



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY

TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,

MEXICO AND THE BAHAMAS MEETING WITH CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Sanctuary of Guadalupe

Wednesday, 31 January 1979 Beloved Brothers and Daughters of the Catholic University world, 1.

With immense joy and hope I come to this appointment with you, students, professors and lecturers of the Catholic Universities of Mexico, in whom I also see the University world of the whole of Latin America. Receive my most cordial greeting. It is the greeting of one who feels so much at home among the young, in whom he lays so many hopes; especially when it is a question of such qualified sectors as those that pass through University halls, preparing for a future that will be determinant in society. Allow me to recall in the first place the members of the Catholic University La Salle, within which this meeting was to have taken place. I recall no less cordially, however, the other Mexican Catholic Universities: the Iberian American University, the Anáhuac University, Monterrey University, the Superior Institute of Educational Sciences in Mexico City, the Faculty of Public Accountancy at Vera Cruz, the Western Institute of Technology and Higher Studies at Guadalajara, Motolinia University, Puebla University for Women, the canonical Faculty of Philosophy in this city, and the Faculty — still in embryo — of Theology, also in this metropolis. These are young universities. You have, however, a venerable ancestor in the "Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico", founded on 21 September 1551 with the explicit purpose that in it "the natives and sons of Spaniards should be instructed in matters of the holy Catholic faith and in the other faculties". There are also among you — and they are certainly extremely numerous in the whole Mexican territory — Catholic professors and students who teach or study in universities of different denomination. I address my affectionate greeting to them, too, and express my deep joy at knowing that they are all engaged in the same way in establishing the kingdom of Christ. Let us now extend our view to the vast Latin-American horizon. Thus my greeting and thought will dwell with satisfaction on so many other Catholic University Centres, which are a motive of legitimate pride in every nation, where so many enthusiastic looks converge, from whence Christian culture and civilization irradiate. There, persons are formed in the atmosphere of an integral concept of the human being, with scientific precision, and with a Christian view of man, life, society, moral

and religious values.² And now what more can I say to you in these moments that will necessarily be short? What can the Mexican and Latin-American Catholic University world expect from the words of the Pope? I think I can sum it up, quite synthetically, in three observations, following the line of my venerated predecessor Paul VI.

a) The first one is that the Catholic University must offer a specific contribution to the Church and society, setting itself at a high level of scientific research, deep study of problems and an adequate historical sense. But that is not sufficient for a Catholic University. It must find its ultimate and deep meaning in Christ, in his message of salvation which embraces man in his totality, and in the teaching of the Church. All this presupposes the promotion of an integral culture, that is, one that aims at the complete development of the human person; one in which emphasis is laid on the values of intelligence, will, conscience, and brotherhood, all of which are based on God the Creator and have been marvellously exalted in Christ (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 61): a culture that aims in a disinterested and genuine way at the good of the community and of the whole of society.

b) The second observation is that the Catholic University must form men who are really outstanding for their knowledge, ready to exercise important functions in society and to bear witness to their faith before the world (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 10). This aim is unquestionably decisive today. Moral and Christian formation must not be considered as something added from outside, but rather as an aspect with which the academic institution is, so to speak, specified and lived. It is a question of promoting and realizing in professors and students a more and more harmonious synthesis between faith and reason, between faith and culture, between faith and life. This synthesis must be obtained not only at the level of research and teaching, but also at the educative-pedagogical level.

c) The third observation is that the Catholic University must be an environment in which Christianity is alive and operating. It is an essential vocation of the Catholic University to bear witness that it is a community seriously and sincerely engaged in scientific research, but can also be characterized by a real Christian life. That presupposes, among other things, a revision of the figure of the professor, who cannot be considered a mere transmitter of knowledge, but also and above all a witness and educator to true Christian life. In this privileged environment of formation, you, dear students, are called to conscientious and responsible collaboration, free and generous, to realize your formation itself.

3. The establishment of a University apostolate, both as an apostolate of intelligences and as a source of liturgical life, and which must serve the whole University sector of the nation, will not fail to yield precious fruits of human and Christian elevation.

Dear Sons, who dedicate yourselves completely or partially to the Catholic University sector in your respective countries, and all you who, in any University environment, are engaged in establishing the Kingdom of God:

- create a real University family, engaged in the pursuit, which is not always easy, of truth and good, the supreme aspirations of the rational being and the foundations of a solid and responsible moral structure;
- pursue a serious research activity, directing the new generations towards truth, towards human and religious maturity;
- work indefatigably for real and complete progress in your countries. Without prejudices of any

kind, take the hand of those who propose, like you, to construct the real common good;

— unite your forces as bishops, priests, religious men and women, laity, in the planning and implementation of your academic centres and of their activities;

— walk joyfully and tirelessly under the guidance of Holy Mother Church. Her Magisterium, the prolongation of Christ's, is the only guarantee not to stray from the right path, and is a reliable guide to the imperishable inheritance that Christ reserves for those who are faithful to him.

I recommend you all to Eternal Wisdom: "Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and she, is easily discerned by those who love her, and is found by those who seek her" (Wisdom 6:12).

May the Seat of Wisdom, which Mexico and the whole of Latin America venerate in Guadalupe Sanctuary, protect you all under her motherly mantle! Amen. And many thanks for your presence.

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