



16 December 1923

**The Meaning of the Granting of the New Headquarters
of the Academy, Casina Pio IV**

Address to Inaugurate the Academic Year of the

Pontifical Academy of Sciences 'New Lynxes' and its New Buildings

Pius XI stresses that science is 'true, most high wisdom'. Implicitly referring to the Church's commitment to such wisdom through her advancement of learning, he points out how the Academy is situated next to other institutions of learning of the Church (the Vatican Observatory, the Picture Gallery, the Archives, the Library, the Museum) and to a great centre of prayer – St. Peter's Basilica. Here, too, the human mind, through prayer, rises up, like science itself, to God.

Everything that we have seen and heard hitherto has filled our spirit with an increasing joy, the pure joy of the spirit that sees, that admires, truth in being; that admires the wonders of God in being and truth. All this has made us once again thank Blessed God, who inspired in us the thought of locating this – one can well say famous in the deeds of art – Casina Pio IV, our ancient and illustrious antecedent and fellow citizen who inaugurated it in 1591 and left it a real jewel of art, of a kind not frequent in so much completeness of architecture, we were about to say garden architecture, because it is a small villa, and it was exactly a small villa that was needed so that it could be suited to a garden... the thought, we were saying, of giving this small villa for the purposes of the work of our dear and glorious Pontifical Academy of Sciences, always of the New Lynxes.

We do not feel that we need to add anything else, except a word of sincere congratulations on all this glorious past, which today opportunely and rapidly has been re-evoked in our presence; a past which through various laborious and even distressing events, has been so full of fertile and luminous work; a past that finds confirmation and a worthy continuation in a present which is so much beyond any kind of praise, so that this continuation contains all the justification for, and trust in, a future which cannot but be worthy of such a past and such a present.

For that matter we must repeat rightly what the Ancients liked to say in their elegant search for harmony between words and things: *Est omen in nomine, est omen in loco.*

There is a hope and a wish in the name 'Lynxes'; the science of long sight, of farsighted and farseeing sight, always on the track of something that is beyond, further on, higher up; from the particular to the universal, from the effect to the cause, from the immediate causes to the remote causes, from the second causes to the primary causes, from the *Causa causarum*, where your science, O beloved sons and most illustrious gentlemen, rises to the level and the substance of true most high wisdom, in which all treasures gather, in which all the treasures of our science acquire their highest appreciation, so as to be able to be rightly called: *Divitae salutis sapientia et scientia*.¹

Est omen in loco; a place of quiet. We have allowed ourself to congratulate ourself on this as well. This quiet, we were about to say mystical quiet, will also be useful in the meditation of the spirit, and thus in a deeper and clearer inquiry of the spirit itself. But even more the connections, the contiguity of this place, seem to us to have a special eloquence and contain a treasure of valuable promises, just as they contain the scientific pinnacles, that your, our, Academy had the happy idea of especially studying, drawing to them general attention. Contiguity: behind you, O beloved Academicians, there is the Vatican Observatory with its high-points of observation, of speculation and of calculation. In front of you, you have the Picture Gallery, the Archives, the Library, the Museum: all a treasure of science, of art, an incomparable mass abundant in treasures of every kind, and from which science and art will be able for a long time to draw sustenance. At your side is the really magnificent panorama of Monte Mario and the Via Trionfale, which announces to you new triumphs of science, and of truth as well.

On the other side the magnificent and always admirable cupola of St. Peter's, where, one would say, a supreme effort of art and of science wanted to bring nearer to the Creator, to the very feet of God, thought, the thinking and ascendant soul on the paths of the true; that magnificent monument to which are turned, and in which are gathered, the prayers of the whole Catholic world.

If, as we have heard with profound joy of the spirit, the most direct experiences also make thought the principal fulcrum of prayer, and these prayers correspond so well to the definition of prayer given by St. Thomas Aquinas himself, that great man whose centenary we have recently celebrated: *elevatio mentis in Deum*,² and given that the eyes of your science are turned towards, and open to, God, then it is fitting that this is in a place where with such a great mass and flight of prayer one rises to God.

It is with this happy wish and hope, and with this magnificent vision of past glories and of glories to come, that with heartfelt feelings we impart the Apostolic Blessing, which you ask of us, on your families, on everything you hold dear, that is to say – we feel this as clearly as you understand it – on your work, your successes, and your triumphs.

1/s 33:6.

2S. *Th.*, II-II, 83, 13. Cf. Damasceno, *De fide orth.* 3:24.