



THE PORTAL TO JESUIT STUDIES

The Jesuit Mission in the University Apostolate, Pedro Arrupe (1975)

On August 4, 1975, Pedro Arrupe addressed several leading officials at Jesuit universities. The gathering in Rome included rectors, presidents, and principals as well as provincial representatives and the presidents of regional educational associations. Arrupe's remark to the group appears below. Those gathered also heard from Cardinal Garrone, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, and Pope Paul VI. This meeting was one of many (others being held in Delhi and Moscow, as noted in these remarks) that discussed how to implement the decrees of the 32nd General Congregation to Jesuit life and apostolates, especially in higher education.

I. IMPORTANCE OF THE APOSTOLATE OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

1. Unique Occasion

Just five months ago I looked out over this hall, to say my final words to the delegates to the 32nd General Congregation. Already at that time they and I were wondering how we could interpret to the entire Society the rich and profound experience of the preceding three months.

What better way for me to carry further the work of the Congregation than to use every occasion to meet with various groups of Jesuits and discuss with them the orientations which the Congregation has opened up for us? So you can imagine my joy when I learned of the meetings in Delhi and Moscow to which many of you were planning to go and when I saw that without imposing too much on you I could invite you to stop in Rome. That joy has fairly brimmed over, now that you are here. Not thirty or forty of you, as at first I thought might be able to free yourselves to come, but seventy!! Almost all of the directors of our institutions of higher education in Latin and North America, Europe, and East Asia, along with a strong representation from India.

Never before in the history of the Society of Jesus has such a large group of directors of our universities and colleges assembled!!

It is most fitting that it is with you, directors of the extremely important apostolate of institutionalized higher learning, that my staff and I hold the first large-scale meeting after the Congregation. Fitting, because the educational apostolate has been close to the Jesuit heart from our very origins (cf. *Const.*, part 4). Fitting because you may have doubts about the importance the Congregation attached to this



apostolate, since it prepared no statement pertaining exclusively to it. Fitting too, because it is in and through the institutions from which you come that the Society inserts herself into that world of learning which, for good or bad, feeds the citizenry of every nation with the ideas and preconceptions which help to determine norms of judgment and action. Fitting finally, because “the Catholic university has a distinctive vocation in modern society” and to work for its development “is to carry on an ecclesial task, both urgent and irreplaceable,” for “the Catholic university is a necessary element of the Church, living in and at the service of the world.”

How can we best use the limited time at our disposal? First of all, I would say as “men of prayer, of the evangelical mission of Christ, endowed with a supernatural spirit.” Secondly, in a communitarian way. Many of you are meeting for the first time and discovering that, though from very differing parts of the world, you are nodes in that net which is the *communitas dispersa* of the Society in the world of academe. You will see that you have not only common concerns, but also common challenges and opportunities.

Our prayerful openness to God in a spirit of fraternal sharing will lead us, it is clear, beyond the Society of Jesus. It will situate us ecclesially, *within the Church*, which mediates to us our mission of service to men in their quest for faith and in their promotion of justice. In these four days, let us with all the vigor at our command make the concerns of the Church our concerns, her needs our needs, her frailties our common burden.

Finally, let us ask the Father of Jesus to draw us to His Son, *to place us with His Son*, to be “propitious to us in Rome” as he was to St. Ignatius, following his vision at La Storta. God’s arm is not shortened.

2. Why is the Apostolate Important

The theme that I propose to discuss this morning is that the university apostolate *is* of capital importance for the Church, and therefore for the Society, and this for many reasons. You are more familiar with these reasons than I. Let me, nonetheless, select two and briefly develop them before looking more closely at the prophetic Catholic university.

– The teaching of our blessed Lord is for all men, including specially the “wise of this world.” Now the wise of this world are to be found, if not exclusively, certainly in strength, in institutions of higher education. These institutions, then, merit an important place in our apostolic planning and labors.

– Our Lord’s teaching is to be the salt that penetrates and sustains the vitality of human cultures. Now human cultures, specially in the modern, technological world, are shaped in institutions of higher education. In these institutions, then, we are offered an unrivalled opportunity, where the graces of civilization flourish, for the grace of God to abound the more.



