

# THE ANGELICUM

The Pontifical University of  
St. Thomas Aquinas

JULY 2020

100 YEAR  
ANNIVERSARY

OF THE BIRTH OF THE ANGELICUM'S MOST ILLUSTRIOUS ALUMNUS,  
SAINT JOHN PAUL II





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## **Publisher**

Fr. Benedict Croell, O.P.

## **Chief Editor & Communications Strategist**

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Marta Neri

## **Graphic Design and Layout**

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Fr. Michał Paluch, O.P., Rector Magnificus

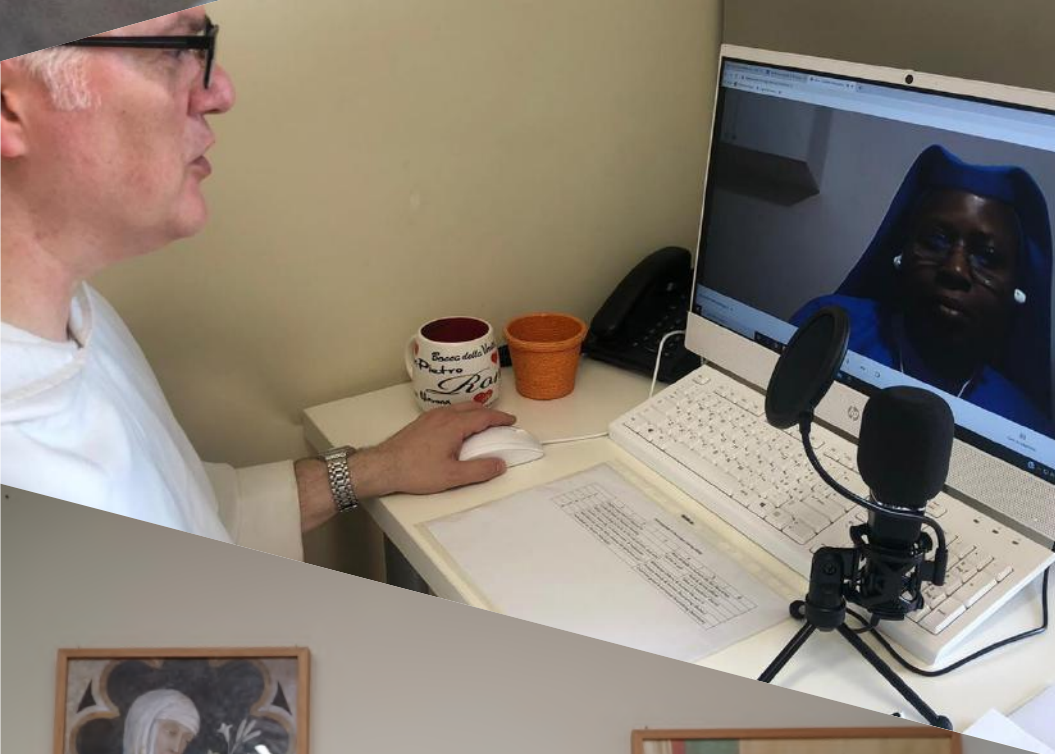
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# Do not be afraid!



Dear Friends,

In the midst of this uncertain time of sickness, death and isolation I send you the words of our Lord, “Do not be afraid!” When so many are deprived of the grace of the sacraments, I assure you that the Dominicans of the Angelicum still have the privilege of presenting the needs of our dispersed academic community and benefactors to the Lord in the daily Eucharist. We continue to lift you up in prayer as well as all of those who serve us in various ways to make life go on. This prayer draws us into the broken body of Christ suffering around the world. St. John Paul II told us that this suffering Christ reveals the radical mercy of God (*Dives in Misericordia* 8).

We are often reminded, in times like these, of the wisdom and insight of our beloved St. John Paul II, who began his pontificate with the same words of Jesus, “Be not afraid!” Filled with the Spirit and an unwavering courage, born of the struggles of his young life and his years fighting against a culture of death, he understood that engaging the culture was paramount to Christ’s mission today. He wanted to make the Church the home and school of communion (*Novo Millennio Ineunte* 43).

God’s plan is perfect and will not be thwarted, bringing good out of evil. In the midst of this pandemic the Angelicum was privileged to launch the St. John Paul II Institute of Culture on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. This new institute for the whole Church flows from the grateful hearts and generous efforts of Polish lay faithful in collaboration with the Saint Nicholas Foundation, the Futura Iuventa Foundation and the Angelicum. As a son of Poland and Rector of our university, I am honored to be part of this effort on behalf of the Angelicum’s most illustrious alumnus (*Letter to rector*, Pope Francis). St. John Paul II should not become just a historical figure, but his writings should be accessible to generations of students to bring them to bear on all aspects of our culture.

Finally, as we work out the logistics of how we will proceed, whether it be together or in isolation, please know that the Angelicum remains faithful to our academic mission with strong fidelity to the Church. As St. John Paul II neared the end of his life, the robust man began to be burdened with illness. As his life dimmed, his vision became clear, as he viewed the world with Jesus, suffering on the cross. He spoke of the “light of Christ”. But not everyone can see this light. Ours is the wonderful and demanding task of becoming its “reflection” (NMI 54). May the sufferings and struggles of the present pandemic bring new clarity of vision, to illumine humanity with the One who has definitively conquered sin and death.

**Fr. Michał Paluch, O.P.**  
Rector Magnificus



# The Angelicum's most illustrious alumnus

Dear Friends,

**O**n the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, together with the whole Church, we celebrated the 100th birthday of the Angelicum's most illustrious alumnus, Fr. Karol Józef Wojtyła. That same day we launched the new St. John Paul II Institute of Culture (see the letter of our rector, Fr. Michał Paluch, O.P.).

This major step for the Church, taken in the midst of a global pandemic, shows the energy and vigor of our pontifical university to hold fast to our course despite many challenges. What has transpired in the lives of so many people throughout the world will be etched into our memories forever. It was an absolute shock to see no public Masses celebrated throughout much of the world for more than two months. I have been reminding everyone of the consoling words from Romans 8:28 - "In everything God works for good for those who love him." How important it is for us to never lose sight of the fact that God has wonderful plans for each and every one of us, despite the tremendous suffering and loss of life we see around us.

