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Audience with members of the Blanquerna – Universitat Ramón Llull Foundation, Barcelona

This morning, in the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the members of the *Blanquerna – Universitat Ramón Llull* (Barcelona) Foundation, to whom he delivered the following address:

Address of the Holy Father

Dear brother,

Dear friends,

I am pleased to greet you again: some of you have already been here for the meeting with the Federation of Catholic Universities, you already know the way, you are almost at home. My attention was drawn by the name Blanquerna, the illustrious literary personage used by Blessed Ramón Llull to give a precise description of the society of his time. At the same time the philosopher tries to provide, in a pedagogic form, some models of Christian life that can be of use to any person to follow Christ, wherever He may call them.

And all of this is like a lesson which is of a topicality, a surprising topicality, because it speaks to us of a new and accessible language, of a way of communicating perhaps unusual for the age, but pleasant and clear to his contemporaries. A pedagogy that moves away from the fantastic heroes who try to make us escape from our reality, as chivalrous characters were then, and, on the contrary, proposes to us simple models of life, and natural models of life, in which we can serve the Lord and be happy. How much pain and frustration are caused today by the unattainable stereotypes that markets and pressure groups claim to impose on us, even more than in the time of the Blessed [Ramón Llull]. What a great task to make young people the plan God has for each one of them.

Your foundation, and the entire *Universitat Ramón Llull*, by assuming this name, has accepted this exciting task. First of all, working to give back to the family its primary vocation in society, following the example of our protagonist's parents. Then, by offering young people different paths in life which, like the phases our character

completes, help them to overcome the challenges life presents to them. Also, by creating the certainty that the Christian hero's steps are not marked by the longings of careerism, but are an answer to a calling. Careerism causes great harm, great harm, because it is not communitarian, it is individualistic, and this causes harm. And courageously affirming that the demand for roles of ever-greater responsibility must be the result of excellence in the service rendered so far. And above all, by teaching them that, once their task has been brought to completion, like our protagonist, even if he reaches the Supreme Pontificate, the Christian must strive, must aspire to the encounter with the Lord, to full devotion to the divine service. Or rather, at the base there is always the Baptism that made you Christian and, wherever you are, you are a baptized person who must respond from there, and not from the steps you can climb in life.

This is the idea I would like you to take with you when you return to your university and to the other educational projects you promote. To form, yes, with a current, modern, concise, pedagogic language, with an accurate analysis of reality; but – there is always a "but" in life – but always taking into account that we form complete men and women, not illusory replicas of impossible ideals. For example, there are some universities I encountered in America that are too liberal, that try only to form technicians, to form specialists, and forget that they must form men and women. Integral people who try to give the best of themselves in the service God calls them to, knowing that they are pilgrims, that in reality everything is a journey towards a goal that surpasses this reality, the encounter of the friend with the beloved, in that love that, poured into our hearts, gives us the strength to go forward.

At the end of the book, Blessed Llull offers us a daily meditation; I have chosen number 124 which, being a leap year, would ideally correspond to today: "They asked the Friend what was the greatest darkness. He answered the absence of his Beloved; and when asked what was the greatest splendour, he said the presence of his Beloved". This is my wish for you, that you may enlighten the lives of your students with the presence of Jesus, that this certainty may make them aware of their dignity as friends, of God and of men, and that they may be able to dispel the darkness that covers this world that has strayed from its true essence. May Jesus bless you and may the Holy Virgin protect you, and do not forget to pray for me; but for, not against.