



Santa Croce



PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY OF THE HOLY CROSS FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2004

From The Grand Chancellor Bishop Javier Echevarría



I am happy to address the readers of the Newsletter for the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross Foundation, as the University proceeds through its twentieth year of activities.

In the first place, I want to thank the donors for all the help they provide. Without their assistance – which, whether large or small, is the fruit of their love for God and their veneration for the priesthood – all the good that is being done in the service of the Church by the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross and the Sedes

enjoyed by this great Servant of God. Our gratitude to Bishop Alvaro del Portillo should be accompanied by trusting recourse to his intercession, asking him to intercede for each of us and to obtain from God, along with the favors and graces that we need, the gift of an untarnished fidelity to the demands of our Christian vocation.

I do not want to end these lines without drawing everyone's attention to the figure of St. Josemaría Escrivá, the true inspirer of these initiatives. Since 1946, the time of his arrival in Rome, and above all since 1950, the year of Opus Dei's definitive approval by the Holy See, one of the foremost concerns in St. Josemaría's mind and heart and prayer was the human, intellectual and spiritual formation of both priests and laity. From the early 50s, I myself was witness to his eagerness to have available—in the city that is the center of Christianity—an educational center open to the needs of the universal Church. Today we see this made a reality in the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, in the Sedes Sapientiae International Ecclesiastical College, and in the various ecclesiastical residences dependent on the University. Deo gratias!

Filled with gratitude to the Most Holy Trinity, from Whom all gifts proceed, and as a sign of my appreciation for the generous assistance of so many people, I send my warmest blessing to all the benefactors of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross Foundation and their families.

+ Javier Echevarría
Grand Chancellor

Sapientiae International Ecclesiastical College would be impossible to carry out. Through their help, and especially through the support of their prayer and affection, a large number of young people from all over the world are studying to be priests or religious, or to work as lay men or women in a profession. All of them will sow the seed of the Gospel when they return to their respective countries, especially in places where the Church is still taking its first steps.

These dates coincide, in addition, with the tenth anniversary of the death of Bishop Alvaro del Portillo, first Prelate of Opus Dei and first Grand Chancellor of the University. It is to this holy bishop that we owe the beginning of these educational activities. Also during this time, his cause of canonization has been opened in Rome. I have petitioned the Holy See for the opening of this process, in response to numerous requests that have arrived from all over the world, a clear witness to the fame of sanctity

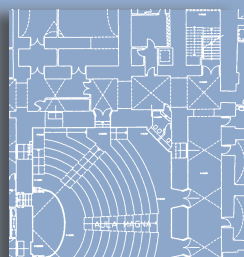
“All of them will sow the seed of the Gospel when they return to their respective countries, especially in places where the Church is still taking its first steps.”

- Bishop Javier Echevarría

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An Interview with Fr. Bob Gahl

From Silicon Valley Engineer to Associate Professor of Ethics



You grew up in the Midwest.

How did you end up in Rome?

I was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I met Opus Dei in high school. I went to college at Washington University in St. Louis. In Opus Dei I had learned I had to develop a priestly soul and a lay mentality. However, it was a trip to Toronto I organized while I was in college in 1984 that had a special impact on my life.

What was the occasion?

We went to see Pope John Paul II during his pastoral visit to Canada. He celebrated Mass in Toronto Stadium. It was during those days that the call to the priesthood began to germinate within me. I'm sure it was, in part, from the grace of the Pontiff being in North America.

What happened next?

I finished college with a degree in chemical engineering and moved to California, where I worked in software and robotic engineering in Silicon Valley. I spent some time helping out at Westwood, a boys club in Marin County. In 1987 I went to Rome where I continued my formation for priestly ordination.

What memories do you have of your first years in Rome?

I was there at the beginning of what was later to become the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. The University first started classes in the fall of 1984. By 1990 a full course of studies was offered, and I was among the first to receive a doctorate in philosophy. In 1992 Bishop Alvaro del Portillo ordained me as a deacon. He had been consecrated a bishop by John Paul II the previous year, and I was fortunate to be among the first groups of deacons he

ordained. As a deacon, I got to participate in the beatification of St. Josemaría and be among those who carried his relics into the church of Our Lady of Peace, to place them in the altar where they are today.

Later that year, Pope John Paul II ordained me as a priest in St. Peter's basilica, along with 49 other men, many from the Prelature of Opus Dei including two other Americans, graduates of Santa Croce. Bishop Alvaro del Portillo had already asked me to stay in Rome to teach philosophy at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. Since then I've been teaching philosophy and assisting in the formation of priests and seminarians. I've been in Rome for the past 12 years, aside from spending some time in the United States and Kenya for philosophical research and pastoral work.

What's your position at the University?

I'm an Associate Professor of Ethics. I teach courses that cross over into both philosophy and theology.

What courses?

For undergraduate students in philosophy, I teach a course in general ethics. I also teach a seminar in Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics. I enjoy it because of the students. We have great students at the University. Every time a semester ends, I'm just amazed at their performance on the exams. Really. I'm sure that it's not all due to their professor.

Tell us more about the students.

