*Spoken word applies.*

***Prof. Dr. Jože Vižintin***

**An understanding of the past and a pause in the present is the way to create the future**

Esteemed Mr Chancellor, esteemed academic assembly, dear ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour to be able, in the name of my colleagues and myself, to express the gratitude for the bestowal of the titles of Professor Emeritus and Professor Emerita of the University of Ljubljana. We see this honorary title as a recognition of the creative work we have done at, together with and on behalf of our University, and which remains our common cherished possession. Conscientiously and to the best of our ability, we performed teaching, research and educational work imposed upon us by the duty to develop our scientific disciplines, future intellectuals and the wider social community. As we walked on the path of duty, we were not alone, but accompanied by our students and colleagues. We showed them the way, taught them, learned from and created with them. **This bestowal is a festive pause in the present, allowing us to congratulate each other, browse through the past and gaze into the future.**

In the world of today, where people often sink into despondency, mistrust and pessimism, values are lost and altered, and doubts about the future and its purpose cripple the will and courage of many, a pause and a profound consideration of the here and now are a necessity. Some will advocate the hedonistic view and take on life, saying that we must fully exploit and enjoy the present day. I can safely claim that not a single one of today’s recipients approved of such ways, let alone supported them. For us, our creation to benefit the development of the University and our scientific disciplines was the only guideline for our future-oriented work.

**At this occasion, I would like to quote Kirkegaard: “Life can only be understood backwards but lived forwards.”**

The present day gives us time to linger, so that – honoured as we are by this recognition – we may look back to see more distinctly how things were, and what we were given by this life of work, which could be thoroughly demanding and difficult every so often. We do not have enough time to revisit the past for too long, but still it is good to pause a bit once in a while, browse through the yesteryear, reorganise it and keep it safe, so that we might build plans for the future more easily. That said, looking at the present-day situation, we are surprised to see how easily both the milieu in which we were actively involved and the State tend to forget about our experience, knowledge and, dare I say it, our wisdom.

**I hope that today’s bestowal of Professor Emeritus titles will be one of those milestones that will prompt a reconsideration of the purposefulness of such doings.**

The world we live in is a world of cybernetic and global integration and new challenges. The development of science and innovation in all fields is very promising on the one hand, but on the other hand, it inspires insecurity and fear. Modern-day means of communication enable us to connect with others, but they are also driving us apart. They might help us, but at the same time enslave us. Will we be able and willing to preserve humanity's beautiful customs and traditions, the warmth and originality of each individual in the relationships with our friends and family? We should not allow the world we live in, the world thrusting us away from the here and now, take away our time for creative work in the present, time which allows us to build the future together. Today, we live in a world where everything and everyone is pushed to dive headfirst into the future, often in ways determined by the authorities or some invisible forces emanating from them. Pausing, stopping and safeguarding our time are unwelcome expressions, but crucial notions for creative work.

**This prompts me to quote Anton Trstenjak: “Does the modern-day bored human being remain at all capable to wish luck to fellow men, sincerely and without reservations? People are literally running away from happiness – they are running after the smoke, away from the fire.”**

Nowadays, we are witnessing that our happiness is, alas, all too often tinted with the consumerist and materialistic mentality that swears by business success, prestige and money, and much less so derived from creativity. And so we hardly even notice how our relations are becoming increasingly superficial, calculating, cold, artificial, feigned, tactical, pragmatic, self-interested, envious and smug. This is unfortunately happening as early as during the primary levels of education. And all the while, we will never hesitate to criticise others, rather than seeing ourselves for who we really are and striving for improvement. A valuable lesson in this respect would be that co-creation is the key concept in this millennium. Everything we do and will be doing tomorrow requires building alliances, holistic perspectives, joint and integrated activity. We possess a tremendous amount of knowledge and willingness, but lag behind when it comes to integration, collaboration, co-creation and interdisciplinary work.

We are at an age when we will slowly be bidding farewell, yet wish to remain present with the work we have passed on and continue to impart. And we will be glad if we are able to stay in contact with the creative world of our University to witness the wealth of knowledge it generates.

**Allow me to conclude this speech, my expression of sincere gratitude, by paraphrasing Leo Rosten: The purpose of life is to matter to someone, to appreciate someone, to have made at least a small difference in your life.**

**I am convinced that every single one of us who received the title of Professor Emeritus/Emerita today have abided by this thought throughout our active careers and contributed to the University at least a small change for the better.**