



The Holy See

GREETING OF THE HOLY FATHER
TO THE "BOARD OF TRUSTEES" OF THE
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA,
WASHINGTON D.C.,

Monday, 27 September 1999

Your Eminences,
Dear Brother Bishops,
Dear Friends,

In the love of God from whom all wisdom comes, I welcome you, the Trustees of the Catholic University of America. Your University has long made a quite special contribution to the Church and society in the United States, and therefore I am happy to have this occasion to encourage you to continue to shape and implement the vision of a truly Catholic university in your culture, especially at this time.

At the threshold of the new millennium, the Church is deeply committed to the *new evangelization*, and Catholic universities have a specific role in this great task. In my Encyclical Letter *Fides et Ratio*, I wrote that "faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth" (No. 1). Reason can help faith avoid the dangers of myth or superstition, and faith can open reason to that fullness of truth which of its nature it always seeks (cf. No. 48). The entire Catholic tradition bears witness to this mutuality, and the Catholic University of America can make no greater contribution to the work of the new evangelization than to stand as a witness to this deep harmony of faith and reason.

I am also happy to welcome the Student Choral Group present here today. I thank you for the beauty of your music which shows that, in the Catholic tradition, the good and the true are always wedded to the beautiful. This too is at the heart of the witness of Catholic universities, for beauty is always "a key to the mystery and a call to transcendence" (*Letter to Artists*, 16).

Entrusting the entire community of the Catholic University of America to the unfailing intercession of Mary, Seat of Wisdom, I cordially impart to you and your loved ones my Apostolic Blessing.