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Discourse of John Paul II to UNIV 2004

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Dear young people!

I am happy to receive you again this year, and I extend to each one of you a cordial welcome. You have come to Rome from different countries and from different universities to live Holy Week together and participate in the UNIV International Congress. This will help you to put into practice the Christian formation you have acquired in the activities the Opus

Dei Prebature carries out in your cities and universities.

I also greet with affection those who have accompanied you and the priests who guide you spiritually. Yesterday, Palm Sunday, we heard these words resound in St. Peter's square: "We want to see Jesus." This is the theme I addressed to the young people of the entire world on World Youth Day.

May the desire to see Jesus never be extinguished, dear friends, in the deepest recesses of your hearts! Learn to overcome every superficial emotion, resisting the seductions of pleasure and the ambitions of egoism and comfort.

In your International Congress you are discussing a subject of great timeliness: "Projecting Culture: The Language of Advertising." There is a great need to know how to use the appropriate language to transmit

positive messages, and to make noble ideals and initiatives known in an attractive way. It is also imperative to discern the limits and pitfalls of the expressions proposed to us by the media. At times, advertisements offer a superficial and inadequate view of life, of the person, of the family, and of morality.

In order to carry out this demanding mission, it is necessary to follow Jesus closely in prayer and contemplation. Moreover, to be His friends in the world in which we live calls for an effort to go against the current.

In the university, the school, and the places where you gather, do not fear to be nonconformists, whenever that is necessary! I invite you in a special way to spread the Christian view of the virtue of purity, knowing how to show your peers that this virtue “is born of love and is not an obstacle to

pure love, to the force and joy of youth” (St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, *Christ Is Passing By*, 40).

This world seeks Jesus, often without realizing it. In this world, dear young people of UNIV, you are a leaven of hope. In one of our first meetings, I expressed this wish to your friends: “If man walks with God, he is capable of changing the world” (*Discorso all’UNIV*, in *L’Osservatore Romano*, [13-IV-1982], 1, 3). I repeat it to you today: to improve the world, commit yourselves, above all, to change yourselves by means of the Sacrament of Penance and intimate identification with Christ in the Eucharist.

I entrust each one of you and your families to Mary, who never ceased to contemplate the Face of her Child Jesus. Upon each one of you I invoke the protection of St. Josemaría as well as the patron saints of your

countries. And from my heart, I bless you.

Paul VI audience hall, Vatican City

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