



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF JOHN PAUL II TO THE RECTOR MAGNIFICENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA

To the illustrious

Prof. Pier Ugo Calzolari

Rector Magnificent of the University of Bologna With deep gratitude I accept the tribute of the University of Bologna, which on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of my Pontificate, has wished to confer upon me the *Sigillum Magnum* of the *Alma Mater Studiorum*. I am especially honoured by this esteemed recognition, considering that the Athenaeum of Bologna is one of the oldest and most famous in the world. The university environment and the young students especially have always had a privileged place in my pastoral concern. As a priest and a Bishop I enthusiastically expended great energy on them. Later, as Bishop of Rome I have not missed meeting the academic communities on every suitable occasion, not only in Rome and in Italy, but also during my Apostolic Journeys. Broadening the horizon even more, I like to think that this attestation of esteem is motivated by the spiritual attention I have paid to culture and to its fundamental importance for the advancement of human beings and the progress of history. "*Genus humanum arte et ratione vivit*". [the human race lives by art and reason], as I had the opportunity to say in 1980 in Paris, in my Address to the members of UNESCO (2 June 1980, n. 17; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 23 June 1980, p. 11), I repeat to you now, Rector Magnificent, addressing in spirit the entire community of the *Alma Mater Studiorum* of Bologna. There is an inseparable reciprocity between the education of the human being and culture: indeed, if a human being is educated by the quality of the culture in which he or she lives, it is also true that the value of culture is measured by its ability to enable men and women to develop in accordance with their exalted vocation, that is, to help them become more and more fully human (cf. *ibid.*, n. 11, p. 10). Therefore, as I renew the expression of my gratitude for the *Sigillum Magnum* award, which I will always treasure as a rare document of the bonds that bind me to the university world, I encourage you and the entire Academic Senate to ensure that scientific and cultural activity is always motivated by a sincere passion for the human being, and ordered to his harmonious and integral advancement. To this end, I assure you of my special remembrance in prayer, and very gladly invoke upon you, the Professors and the students of the University of Bologna an abundance of heavenly blessings. *From the Vatican, 3 July 2004*

JOHN PAUL II