(a) The Wise of this World

My first statement, that the teaching of our blessed Lord is intended in a special way for the “wise of this world,” may come as a surprise to some. Did not our Lord Himself say that it has pleased His Father to reveal to the unlearned what He has hidden from the wise and learned (Luke 10:21)? And has not the Church in recent years, through the Holy Father and the bishops interpreting the Gospel for today’s world, guided us very explicitly to be concerned, more than in the past, with the poor, the outcast, the marginados?

Paradoxical as it may seem the “wise of this world” have often to be ranked among the impoverished, the marginados, suffering from the isolation which is the special mark of the outcaste. They are often out of contact with the light and saving power of the Lord, shut up in a world of values that excludes the personally Transcendent. This isolation is often the greater, the more advanced the research on which their lives are centered. They have not encountered Christ, because – to give one reason – they have never met the modern equivalents of Justin, Irenaeus, Augustine, Bonaventure, Aquinas, Ricci, or de Nobili. But if the “wise of this world” become wise in Christ, their influence will be enormous, like a lamp set upon a stand and bringing light to all in the house (Mat. 5: 14).

How will they become wise in Christ, if Christian scholars are not present in their world of contemporary philosophy, science or art, and at home, even more so, in that world which evoked Paul’s lyrical cry, “How great are God’s riches? How deep are his wisdom and knowledge? Who can explain his decisions? Who can understand his ways?”

As we look at the Jesuit community and then at the large number of lay professors and administrators at our institutions, what do we see? Are they – are we – distinguishable from our peers at other institutions? Has a “dominant secularism” become our native air, so that God is effectively absent from our world? To what extent have we internalized that judgment on the situation of today’s world expressed so incisively in *Jesuits Today*, namely that “the prevalence of injustice in a world where the very survival of the human race depends on men caring for and sharing with one another is one of the principal obstacles to belief: belief in a God who is justice because he is love?”

(b) Christification of Cultures

I turn now to my second consideration; namely, that our Lord’s teaching is intended to permeate human cultures and vivify them from within. It is not only for all men but also for the total culture which every human community builds in our different countries. Our cultures, ideologies, and structures are shaped by cultural, political, and economic leaders, who in turn draw their views about man and the world in part from the “knowledge industry,” at the heart of which we find the university.



It was not always so. But today, man's growing awareness of his own cultural identity, the rise of "new" nations with their own cultural values the ecological and population problems and the crisis of values triggered by the technological revolution of the last few decades have enhanced the need for universities, where such huge questions can be systematically studied in interdisciplinary fashion. From the viewpoint of rural-urban relations, we can say that the movement of peoples and the shift of power bases from rural dispersion to urban centers leads almost inevitably to strengthening the position of the university. It becomes the point where men in quest for knowledge and understanding give that quest a local habitation and a name.

Such convulsive changes bring us face to the question of inculturation in the true sense of the word; namely, the Christification of cultures. Clearly, this touches not only the "new" nations, with their subcultures based on different tribal and ethnic origins, but also the industrialized nations of the technologically advanced world with their sub-cultures and social strata. To understand what it means to be a person, precisely in any particular culture or sub-culture demands experience, reflection fed by the contributions of many disciplines, and the light of faith illuminating all reflection.

Inculturation, then, is the incarnation or enfleshing of the Faith and Christian existence in each and every culture so that people can genuinely express them in ways with which they feel comfortable. Thus they will be able to develop and deepen as well as transmit *their* faith in their own language (*ecclesia localis*), through concepts derived from their own culture (*inculturatio philosophica et theologica*), in accord with their own spiritual and religious tradition with the values proper to it (*inculturatio vitae spiritualis*). This process is to go on without any deformation of the Gospel, since it is only in the light of the Gospel that cultural and human values can be supernaturally judged and evaluated. How appropriate for our institutions of higher education is the study involved in such an enterprise, where history, anthropology, linguistics, sociology, and other disciplines all have their place.

It may be argued that the advanced research institutes of governments and industry or popular programs for millions of television and radio audiences both generate and popularize new values so that the institution of higher education is no longer so important. Undoubtedly, it is no longer without rival, as perhaps it was until the most recent past. But if we ask where the research workers of specialized institutes and the writers of television programs have been educated, are we not directed back to our institutions of higher education?

