



# The Holy See

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**ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER JOHN PAUL II  
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN AN INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM  
ON THE FRENCH PHILOSOPHER, MAURICE BLONDEL**

*Saturday, 18 November 2000*

I am pleased to greet the participants in the international colloquium organized at the *Gregorian University and chaired by Cardinal Paul Poupard on "Blondel between L'Action and the Trilogy"*.

Your colloquium seems particularly important with regard to a certain number of needs whose urgency I wished to recall in the Encyclical *Fides et ratio*. Thus I insisted on the need for the study of philosophy as a *praeparatio fidei* (n. 61) and on the relationship between theology, the science of faith, and philosophical reason (nn. 64-69).

At the root of Maurice Blondel's philosophy is a keen perception of the drama of the separation of faith and reason (cf. nn. 45-48) and an intrepid desire to overcome this separation, which is contrary to the nature of things. The philosopher of Aix is thus an eminent representative of Christian philosophy, understood as rational speculation, in vital union with faith (cf. n. 76), in a twofold fidelity to the demands of intellectual research and to the Magisterium.

In a Message sent on 19 February 1993 to Archbishop Bernard Panafieu of Aix on the occasion of the international colloquium celebrating the centenary of *L'Action*, I already had occasion to stress that "Blondel pursued his work by tirelessly and persistently clarifying his thought without ever disavowing its inspiration". And I added: "It is this courage of thought, allied with a fidelity to and an unflinching love for the Church, which today's philosophers and theologians who study Blondel's work should learn from this great master" (*L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 13 March 1993, p. 4). May all who are involved in academic research be courageously willing, like Blondel, to recognize the limits of all human thought and let themselves be led to the threshold of the divine mystery given to us by faith!

In again offering you my encouragement, I gladly grant you my Apostolic Blessing.

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