



The Academy is the Scientific Senate of the Church

Address to Inaugurate the Academic Year of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences 'New Lynxes'



The Supreme Pontiff declares that the Academy is his 'senate of science' and observes that it is a vehicle for the spreading of the natural truths that faith seeks and promotes. He refers to a magisterium of science side by side with the Magisterium of Faith. In a reference to the troubled international situation and the threats to the cause of peace, he observes that peace is necessary to science just as science is necessary to truth: truth is what frees man from 'every evil'.

The Holy Father said that he was especially and doubly grateful and happy to be with his beloved sons from the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. Doubly pleased, he said, because he was not only inaugurating the new academic year but also, so to speak, the new President, Father Gemelli, who had, among other things, so opportunely called to mind the temporary but real merits of Msgr. Morano. Happy and grateful always to be among the members of his Academy for very important and profound reasons, it sufficed to say that while by the hidden divine plan the Magisterium of Faith rested with him, the magisterium of science could be perceived, in a certain sense, as resting with these beloved sons.

For this reason, His Holiness was also very happy to see, so well and so worthily represented at one time and in a particularly solemn occasion, his Sacred College, the Sacred College of Cardinals, which – and this was very well said – was his Hierarchical Senate: he was also able to say that the Academy of Sciences was his Academic Senate: and many could easily guess among the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff – alongside the intentions and preoccupations of science and the services which it could give and does give to Faith and truth – one could well have guessed that the Pope wanted to place within the scope of his Magisterium, that is the Magisterium of Faith,

also a particularly chosen and efficacious instrument for the spreading of the natural truths that Faith not only does not exclude, but manifestly supposes, requires and demands.

The Holy Father had mentioned the new President: thus by doing so he implicitly honoured the memory of the preceding deceased President, the dear Father Gianfranceschi, so favourably, so honourably, so justly noted and appreciated not only by all the Academicians but by the whole world of those who study and know what constitutes hard and truly worthwhile work. Nor was it only the honoured and dear memory of Father Gianfranceschi that His Holiness wished to evoke; he also believed the moment had come to recall actively and effectively the legacy of the great religious to the Academy: that is his intellectual heritage – or better his academic heritage because in this case it is in regard to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

Many times in his life, the dear Father spoke with the Pope about his almost fatherly ambitions concerning the beloved Academy; explaining how he would have liked it to be and how he would have shaped it and formed it according to those ideals of science and scientific culture which animated his whole spirit. And quite often too he explained his thoughts to the Pope and left these behind in his writings – which today are almost voices from the world beyond – so making his great hopes clearly understood, beginning with a hope for a larger and more comfortable home for the Academy. Beautiful, charming as dear Father Gemelli had described the Casina of Pius IV, but a little limited; so that it was right to say *dilatentur spatia* if not *charitatis* at least *veritatis*. His Holiness had immediately accepted that desire which was also his (perhaps in fact the wishes of the dear religious sprung from the desire of the Pope); and the present meeting hall, the room for many important gatherings, can, without a doubt be considered as the fulfilment of the first thought and desire of Father Gianfranceschi, fulfilled despite the proportions which the tyrannical poverty of space allowed.

But, Father Gianfranceschi's wishes went even further: and when, with all his refined filial piety he honoured, gladdened and consoled the Pope, he did not hesitate to imply that it would be a great, beautiful and useful thing if there were to be, so to speak, a spaciousness in financial means alongside the greater spaciousness of the new premises. And the Holy Father met with his wishes; he had thought of something which would help the financial condition of the Academy, if not the riches which it merited, then at least a reduction in its poverty, to allow it something greater in the scientific field of activity and above all in that very precious activity which consisted in stimulating the activity of others.

Yet all was not finished. Father Gianfranceschi worked out with particular care and with all delicacy that the scheme needed a new and more useful arrangement of the scientific personnel, of workers in this great task of science.

His Holiness was pleased to accept all these ideas and as he had already sought to accede to the wishes of the dear departed Father, so he also came to look – clearly with the advice and consultation of the new President – at the other and more important aspect, namely the rearrangement of the scientific personnel, of the scientific structure of the Academy. The Venerable Pontiff was happy to say that, with the help of Divine Providence and of good will, the Academy so dear to him seemed to be on a good road toward a definitive and complete reorganisation. Certainly, that would be the task – as has already been said – of the new

President, with those means and that assistance which his qualities put at his disposal; but also the Pope put himself at his disposal for such a useful and important restructuring to give the finishing touch to the renewal of the beloved Academy. Without doubt, there would be difficulties, but there is no difficulty which good will cannot overcome. Clearly it would be up to him, the President, to regulate in the meantime, in the best possible way, the actual period of transition of the Academy until everything is supplied, finished and ready so that the Holy Father can usefully document what will be done. Probably, therefore, it will be the role of the President not to call the next session for February in the normal way, but, at the right moment, newly to convene the Pontifical Academicians for the new meeting.

All this clearly stated to these beloved sons that thought of the Academy was not in the mind of the Pope only when he had the true joy of being among them, but he often thought about it and followed it and was directly involved in the Academy. It suffices to say that the Pope holds his solicitude for the Academy as perfectly justifiable as he regards it as the magisterium of science alongside the Magisterium of Faith, the senate of science alongside the Hierarchical Senate. It then seemed to the Venerable Pontiff that one could not meet in such a serene atmosphere, about such peaceful matters, for those pleasures of the mind which science obtains, without thinking about the thick, black menacing clouds upon the horizon: the national horizon and the international horizon in the largest sense of the word. Those beloved sons already had in mind what their Father, the Pope, felt; it really seemed to him that being concerned so peacefully and joyfully with what all the participants in the auditorium had brought together, well demonstrated – and not just in a manner of speaking – that despite the climate of gloomy clouds and despite the dangers which menaced on all sides, the Pope preserved a calm area within his soul which these tumults of external threats could not reach; and this confirmed that – as he had earlier already stated more than once – he always kept a hope which was a little optimistic (but not blindly or unjustifiably so), that from some part of this gloomy and menacing sky, the light could re-emerge and the rainbow of peace could be born and rise up, that peace, even that plenitude of peace – as the divine word so well says – based on justice and truth, that truth for which this meeting was called and for which all must live and work.

This peace, this need for national and international reconciliation – it is obvious – is necessary also for the benefit of study and science, to return to it. It is science which seeks always to serve the truth. And the truth is the source of all good: truth will free us from every evil; *veritas liberabit vos*:¹ and God is Truth. And it is precisely in this Name, God, that the Pope called together the participants; and it is in His Name that he had given to them every true joy of the spirit: it is in His Name that the Holy Father wished to bless those present, their studies and all the persons and things dear to each one.

This blessing the Pope therefore wished to extend to all members of the great and truly noble family of scholars, from the greatest to the most humble of scientific workers; that science which expresses the most beautiful harmonies and the most magnificent wonders that can be imagined: there are no others which can race or compete with it save goodness and love.