Certainly the General Congregation was convinced of the need for "a profound and academic formation of its future priests." Consider from the viewpoint of higher education its strong words on this subject:



Thus the Society has opted anew for a profound academic formation of its future priests – theological, as well as philosophical, humane, and scientific – in the persuasion that, presupposing the testimony of one’s own life, there is no more apt way to exercise our mission. Such study is itself an apostolic work which makes us present to men to the degree that we come to know all ... their cultural milieu. Our studies should foster and stimulate those very qualities which today are often suffocated by our contemporary style of living and thinking: a spirit of reflection and an awareness of the deeper, transcendent values.

3. Our Bonds with Our Students and Lay Staff

Now what we say about younger Jesuits holds true in its own way about young men and women in general. Those particularly who spend anywhere from 3 to 10 years in institutions of higher education are called on to develop that “spirit of reflection and an awareness of deeper, transcendental values” which will enable them to unify various branches of study into a living synthesis of knowledge to be used for their own true good and that of their fellows.

Let us not be too easily persuaded that students are developing this spirit of reflectiveness and synthesis merely because they study at our institutions. On the other hand, let us not be so obsessed by the difficulties as to assume that all that our students seek is a degree or certificate to enable them to find more profitable employment than their contemporaries.

Through the *students*, then, who choose our institutions, our Lord’s teaching is to penetrate human cultures and vivify them from within.

Perhaps as you listen you are thinking of your institution: the small number of Jesuits, the growing number of lay professors. Perhaps you wonder if I am thinking of a model that no longer exists – the small college of less than 1,000 students with an almost exclusively Jesuit staff. No, let me assure you, I am thinking of *your* institutions, both the smaller ones and those of five, ten, fifteen thousand students, a Jesuit staff whose average age is considerably above where it stood ten years ago, and a lay staff anywhere from 2 to 20 to 40 times as numerous as the Jesuit.

Considering these institutions, is it not clear that we have a special responsibility to strengthen our bonds with *lay professors and administrators*? Perhaps no single question is as important as this in almost all of our institutions. I will not go into details on this point, but I would ask you to view your institution from this point of view and ask yourselves some very practical questions, like the following.

(i) What is the *general* spirit among the lay professors? Do they view the “Jesuit” university as part of themselves? Do they have opportunities for learning, discussing, and explaining Ignatian values which have given birth to and are supposed to permeate the “Jesuit” university?



(ii) Are Jesuits available for apostolic planning with lay professors? What concrete results have such plans led to?

(iii) In the very delicate matter of selection of new professors, does your institution have a plan for emphasizing certain qualities of instruction and certain sectors of research, in the light of which it makes its selection?

Our former students too—are they not also part of our institutions? Are we really interested in them? Do we keep in touch with them, with a purpose larger than raising of funds? I will not go into this question in detail, but I do refer you to my views on this important matter.

4. Shaping of Opinion and Conscience

Finally, I would like at least to mention an enormous force for good at *your* disposal, one often overlooked or neglected. I refer to the making of *opinion* and the indirect formation of conscience implied in it. You may recall what I had to say on this point at the Episcopal Synod last year:

The Church cannot ignore this phenomenon which constitutes a real “sign of the times.” Formation of public opinion and its freedom from forces which would suppress or distort should constitute one of the prime objectives in the evangelization of the Church today. A proper formation and expression of public opinion is necessary for the integral human development which evangelization seeks to promote. Therefore, as the Second Vatican Council put it: “Within the limits of morality and the general welfare, a man should be free to search for the truth, voice his mind and publicize it ... and have appropriate access to information about public affairs.”

The two principal elements which in fact form and limit public opinion are: on the one hand, the information which is published concerning facts, ideas, and the historic reality in which we live; the other, the values, mental sets and attitudes which condition the reception of this reality and at times distort it.

To do the work of evangelization is to exert a force so that public opinion is not manipulated but formed in an objective and impartial manner, and so that this information can be received and interpreted in the light of a Christian vision of the world, man, and society.

We are all aware of the enormous power of television, papers, and films to channel the mainstream of public discourse. If we are to play our part in directing this influence wisely and fairly, it is not so much the question of further information we should be concerned with. It is, rather, the image, the presuppositions, the angle of vision, the frame of reference, the symbolic presentation of values.



