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Letter of the Cardinal Secretary of State to the Archbishop of Milan on the occasion of the 94th National Day for the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart

The following is the letter sent by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin on behalf of the Holy Father Francis to the President of the G. Toniolo Institute of Higher Studies, H.E. Msgr. Mario Delpini, Archbishop of Milan, on the occasion of the 94th National Day for the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, celebrated today on the theme: *Heirs and innovators. The young protagonists of history*.

Letter from the Cardinal Secretary of State

From the Vatican, 5 April 2018

Reverend Excellence,

This year is characterized by a renewed attention of the entire Church towards the young, who will be at the centre of the work of the next Synod of Bishops. In this context, the 94th National Day for the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, which will be celebrated on Sunday 15 April, is a valuable occasion for confirming and strengthening the active commitment of the ecclesial community to the service of the new generations and, in particular, to offer them a qualified human, cultural and professional formation, of Christian inspiration. To understand the problems that today concern the condition of the young, the analyses carried out by the Toniolo Institute in collaboration with the University are extremely useful. These surveys show that, despite persistent difficulties, the new generations do not resign themselves to an economic system that delays their entry into the world of work; they do not surrender to the precarious conditions that dissolve the expectations of a fully-realized life also in view of the formation of a family and an active participation in social life, and they do not renounce their desires for good, justice and peace for all.

The theme of the Day, “*Heirs and innovators. The young protagonists of history*”, effectively grasps the polarity along which there must develop the accompaniment of young people, who are often disoriented and bewildered, even they are always connected and able to relate to each other. It is paradoxical that while they are immersed

in a vortex of communication and through social media they can feel they are citizens of the world, they nonetheless experience deep dissatisfaction and loneliness. While they connect with everything and everyone, they seem to lack the ability to place themselves with full awareness in the course of history and to look forward and trust to the future. If the task of guiding and training has always characterized the mission of the universities, today it seems even more necessary that the academic and cultural institutions should know how to offer young people the tools to inhabit history by treasuring the enormous wealth of knowledge and wisdom inherited from the past. It is only from this legacy that the future of humanity can be built in a truly innovative way, enhancing the progress of science and technology within an integral vision of the human person made in the image and likeness of God.

The mission of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart therefore appears more relevant than ever, in supporting the momentum and the innovative abilities of young people. It is a demanding task that can only be achieved by developing the humanistic and spiritual heritage that moves in the ancient and ever new furrow of Christian wisdom with its four pillars: the passionate search for truth, wonder and contemplation in the face of beauty, the sincere desire to construct the good of each and every person in dialogue and acceptance, the constant commitment to make the common home ever more harmonious, supportive and peaceful. We need courageous and resourceful figures such as the founders of this prestigious Athenaeum, capable of great dreams and daring visions. Exactly one hundred years ago, the Blessed Giuseppe Toniolo, by then at the end of his earthly life, entrusted to Fr. Agostino Gemelli, Armida Barelli, Lodovico Necchi and Msgr. Francesco Olgiati the realization of a long-cultivated project: to give life to a Catholic Athenaeum. That demanding torch, entrusted to people whom many then considered dreamers, continues to burn today more than ever, continuing to inflame the hearts and enlighten the minds of many young people.

The Holy Father, who holds young people and their dreams in his heart, is grateful for the precious service that the Athenaeum of Italian Catholics, guided and supported by the Heart of Christ, continues to offer with competence and farsightedness to the new generations, for a fully human and authentically Christian cultural formation. While he assures them of his closeness and his paternal support, Pope Francis asks to be remembered in prayer. To Your Excellency the Magnificent Rector, the General Ecclesiastical Assistant, the members of the Toniolo Institute, the Illustrious Professors, the technical and administrative staff and all the students, I heartily impart a special Blessing.

I wish to take advantage of this circumstance to confirm my deepest respects

to Your Most Reverend Excellency

Pietro Cardinal Parolin
Secretary of State
