

Addresses and Other Statements

On the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Campus Bio-Medico University, Rome (October 3, 2018)

Crossing the threshold of this university is very moving for me. My memories go back to the last days Bishop Javier Echevarría spent with us on earth, in the University Polyclinic here. Surrounded by the affection of all of you and the care of the medical and nursing staff, we accompanied him together on his way to his home in Heaven.

But it also gives me great joy to see made a reality in these buildings a project that, just a few decades ago, was only a dream. Those who work every day in such a large undertaking may sometimes fail to grasp, with just one look, the itinerary of these past 30 years. But those who, like myself, follow you daily with affection, even if we are not physically present, are surprised by the distance covered in such a short time, since Blessed Alvaro del Portillo in 1988 encouraged the beginning of this initiative, which we now see with

our own eyes. This endeavor, let us never forget it, is the result of the dedication, study, work—and also of the faith—of thousands of men and women who work in the University, the Polyclinic and other initiatives—cultural, educational and social—that have arisen around these buildings. The Campus Bio-Medico, although still quite young, today has its own internationally recognized personality, which fully integrates it into the great university tradition, a tradition that has its roots in history.

And in reference to history, it is worthwhile remembering that the university plays an important role in the future of society. Although its role has evolved from the Middle Ages to the present day, its mission is now more necessary than ever. We will always need a place where knowledge is deeply cultivated out of love for the truth, and transmitted in a disinterested way. We need a place where the study of problems and the search for solutions is carried out with competence and professionalism, not with a partisan mentality or in pursuit of personal interests and superficial fads. We are committed to the university as a place where culture becomes a service to mankind and not a pretext for self-affirmation or the exercise of power. A place, that is, where

words such as “truth” and the “common good” are joined together and continue to seriously challenge us, where scientific progress and human progress can grow without harmful missteps.

This mission is not out-of-date. We are encouraged to carry it out eagerly, above all, by the students we have met, whom you, professors, see in the classrooms and laboratories of the Bio-Med Campus. The students are seeking not only professional preparation and competence, but also the example of teachers whose virtues they can imitate and in whom they can truly trust. The mission of the university, right from its beginnings, has been sustained by the Christian inspiration that led to its birth and subsequent development in Western civilization. This inspiration, implicitly present in the foundations of every university, can and must come to light here too, because it is the lifeblood of the organism, both in its teaching and research dimensions and in the work of those who provide care and assistance in the health centers of the Campus.

Christian inspiration is not a formal or extrinsic quality of the work carried out here, but rather represents the beating heart that gives it life, day by day, in personal relationships and in the deepest reasons for one’s study and research. This inspiration does not endanger the pluralism of its teaching, the autonomy of the re-

search, or the professionalism of the practices required for the best medical care, because the “principle of the Incarnation,” which guides every true Christian endeavor, uniting the human with the divine, requires precisely these dynamics, in accord with the laws of each science. A university of Christian inspiration must, above all, be a good university, in order not to lose its credibility. The Christian inspiration of the Campus Bio-Medico is manifested through the spiritual assistance generously made available to everyone, professors and students, and especially to the patients in the health-care centers. But it must also be seen intellectually, by offering a mature synthesis between faith and reason, providing the light needed to illumine the ultimate meaning of the various disciplines studied here, and guiding the medical practice towards truth and goodness.

Ethics, anthropology, and even theology, can and should be present in the work of the university, supporting it and making explicit all its potential for knowledge and service. The goal, therefore, as I recently reminded people in a meeting with professors from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, is “to discover and share with everyone the knowledge of the moral law that is within the reach of human reason and that, therefore, can be understood and grasped by all men and women, even by those who do not have the Christian faith. All questions need

to be discussed with ‘the force of truth,’ which can overcome the claims of the alleged ‘truth of force.’ Thus the Christian spirit can heal the structures of earthly life and shape society according to the divine plan of redemption” (*Work and Holiness*, p. 49, EDUSC, 2018).

