



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF POPE JOHN PAUL II
TO THE UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
GATHERED FOR THE THIRD EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY DAY**

Dear Young University Students,

1. I address my cordial greeting to all of you who have gathered in the Paul VI Hall for a Marian vigil. Although I am unable to be with you, I am nonetheless close to you with my affection and prayers. I extend my greeting to your peers who, on the occasion of the Third European University Day, are taking part in your meeting via special television link-ups in Bari, Italy, and then in Berlin, Bucharest, Lisbon, Zagreb, London, Tirana, Madrid and Kiev: Europe is spiritually involved in this important moment of prayer and reflection in preparation for the upcoming World Youth Day, which will take place in Cologne, at the very heart of the European Continent.

2. I am pleased that as students, you have wanted to make your own specific contribution to the preparation of the important world youth event with this meeting, whose theme is: *"Intellectual search as a way to encounter Christ"*. There is no contradiction between faith and reason, as the experience of the holy Magi shows; they reached Bethlehem using both these dimensions of the human spirit: intelligence that scrutinizes signs, and faith that leads to adoration of the mystery. To face the long and gruelling journey in search of the Messiah, reason did not suffice; in order to reach their goal, the Magi also needed faith in the sign of the star. The hope and ardent longing of the Magi were not in vain. They sought the Infant Jesus in Bethlehem and once they had found him, their minds needed faith in order to recognize that the humble Son of man was the Messiah, awaited and foretold by the prophets throughout the Old Testament.

3. Dear young people, may you always be motivated by the desire to discover the truth of your lives. May faith and reason be the two wings that bear you aloft towards Christ, the truth about God and the truth about man. In Christ you will find peace and joy. May Christ be the centre of your entire existence. This is my deepest hope, which I warmly express to you all and accompany with the assurance of my prayers.

On this first Saturday of the month, I especially entrust you to the motherly guidance of Mary Most Holy: may she teach you to follow Jesus faithfully to the Cross and to experience the joy of the Resurrection.

With these sentiments, I bless you all. Have a Happy Easter and a good journey to Cologne!

From the Gemelli Polyclinic, 5 March 2005

JOHN PAUL II

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