



Episode 1: Welcome to UNIVLab podcast – What We’re Building

Summary: The UNIVLab Podcast is a new space designed to help young thinkers engage with the world through Christian humanism and sincere dialogue. The podcast extends the vision of the annual UNIV Inspire conference from a single week to help listeners become protagonists who shape culture, rather than passive consumers.

Key Quote:

“All are in fact called by the need to prepare true peace, to maintain it or to reestablish it, on solid and just foundations. Now I am deeply convinced that dialogue - true dialogue - is an essential condition for such peace. Yes, this dialogue is necessary, not only opportune. It is difficult, but it is possible, in spite of the obstacles that realism obliges us to consider. It therefore represents a true challenge, which I invite you to take up.”

- St. John Paul II, Dialogue for Peace, A Challenge for Our Time, 1983

Reflection Questions

1. **Consumer vs. Protagonist** St. Josemaría Escrivá did not want young people to be "passive consumers of culture," but rather "protagonists" who shape public opinion. In your own life—whether on social media, in your university classes, or in your friend group—do you feel like you are currently consuming culture or helping to shape it?
2. **Loving the World Passionately** The episode defines Christian humanism as a force that should drive us to "love the world passionately" and engage with science, art, and politics. Are there areas of the secular world that you have been hesitant to engage with? How might your faith shed light on those specific spaces?
3. **Breaking the Echo Chamber** It was pointed out that we often live in digital echo chambers, leading to the hard question: do we actually know how to listen anymore? When was the last time you truly listened to someone you disagreed with, seeking to understand the person behind the opinion?

Practical Challenge: The First Step

Context: Our season theme is *Building Bridges: The Art of Dialogue*. As we prepare for UNIV, we recognize the profound challenge of truly listening and connecting. Our goal is to equip you to bring truth, respect, and hope into your everyday environment.

The Challenge: Ask yourself: *Where can I be a bridge-builder right where I am?* Whether discussing this episode with friends or reflecting alone, try these three steps:

- **Identify:** Choose one bridge to build: reconnect with someone, explore a topic that challenges your worldview, or reclaim the habit of active listening.
- **Commit:** Write this intention down where you will see it daily (like a mirror or phone screen) to anchor your journey.
- **Act:** Take one concrete step this week. Reach out to that person, read a differing perspective, or intentionally pause to listen before responding.