Fu Jen Alumni Association in Taiwan, most of whom were not Christians. Therefore, instead of bemoaning the dwindling away of foreign missionary priests, brothers and sisters, we ought to read the signs of the time as the start of a new phase of development calling for empowerment and stronger involvement of Christian as well as non-Christian lay people. This too is a central concern of the 'New Evangelization' movement, which urges us to trust the work of the Holy Spirit and the missionary calling and role of our lay partners, who have no difficulty endorsing the universal values of Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Holiness as the foundational pillars for holistic human development. Moreover, witnessing the increasing secularization of society, accompanied by the erosion and confusion of social and moral values on a global scale, Fu Jen all the more needs to unite and mobilize the energy of all like-minded Fu Jen educators to live up to our call as 'salt and light', and 'social conscience' in the modern world, which may mean taking a counter-culture stance. *Veritatis gaudium* refers to this stance as '*a bold intellectual call-to-arms in our secularized society*' (4).

Finally, the process of systematic leadership development is bound to have an important side effect in that it will promote the much-desired inter-disciplinary and inter-religious dialogue conducive to building personal relationships and a sense of community and solidarity which, sooner or later, will benefit administrative processes.

Given the enormous size of our University with turnover of administrative personnel every 3-6 years, the development of administrative leaders needs to be ongoing. As of now, it is overdue and can hardly be postponed if our University is to retain a ‘critical minority’ of individuals deeply committed to the ‘Catholic’ inspiration and mission of our University.

### 3. Promoting a culture of encounter among faculty and staff:

It is not enough for a Catholic University of our size to systematically and continuously prepare for future administrative personnel to carry on her missionary mandate. Something similar needs to happen on the faculty and staff level through ongoing intra- and inter-departmental dialogue in accordance with our University’s Major Goal 6 which commits us: *‘to encourage faculty and students to acquire an understanding of the Christian faith, and facilitate intellectual, spiritual and inter-religious dialogue and collaboration’*. Unfortunately, more and more meetings are taking place daily to cope with immediate issues and developmental urgencies, leaving less and less time for teachers and staff to engage in a free exchange of ideas and educational concerns leading to deeper, more personal exchanges on the ‘intellectual, spiritual and inter-religious’ levels.

Given the overall situation, we cannot afford to miss this timely opportunity to design a process whereby to promote such dialogue in a systematic and ongoing manner for all members of faculty and staff, first on the college and then on the departmental levels. The focus should be an in-depth communication and dialogue of the newly revised Mission Statement, Core Goals, and Motto, including related papal documents leading the way towards appropriate application and implementation on the college and departmental levels. Initially, such a process might need the assistance of a competent team under the overall responsibility of the Vice-President for Mission.

Sooner or later, such dialogues will also provide opportunity to clarify issues related to one of the most fundamental pillars of university education in general, namely its commitment to ‘truth’; all the more so since our age is plagued by fake news, alternative truth, and mindsets infiltrated by the doctrine of relativism. Giving up the basis of truth amounts to undermining the very foundation on which the scientific and systematic quest for knowledge is built. Here we do well to notice that the word ‘dialogue’ appears three times in the English translation of our revised Mission and Core Goals Statement. We also do well to listen to a recent highly appropriate comment made by Pope Francis on the necessity of inter-faculty dialogue:

*‘...wide-ranging dialogue, not as a tactical attitude, but as an intrinsic necessity, in order to*

*experience as a community the joy of the Truth which, in practice, encourages the culture of encounter. Universities cannot but dialogue, because as Benedict XVI pointed out, the truth is logos, which creates dia-logos, and therefore, communication and communion.'*(5)

Finally, developing such a 'culture of encounter' would also make the lives and hard work of our teachers, researchers, and staff more integrated, meaningful, and rewarding. It would deepen their sense of commitment and belonging, in as much as they would discover and experience themselves and their service at Fu Jen as part of a worldwide enterprise, adding universal value to their daily individual endeavors.

#### 4. Orientation program for newly hired faculty and staff members:

John Carvey, President of the Catholic University of America, in his address to Catholic leaders interpreted Pope Francis exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* emphasizing the need for Catholic universities to take a '*self-consciously Catholic institutional stance*'. (6) Catholic universities are by nature private institutions. By definition:

*A private college is independent and sets its own policies and goals, as well as being privately funded ...A private college may also be affiliated with a particular religious denomination or gender.*  
(7)

