

live as though they didn't. But immediately, filled with love and thanksgiving toward our Lord, who had called him to be a free cooperator in the work of redemption, he realized that the statement did not correspond to the truth: Christ "has not failed. His doctrine and life are effective in the world at all times. The redemption carried out by him is sufficient, and more than sufficient."<sup>11</sup>

Christ continues to infuse the world each day with his Spirit. But he wants to make use of us Christians, who are members of his Mystical Body, employing us as his instruments. He, God the Sanctifier, enables us to believe in the divine word. He grants us his light, he teaches us and asks us to listen, to learn, so that we can then "reveal and communicate the love of God to all men and to all peoples."<sup>12</sup>

United to the action of the Holy Spirit, the study of sacred science (and all human activity: I think especially of the work of those in non-teaching positions in our university) becomes an instrument of evangelization, of co-redemption, of unity. Thus we will attain an indestructible foundation: a way of thinking, of acting, of living that characterizes the apostolic force of unity, a gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Blessed Virgin is our life, our sweetness and our hope. We will remind our Mother of this when, at the end of Mass, we sing the *Hail Holy Queen*. May holy Mary intercede for each of us, helping us to respond effectively to the action of the Holy Spirit in accord with the fullness of life that Christ came to bring.<sup>13</sup>

## Addresses

Rome  
October 5, 1998

*Bishop Javier Echevarría presided, as Chancellor, at the opening ceremony for the academic year 1998-99 of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. He gave the following address.*

Your excellencies,  
Esteemed professors, students,  
and all who work in this Pontifical  
University,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I extend to all of you my cordial greetings and express my sincere gratitude for your presence at this solemn opening act of the new academic year. While these occasions are always a cause for joy and thanksgiving, since I am able to witness the

11. Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 129.

12. Second Vatican Council, Decree *Ad Gentes*, December 7, 1965, no. 10.

13. Cf. *Jn* 10:10.

growth of an undertaking that holds a special place in my heart, the present occasion is so in a particular way. God's providence has seen to it that during the very days in which we are celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the foundation of Opus Dei (which took place by God's will on October 2, 1928), we can also celebrate the granting of the title of Pontifical University to our Atheneum.

I give thanks with all my heart to our Holy Father John Paul II, who has thus confirmed once more the hope and trust he has placed in this institution of higher learning. And since gratitude should be shown above all by deeds, I invite all of you to pray very much for the Roman Pontiff and his intentions. This loving duty of ours is made even more pleasant by the knowledge that in a few days, on October 16, we will be celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the election of John Paul II to the See of Peter. Let us pray that God may sustain our beloved Pope through the power of the Holy Spirit, so that he can continue guiding the Church towards the Third Millennium for the good of all humanity.

1. With the elevation of our atheneum to the rank of university, we can cast our eyes back over the work carried out during these fifteen years, with God's help and the self-sacrificing effort of so many people. The list of those involved would be a long one, but I think everyone here would like me to mention particularly my predecessor, Bishop Álvaro del Portillo, the university's founder.

The importance of this event calls for my addressing some considerations to you that hopefully will spur us on in our work in this university. I have done so at other times, speaking to you, professors, students and non-teaching personnel, in gatherings that have always left me with very pleasant and warm memories. But today's gathering, for the reasons that I have mentioned, has a special importance.

My first hope is that the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross will fulfill the task entrusted to it by the Church and live up to its new responsibility. We have been presented with the opportunity to combine the Prelature of Opus Dei's specific ecclesial mission—fostering the spread of *the call to sanctity and apostolate*, through the sanctification of ordinary work—with the university vocation that Blessed Josemaría so liked to speak about. In the lives of those of us present here, "university vocation" and "ecclesial mission" are closely intertwined. For a university, if it truly wants to serve the Church and society, has to be, before anything else, a place in which the university spirit is lived in a real and profound way.

The founder of Opus Dei once summarized the university's role and mission in these terms: "The university does not live with its back turned to the doubts, anxieties and needs of mankind. It is true that its mission is not to offer immediate solutions. But in studying problems with scientific depth, it also moves hearts, spurs those who are passive, awakens dormant forces, and forms citizens pre-

pared to construct a more just society. Thus it contributes to eliminating barriers that make it difficult for men to understand one another.”<sup>1</sup>

Anyone who knew Blessed Josemaría saw that his love for the university was a manifestation of his apostolic zeal and his desire to place all the resources of the human intellect and heart at the service of souls. My beloved predecessor and first Grand Chancellor of this University, Bishop Álvaro del Portillo, testified to this: “When we speak of the founder of Opus Dei’s love for the university we are referring to a personal concern deeply rooted in the heart of Msgr. Escrivá; to the apostolic fruit produced by his efforts in the university milieu; and also to the future benefits that his spiritual message and outlook can bring to the institution of the university in general.”<sup>2</sup>

2. When he communicated to us the Holy Father’s decision to grant the title of Pontifical University to this atheneum, His Eminence Cardinal Pio Laghi added that our institution has carried out a notable ecclesial and academic service in the formation of students and that it has fully exhibited the necessary requisites for the concession of this title. This recognition reinforces and confirms the work begun fourteen years ago, which we have tried to carry out, from the start, with a university spirit.

