

ADDRESS OF SR. RAFFAELLA PETRINI, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE GOVERNORATE OF VATICAN CITY STATE, AT THE PRESENTATION OF A STAMP COMMEMORATING THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE OF SAINT APOLLINAIRE, ON MONDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2024, IN ROME

I offer my most cordial greetings to all of you, who are gathered here to celebrate the bicentenary of the foundation of the Pontifical Institute. In particular, I greet Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, Msgr. Baldassare Reina, Vicar General of his Holiness for the Diocese of Rome, and Michele Di Tolve, Auxiliary Bishop, in charge of the school, all of whom will celebrate the Eucharist shortly.

I greet the Institute's Board of Directors, starting from Fr. Andrea Cola, President, Professor Maria Urso, Principal, and Fr. Lorenzo Colombo, Counsellor and Spiritual Assistant. I also greet Ms. Anna Paola Sabatini, Director General of the Regional Education Office of Lazio.

Despite the solemnity of the occasion, allow me to say, that in some ways, it is a family celebration. The Institute in fact, is a product of the Pontiffs' zeal for education and formation. In its 200 years of existence, it has maintained the high ideals entrusted to it on 4 November 1824, by Leo XII.

During celebrations over the past year, you have reflected upon and discussed the history of the school, the transformations it underwent, the events it experienced, the work it achieved and the enormous tasks it had to face.

The decision to issue a commemorative stamp by the Post and Philately Service of the Governorate of Vatican City State is a tangible sign of recognition of the Institute's value and role in these 200 years, not only at the service of the Holy See, but also of the city of Rome and civil society.

Throughout this long period of time, the school has carried out its task, with the awareness that this mission goes beyond just learning because it is a formative community that also aims to transmit the fundamental message of faith: Christ, dead and risen, the beginning and end of all things created.

In this sense, the stamp is an expression of gratitude to the Institute's many principals, professors and collaborators, for their exemplary commitment as teachers: to make their students' talents blossom, and to instil in them the foundations of life lived in groups and in society. In fact, teachers have the role of transforming the lives of these men and women of tomorrow, moulding them with Christian humanism and fostering the development of each of them. This is what distinguishes the Pontifical Institute from other schools.

This is why the image of Saint Apollinaire on the stamp stands out above the Institute's building. It is a homage to the Patron Saint of the Institute and to all those who have contributed or continue to contribute to evangelization, helping students grow into a new life.

Thus, dedicating a stamp to its 200th anniversary, is an opportunity to reaffirm the Institute's bond with the Successor of Peter and a sign of recognition for its irreplaceable role in forming new generations. It is also a commendation from a Sovereign State like Vatican City, to an educational community that has always been at the service of Pontiffs.

I conclude by thanking all of you – on behalf of the Governorate, but also as a former student who carries the years spent at the Institute in her heart – for being close to the students entrusted to you and for teaching them to be people at the service of others, with their knowledge, their dedication, their sense of justice, their love for work and for the truth,

Thank you for your attention and happy bicentenary.