

our Christian life is based on the sacraments and prayer.

I remember an informal meeting that Blessed Alvaro del Portillo, the founder of this university, had in 1984 with the teaching staff, who were about to begin the undertaking that was then called the Roman Academic Center of the Holy Cross. Among other practical points of advice that he gave were two that showed very clearly how he viewed academic work. The first related to the choice of research topics. Among so many possibilities, Bishop Del Portillo strongly advised us to choose those that could have a greater impact on our service to the Church and souls. The second suggestion, no less practical, was addressed especially to philosophers, but it is valid for everyone: to strive for clarity in what we write, the clarity that he loved and sought in his own writings.

All university work and every aspect of the university needs to be directed to the Church's salvific mission. Dedicating ourselves as teachers to research and teaching of the sacred sciences is in itself a deeply apostolic work. Spending time in Rome as a student not only does not separate us from service to the Church, but it implies a gift to strengthen that service. Working at the university in the various tasks of management and organization takes on all its value when it is lived as an indispensable participation in our common mission.

I ask through the intercession of Mary *Sedes Sapientiae* for the gift of the joy of the truth, and declare the academic year 2018–2019 inaugurated.

Words of the Prelate on the Canonization of Paul VI and Oscar Romero (October 11, 2018)

The new saints Paul VI and Oscar Romero were two pastors completely dedicated to the service of the Church and the world they lived in, untiring promoters of unity and fraternity. The canonizations this Sunday are a joyful invitation to beg our Lord to grant, preserve, and increase these essential gifts in everyone.

Pope Paul VI constantly strove to foster communion in the Church and unity among all Christians, always basing the desire for spiritual renewal on a complete fidelity to the Gospel. His service to several Pontiffs, prior to his later mission as successor to Peter, is a luminous example of how to seek harmony with the Pope, with the other shepherds and with all the faithful in the Church. Making use of a prayer this holy Pontiff composed in 1972, we can ask God "to open still more our spirit and our heart to the specific demands of love for all our brothers and sisters, so that we may

be ever more effective builders of peace.”

The new saint Oscar Romero often meditated on Christ’s prayer for unity: “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you.” He called this “the true unity” and used to say: “disunion in the Church is sad, my brothers, it is the anti-sign of Christ” (Homily, April 30, 1978). He saw the urgent need for communion in the Church: of Catholics among themselves and of everyone with the Holy Father. We also especially ask him, who had such great love for his people, to intercede for unity and respect among all Salvadorans and for an end to the scourge of violence.

Pope Francis on Sunday will also canonize the priests Francesco Spinelli and Vincenzo Romano, the women religious Maria Katharina Kasper and María Ignacia de Santa Teresa, and the young layman Nunzio Sulprizio. Now that the Church is reflecting on the faith and the vocational discernment of young people, let us go to the intercession of the new saints to ask God to grant young people expanded horizons, and that the message of Jesus may continue to reach many young men and women who will decide to follow him generously on the various paths that exist in the Church.