

MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR FOR THE INCOMING STUDENTS : **USJ STUDENTS: ACTORS, NOT SPECTATORS**

First, I would like to welcome you to USJ. Today, you become full-fledged actors within this institution. You are witness to the 145th year of its foundation: 145 years of tireless work for the sake of students' futures, our main purpose.

I use the word **actors** to designate not only you but every USJ student: indeed you are, and you will continue to be, the actors that shape the University on a daily basis. Through you, we are able to see USJ as we wish it to be and as we have known it to be since 1875. It is through you and for you that it continues to be built and transformed. The strict environments you knew as school students are behind you; today, the world of USJ opens up before you.

Students are responsible actors in a system of scientific and literary learning: they learn about subjects of their choosing, but not only with the help of professors- they themselves are also responsible to do the required work. In this way, they will make the most of the education USJ offers and graduate with a diploma and a job in their corresponding fields.

USJ students are also actors in acquiring cross-disciplinary competencies such as fair reasoning, free and critical thought, methodology and intellectual and moral honesty, and the choice to be a citizen, all of which are equally important and sought after to fully integrate into society and claim one's status not only as a professional but also as a citizen. This explains how USJ offers its students the chance to become full-fledged citizens by way of its academic setting.

Indeed, it is within this setting that we seek to transcend denominational, regional, and partisan characteristics to learn the rules of democracy, mature debate, empathic listening, and solidarity-based civic involvement in order to provide help to every human being who needs it, and to become citizens who are defined by their commitment to the community in the broadest sense and to their respective rights and duties.

The University is where these two aspects come together. It is where students are pushed to find the right "middle ground" between purely academic learning and personal investment and involvement.

An entire set of structures is thus offered to you in various varied domains (the *Amicales* (or *student bodies*), academic delegates, cultural clubs, the chaplaincy, the *Opération 7^e jour*,...), and I cannot but encourage you to delve into these structures, so convinced am I of the

contribution they will make to offering you a complete and balanced educational experience. We continue to pay special attention to the environment as we have done over the past several years, USJ being declared a green university for the conservation of nature, our home, as well as a tobacco-free university for the protection of students' health. Those who enroll at the Campus of Medical Science will benefit from the car- and CO2-free internal spaces, with hopes that the Mar Roukoz Campus of Science and Technology will soon follow suit.

Starting September 2019, USJ enters into the 145th year of its foundation by the Jesuit Fathers. You are entering into this year alongside it. Under no guise of celebration, a number of activities in which you will participate will be organized. There are also several construction sites on which work will begin, such as the student dorms in Mar Roukoz and a building for the Faculty of Medicine. Not to mention the institutional projects under way, such as the implementation of the accreditation recommendations (institutional involvement of professors and students in governance, etc.). As you can see, this coming year will not be the most relaxed, and there is a lot that remains to be done. We live in a society that is in constant motion, especially here, at the heart of a university that is always looking to renew and reinvent itself to provide a quality education to its students. To achieve this continuous renewal, USJ as a whole needs you, your ideas, your investment, your commitment.

Actors of USJ, I wish you all an excellent academic year.

Pr Salim Daccache s.j.

Rector of the University