MY TEACHING PHILOSOPHY*

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My Keynote Lecture this year is going to have a more personal nature than previous keynote lectures. In fact, what I am going to tell you is what teaching means to me, what my philosophy of education is.

For me, teaching is four things. First of all, for me, teaching is love. Teaching is love. Love, *caritas* in Latin. I repeat, first of all, for me, teaching is love, because only if one deeply loves the teaching profession, only if one deeply loves economics as a discipline, and only if one deeply loves the students — and I always do have a deep love for my students, academically speaking — can one be a good professor.

And each day, I come to class thinking I am the luckiest man in the world. That I have reason to be the happiest man in the world, because I am going to have the opportunity to teach sixty young men and women who are beginning their academic lives, as well as thirty who are not so young (but who are equally important) in the master's program. It is only by deeply loving this profession, and deeply loving economics as a discipline that one can be a successful teacher. And it is immediately evident when a professor enjoys teaching.

Incidentally, teaching is one of the works of mercy. As you know, the works of mercy fall into two categories — spiritual and corporal — and they are very important. Each category contains seven, and the first spiritual work of mercy is "to instruct those who lack knowledge." There are seven corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy. The corporal works include feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, pilgrims and immigrants, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, visiting the imprisoned, and burying the dead. The first of the spiritual works of mercy is the one I

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mentioned before: to instruct those who lack knowledge. Then come the following: to counsel the doubtful, to correct those who need it, to comfort the afflicted, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive willingly, and to pray for the living and the dead. As I have said, the first spiritual work of mercy is to instruct those who lack knowledge. So, it turns out I am doubly happy: I not only feel the best thing on earth to do is to be a professor, but it is also a work of mercy. And remember that God, who created us, is infinitely merciful, and nothing offers human beings greater happiness than drawing closer to him. If it turns out that my mission is to do a work of mercy — the first spiritual work, to instruct those who lack knowledge, then you will understand why teaching makes me so happy.

So, first and foremost, teaching is love. Now, there are two sides to love. Love cannot be understood in the absence of freedom or much better, in the absence of liberty. What good is it to love someone if there is no liberty? Imagine: "Hey, I love you a lot. You don't know how much I love you. But if you don't do what I say, I'm going to beat you up." Or, what would be even worse: "I'm going to force you to love me." Do you think that this is real love? To force someone to love you is the furthest thing from love imaginable. And be aware, because this constantly tempts us. We get so excited about everything we love that, without realizing it, we cross the line and often even justify violence. Consider that God, out of love, and in his immense goodness, created all things, including human beings. He made us out of love, but he made us free. He even gave us the liberty not to believe in him, to reject him, and to rebel against him. Just think what a great manifestation of love that is: He allows us to rebel against him, ignore him, and turn our backs on him. And, for those who are believers: Remember that God is all-powerful. He could cause a cataclysm, reveal his power to everyone, and give clear proof of his existence and omnipotence. But, if he did that, he would destroy his own work, because he would be conditioning our response to him in liberty, and we could no longer love him freely. This idea, which you can now grasp perfectly, is key. Is there any value in forced love? Of course not. As you can see from this theological digression, support for the concept I've just explained of teaching as an act of love in liberty is very deeply rooted.

As a professor, I love my courses and I love my students, but I definitely cannot force them to be good students. What I can do is encourage them, be their coach, explain and repeat things to them over and over again to help them understand, and lead them to grow and mature within themselves as a result of the incentives they receive from me, their professor. Teaching is love, and its object must be free.

However, I usually use shock therapy. Note that: Liberty means the absence of both physical coercion and the threat of physical coercion. I am not interested in pseudo-modern or postmodern concepts of pseudo-coercion that refer to dominance, influence, or the notion that freedom means being able to do whatever we want. No, liberty is the absence of coercion. According to my approach — which is in keeping with the discipline of economic science — where there is no coercion, there is liberty. But the world has turned upside down, and, on the pretext of avoiding situations of supposed "dominance," people justify systematic coercion and violence. And not just any coercion, but the worst of all: that of the state, which, by force, for instance, imposes quotas for women, men, and so on. Teaching is love in a context of liberty, and that is the approach I take with my students. But beware; that does not mean I don't use "shock therapy": I continually try to "hit" my students, but I hit them intellectually only and always with a good sense of humor. In the sense that I try to raise their conscience, and train their intelligence, their spirits. But at the end of the day, it will be the exclusive responsibility of each of them to freely look for the scientific truth and choose what they believe to be true.

