

Universities worldwide reflect on the richness of Ex Corde Ecclesiae 30 years on in new book

Academics and university leaders from around the world have reflected on Pope John Paul II's vision for Catholic higher education in a new book launched by Australian Catholic University.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae: Reflections after 30 Years contains philosophical, theological and juridical reflections of the former Pope's landmark apostolic constitution issued on August 15, 1990.

Key Catholic higher education leaders from Australia, USA, Spain, Belgium, Taiwan, and Italy are featured in the book, which was launched at ACU Melbourne by Archbishop Peter A. Comensoli on September 21.

The contributing authors include ACU Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Ethics) Professor Hayden Ramsay, Notre Dame University lecturer Fr Wilson Miscamble csc, emeritus Professor Greg Craven AO, Fr Manuel Jesus Arroba Conde cmf, Sr Anne Therese Falkenstein from Providence University in Taiwan, President of the U.S. Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities Fr Dennis H. Holtschneider cm, and Professor Rik Torfs from KU Leuven, the oldest Catholic university in the world. The book also includes a foreword by Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

The book is the brainchild of co-editors ACU Vice-President Fr Anthony Casamento csma and Director for ACU's Canon Law Centre, Professor Michele Riondino.

As the director of Identity and Mission at ACU, Fr Casamento said St John Paul II's vision for Catholic universities was "timeless".

"St John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution Ex Corde Eccelsiae is the seminal work on what it means to be a Catholic university," Fr Casamento said.

"Although 30 years old, its words are timeless, as many of the issues that John Paul II raised back then are just as relevant today as they were 30 years ago

"Our hope for the book was to collect a variety of views in one collection reflecting the diverse reception of the document within the global Catholic university community when it was published.

"We have achieved this in the range of authors that have contributed to the volume."

During the launch, Professor Riondino described Ex Corde Ecclesiae as "the magna carta for Catholic universities", saying its title, Latin for 'born of out the heart of the Church', revealed the significant place of Catholic higher education in the Catholic Church.

"Ex Corde Ecclesiae is first and foremost a theological document that contains interesting and challenging philosophical and juridical points that every Catholic Institution of Higher Studies must follow, according to their own peculiarities," Professor Riondino said.

"Within our newly published book we find philosophical, theological and juridical reflections that will hopefully help with the correct implementation and understanding that even after more than 30 years, Ex Corde Ecclesiae remains a great and unique document of the Magisterium of the Church."

Universities around the world marked the 30th anniversary of Ex Corde Ecclesiae in 2020. The celebrations also coincided with 30th anniversary since the opening of ACU, Australia's largest Catholic university.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae: Reflections after 30 Years can be purchased at St Paul's Book Centres throughout Australia or at the St Paul's [online store](#).

Fr Anthony Casamento csma and Professor Michele Riondino are available for interview.

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