When I look at the Angelicum and I see her great mission, I see how important it is to communicate the Gospel and the Church's teachings in fidelity in order to pass on that which we have received from the Apostles - especially during these times of division and vulnerability. We must continue this mission since so much is at stake. We absolutely cannot give up and we cannot let a pandemic slow us down.

This summer, thanks to generous donors, we will equip our university with "smart" technology for mixed classrooms, including those students physically present and the possibility of virtual participation for those whom we expect will not be able to return due to COVID19.

**Thanks to generous donors we also have a newly established St. Thomas Aquinas Emergency fund for \$100,000, which will be matched dollar for dollar if we can meet the goal to raise an additional \$100,000! This fund will have the sole purpose of helping our current students to be able to continue their current program of studies. Can you help us? Any donation, regardless of the size will be doubled until August 31.**

In this issue we give special tribute to Fr. Luke Buckles, O.P. as he completes many years of teaching at the Angelicum and we remember Fr. Neal McDermott, O.P., a devoted friend of the university who recently died.

As I write this to you, I am in the United States and unable to return to Rome due to the pandemic. Working remotely with our new staff in Rome has been a challenge and I am incredibly grateful to Sr. Mary Angela, SCTJM and Marta Neri (more about them later). We look forward to welcoming you back to the Eternal City very soon!

**Fr. Benedict Croell, O.P.**

**Office of Development and Mission Advancement**

P.S. We are growing from two to four issues next year thanks to our good friend, John F. Carrere! We desperately need monthly donations to meet basic expenses. **So again I ask you, would you please also be generous and sign up for a monthly donation to support the Angelicum?**

# 18 YEARS OF GRATITUDE

Fr. Luke Buckles, O.P. had the dream, as he was growing up in Iowa, to be a doctor and heal the sick. Christ both answered and broadened this desire by calling Fr. Luke to the priesthood. For the last eighteen years, he has brought healing and joy to others specifically through his teaching at the Angelicum. He has also served as Rector for the Convitto Internazionale San Tommaso d'Aquino, an international residential college of the Dominican Order for diocesan priests from developing countries, located adjacent to our University.

Students, spiritual directees, and faculty alike speak of Fr. Luke's warmth and understanding. Readily available, he always has time for a greeting or conversation. Many in the Angelicum community gave testimony that Fr. Luke lives what he preaches, and he teaches what he has first contemplated in prayer. So many have a story of Fr. Luke's goodness to them and they speak of him with tremendous gratitude. Deacon Dominic Jenkinson, from the Venerable English College, summarizes this sentiment well, "Fr. Luke is one of the kindest people I have ever met. He has enriched my life greatly during my six years at the Angelicum. He is a true friend and father in Christ."

Fr. Luke, in turn, repeatedly uses the word "gratitude" when asked to describe his time as a professor at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas. Always the teacher, Fr. Luke says his Roman experience gave him a deeper understanding of the four marks of the Church: of the unity, holiness, universality and apostolicity of our Catholic Faith.

First, the Church is One. After spending almost two decades in the Eternal City, Fr. Luke continues to find it extraordinary that he lives within walking distance of the Vicar of Christ. He is deeply grateful for the opportunity of seeing first hand the Church united in Christ, around Peter.

Second, the Church is Holy. Fr. Luke gives thanks for the many holy people he has met in Rome. Here he refers to the goodness he sees in the students, but he also mentions the pontificate of St. John Paul II, as well as the countless saints buried in Rome. In the Eternal City, one is surrounded by the memory of the saints from the beginning of Christianity to modern times.

Third, the Church is Catholic. Fr. Luke reflects on his time at the Angelicum, "I see, looking out at my students, all the different countries in the world. I often begin my seminar classes by asking the students to give their name, their diocese, and their country. My current seminar has every inhabited continent except Australia. It's truly an experience of a church which is Catholic." Father has nothing but gratitude for his experience.



Fourth and finally, Fr. Luke remarks on how the Church is Apostolic. Within walking distance from the University, one can pray at the tomb of St. Peter, at the tomb of St. Paul, near the tombs of Simon and Jude, Philip and James, Bartholomew, and before smaller relics of many other apostles. In Rome, one cannot forget where the Church came from.

St. John Paul II once shared about his time in Rome, while a student at the Angelicum, "To discover Rome is a chapter...there are so many levels and so many aspects... one constantly comes across fine details and discovers an even greater store of wealth within oneself." (Pozniakowa Letters) Fr. Luke comments on a similar experience: "Oftentimes when I'm studying on the terrace, I look over at the Colosseum from 70 AD, located in the oldest neighborhood of Rome, where Christians lived and to whom St. Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans: Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever. In Rome, one sees the timelessness of the Church."

The Angelicum wishes to express a deep appreciation to Fr. Luke for bringing the Angelicum this same grace for the last eighteen years. God bless you, Fr. Luke! You will be greatly missed.



# FR. HYACINTHE DESTIVELLE, O.P.

An Interview with the 2019-20  
Fr. McInnes Chairholder

*Due to the pandemic, we canceled the Angelicum Homecoming. We also were unable to hear from the chairholder, Fr. Hyacinthe Destivelle OP.*

*Official Talk available at [www.ANGELICUM.it](http://www.ANGELICUM.it) or we will send you a copy upon request: [development@pust.it](mailto:development@pust.it)*

## **Fr. Hyacinthe, as holder of the Fr. Val McInnes Chair for 2020 could you please briefly introduce yourself?**

I am a French Dominican priest from the Toulouse Province. After my ordination in 2001 my ministry has been always linked with the question of Christian unity, first as director of the Istina Ecumenical Centre in Paris, then as pastor in Saint Petersburg, Russia, and for the last seven years as an official of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in the Vatican. Since last year, I have also been the director of the Angelicum's Institute for Ecumenical Studies.

## **Tell us something about your work in the Vatican?**

For five years I was responsible for relations with the Slavic Orthodox Churches (mainly with the Moscow Patriarchate), and for the last two years I have been working with the Oriental Orthodox Churches – namely the Coptic, Armenian, Syriac, Ethiopian and Malankar Churches. These Churches were considered in the past as “Pre-Chalcedonian” because they rejected the Christological definitions of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Thanks to

the theological dialogue we now recognize that Catholics and Oriental Orthodox have the same Christological faith, although expressed in different ways. My role is to follow the theological dialogue with these Churches as co-secretary and also to oversee the Catholic Church's fraternal relations with them.

