



**Words offered on 12 December 1993 by
St. John Paul II
on occasion of the 75th Anniversary of
Pontifical Oriental Institute**

I have very much wanted to be with you, dear Brothers who constitute the community of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, to conclude the celebrations of 75 years of the life of this prestigious academic institution, founded by my predecessor Benedict XV as “altiorum studiorum domicilium de rebus orientalibus” (Motu proprio *Orientis Catholici*). He conceived this Institute both for those Latins who would offer their own ministry among the Orientals as well as for the Orientals themselves, Catholic and Orthodox. He also indicated the methodology which the Institute’s teaching should follow: a parallel exposition of

Catholic and Orthodox doctrine [...]. This Institute, through a rigorous and scientific examination of the Oriental heritage, has contributed much to the ecumenical path.

At the same time, the very progress of ecumenism has contributed to update and complement the Institute’s perspective and way of being. In fact, it will be recalled that an Pontifical Institute is not content with working for a deepening of knowledge, but acts as a precious instrument at the service of the Church to point to new goals and to pursue them through a profound formation, an effective achievement.

The Pontifical Oriental Institute is therefore a place, within the Catholic Church, where new horizons are outlined [...]. You must be those who help the Churches to draw from their storehouse “old things and new things” (Mt 13,52), to indicate that which among the precious treasures of the diverse traditions can make the Truth flourish, which for the Christian of today is the secure way to an ever fuller “Life in Christ.” For it will happen, you are called to be, without discontinuity or conflicts, both researchers and educators [...]. Work in such a way that the young people entrusted to you become good educators of those who await their return to their homelands [...].

Dear Teachers, instill in these young people a taste for the circularity, for the global comprehension of the faith and of the theology. Precise research is a school of method to better understand the universality of the faith, and its recapitulation in the unique Person of Christ, true God and true man, Son of the Father. The Holy Spirit will lead each one to communion with the Most Holy Trinity, drawing each one away from the fragmentary nature of so many particular problems, which risk ending up in sterility.

Act in such a way that the Student, during his or her time at your Institute, acquires a dear and well developed knowledge of the Christian East in its fullness. If that will be useful for the Latins, it will be so particularly for the Orientals, who will acquire in this way the instruments to appreciate the traditions of the many Churches that make up the variegated mosaic of the Christian East. This can call for a greater recourse to interdisciplinary work and a common activity among the Teachers. Do not hesitate to use these means to bring to a full fruition your efforts on the part of your Students.

Do this in such a way that the Liturgy calls on the Fathers, and the Fathers assist in a rereading of Holy Scripture, and Theology is a contemplative synthesis of that “Life in Christ,” closely joined, rather, in a unique experience, along with spirituality based on the felicitous model which was common to East and West [...].