

# Pope says intellect, faith not mutually exclusive

VATICAN CITY – Being a Catholic and sharpening one's intellect through higher education are not mutually exclusive, Pope Benedict XVI told a group of Catholic students.

In fact, it is in the search for greater knowledge and truth that the doors are opened to faith, he said in a Nov. 9 address to representatives of the Italian Catholic University Federation, which this year celebrated the 110th anniversary of its founding.

Why is it people maintain “that whoever has faith must renounce an unencumbered search for truth and whoever freely seeks truth must renounce one's faith?” the pope asked.

Exactly the opposite is true, he told about 120 students gathered for the private audience in the Vatican.

“It is precisely the steady, courageous search for the truth that opens the doors to faith,” he said.

Many intellectuals, from Socrates to St. Edith Stein, showed that it was their quest for truth that put them on the path toward finding God, said the pope.

Intelligence and faith can be friends, he said, and one's university years can translate into “authentic human, scientific and spiritual maturation.”

Intellectual pursuits represent “a providential opportunity to go forward in one's journey of faith because a well-enriched intelligence opens up the human heart to hearing the voice of God,” since learning helps develop the capacities of discernment and humility, the pope said.

Pope Benedict reminded the students that being one of Christ's disciples means going “against the tide.”

Today's society shows evidence of a race, "at times unbridled, toward appearance and possession at the expense, unfortunately, of being," he said.

Young people must turn their backs on the "diverse pulpits" promoting arrogant and violent behavior as well as the need to be the best and succeed at all costs, said the pope.

He said Jesus calls on people to live with simplicity and generosity and to cultivate sincere friendships.

"May your years at university be, then, a training ground for confident and courageous evangelical witness," the pope said.