## **Can you say a few words on the new Institute for Ecumenical Studies at the Angelicum?**

This Institute was founded last year and is placed under the patronage of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. It builds upon the legacy of a long tradition of ecumenical studies at the Angelicum, marked by the presence of pioneers of Christian unity such as Cardinal Willebrands, Cardinal Yves Congar, Fr Jean-Marie Tillard and, not least, Saint John Paul II. The Institute provides academic qualifications for clergy, religious and laity preparing to become teachers in ecumenism and ecumenical officers within dioceses, or requiring ongoing ecumenical formation. It also promotes theological research in ecumenism through the organization of research seminars and public conferences. It is the only Institute of Ecumenical Studies in Rome.

## **We are commemorating this year the 100th anniversary of the birth of Saint John Paul II. Do you have any personal memories of him?**

Saint John Paul II was the first pope I saw, at the age of ten. It was during his first visit to France in June 1980. As a Boy Scout, I was there for his famous speech given at Le Bourget airport, when he challenged my

country with the question: “France, eldest daughter of the Church, are you faithful to the promises of your baptism?” It was also during this trip to Paris that he used for the first time of his pontificate the expression “two lungs”: “We cannot breathe as Christian, I would say more, as Catholic, with only one lung; one should have two lungs, that is to say the Eastern and the Western”. Even if I was not able at that time to grasp these expressions, let alone to understand their meaning, I can say that they have accompanied my spiritual path. I understood later that they were somehow linked. It is by “breathing again with two lungs” that my country and Western Christians (and myself personally), will be faithful to our baptism.

## **This year is also the Jubilee of the Encyclical Ut unum sint....**

Yes, it was 25 years ago, the 25th of May 1995. It was the year of my novitiate as a Dominican and I read it. This encyclical struck me and was like a call for me. I understood that perhaps my vocation would be to serve this unity desired by Christ. In fact John Paul II states: “To believe in Christ means to desire unity; to desire unity means to desire the Church; to desire the Church means to desire the communion of grace which corresponds to the Father's plan from all eternity. Such is the meaning of Christ's prayer: “Ut unum sint” (9).

## **Anything else you would like to share with our readers?**

I would like to thank all the donors of the Fr. McInnes Chair for their generosity towards our University and the Institute for Ecumenical Studies. Saint John Paul II was convinced that Christian unity was the great challenge of the Church of the third millennium, that it was the condition for the credibility of its message, the effectiveness of its mission, and the fruitfulness of its dialogue with the other religions. In helping the new Ecumenical Institute of the Angelicum, the University where John Paul II studied, you are helping his dream for Christian unity, which Christ prayed for on the eve of his Passion, become a reality.



Fr. Hyacinthe with Pope Francis and Metropolitan Hilarion



Fr. Hyacinthe preaching the Gospel

# SERVANT OF GOD: FR. RAGHEED AZIZ GANNI 1972-2007

Fr. Ragheed Aziz Ganni was born in Nineveh, Iraq on January 20th, 1972. His family moved to the nearby city of Mosul where he grew up as a devout Chaldean Catholic in a large family. He received his First Holy Communion on May 1, 1982, and the pictures from that day communicate his family's pride in the special moment.

Ragheed had a big personality and quick humor. He attended the University in Mosul, graduating in 1993 with a degree in Civil Engineering. During this time he discerned a vocation to the priesthood and entered the diocesan seminary. In 1996 the diocese of Mosul sent him to study in Rome. As there was no seminary for Iraqi Catholics, Ragheed stayed with the Irish College. The Irish were quick to make the young seminarian one of their own, and gave him the affectionate nickname "Paddy the Iraqi." He was greatly loved by his fellow seminarians and friends remember his quick wit, vivacity, and love for jokes.

Ragheed studied Theology at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas from 1996-2003. As a result of the strong anti-Catholic persecutions occurring in his state, he was ordained in Rome in the Chaldean Rite of the Catholic Church in 2001. He remained in Rome for two more years in order to earn the licentiate in Ecumenical Theology, but his thoughts were always with his people and their suffering in Iraq. A friend recalled that Fr. Ragheed once remarked that the price of a single cappuccino would have been enough to buy food for an entire Iraqi family. While studying in Rome, he made a point to be actively engaged with the poor, and frequently volunteered with the Sant'Egidio community, delivering meals to the homeless.

In 2003, despite the persecutions and serious risk, Fr. Ragheed chose to go back to his home diocese. He was assigned to the Church of the Holy Spirit in Mosul. From the beginning, his priestly ministry was marked with persecution and suffering. His Church was attacked several times and his own life repeatedly threatened. Fr.



Ragheed visited Rome several times during this period of intense persecution and, though he was offered a chance to flee each time, he repeatedly chose to return to his people in Iraq, stating simply, "It is where I belong."

In 2005, Fr. Ragheed was asked to address the National Eucharistic Congress in Italy. He spoke of the terrorist attacks and bombings that he personally had witnessed during the two years he had been home. Fr. Ragheed proclaimed, "The terrorists might think they can kill our bodies or our spirit by frightening us, but, on Sundays, churches are always full. They may try to take our life, but the Eucharist gives it back." He concluded his talk with the following words, "There are days when I feel frail and full of fear. But when, holding the Eucharist, I say 'Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sin of the world', I feel His strength in me. When I hold the Host in my hands, it is really He who is holding me and all of us...keeping us united in His boundless love...In normal



times, everything is taken for granted and we forget the greatest gift that is made to us. Ironically, through terrorist violence that we have truly learned that it is the Eucharist, the Christ who died and rose, that gives us life. And this allows us to resist and hope."

Fr. Ragheed was martyred after Mass on Pentecost Sunday, June 3, 2007. He was killed with three of his subdeacons. Witnesses report hearing one of the terrorists screaming at him, "I told you to close the church, why didn't you do it? Why are you still here?" Ragheed replied with the simple but profound remark, "How can I close the house of God?" He was given a chance to renounce

the faith and when he refused, he was repeatedly shot.

A year after his martyrdom, Pope Benedict XVI received Fr. Ragheed's relics in Rome. On the 10th anniversary of his death, Pope Francis celebrated Mass wearing Fr. Ragheed's stole. The stole can be venerated today in Rome's Basilica of St. Bartholomew on the Tiber Island, along with the relics of other modern martyrs. The Church in Iraq continues to live the faith, in the midst of great persecution.

