

Addresses

Santiago de Chile (September 1, 1997)

Bishop Echevarría undertook a pastoral trip to Chile from August 22 to September 2. On September 1, the Prelate celebrated Mass for the professors, students and administrative personnel of the University of the Andes; afterward he presided at a meeting with the academic community. As honorary Rector of the university, he gave the following address to the assembly.

1. I thank all of you for the honor you have bestowed on me. I am aware that others would have been much worthier recipients of this kind gesture, specifically our Father and his beloved successor Don Álvaro.

I would like this memory to remind us of the need to faithfully follow in their footsteps. I am also very happy that this chain has been placed above the Cross, since the Cross has to be the foundation of all our activities.

Some words come to mind that our Father spoke to me many years ago. When some were trying to malign Opus Dei and misunderstandings were springing up on all sides, our Lord decided to put the seal of the Holy Cross on the Work. So if we want to be effective here in Chile, in this university, and all over the world, we must make sure that the Cross is the foundation of all our actions.

But now, so as not to become overly sentimental, let me read the words that I have prepared:

2. Esteemed Rector, faculty and students, ladies and gentlemen, and all of you who are here as my brothers and sisters, and professors to teach me.

I am sure that my own joy at being able to be with you here at the University of the Andes echoes the joy of Blessed Josemaría and also that of his first successor, Bishop Álvaro del Portillo. I can tell you in all truth that this university was already present in our founder's dreams, when he encouraged us to dream with our sights set high. As he used to say: *dream and your dreams will fall short*. I'm certain those dreams, enkindled with Christ's love, burned in his heart when he gazed for the first time in 1974 at the towering snow-capped peaks that surround us, seeing in them a clear sign of God's handiwork and our own supernatural life.

It is not accidental that your coat of arms—*our* coat of arms, for I feel myself an integral part of this university—has depicted on it those nearby peaks, which evoke images of enterprise, high goals, magnanimity, purity and solidity. I also recall how Bishop Álvaro del Portillo, a great promoter of learning, when he took over the helm of Opus Dei, followed this university's history from its very beginnings. He frequently praised its rapid growth and your determination to overcome the difficulties that your

Rector has just recalled, which at the beginning were quite substantial. I can personally attest to the great affection with which this pastor of the Church followed your efforts and the intensity of his prayers for you. I have tried to imitate him in this, and now more so than ever, because on succeeding him as Prelate I also inherited his title as honorary Rector of the University.

Therefore it is a great joy for me to see all that you have accomplished in just a few years. I impart on your efforts my most fervent blessing, while I also learn many things from you. To help you advance ever further, I want to recall to you a triple responsibility that you know very well and that will be a sure guide for this center of learning. I would like to remind you that you have to be passionate *seekers of the truth*, passionate *doers of the truth*, and passionate *spreaders of the truth*.

3. When I speak of truth in this academic setting, I am referring in an analogical way to the whole hierarchy of truths of various types which, in the words of Pope John Paul II, respond to man's "yearning for absolute truth" and his "tireless search for knowledge in all fields."¹ It is particularly the university's task to harmoniously develop theological knowledge, philosophy and the various sciences and humanistic studies.

Blessed Josemaría used to say "how marvelous it was to see how God assists human intelligence in these investigations, which should necessarily lead one to God, because they contribute, if they are truly scientific, to bringing us closer to the Creator."² For a child of God all truths betray a marvelous unity. The serious investigation of the intelligibility and laws of all created realities leads one to glimpse that mysterious truth, that first truth in which all other truths and love are grounded; and this Jesus of ours could say so forcefully: "I am the truth."³

Msgr. Escrivá used to challenge academics to be "lovers of the truth," men and women who seek the truth eagerly, and "who are able to contemplate it objectively."⁴ *Love for the truth!* Doesn't this phrase suggest to us a dominant passion, a burning vocation that calls for complete fidelity, an indescribable wonder at being? It means to love God in himself, and to love Him in the humblest realities of nature and human history.

However, as we well know, the search for truth is arduous. Our intellect, which is intrinsically limited and also darkened by sin, finds the task complex and exhausting. It is hard to disengage the intelligible structures hidden in the information our senses present to us. Therefore this is a good moment to remind ourselves of the moral need for a

1. JOHN PAUL II. Litt. enc. *Veritatis Splendor*, Aug. 6, 1993, no. 1.

2. BLESSED JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ. "La universidad ante cualquier necesidad de los hombres," Oct. 7, 1972, in *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y la Universidad*, Pamplona 1993, p. 98.

3. *Jn* 14, 6.

4. BLESSED JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ. "Servidores nobilísimos de la Ciencia," Oct. 7, 1967, in *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y la Universidad*, Pamplona 1993, p. 87.

holy tenacity, for methodical and patient research and intellectual diligence.

The search for the truth demands from the whole university and from each of you, a constant effort of research. The real difficulties of this task are obvious, especially the lack of material means and time. But given the determination, ingenuity, creativity and initiative found among those here present, I am certain that your research and investigation will help to further human knowledge, and that thus you will be children of God who honor their Creator and serve the common good.

Let us continue with the sequence mentioned above: besides being *seekers of the truth*, we also must be *doers of the truth*. I think it is clear to all of us that someone who loves the truth should strive to make it part of his life. A true teacher has a personal commitment to the truth, and therefore is always strongly opposed to intellectual incoherence, ethical compromises, succumbing to ideologies. I recall in this regard the clear words of Msgr. Escrivá, who was a passionate defender of true human values: "Love for the truth shapes a scientist's entire life and work, and it sustains his integrity in the face of possible negative reactions of public opinion."⁵ Let us be committed to the truth.