Fu Jen is an extraordinary large private university with twelve colleges. In a democratic society, private universities or colleges are meant to offer alternative choices to society's multi-cultural and multi-religious citizens. In as much as private institutions have the right to set their own goals and policies, teachers and students are free to choose from among the public and private institutions the one best suited to their needs and expectations. If they decide to enter Fu Jen Catholic University, they ought to be in agreement with her educational philosophy and through their services contribute to the realization of its mission. To avoid any misunderstanding, and in order to enable newcomers to fulfill the institute's expectations, Fu Jen on her part, as part of the contract deal, needs to clearly state and communicate to them its Catholic stance, in particular her Motto, Mission Statement and Goals. In addition, the applicant ought to express willingness to participate in a special orientation program aimed at gaining a better understanding of the nature of Catholic universities in general as well as the unique history, role and mission of Fu Jen in particular, including also the meaning of academic freedom and professional ethics as pointed out in Goal 3 of Fu Jen's Mission Statement: '*We adhere to academic freedom and professional ethics and aim at the integration of inter-disciplinary knowledge.*'

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Private Fu Jen Catholic University has the reputation of being administered most like public universities. Perhaps, the time has come for Fu Jen, as the leading comprehensive Catholic institution on the island, to assume a more ‘self-consciously Catholic institutional stance’ by means of engaging in a courageous dialogue with the local Ministry of Education supported by the Apostolic Nuncio to the Republic of China. The dialogue ought to clarify the significance of greater institutional autonomy and academic freedom for private institutions and resulting benefits to a multi-cultural democratic society. Such a dialogue is all the more appropriate because granting more institutional freedom perfectly coincides with our Ministry’s policy and insistence on institutional distinctiveness and their unique contribution to society at large. Obtaining only minimal financial support from the government, private institutions should be less government-controlled. Moreover, considering the fact of 1358 Catholic universities and colleges in operation worldwide, plus the Catholic Church’s record of 900 plus years’ experience of successful university education, the Ministry has all reason to trust and encourage Catholic institutions to live up to their mission and educational commitments so as to enrich the spectrum of academic choices available to its citizens.

#### 5. From Multi-University’ to Uni-versity:

Over the years Fu Jen has grown bigger constantly. Neither the ‘Trinitarian’ nor ‘Unification’ phase of development was guided by a master plan. Even today - facing the stage of down-sizing and reformation - the struggle continues. As a result, the growth in student population and related developmental needs have led to the establishment of new centers, offices, and sub-divisions with a non-proportionate increase of administrative personnel, bureaucracy and lack of efficiency. In other words, be it on the administrative or academic development levels, the tendency toward institutional and academic fragmentation is real. There is need for clear definition of roles and functions, and of integrating related pursuits so as to improve overall performance and reduce the University’s financial burden.

There are some concrete signs on the horizon, indicating a move in the right direction, hopefully with more to follow. For example, as far as the administrative level is concerned: With the encouragement of the Mission Committee of the University’s Board of Trustees, the Director of the Fu Jen Catholica Academia with its five academic research centers has realized the need for cross-disciplinary dialogue - including the Department of Philosophy with its own Institute of Scholastic Philosophy, the Department of Religious Studies which also offers a special degree program for Catholic students, as well as the Fu Jen Faculty of Theology - to address matters of common interest and concern and engage in goal-directed future planning so as to counteract tendencies toward fragmentation by strengthening the ‘uni-versity’ character of this Catholic

institution.

Pope Francis' idea of 'missionary transformation' of Catholic universities is not limited to overcoming internal university fragmentation, but also inter-university isolation among institutions dispersed over the globe. He believes that, in an 'epochal change like the present one', Catholic universities and faculties need to 'network' and 'collaborate' on a global scale to bring about '*a courageous cultural revolution*'. Accordingly, universities are to pursue research and studies:

*'in synergy with academic institutions of other countries, so that the wealth of the diversity of knowledge, culture and religion can become a proposal for common projects in response to the problems of humanity'. (8).*

Such an 'ad extra' directed missionary transformation finds its echo in Core Goal 7 of our Mission Statement entitled 'Spirit of Service', stating: '*Fu Jen seeks to develop a spirit of compassion, and to demonstrate an active commitment to justice that reflects international solidarity*'. Instead of isolated ivory tower multi-versities dispersed over the globe, Christian universities, through effective ad extra purpose-directed networking, can multiply their impact on society significantly, so as to bring about the envisioned 'cultural revolution' on a scale far transcending one's own cultural context.

With regard to this aspect, we may well ask ourselves: How effective are our relationships with international sister universities, and to what extent have our international conferences and memberships in international organizations - including those of Christian and Catholic nature such as ACUCA and ASPAC - resulted in 'common proposals and projects' that 'promote justice and reflect global solidarity'?

## 6. Co-creating a culture of care

Like most Catholic universities worldwide, Fu Jen has a spacious, walled campus with thousands of students living there, including members of faculty and staff. It provides ample academic and recreational facilities to encourage student-faculty interaction and relaxation. In the early mornings, evenings and weekends people from the densely populated neighborhoods and the adjacent Teaching Hospital also enter the campus for a breeze of fresh air, exercises, body prayer, or leisurely walks.