***Fr. Ragheed Ganni, pray for us.***

## PRAYER FOR THE CAUSE OF FATHER RAGHEED GANNI

Your servant and priest, Fr. Ragheed Ganni, was given as a gift to Your faithful, and by Your grace, was found worthy to endure a martyr's death. I beseech You, Lord, to grant this petition through the intercession of Your beloved martyr. (mention your request) Help me to imitate Fr. Ragheed in giving my life to You in love, so that one day I might be worthy to attend the heavenly banquet. Amen.

If a miracle came about as a result of this prayer, please contact the Eparchy of St. Thomas the Apostle in the USA at +1 248-351-0440.



# FROM ROME TO THE VIRTUAL WORLD

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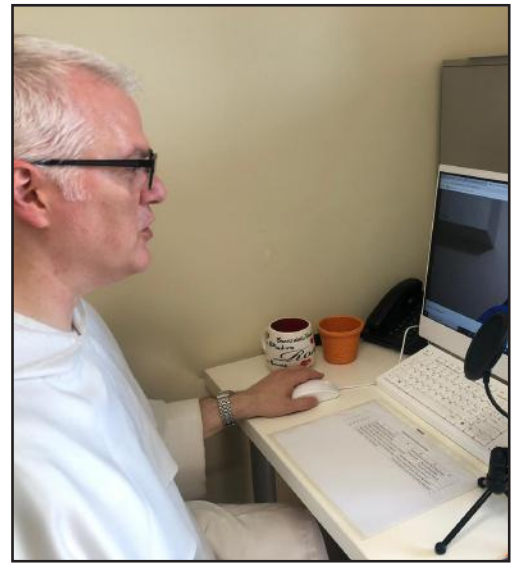
In the days and weeks following the appearance of COVID-19 in Italy, restrictions were implemented at a fast pace. The Angelicum followed all the regulations and recommendations of the Italian government carefully, including the closure of schools and universities beginning March 4th. In a matter of days, the Angelicum went from a bustling university in the busy days at the beginning of a new semester to a place of empty offices and classrooms, silent except for the faint sound of keystrokes. Yes, keystrokes. In a rapid effort to facilitate the continued education of the students, the deans and professors worked tirelessly to implement “smart learning.” Fr. Dominic Holtz, O.P., professor of the Faculty of Philosophy and chaplain to the English-speaking students, noted, “I had to convert, and quickly—over a weekend—courses designed to be taught face to face, to go online.” Angelicum student Valerie Krauel, in her first year of Philosophy, shared that she originally intended to remain in Rome for the time of closure, but when the lockdown of Italy was declared, she was on a plane home to Germany within twenty-four hours; during her flight home, the first online classes were already being held.

In line with the Dominican tradition, and animated by the Catholic understanding of the human person, the Angelicum is committed in its pedagogy to the personal, face-to-face encounter of students with their professors and with each other. However, the unprecedented

situation of the COVID-19 pandemic called for a creative and energetic response from the university’s leadership, professors, staff and students alike. As Sr. Catherine Joseph Droste, O.P., Dean of the Faculty of Theology, expressed at remarks in the Mass for the Feast of Bl. Hyacinth-Marie Cormier, O.P., on May 21st , “How many professors thought just a few short months ago that ‘meet’ was simply a synonym for ‘encounter’ and ‘platform’ was a stage. How many students imagined that they would be attending classes at all hours of the day and night with other students in different time zones.”

Br. Damien Habimana, F.I.C., a seminarian from Rwanda in his first year of Theology, shared that this was his first experience with online studies, and it was challenging at first. However, he highlighted the encouragement he received through the creativity and example of the professors, “the witness of continuing to do their best,” despite the various challenges of schedules and technology. Admittedly, the feel of the classroom was very different when a room of students was replaced by a screen of faces. Fr. Alejandro Crosthwaite, O.P., Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, shared that “the energy of the students was missing” in the online setting. Nonetheless, this transition also had unanticipated benefits. As Sr. Helen Alford, O.P., Vice Rector of the University and professor of the Faculty of Social Sciences, observed, “One unexpected thing was that some students clearly found it easier to interact with the professor over

Fr. Damien also observed that the challenges of the online classroom brought out the Angelicum's sense of community, where no student was left behind, working to include students in many time zones and situations. The onset of the quarantine scattered the student body of the Angelicum around the world, with many returning to their hometowns and dioceses, stretching from Australia and South Korea to countries across Europe and Africa to the western coast of the Americas. Mario Torres, a seminarian for the Diocese of Tyler, Texas, U.S.A., shared, "One of the greatest challenges has been the distance and time zone. But the professors at the Angelicum were really generous and kind, sending us the recording for each lecture and we were able to continue with our semester." This creativity included not only the delivery of the lectures themselves, but also by encouraging the students and helping to keep them engaged. For example, Fr. Holtz filled the mid-class breaks with music, introducing his students to a variety of music across genres, styles, and country of origin.



Fr. Dominic Holtz, O.P.

This unprecedented and extraordinary semester has drawn to a close. It was an adventure that tested our limits, called forth and refined many gifts, and brought out the best of the students and faculty alike. Fr. Holtz, O.P. shared, "I think, with good humor, we have found a way to do the best we can. I am convinced that real learning has happened, while also saying that we all saw the great richness that comes from our face-to-face learning, and that we very much want to return to the moment where we can engage one another, face to face, and really see how important that human interaction is." As we look ahead to the coming year, many uncertainties remain. However, the words of Mario Torres express a clear tone for this semester, which puts into words the educational vision of the Angelicum. "I want to say some words of gratitude to our professors, for their great effort and sacrifices they did in order to continue teaching classes online. This shows the commitment and responsibility of our university in order to continue forming priests and religious people to serve our



Fr. Dominic Holtz, O.P. professor in the faculty of Philosophy with Sr. Maria Nneoma Ezeifedi, I.H.M.



Greg with the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta

# FROM THE CLASSROOM TO CALCUTTA

## Greg Zanetti

3rd year Theology

Diocese of Metuchen, NJ (USA)

Have you ever wondered what Angelicum students do during their breaks while studying in Rome? Greg Zanetti has spent two of them in Calcutta, with the Missionaries of Charity. Greg believes that his time spent in serving the poorest of the poor is a natural complement and outgrowth of his studies, and also an essential part of his formation as a future diocesan priest. In his theological studies, he heard the consistent theme of the call to take his academic knowledge beyond the classroom doors, and to apply them in a life spent in love for one's neighbor. This truth challenged Greg to use

his free time to do just that.

