



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER LEO XIV
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEMINAR PROMOTED
BY THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF THEOLOGY**

*Clementine Hall
Saturday, 13 September 2025*

[Multimedia]

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Peace be with you!

*Your Eminence,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Scholars,*

I am delighted to welcome the Pontifical Academy of Theology at the conclusion of your international seminar focused on the theme, “Creation, Nature, Environment for a World of Peace.”

You have reflected on issues of urgent relevance, which are very dear to me, just as they were to my venerable predecessors [Saint John Paul II](#), [Benedict XVI](#), and [Francis](#). Environmental sustainability and the care of creation are essential commitments to ensure the survival of the human race; they have a direct impact on the organization of our societies and on the possibility of peaceful and cooperative human coexistence.

At the same time, any effort to improve the environmental and social conditions of our world requires the *commitment of everyone*, each doing his or her part, with an attitude of solidarity and collaboration that transcends regional, national, cultural, and even religious barriers and limitations. The *intercultural and interreligious scope* of your seminar is a promising sign for

further and increasingly robust discussions, as well as incisive and fruitful initiatives. This corresponds to the renewed profile of the Academy of Theology desired by Pope Francis, who gave a new configuration to this centuries-old institution of the Holy See.

Guided by the Apostolic Letter *[Ad Theologiam Promovendam](#)*, which accompanied the promulgation of the new statutes and programmatic policies less than two years ago, I would like to focus, in particular, on the missionary and dialogical impulse of future theological endeavors.

Theology is, of course, *a constitutive dimension of the Church's missionary and evangelizing activity*. It has its roots in the Gospel with the ultimate goal of facilitating communion with God, which is the purpose of Christian proclamation. Precisely because it is addressed to every person in every age, the work of evangelization is constantly challenged by cultural contexts and requires a theology that “goes forth,” combining scientific rigor with a passion for history – a theology that is incarnate, imbued with the human pains, joys, expectations and hopes of the women and men of our time.

The synthesis between these different aspects can be offered by a *theology of wisdom*, following the model developed by the great Fathers and Masters of antiquity. Because of their docility to the Spirit, they knew how to unite faith and reason, reflection, prayer and practice. The ever-relevant example of Saint Augustine is significant in this regard. His theology was never a purely abstract pursuit but always the fruit of his experience of God and his life-giving relationship that flowed from it. It was an experience that began even before his baptism, when he felt guided in the depths of his heart by an ineffable light (cf. *Confessions*, VII, 10). This experience continued throughout his life, shaping his theological reflections, which were incarnate and capable of responding to the spiritual, doctrinal, pastoral and social needs of his time.

While Augustine began this journey with an existential and emotional approach, starting from inner reflection and recognizing the “Truth that dwells within us,” Saint Thomas Aquinas systematized it with the tools of Aristotelian reason. Thomas built a solid bridge between Christian faith and universal science, understanding theology as a *sapida scientia* or *sapientia*. This brings us to another great thinker from more recent times, Blessed Antonio Rosmini, who “considered theology to be a sublime expression of intellectual charity, while insisting that the critical reasoning behind all knowledge should be oriented towards the Idea of Wisdom” (Apostolic Letter *[Ad Theologiam Promovendam](#)*, 1 November 2023, 7).

Theology is the *wisdom*, therefore, that opens up greater existential horizons, dialoguing with science, philosophy, art and all human experience. The theologian is a person who lives out, in his or her theological work, a missionary fervor by communicating to everyone the “knowledge” and “taste” of faith, so that it may illuminate our lives, redeem the weak and the excluded, touch and heal the suffering flesh of the poor, help us build a fraternal and supportive world, and lead us to an encounter with God.

A significant witness to the knowledge of faith at the service of humanity, in all its dimensions – personal, social and political – is the *Social Doctrine of the Church*, which today is also called upon to provide wise answers to digital challenges. Theology must be directly involved because an exclusively ethical approach to the complex world of artificial intelligence is not enough. Instead, we need to refer to an anthropological vision that underpins ethical action and, therefore, return to the age-old question: What is a human being? What is his or her inherent dignity, which is irreconcilable with a digital android?

I therefore invite you to cultivate a theology based on an intimate and transforming encounter with Christ, aimed at incarnating itself in the concrete affairs of humanity today. I encourage you to engage in dialogue not only with philosophy, but also with physics, biology, economics, law, literature and music, in order to enrich yourselves and others, and to bring the good leaven of the Gospel into different cultures, in your encounters with believers of other religions and with non-believers. In order for this *ad extra* dialogue to take place, as you know, there must first be an *ad intra* dialogue, that is, dialogue among theologians based on the awareness that the face of God can only be sought by walking together. It is my hope that the Academy will become a place of encounter and friendship among theologians, a place of communion and sharing where all can walk together toward Christ.

With this hope, I wish to encourage and bless all three “faces” of the Academy outlined in the new Statutes: the *academic-scientific face*, where intellectual rigor, research and critical study of the faith are exercised; the *sapiential face*, which represents the period of contemplation and discernment, engaging many ordinary people through “theological cenacles,” where theology involves prayer, listening and sharing, helping to nourish the spiritual life and overcome false images of God; and finally, the *face of solidarity*, which inspires and animates concrete acts of charity. True knowledge of God is realized in a life transformed by love.

Dear friends, I thank you for your commitment. It is my desire that you develop and incarnate this theology of wisdom, in the service of the Church and the world. May my blessing accompany and sustain you. Thank you!