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Holy Father welcomes UNIV 99 participants

In the Paul VI Hall this morning, Pope John Paul welcomed 4,000 students participating in the UNIV 99 Congress, the annual Holy Week encounter in Rome promoted throughout the world by the faithful of the prelature of Opus Dei.

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Addressing the young people on the theme of their Congress, "Solidarity and Citizenship," the Pope said in English, "I wish to start with the second of these two terms. In a book by Blessed Josemaria, ... we find a whole chapter with this very title: 'Citizenship'. In it we read the following: 'This is your duty as a Christian citizen: to contribute to making the love and freedom of Christ pre-eminent in every aspect of modern life - in culture, in the economy, in work and leisure. in family life, and life in society'.

"Blessed Josemaria speaks of the love and the freedom of Christ: this is freedom from sin, the struggle that, out of love for Christ ... Christians fight in themselves against everything that separates them from God and distances them from their brothers and sisters."

Then, speaking Spanish, the Holy Father highlighted the meaning of solidarity. "How can we not reflect on the immense human potential of peace, harmony and brotherhood that a coherent Christian life ... can cast on the transformation of the world? With a more careful analysis, Christian solidarity shows itself to be, more than a virtue per se, a spiritual conduct in which different virtues come together and, particularly, justice and charity. ... Justice, nevertheless, needs a soul. And the soul of justice is charity, charity which is at the service of every person."

"The first and most basic contribution which every believer is called to offer the new evangelization," stated John Paul II, "is to faithfully embody the Gospel in their own life: to be holy. Indeed, whoever seeks personal holiness without reserve, contributes

efficaciously to spreading good throughout the world."

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