

**Catholic Christian Outreach
Second Annual Fundraising Dinner
Monday, March 8, 2010
Westin Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario**

**Address of
His Eminence William Cardinal Levada
Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith**

Mind, Heart and Mission: Handing on the Catholic Faith on Campus

Dear young people of Catholic Christian Outreach, together with your many friends and benefactors, you do me the honour of welcoming me as a guest and inviting me to speak to you.

I greet Archbishop Pedro Lopez Quintana, Apostolic Nuncio to Canada. Your Excellency, you have been here only a few days – and already the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has come to visit! I pray that your time in Canada representing our Holy Father will be abundantly blessed. Your predecessor, Archbishop Luigi Ventura, was very close to Catholic Christian Outreach, and it is a Providential blessing that so soon after your arrival that you are welcomed by these marvellous young people.

I greet His Grace, Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, who has made me welcome in this archdiocese. Archbishop Prendergast, in addition to his duties here in Ottawa, serves the universal Church in the most important work of liturgical translations through his membership on the *Vox Clara* Committee. That work assists the Holy See in translating the Roman Missal into English and will shape how English-speaking Catholics around the world worship God for generations to come. He deserves our gratitude for a difficult but essential task.

I thank Father Raymond de Souza for his introduction. I should say a word about Father de Souza. When I accepted his invitation to Canada to visit Queen's University, he immediately added another request: *While you are here, would you speak at the annual dinner for Catholic Christian Outreach?* I thought that was pushing it. So he explained: *It's the best thing happening in the Church in Canada!* That's lofty praise. Father de Souza has been called "Canada's finest Catholic commentator". So if he says this the most vibrant sign of the new evangelization, then it would seem to be worth a visit. I am glad I came.

My topic tonight was proposed by CCO: *Why is the Catholic faith worth passing on?* It is a good question. Let me give you a short answer: Because it is true.

I will give you a longer answer too. I have entitled my remarks: **Mind, Heart and Mission: Handing on the Catholic Faith on Campus.**

Now, before I get to that longer answer, I will tell you a little about the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF).

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, as it is called now, was founded in 1542 as part of the necessary reform of the Church in the 16th century. The 16th century was a time of religious turmoil and division of the Protestant Reformation. It became clear that it was necessary for a special organ of the Holy See to guard the faith, identify errors and promote the truth. The original name given to this new body was the Sacred Congregation of the Universal Inquisition. Early in its life it became known as the Holy Office, to this day the name of the *palazzo* which houses its offices and the *piazza* before it. In 1908, the name was officially changed to the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office.

In 1965, after the Second Vatican Council, it received its current name. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger served as its Prefect from 1981 to April 2005, when he was elected Pope Benedict XVI. The charter given to our Congregation is the following: “the duty proper to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is to promote and safeguard the doctrine on the faith and morals throughout the Catholic world.”

Here in Canada’s capital, just a short walk from the Parliament buildings, the words of Venerable Pope John Paul II in his 1991 Encyclical *Centesimus annus* can have an enduring impact: *Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and sceptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitude which correspond to democratic forms of political life. Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends. It must be observed in this regard that if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power (Centesimus annus #46).*

Can anyone doubt that that is what is happening – in Canada, in the United States, in Europe? Pope Benedict has described this as “the dictatorship of relativism”, the phrase he made famous on the eve of his election as Bishop of Rome. The dictatorship of relativism does not so much seek to impose one view on everybody, but rather to drive from political life, academic life and cultural life anyone who refuses to concede that all truths are relative, or to put it more bluntly, that there is no truth which can be known with certainty. Against this relativism and scepticism, the Christian believer proclaims that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. It is a direct confrontation with the dictatorship of relativism.

So let me return to the brief answer I gave – *The Catholic faith is worth handing on because it is true* – and expand on it in a way that is relevant to your work as Catholic missionaries on campus.

“Mind” on the campus

The university exists to search for the truth in the various disciplines of human knowledge. While we divide up fields of knowledge in order to better research the particular truths under investigation, reality cannot be divided against itself. Something we know as true in one discipline cannot be utterly contradicted by a truth in another discipline. In this academic pursuit, the truths of Christian faith have a place. It would be absurd to exclude from our common life the truths of physics or philosophy, or the insights of literature or music. In the same way it impoverishes our common life when the truths of faith are excluded from campus. Indeed, in response to the deeper questions of human existence, to exclude the truths of faith is to exclude a rich patrimony of human wisdom.

So the first thing to say about the Catholic mission on campus is that it participates in the mission of the university: *Scientific and technological discoveries create an enormous economic and industrial growth, but they also inescapably require the correspondingly necessary search for meaning in order to guarantee that the new discoveries be used for the authentic good of individuals and of human society as a whole (Ex corde ecclesiae, #7).*

We know well that technical mastery without ethical guidance can turn man’s discoveries against himself. We know that political philosophies untethered from the dignity of the person can be lethal. We know that economic enterprises removed from the practice of the virtues can increase human suffering and instability. In all fields, the world needs more truth not less, and so we decline to cooperate in our exclusion from the university campus. We hand on the Catholic faith because it is true, and it belongs in the place where the truth is sought.

“Heart” on the campus

The search for truth might appear to remain abstract. This brings me to my second point. We hand on the Catholic faith because the truth of our faith is personal. It is personal in its object: Jesus Christ. And it is personal in its subject: the believer, the human person.

