



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II
TO THE PARTICIPANTS
IN THE INTERNATIONAL UNIV MEETING**

Monday, 5 April 2004

Dear Young People,

1. I am pleased to greet you again this year and offer each one of you my most cordial welcome.

You have come to Rome from various countries and many universities to spend Holy Week together and to take part in the international UNIV meeting. Thus, you have been able to compare the experiences you have acquired by taking part in the activities of Christian formation that the Prelature of Opus Dei promotes in your respective cities and nations.

I greet you with affection, and I greet those who have accompanied you, as well as the priests who are your spiritual directors. Yesterday, Palm Sunday, we heard these words ring out in St Peter's Square: "*We wish to see Jesus*". *This is the theme of the Message* that I wanted to write to young people of the whole world on the occasion of World Youth Day.

Dear friends, may you always cherish in the depths of your heart the desire to see Christ! May you be able to overcome every superficial emotion, resisting the seduction of pleasure and the ambitions of selfishness and comforts!

2. At your International Congress you are addressing a very timely theme: "*Projecting culture: the language of advertising*". There is a real need to know how to use suitable language in order to transmit positive messages and make their ideals and noble initiatives known and attractive. It is also necessary to be able to discern the limits and pitfalls of the language which the media propose to us. Sometimes, in fact, advertisements present a superficial and inadequate vision of life, of the individual person or the family, and of morality.

3. To carry out this demanding mission, it is necessary to follow Jesus closely in prayer and contemplation. Being his friends in the world in which we live also demands the effort to swim against the tide.

At university, in school and wherever you may find yourselves living, do not be afraid when necessary to be anti-conformist! I especially ask you to spread the Christian vision of the virtue of purity and to show your peers that it "comes from love; and the strength and gaiety of youth are no obstacle for noble love" (St Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, *Christ Is Passing By*, 40, 6).

4. Dear young people of UNIV, in this world which is seeking Jesus, sometimes without even knowing it you are the leaven of hope. I repeat to you today what I said to your friends in one of our first meetings: to improve the world, strive first of all to change yourselves through recourse to the sacrament of Penance and intimate identification with Christ in the Eucharist.

To Mary, who never lifted her eyes from the Face of her Son Jesus, I entrust each one of you and your families. I invoke upon each one of you the protection of St Josemaría and of all the saints of your countries, and I cordially bless you.