"Calcutta pushed me out of my comfort zone," Greg explained. "I want to really encounter Jesus in everyone. I see Jesus in the Eucharist but I want to live that out and be able to see him in every soul... The work in Calcutta is dirty and difficult. It is hard to give to others in that way. But the Sisters love so naturally and working with them really helped me to grow in love. Their example is powerful. They show me that everything we do is for Jesus."

Back in Italy, Greg has continued to work among the poor when not in the classroom or studying. He shared a story from a time serving at the Church of San Gregorio in Rome, where one day a person entered who was bitterly angry, and no matter what Greg did or said, he was unable to lighten his mood. One of the Sisters commented to Greg with a smile, "Don't worry. He's an angry Jesus." Greg's goal is to be able to see the face of Jesus just as clearly in the face of all he encounters. He intends to keep using his breaks practicing such love, knowing that the love and knowledge of the truth, at the heart of his theological studies, grows in tandem with the love for neighbor, forged in the school of service.

*God willing, Greg will be ordained to the Diaconate this July 25<sup>th</sup>. Please keep him in your prayers.*



Greg during the Rite of Institution of Acolyte

# UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Saint John Paul II Institute of Culture was officially launched on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the Angelicum's most distinguished alumnus, Fr. Karol Wojtyła. The Angelicum's Rector, Fr. Michał Paluch O.P. concelebrated Mass with Pope Francis over the saint's tomb in St. Peter's Basilica on the same day.

Dr. Remi Brague, a French historian of philosophy at the Sorbonne and recipient of the prestigious 2012 Ratzinger Award is one of the visiting professors for the Fall 2020 semester for the new St. John Paul II Institute of Culture for the Faculty of Philosophy.

Fr. Simon Francis Gaine, O.P., of the English Province, has been named to the new Pinckaers Chair (Thomistic Institute Angelicum) in Theological Anthropology and Ethics beginning Fall 2020.

Fr. Thomas Davenport, O.P., of the Province of St. Joseph (USA), and Fr. Mariusz Tabaczek, O.P. of the Province of Poland will together launch a new Project for Science and Religion under the Thomistic Institute Angelicum. Beginning in Fall 2020, Fr. Davenport will teach in the Faculty of Philosophy, and Fr. Tabaczek will teach in the Faculty of Theology.

Fr. James Dominic Rooney, O.P., of the Province of St. Albert the Great (USA), will be coming to teach in the Faculty of Philosophy beginning Fall 2020.

The Angelicum launched on-line registration for the 2020-21 academic year, a plan that was being implemented before the pandemic struck.

The Faculty of Social Sciences will inaugurate the STRONG programme, providing sixteen scholarships for the Academic Year 2020-21. The programme is focused on assisting foreign citizens residing in Italy and of Italians with migrant backgrounds, both young and adult, so that they can become agents of social change, as well as improve the social inclusion of migrants where they reside.

# Launching the new St. John Paul II Institute of Culture To Think with a Great Pope

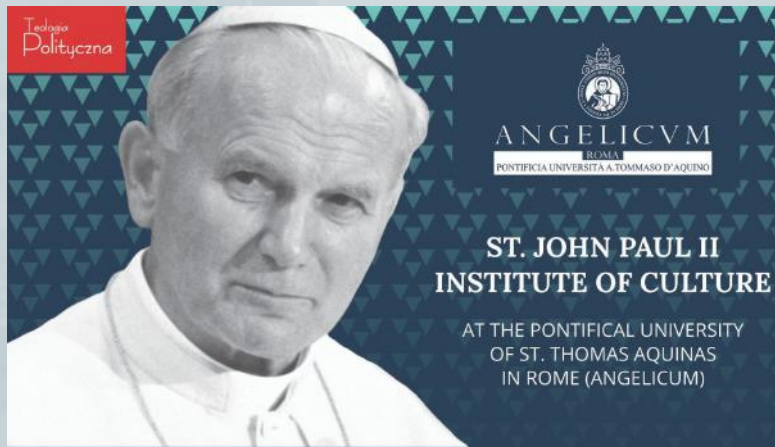
**B**irthday gifts come in all shapes and sizes. For the 100th birthday of St. John Paul II on May 18th, the gift came in the form of a new academic Institute. The Saint John Paul II Institute of Culture was officially launched at the Angelicum during an event which took place in three locations (Italy, Poland, France), connected and shared through live-streaming to the whole world.

“The Angelicum, which can rightly be called the home university of Karol Wojtyła, is the obvious place to establish an institute inspired by the legacy of John Paul II,” shared Fr. Paluch, Rector of the Angelicum. “This is why the establishment of the St. John Paul II Institute of Culture, at that same university where he studied, will research and recognize his achievements in contemporary Christian thought and culture.” The project was born of the collaboration of two Polish organizations: the Saint Nicholas Foundation and the Futura-luventa Foundation. They envisioned an Institute that would study the thought of John Paul II, not in a merely formal manner, but as a means of applying his voluminous Magisterium and teachings to the present historical situation. As Dariusz Karłowicz, President of the Saint Nicholas Foundation, explained, “We want to focus not only on examining the achievements of this great pope, but also, to think with him about the most important matters of spiritual culture, i.e. solidarity, mercy, Christian art, the place of the Church in the modern world and the spiritual crisis of Europe.”

The inauguration ceremony, held in the Aula Minor of the Angelicum, reflected the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those physically attending the event at the Angelicum included primarily professors, while the means of communication provided a live connection with representatives of the two sponsoring Foundations and participants who attended the inauguration virtually from around the world. The day did not go unnoticed by the Holy Father, who addressed a letter to the Rector of the Angelicum, in honor of the inauguration of the new Institute. Pope Francis observed,

*Saint John Paul II is at once both the inspiration behind this project and its first and most important architect. This is thanks to the rich and multifaceted heritage that he left to us, and even more so by the example of his open and contemplative spirit, his passion for God and man, for creation, history and art.*

These encouraging words began the ceremony, which continued with some comments from Cardinal Stanisław Ryłko, who worked with St. John Paul, as well the two successive Pontiffs. Following comments by representatives of the two sponsoring organizations from Poland, the afternoon concluded with a short lecture by Remi Brague, a French historian of philosophy at the Sorbonne and recipient of the prestigious 2012 Ratzinger Award. Brague observed, “Pope John Paul II already belongs, not only to the canon of Sainthood, but to history. Yet, this doesn’t mean that his thought should be wrapped up in a purple shroud and solemnly buried. To the contrary, his teachings still possess a thriving actuality.” His concluding questions, calling for both reflection and further conversation, provided a clear orientation and foretaste of the mission of the Institute.



