



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II
TO THE ADMINISTRATORS AND PROFESSORS
OF THE KRAKOW ACADEMY OF MINING AND METALLURGY**

Monday, 3 April 2000

I extend a cordial welcome to all those present. I am pleased to be able to host such a distinguished group of men of science led by the Minister for Education. I thank the Rector Magnificent for his kind words to me. I greet the Pro-Rectors, the Deans of the Faculties and all the professors, members of the Senate of the Academy of Mining and Metallurgy who have come here.

We listened to the "*laudatio*", for which I thank Prof. Ryszard Tadeusiewicz. My merits in the field of science and technology are certainly not as grand as would appear from the professor's speech. It is true, however, that I have always been convinced that humanistic disciplines such as philosophy, theology, history and literary criticism, those closest to my heart, could not fully describe this complex being that is man, or fully express the reality in which he exists and which he himself creates, without recourse to the natural sciences and technology. For this reason, from the beginning of my contacts with the academic centres of Kraków, I have also tried, as far as possible, to include these fields among my interests. Many well-disposed and patient people have helped me - students, teachers and professors - who have even created their own particular milieu committed to a deeper reflection on man within the broad context of advances in modern physics, chemistry, biology or technology. These contacts did not cease when I was called to the See of Peter. Every so often we meet at Castel Gandolfo.

When on those occasions I listen to the reports and discussions of the scholars, a special *wonder about the wisdom of the Creator* is aroused in me: this Creator who inscribed in the cosmos numerous laws of nature that are at the basis of its stability and, at the same time, of its continuous development. On the other hand, a meeting of this kind with the sciences, following their successes and their new perspectives and challenges, allows us *to see how man is open to the infinite*. It seems that precisely in the area of the natural sciences we see more clearly how the

development of research techniques and methodological apparatus always creates new possibilities of knowledge, new possibilities too for going beyond the limits of human reason.

In a certain sense this consideration calls man to give glory to the Creator, who not only *left a sign of his own infinity in the world*, but also enabled man - after making him in his own image and likeness - *to delve more and more deeply into this infinity* through rational knowledge of the world, until he meets the Infinite himself. As St Paul writes: "What can be known about God is plain ... because God has shown it.... Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made" (cf. *Rom* 1: 19-20). In this sense, the sciences serve men not only as a source of technological development and unceasing improvement of the conditions of life on earth. They can also become bearers of the truth about God, the instrument of his self-revelation to man.

I thank the whole Kraków Academy of Mining and Metallurgy for its kindness in awarding me the degree of "*Doctor honoris causa*". My wish for all the professors and all the students is that their ever deeper knowledge of the world will also bring them joyously closer to the goodness and wisdom of God. I pray that the scientific successes of those who work at the Academy will make its name famous in the world and serve the growth of industry and of the entire economy in our homeland.

I cordially bless everyone here and the whole community of the Kraków Academy of Mining and Metallurgy.

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