

## **David McCallum, SJ – “Leadership in an Ignatian Way of Proceeding”**

**Summary of the presentation. Webinar, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Kircher Network - The Canisius Formation Course**

### **Introduction**

McCallum invited participants to reflect on a video created at the founding of the International Association of Jesuit Universities in 2018. This video, a compilation of voices from lay and Jesuit professors and administrators worldwide, was presented in multiple languages, showcasing the global reach and unity of Jesuit higher education. McCallum emphasized the importance of approaching what we perceive with a loving gaze and being mindful of our subjectivity as we respond to our experiences. The session concluded with McCallum's invitation for participants to contemplate the video, further deepening the collective reflection.

### **Transformative Education for Social Justice**

McCallum stressed the pivotal role of transformative education in shaping compassionate, creative, and socially responsible individuals. He argued that education must extend beyond mere information delivery, aiming instead to inspire students to critically engage with reality, develop autonomy, and collaborate for social change. The conversation reflected how Jesuit education fostered these values across diverse cultural contexts, aiming to cultivate leaders attuned to contemporary issues, open to learning from marginalized communities and motivated to tackle injustice through creative and collaborative efforts.

### **Ignatian Leadership in Jesuit Education**

McCallum led a profound discussion on the essential role of Ignatian leadership in Jesuit higher education. He underscored the importance of considering the individual in front of us, their background, and their familiarity with Ignatian spirituality. The conversation highlighted the practices of discernment, service, and the examen, emphasizing their role in fostering community and promoting the greater good. McCallum also spoke about balancing excellence with accessibility and the importance of spiritual maturity and social responsibility in leadership. He concluded by outlining the characteristics of an Ignatian leader, including discernment, service, and a Christocentric spirituality, while framing the conversation around how to lead in a collaborative and transformative manner.

### **Leadership, Humility, and Community Building**

McCallum reflected on the vital roles of intellectual humility, interconnectedness, and the ability to view situations from multiple perspectives in leadership. He emphasized that leaders must be open to personal transformation, make decisions to pursue the greater good and work towards fostering a sense of community. Using the example of a business school dean who found that time away from the classroom helped build stronger community ties and align with the institution's broader purpose, McCallum illustrated the importance of balance in leadership. He concluded by proposing that the Society of Jesus is rediscovering the power of communal discernment and its potential translation into university life, helping institutions to align their mission with their daily practices.

### **Navigating Diverse Educational Contexts**

McCallum discussed the challenges and opportunities of navigating diverse and pluralistic educational contexts. He emphasized the importance of hospitality, authenticity, and mutual understanding in fostering engagement. The group discussed how institutions can respect and appreciate the diversity of individuals' backgrounds while maintaining a commitment to their core mission. Some raised concerns about the difficulties of preserving missions in secular contexts, while Michaela asked about strategies for resilience in the face of cultural challenges. McCallum suggested starting with gratitude and appreciation for the positive aspects already present, urging a mindset of openness in addressing challenges. The conversation concluded with a call for ongoing reflection on navigating these complexities and communicating the mission authentically.

### **Communal Discernment in Institutions**

In a dialogue with the participants, McCallum explored the importance of communal discernment in fostering unity and hope within institutions. They emphasized the need for trust, interdependence, and a shared vision to navigate polarities and make informed decisions. One participant expressed concerns about the feasibility of communal discernment in larger, hierarchical institutions, while another highlighted the difficulties posed by performance-driven environments. Another participant stressed that institutions might need to focus more on sense-making and bridging explanations in secular societies. The group also discussed the importance of community, highlighting that developing communal discernment requires time and trust. The conversation concluded with McCallum offering resources for further exploration, and the group expressed gratitude for the enlightening discussion.