4th Scholas Chairs International Congress 2018
University and School. Towards a revival
of universities that "go forth" (Cf. VG, 4)
Castelgandolfo Pontifical Villa, Italy

June 27th to 29th, 2018

"Today we are not only living in a time of changes but are experiencing a true epochal shift, marked by a wide-ranging "anthropological" and "environmental crisis". In a word, this calls for "changing the models of global development" and "redefining our notion of progress". This vast and pressing task requires, on the cultural level of academic training and scientific study, a broad and generous effort at a radical paradigm shift, or rather – dare I say – at "a bold cultural revolution" (Pope Francis, Veritatis Gaudium, 1/29/2018)

What is a Scholas Chair?

The Chairs are spaces of reflection and action connected in a great network, in which each subject (professors, researchers, students) is enriched in the Encounter with the other, through bonds that develop between Scholas Chairs and schools from Scholas.Social web site.

There is an "urgent need for "networking" between those institutions worldwide that cultivate and promote ecclesiastical studies, in order to set up suitable channels of cooperation also with academic institutions in the different countries and with those inspired by different cultural and religious traditions. At the same time, specialized centres of research need to be established in order to study the epochal issues affecting humanity today" (VG, 4d)

Scholas Chairs perform diverse activities:

a. Support for educational and social projects: Scholas chairs provide educational support and expert consulting for projects placed on Scholas.Social platform, directing them to the pedagogical principles of Scholas.

b. Didactics: Communication of contents produced by cholas Chairs (through active and motivating methodologies).

c. Research: Professors and students can elaborate a comprehensive research on the subject proposed by the Chairs. It could also involve the development of specific doctorates.

d. Awareness-raising and insertion in public policies: Promoting dissemination, communication and training on the values of the Culture of Encounter in the various areas of society.

The goal is to generate concrete cooperation on experiences and case studies that will serve as models to apply in different contexts, developing synergies between universities, schools and projects; as well as to involve students in the process of comprehensive research and generate actions destined to help the community.

What is the Academic Year of Scholas Chairs?

Scholas Chairs program develops in cycles called Academic Years. The academic year of Scholas Chairs starts and finishes with an International Congress in which the projects carried out in different contexts, its impact on the community, level of awareness and eventually of incidence in public policy are presented.

To this end, all participants worldwide are part of a space for exchange of experiences, re-discussion of the theoretical principles in light of the experiences within the framework of the International Congress, which gives visibility to the Chairs.

These international meetings take place each year, changing country and continent. The academic year ends with a publication that includes results of the investigation, description of the technical model applied, good practices and "lessons learned" that will arise as a result of the collective construction of the group of Universities involved.

The first congress was held at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (Vatican City) from May 29th to 31st, 2016 with the participation of 40 universities from 14 countries. The following one took place at the Catholic University of Valencia with the participation of high ecclesiastical authorities and academics of Spanish universities. And the third one, at the Harry Truman Institute of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem from July 1st to 4th, 2017 with the participation of 41 universities from 20 countries.

Scholas Chairs Program currently involves 47 universities and 19 observer organizations from 21 countries.

What is Scholas Citizenship Program?

Scholas Citizenship is an educational program of the Scholas Occurrentes Foundation that aims to promote social commitment and participation of youth, based on their own experiences and concerns, in order to produce positive changes in themselves and their communities.

The origins of this educational proposal is the School of Neighbors ("Escuela de Vecinos") program created by Jorge Bergoglio as Buenos Aires Archbishop, in the pursuit of building bridges amongst different schools within the city. This program started after the 2001 economic and social crisis in Argentina, incorporating eleven schools of diverse religious communities: Muslim, Jewish, Evangelical and Catholic. Students from these schools were invited to get together to identify their common concerns and join efforts to solve them collectively.

At present, in the City of Buenos Aires more than 60 state-run and private schools are part of the program, both religious and non-religious, from different creeds and from all the 15 boroughs that comprise the city. Moreover, the program is being developed in all Argentinian provinces with the support of Argentina's Ministry of Education.

