

## BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE

# 4C

FRANCE - PARIS - 13.09.2008

Institut de France

Brève visite

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Official translation - English

Mr Chancellor,  
Dear Permanent Secretaries of the five *Académies*,  
Dear Cardinals,  
Dear brothers in the episcopate and the priesthood,  
Dear friends from the *Académies*, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For me it is a very great honour to be received this morning under the Cupola. I thank you for the overwhelming expressions of kindness with which you have welcomed me, and for your gift of the medal. I could not come to Paris without greeting you personally. I am pleased to have this happy opportunity to emphasize my profound links with French culture, for which I have the greatest admiration. In my intellectual journey, contact with French culture has been particularly important. I therefore avail myself of this occasion to express my gratitude to it, both personally and as the successor of Peter. The plaque that we have just unveiled will preserve the memory of our meeting.

As Rabelais rightly asserted in his day, "Science without conscience brings only ruin to the soul!" (Pantagruel, 8). It was doubtless in order to contribute to avoiding the risk of such a dichotomy that, at the end of January of last year, and for the first time in three and a half centuries, two *Académies* of the *Institut*, two Pontifical Academies and the *Institut Catholique* in Paris organized a joint Colloquium on the changing identity of the individual. The Colloquium has illustrated the interest generated by broad interdisciplinary studies. This initiative could be taken further, in order to explore together the countless research possibilities in the human and experimental sciences. This wish is accompanied by my prayers to the Lord for you, for your loved ones and for all the members of the *Académies*, as well as all the staff of the *Institut de France*. May God bless you!

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