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Universitas, an unbounded inquiry

For more than 40 years, the UNIV Forum has offered young people from various religions, cultures, countries and academic disciplines the opportunity to study and dialogue over contemporary academic topics. Since the first gatherings, more than 85,000 university students have participated in the UNIV Forum in Rome. Their experiences have had repercussions among their friends and colleagues, and back in their respective universities.

Since its birth in the dawn of the second millennium of the Christian era, the University has been a place of interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogue. UNIV 2009 continues being, for young people from around the world, an international *universitas*, a place of exchange and research for university students who seek to commit themselves to an ideal, who want to serve society.

Benedict XVI, in his speeches to the University of Regensburg and La Sapienza in Rome, has called for us to overcome the fear of speaking the truth in moral, scientific, humanistic and social spheres. The objective idea of truth does not clash with one's personal freedom, nor with the basic respect for the beliefs of others. UNIV 2009 seeks to challenge preconceptions, and to suggest that, in the *universitas*, a real dialogue is possible among people and among ways of knowledge: a dialogue between faith and reason, science and revelation, technology and ethics, believers and non-believers.

Some of the possible areas of research for UNIV 2009 are:

- **Scientific Research and Commitment to Social Causes** for university students
- **Integral Lifestyle and Business Ethics** after *Enron, Parmalat, Societ  Generale...*
- The need to learn the **art of dialogue** (rhetoric) in the university; to truly listen to the arguments of others; to express empathy in one's relationships, in order to understand the *reasons of the heart*; to affirm with clarity one's own arguments without imposing a point of view: to seek the truth together.
- A priority for university students: to **learn languages** of communication. Web 2.0, blogs, television, film, speeches, scientific conferences, lobbies, and international organizations. It is not just a matter of "communication techniques", but the art of persuasion, in order to make oneself understood, with friendship and respect.
- How to study the **meeting point between two distinct disciplines**: bioethics and new medical techniques; artificial intelligence; social solidarity and global economy; the right to privacy and international security; freedom of expression and the respect for the beliefs of others; quality of life and the human rights of the *weaker* (children, the handicapped, the elderly, etc.)

These are just a few examples. The proposed goal of the Organizing Committee of UNIV Forum 2009 is to open up an international debate, between both professors and students, on the role of the university today.

The theme for the 42nd International University Forum UNIV 2009 is

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For more information in the coming weeks, go to: www.univforum.org