

# Addresses

## Buenos Aires September 29, 2003

*On the occasion of the awarding of honorary doctorates at Austral University.*

### *1. Opening of the session*

It is a motive of great joy for me and of profound gratitude to God to be present with you at this solemn ceremony in which three prestigious professors will join the family of Austral University as recipients of honorary doctorates.

The university is a place of intense work, where scientific developments, technical advances, and new ideas decisively influence the configuration of human society. This effort results in true progress when it respects and loves the nature and dignity of the human person, called to live in unity with all men and women and to journey toward God, our Creator and Father, and to enjoy him for all eternity.

The responsibility of offering this service to society, while eschewing explanations that diminish the human and supernatural dignity of each person, is the challenge that all university communities face. Aus-

tral University has accepted this great challenge, and under the inspiration of the teachings of St. Josemaría Escrivá, it has been working to meet it from its very beginning.

St. Josemaría, because of his great human sensitivity, was always very aware of the challenge of university life. With supernatural enthusiasm he encouraged thousands of Christians of all races and social conditions to take part in this work of service to humanity and of spreading the light of divine revelation in all fields of university study. Given the great importance of intellectual work for the proper ordering of society, he took special interest in the university tasks in the classroom and the laboratory (cf. *The Way*, no. 338), carried out with rigorous and constant effort, and always with a very refined respect for freedom of consciences.

Those here present share this appreciation (with its deep Christian roots) for university work. Precisely because I know your enthusiasm for your work, let me urge you to foster an even greater sense of responsibility in your tasks. Your country and the whole world are in need of the example of your research and teaching, which will encourage many others to undertake the effort to bring the truth to light, contributing to resolving the

great problems of our time—the advancement of society, assistance to those most in need, and above all redirecting all human realities to God.

The ideals and responsibilities that I have just outlined have led the governing council of Austral University to recognize the academic work of three great university people, whom today we are honoring with a doctorate *honoris causa*. Their accomplishments draw the attention and appreciation of those who value work that is well done, and awaken in the university community the responsibility of following their excellent example, which is now receiving public recognition.

*2. Address at the closing of the session*

The human person, created in the image and likeness of God, encompasses unfathomable riches and unity. This profound truth, which we will never fully comprehend, awakens our zeal to penetrate ever more deeply into the truth of man's being.

This zeal beats in the heart of every true university professor, manifested in the eagerness to enrich our understanding of the human person. In the most varied disciplines of university life, the multiple dimensions of the human being are investigated and arguments are tested that provide a reasoned explanation for the sen-

sible, psychic and spiritual facets of each person.

The sciences to which the three new doctors have devoted their lives share, with different methods, in this effort to deepen our knowledge of the human person and to foster each person's dignity.

The neurosciences seek to comprehend the highly complex reality of the human mind. Professor Tomas Hökfelt has achieved notable results in this field. Besides the international recognition won by his valuable research at the Karolinska Institute, we want to emphasize his concern to form students coming from all over the world. This generous dedication reveals the human and Christian depth of Dr. Hökfelt, and is an eloquent example of how to make work of the highest demand compatible with a real appreciation for one's collaborators, to whom he has offered his guidance and help with attentive solicitude.

In investigating the physical and chemical mechanisms that regulate the activity of the human body, the scientist discovers that the experimental method does not exhaust reality. Rather, he needs to be open to the other sciences and seek as an ultimate guide the knowledge provided by theology and philosophy.<sup>1</sup> In the words of Pope John Paul II, philosophy plays an important role in formulating the question of the meaning of man's life, and in providing the answer.<sup>2</sup>

1. Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, September 14, 1998, no. 81.

2. *Ibid.*, no. 3.

Therefore it is a path towards discovering fundamental truths about the life of man.<sup>3</sup> Specifically in the field of logic, Dr. Ignacio Angelelli, professor at the University of Texas-Austin, has carried out internationally recognized research, and has proven himself to be a true teacher. His academic achievements and writings have manifested an attitude of service to all men and women through his philosophical work.

