

# What is the calling of the academy?

Dra. Alexia Salvatierra - March 7, 2025

I arrived late to the academic world; I started to teach at the age of 53, after a lifetime of leadership in church and society. The truth is that my identity was a practical woman, living in a world in which the value of ideas and symbols is measured by their impact on daily life. As a woman of my generation and class, it never occurred to me to see myself as a scholar. I wrote my first book to serve the church, not even thinking about the academy. When academic institutions began to use the book, I began to teach as affiliate faculty and in that way discovered a new purpose and task for my "third age."

The academic vocation is beautiful. It consists in climbing up the mountain to the point where it is possible to see the past and the globe -- to collect wisdom from all sources and organize it for the use of those who are laboring in the valley below. This wisdom can serve as a compass, a guide, when needed. Yet, there is another compass that is equally important to the academic task. The academy must respond to the present work of God, integrating the emerging wisdom with the wisdom of the ages. This is a mutual exchange and relationship. As a woman, I always live in the world where the children reside, and I am constantly aware of their well-being. The kingdom of God is a sphere in which children experience abundant life. A society that assures a high quality of life for children creates an ideal environment for everyone.

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