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UNIV 2002: Serving others through study and work

A Vatican Information Service article about the Pope's meeting with students on the the UNIV Holy Week trip.

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VATICAN CITY, March 25, 2002 (VIS) - The Pope received today in audience in the Paul VI Hall 4,000 students from thirty countries who are participating in the international university congress "UNIV 2002." The

theme this year is "work, study and service."

The Pope told the young people who take part in formative activities sponsored by the Opus Dei prelature that "study and work presuppose a personal attitude of availability and gift of self that we call, precisely, service. ... With this opening up to your brothers and sisters, beloved young people, each one of you perfects the fundamental aspects of the mission itself, thanks also to study and work."

He went on to say: "In this sense, how useful are the teachings of Blessed Josemaria Escriva, the centenary of whose birth we celebrate this year! He used to love to highlight on many occasions that in the Gospel Jesus is known as the 'carpenter', even as the 'son of a carpenter'.

"All the dignity of work," continued the Holy Father, recalling what Blessed Escriva wrote, "is founded in love." And he added: "When you are faithful to this spiritual itinerary and you work and study seriously, you will really become the salt of the earth and light of the world", which is the theme of the upcoming World Youth Day. "It is a hard road that often contrasts with the mentality of your contemporaries. It certainly means to go against the grain with respect to the behavior and ways that dominate today."

John Paul II urged the students to resist "the temptation of mediocrity and conformism. Only like this will you be able to make life a gift and a service for humanity; only in this way will you help to heal the wounds and the suffering of so many poor and marginalized people still present in this world of ours which is so technologically advanced."

He concluded by saying: "In order for all this to be possible, it is necessary to make prayer a priority. ... Be men and women of generous activity, but at the same time of profound contemplation of the mystery of God. Make the Eucharist the center of your day."

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