As a result of Pope Francis's request to bring this program to the entire world, promoting a culture of encounter between youth from around the globe, the experience is being carried out in Spain, Italy, Paraguay, Haiti, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, the United Arab Emirates and Mozambique, reaching thousands of students from around the world.

With the Interreligious Citizenship Encounter, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Scholas joined together answering Pope Francis' call to create a culture of encounter among youth, applying the yearly wisdom of the University, with the Foundation's intuition and expertise.

Which are the objectives of the Congress?

Scholas Chairs Congress aims at gathering researchers and academic members of Scholas Chairs program with religious, diplomatic and government authorities, to generate opportunities of cooperation and learning considering education as a means for social change. The final objective of these lectures is to promote a concrete cooperation regarding successful experiences and study cases that can be considered as models for its implementation in diverse environments.

"As I noted in Laudato Si', "beginning in the middle of the last century and in spite of many difficulties, there has been a growing conviction that our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home". Indispensable in this regard is the establishment of new and qualified centres of research where – as I proposed in Laudato Si' – scholars from different religious universities and from different scientific fields can interact with responsible freedom and mutual transparency, thus entering into "dialogue among themselves for the sake of protecting nature, defending the poor, and building networks of respect and fraternity". In all countries, universities constitute the main centres of cientific research for the advancement of knowledge and of society; they play a decisive role in

economic social and cultural development, especially in a time like our own, marked as it is by rapid, constant and far-reaching changes in the fields of science and technology. International agreements also take account of the vital responsibility of universities for research policies and the need to coordinate them by creating networks of specialized centres in order to facilitate, not least, the mobility of researchers. In this regard, plans are under way for outstanding interdisciplinary centres and initiatives aimed at accompanying the development of advanced technologies, the best use of human resources and programmes of integration." (VG, 5)

Which are the three topics for the 2018 Congress?

Topic 1: Educating for Fraternal Humanism: Innovative education

Topic 2: Laudato Si' – Social ecology: environmental and social sustainability

Topic 3: Assisi – Interreligious dialogue for sustainable peace

These 3 topics emerge from matching the issues that the youth of diverse Scholas Citizenship editions chose as more important in different countries with the most important issues shown by Pope Francis in his Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 of the UN. The participants are expected to present papers related to some of the issues involved in each topic:

I. Educating for Fraternal Humanism: Innovative education	Working groups	Conceptualization of Pope Francis' Pedagogy: Sports and education
		Conceptualization of Pope Francis' Pedagogy: Arts and education
		Conceptualization of Pope Francis' Pedagogy: Science, technology and education
		Inclusive education
		Journal Cultori dell'Incontro
		Exchange of students and professors through Erasmus grants or similar (Internationalization with multiculturalism)
		University commitment with social movements
		Solidarity humanism and university social engagement
		Initiatives for the harmonization of the broken pact
	SDG	Quality education
	Issues chosen by participants of Scholas Citizenship program	Recreational areas
		Education / Educational change
II. Laudato si' - Social ecology: environmental and social sustainability	Working groups	Human Mobility and Refugees
		Education and sustainable Development within the framework of Laudato Si'
		Initiatives for sustainable peace
	SDG	No poverty

		Zero hunger
		Good health and well-being
		Gender equality
		Clean water and sanitation
		Affordable and clean energy
		Decent work and economic growth
		Industry, innovation and infrastructure
		Reduced inequalities
		Sustainable cities and communities
		Responsible consumption and production
		Climate action
		Life below wáter
		Life on land
		Peace, justice and strong institutions
	Issues chosen by participants of Scholas Citizenship program	Youth suicide
		Stereotypes / Discrimination /Social disintegration /Bullying / Cyberbullying / Peer violence
		Environment
		Poverty
		Sustainable consumption
		Pollution and environment
		Anorexia and bulimia / Depression
		Teenage pregnancy / Abortion
III. "Assisi" – Interreligious dialogue for sustainable peace	Working groups	Initiatives for multicultural and interreligious dialogue
	SDG	Partnerships to reach goals
		Peace, justice and strong institutions
	Issues chosen by participants of Scholas Citizenship program	Stereotypes / Discrimination /Social disintegration /Bullying / Cyberbullying / Peer violence