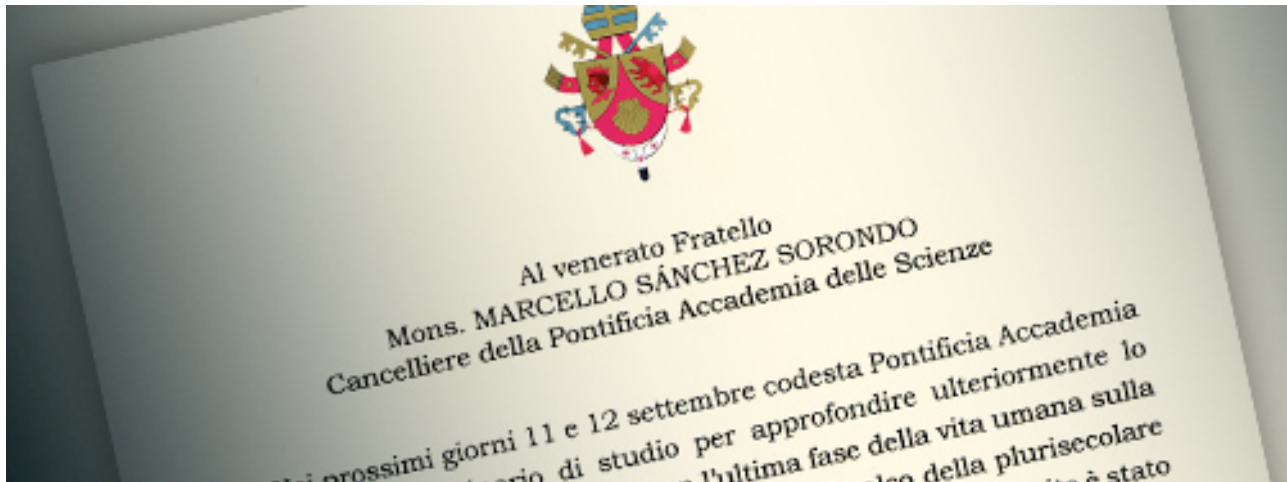




8 September 2006



To Our Venerable Brother

Msgr. Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo

Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences

On 11-12 September of this year the Pontifical Academy of Sciences will organise a study seminar to further extend its study of subjects and issues connected with the last stage of man's life on earth. This significant meeting is to be located in the furrow of the centuries-old tradition of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, whose task has been, and continues to be, that of offering the scientific community a valid and qualified contribution to the solution of those relevant scientific-technical problems that are at the basis of the development of mankind, taking into due consideration the moral, ethical and spiritual aspects of every question as well.

In performing its special service, the Pontifical Academy of Sciences always refers to the data of science and to the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church. In particular, as regards this study meeting, Christian Revelation also invites the man of our time, who tries in so many ways to find the true and profound meaning of his existence, to address the subject of death by projecting his gaze beyond pure human reality and by opening his mind to the mystery of God. It is, indeed, in the light of God that the human creature better understands himself and his own definitive destiny, and the value and meaning of his life, which is the precious and irreplaceable gift of the Almighty Creator.

While cordially greeting those taking part in the working group, I hope and wish that the shared reflection will prove useful in producing opportune clarifications on aspects that concern such an important human question. And, assuring you of my spiritual nearness through prayer, I most willingly send to you, to the President of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and to all the distinguished scholars present, an Apostolic Blessing.

From Castelgandolfo, 8 September 2006