The Institute begins courses in the Fall through the Faculty of Philosophy. Though the official launch was intended to also be a gift to our beloved Saint, already it is quite clear that we are in turn recipients of the gift of his life for the whole Church throughout the world.

For more information, go to: <https://angelicum.it/institutes/st-john-paul-ii-institute-of-culture/>

# Tough Love

## In Memoriam: Fr. William Neal McDermott, O.P., 1933-2019

Recently our university and the Dominican Province of St. Martin de Porres lost a great friend and Dominican priest, who will be remembered for all he has done for the Church and the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

Fr. Neal McDermott had a life-long passion for Catholic education. His constant plea was a call to support students, emphasizing the importance of the formation of youth. This was seen in his great efforts to rebuild the Catholic school system after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, and also in the way he inspired his friends to support higher education around the world. This passion was a true gift for the Angelicum, Fr. McDermott's Roman alma mater, where he earned the bachelor's and licentiate in Philosophy. Fr. McDermott brought many friends to the Angelicum, who have been very generous throughout the years. Throughout his life, he worked tirelessly to draw others to participate in the Angelicum's mission through their support - and this will not be forgotten.

Fr. McDermott had a passion for helping others find and use their talents for the glory of God. With eyes to discover

particular gifts of others, he knew how to pinpoint where they would be best placed for the service of the Lord. He inspired others to find their vocation and challenged whomever he met to embrace the mission of the Church as something much bigger than themselves.

Strong in his words, people loved his toughness and encouragement. In a world where it is easy to find people who will doubt themselves, Fr. Neal's no-nonsense insistence on one's capacity for greatness was immensely refreshing. He touched many lives by being the voice of authentic challenge, encouragement and strength. A former high school student of Fr. McDermott said, "I have heard that people would often use the term 'bulldog' or even 'Steel Neal' to describe his personality or the way he did things, but if you knew him you would know that his fight and his firmness was always motivated by love: love of Christ and love of neighbor."



One priest of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Fr. Josh Johnson, shared, "It is always a gift when we meet people who want to help us become saints in our walk toward eternity. Father Neal McDermott was one of those people our Lord brought into my life who always held me to be accountable to growing in my relationship with Jesus Christ. He went out of his way to provide me with opportunities to spend time with God in prayer on pilgrimages and retreats during my very busy seminary formation. For that I will forever be grateful."

In the last years of his life, Fr. Neal was ready for death and he often told others that he was excited to enter into eternity. This desire only grew as Father became sick and weak. When he was dying, his hands were in the air; those at his bedside said he was reaching out to Jesus. The Angelicum fondly remembers and appreciates all that this great Dominican Friar has done for the Church throughout the world! Eternal rest grant into him O Lord.

# A NEW TEAM

**We Extend a Warm  
Welcome to Sr. Mary  
Angela and Marta**



The Office of Development and Mission Advancement has some updates! We extend a warm welcome to Sr. Mary Angela Woelkers, S.C.T.J.M., who has joined the mission. Sister is a member of the Institute of the Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary, founded in Miami, Florida, by Mother Adela Galindo, S.C.T.J.M. With a Marian charism that is expressed as “the all-embracing motherhood of Mary”, their apostolates are placed at the service of the New Evangelization, following in the footsteps of their spiritual father, St. John Paul II. “It is an immense joy to be able to serve at the Angelicum, and a humbling gift to be able to further the Angelicum’s mission to form priests, religious and lay leaders within the heart of the Church, to serve and evangelize the world.” Sister’s congregation also serves in various capacities under the Military Ordinariate of Italy in Rome. Fr. Benedict expressed his particular gratitude to Mother Adela Galindo, S.C.T.J.M., Foundess and Mother General, for making one of her Sisters available to help in this office.

We also welcome Marta Neri, who has served in various roles in the university for over 20 years. Marta has seen multiple “generations” of teachers and students and has remained in touch with many of them, serving simultaneously as an English teacher and the secretary for the Faculty of Theology for many years, and also teaching Italian and German. “The Angelicum is my second home,” Marta said, “and I’m proud to be able to work with our team to further the mission.” Her experience with an eye for detail is a great gift as we embark on a more proactive effort to engage alumni and benefactors in Italy/Europe, the United States, and the whole world. Marta shared, The Angelicum is growing tremendously in its capacity to engage younger generations with modern technology. It will be much easier to remain in contact with everyone and welcome them back to their Roman alma Mater.” Marta continued, “I believe that as the Angelicum becomes better known, our use of technology will help us to close the social distance with friends of the university and former students who are now spread across the world.”

We wish to express tremendous gratitude to Sr. Teresa Benedicta, O.P. and Sr. Martin Therese, O.P. of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, for their help during this past year, and Mother Mary Assumpta Long, O.P., for their availability to assist us. The Sisters gave generously during their sabbatical year while they were studying. “It was a huge amount to juggle,” Fr. Benedict said, “but they did it with such grace and expertise! We could not have done it without them. THANK YOU!”

# ANGELICUM The Journal

[www.rivistaangelicum.wordpress.com](http://www.rivistaangelicum.wordpress.com)

The Angelicum is a peer-reviewed academic publication of the faculty of the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas. In accord with the munus docendi of the Bishop of Rome, the Journal publishes advanced research on the themes of the knowledge of God, of the person and of society, and on the life and mission of the Church within the horizon of Thomistic thought.

Since 1924, its history has been marked by articles and book reviews authored by authoritative and prestigious names in the spheres of theological, philosophical, canonistic, social thought and that of the religious sciences. The Journal aims at being a meeting place between Catholic culture and the main challenges of the global world.

**This is the current list of items published in Vol. 96, Annum 2019, Fasc. 2 of the Angelicum:**

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# Alumni Spotlight: Servant of Truth - Susan Timoney, '97 S.T.L., S.T.D.



