

The Courage of Intelligence

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On October 6th 2014 the Gregorian University opened the New Year with a Mass of the Holy Spirit at which the Father Rector presided. Here we quote some passages from the Inaugural speech for the opening of the 464th Academic year since the foundation of the Roman College

Dearest Friends,
At the beginning of this new academic year, I would like to commend to you all a path of faith and hope along the way to our common duty as a university community. Today I would like to underline three aspects.

◀ *Progressing from one year to another*

In view of our academic continuity, we would like to follow the suggestions that the AVEPRO external evaluation commission expressed last June, when it met with our professoriate, students and the members of the administration personnel. The very positive evaluation encourages us to continue with renewed impetus.

A few days ago, the meeting of the University professoriate was held in the renovated Great Hall. The modernization, planned and managed by architect Stella with such exceptional meticulousness, was carried out in the summer. At the same time, the work required by the transfer of the Centre for Child Protection from its premises to those in Rome that Father General has made available in the Collegio Bellarmino was carried out. The next few months will see the commencing of the activities of the Rome Centre for Child Protection, under the executive director Professor Karlijn Demasure.





This year we are also delighted to welcome ten Jesuits who are joining our professoriate – another clear signal of the commitment of the Society of Jesus and its undertaking of the mission that the Holy Father has entrusted to us, and which we want to carry out to the best of our ability.

● *Taking on our responsibilities*

We are not just spectators of today's world and history. All of us have a keen awareness of the current tragedies, slaughters and conflicts that seem to be limitless.

However, this situation calls upon us all to live our academic mission with great resolve. We must be fully aware that the intellectual enterprise must never divert us from the real world in which we live. Due to our incarnate faith in the Word, and to everything we share with all people of goodwill, we can never yield to the logic of heedless violence. [...] The current challenges require

Above:
The Pontifical North American College Choir animated the liturgy.

● Photo by
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not only considerable knowledge and understanding of situations that are often extremely complex, but also the courage of intelligence, in order to resist the temptation of simplistic reasoning or slogans, which are already too widespread. Academic work entails a dimension of resistance through reason and faith. This is a long-term task and calls for a free spirit and pursues the exacting path of shared deliberation. This is our standpoint as a University, if we aspire to build a future of justice, peace and respect for the absolute dignity of the human being as a child of God.

◀ *Pursuing our mission*

Today more than ever are we driven to “give an account of the hope that is within us”. This is not just a question asked of us: it is a requirement that is central to faith itself. This is why research is an inherent aspect of “our” mission. Research is not just the professor’s responsibility: it is the responsibility of every academic unit and

of the entire University. Academic work is always performed with discretion, and sometimes in silence...; superficiality and carelessness, words without deep roots and low-cost gratification do not go far. The path we are called upon to follow is that of humble and deep thought, conscious of the fact that reflection is a never-ending journey, as we are aware that the academic mission leads to the frontiers of cultures and societies. ▶