



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER
POPE JOHN PAUL II
AT GUIDO CARLI UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL STUDIES***

Tuesday, 17 November 1998

Mr. President,

Rector Arcelli,

Distinguished Guests and Teachers,

Dear Technical and Administrative Staff,

Dear Students,

1. It is a great joy for me to meet the university community of LUISS-Guido Carli, with the members of the Academic Senate and the Board of Directors. Thank you for your invitation.

I thank the President, the Rector and the young student for the words they addressed to me on behalf of the whole university. I greet the Cardinal Vicar, the Minister for Universities and Scientific Research, and the Rectors of the Roman universities, who have honoured our meeting with their presence.

Today's visit has a special significance since it immediately precedes the opening of the mission year which the Church of Rome is dedicating to the proclamation of the Gospel in the living and working environments of the city.

The words of the Apostle Paul, which have just been proclaimed, suggest to us the true meaning of the City Mission. It is an act of love on the part of Rome's Christian community to the men and women who live in the city, and an invitation to let themselves be led by the Gospel to promote the great human and civic values everywhere.

2. Paul's teaching also sheds light on university life, because he urges it to seek in charity for the ultimate reasons for its life and work.

In fact, the university, born from the heart of the Church, has been marked down the centuries by the cultivation of

knowledge and the diligent search for truth at the service of the human good.

Scientific investigation, which consists of arduous daily application, of enthusiasm and of intellectual daring, concerns areas of scientific study both ancient and more recent. Prominent among them are the economic and social disciplines, so firmly woven into the fabric of daily life and the structures of the “global” society.

The university can never ignore the humanistic dimension, which involves it in a deeper study of knowledge, its appropriate transmission and its irreplaceable educational role.

The university finds its place in that *caritas intellectualis* in which the knowledge and experience of scientific discovery, as well as artistic inspiration, become gifts which are communicated as a driving force. The Christian faith sees in this the true wisdom which is a gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 45, a. 3).

In university education, *caritas intellectualis* also creates significant interpersonal relations which offer each individual the possibility of fully expressing his own unique identity and of putting the tools of his profession at the service of this goal.

3. The university's academic activity demands attention to the city's life, in order to make scientific professionalism an authentic mission and a service to the progress of the whole man and of all men. This attention should be integrated with significant forms of that intellectual and spiritual communion between students and teachers which was the distinctive feature of the medieval university.

The demands of ever greater specialization and the scattering of the university's various institutions throughout the city does not always encourage this vital intellectual communion, which, nevertheless, can find in modern and updated technologies an interesting tool for opening ways of interconnection and communication unknown until yesterday.

The necessary connection, then, between economic and professional requirements must never obscure the principal goal of teaching, which aims above all at forming teachers of life. Likewise, the correlation between the university world and that of economics and business, in itself legitimate and often fruitful, cannot be influenced by a merely pragmatic vision which would ultimately be reductive and sterile. Rather it should let itself be guided by criteria marked by the Christian concept of the person and the community, so as to strengthen and enhance the university's cultural and social value.

4. There is another important point which I would like to suggest. In the Encyclical *Fides et ratio*, I stressed how deeply “related are the knowledge conferred by faith and the knowledge conferred by reason” (n. 16): by virtue of this unity, the word of faith, enlightening and directing the progress of reason, does not allow the gift of intelligence to retreat, hesitant and defeated, within a horizon where everything is reduced to opinion (cf. *ibid.*, n. 5). Instead, faith supports it and continually spurs it to lift its sights until it reaches the very edge of mystery, the vital concern and driving force of all genuine culture, where the fragment reveals an All which transcends it. Indeed, “every truth attained is but a step towards that fullness of truth which will appear with the final Revelation of God” (*ibid.*, n. 2).

Conscious of this, the Church in Italy has been committed for several years to developing a cultural project which, on the

basis of Christian values, intends to make a further contribution to the renewal of the nation's social and cultural fabric. In this way, the Christian faith wants to give an answer to the questions which trouble the human heart, and to guide its steps so that, as it prepares to cross the threshold of the third millennium, hope may be revived and solidarity among people strengthened.

5. I entrust my reflections especially to you who work at this university, so that you can contribute to its spiritual and cultural growth. I would also like to thank you for your collaboration in preparing the Jubilee of university teachers, which will take place in September of the Year 2000, and for your generous willingness to host one of the congresses planned for this event.

My thoughts turn in a special way to you, dear students. Generously accept the way of intellectual charity, in order to support an authentic social renewal which can oppose the serious forms of injustice that threaten human life. Love your studies, be humble in learning and be ready to put all the skills you acquire during your precious years of university education at the service of all men and women.

May God's Blessing, which I invoke in abundance upon each of you, go with you all.

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