

LAUDATIO

To his Eminence

Cardinal ZENON GROCHOLEWSKI

Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education of the Holy See,
on the occasion of the *Doctor Honoris Causa* Award Ceremony

the 5th of November 2010

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Laudatio

In honour of His Eminence

Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski,

Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education of the Holy See

Eminenza Reverendissima,

Your Eminence,

Dear Rector Vasile Işan,

Members of the commission, distinguished guests, dear students,

Benedictus Deus in saecula

Blessed be God forever!

It is a privilege for me to read the *laudatio* for a great personality, a scholar of law, educational and religious sciences in today's society, in this historic University and festive aula, which has witnessed so many important scientific, academic and honorary events. *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University awards the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* to His Eminence Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, Prefect of the prestigious Roman Congregation "Pro Educatione Catholica".

Born in Poland, a country that we consider our neighbour and friend, on 11 October 1939, in Brodki, a village belonging to the Archdiocese of Poznan, he comes from a family blessed with four children. His parents, Stanislaw and Giuseppina Stavinska, deeply religious people, brought him up in the spirit of love for God and respect for people.

He studied philosophy and theology at the Archdiocesan Seminary in Poznan and then he was ordained priest on 27 May 1963. He spent his first years as a priest at Christ the King Parish in Poznan.

Starting with 1966, during the communist-atheist dictatorship period, he had the privilege to study canon law at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he took his bachelor's degree in 1968 and his doctoral degree in 1972 with the highest honour, *summa cum laude*, receiving a gold medal in accordance with the academic traditions of that time.

The thesis entitled *De exclusione indisolubilitatis ex consensu matrimoniali eiusque probatione* (M. D'Auria Editore, Napoli, 1973, 200 p.) was defended in Latin and published in 1973.

He also attended special courses for a period of three years in order to get the diploma of *avvocato rotale* for the Supreme Tribunal of Apostolic Signatura.

Following the intense activity developed between 1972 and 1999 within the most important dicastery of justice, The Supreme Tribunal of Apostolic Signatura, The Holy Father John Paul II designated him to be Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

From the moment of his appointment as Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, the eminent man of law and religious and life sciences became Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical Gregorian University, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, Pontifical Institute of Christian Archaeology, Pontifical Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, and patron of the Faculty of Christian and Classical Literature (Salesian Pontifical University).

At the same time, the distinguished doctor in educational sciences became the President of “Pontificia Opera delle Vocazioni Cacerdotali”, “Commissione Interdicasteriale per la Formazione dei Candidati agli Ordini Sacri” and “Commissione Interdicasteriale per l'Equa Distribuzione dei Sacerdoti”. His Eminence also develops various activities within the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia and the academic environment.

Considering his legal and theological education, he was part of several commissions, as for example the one established by Holy Father John Paul II, consisting of 7 persons who were going to study the project of the new code of the canon law or the commission dedicated to the reform of the Roman Curie between 1983 and 1985.

He was also a member of the Disciplinary Commission of the Roman Curie between 1983 and 1998 and he was later elected president of the Lawyers Commission of the Holy See and of the Roman Curie between 1988 and 1999.

Being a specialist in canon law, mastering various languages learnt during his study years and having a large experience in the field of general and religious education, he distinguished himself through his teaching activity and numerous publications offered to the Church, to those responsible with justice in the world and to the young generations meant to create a peaceful and harmonious climate and a better and more equitable environment for all of us.

His scientific and didactic activity consists of more than 550 works, published and presented in 12 foreign languages.

In order to find out more about the special guest of the Faculty of Roman-Catholic Theology, mention should be made of the fact that His Eminence Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski coordinates the largest network of training and education centres in the Christian world, as well as all the 1300 catholic universities worldwide spread not only in the Catholic or Christian world, but also in areas where Christians or Catholics are very few.

In Taiwan, for instance, where Catholics represent 1.3% of the population, there are three prestigious Catholic universities which offer education to more than 25.000 students. The Minister of Education in Taiwan, part of a government with no Christian representative, expressed his open admiration for the ideals of Catholic universities in his country, together with his wish for their continuously increasing number. The Catholic University in Bangkok is also worth mentioning since Catholics in Thailand represent 0.5% of the whole population. 20.000 students are enrolled at this university at the moment, out of which 2% are Catholics, while the rest belong to local religions. There is also another prestigious catholic university in Bangkok, i.e. Saint John's University.

All these great institutions and catholic universities are directly coordinated by the prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education and involve the training of the academic staff in all fields of higher education.