Thinking of the former Beijing Fu Jen University campus, as well as the present one -

though different in architectural style and landscaping - most of our Beijing as well as Taiwan alumni will remember their student years in a beautiful, unique and people-friendly natural environment. However, over the years, the situation has changed quite drastically, so that the campus experience is no longer what it used to be, due to the huge increase of pedestrians, the need for more buildings including the new adjacent hospital, parking lots anywhere and everywhere and, most of all, the all-day-long traffic flow of cars, delivery trucks, hospital shuttle busses and bicycles along the main roads. As a result pedestrians, such as students and faculty walking from one building to the next, need to be on constant alert so as not to interfere with the non-stop flow of traffic in order to stay safe. Whereas campus design ought to be human-friendly and community-building centered, Fu Jen campus now is becoming more and more traffic-centered.

Moreover, looking around, one can spot many of the earlier buildings in serious need of exterior repair, cleaning, and face-lifting. As far as trees, plants, flowers, green areas and gardening are concerned, there are too many signs of neglect, partially due to the fact that Fu Jen has no full-time gardener or contracted a company to take care of gardening needs on a continuous year-round basis. In addition, there are the bigger problems, such as campus flooding, road repair, re-direction of traffic flows, and the unresolved problem of the unsightly San-Chung bus station at the main gate, all of which require intensive dialogue with local government agencies, including Fu Jen neighborhood communities to negotiate win-win solutions. All in all, what has been lacking for too long is a master plan for campus development and maintenance, which could have prevented at least part of the present dilemma.

As our University looks forward to her 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on this island in 2020, and her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration beginning December 2024, a great increase of visiting alumni may be expected, many of whom are supporting Fu Jen's development on a continuous basis. The least that alumni would expect to see is a campus environment that reveals a 'culture of care', one that honors Fu Jen's commitment to the ideal of 'Beauty' as engraved in golden characters on a highly visible column at the main gate. Like people judge a person by appearance and dress, at least on first impression, Fu Jen needs to take better care of her 'visible self', namely her physical environment. Although soon 100 years old, alumni hope to see their Alma Mater well-groomed and well-taken care of, so as to renew their pride in being one of her sons or daughters.

The big question to be faced is: How to solve such a time-consuming, complex, problematic and costly undertaking? First of all, Fu Jen has a Department of Landscaping and Architecture (LA), which ought to consider this project as a gracious learning opportunity for its faculty, students, and alumni and play a leading role in designing and implementing a 6-year master plan



aimed at gradually re-covering what has been neglected for too long. Pope Francis in his recent exhortation *Veritatis gaudium* speaks of universities serving as '*cultural laboratories in which the Church exercises her mission*' (9), an expression very applicable to how the LA Department as well as University administrators need to look at this opportunity. While the LA Department faculty, students, and alumni with their expertise and connections would be responsible for developing the overall six-year master plan supported by the Office for General Affairs, it would be the responsibility of the Vice-Presidents for Administration and Mission to supervise the entire project and enter into fruitful dialogue with respective government officials.

Meanwhile, initial unofficial contacts with government officials have been made and a so-called 'Fu Jen Campus Working Committee' including LA faculty keeps things moving forward. To prevent certain maintenance problems from recurring, it is foreseen that, sooner or later, students from each college would be involved in the up-keep and maintenance tasks of the areas surrounding their own building through the 'Service Learning Program'. For what does it profit our students to go as far as Africa or India for service learning projects, or listen to more lectures on environmental protection, but do not see the need of caring for their immediate environment? After all, service learning must begin at home as a small, yet significant personal contribution to the solution of global problems. Possibly Fu Jen's twelve colleges could be involved in a campus-wide competitive 'culture of care' movement. By the time of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the most beautiful and best cared for college environment could be awarded a special prize. The ambitious overall aim should be nothing less than this Catholic University having the most community- and environment-friendly campus in all of Taiwan: beautiful, unique, and well-cared for.

