

Pope Francis with the University students



The University of Bologna has been a laboratory of humanism for almost a thousand years said Pope Francis speaking to the students during his short visit to Bologna on Sunday.

The word Universitas which entails the idea of a 'whole' includes students from Italy, many European countries and even from South America, who work on two ideals that of 'vertical' - imbibing knowledge and 'horizontal' – sharing the research done for common good the Pope noted.

The Pope particularly focused on three rights:

Right to culture.

The Holy Father referred not just to the sacred right of everyone to study but also to the fact that today the 'right to culture' means to protect wisdom, which is human and humanizing knowledge. For Pope Francis learning serves to ask questions and to seek meaning in life. He said, one also has the right and not to be distracted in order to make strong choices through research, knowledge and sharing.

Culture he said is what nurtures and makes us grow. Today he said we do not need loud screaming but words that reach the mind and heart. He called them to devote themselves to education with passion, that is to 'draw out' the best from each one for the good of all. He called them to assert a culture of humanity that recognizes merits and rewards sacrifices.

Right to hope.

Many today the pope said, experience loneliness and restlessness, feeling the heavy air of abandonment. So it is necessary to provide this right to hope, which he said is not to be invaded by the daily rhetoric of fear and hatred, or be overwhelmed false news. It is the right he said for the young to grow free of the fear of future and know that there are beautiful and lasting realities in life and so it is worth getting involved. It is a right he said to believe that true love is not disposable and that our labour is not a mirage to achieve, but a promise that needs to be sustained.

He wished that the university classrooms be a haven of hope, where the students learn to be responsible for themselves and for the world. He urged them to feel the responsibility for the future of our common home.

Right to Peace.

Peace is both a right and a duty, inscribed in the heart of humanity the pope affirmed. Referring to Europe's quest for unity, he noted how the two wars obscured the vision of peace in the continent.

Denouncing war as useless massacre he called the students to pursue ways of nonviolence and paths of justice which foster peace.

The Pope invoked the right to peace as a right of all to resolve conflicts without violence. To the students who have come to study law this is a challenge he said to affirm the rights of people and peoples, the weaker ones, those rejected and the creation our common home.

In conclusion he called them not to believe those who say fighting for the right is useless and nothing will change. Instead he urged them to dream big not in their sleep but in broad daylight.

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