

Dear student,

The Rector has sent to students his traditional Christmas Wishes ,which we are happy to share with all those who have been part of our university.

Dear students,

As is now tradition, I am sending you a letter of Christmas greetings.

Some of you may recall that last year's letter contained a reference to 22nd February, the day on which the Rectors of the Universities in Lombardia decided, as a precaution, to suspend teaching activities. In those first moments of the spread of Covid-19, it was thought that the problem would be solved within a few weeks. Unfortunately, this was not the case as the virus is constantly changing, and the vaccination campaign has not yet been able to eradicate it. To summarise: we must continue to maintain attention at the highest level.

That said, the situation we are experiencing should not prevent us from recognising the value of the road travelled, of the experiences made, and of the results achieved.

It would only be natural to construct a sort of storyboard of what has been done at LIUC in the course of 2021: facts, dates, protagonists of the development of teaching, the consolidation of research, the strengthening of the business school, and the improvement of services. In addition, the remote election of your representatives (I would like to take this opportunity to say; "Thanks for the commitment!"), the celebrations in presence of graduates, the welcoming of new students and exchange students, the resumption of lessons in safe conditions, and to initiatives of the Alumni Association. And not to forget the awards of various kinds, and the celebrations of the thirtieth anniversary of LIUC... so many satisfactions, and some mistakes, to be treasured.

But this is not the place. Anyone who wants to, can always read the inaugural report of the academic year, where they may find everything and more.

Wanting to change my perspective, I have drawn inspiration from the book "Living words - For a vocabulary of existence", in which Monsignor Nunzio Galantino collected what had been published in the Sole 24Ore over the past few years; 101 words, grouped into seven parts. From the part dedicated to "social virtues", I have selected four that, in my opinion, represent well what we have recently lived, experienced, learned.

### **Responsibility (Responding to listening).**

Galantino observes that the original meaning of the term is found in the Latin 'responsus', the past participle of the verb 'respond': "to respond with great commitment, several times, seriously; knowingly give an account to someone or themselves of their actions and of the resulting consequences ". He also states that at the origin of responsibility there is attentive listening to one's conscience and the rigorous response to everything (people and/or events) that an individual encounters in their own history.

The message is clear and strong: the entire LIUC community, having "encountered" a unique, dramatic, unexpected event, was urged to a great exercise of responsibility.

### **Courage (A full heart).**

Reconstructing the etymology of the word 'courage', the author puts the heart at the centre. "Having courage literally means having heart. That is, possessing the strength of mind, the necessary will and the consequent ability to deal with dangerous, difficult, painful, or unpredictable situations".

There is no doubt: we have, over recent months, had to face "tests of courage" that we would have gladly avoided.

### **Adaptation (Conditions to find the way).**

I go straight to the contents of the book: "In the human species, adaptation is a process by which an individual adapts to the environment (physical and/or social), modifying their behaviour patterns (passive adaptation) or working on the environment itself to transform it according to their own needs (active adaptation). In both cases, adaptation requires participation, responsibility, and availability ... Generally, the most strenuous adaptations require serious commitment and passion to achieve a goal. That is the way it is when one has to adapt to a rule, to a new lifestyle...".

Now, almost seven hundred days since the onset of the pandemic, any comment on the subject of adaptation would be superfluous.

### **Optimism (A breach in complexity).**

The premise: "The world we live in and which often fascinates us for its size and beauty, is also the world in which rampant violence is manifesting itself more and more, spreading destruction and death everywhere: wars, disaster, diseases, terrorism, poverty. So much so that many end up surrendering or resigning themselves to the absurdity of the chaos that reigns supreme, it seeming so inevitable". And, going on: "Yet it is not like that. In the

sometimes-tragic complexity, optimism can still be present. Not much, a little. Just enough not to be paralysed, to express an idea, to look a little further and, if anything, to write a page that maybe someone will read ... ".

We at LIUC, in the face of the emergency, this type of optimism has certainly not been lacking.

I shall now conclude.

LIUC, like every university, is an educational place, a context for personal as well as professional growth. Which explains why I like to look at this present historical period as a great test of institutional maturity, with dimensions such as those I have symbolically reported... and many others. Value dimensions that live on words, precisely because, as Pope Francis states in the preface to the book, "words are not neutral, nor do they ever leave things as they are. They are not born at a table, in the good living rooms of closed and self-referential circles. Rather, they give voice to cultural and spiritual values rooted in the collective memory of a people, to which they restore new vigour".

Best "Happy Holidays" wishes to you and your families.

Federico Visconti