The university looks to the total development of people—intellectual, artistic, moral, religious—and to the issues of values, both personal and social. In what ways, we might ask, do our institutions contribute to the forming of the values which underlie social issues and community programs? In what ways do they explore the deeper religious and spiritual values of human experience and thus, in line with their own finality, assure that they will have their place in the formation public opinion?

I do not exaggerate when I say that few if any groups in the Society enjoy the opportunities that are yours to bring the wisdom of the Gospel to the councils of men. Your outreach into your local and even national communities may even frighten you; for you know that when you speak it is not as an individual Jesuit that you are heard but as the president of important institution. You may recall the story of the illustrious president of Harvard University, Charles W. Eliot. His secretary was told that the then president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, was on the phone. She bade the caller wait and then after locating Dr. Eliot said to him: “President Eliot is ready to talk to Mr. Roosevelt.” You may smile, but you know there is some measure of truth to the story, for bearers of political and economic power are aware that men like yourselves help shape the values of youth and of entire communities.

II. PROPHETIC ROLE OF CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

5. Witness and Prophet

Our Lord’s teaching, as we saw before is for the “wise of this world.” It is intended to permeate all human cultures and impregnate our institutions and structures. It is also intended to provide a bridge between what is and the shape of things to come—the *nova et vetera* of the good householder. Is not the Jesuit institution of higher education a privileged place for mediating between the set of ideas and views which hold sway in today’s world and that divine wisdom which both participates in the folly of the Cross and is itself a sign of the “Behold I make all things new?” Is it not called to exercise a *prophetic* role?

Let me make clear what I do not mean, and what I do mean, with that word “prophetic.”

I do not mean the angry, facile denunciation of a particular evil. I do not mean a proclamation which, while purporting to liberate the weak and powerless, instigates them to a self-righteous exaltation of their own virtue and to hatred and scorn for those who are not of their number.

I use the word *prophet* here in a biblical sense: one who is entrusted with a spiritual mission, that of bearing witness to the power and love of God towards men. By *prophetic* I mean the persevering, fearless speaking forth on the issues of the day by people whose views are rooted in Christ’s teaching, clarified through discernment with their community, and consistent with, their own total dedication to Christ. The prophet “speaks God’s message” (1 Cor 14-24), not only when it is willingly accepted but



also and especially when it is seen as a “hard saying,” painful to all-too-human ways of viewing what God expects of man in history. The prophet has let himself be steeped in God, with the result that he is free interiorly and pure of heart. He is sympathetically critical of all movements institutions, many of which are of course excellent, but all of them limited.

6. On the border line of Church and World

The prophet’s role is to relate the living God to his creatures in the singularity of their present moment. But just for that reason, his message looks towards the future. He sees the future coming with its twin aspects of judgment and salvation. He judges the human situation with total freedom and reads the passing moment with the aid of a special, God-given light, which enables him to penetrate deeply into the meaning of events. The prophet knows that the judgment he pronounces comes from the God of salvation and is intended to “build and to plant.” When the “wise of this world” must be silent out of ignorance of the profound meaning of events, the prophet speaks out. We can understand in this sense why Father Przywara says that “the Jesuit lives on the border line where the Church meets the world and the world meets the Church.... It is the function of the Jesuit to interpret the Church to the world and the world to the Church. The border line is ever shifting. Our first task therefore is to locate it.”

Was it not this which our Holy Father had in mind in his memorable allocution of December 3 when he addressed us follows:

Wherever in the Church, even in the most difficult and extreme fields, in the crossroads of ideologies, in the front line of social conflict, there has been and there is confrontation between the deepest desires of man and the perennial message of the Gospel, there also have been, and there are, Jesuits.... You are at the head of that interior renewal which the Church is facing in this secularized world, especially after the Second Vatican Council. Your Society is, we say, the test of the vitality of the Church throughout the centuries; it is perhaps one of the most difficult crucibles in which are encountered the difficulties, the temptations, the efforts, the perpetuity, and the successes of the whole Church.

These words mean that if we want to continue in our apostolic and prophetic role, according to the best traditions of the Society, we must remain at our post on that border line between the Church and the world of non-belief, between the forward leaps of science and the reality of everyday life, searching for solutions to the most pressing problems and in the process stirring up others. Firmly grounded in a solid and genuine tradition, and *therefore* progressive as are only those who are most driven by the inexhaustible desire of the “*magis*.”

