Prospects for the 2020-21 academic year

Given the current emergency situation caused by Covid-19, it is normal for many to ask questions about the regular beginning of the academic year 2020-21.

The Biblical Institute was able to respond immediately to the state of emergency that began on 5 March with the suspension of teaching activities at the site of the Institute and the library. Favored by the fact that all professors and students have already had an MS Office 365 license for some years, the teaching activity continued online without any interruption, thanks to the MS Teams platform, accessible to all, or to some other platform more congenial to the professor. Therefore, the regular conclusion of the current academic year is assured and the summer exam session will also take place as anticipated, even for those who have had to leave Rome. Access to digital library resources was available to students and professors alike.

Final experiments to conclude the Year of the Doctorate and online thesis defense for candidates who accept this digital or in distance/form are also scheduled.

There is therefore no reason to believe that a regular start of the 2020-21 academic year is not possible, starting from 5 October. Indeed, the experience of these months will help us to improve teaching procedures and adapt to the necessary flexibility that the situation will require. Professors will be more prepared for a teaching that perhaps will not be just in attendance physically but also in distance. In fact, we are aware that some probably will not be able to arrive on time in Italy due to difficulties in international travel and in obtaining the necessary visas.

New students who had already planned to come to Italy a few months earlier to study the Italian language, perhaps will find it difficult to arrive as expected. It may be useful for them to know that the Centro Studi Cassia, which normally organizes Italian courses at the Pontifical Gregorian University, offers the possibility of online courses. However, there are also other schools that offer online courses (for example ProLingua).

Obviously we all hope that the current emergency situation will soon pass and that normal interpersonal relationships can be gradually restored as soon as possible.

The study of the Word of God impels us to have courage and trust in the One who “is not the God of the dead, but of the living”.

Fr. Michael Kolarcik, S.J.