Susan Timoney completed a Masters of Arts at La Salle University in Philadelphia, but it wasn't enough. She became a Jesuit Volunteer following college, but there was still something missing. She worked for six years in parish ministry, but wanted to serve even more. It struck her that, while her heart was willing, her knowledge was weak. Gifted by the Lord with a sharp intellect, she wanted to cultivate this capacity by developing a much broader and firmer foundation in Theology. She came to understand that studying and teaching would be her path to serve Christ and his Church. With the encouragement of her local pastors, both alumni of the Angelicum, she enrolled at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Susan remembers her time at “the Ange” with great nostalgia. It was an incredible experience to be in the midst of the universal Church and among the wide diversity of students, coming from numerous countries. In Rome she encountered the Catholicity of the Church, experienced through this international backdrop. This not only gave her a sense of her personal vocation, but also of her role in the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Angelicum gave Susan two particularly cherished gifts: the first was a foundation in Thomism, and the second was the needed encouragement to step forward and lead. Susan credits her studies in the teachings of St. Thomas gave her the ability to think systematically and to think with the mind of the Church. These studies helped her to understand and articulate the reasons behind faith. They also gave her the intellectual means to teach the truth to others. “The way truth is expressed and the way that it's

experienced changes,” Susan reflected, “but we can always rely on there being objective truth. People today still have that ultimate desire for happiness and truth, but we have to help people recognize and connect the dots in a world that no longer believes we can know anything with certitude or even see a place for faith.”

After graduating from the Angelicum, Susan moved to Washington DC where she worked for ten years in a program called “Education Parish Service,” a program which formed lay people for active participation in parish life and leadership. Susan was hired as the vice president and was asked to redesign the curriculum in terms of the call to the new evangelization.

Eventually she served in Archdiocese of Washington as Executive Director of Evangelization and Family Life. That position expanded and she was named the Secretary for Pastoral Ministry. During the next decade she assisted pastors



in the process of implementing evangelization at the parish level.

Two years ago, Susan joined the Catholic University of America as a full time professor. She had been teaching as an adjunct during her time as Director of Evangelization and Family Life, which helped her to realize how much she loved to be in the classroom. She is currently teaching full time in pastoral studies. She also works as the associate dean for undergraduate studies in the school of Theology and Religious Studies.

When Susan reflects on her life, the words that come to mind are awe and gratitude. Growing up, it was inconceivable to her that a lay woman might be teaching Theology to priests and others in roles of leadership within the Church. She sees these opportunities as gifts and moments of real blessing in her life. While grateful to God above all else, Susan’s heartfelt thanks also goes to the Angelicum. “It was a time when people really questioned if women had a place in the Church, and at the Angelicum I received so much encouragement.” Susan commented, “I knew they wanted to help me be formed and prepared to lead. My confidence as a leader in the Church was first experienced at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas.”

Susan’s desire to learn is still as strong as it ever was. The restlessness, however, has been transformed into zeal to help form others. In the study and teaching of the truth of Christ, Susan has found her home in the Church. It is her great pride to lead others to that home, and to the joy of knowing Christ Jesus.

The Angelicum Alumni Office is grateful to Susan for helping organize a recent Angelicum Alumni Reunion for Clergy of the Archdiocese of Washington. Sign up for Alumni updates: [ANGELICUM.it/alumsignup](http://ANGELICUM.it/alumsignup)



**THE ANGELICUM EXTENDS WARM CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR ALUMNI WHO HAVE RECENTLY BEEN RAISED TO THE EPISCOPATE. FOR STORIES AND MORE ON OUR LAY, RELIGIOUS AND CLERICAL ALUMNI, CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:  
[ANGELICUM.IT/ALUMNI](http://ANGELICUM.IT/ALUMNI)**

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STAY IN TOUCH WITH US: [ANGELICUM.IT/ALUMSIGNUP](http://ANGELICUM.IT/ALUMSIGNUP)



# Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis

*To the Reverend Michał Paluch, O.P.*

*Rector of the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas*

On the centenary of the birth of Saint John Paul II, the most illustrious alumnus of your university, the Institute of Culture named after him is being inaugurated at the Angelicum, within the Faculty of Philosophy. In expressing my appreciation for this initiative, I cordially greet the entire academic community and all those present for the event, especially the representatives of the two Polish Foundations, Futura Iuventa and Saint Nicholas, which support the new Institute.

The principal aim of the Institute is to reflect on contemporary culture. To do so, the organizers intend to seek the collaboration of eminent philosophers, theologians and men and women of culture in its broadest sense. Saint John Paul II is at once both the inspiration behind this project and its first and most important architect. This is thanks to the rich and multifaceted heritage that he left to us, and even more so by the example of his open and contemplative spirit, his passion for God and man, for creation, history and art.

The range of experiences that marked his life, especially the momentous historical events and the personal sufferings that he sought to interpret in the light of the Spirit, led Saint John Paul II to an even deeper reflection on man and his cultural roots as an essential reference point for every proclamation of the Gospel. Indeed, in his first Encyclical he wrote: “ We approach all cultures, all ideological concepts, all people of good will. We approach them with the esteem, respect and discernment that since the time of the Apostles has marked the missionary attitude, the attitude of the missionary. Suffice it to mention Saint Paul and, for instance, his address in the Areopagus at Athens. The missionary attitude always begins with a feeling of deep esteem for ‘what is in man’, for what man has himself worked out in the depths of his spirit concerning the most profound and important problems. It is a question of respecting everything that has been brought about in him by the Spirit, which ‘blows where it wills’” ( *Redemptor Hominis*, 12; cf. *Address to UNESCO*, 2 June 1980).

We need to keep this approach alive if we wish to be an outward-looking Church, not satisfied with preserving and administering what already exists but seeking to be faithful to our mission.

