



Visit of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences



This is an extraordinary day for the Academy, but also for me. In a way, it is different from last Saturday, which was extraordinary from the official, public point of view. Today is an extraordinary occasion for several reasons. The first is to meet you in your work environment; I have passed by the Casina many times, but I have never wanted to enter, because without you it is just a building, whereas with you it is a very valuable edifice. I think today is just the right time for a first visit. With you it becomes a very special human reality, because of who you are and because of the scientific authority that each of you represents. This is the reason why I consider this day truly extraordinary.

I would like to repeat what I said to you last Saturday in my official speech. I express my appreciation for science as such, for science as research for those who are interested in knowing the truth; my appreciation for science as a function of the superior activity of the human spirit; a science that thus perfects man as such. The humanistic tradition, the philosophical tradition that we inherited from Aristotle, which later also became the Christian tradition, is long: it contemplates man, it values him, it gives him worth. And we appreciate man as such: as an individual who perfects himself through the truth; a truth sought with loyalty, method and responsibility; a truth humbly possessed but with a firm and persevering attitude; a truth also transmitted to others, to one's own circles, to one's students and to all of humanity. These are the reasons for my visit today, and I wanted to reiterate once more what I stated on Saturday afternoon in my official speech. The existence of a Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the rich and consoling legacy of Pius XI, gives me a special sense of satisfaction. I must thank my predecessor and Divine Providence

for the institution of this Academy during his pontificate and for its continued existence. My feelings that I express to you are true and deep, and confirm what I said before. Mine is not a merely intellectual, cold attitude, it is a disposition of the heart, of my feelings and of my affection. In this sense I rejoice and will rejoice every time you come here to meet, to work together and communicate the fruits of your work.

I also intend to put your project into practice, which your President will be kind enough to present to me after this first meeting and your work sessions. Your project will certainly focus on developing this Academy and addressing the primary problem of the relationship between science and religion, between the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Holy See, and between science and the mission of the Church. These are the brief words and ideas that I wanted to communicate to you in this circumstance that is so valuable to me now and will continue to be very valuable in the future.