You are all very aware of the moral questions now under debate in

many countries, a debate that should draw its light from Christ's teachings, the natural law, and the essential contribution made by the human sciences when they are rigorously pursued. Thus these vital questions will be resolved in favor of human dignity, especially the indissoluble character of marriage and the central role of the family. I have followed with joy your efforts in this regard, and I encourage you to persevere in such an important task.

There are also matters of great doctrinal importance connected with history, demography, psychology, psychiatry, the so called social sciences, and all branches of human knowledge, where important contributions can be made as the university develops and expands. You should have it very clear that a "doctrinal neutrality" is impossible when it comes to applying Christian wisdom to the decisive moral questions affecting man's life.

To be committed to the truth, to be a doer of the truth, implies a whole spiritual dimension. It means dealing lovingly with the truth that is God himself, with the truth that is Jesus Christ in person and that frees you from the possible vanities of intellectual work, from the pretense of human erudition and vain-glory. We read in *The Way*, written by a person with a passionate love for knowledge: "You worry only about building up your culture. But what you really need to build up is your soul."⁶ Within the climate of

5. BLESSED JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ, "El compromiso de la verdad," May 9, 1974, in *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y la Universidad*, Pamplona 1993, pp. 106-107.

6. BLESSED JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ, *The Way*, no. 347.

full freedom of consciences that marks this center of learning, all of you are aware of the great effort that has been made to make available to everyone, including the professors of course, free access to the means of spiritual formation so necessary for one's soul.

The commitment to truth that Christian prayer strengthens is intimately tied to moral rectitude, with behaving both within and outside of the university in accord with the truth about the world, about man, and about God. You are being watched by so many young people, who are especially sensitive to the consistency of your life, to its unity, to the correspondence between your conduct and your principles. May they see you acting with integrity, with consistency and justice. This will be shown by the professional ethics you observe in your research and teaching; by your intellectual seriousness and rigor, diligence in work, incorruptible honesty, rigorous compliance with the laws intrinsic to the humanities and the sciences. A professor who acts in this way is necessarily a good example to his students, because he not only teaches a discipline, a subject matter, techniques, data, but also how to be a person, how to encounter Christ. By this moral and spiritual route, we come to the third aspect that I would like to consider briefly.

5. You also have to be passionate spreaders of the truth. Truth is diffusive of itself, the philosophers tell us *bonum sui diffusivum* a principle which they invoke for showing the fittingness of the creation of the world by God. This dynamism of truth is the soul of your professional vocation, and the university is its privileged place.

"The joy that comes from contemplating the truth," which I described earlier with words of Blessed Josemaría, "leads you in a natural way to want to communicate these riches to your students and help them raise their sights to spiritual goals."⁷ I would also like to mention here Bishop del Portillo, who used to urge university teachers "never to keep for themselves the fruits of their research, but rather to generously communicate to their students the riches attained by their efforts."⁸

These considerations also recall Blessed Josemaría's recommendation in *Furrow*: "Teacher: may you be eager to make your pupils understand quickly what has cost you hours of study to see clearly."⁹ This eagerness will be shown especially in your generous effort to form assistants, who later will become instructors and researchers; in your eagerness to train, if possible, professors who will be even more competent than yourselves.

7. BLESSED JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ. "Servidores nobilísimos de la Ciencia," Oct. 7, 1967, in *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y la Universidad*, Pamplona 1993, p. 88.

8. MONS. ÁLVARO DEL PORTILLO. "La universidad en el pensamiento y acción apostólica de Mons. Josemaría Escrivá," Apr. 13, 1992, in *El mundo que viviremos. 25 años de los congresos UNIV*, Madrid 1993.

9. BLESSED JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ, *Furrow*, no. 229.

A true spreader of truth will always want to improve his teaching methods, to make them more effective and attractive. Your formation as university teachers should never come to an end. This is also a necessary human basis for the sanctification of your work in God's presence.

Your task is aimed, beyond mere instruction, at the whole person of each student, at their head, heart and conscience. As Blessed Josemaría said "a university is not a true one if the transmission of knowledge that takes place there is not linked to the integral formation of the young men and women."¹⁰

What a beautiful panorama you have before you! I join myself to your efforts. How much you can do for Chile and from Chile! I have prayed for you in holy Mass, and do so again now. I entrust your work to Mary, the Throne of Wisdom, the Immaculate Virgin, our Hope. May she pray for us.

Thank you for your patience.

Rome (October 6, 1997)

The Prelate of Opus Dei presided at the inauguration of the 1997-98 academic year of the Pontifical Atheneum of the Holy Cross. During the convocation he delivered the following address.

1. As I thought about this event over the past few days, it occurred to me that when Blessed Josemaría met with people, whether in small or large groups, he would sometimes begin by citing this phrase from Sacred Scripture: *Dicite justo quoniam bene.*¹ He would translate this phrase as: "Good! You are doing things very well!" It was a phrase of encouragement and of sincere thanks for the apostolic work being accomplished and for the fruit that those people, who were immersed in the problems and preoccupations of daily life, perhaps had not perceived in all its fullness.

I now direct myself to all of you—professors, students, and non-teaching personnel of the Pontifical Atheneum of the Holy Cross—in the same way that Blessed Josemaría used to do: "Good! You are doing things very well!" And I am not just thinking of the official report of the past academic year. I refer instead and above all to the hours of study, teaching and research, to the hours of silent and constant work in your offices, to all your activities that, often

10. BLESSED JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ. "Formación enteriza de las personalidades jóvenes," Sept. 28, 1964, in *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y la Universidad*, Pamplona 1993, p. 77.

1. Is 3:10 (Vulg.)