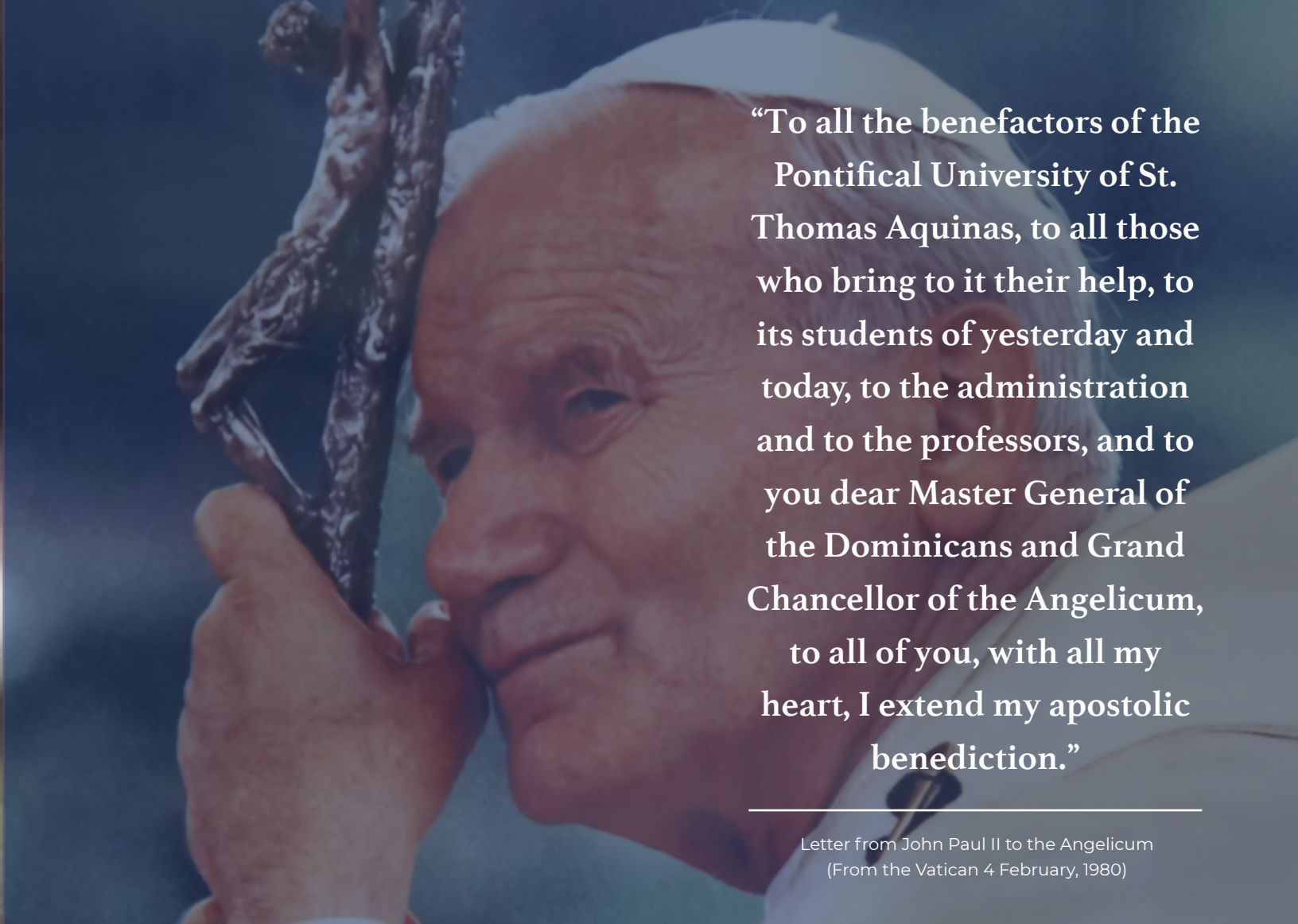
I am pleased that this initiative has found a home in the University of Saint Thomas Aquinas. The Angelicum in fact houses an academic community comprising professors and students from throughout the world and is a fitting place for interpreting the important challenges of today’s cultures. The tradition of the Dominican Order, with the important role given to rational reflection on faith and its content, articulated in a magisterial way by the Angelic Doctor, will certainly favour this project, so that it will be characterized by the courage of the truth, freedom of spirit and intellectual honesty (cf. SAINT PAUL VI, *Apostolic Letter Lumen Ecclesiae*, 20 November 1974, 8; SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Encyclical Letter Fides et Ratio*, 43).

With these sentiments, I renew my encouragement and gratitude to you, dear brother, and to all those who have established the new Institute. To the professors, students and staff I send my best wishes for their work, and to all I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

.....

ROMA, SAN GIOVANNI IN LATERANO, 18 MAGGIO 2020

*Franciscus*



“To all the benefactors of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, to all those who bring to it their help, to its students of yesterday and today, to the administration and to the professors, and to you dear Master General of the Dominicans and Grand Chancellor of the Angelicum, to all of you, with all my heart, I extend my apostolic benediction.”

---

Letter from John Paul II to the Angelicum  
(From the Vatican 4 February, 1980)

## **CURRENT ANGELICUM CAMPAIGNS IN COOPERATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL DOMINICAN FOUNDATION**

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3. **St. John Paul II Institute of Culture Founders Campaign** to support the new institute; a donation of at least \$10,000 / €10,000 includes a plaque to memorialize a loved one on a chair of the Aula John Paul II (Aula Magna)

Find these campaigns at [ANGELICUM.it](https://www.angelicum.it)

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**Thank you, Fr. Luke  
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**for 20 years of teaching ministry!**

**THANK YOU  
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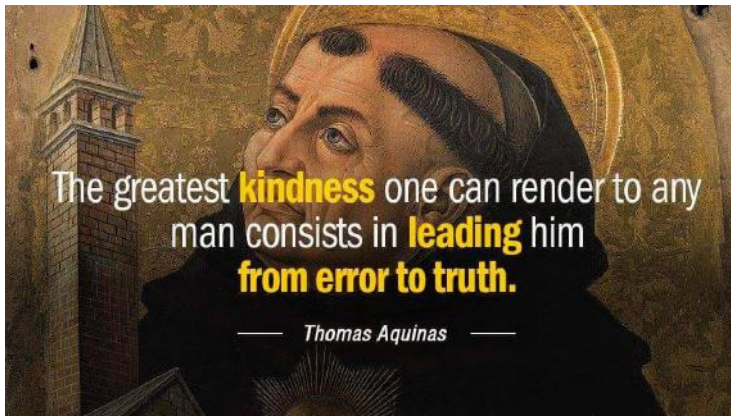


***For 23 years of teaching ministry!***

In loving memory:  
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The Angelicum wishes to express warm  
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**RECTOR MAGNIFICUS**

Fr. Michał Paluch, O.P. [rettore@pust.it](mailto:rettore@pust.it)

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