and moving announcement by Benedict XVI renouncing his Pontificate. After a first moment of amazement and—why not?—shock, with the help of faith we understood the great courage and generosity this gesture required. I think I am expressing the desire of all of us if I take advantage of this occasion to once again state our gratitude to the Pope Emeritus for his pontificate and, in a special way, for his rich magisterium. Among his teachings he reminded us that the Church is truly "a living body, enlivened by the Holy Spirit, truly living by God's power. She is in the world but not of the world: she is of God, of Christ, of the Spirit." [8]

Another proof of the Church's supernatural life and nature was the subsequent election of Pope Francis, on March 13. The Church is truly a living body animated by the Holy Spirit; he knows and sees what we men do not see, and suggests at every moment what is most suitable for the Church. Although I have already had the opportunity to express to our Holy Father Francis my personal affection and to assure him of my prayers as well as yours (since I represent in some way the students, professors and employees of this University), I would like to ask you to be even more generous in your prayer and your affection for him. Let us pray that the Holy Father, docile to the motions of the Holy Spirit, may continue guarding and guiding the Church entrusted to him as supreme pastor, with the daring, generosity and strength that, in these first months of his pontificate, have won over the hearts of all the faithful.

Finally, I would like to mention another event that, for me and for this University, holds great significance: the approval on the part of His Holiness Pope Francis of the decrees opening the path for the canonization of John XXIII and John Paul II, and for the beatification of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo.

The birth of this university is closely linked both to John Paul II and to Alvaro del Portillo, my predecessor as Prelate of Opus Dei and as first Chancellor of this University so desired by St. Josemaría. In the documents recounting the history of the University of the Holy Cross, from its birth as the Roman Academic Center to its constitution as a Pontifical University, the signature of His Holiness John Paul II is always present. The Pope not only welcomed the request of Venerable Alvaro del Portillo; he promoted and closely followed the birth of this institution. In God's Providence, the Holy Father's decision to canonize and beatify these two faithful servants of God and the Church, united in life by a deep spiritual affinity, came on the same date. Nor is it by chance that this ceremony is being held in an auditorium dedicated to John Paul II and, for those who didn't find room here and are following the ceremony by internal television, in the

8. Benedict XVI, Address in the Clementine Hall, February 28, 2013.

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smaller auditorium dedicated to Alvaro del Portillo. Besides our joy on looking forward to attending, with God's grace, the two ceremonies of canonization and beatification next year, the certainty of having these two sure intercessors in heaven fills us with great peace and serenity.

To their intercession and to the intercession of St. Josemaría Escrivá and our Blessed Mother Mary, I entrust this new academic year, which I now declare opened.

Interview granted to *Desde la Austral*, Argentina (Spring–Summer 2013)

In our interview last year, we asked you to come before the Year of the Faith ended, to confirm us in the faith. You said that you would be "very happy to" but that you left this desire "in God's hands." And now we have you with us, for which we give thanks to God for making this mutual desire a reality. What advice do you have for us to take advantage of these last days of grace in the Year of Faith? And afterwards, how can we transform all the years of our life into years of faith?

I too am very thankful to God for the possibility of being in this dearly beloved country. You can't imagine how much I wanted to come to Argentina to be with you. The authentic Christian life is a life of faith, of believing in God and in his Son Jesus Christ, who gave himself up for us: believing in his love and responding with our own love. Therefore the Year of Faith is an opportunity for us to refocus on how we share our life with Jesus, day by day, in a new and closer way, in all our daily tasks. I can sum it up with words from St. Josemaría: "May you seek Christ, may you find Christ, may you love Christ," eager to bring to others the experience of meeting him, to create a "culture of encounter," as the Pope says.

As you can well understand, we Argentineans now have an additional reason to love Pope Francis even more. What can we do, from this "distant corner" of the world, to accompany him in the difficult task that he bears on his shoulders?

