

The 30th ASEACCU Students Conference 2024 in Sydney, Australia

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The 30th ASEACCU students conference was held at the Australian Catholic University, in Sydney Australia. The theme of the conference was “What makes a Catholic University Catholic?”. By focusing on this, I wanted to deepen my knowledge of Catholicism and my thinking about my religion. I was very nervous and excited at the same time, but once I got to Australia, I had wonderful experiences learning about the cultures of different countries and was greatly impressed by Catholicism.

I remember when I saw all the students gathered in the conference room on Day One. It was my first opportunity to meet so many students from different countries and universities. When I talked with many of them, I felt my heart beat faster and I felt curious to learn more about them. We talked about aspects of our daily life, such as what languages we use, our families, our school lives, and favorite foods. It was fun for me to imagine their lives in the context of their culture. After that, my nervousness disappeared, and I was excited about what lay ahead in the five-day conference. Through talking and spending time in Sydney, where the British-style buildings are beautiful and the Opera House is amazing, we became such good friends that we even made plans to meet again and set the date to do so. Another nice thing for me was the gifts I received from their countries. Every friendship I created there and every gift I received is my treasure. I'm glad to have learned about different countries and to have become interested in those countries. I'm sure I'll visit their countries and meet my new friends again someday.

Through the theme “What makes a Catholic University Catholic?” I spent a lot of time thinking about Catholicism. Before attending the conference, I thought that a Catholic university becomes Catholic by teaching its students Catholic-oriented ethics. But, through the conference I came to think that giving students the experience of knowing the goodness of Catholicism is the most important thing that a Catholic university can do. The reason for this was that I was impressed by the Masses, talking with Catholic students, and learning through lectures about Catholicism. I prayed and sang songs with everyone else in a traditional and beautiful church. It was almost as though meditation had calmed my mind and given me courage through this inspiring experience. Many of the students who

attended the conference were Catholics, and they were all very kind and genuine. I felt warmed by the kindness they showed when we spent time together. One of the lectures was about the form of education known as service learning. I was very impressed with charity aspect of service learning in which students use what they have learned in school to help society. I would like to apply the Catholic teachings I learned at the conference to my future university studies. I believe that studying with Catholic thoughts in my heart will be yet another experience that I can only have at Nanzan University.

I empathized with the spirit of charity in the Catholic faith. Whatever job I choose to do in the future, I don't want to forget the importance of helping others.

I am very grateful to have been able to have such a wonderful experience and would like to thank everyone involved in this conference.