In the sense just described, the Jesuit communities of which you are a part, and yourselves as leaders in the university apostolate, are called to be prophetic. You have not sought this burden. The Society, acting as part of the People of God, has missioned you to it, whatever the precise form in which you have been appointed.



7. Risk and Courage

To be a prophet in the sense just described and in the measure marked out for us by the 32nd General Congregation will not win us first place in popularity contests.

To live as a prophet demands integrity and spiritual energy far beyond the average. Now, even more than before the 32nd General Congregation, are we in need of that integrity and energy, for we have been called to make the service of faith and promotion of justice the centre of our lives. Given the demands of this task, I recalled to the members of the Congregation early in the discussion on justice the following grave words from *Octogesima Adveniens*:

Let each one examine himself, to see what he has done up to now, and what he ought to do. It is not enough to recall principles, state intentions, point to crying injustices and utter prophetic denunciations; these words will lack real weight unless they are accompanied for each individual by a livelier awareness of personal responsibility and by effective action.

I went on to ask in my own name this series of questions, not drawn out of the air but deliberately chosen to assist us to foresee where our decisions might lead us:

Is (the Congregation) ready to accept this responsibility and to carry it through to the final consequences? Is it ready to enter on the sterner way of the cross, that which brings us misunderstanding from civil and ecclesiastical authorities and our best friends? Is it ready to give witness not only through decrees or statements which would put into words the sense and meaning of all the members or a large part? Is it ready to give practical expression to its witness through concrete decisions which will necessarily modify our way life, our style of working, our field of endeavor, our social and personal contacts, and finally our image and social standing?

The Congregation's response, we know, was the decree on our mission today and thereby the commitment of the entire Society. So, we cannot avoid asking ourselves in utter sincerity whether we have sufficient resources to bear the prophet's burden. We will indeed experience extraordinary power and authority if we say yes, but great sacrifices will be asked of us, both in what concerns us personally and in our relations with men who up to this point were counted among our defenders, our friends.

It is we who must decide. Do we want to play our apostolic-prophetic role with all that it demands, or be satisfied with a comfortable mediocrity?

From your strenuous efforts to maintain a Jesuit identity and spirit in your institutions despite ever mounting obstacles, from your prompt and generous response to my invitation to this meeting, from your evident determination to be faithful to your Jesuit vocation to the *magis* for Christ, I have no doubt about your answer. True enough, we cannot decide of ourselves to be ministers of prophecy. Prophets are God's creations, made not born, responding to specific needs. Nonetheless, as I said earlier, the prophetic spirit is to be found not only individuals, but in groups and communities as well. We are



called to be in some way prophets because we belong to the Church and because we are religious. The Church is a prophetic body. Religious communities, too, have a prophetic function. It is in this sense that Ladislav Orsy, SJ writes: "The purity of religious vocation consists in the purity of prophecy by word, deed, and daily life."

III. EXPRESSION OF PROPHETIC CHARISM

8. Research, Teaching, Service

This charismatic-prophetic spirit should express itself in every aspect of our daily university life, be it research, teaching, or service to our community. Generally speaking, the qualities that should distinguish these activities are insight, clarity of vision, sincerity, authenticity, fortitude in facing difficulties, and in seeing our undertakings through.

It is these qualities that will determine the kind of *research* we undertake: our short- and long-term projects; the problems we decide to study, including some which others might not dare to treat; the aspects of them we focus upon. In this connection, I would like to cite the wise observations of Father Bernard Lonergan on the Jesuit approach to world problems:

If I am correct in assuming that the Jesuits of the twentieth century, like those of the sixteenth, exist to meet crises, they have to accept the gains of modernity in natural sciences, in philosophy, in theology, while working out strategies for dealing with secularist views on religion and with concomitant distortions in man's notion of human knowledge, in his apprehension of human reality, in his organization of human affairs.

Acceptance of gains along with a spirit of critical evaluation of their meaning and use: let this be our formula, if formula we seek.

