



[Paul VI](#) [1]

1965, December 8

*At the Closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, on December 8, 1965, Paul VI delivered a number of messages addressed to specific social groups, as a symbolic act on behalf of all the Fathers of the Council. The French philosopher Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), who was the French Ambassador at the Vatican State and shared an intellectual friendship with the Pontiff, received from Paul VI the following message, addressed to Men of Science and Culture. Although short and essential, the message highlights a central theme in the relationship between faith and science, that is, the convergence between the search for truth and the search for God. On October 11, 2012, on the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, Benedict XVI repeated Paul VI's act, delivering the same message at St. Peter's square. The document was given to the Italian CERN researcher Fabiola Gianotti, to the German philosopher Robert Spaemann, and to the German theologian Gerhard Lohfink, as representative of all intellectuals.*

A very special greeting to you, seekers after truth, to you, men of thought and science, the explorers of man, of the universe and of history, to all of you who are pilgrims enroute to the light and to those also who have stopped along the road, tired and disappointed by their vain search.

Why a special greeting for you? Because all of us here, bishops and Fathers of the council, are on the lookout for truth. What have our efforts amounted to during these four years except a more attentive search for and deepening of the message of truth entrusted to the Church and an effort at more perfect docility to the spirit of truth.

Hence our paths could not fail to cross. Your road is ours. Your paths are never foreign to ours. We are the friends of your vocation as searchers, companions in your fatigues, admirers of your successes and, if necessary, consolers in your discouragement and your failures.

Hence for you also we have a message and it is this: Continue your search without tiring and without ever despairing of the truth. Recall the words of one of your great friends, St. Augustine: "Let us seek with the desire to find, and find with the desire to seek still more." Happy are those who, while possessing the truth, search more earnestly for it in order to renew it, deepen it and transmit it to others. Happy also are those who, not having found it, are working toward it with a sincere heart. May they seek the light of tomorrow with the light of today until they reach the fullness of light.

But do not forget that if thinking is something great, it is first a duty. Woe to him who voluntarily closes his eyes to the light. Thinking is also a responsibility, so woe to those who darken the spirit by the thousand tricks which degrade it, make it proud, deceive and deform it. What other basic principle is there

for men of science except to think rightly?

For this purpose, without troubling your efforts, without dazzling brilliance, we come to offer you the light of our mysterious lamp which is faith. He who entrusted this lamp to us is the sovereign Master of all thought, He whose humble disciples we are, the only one who said and could have said: "I am the light of the world, I am the way, the truth and the life."

These words have meaning for you. Never perhaps, thank God, has there been so clear a possibility as today of a deep understanding between real science and real faith, mutual servants of one another in the one truth. Do not stand in the way of this important meeting. Have confidence in faith, this great friend of intelligence. Enlighten yourselves with its light in order to take hold of truth, the whole truth. This is the wish, the encouragement and the hope, which, before disbanding, is expressed to you by the Fathers of the entire world assembled at Rome in council.

[From the Catholic Church Magisterium](#) [2]

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