

Honourable rector

Esteemed president

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the lecturers, nurses, and interns here today and everyone who has accompanied them.

It is an honour for me to recognise the distinguished professor Dr. Jean Watson, as *doctor honoris causa* at this university. She is one of the most internationally recognised nurses for the contributions she has made to the science of nursing all over the world.

This year marks the hundredth anniversary of the death of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. She saw the need to bring formal organisation to the women who cared for the ill.

She made use of the resources available in her surroundings in her endeavour to keep patients healthy. In addition to caring for the ill, she understood the importance of maintaining health and how it could be done.

In the 20th century, the field of nursing began to systematise its body of specific knowledge, developing concepts based on the phenomena experienced by professionals in their day-to-day work and defining them in theoretic proposals. In the 1950s the

first theoretical frameworks in nursing appeared and began to be developed, interpreted through the different world views of their authors. According to the paradigm of the day, the first research projects in nursing were seen as very positive, and such projects have been continuously developing under other scientific paradigms ever since. Since the end of the 1970s, some of these theories have gone on to adopt humanistic concepts, such as those of Dr. Watson, in their formulations.

This year, 2010, has been declared the International Year of the Nurse, and I have been given the honour of speaking these few words so that nursing in Tarragona can join the ranks of history, holding Dr. Watson up as an example of excellence for the nurses of our university, and for all the other professionals who work in the field of nursing at institutions which take in people on their paths between illness and health, and who believe in nursing based on science and humanism.

Quality and warmth are the two words that her contributions to the science of nursing bring to mind, concepts that continue to have bearing on the reality of nursing today. Facing the risk of dehumanisation of patients from a number of causes, including the administrative reconstruction of the majority of healthcare systems across the world, professionals in the field of nursing must rescue the human, spiritual and transpersonal aspect of care, in clinical practise, in administration, in education, and in research. This is the basis for the theory that she espouses – the theory of Human Caring.

Margaret Jean Harman Watson was born in West Virginia in 1940. She received her nursing degree in 1961 from the Lewis Gale School of Nursing in Roanoke, Virginia. After graduating, she moved to Colorado, where she resides today.

In 1964 she received a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from the University of Colorado, Boulder.

In 1973, she received her Doctorate in Educational Psychology and Counselling from the same institution. Her doctoral thesis was on the effects and feelings of political groups on conflict resolution in specific situations.

After completing her Ph.D., she became a lecturer in the School of Nursing at the University of Colorado in Denver, where she also held different administrative positions and later became Dean.

She held the positions of President and Vice-President of different university nursing programmes and was involved in the development of the nursing Ph.D. programme at the university. The programme was launched in 1978, and she worked as coordinator and director of the programme for four years.

In the following years she continued her post-doctoral education and focused on the study of caring in countries such as New Zealand, Australia, India, Thailand and Taiwan.

In 1980, she jointly founded the Center for Human Caring with colleagues in the profession. It was the first interdisciplinary centre in the United States with an overall commitment to

developing and using knowledge of human caring and healing as a scientific and moral basis for clinical practise. The centre promotes research and programmes whose goal is to establish a critical balance between traditional biomedical technology and human caring in nursing.

In 1982 she returned to the University of Colorado as Dean of the School of Nursing and Associate Director of Nursing Practise at the University Hospital in Denver, where she remained until 1990. In this period, she was instrumental in the development of a post-graduate nursing curriculum in Human Caring, Health and Healing which would lead to a Clinical-Professional doctorate. This programme was significant in that it stressed a relationship and approach that brings together healthcare theory and practice, working from the arena of university academia with healthcare institutions to ensure that the education that nurses receive provides them with the tools they need to develop human caring practices in day-to-day professional situations as well as to promote in research in the field.

One of her most important research publications came out in 1979, entitled "Nursing: the Philosophy and Science of Caring". It has been republished on several occasions, most recently in 2008, and translated into several languages. Her contributions to nursing have proven invaluable to nurses worldwide.

She later published "Nursing, Human Science and Human Caring" in order to clarify some epistemological and

philosophical concepts. With this work she was able to address the process of human care in nursing, preserving the concept of the person in science, and better the contribution of nursing to society. The first publication was translated into two languages, but her second work was translated into eight, reaching an audience spanning almost every continent.

In 1999 she published “Beyond Post-Modern Nursing”, projecting nursing and healthcare into the 21st century. In the words of Dr. Watson, she seeks to illuminate “...a model of caring and healing practices that take medicine, nursing and the public beyond the ‘cure at all costs approach’”, and embeds curing and caring and healing practices in a new paradigm that acknowledges the symbolic relationship between humankind-technology-nature and the larger, expanding universe.” This work is based on personal traumatic experiences in her life, the result of a serious accident she was in, and the relationship between the care she received and the people who surrounded her.

