

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.)

hidden, nevertheless produce much fruit, although, in many cases this fruit matures slowly and it is not always immediately visible from the outside.

2. One of you told me some time ago that when speaking about his teaching and research with an old friend whom he had not seen for years, his friend replied, "What luck you have! I would like to be able to dedicate myself to a work of that sort." Then he added the reason why he said this. He believed that it was an exciting work, in appearance not very productive, but in fact of great efficacy because of its profound influence on the development of Christian thought about the person and society.

What can truly transform our age into a "Springtime of Christianity"² are the values and ideals that you are trying to learn, teach and live, in a word, the truth and love of Christ. Therefore, I also say to you, professors, students and everyone who works in these buildings: know how to be grateful to God for the splendid opportunity that he has granted you, calling you to be salt and light. Try to correspond generously, as Blessed Josemaría said, with holiness, good humor and effort, because we have to give our life.³ My beloved predecessor, Bishop Álvaro del Portillo, used to say that the ecclesiastical schools merit a generous sacrifice on the part of everyone.

This was precisely the desire that the Holy Father expressed during the recent National Eucharistic Congress in Bologna. He said we should give thanks to God, especially at Mass, for the goods that he has granted us, even the natural ones, so that our gratitude, united to the infinite value of the Sacrifice of Christ, will become a *Eucharist*, an act of thanksgiving truly pleasing to God.

3. In *Gift and Mystery*, written by John Paul II on the occasion of his priestly jubilee, many of you, due to the circumstances in which you live, found especially moving those pages where the Holy Father recalls his years in Rome as a student. He writes about his arrival to the Eternal City wanting to follow the advice he received from the rector of the seminary of Krakow: "learn Rome itself." He tells us of his experiences in the university halls, his friendship with his college classmates, his gratitude to his professors. "I often think back on those years with great emotion," he wrote. "As I left [Rome], I took with me not only a *much broader theological education but also a strengthened priesthood and a more profound vision of the Church*. That period of intense study close to the tombs of the Apostles had given me much, from every point of view."⁴

I would like all the students, at the beginning of this new academic year, to have a similar experience. May this Roman period leave a deep furrow in your life. May you also *learn*

2. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, November 10, 1994; Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, Dec. 7, 1990, no. 86.

3. Cf. BLESSED JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ, *A solas con Dios*, no. 228 (AGP, P10 1996, p. 93).

4. JOHN PAUL II, *Gift and Mystery*, New York, 1996, pgs. 59-60. Emphasis in original.

Rome itself! Through your study, the growth in your spiritual life, your conversations with your professors and your fellow students, may you arrive at a knowledge and a profound love of Christ and his Church. During these years I would like to see your heart become more and more Roman, that is, catholic, universal, that it might beat in unison with the heart of Christ and with that of his Vicar on earth.

4. *Dicite iusto quoniam bene!* The good! of which I speak to all of you is not just a recognition of what you have done up to now. I hope that it will also be a stimulus, so that you continue to make a greater effort every day, conscious of the important apostolic dimension of your work, which is at the service of the Church and all souls. To those of you who are beginning your studies or your work this year, I hope that you will go far on the path begun, improving more and more the tradition and spirit of this Pontifical Atheneum.

I am thinking in a special way of the students and professors of the School of Social and Institutional Communications, which is now beginning its cycle of the licentiate, and of those professors and students who this year will give life to the new specialization in the history of the Church, within the School of Theol-

ogy. To you who undoubtedly feel the responsibility of opening up these new fields within the Atheneum, I would like to assure you in an even more explicit way of the help of my prayers and the efforts of all the academic authorities and the active collaboration of the entire faculty.

I invite each one of you, as I have already said in the homily of the Mass, to let yourselves be guided by the divine Paraclete. In announcing that this second year of preparation for the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 will be dedicated to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Father wrote, "The Spirit, in fact, makes present in the church of every time and place the unique revelation brought by Christ to humanity, making it alive and active in the soul of each individual: 'The counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.'" (Jn. 14:26).⁵ Under his guidance and protection, and through the intercession of Holy Mary, "the woman who was docile to the voice of the Spirit, a woman of silence and attentiveness, a woman of hope,"⁶ I confide the work of the professors, students and administrative staff of the Pontifical Atheneum of the Holy Cross for the academic year 1997-1998, which I now declare inaugurated.

5. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, no. 44.

6. *Ibid.*, no. 48.