Catholic schools are another aspect of the education and training for life. Nowadays, there are more than 200,000 schools worldwide which provide education for more than 45,000,000 students. We notice that these schools are open for everybody, therefore in some parts of the world, like Thailand for example, the number of Catholics reaches 300,000, while the number of students in schools is more than 465,000.

We are pleased to see that the Catholic school continues to exist in the former communist countries, and that some of these countries (like Poland, Slovakia, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, Hungary and so on) offer subsidies for such institutions and students have a choice for one school or the other.

Action has been taken in all countries so that religious education and confessional schools be considered equal to the others and therefore the government has to support them. Through the Congregation for Catholic Education, our distinguished guest has undertaken various measures in this respect, as he himself declared in an interview given on March 15, 2008. In his opinion, the state should not take sides, but care for all its citizens and equally finance them, irrespective of where they chose to do their education and training. If this obligation and right are not obeyed, the state does not follow the fundamental principles of democracy and of a healthy laic society where everyone is equally respected.

Most of the international conventions support and proclaim parents' rights to raise and instruct their children following their own religious

beliefs. The state, which does not govern over religion, must naturally obey this right, obeying thus parents' will and the will of its citizens.

If the Catholic school is destined just for those who pay, this right is no longer obeyed. "Our regret", says our guest, "is that in such cases those who suffer are the poorest. Nobody has ever said that the Catholic school raises bad citizens, but, on the contrary, non-Christians have often expressed their high esteem for the education provided by Catholic schools" (in an interview given on March 15, 2008).

Consequently, education institutions – theological schools, universities, other types of higher education institutions and Catholic schools – are spread all over the world and they come into contact with all possible social, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, political and religious situations. The Congregation for Catholic Education, led by His Eminence Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, thus undertakes remarkable, but demanding efforts for the benefit of the Church.

Another aspect approached by the Congregation for Catholic Education would be worth mentioning. With respect to education, Pope Benedict XVI said that nowadays this field is determined by stringent needs, since education is a difficult matter in our society.

It is true that education is currently one of the very urgent issues, because assiduous students are conveyed scientific information exclusively. Education is oriented first of all towards the practice of a

future profession. In such case the real personal education, meaning the complete education, which is definitely necessary, may be absent.

Partial education, involving only the intellectual and technical education, is by no means enough to build up the creators of a better world. Simple knowledge is known to be incorrectly used for evil goals. Various scientific and technical knowledge has been used in wars and even worse, in terrorism and iniquity against the weak and innocent.

It is therefore necessary to help people become responsible for their deeds, to help the youth serve the good, to offer each and every pupil, student and future researcher the chance of a complete education.

It is an honour to mention that His Eminence, Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, is the promoter and supporter of a special programme for youth education.

He states that education must have four dimensions:

- the human dimension (for the upbringing of an earnest reliable person who proves self-control;
- the spiritual dimension (which consolidates and accomplishes the human one);
- the intellectual dimension (referring to the ability of a firm critical judgment) and finally
- the professional dimension (really constructive and useful to the society if supported by the other three dimensions). These four dimensions must therefore combine and never be separated from one another.

It is a pleasure to point out some of the honorary titles and awards that His Eminence, Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, has received so far:

- *Honorary Citizen* of Trenton and Princetown, U.S.A., Agropoli, Italy, and Levoca, Slovakia;

- “*Polonia semper fidelis*” Medal awarded in 1998 by the Polish authorities for his activity carried out to the benefit of his country;

- *Doctor Honoris Causa* of the Theological Academy in Warsaw, which became Stefan Wyszyński University in 1999;

- *Doctor Honoris Causa* of the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland, in the same year;

- the Great Medal “Saint Gorazd” awarded by the Ministry of Education in Slovakia, for special merits in the promotion of science in Slovakia;

- *Doctor Honoris Causa* of the University of Passau, Germany, in 2001;

- *Doctor Honoris Causa* of Babeş Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, on behalf of the four theological faculties: Orthodox, Protestant, Roman and Eastern Catholic, being a member of the honorary academic corpus of this scientific forum.

It is therefore natural that such a researcher of the society in general and of the Church in particular be awarded a new academic title, which follows the ones he has received so far, as a student, a professor, a law and education specialist and an expert in Christian life.

Your Eminence,

It is with great joy that Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, the first modern Romanian university, awards the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa* for Your achievements in law, training and education, Your dedication to the defence of truth and Your service to the man, body and soul.

We kindly ask His Magnificence, Rector Vasile Işan, to hand in the specific signs of appreciation and the diploma of *Doctor Honoris Causa* of our university.

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Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași

Iași, the 5th of November 2010