



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO MEMBERS OF THE ST DOMINIC CENTRE IN BOLOGNA
ON THE OCCASION OF ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY***

16 June 1979

Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

Allow me first of all to extend my most sincere and cordial greeting to you all, gathered here also in representation of many other members or supporters of the St Dominic Centre in Bologna. I also wish to thank you warmly for having desired this meeting, which shows your sense of Christian filial adherence and devotion to this See of Peter, to which the Lord, in his inscrutable goodness, has called me.

This circumstance also offers me the happy occasion to remember that I, too, had the honour to be invited by the leaders of your Centre, not many years ago, and that I have therefore been one of your speakers. And I must say that I still keep a good memory of that experience. It permitted me close acquaintance with a beneficial cultural institution, which constitutes a living presence and a Christian testimony in the city and diocese of Bologna and which is ready, too, in a praiseworthy way, to listen to other voices in a spirit of fruitful and constructive dialogue.

You are celebrating the tenth year of life of your association. I know that your Centre was opportunely founded by some lay people close to the Dominican Order, from which it draws inspiration. On the one hand, its postconciliar origins confer on it a stamp of renewed integration in the life of the local church and a special opening to the various ferments present in the modern world. On the other hand, its link with the Order of St Dominic gives it a characteristic of staunch attachment to the Magisterium of the Church and a particular seriousness of methodological application in the investigation and exposition of the various subjects dealt with. In this connection, one cannot help thinking at least of the luminous figures of two Dominicans: St Albert the Great and St Thomas Aquinas. Their names at once call up research and depth of knowledge, cultivated

according to a typical "catholic" cut where the adjective is understood not only in the confessional and ecclesial sense, but also in the etymological one of the vast visual angle characteristic of human intelligence. Today, too, all this is more necessary than ever.

It is important, in fact, that the specific Gospel proclamation, or kerygma, should be homogeneously integrated by study and investigation of the various aspects of sciences, both theological and human. The apostolate of culture, to which you dedicate yourselves, has been a fundamental part of the missionary action of the Church, right from its origins. The task of Jesus, who came "not to abolish but to fulfil" (Mt 5:17), must continue in history and should be carried out zealously and intelligently. St Paul, for his part, although he stigmatizes the foolishness of the wisdom of this world (cf. 1 Cor 1:19-21), even enumerates among the charisms of the Spirit "the utterance of wisdom and the utterance of knowledge" (1 Cor 12:8). And the ancient Church Fathers did nothing but re-think the message of the Bible in the light of the cultural categories of their own environment, thus giving new vitality both to the message and to these cultures.

In this way, a real and proper "Christian wisdom" takes shape, marked by its deep roots in Revelation, by its keen sensitiveness to historical cultures, by its indispensable destination for man's concrete life, beyond all aristocratic abstraction, and by its ecclesial finalization, as a specialized contribution to the growth of faith in the community of the baptized. Thus you feel in practice, and also lead others to experience, how fruitful and stirring is the mutual relationship between the movement of the intelligence in search of faith and that of faith which seeks understanding of itself. Along this way one cannot but arrive at "Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3), while discovering, with joyful wonder, that his love "surpasses knowledge" (Eph 3:19).

In the light of this way and this goal, I cannot but cordially encourage your activity. Continue the work undertaken with joy and commitment according to your organizational and apostolic purposes. Ten years of life is a relatively short space of time; before you there is still a great deal of time for a growing contribution to the discussions of our time and for an increasingly deep and fruitful impact on modern man, who is more thirsty than ever for the absolute and for eternal life (cf. Jn 6:68). In this way you will be able to render a very precious service to the Christian community and, in a wider sense, to the civil one of the beloved city and diocese of Bologna.

On my part, I intend to confirm these wishes willingly by warmly granting the propitiating Apostolic Blessing to you all, to those whom you represent, and in particular to the well-deserving leaders of the Centre, whether they are lay people or members of the Dominican Order.

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