As soon as he was elected Pope, Francis became the Pastor of the whole Church. He is now the visible source of unity. Of course, the Pope—as one sees so clearly—has great affection for his country, and I think that he expects a lot from the Argentineans. In order to accompany him in this ministry, three words come to mind: pray, listen, communicate. Praying for him, offering our work, our tiredness, and also our joys. Prayer is always the first work of charity. Then, listening: meditating on what he says, in his encyclical *Lumen Fidei*, in his homilies, in his speeches and statements. Making his words our own,

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part of our life. And finally, communicating them: repeating them to others, in a positive and enthusiastic way. It is a great opportunity for Argentina to renew its commitment to all the virtues and fundamental values: faith, hope and charity, and, as a consequence, service, love, solidarity, well finished work, honesty. We can't be, as people say here, chantas, frauds. God expects us to work very well, in the service of society and all mankind.

At World Youth Day held in Rio de Janeiro, Pope Francis told the young people, and by implication all Christians, not to be spectators in life, not to "remain on the balcony," but to get involved in people's lives, just as Jesus did. What can we do to fulfill this request of the Pope?

"Remaining on the balcony" means not making a decision to serve, not giving one's life to God and others, burying our talents. And Jesus invites all of us, all women and men, to be magnanimous, to dream of great projects of love for God, of service, of fraternity, of education. We can't be satisfied with a comfortable life, without great ideals. The life of a Christian is a wonderful adventure; that's the spirit we always see in the Church's saints, and we are all called to be saints.

We were happy to hear about the upcoming beatification of Don Alvaro, our first Honorary Rector, and we are certain that many of the graces poured out through his intercession will fall upon this University that he inspired. Since you were so close to him, please tell us something about his efforts to begin Austral University.

Don Alvaro encouraged the start of educational and social projects in many countries, in accord with St. Josemaría's spirit. He followed with great interest these projects promoted by people of the Work, Cooperators and friends, which would be able to do, and are doing, so much good for the places where they are found.

He kept them very present in his prayer, and always encouraged people to "think big," to dream about these endeavors that, besides providing a solid professional and human formation, would also communicate a Christian spirit of charity and respect, of honesty, friendship, promotion of the family, and pluralism.

I know that, among many other things, Don Alvaro prayed a lot for this University, and that all the good it is doing gave him great joy.

What does our current Honorary Rector expect of us who are now working and studying at the Austral University?

That the educational work and human assistance you provide be based on personal contact with God. That is the best way to ensure that you transmit the friendly, smiling, positive tone of service that characterizes Austral University. I would like to see you closely united, overcoming the natural personal

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differences that may arises, in order to continue contributing to Argentina being a country with great horizons, investing in its people, in their education (which includes everyone, from all walks of life), and in their continuous development.

Address at the International Congress on "St. Josemaría and Theological Thought" (November 14, 2013)

Fifty Years After Vatican II: the Contribution of St. Josemaría

In the twentieth century as well, the Holy Spirit inspired one of the great renewals that shine forth like stars in the Church's two thousand year history—a deep spiritual, intellectual and theological growth. This renewal stemmed from the intertwining of various charisms and currents of thought, and the response by Christians to the pastoral challenges presented by the modern world. It is sufficient to recall figures such as, for example, Cardinal Joseph Cardjin, Blessed Columba Marmion, and Fr. Paul Couturier, or the ecumenical and liturgical movements.

Looking back on these decades we find many saints, both women and men, who by their message and pastoral activity can be seen as gifts from God to shed light on the Church's path and life. St. Josemaría Escrivá is one of these saints. The light that he received from God in Madrid, on October 2, 1928, was a divine intervention to help build up of the Body of Christ, which St. Paul spoke of in his Letter to the Ephesians (see *Eph* 4:13 and 15f). The seeds of spiritual and theological renweal that had arisen and taken root in the previous years were the foundation that inspired, under the action of the Holy Spirit, the writing of the magisterial documents at Vatican II and the guidelines given for spreading the faith in today's world. The Council was, undoubtedly, a great gift from God to his Church at the end of the second millennium.

As we know, from 1928 on St. Josemaría dedicated himself generously to spreading the divine message that the Holy Spirit had entrusted to him, and that influenced the Second Vatican Council. Today, now that fifty years have gone by since the Council, that message continues to offer light to the Church, together with the light of so many other ancient and modern saints, so that the People of God may fully carry out the mission Christ entrusted to it. This was emphasized by Blessed John Paul II in 1993, a year after the beatification of the founder of Opus Dei. Recalling what the Council had

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