Our *teaching* will be directed towards forming the new man, the man for today's world, and we will seek out the most efficacious means to accomplish this; greater emphasis, for example, on training in the use of freedom, and on the development of an integrated personality, instead of the customary maimed, one-dimensional products of our cultural technology. We shall foster an eagerness "to learn how to learn" which is at the heart of what is called Continuing Education. We shall build up Men for Others, men whose ideal is that of service; who enrich their own personalities for the enrichment of others; whose horizons stretch out to their fellowmen across the farthest national and international frontiers. It is our charismatic insight, our prophetic vision that will spur us to discover pedagogic principles, and diversify their application, in order to achieve goals that lie beyond the reach of purely human or rational considerations.



In our *service*, we shall be unremitting in our search for the truly important kind of service and the form that we should give it.

Some of the challenges we shall face will stretch almost as wide as the world itself: the massive phenomenon of unbelief in its theological, pastoral, and other aspects; the fundamental basis of moral values; business ethics; the problems of ecology, lodging; inner city problems; the exploitation of the poor and defenseless; famine and drought; inadequacy of resources to population. Others will vary from region to region, from country to country. However, the principles that should guide us in confronting these challenges will be common to us all, for they derive from the one spirit that animates us and directs us to the end for which Christ called us to his company.

9. Interdisciplinary and International Approach

All this calls for men of extraordinary sensibility and spiritual discernment on the one hand, and of outstanding, unswerving fidelity to the Church on the other; men who are in continual contact with the world of science without losing touch with the world of the spirit, for their decisions do not always flow from certain rational deductions but also from a profound understanding of all the elements involved in a particular situation, and this can be very involved indeed.

So involved, in fact, that no single individual however learned, no one institution however resourceful, can hope to solve the problem unaided. The approach has to be both interdisciplinary and international. *Interdisciplinary* first; many today's urgent problems are multi-dimensional in the sense that they call into play different areas of competence and have a social, political, economic, psychological, philosophical, and religious aspect. The approach to solving them must be an interdisciplinary one if a truly balanced solution is to be found. Here the university is in a privileged position. Isn't a Catholic university really a corporative resolve to achieve the interpenetration of religious, humanistic, and scientific experience?

Then because in today's world no man, no country is an island, but all members or parts of a global village, the solutions we forge must be *international* as well. This is being increasingly recognized by research scientists in industry, food, and health. What we Jesuits have not perhaps appreciate sufficiently is that we have at hand the international network that these others have to strive so mightily to establish. Your presence here today from 70 scattered centers of higher learning across the world is sufficient indication of this tremendous advantage we enjoy but do not, I fear, adequately employ.



10. *Fruits of pooling and cooperation*

Among the fruits to be reaped from this coming together of ours from the four corners of the world, I hope two will hold an important place in your thoughts. The first is that while our deliberations will help each of us to a deeper realization of our responsibilities and opportunities in our own particular situations, they will also enable us to *expand our vision*, so that we can see our labors in relation to the Society's apostolate, see ourselves as members and representatives of that Society. We not merely belong to a world-wide organization; we form part of a global community (*unum corpus*); *communitas dispersa*, it is true, but *communitas vera* nonetheless, deployed across the world in the service of the universal church.

A second fruit to be hoped for is that we shall take full advantage of this occasion to *deepen the bonds of brotherhood between us*, so that in the years ahead we can work as a *communitas*, and that our institutions become in truth sister institutions. I hope we shall be able to get down to some very practical projects, seeking and sharing the information we need from each other in order to plan together, exploring ways whereby we can form national, regional, continental units for mutual assistance and cooperation, and recommending how I and my Curia staff can facilitate your task. We all need to communicate more one with another: presidents among themselves; within the Society, as you are doing here; without, as you will be doing in Delhi and Moscow. Far from adding to your burdens, this sharing will lighten them. Then, because your labors represent but one apostolate of the Society, you need to be in touch with the superiors who coordinate all the Society's apostolates. And finally, because you are on a mission of the universal church, you have to make sure that you interpreting that mission aright.

With these considerations, I draw my opening remarks to a close. I hope that they have helped bring out the capital importance of our corporate apostolate in higher education. More than ever do we need to strengthen that apostolate today, not for the credit of a great name upon earth, not for the power or influence it may give us in the councils of nations, but purely and solely for love of God our Lord in Whom we find all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. May He in His overflowing generosity lead us unto Himself so that with His mind we see this world, and with His heart embrace it.

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