



POPE CALLS FOR CLOSING FAITH-CULTURE GAP

Underlines Role of Universities in Serving Truth

VATICAN CITY, NOV. 18, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The breach between faith and culture must be overcome because Christian revelation is the ingredient to purify and renew culture and customs, Benedict XVI says.

The Pope called for the reintegration of faith and culture when he spoke today to the 23rd general assembly of the International Federation of Catholic Universities.

The assembly this year is marking the 30th anniversary of John Paul II's apostolic constitution "Sapientia Christiana," and the 60th anniversary of the Holy See's recognition of the federation's statutes.

The Holy Father referred to the apostolic constitution in his address, saying that "from its first expressions, [it] shows the urgency, still present, to overcome the existing breach between faith and culture, inviting to a greater commitment of evangelization, in the firm conviction that Christian revelation is a transforming force, destined to permeate ways of thinking, criteria of judgment, and norms of behavior."

Revelation is "able to illumine, purify and renew the customs of men and their cultures," he added, "and must constitute the central point of teaching and research."

Based on this link, the Pontiff encouraged theologians to have contact with other fields of learning, not only to give way to "fruitful dialogue," but also "for the purpose of offering a precious contribution to the mission that the Church is called to carry out in the world."

Benedict XVI further contended that as knowledge is increasingly more specialized, but also ever more marked by relativism, "it is even more necessary to be open to the wisdom that comes from the Gospel."

"Man, in fact, is incapable of understanding himself fully and the world without Jesus Christ: Only he illumines his true dignity, his vocation, his ultimate destiny and opens the heart to a solid and lasting hope," the Pope recalled.

Evangelizing

Universities' commitment to serve the truth is a share in the Church's mission to evangelize, the Holy Father continued.

In light of this, he said, it is important "never to lose sight of the end pursued -- to be an instrument of the evangelical proclamation."

In fact, the Pontiff proposed, time engaged in "higher ecclesiastical studies can be compared with the experience that the apostles lived with Jesus: Being with him, they learned the truth, to become later [his] heralds everywhere."

Benedict XVI said that the 60th anniversary of the federation is a chance to "thank God who has guided our steps" and a call to "take from one's own history a further impetus to renew the will to serve the Church."

Referring to "Caritas in Veritate," he added: "In a culture that manifests 'a lack of wisdom and reflection, a lack of thinking capable of formulating a guiding synthesis,' Catholic universities, faithful to their own identity that considers Christian inspiration as valid, are called to promote a 'new humanistic synthesis,' a learning that is 'wisdom capable of directing man in the light of his first beginnings and his final ends,' a learning illumined by faith."

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On ZENIT's Web page:

Full translation of Pope's address: www.zenit.org/article-27604?l=english