Fortunately, there are already promising signs of alumni interest and support for such a university-wide ambitious project. It may, however, take another year or two to develop and negotiate the final master plan internally and with the government. Nevertheless, the LA Department's faculty, students and alumni are already mobilizing and working on the improvement on some minor projects at this point in time, involving the repair and beautification of some of the holiest places on campus. Moreover, there are also encouraging signs that this so-called '*Make Fu Jen Beautiful Again*' project might mobilize the worldwide Fu Jen Alumni Family to lend their generous support in as much as they too hope to see their 100 years old Alma Mater wearing her name and her age in all dignity. Thus, we will be able to give her a gracious and promising start into her second centennial as we join in worldwide chorus singing our anthem: '*Ju wo Fu Jen chi shou chien chun!*', or: *May my beloved Alma Mater Fu Jen be blessed with another 1000 seasons of Spring!*

## Conclusion

Having named some of the ‘Strengths and Weaknesses’ and identified a variety of ‘Opportunities’ to be taken into consideration, we ought to think as well of certain ‘Threats’ that the future might hold. However, the only real threat ahead of us is ourselves: neglecting to read the signs of the times on the g/local and internal horizons and remain in a non-action status quo mentality instead of heeding Pope Francis’ call for each university to undergo a ‘missionary transformation’. In our case, this must mean more than having a revised Mission Statement, Core Goals and Motto on paper. Rather, conscious of ‘being sent’, it must mean to trust the power of the transforming Creator Spirit, helping us to become more fully conscious of what these statements mean and demand of us. This consciousness will grow as we courageously enter in a systematic, ongoing, in-depth dialogue with one another aimed at facing to the multiple challenges around us in ways worthy of our ‘Catholic’ calling and identity.

Accordingly, the ‘Opportunities’ identified in this inquiry constitute a practical response to the Pope’s request for ‘missionary transformation’ in answer to the question: What more must Fu Jen University do today to live up to her ‘Catholic’ name and mission in terms of the following needs: returning to our missionary roots, developing administrative leadership and empowering like-minded laypersons, co-creating a ‘culture of encounter’ among faculty and staff through ongoing dialogue, designing a meaningful orientation program for newly hired faculty or staff members, moving from multi-versity and fragmentation to uni-versity and collaboration, and sharing responsibility for promoting a ‘culture of care’ campus-wide? If persistently pursued, the resulting transformation certainly would be a significant contribution to Pope Francis’ envisioned ‘cultural revolution’ that our world stands desperately in need of.

This inquiry was undertaken in the hope that its insights and proposals would be of some use in mobilizing all members of this University’s academic community during this critical phase of her history, much as Pope Francis in his 2017 TED Talk would have it, stating: *‘Why the only future worth building must include everyone!’* (10).

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## Appendix:

### Mission Statement and Goals Fu Jen Catholic University

Revised and Approved by the Board of Trustees, March 16, 2017

#### **Vision 願景**

Inspired by the universal love of Jesus Christ, our model, we are a university committed to the betterment of society.

以基督博愛精神，成為具社會影響力的大學。

#### **Mission Statement 宗旨**

Fu Jen Catholic University is an academic community of students and educators dedicated to the goal of fostering the growth of the whole person on the basis of Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Holiness. In our pursuit of harmony, cultivating a right relationship with self, the world, and God as the creative unifying source of all, we commit ourselves to a dialogue that leads to the integration of Chinese culture and Christian faith. We hope to advance academic research that promotes true knowledge. Mindful of the common good of the human family, we pledge ourselves to work toward well-balanced sustainable developments.

天主教輔仁大學，為追求真、善、美、聖全人教育之師生共同體，致力於中華文化與基督信仰之交融，獻身於學術研究與弘揚真理，促進永續均衡發展，增進人類社會福祉，以達到知人、知物、知天之合一理想。

#### **Seven Main Goals -七大目標**

##### **1. Human Dignity**

*We affirm the dignity of every human person, and respect all basic human rights.*

##### 一、人性尊嚴

肯定人性尊嚴，尊重天賦人權。

##### **2. Meaning of Life**

*We promote the search for the meaning of life and the nurturing of an integrated value system.*

##### 二、人生意義

探討生命意義，建立完整價值體系。

### **3. Teaching and Research**

We adhere to academic freedom and professional ethics, and aim at the integration of inter-disciplinary knowledge.

#### 三、教學研究

尊重學術自由與學術倫理，推動知識整合。

### **4. Solidarity and Care**

We foster balanced relationships between ourselves and others, and together strive to build a culture of care.

#### 四、團結關懷

增進群己關係，發展關懷文化。

### **5. Dialogue among Cultures**

Fu Jen advances interaction between Chinese and other cultures, and cultivates the spirit of humanism.

#### 五、文化交流

增進文化交流，培育人文精神。

### **6. Religious Spirit**

Fu Jen encourages faculty and students to acquire a deeper knowledge of the Christian faith, and facilitates intellectual, spiritual and interreligious dialogue and collaboration.

#### 六、宗教精神

鼓勵師生瞭解基督信仰，促進理性、信仰與宗教之交談及合作。

### **7. Spirit of Service**

Fu Jen seeks to both develop a spirit of compassion, and to demonstrate an active commitment to justice that reflects international solidarity.

#### 七、服務人群

發揮仁愛精神，秉持正義，邁向世界大同。