



Intelligence and Faith

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

The Supreme Pontiff bestows great value on the participation of the Academy in his priestly Jubilee and emphasises that science both studies the work of the Creator and is illuminated by His Light. The Pope dwells upon the central importance of uniting intelligence with faith and stresses the close connections between the two, observing that scientific study is a form of homage to the Almighty, whom he describes as the 'God of science... the Light and the Truth'. He adds that 'science is for life'.

The Holy Father began by saying that within a short time he would give his Blessing that the President of the Academy of the New Lynxes had asked him for and he would give it by expressing in it all the sentiments that that very fine and solemn hour had suggested to his mind and his heart.

But to begin with His Holiness did not want to fail to demonstrate and express his pleasure, his congratulations, with regard to the fine, so very luminous and always useful work that his Academy had described to him: these congratulations he extended to the Academy, to all the members and to each individual member, and in particular to those members who during that session had enabled him to hear such interesting things, both in their short summaries, and with a vision of a point of view which was both of a broad perspective and summarising, and yet, he repeated, which were equally interesting.

The Holy Father was happy, at a more concrete level, about the important work and deliberations of the Academy that had been promoted and realised: important not so much and not solely because of their weight and number, but even more because of the contribution made by a large number of new collaborators. Because when the number of intellects amongst such well-known and firm friends of science and truth increases, it cannot be doubted that science and truth can only gain by this, and in a notable fashion.

The August Pontiff said that he was at one and the same time both happy and confused at the fact that an episode from his priestly life, of his personal life, therefore, should have given rise to these numerous, high and valuable contributions to truth and science as well. The Holy Father emphasised that he said 'as well' because it was also true that from all parts of the world, he was about to say from all strata of the world and of society, there had come to him on this occasion expressions of participation in his priestly Jubilee, and the events themselves had shared in this Jubilee: the Pope said this – he had to say this – out of a higher and deeper gratitude to Divine Providence, to the Hand and the Heart of God, which, it seemed, had wanted to give an example to everybody, above everybody and by a much greater extent before everybody, by surrounding

these events with so many beautiful and high things, as to increase in a disproportionate way the importance and the significance of his priestly Jubilee.

He hastened to say, however, that this participation of his beloved Academy of Science he placed amongst the most dear, the most appreciated, and the most valuable; and this was to say a great deal, he added, when the forms of participation had been so many, so fine, so valuable, all of which were appreciated by the paternal heart of the Father. However, he wished to place and he placed this participation of the Academy of the New Lynxes amongst the most beautiful and valuable, because it came to him from the most high supreme regions of intelligence and science; that was to say from the regions to which the Divine Intelligence of the Creator sent its most luminous and illuminating rays, rays of infinite light and splendour, because they come from the Being who is in Himself the Light. These heights are more beautiful and pleasant when, on the one hand, they are a reflection of the light of God and, on the other, a reflection of human light, which renders homage to God, so that intelligence is joined to faith. St. Paul said this as well when he declared that this was the highest homage that could be rendered to God: *Captantes omnem intelligentiam in obsequium Christi*.¹ And of these heights, with the truest sense of those materials of the creation and the material summits of the world, one could say with the poet: *Del mondo consacrò Jehova le cime!*

Such, therefore, were the feelings with which the Holy Father expressed his pleasure and his gratitude to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences of the New Lynxes and wished to bestow the blessing that the President had asked for. With this blessing he expressed, in addition, his most trusting and confident wishes and hopes for ever more beautiful, honoured and fertile work, and ever more useful research, discoveries and contributions, as regards science and truth, praying to the Lord that such work would make fertile and multiply – He who is the God of science, who is indeed He Himself the Light and the Truth. The Holy Father expressed these heart-felt wishes and hopes to the elected body of the Academy and to its individual members.

His Holiness, lastly, and this he did with smiling emphasis, was very happy to express other very special congratulations to the venerable Dean of the Cardinals' College, he was about to say to this always young veteran. He had been that early morning together with the Holy Father at a solemn but not short event, indeed at one of the most solemn and longest of the holy events. And he had wanted to be present then as well, at this radiant hour of truth and science, perhaps to tell us that science is for life, indeed without 'perhaps': science is for life, because the science of life is the basis of all other sciences. Cardinal Vannutelli, on the following day, would attain forty years of cardinalship. So, to him, who had over the years fought so many and such triumphant battles, he could rightly repeat: *Ad multos annos!*

1 2 Co 10:4.