Among the most important advances of the twentieth century in regard to a deeper understanding of the human person is a greater awareness of the human person's relational character and communicative nature. The person is essentially open to God, to other persons, and to the physical universe. Each person attains human fullness through interpersonal communication. To be able to transmit ideas or sentiments, to open up one's intimacy and share it with a beloved person, to express aesthetic reactions, are possibilities that enrich the human person in his relational nature. Professor Alfonso Nieto, who was Rector of the University of Navarre for more than a decade, has explored the field of communications in many of its contemporary forms. His efforts to defend the human person have been directed towards understanding with greater depth the humanizing function of the means of communication. This effort demands responsibility and a vocation of service, for

which Dr. Nieto has made himself a spokesman.

These three professors from distinct academic areas, whose work is harmoniously united by disinterested service to the human person, share the conviction that there is an intimate relationship between the university and the person. The defense of the person also constitutes an essential feature of the message of the Church, as His Holiness John Paul II pointed out at the beginning of his pontificate. The Church wants to help every man and woman to find Christ, so that Christ can accompany each person along life's path, illuminating it with the truth about man and the world.<sup>4</sup> The Prelature of Opus Dei, born in the Church and as an intrinsic part of the Church in order to serve it, has the special mission of opening up divine paths for those who wish to sanctify themselves through their professional work in the midst of secular realities. At a time when certain cultural, social, and political trends offer reductive conceptions of the person (or are even directly opposed to man's dignity and destiny), we need to boldly repeat other words of the Holy Father affirming that the meaning of culture must be measured by the human person.<sup>5</sup>

Inspired by St. Josemaría Escrivá's message, Austral University puts service to the human person at the center of its efforts. In its research and teaching, it strives to give

3. Ibid., no. 5.

4. John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptor hominis*, March 4, 1979, no. 13.

5. Cf. John Paul II, Address to the participants of the World Congress of University Professors, September 9, 2000.

light and to be a guide for constructing a new culture in which every man and woman is respected in their most intimate identity, discovering in their hearts the image of the Triune God, whose Life we are called to share in.

This is not a utopian goal nor a mere expression of good intentions. We are convinced that, as the founder of Opus Dei expressed it on an occasion similar to this one, “the university ... in studying problems with scientific depth, also moves hearts, spurs on the passive, awakens dormant forces, forming citizens ready to construct a more just society.”<sup>6</sup> Awakening dormant forces: here is something that we should keep very much in mind. This should be the dream that every researcher and teacher nourishes in all his daily efforts—the noble desire to acquire a serious and solid professional prestige that is seen as a service, one whose purpose is to transform our world into one of harmony and of loyal and consistent adhesion to the purposes of the Creator.

There are many urgent tasks confronting Christians,<sup>7</sup> the Holy Father has reminded us, as we begin the new millennium. We are grateful for the courageous work of the three new doctors, who have responded to these challenges with their dedicated effort. With God’s help and the maternal intercession of our Lady of Lujan, may

all of us unite ourselves to their endeavor, confronting the great challenges presented by our time.

## Rome October 14, 2003

*At the opening of the academic year at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross.*

Each new academic year is an occasion to examine the path we have followed in the preceding months, giving thanks to God for his gifts, and setting out again on the right path, with renewed determination in our search for the truth. The university, indeed, is marked by an intrinsic vocation to renewal, to originality, but it does not reject the course mapped out by tradition.

Looking at the year that has just gone by, we discover so many reasons to give thanks to God, as grateful children of his. The twenty-fifth anniversary of John Paul II’s pontificate, which is being celebrated during these days with events all over the world, has been a testimony to the responsibility and personal dedication with which the Holy Father has responded to God’s call, even in moments of obvious and serious physical disability. This year has also seen a renewed call to unity through prayers

6. St. Josemaría Escrivá, Address at the investiture of honorary doctors at the University of Navarre, October 7, 1972; in *Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer y la Universidad*, EUNSA, Pamplona 1993, p. 98.

7. John Paul II, Apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, January 6, 2001, no. 51.