



Truth as Beneficial Charity

Address to Inaugurate the Academic Year of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences 'New Lynxes'

The Pope praises the Academy's search for truth and observes that Christ, who was the Word and Divine Truth, was a teacher who sent out his Apostles with the mandate to teach. The Church's historic commitment to learning is a part of the fulfilment of this mandate. His Holiness concludes by expressing the hope that the Academy 'will become an increasingly rich source of that beneficial charity which Truth is'.

What the good President said at the beginning of this really holy and blessed year is true. It has been a great, immense, celebration of Good, of really beneficial Good, of that Good, that is to say, which goes directly to souls and peoples. But also what takes place here, beloved sons, what you do, is also Good – the Good that is called truth, from which the Truth takes its name, form, appearance, but which is real Good, Good which is also specifically and valuably beneficial. You brought to our mind – when you appeared to contrast truth, which you investigate, with good, in which Divine Goodness has enabled us to participate – of what the great Catholic writer, Alessandro Manzoni said about Federico Borromeo and the foundation of his dear 'Ambrosiana', which is also ours and so dear to us. This writer wrote: 'But think what a generous, judicious, benevolent, persevering lover of human improvement must have been the man who wanted such a thing, and wanted it in such a way, and carried it out amidst that ignorance and that inertia, that general antipathy for every scholarly application'. And yet today there are those who think that the money spent in that way constituted most beneficial alms.

But there is in this field an even higher and more sacred authority than the fine, pleasing, and kind figure of Cardinal Federico Borromeo.

There is God Himself who is called Truth. And that essential, divine generation that expresses all the perfection of the Divine Essence, the Word; and the Word means the Truth. And when God thought of saving the world it was the Word, it was Divine Truth, that came to save it. And when he was saving men, it was the title Teacher that most pleased him, and he accepted it and approved it: *Vocatis me magistrum et bene dictis; sum etenim.*¹ And when he sent out the Apostles to preach redemption to the world he gave them, before anything else, the mandate to teach: *Euntes docete.*² This was really the cry of he who had said: the truth will make you free, *Veritas liberabit vos.*³

And thus it was that, in order to fulfil this very important part of their mission, the Roman Pontiffs, our glorious antecedents, so magnificently, so splendidly, and also so heroically, constantly acted to gather together in our admirable Vatican library those treasures of which you, Cardinal Ehrle, and we, after you, have been the fortunate custodians. When the Roman Pontiffs did this, they

thought that they were carrying out a part, a very notable part, of their Apostolic Ministry. And therefore we congratulate you with all our heart on that great good that you do here, on that which we have heard or now hear, on what you have gathered together in all the luminous fields of truth; and wishing and hoping that this Academy will become an increasingly rich source of that beneficial charity which Truth is, we with all our heart impart to you, to your work and to everything that each one of you most holds dear, our Apostolic Blessing.

1 *Jn* 13:13.

2 *Mt* 28:19. Cf. *Mk* 16:15 f.

3 *Jn* 8:32.