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John Paul II encourages young people to renew the language of music

Closely united to the Holy Father, some 4,000 college students attending the university congress UNIV 2005 heard a message from the Pope read to them by Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, Sub-secretary of State, in the Vatican's Paul VI audience hall.

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Rome, March 21, 2005. About 4,000 young people were present today in the Paul VI audience hall to hear a message John Paul II had written to those taking part in the 38th UNIV congress to study this year's topic: "Projecting the culture: the language of music."

"Like all the languages of art, music can bring people closer to God," said the Holy Father. "But at the same time, art sometimes transmits a concept of the human being, of love, of happiness that fails to correspond to the truth of God's plan. It is up to you, dear young people, to renew the languages of art and culture, to summon the courage to reject behavior and amusement that is full of excesses and noise."

As in many of the formational activities promoted by the Opus Dei Prelature under the guidance of its Prelate Bishop, the Holy Father went

on, let us recall that "the vocation of the lay faithful is personal sanctity and the Christian invigoration of temporal realities. For you, then, dear students and teachers, work and study must be 'a continuous prayer that expresses the same intimate words in the different music of each day,' as St. Josemaria liked to say, 'for it is very much our mission to transform the prose of this life into verse, into heroic poetry.'

"May Mary most holy," the Pope concluded, "help you to meet her Son Jesus in the liturgy of Holy Week, in the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. The Virgin Mother of God, Woman of the Eucharist, leads each one of you to this meeting with Christ." The complete message of John Paul II can be found at www.vatican.va.

Prior to hearing the Pope's message, the young people viewed a film of

John Paul's meeting with the participants of UNIV 1985.

In her brief talk, the president of UNIV 2005, Jennifer Wamuyu Gitahi, a judge on Kenya's Supreme Court, expressed the resolution "to bring the joy, the smile of the Pope to everyone our age, as we have just seen it again in so moving a way at the UNIV of twenty years ago--when many of us were little children. We want to be his voice as we offer to our friends--thousands of young people in our universities, in the lower schools, and everywhere--his encouragement not to be afraid to seek the face of Christ." The complete text of this talk is at www.icu.it/univ.

Bishop Javier Echevarria, Prelate of Opus Dei, also attended the session.

What is UNIV?

The Institute for University Cooperation (ICU) began holding

annual UNIV congresses in 1968, inspired and encouraged by St. Josemaria Escriva, the founder of Opus Dei. Every year since then, the Roman Pontiff has met with the participants, first Paul VI, and then John Paul II. Their messages are at www.icu.it/univ.

Students from thirty Italian universities and more than two hundred others from across the world have come together for a week to consider topics proposed by ICU and treated in lectures, seminars, poster sessions, discussions, study groups, and round tables located in different parts of Rome. This year's topic is "Projecting the culture: the language of music." Topics treated in the preceding 37 congresses and general information about UNIV can also be found at www.icu.it/univ.

"We want to assure the Pope that his words will be the subject of our

reflections throughout this week; his messages have always been the high point of UNIV congresses," according to Carlo De Marchi, general secretary of ICU and UNIV coordinator.

The Prelature of Opus Dei organizes activities that provide complementary opportunities for Christian formation for UNIV participants. The congresses also present an occasion to see Rome and explore the pathways of Church history since the first centuries.

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