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UNIV Remembers John Paul II

The memory of John Paul II will be especially strong this year for the thousands of university students in Rome during Holy Week for UNIV. With video of April 20 audience with Benedict XVI.

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During Holy Week this year, more than 3,000 university students from 200 academic centers around the world are taking part in the 44th UNIV Forum in Rome. This year they

will discuss the topic “Living freedom decisively” and take part in the Holy Week celebrations with Benedict XVI.

The memory of John Paul II will be especially strong this year. For 28 years he received the students coming to Rome for UNIV and urged them to enrich the world with their faith. “Rather than telling you things,” he told the students in 1980, “I want to see you as you are: young people who know how to love, who are spontaneous and authentic. The Church expects a lot from you!”

Messages of thanks

To thank Benedict XVI for the upcoming beatification and for the encouragement he gives young people to live their faith with determination, during the Wednesday audience with the Holy Father the university students will present him with a book with

thousands of messages of thanks to the new Blessed. A video will also be made with brief statements of thanks by many young people for what John Paul II has meant for their lives.

Forum activities

The UNIV Forum will take place in various parts of Rome on Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week. It will offer many cultural events including lectures, colloquia and round tables. Some of the notable speakers this year are : Alexandre Havard, president of the *Havard Virtuous Leadership Institute* (Russia); Jeffrey J. Langan, professor at Holy Cross College in South Bend (USA); Giuseppe Corigliano, author (Italy); Xavier Bosch, executive director of ReachOut! (UK); and Ettore Gotti, president of Istituto per le Opere di Religione (Vatican City).

Students for solidarity

One of the major events of the UNIV Forum each year is the presentation of activities of social solidarity that have been carried out by university students in countries around the world. These projects include works of reconstruction in the wake of natural disasters, classes in health and hygiene, and assistance for the sick. Countries where students have carried out projects this year include Haiti, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Cameroon, Vietnam, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Mexico, South Africa and Ecuador.