The Campus is also at the crossroads of some of the great challenges that the Holy Father mentioned in his address to the Pontifical Council for Culture last year (Pope Francis, *Address*, November 18, 2017). The first challenge today, he said, is found in medicine and genetics, “which allow us to look inside the most intimate structure of the human being and to even intervene in it in order to modify it.” Also the challenges raised by recent developments in neuroscience and autonomous “thinking” machines. “Today we are increasingly aware that it is necessary to draw from the treasures of wisdom preserved in religious traditions, from popular wisdom, from literature and the arts, which touch the depths of the mystery of the human being, without forgetting, indeed rediscovering, those contained in philosophy and in theology” (*Ibid.*).

We can find light here in the spirit of Opus Dei, which has inspired and continues to inspire this marvelous aim: sanctifying work, sanctifying oneself in work, sanctifying others through work, as St. Josemaría said (see *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 122). Discovering work’s ethical and service dimensions,

thinking and acting on the basis of the faith. Discovering the *quid divinum* in our daily work (see *Conversations*, no. 114), becoming aware of God’s love for us in the smallest circumstances, even in the midst of adversity.

Saint John summed up the experience of the Apostles in their relationship with Christ in this way: “we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us” (1 Jn 4:16). Seeking the *quid divinum*—the “divine element” hidden in material realities—will lead to finding it also in other men and women, as creatures loved by God; and to see it also hidden in the difficulties themselves. If this is lacking, if ultimately love is lacking, the material development of the world will be of little use to us (see 1 Cor 13:1-13). To achieve these ambitious goals, with the help of God’s grace which will always be present, the Prelature offers, as in other similar apostolic undertakings, a service that facilitates the encounter with Jesus and with the teachings of the Church. It is not a question of a relationship of dependence or control, but rather an opportunity offered to everyone to deepen their Christian formation in and through their professional activity.

I would like to wholeheartedly encourage all those who work at the university and in the health centers on the Campus to renew their eagerness for their mission. I know very well that all of you have to face many difficulties every day,

since your work involves delicate and important topics. You are often called to open up paths that do not yet exist, so that others can follow them. The temptation could arise to let yourselves be overwhelmed by unresolved problems, by the lack of resources or by the complexity of relationships involved, and even weaken your enthusiasm in your daily work. We all need hope and optimism, but optimism should not be founded on the abstract, as a sterile, rhetorical exhortation. Rather, I encourage you to base it on the small and specific fruits that you see in your daily work: the satisfaction you feel at the end of a university class that opens up new horizons for you or, as teachers, when you notice that the knowledge you try to pass on has been well understood; the work of a colleague that improves thanks to your commitment and example; the gratitude of a sick person for the attention received; the appreciation for order and good taste in those who take care of the material services, and who make your work so much easier. Hope and optimism must ultimately be based on the fact that this university and its activities are motivated by a deep spirit of service. Only this can justify all our effort and sacrifice: a spirit of service that for so many of us is illumined and strengthened by the light of faith and Christian charity.

I conclude with the desire that science and service, competence and generosity, faith and geometry,

may always go hand in hand. As in every work of Christian inspiration, the professional dimension and a family atmosphere are not opposed, but should grow together. As St. Paul's hymn to charity reminds us, love can and should guide everything we do. And as St. Josemaría reminded us, it is love that makes small things great. Thank you for your work. I assure you of my daily prayer for all of you and for your families, and I am relying on your prayers.

Opening of the Academic Year, at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, Rome (October 8, 2018)

Most Reverend Eminences, Excellencies, teachers, collaborators, students, ladies and gentlemen:

The beginning of this academic year coincides with the entry into force of the apostolic constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*, with which the Holy Father wants to give a new legislative structure to ecclesiastical universities and faculties (see art. 88). On this occasion, I would like to briefly consider a focus that, in my opinion, can assist the desire expressed in the foreword of this document, namely, the full and vital insertion of ecclesiastical