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Love is only the first of the four aspects of my teaching philosophy. The second is, that for me, teaching is enthusiasm. And what is enthusiasm? We can all recognize an enthusiastic person, just as we can quickly identify someone who is sad, pessimistic or depressed. Although we can visualize it, expressing the essence of enthusiasm can be a little more complicated. Enthusiasm is, so to speak, the inner psychic energy that compels us toward our goals. Think of a well-charged battery capable of starting an engine. In the same

way, this "inner psychic battery" drives human beings, composed of soul and body, toward their objectives. This force does not result in specific, predetermined behaviors, because it depends on the personality, nature, or circumstances of each person. Some people might show enthusiasm by jumping for joy, smiling… But, no matter how it is expressed, that inner force is what matters.

The truth is that an enthusiastic person immediately attracts attention, just as a pessimistic or sad person passes their sadness on to others. An enthusiastic person is a divine blessing. Do you know the etymological origin of the word "enthusiasm"? It comes from classical Greek, from *enthousiasmós*, which means "captivated by God." The Greeks were no fools. They noticed that certain people acted as if they had a mysterious force inside of them capable of even mobilizing others in the many human, academic, and even military fields; and the Greeks said to themselves, "This totally inexplicable inner force must come only from the gods." Thus, they arrived at the term *enthousiasmós*.

Only an enthusiastic person can be a good professor. And this principle is not limited to teaching: In every area of life, success requires enthusiasm. In fact, I have been teaching an iconic class for the last forty years: my final lesson of every school year. This extracurricular class is titled "Ten Pieces of Advice on How to Be Successful in Life." This class is available on the Internet, and hundreds of thousands of people have watched it in its different versions. One of the fundamental pieces of advice is precisely this: enthusiasm is essential to success in life. In any action we undertake — and especially in the academic life — we will be successful only if we are enthusiastic about what we are doing. And I always try to be an enthusiastic person and an enthusiastic professor.

And certainly, any of my students could say, "What a terrific professor, but he seems more like a preacher than an academic. Everything he says sounds great, but my girlfriend has left me, I don't have enough money to make it to the end of the month, nobody likes me… My life is a mess. I can't possibly be enthusiastic." Well, in a moment, I am going to explain to you what you must do to be enthusiastic, even if you find yourselves in the deepest pit. We will see how to climb out and become models of enthusiasm. And I will explain it shortly.

But first, we will do a little acting. Because to be a professor is also to be an actor. Teaching always involves a sort of performance, and I admit that one of my missed vocations was to be a supporting actor in the theater. For instance, I would have loved to have played the role of the butler who enters and announces, "Dinner is served." Or the character who carries an umbrella and says, "After you" like Hitchcock, the famous movie director, who always appeared, at least briefly, in his movies… That has been one of my unfulfilled aspirations. Now, let us do a little thought experiment. Imagine two types of professors. The first one comes to work thinking the following: "Another day teaching these mostly stupid students who have no idea of anything. To have to make this long commute to the university, and for the lousy salary they pay me, one thousand euros a month, to try to teach this group of idiots…" And then, we have a second type of professor, who thinks as I do: "What a fulfilling experience! What a unique opportunity I have today. This is a historic day, because I have the chance to meet with my students, communicate with them, and teach them something. Especially the essence of the laws that shape the processes of spontaneous voluntary social cooperation, without violence or coercion, which is the best possible lesson to teach!" Tell me, which do you think will be a better professor or more effective at conveying a discipline, a message, a subject matter: the first or the second? The professor who comes to work resentful and negative, or the one who comes with enthusiasm and gratitude? The answer is, obviously, the second.

And now, as promised, I am going to explain to you something that could actually change your lives. Because what I am going to tell you now would, even on its own, make this lecture worthwhile. Because I am going to teach you what to do to be enthusiastic in any situation. And it is very simple. We have all had a bad day: When things don't go well; we're down, depressed, or ill. For instance, in the first class of this course, I had acute pharyngitis. My throat was sore, and every word I spoke was painful. I was not in my best physical condition, and, on top of that, I had to teach the first class in the course, the Introduction." Well, what did I do? I put into use the principle I am going to teach you right now about enthusiasm: Simply I thought I had to give two hundred percent

that day and that is precisely what I did (even though I may have not been able to open my mouth again for almost a week).

