



Saint Josemaria Escriva

Founder of Opus Dei

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Twentieth anniversary of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

2005.1.15

A commemoration ceremony was held on January 10 to mark the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the “Roman Academic Center of the Holy Cross” by the decree *Dei Servus*, in 1985. The Hoffner Room at the University of the Holy Cross, where the ceremony took place, was crowded with lecturers, students and friends. The main speech was given by Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, now Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, and who was the Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education when the college was established as a Pontifical University in 1998.

“For the University of the Holy Cross the adjective “Pontifical” is not and has never been merely a decorative title. It is a quality which concerns this University deeply, inciting it to active fidelity to the Pope and, in union with the Pope, to the Church. That is the spirit which its founder, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, instilled in it, echoing the priestly and apostolic zeal of Saint Josemaría,” said the Cardinal.

In his speech he commented on several passages from the writings of the Founder of Opus Dei about the work of a university. He highlighted the importance given by Saint Josemaría to uniting moral rectitude and love for freedom with respect for the autonomy of the various fields of knowledge, and as a consequence, respect for the legitimate freedom of teachers and researchers. He also showed how Saint Josemaría stressed the need to put learning at the service of the person. He said, “No researcher who is motivated by genuine scientific interest, and in broader terms, no Christian, can, in Saint Josemaría’s words ‘be afraid of science, because all research, if it is truly scientific, tends to the truth’.”

Bishop Javier Echevarría, Prelate of Opus Dei and Chancellor of the University, referred in his speech to the scientific horizons of university work, which he described as “going deeper and deeper in the knowledge of God and mankind in order to attain personal unity of life and share in the Church’s task of evangelization, establishing a dialogue with the men and women of our time.”

The University Rector, Msgr. Mariano Fazio, presented the Acts of the Congress which was organised for the centenary of Saint Josemaría's birth. They consisted of fourteen volumes entitled "The Grandeur of Ordinary Life", published by the *Edizioni Università della Santa Croce* (EDUSC).

Finally, in the course of the proceedings Msgr. Jose Luis Illanes gave a presentation on the aims and activities of the "Instituto Historico San Josemaría Escrivá".

Twenty years of academic action

On January 9 1985, at the request of the then Chancellor, Msgr. Alvaro del Portillo, the Congregation for Catholic Education issued the decree *Dei Servus*, canonically establishing the Roman departments of the Faculties of Theology and Canon Law of the University of Navarre (Spain). A total of forty-one students were enrolled for the first academic year of the new "Centro Academico Romano de la Santa Cruz" as it was then known, and they came from 22 different countries.

Today the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross has Faculties of Theology, Canon Law, Philosophy, and Social and Institutional Communication. To these is added the *Istituto di Scienze Religiose all'Apollinare*. There are 1400 students enrolled this academic year, coming from 97 different countries.