

the consumer and entertainment industry. Faced with such grave and persistent phenomena the Christian commitment appears all the more urgent so that everywhere it may promote a culture that recognizes the dignity that belongs to women, in law and in concrete reality.

God entrusts to women and men, according to their respective capacities, a specific vocation and mission in the Church and in the world. Here I am thinking of the family, a community of love open to life, the fundamental cell of society. In it the woman and the man, thanks to the gift of maternity and paternity, together carry out an irreplaceable role in regard to life. Children from their conception have the right to be able to count on their father and mother to take care of them and to accompany their growth. The State, for its part, must uphold with appropriate social policies everything that promotes the stability and unity of matrimony, the dignity and responsibility of couples, their rights and irreplaceable duty as educators of their children. Besides, it is necessary to enable the woman to collaborate in the building of society, appreciating her typical “feminine genius.”

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you once again for coming and, while I wish the Convention’s work may be successful, I assure you of a remembrance in prayer, invoking the maternal intercession of Mary, that she may help the women of our time to carry out their vocation and their mission in the ecclesial and civil

community. With these wishes, I impart to you present here and to those dear to you, a special Apostolic Blessing.

## Greetings to the students taking part in the UNIV 2008 Congress (March 19, 2008)

Dear Friends,

I offer a cordial welcome to all of you who have come to Rome from various countries and universities to celebrate Holy Week together, and to take part in the International UNIV Congress. In this way, you will be able to benefit from moments of common prayer, cultural enrichment and a helpful exchange of the experiences gained from your association with the centers and activities of Christian formation sponsored by the Prelature of Opus Dei in your respective cities and nations.

*(Greeting in Spanish)*

Vosotros sabéis que con un serio compromiso personal, inspirado en los valores evangélicos, es posible responder adecuadamente a los grandes interrogantes del tiempo presente. El cristiano sabe que hay un nexo inseparable entre verdad, ética y responsabilidad. Toda expresión cultural auténtica contribuye a formar la conciencia y estimula a la

persona a superarse a si misma a fin de que pueda mejorar la sociedad. Uno se siente así responsable ante la verdad, al servicio de la cual ha de ponerse la propia libertad personal. Se trata ciertamente de una misión comprometida y para realizarla el cristiano está llamado a seguir a Jesús, cultivando una intensa amistad con Él a través de la oración y de la contemplación. Ser amigos de Cristo y dar testimonio de Él allí donde nos encontremos exige, además, el esfuerzo de ir contracorriente, recordando las palabras del Señor: estáis en el mundo pero no sois del mundo (cf. Jn 15,19). No tengáis, por tanto, miedo, cuando sea necesario, de ser inconformistas en la universidad, en el colegio y en todas partes.

*(Greeting in Italian)*

Cari giovani dell'UNIV, siate lievito di speranza in questo mondo che anela di incontrare Gesù, talora senza neppure rendersene conto. Per migliorarlo, sforzatevi anzitutto di cambiare voi stessi mediante una vita sacramentale intensa, specialmente accostandovi al sacramento della Penitenza e prendendo parte assiduamente alla celebrazione dell'Eucaristia. Affido ciascuno di voi e le vostre famiglie a Maria, che non smise mai di contemplare il Volto del suo Figlio Gesù. Su ciascuno di voi invoco la protezione di San Josemaría e di tutti i Santi delle vostre terre, mentre di cuore vi auguro Buona Pasqua!

## Homily at the Easter Vigil (March 22, 2008)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In his farewell discourse, Jesus announced his imminent death and resurrection to his disciples with these mysterious words: "I go away, and I will come to you," he said (*Jn* 14:28). Dying is a "going away." Even if the body of the deceased remains behind, he himself has gone away into the unknown, and we cannot follow him (cf. *Jn* 13:36). Yet in Jesus' case, there is something utterly new, which changes the world. In the case of our own death, the "going away" is definitive, there is no return. Jesus, on the other hand, says of his death: "I go away, and I will come to you." It is by going away that he comes. His going ushers in a completely new and greater way of being present. By dying he enters into the love of the Father. His dying is an act of love. Love, however, is immortal. Therefore, his going away is transformed into a new coming, into a form of presence which reaches deeper and does not come to an end. During his earthly life, Jesus, like all of us, was tied to the external conditions of bodily existence: to a determined place and a determined time. Bodilyness places limits on our existence. We cannot be simultaneously in two different places. Our time is destined to come to an end. And between the "I" and the "you" there is a wall of otherness. To be sure, through love we can somehow enter