The ecclesial path confirmed by the concession of the title of university, and which begins from this academic year on *in novitate sensus*, is not something new. As you all know, throughout the centuries the Church has dedicated great attention to academic communities and universities, which were born, so to speak, *from her heart*, surrounding them with special care. The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross has the honor of being inserted with full right in this most fruitful furrow, almost a thousand years old. John Paul II, in the constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, citing the words of Pope Alexander IV directed in 1255 to the University of Paris, says: “the *Universitas magistrorum et scholarium* is dedicated to research, to teaching and to the education of students who freely associate with their teachers in a common love of knowledge.”<sup>3</sup>

Referring to the universities born in the furrow of Christian tradition, the Holy Father adds: “With every other university it shares that *gaudium de veritate*, so precious to St. Augustine, which is the joy of searching for, discovering and communicating truth in every field of knowledge. A Catholic university’s privileged task is to unite by intellectual effort two orders of reality that so frequently tend to be treated as antithetical: the search for truth, and the certainty of already knowing the fount of truth.”<sup>4</sup>

1. Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, “La universidad ante cualquier necesidad de los hombres,” October 7, 1972, in *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y la Universidad*, EUNSA, Pamplona 1993, p. 98.

2. Bishop Álvaro del Portillo, “La Universidad en el pensamiento y la acción apostólica de Mons. Josemaría Escrivá,” in *ibid.*, p. 17.

3. John Paul II, Apostolic Const. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, August 15, 1990, no. 1.

4. *Ibid.*

In our endeavor to unite the university vocation to the ecclesial mission, the question immediately arises: Isn't the term "vocation" a bit of an exaggeration? Does the university work carried out by professors, students, and all of those involved in a university truly correspond to a vocation? And what is the role of this vocation within the Church's unique salvific mission? These are not questions to which we can give a detailed response here. Nevertheless they are worthy of much reflection. And from today on, we have an additional reason to do so.

On this occasion, we can at least begin this process of reflection. We know very well that a university vocation and spirit requires love and humility in the search for truth; the capacity to listen and to dialogue; adequate time and facilities for study and personal reflection; knowing how to situate one's own field of teaching, study or research within the larger picture; having a good interdisciplinary "eye," which views the one truth as the summit of a mountain that can be climbed by different paths, frequently quite fatiguing, but all animated by the same spirit and directed to the same goal.

But university vocation also means, I might even say above all, the awareness of forming an academic "community." For these paths, whether pleasant or tiring, are always attractive, as is everything that is true, good and beautiful; and they have to be traveled in the company of others. This community enjoys a legitimate autonomy and freedom,

while at the same time bearing an important responsibility: that of serving society and the Church by means of intellectual work. The autonomy and privileges granted to the academic community over the course of history can be understood only in virtue of its orientation to truth and service. Its nature as a community of professors and students requires that its teaching not be limited to abstractions. It also has to transmit, through the shared experience of life, a true interest for each person and a concern for fostering integral human relationships. These realities confirm the credibility of its didactic content and constitute as it were its soul.

Finally, a university spirit means possessing a universal outlook in seeking to understand and resolve problems, placing one's own intellectual resources at the service of a culture of solidarity, confronting the challenges of a history that is always moving forward through a "creative relationship with truth," as John Paul II has expressed it.

3. These features should also characterize the work and ecclesial mission of a university like ours. They do so in a special way, because the principal object of the search for and transmission of knowledge in an ecclesiastical university is the study of the mystery of God and the Church; the eternal questions about humanity and the world judged in the light of that mystery; as well as the study of other disciplines that further the understanding, spread and safeguarding of the salvific Word.

Love for the truth means, for us, love for Christ, who is the Truth.<sup>5</sup> This truth can only be understood when it is loved, accepting all of its consequences. We are unable to 'possess' this truth; rather it possesses us, spurring us to an ever more humble and sincere investigation. We find ourselves urged to listen to and learn from the multitude of voices that help us to capture the beauty of this symphony: the voices of our companions in our university adventure, whether within these walls, in the atheneae of Rome, or in the whole world.

An authentic university spirit leads us to listen to the truth, whatever its source. Therefore, the university is the privileged interdisciplinary milieu, encouraging professors to take an interest in the fields cultivated by their colleagues, to join them in common meetings, to share their studies and findings with sincere interest. An important part of this dialogue, in coordination with the work of the other ecclesiastical faculties, is the relationship of this university with the civil universities that work in the humanistic, scientific, economic and medical fields. I would like to recall, in connection with this, that His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, on the occasion of receiving an honorary doctorate from the University of Navarre last January, praised the interdisciplinary spirit that he found there, seeing the widespread and harmonious collaboration between the civil and ecclesiastical schools.

