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College Students, "seekers after truth"

The Prelate of Opus Dei opened the academic year at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome by urging the faculty and students "never to separate the pursuit of truth from fraternal love."

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"For college students, promoting charity means placing emphasis on working with others. It is in conversation and the exchange of views and experiences that people

mature as seekers after truth," said Bishop Javier Echevarria, chancellor of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross and Prelate of Opus Dei in opening the new academic year on Oct. 9.

Bishop Echevarria went on to cite a passage of Pope Benedict XVI's first encyclical, "Deus Caritas Est" that urges everyone "never to separate investigation of the truth from love for others. A Christian is a person with a heart that sees, a heart that is sensitive to the needs of others and ready to respond."

The inaugural ceremony took place in the new auditorium dedicated to the memory of Pope John Paul II. The university's rector, Mariano Fazio, opened the session, which, along with faculty and students, was attended by diplomats--among them the Iranian ambassador to the Holy See, Mohammad Yavad Faridzadeh.

"This new academic year," the president said, "is full of potential for continuing last year's growth in the size and diversity of the student body and in the opening of new areas for study and research."

"We intend to continue along this course," he added, "but in addition to numerical increase are many cultural challenges that give to the work of this university, and of all the pontifical universities in Rome, such pressing responsibilities."

"The world around us is rich in human and Christian resources that enable thousands of people to offer their lives in the service of others, often unseen but nonetheless fruitful. These persons are the salt of the earth," Msgr. Fazio added.

"We cannot, however, close our eyes to the complex problems that trouble contemporary culture and menace

respect for the human person," he stressed.

It is, then, "at this moment in history" that "we Catholics, other Christians, and all people of good will must find a clear and certain reference point: the teaching magisterium of our beloved Roman Pontiff, Benedict XVI."

This year's enrollment of 1,467 includes 930 students in the four divisions of the university (philosophy, theology, canon law, and communications) and 537 in the Institute of Advanced Religious Studies. Seventy-six countries are represented from every part of the world; in percentages: 21 Africa, 13 Asia, 23 Europe, 17 North and South America, and 2 Oceania.

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