

Address for the Inauguration of the St John Paul II Institute of Culture

**Fr. Ryszard Rybka OP, Director of St. John Paul II Institute of Culture**

Good evening and a cordial greeting to all those participating in this important event in the Aula Magna St. John Paul II and also to all those participating through the Internet.

The St. John Paul II Institute of Culture, which we inaugurate today, will be a beautiful and significant tribute to this extraordinary Pope, on the centenary of his birth. I am convinced that all of us, participants in this great event, and each of us personally, feel indebted to St. John Paul II, because in different ways, he has deeply marked our lives. We have been enriched by his great personality and enlightened by the depth of his teaching. For many of us, St. John Paul II has become a teacher and spiritual guide. When Cardinal Wojtyła was elected Pope, I was still a university student. I have never forgotten his first pilgrimage to Poland in 1979, which profoundly changed my homeland and started profound changes in Central and Eastern Europe. The strong and unequivocal words spoken by the Holy Pontiff in Warsaw still echo in my ears: "And I cry—I who am a Son of the land of Poland and who am also Pope John Paul II—I cry from all the depths of this Millennium, I cry on the vigil of Pentecost: Let your Spirit descend. Let your Spirit descend and renew the face of the earth, the face of this land. Amen."

I can say without exaggeration that St. John Paul II helped me to discover the importance of faith and the beauty of the Church of Christ. Thanks to him, I discovered my vocation to religious and priestly life. His long and extraordinary pontificate, rich in the depth of his theological, philosophical and social doctrine, has influenced and is influencing to date my scientific research and my teaching at this Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, the "Angelicum".

The St. John Paul II Institute of Culture, officially inaugurated today, on the centenary of the birth of the Pope, is a visible sign of our gratitude to him. I want to thank all those who have worked in different ways to give life to this important and significant work. A "special thank you" to the Founders and Benefactors for their generosity and great organizational capacity and enormous spiritual and material generosity. It is a great honor for me to be the first Director of this Institute. I am convinced that the St. John Paul II Institute of Culture will achieve its goals, by spreading the thought of this great Pontiff not only among the students of this University, but also to all the young people of the world. I also believe that this Institute will become an effective tool for seeking, together with St. John Paul II, solutions to the various urgent problems of the contemporary world. This is why we ask Saint John Paul II to intercede to the Lord to fill this initiative with graces and blessings, which wants nothing more than to translate the Pauline admonition of truth with charity and the charity of the truth (cf Eph 4:15). Thank you for your attention!