The Pope to UNIV: "We contemplate Christ crucified"

At the end of his catechesis on the virtue of patience, Pope Francis greeted the young people at UNIV, who came to Rome for Holy Week.

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The young participants of UNIV attended Pope Francis' general audience in the Paul VI Hall on 27 March.

During the audience, the Pope greeted them, saying: "I extend a warm welcome to [...] the participants of UNIV 2024. I invite you to live these holy days in contemplation of Christ crucified. By his example, He teaches us to love and to be patient, in joyful expectation of the Resurrection. May Jesus bless you and the Blessed Virgin watch over you. Thank you."

[Read the full text of the audience, on the virtue of patience](#).

As in other years during Holy Week, around 3,000 students will gather in Rome for UNIV 2024, an international meeting of university students who want to spend Holy Week and Easter alongside the Pope. The students will participate in the liturgical ceremonies of Holy Week

and meet the Prelate of Opus Dei, Monsignor Fernando Ocáriz.

The UNIV Forum and UNIV Lab, themed "The Human Factor," will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday. Students will reflect on technical advances in artificial intelligence, human intelligence, creativity, and what it means to be human.

One of the organizers of UNIV Forum, Jeffrey Pawlick (USA), explains this year's theme thus: "Current artificial intelligence has capabilities that seemed fantastic as little as five years ago, like image generation, program writing, and the ability to respond to complex requests. Some of these capabilities mimic essential dimensions of human experience to an astonishing degree. Although we understand that simulating human behavior is not equivalent to being human,

technological advances urge us to reflect more deeply on what it means to be human. What is the human factor?"

Ana Fernández, from the UNIV Inspire team, says that the human factor "is a fundamental issue. We need to stop and ask ourselves where we are going and how we want to get there. We seek to create a space for reflection so that students can dialogue with experts in different disciplines, pondering how to contribute to the humanization of different social and professional environments."

UNIV 2024 includes cultural events in various places in Rome: conferences, seminars, exhibitions, and round tables with speakers such as William Hurlbut, Professor at Stanford University and Director of "The Boundaries of Humanity" Institute (USA); Julián Larrauri, Oscar-

nominated producer (Spain); Anne Boily, strategic consultant on responsible AI (Canada); Allannah Karas, Professor at the University of Miami (USA); Claudio Pedone, Director of Geriatrics at Campus Biomedical University (Italy); and Lucy Molinar, journalist and former Minister of Education (Panama).

The UNIV meetings were born in 1968 with inspiration and encouragement from St. Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei. Over the last 55 years, more than 100,000 university students have participated in them. The students participate in an audience with the Pope every year, and the audience this March 27 will be particularly significant because of Pope Francis' urgent calls for peace and the dramatic situation of many people in Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Gaza, South Sudan, and around the world. Participants will contribute to

financial and humanitarian assistance for the crisis in the Holy Land through Caritas Jerusalem.

The text of those meetings, themes from past years, and other information, can be found at www.univforum.org and www.univinspire.org.

The Prelature of Opus Dei organizes activities of Christian formation that complement the UNIV program. For the participants, it is an opportunity to experience Holy Week with more intense prayer, get to know the city of Rome, participate in guided tours of museums and art exhibitions, and visit places important to the history of the Church.