Within this interdisciplinary dialogue, the sacred sciences, theology in particular, should be presented in their full nature, conscious that they can offer, with the gift of divine revelation, answers capable of giving light to all sectors of human activity, orienting them toward the recapitulation of all things in Christ, from whom every search for truth obtains its ultimate meaning. Where this dialogue is lacking and theology abdicates its proper role, its place will not simply be ignored, as Cardinal Newman observed with such clarity in his work *The Idea of a University*; it will be usurped by other sciences, which will attempt to assume the task of providing the definitive answers that lie totally outside their grasp.<sup>6</sup> But theology has to move forward on its path with humility, without ignoring the true results attained by the other sciences, including the natural sciences, conscious that the final answers which theology alone is capable of providing are always a gift of God who reveals and is revealed.

In an ecclesiastical university the construction of a true university spirit cannot dispense with its cornerstone, Christ. Nor can it fail to open itself to his Spirit, which is the more intense the more his members sincerely cultivate the desire for sanctity in the perfection of charity. This is not merely a matter of a human spirit of collaboration or harmony. We are speaking of the Spirit, with a capital "S," who alone can make us a living part of the Church of Christ for the good of his whole Body, in accord with St. Paul's

5. Cf. *Jn* 14:6.

6. Cf. John Henry Newman, *Idea of a University*.

teaching: "And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."<sup>7</sup>

The personal witness that we are called to give by our teaching is not a mere human consistency, but an evangelical witness; and the new challenges that have to be confronted with responsibility and creativity are not only those bearing on the future of society or the new technologies, but especially the evangelization of all environments and cultures.

Let us never forget that the university *vocation* consists precisely in the holy and marvelous task St. Paul describes: to work "for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." Each one in accord with his or her role: that of being teachers and helping others to soon be such, that of forming shepherds, or the broader one of helping each person to live his future ecclesial ministry with a spirit of service. We must dedicate ourselves to this task with a renewed zeal and love, which will give us strength whenever trials or difficulties cloud the horizon of our university work.

4. Before finishing, I express my sincere hope that all of you, professors, students and non-teaching personnel, may never lack joy in your daily work. The *gaudium de veritate* of

which St. Augustine speaks, has to be for all of you also a *gaudium cum pace*. You are called to place all of your creativity and talents at the service of an ever deeper grasp of your discipline and its transmission to others; at the service of evangelization and of Christian culture; and at the service of your brothers, especially the ones most in need because they have come from Churches that have suffered more, or because they will be returning to territories presenting much greater challenges. Remember that, like every vocation and every mission, that of being a university in the Church and for the Church also enjoys a special grace which will help and comfort you on your path.

To you, professors, who devote yourselves to teaching tasks, and to you dear students, I wish with all my heart that you may see realized in your lives the words Blessed Josemaría wrote in the *Furrow*: "You have had the great good fortune to find real teachers, authentic friends, who have taught you everything you wanted to know without holding back. You have had no need to employ any tricks to 'steal' their knowledge, because they led you along the easiest path, even though it had cost them a lot of hard work and suffering to discover it. Now, it is your turn to do the same, with one person, and another—with everyone."<sup>8</sup>

To the Father in heaven, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,<sup>9</sup> and to whose divine

7. Eph 4:11-12.

8. Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, *Furrow*, no. 733.

9. Cf. Eph 3:15.

Person the third year of preparation for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 is dedicated, I entrust the hopes and desires expressed above. I commend you to Him through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, his specially beloved daughter,

whose maternal protection I invoke upon the work of the professors, students and non-teaching personnel of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in this academic year of 1998/99, which I declare to be officially inaugurated.

## Articles and Interviews

### Studi Cattolici, Milan October, 1998

*Complete text of the interview granted to the magazine "Studi Cattolici" of Milan, published under the title "Opus Dei: the First Seventy Years."*

*The interview was arranged for 5:15 p.m. on a Wednesday in September, at the central headquarters of Opus Dei on Bruno Buozzi street in Rome. It's a building that "seems to be built of stone, but is really built of love," as Blessed Josemaría Escrivá used to say, who urged forward its construction, day by day, over the course of many years. His presence in this house can still be sensed. The mortal remains of the Founder lie beneath the altar of the Prelatic Church of Our Lady of Peace. They are like the foundation, the main beam of the entire edifice.*

*The Prelate of Opus Dei receives me in the living room, where the get-together*

*after lunch and dinner is usually held. This is a typical family gathering, in which each one can express his opinions or recount the day's happenings.*

*It is easy to imagine Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, a quarter of a century ago, taking part in one of these family get-togethers. My interview with Bishop Javier Echevarría also takes on the atmosphere of a get-together:*

*The first thing I would like to ask you concerns the seventieth anniversary of the foundation of Opus Dei, which took place on October 2, 1928. Fourteen years later Blessed Josemaría asked Álvaro del Portillo, then a 28-year-old engineer, to go to Rome to seek juridical recognition for Opus Dei. When he returned he mentioned a remark he heard in one of the Curia offices: "Opus Dei has arrived a century too soon."*

*Don Álvaro was later ordained a priest and was, from 1975 to 1994, Blessed Josemaría Escrivá's first successor and the first bishop-prelate of Opus Dei. And now when Opus Dei is celebrating its seventieth anniversary, when it is established as a personal prelate, can one*