There are some really bright and generous students from all over the world. I just finished a seminar class with eight students. I got to know them pretty well. They came from six different countries from nearly as many continents. They were a great group. Some returned to their countries and are now teaching philosophy.

What about the graduate students?

Most of my teaching is at the graduate level. In the graduate program, I teach a course in the history of natural law and on moral action. I've also taught sexual ethics. A lot of my time, some of my most rewarding work, is in directing the research of those

students. A professor is both a teacher and mentor for students, who often go on to become priests, professors and some even bishops. Their research tends to focus on some specific area and is seen as a contribution to the scholarly community. It's especially rewarding for a professor because at any one time, you can have four to eight students who are working on some specific topics of current interest from the historical perspective of the tradition of the Church. These are topics that are very important today for the Church and for our culture.

Having bright young people working on these subjects and then concluding with a publication, sometimes a massive publication, is a wonderful thing to see. And then to see them go on in their life and to help train other people, to teach, is very rewarding. I have former students who are teaching in seminaries with over two hundred seminarians. One of my former students, who still refers to me as Professor, is now a bishop in Kenya in a diocese of over one million people. It's just booming with vocations. In one of his parishes they confirmed over eight hundred students—that's just one of his parishes. He is, of course, responsible for the local Church, the Catholic formation of all the students there. John Paul II appointed him a bishop while he was still a student at Santa Croce completing his doctorate. He was really surprised.

What language do you teach your courses in?

Italian. Virtually all of our teaching is in Italian. We have some exceptions and one of those exceptions is Scott Hahn, who comes to the University as a visiting professor on a regular basis. He teaches in English.

Describe your typical day.

I get up and pray. That's the first thing I do. I pray and I celebrate Mass. I try to remember the benefactors of the University in my prayers every day. In the morning I go to the University to teach in our building at Sant'Apollinare. I also have meetings with the students for study and research in the library. I should also mention that an important part of my work is spiritual direction and other activities of spiritual formation for priests and seminarians.

Adjacent to both buildings of the University we have chapels with the Blessed Sacrament reserved where students go for personal prayer, to attend days of recollection and also for confession. Most of my time is spent at these two locations.

How did the University develop?

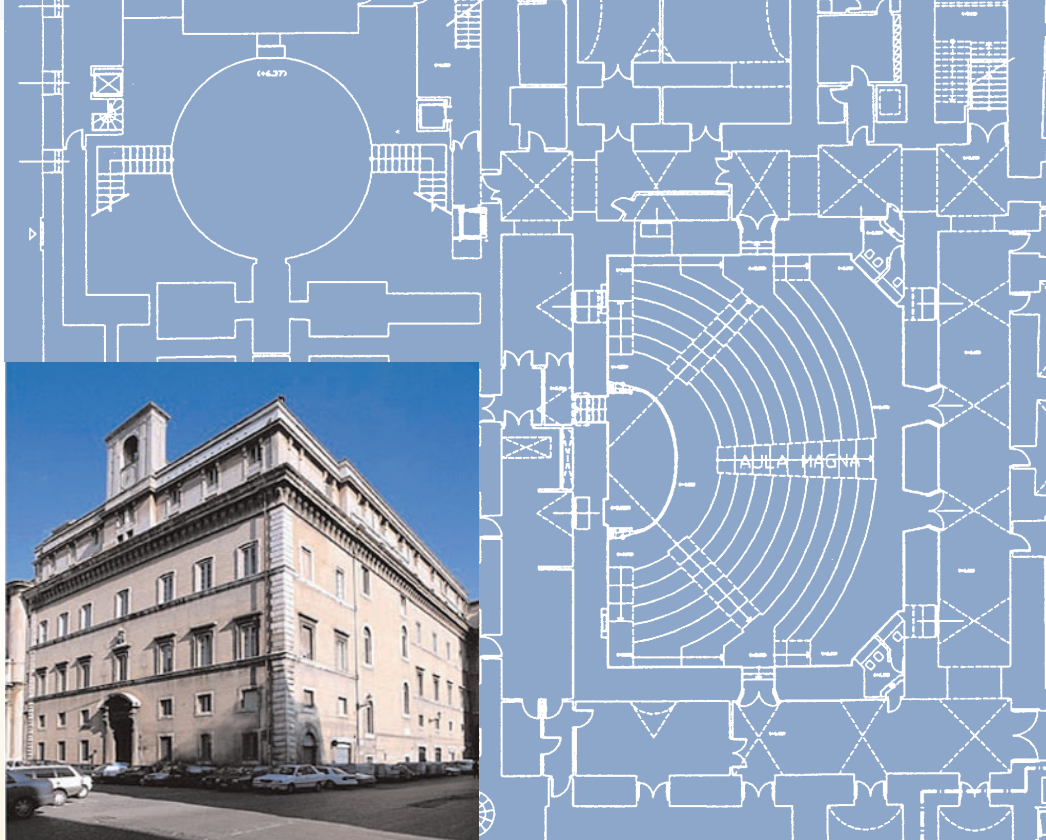
St. Josemaría saw the importance of ecclesiastical studies and established the schools of Theology, Canon Law and Ecclesiastical Philosophy at the University of Navarre, founded in 1952. He also envisioned establishing a university in Rome. It was his successor, Bishop Alvaro del Portillo who decided when the moment was right, in accord with the Holy See, to start the University in 1984. It grew very quickly. In fact, one news magazine said we were in “vertical take-off” because we grew so fast, especially by Roman standards. It has been very exciting to see the University develop from the initial seed — the Roman Academic Center—into an Athenaeum and then to a University with Pontifical recognition. It’s also an encouragement to see how the offices of the Holy See rely more and more on the University for consulting with respect to theological, philosophical and juridical matters important to the universal Church.