So, what do we do if it happens that we have no enthusiasm at all? Well, it is quite simple. Take careful note. What we must do when we lack enthusiasm is the following — and if you want you can write this right now in large, capital letters: We must act as if we were enthusiastic, and then we will become enthusiastic. I repeat, when we lack enthusiasm, there is only one thing to do: act as if we were enthusiastic, and then we will become enthusiastic. If, for instance, you are lying in bed, downhearted, feeling the weight of personal and family misfortunes, and in short, all of life's hardships, and you cannot get up, ask yourselves this question: "What would an enthusiastic person do?" Imagine it, and, immediately, without hesitating, do it! You may imagine, for instance, that an enthusiastic person would just jump out of bed, open the window, and shout, "I will conquer the world!" Then do exactly that: Jump out of bed, open the window, and shout, "I will conquer the world!"

Who has not seen the movie *Saving Private Ryan*? Remember the famous Omaha Beach landing scene from the movie Spielberg directed; this scene clearly illustrates what I am saying. D-Day was June 6, 1944, the day of the Normandy landing, which saved Europe from the Nazis. Well, the day before, high-ranking officers gathered the troops in England, thousands and thousands of young men, most of whom were no more than twenty-two or twenty-three years old, and many of whom were actually only eighteen, nineteen, or twenty. The best-trained senior commanders gave them a brief talk that went something like this: "Soldiers, we know you are sick with fear, and we are too. Tomorrow, we will bravely disembark against Nazi machine-gun nests on the beaches of Normandy. We must be heroes tomorrow. Even if we are mortally afraid, we must be heroes. When you get off the boats tomorrow, when the bow doors drop, you must have in mind what a hero would do in your place… and just do that!" And that is what they did. Vomiting from seasickness and trembling with fear, those young men disembarked. The bow doors dropped and, while under heavy fire — in the movie, we even see bullets going through the bloody water — they jumped, as they were thinking and

shouting, "We are heroes! We are saving Europe!" And, because they acted as if they were heroes, they saved Europe and indeed they were heroes.

Because it is impossible for the human mind to separate our actions from what we feel and have inside of us. And now you might be thinking: "But this lesson on enthusiasm is very artificial; it consists merely of deceiving ourselves." To that, I respond: Yes, but there is immense power in that self-deception. The moment you "deceive" yourselves and act enthusiastic, you will have become enthusiastic, and you will have changed not only your world but also the world of those around you. So, I want my students to become better people. And from the moment my class ends, and they walk out the door, I think they act as if they were enthusiastic people and take on the world. When they get home, whatever they do — starting with walking through the door — they try to do it with enthusiasm, as if they were enthusiastic, and we cannot even imagine the effect all of this has on them and on those around them.

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Third, for me, teaching is clarity, and this is also very important. Because only what is perfectly understood can be clearly explained, and only what is clearly explained can be grasped and learned by students. If a teacher's message is unclear, that is because not even he himself understands what he is saying. And bear this in mind: This applies even to very distinguished professors who — beginning with the German philosophers of the nineteenth century — seemed to make it fashionable to speak and write in a highly technical language that cannot be understood. And we are so stupid, so dumb, that when we hear that technical language, we take a step back and think, "What an intelligent man!" Nothing of the sort! What is taught must be pristine. In other words, it must be easy to understand from the beginning. Therefore, teaching is love, teaching is enthusiasm, and teaching must be clarity. I try to do my best to be as clear as possible with my students. I give straightforward explanations and use all kinds of examples, so my students can connect what they are learning in

the course with their most immediate daily experiences. And, at any rate, students are no fools. Of course they are young people, but they have 150 billion fresh neurons that instantly perceive when someone speaks with clarity and when someone is confused and, despite appearances, doesn't know what he is talking about, and is simply stumbling along from one confused idea to the next. Clarity is a fundamental principle in all areas of life, but especially in academics. And incidentally, the social sciences suffer from an inferiority complex with respect to the natural sciences, that have mainly developed through the very successful use of mathematical language. And many people think that, in our world of economics and the disciplines of human action, what is not expressed in the same mathematical language lacks scientific value. And this is a grave error that has led many economists not only to lose clarity but, even worse, to make it almost impossible for them to understand the voluntary process of social cooperation.