The university world in which our students live is vastly different from the days when I was young. The sheer volume of information, the constant communication between students, and the connectedness of the campus to the outside world means that students live in a vast ocean of information. The Catholic faith proposes a standard against which all this information can be measured. Last summer, the Holy Father’s encyclical on economic questions, *Caritas in veritate*, met with a very favourable response in many quarters normally quite distant from Catholic teaching. It received such a response not only because it spoke to the economic problems of our time, but also because it presented a richer view of the human person. It provided a context and a criterion against which economic matters could be evaluated – the standard of the human

person, created in the image of God and so endowed with an inherent dignity that deserves to be recognized in boardrooms and factories alike.

I know that campus missionaries do not set out to integrate scientific knowledge with Catholic metaphysics as they set up their tables in the student centre. But that it is what they do at the personal level. They help students discover the truth of Jesus Christ, and to see all their other endeavours in light of that relationship – what CCO calls the “ultimate relationship”.

We hand on the Catholic faith because the mind of the university needs it. But the heart of the university needs it too. The hearts of the young yearn for meaning, for some purpose toward which they can direct their energies and talents, for some cause to which they can devote their lives. The campus mind seeks knowledge, but the campus heart seeks a great mission. We all recall the stirring words of our Holy Father Benedict XVI at his inaugural Mass in April 2005: *If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. No! Only in this friendship are the doors of life opened wide. Only in this friendship is the great potential of human existence truly revealed. Only in this friendship do we experience beauty and liberation. And so, today, with great strength and great conviction, on the basis of long personal experience of life, I say to you, dear young people: Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return. Yes, open, open wide the doors to Christ – and you will find true life.*

We hand on the Catholic faith because it offers something that every young person seeks: authentic, enduring friendship. It may surprise some to realize how much loneliness there is in our universities. The hearts of the young, not just their minds, need the beautiful friendship that the Catholic Church offers with Jesus Christ.

“Mission” on the campus

I would add a third reason why we hand on the Catholic faith. It is because the Lord Jesus commanded us to do so: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...*

This was not a task for the apostles alone. It is not a task today for the pastors of the Church alone. It is a task for every baptized Christian, and therefore it is a duty that includes the university campus. The testimony of many university chaplains is that the modern, secular campus is truly exotic mission territory.

I was impressed to hear that CCO missionaries study *Redemptoris missio* as part of their training. That was the 1990 encyclical of Pope John Paul II on the Church’s missionary activity. Listen to the urgency of what the Venerable John Paul II wrote then: *evangelization is the “primary service the Church can render to every individual and to all humanity in the modern world” ... “the moment has come to commit all of the Church’s energies to a new evangelization... No believer in Christ, no institution of the*

Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples” (Redemptoris missio, 2-3).

We might ask ourselves: Where are the Church’s energies mobilized for this work of evangelization today? It is essential that these energies are directed to our campuses, for if we do not reach our young leaders today, the future will look bleak indeed. Yet there is nothing bleak about the experience of those who do preach the Gospel to our young people. The Church as a whole has learned this lesson from the World Youth Days – our experience as Americans in Denver in 1993 and yours in Toronto in 2002 still remains vivid. Some of you were present at the last World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008. Perhaps you remember the words of the Holy Father at the concluding Mass: *Dear young people, let me now ask you a question. What will you leave to the next generation? Are you building your lives on firm foundations, building something that will endure? Are you living your lives in a way that opens up space for the Spirit in the midst of a world that wants to forget God, or even rejects him in the name of a falsely-conceived freedom? How are you using the gifts you have been given, the “power” which the Holy Spirit is even now prepared to release within you? What legacy will you leave to young people yet to come? What difference will you make?*

Those questions pertain to young people in a particular way. They presume energy and excitement for the future and the great treasure consigned to young people – the capacity for great ideals and an eagerness to make sacrifices for them. University campuses are full of such young people. Many of them do not know Jesus Christ; many of them do not know that in Him they will find the one ideal which never fades, the one cause that will never disappoint, the one model who will never betray them. The mission on campus is essential because there are so many there who desire a great mission. At the beginning of the WYD Mass in Sydney, the local archbishop, Cardinal George Pell spoke of that immense crowd: . *We see young men and women who are just now discovering their mission in life. One mission is better than a thousand options, and we are encouraged by their high ideals in embracing the mission the Lord has chosen for them.*

We hand on the Catholic faith on campus because there are eager souls looking for that one mission among a thousand options. The mission we propose is greater than any other on offer.

I conclude with a personal note about our work at the CDF. Much of our work involves identifying problems, correcting errors, and disciplining abuses. But we do all that so that we can propose the truth of Jesus Christ. In this we have no better model than my predecessor, our Holy Father. For 24 years he worked vigorously to correct errors, but never lost sight of proposing the truth. Had he never been elected pope, the great achievement of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* would itself have stood as a remarkable legacy. Now, even with his heavy burden of administrative duties, the Holy Father teaches brilliantly, proposing the Catholic faith anew.

I remember being with the Holy Father during his visit to Washington in 2007, when he addressed these words to the U.S. Bishops: *“In a society that rightly values*

*personal liberty, the Church needs to promote at every level of her teaching—in catechesis, preaching, seminary and university instruction—an apologetics aimed at affirming the truth of Christian revelation, the harmony of faith and reason, and a sound understanding of freedom, seen in positive terms as a liberation both from the limitations of sin and **for** an authentic and fulfilling life.”* Such words not only challenge us, but encourage us in our apostolate to today’s campus.

At the end of the first volume of *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict summarizes his main point with the clarity for which he is known. As we await the publication of the second volume, permit me to conclude with words from the end of the first volume: *In the end, man needs just one thing, in which everything else is included; but he must first delve beyond his superficial wishes and longings in order to learn what he truly needs and truly wants. He needs God.... Jesus gives us “life” because he gives us God.*

Yes, we need God. That is why the Catholic faith is worth handing on.

Thank you, and God bless you.