These are some of the best-known of the 14 works written about caring covering empirical caring methods, new post-modern philosophies of caring and treatments. Some of these were written with distinguished nurses such as Madeleine Leininger, the world’s foremost authority on anthropological nursing. Currently, she is working on revising some of her best-known works for republication this year as well as several research projects.

She is the author of more than three hundred publications in internationally recognised specialist journals, chapters in different books, monographs, conferences and audio-visual materials, not to mention her activities in research projects, symposia, conferences, and international and national committees at her university and elsewhere.

I would also like to point out the many awards and recognitions she has received for her contributions to research as well as teaching, and the numerous grants and abundant financial support she has received both from public as well as private sources to continue her work in human caring.

She has been awarded honorary doctorates from the American Universities of Akron and West Virginia, as well as the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, the University of Luton in London, the University of Montreal in Victoria, and the University of British Columbia in Canada.

She has received recognition as a Distinguished Professor of Nursing from the University of Colorado, as well being awarded the National League for Nursing Martha E. Rogers Award, an award for nursing professionals who have made outstanding contributions to the field of nursing. Later, in 1995, she would become president of the National League for Nursing.

In 1997, she was awarded Honorary Lifetime Certification in holistic nursing by the American Holistic Nurses' Association, and in 1998, she was recognised as a Distinguished Nurse

Scholar by the University of New York. In 1999 she was honoured with the Norman Cousins Award by the Fetzer Institute in recognition of her commitment to developing, maintaining and exemplifying relationship-centred care practices, another in a long list of academic, clinical and social awards, distinctions and recognitions; among these I would like to highlight the Jericho Rose, which she was awarded for her contributions to humanisation of healthcare at the 90th anniversary of the Santa Madrona School of Nursing in Barcelona. This was the seed from which the relationship our faculty today enjoys with Dr. Watson grew.

In 2008, she created a non-profit foundation for the promotion of caring sciences across the world, The Watson Caring Science Institute, which aims to promote the philosophy and practices of caring worldwide and has connections to 29 different countries, including ours.

Currently she holds the Murchinson-Scoville Endowed Chair in Caring Science at the University of Colorado in Denver School of Nursing.

The theory and science of human caring aims to restore the profound nature of caring-healing and ethics, and the ethic of love to healthcare. The institute promotes the caritas model (caring and healing) through a wide network of nursing and academic clinics with systemised programmes of services which aim to transform healthcare – from the people, to the nurses, to the system itself – by fomenting and aiding the

current system while retaining the best of its resources: competent nurses and healthcare professionals. At the same time, a new generation of healthcare professionals is being readied to put a yet broader model of caring into practise.

A wide network of schools and faculties in countries such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, the Philippines, Sweden and the United States, a list of 29 countries, promote the model of caring that today we defend as rightfully indispensable at Rovira i Virgili University. The School and Department of Nursing consider the science of human caring to be the principal guiding axis of our curriculum, and the best way for us to approach people who, for whatever reason, have lost their health.

Dr. Watson's philosophy of human caring is employed in the nursing practices of hospitals worldwide in cities such as Hong Kong, Helsinki, Orange and Miami, to name but a few, reinforcing the idea that theory can manifest in practise, and that nurses are the key to making this happen.

I would like to conclude by saying that Dr. Jean Watson is the one nurse who has most successfully put forward theories on caring from a philosophical perspective, and she is the only one who has shown an interest in the concept of the soul, emphasising the spiritual dimension of human existence. She describes her philosophical approach as existential-phenomenological, spiritual and adopting the humanist and existentialist schools of thought, as well as that of transpersonal

psychology. She believes that the day-to-day practise of nursing must be based on a well-founded system of humanistic values which must be cultivated over the course of a nurse's professional career, integrating scientific knowledge to guide nursing activities.

The interplay between humanism and science is the essence of the nursing discipline, an idea upheld by many of the people dedicated to caring for the sick in all branches of nursing, and for this reason, Rovira i Virgili University is honoured to include Dr. Jean Watson among its honorary doctorates.

Our relationship with her, since she visited us in 2007 and gave the closing speech at the first graduation ceremony for the Master's in Nursing Sciences at our university, takes on special relevance as of this moment, thanks to the outstanding quality of her academic and scientific contributions and their value, and the international recognition she has received both as a nurse and as a person.

She sets a sterling example for our school, our department, for the nursing professionals and for our students, and especially for me. I am deeply grateful that the proposal for her candidacy was accepted and that I have been granted the opportunity to speak on the behalf of all of us.

Honourable rector, I have to the best of my ability described the life and work of our honoured guest, Dr. Margaret Jean Harman Watson. I think, therefore, that I have said enough to, with the

rector's approval, bestow this award in recognition of her merits. I ask, therefore, honourable rector, that you grant Dr. Margaret Jean Harman Watson *doctor honoris causa* and make her part of our university.