What is the future of the University?

I see the University growing somewhat in the number of students, perhaps adding some new schools in the future, working together, especially with respect to questions of bioethics, with some secular universities in Rome. We’re really promoting a sound understanding of the Church’s teaching in a way that is persuasive to people who don’t accept the fullness of the faith and the beauty of what the Church offers.

How does the University need to grow?

It’s important to engage the students more and more in the classroom. The personal attention they receive from professors is important. When we provide a quality education, word spreads. One of the best ways for promoting our University, in order to attract top students, is by word-of-mouth from former students. We must also continue removing financial barriers. Scholarships for students are essential, especially for those with limited means. Facilities-wise, we could use more space. Currently we enjoy the benefits of remodeling which took place in our



University Embarks on Remodeling Project

A major remodeling of the Apollinare building, the main academic facility of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, is underway.

The project, which is expected to take 34 months to complete, will cost several million dollars. It will be financed by the generous contributions of the University’s benefactors throughout the world. The work will be divided into two phases to allow for the normal functioning of academic activities.

The University has been using the building since 1990 and has a long-term lease on it. It serves a variety of uses and includes classrooms, administrative offices and the university chapel, all around a courtyard.

Located in the historical center of Rome, the Apollinare building was originally designed in the 15th century. It was restructured in 1748 by the architect Ferdinando Fuga. This will be the first major remodeling in more than 250 years.

The project has many benefits. Modern technical and academic equipment and lighting will be installed. The façade will get a much needed facelift. The remodeling will allow a more efficient use of space available, allowing for an increase in both the size and number of classrooms. Overall square footage of usable space will increase to over 100 thousand square feet, an increase of 41%.

Areas of Improvement	Current	Remodeled
Number of classrooms	21	26
Total capacity of classrooms	670 seats	1,220 seats
Amphitheater	140 seats	300 seats
Space for student services	6,983 sq. ft.	8,877 sq. ft.
Technology center	731 sq. ft.	4,196 sq. ft.
Total available space	71,252 sq. ft.	100,778 sq. ft.



The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross

The University, referred to as *Santa Croce* (Italian for *Holy Cross*), is an institution of research and study in the ecclesiastical sciences established by the Holy See. It includes schools of Theology, Canon Law, Philosophy, and Institutional Social Communications and an Institute for Advanced Religious Studies. The schools grant Bachelor's, Licentiate, and Doctoral degrees. A Bachelor's degree in philosophy and theology satisfies the full academic requirement for priestly ordination. Currently there are over 1,300 students from 64 countries around the world. Since the beginning of its academic activities in 1984, there have been more than 3,000 students who have attended the courses of the four schools.

The University is entrusted to the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei. It was inspired by the vision of Saint Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei, who desired to develop a university in Rome dedicated to the intense training in the ecclesiastical sciences, at the service of the universal Church.

The Foundation

The Pontifical University of the Holy Cross Foundation assists the University in its financial needs and grants scholarships to students from poor dioceses wishing to attend the University. In the past 15 years donations from benefactors in various countries have allowed the University to award 2,140 scholarships to priests and seminarians from 95 countries around the world.

Last year, the University awarded 155 scholarships. The goal for the next academic year is more than 200 scholarships. Please consider making an investment in the formation of a priest.

For further information,
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Fr. Bob Gahl *continued from inside left page*

library building a few years ago, making it a good place to study and do research. Our library is growing rapidly. We need it to do world-class research. Our main building at Sant'Apollinare has just begun a new construction project to remodel the entire building to make better use of the space and in order that it might be more adequate and more efficient for the number of students that we have. We really have an urgent need for more classroom space. Hopefully through the contributions of our benefactors, we can carry out this expansion.

Is growth limited now?

We haven't been able to begin some new classes that we'd like, to offer a greater variety of course options to our students. We haven't had to turn away students at the University, but at Sedes Sapientiae, the seminary that's connected with the University, they are constantly turning away students because of space limitations.

Final thoughts?

The results of a teacher's work are often invisible. Only now and then does a teacher have the gratifying experience of seeing the positive effect of the efforts he puts into teaching and research. The same is true for benefactors. They contribute and they often don't see the end-result. They don't see the daily operation of the University. They don't see the student, now a priest, ministering to countless souls. I want your readers to be assured that there are a lot of people working really hard at the University for the sake of the Church and that a lot of good is coming out of it, even if it's not immediately apparent in a tangible way. I hope you can get this across to more people and make it more visible.

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