

FUNDACIÓN
**CORRIPIO
ALONSO**

SPEECH BY ANA CORRIPIO ALONSO DE BARCELÓ

The history of humanity is, in many ways, the history of migration. For thousands of years, peoples have moved from one place to another in a constant journey undertaken by individuals, families, tribes and nations. The only borders they recognised were often those created naturally between peoples—rivers, mountains and seas—and life was shaped by the most fundamental human need of all: the need to survive and to seek a better future for oneself and one's family.

Then comes belonging: the decision to remain in a place and put down roots there, as trees do. To make a piece of land one's own, to identify with it, to come to know it deeply and to build a life there. Perhaps that is the story—our story, the story of all of us. And although we cannot say with certainty when modern states first emerged, we can say that, regardless of the institutional complexities that define them, human beings have never abandoned—and never will—their migratory nature.

If there is one thing that distinguishes us from those who came before us thousands of years ago, it is that we continue to exercise that migratory instinct without giving up our deeply social nature or the bonds that connect us to a particular place—even when we are no longer there, even when we no longer live there.

A sense of belonging goes beyond legal definitions or material realities. It is something that develops within us; something that is born deep inside each individual. It is the feeling of knowing that we belong to a place and to everything that place and its people represent, even when we are thousands of kilometres away, even if we were not born there. We remain connected by bonds that go beyond family ties and affection. In our everyday lives—in our actions, customs, traditions, rituals and language—we express what identifies and represents that distant place that also lives in our hearts: the place to which we always return, because in truth, we never really left it.

For our family, being here today in Villaviciosa for the presentation of the Corripio Alonso Foundation is a source of great joy and satisfaction. Through this occasion, we reaffirm that the unbreakable bond that connects us to this land remains alive and is stronger than ever.



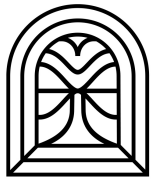
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But this moment is also an affirmation of our deepest identity—the identity passed down to us by those who came before us, by our ancestors, who lived and died here over generations and who, despite the passage of time, still feel close to us and present in our lives, just as all of you gathered here with us today do.

Our grandfather Manuel emigrated to America in 1921, just as the grandparents of many people here today did. Circumstances led many Spaniards to see emigration as a way of meeting the urgent need to provide for their families and, amid the hardships of those times, to seek the promise of a better future.

When our ancestors emigrated, many travelled to lands that had been connected to our shared history and identity for centuries. America—a beautiful and challenging continent—was also a place where Spaniards could feel at home, because we shared the values and culture of those brother nations.

Our grandparents took very little with them, but they carried what mattered most: the values they had learned here, in this land. Their pockets held few material possessions, but how many principles, lessons, memories and traditions they carried in their hearts. They looked out at the sea with fear, but also with faith. From the bow of the ship, they gazed towards the distant land ahead of them, without ever forgetting that behind them lay the land that had given them life—the place to which they would always belong.

They arrived in the Dominican Republic and were fortunate to be welcomed by Dominicans as brothers and sisters. They found the support and solidarity of a people who always know how to smile; a people who believe in and respect men and women who are willing to work. They did what they knew best: they worked—and they worked hard.

That work allowed them to grow, to achieve financial security and to become more ambitious and entrepreneurial in a country filled with people who believe that the only way to make progress is through constant hard work. Because the greatest treasure of the Dominican Republic is not its beaches or its mountains. The greatest treasure of the Dominican Republic is its people. And although our family adapted so fully that they came to feel Dominican too, three generations later, their descendants feel just as Asturian and Spanish as they do Dominican.



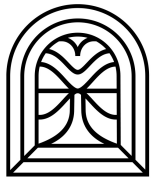
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Because, in many ways, we are still sailing on that same ship—the ship that looks towards a distant future in another land without forgetting the past that lies behind it. A past that is also a permanent and living present, beating in our hearts every day. It is a legacy that we strive to pass on to our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren with care and dedication, so that, wherever they may be, they never forget where they belong.

It is in this spirit of connection, permanence and belonging that our parents, Ana María and Pepín, decided to reaffirm their bond with and commitment to this land. And what better way to do so than by giving back part of what it has given us?

Just as the Corripio Foundation—which has been working in the Dominican Republic for more than 38 years—recognises, celebrates and supports significant achievements each year across different fields of knowledge and learning, because it understands that this is one way of contributing to the country's development while preserving and sharing its historical legacy and national identity, we believe that our family has an unbreakable bond with this land as well. That bond calls upon us to play an active role in its development. And this means not only recognising and celebrating those whose efforts contribute to that development, but also offering our firm and wholehearted support wherever we are able to help bring about tangible improvements.

Our father has always taught us that hard work, discipline, perseverance and leading by example are among the fundamental foundations of success. But he has also taught us that success must always be received with humility and caution, because its true value lies in the positive impact it has on the society in which we live.

That is why we believe that, in some way, we must give back to this community part of what it has given us: a love of hard work, of family, of our Christian values and of the community in which we live. Because, as our father says: “No success can be celebrated as the achievement of one person alone; every success is the result of a collective effort.”

And so, through this moving occasion, we wish to formally begin the work of the Corripio Alonso Foundation. Through its various programmes and activities, the Foundation will recognise, celebrate and support the efforts of the men and women of Villaviciosa, Cabranes and Piloña, for the benefit of the entire community.



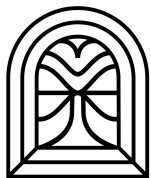
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Likewise, through the Corripio Alonso Award for Literature, the Arts and the Preservation of Historical Heritage, we hope to support and recognise the creation, preservation and promotion of our cultural heritage as expressed through the many different forms of knowledge and artistic expression—literature, painting and dance—as well as through all the ethnographic traditions that make the people of these communities unique. Unique, of course—but also part of something broader and universal: Asturias within Spain, and Spain within the world.

Through the work that the Foundation is now called upon to undertake, we reaffirm the commitment of every member of the Corripio Alonso family to offer back to the land that gave birth to our family part of what it has given to them—and to all of us. Just as our parents and grandparents taught us.

Thank you very much.



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