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Finally, we come to the fourth element of my teaching philosophy: Teaching is constancy. Listen, life is very tough, and the only way to be successful in this daily struggle is to be more determined than life itself. Constancy is one of the essential secrets to success in life. Constancy means being like a steam hammer. Steam hammers are very repetitive: Bam, bam, bam. And in class, I repeat things over and over again. I present ideas from one point of view and then from another. I look at things from different angles and consider many examples. Repetition, repetition, repetition. And the only way for students to absorb ideas and make them their own is to repeat them endlessly. Even memorize them! I am a fervent supporter of learning by heart, which is the exact opposite of what the most modern doctrines of teaching seem to advocate. But listen closely: one can memorize only what one clearly understands. And memorization requires reading, thinking, understanding, repetition and hard work; and then, closing the book or the computer and explaining everything in one's own words. And if we get stuck — and many times we get stuck — we must go back to the beginning. Get back to work again and repeat everything from the

beginning. Repeat everything twice, three times, four times, until we become thoroughly familiar with the subject. Only when we have internalized it completely, when it has become part of ourselves, will we be able to say that we have mastered the subject. And this, and no other, is the study technique I recommend. And do not come to me saying, "I am very smart, and I improvise as I go." Even Hayek applied that nonsense to himself in his article "Two Types of Mind." But improvisation does not count here. Students must master the material, and that requires effort and sacrifice. No one has said that studying would be easy. Poor things if the students come to class simply to listen to ideas that go in one ear and out the other, while thinking, "This professor sure is intelligent and enthusiastic! I come out of every lesson in such a good mood!" And then they forget everything until the next class. No; the important part comes precisely after the students leave the classroom!

And I will tell you something else. Why are women relatively more successful at studying and at the university? Why is it that, out of every ten students who receive top marks in my classes, eight are women? It is very simple. It is not because they are more intelligent — though sometimes they are — but because they are far more enduring, far more constant; by nature, they are more persistent. At the same age, girls are much more mature than their male classmates. As you know, nowadays adolescence begins at thirteen, fourteen, fifteen years of age and, in some cases, some could say, lasts until people are thirty, forty, fifty… or even sixty, with ninety-year-old parents who are still wondering how to push their children out of the nest…

Ever since I started teaching in 1985, I have been saying it: constancy is key. And, every year I used to tell my students, "Teaching is constancy, and this is so important that if I had another child…" But before that, I will tell you that I am married, and I have six children and 19 grandchildren. In our family, my son Jesús was born first; Sonsoles came second; Silvia third; and then Juan Diego. And after Silvia, I started to say to my students, "Constancy is so important that, if I had another daughter, I would name her Constanza." I was saying that to my students year after year… And, in the end, another daughter did arrive, and Constanza finally was born and is out in the world! She is thirty now and for this reason she is very

well known in the academic sphere. But when she was born, I had to change the script, because I could not go on saying the same thing to illustrate the importance of constancy. And I thought, "Well, what can I say now?" And I began to say, "For me, constancy is so important, that what I would like most, what would give me the most pleasure, would be to someday have a yacht and call it *Constantia*." By the way, in recreational seamanship, I have done everything. First, I obtained my certificate of skipper; then, that of yacht skipper; and finally, yacht captain. Incidentally, it took me more effort to become a yacht captain than it did to gain my professorship. I had to take two eleven-hour exams, with one day in between, and manually calculate the location in the sea using a star — when today, a GPS will tell you that in seconds. But, as I am very dutiful, in order to practice, I used to rent a boat — I didn't have my own yet — and go out with my sextant, measure the height of the sun at midday, begin the calculations by hand as required… And four and a half hours later, I would have the exact location. The only problem was that the boat would already be sixty miles away from where I had begun the calculations! In the end, I had all of the titles and even bought the yacht-captain uniform. I had everything… except the yacht. What a pity! So, in my classes, I would say, "Do you see how important constancy is? If I could someday have a yacht, I would name it *Constantia*." And well, when my father passed away (may he rest in peace), he left me a good fortune. What did I do? I bought myself a yacht, and it is called *Constantia*. It is at the Palma de Mallorca yacht club, and you are all invited to take a ride on it. But now, of course, I have to change my script again, because now I have the yacht. And I wonder, what could I say now to communicate to my students the importance of constancy, to clearly illustrate the idea and to emphasize it? Of course, I will accept any suggestions from you!

Well, this, and no other, is my teaching philosophy: love (in the context of liberty), enthusiasm, clarity, constancy and repetition.

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And now, and because it is inseparable from my teaching philosophy, very briefly, I will outline the essence of what I teach

every year in my course on Economics. What my pupils discover in my courses is that the state does not work, and I show them why. Let us see an illustration with an unexpected effect: one day, someone in an office in a government ministry said, "Look at that! We have a problem. We need to create jobs for professors. We have lots of economics professors, and economics is obviously very important. Everyone should know about aggregate demand, the money supply, the balance of payments… All of that is essential." And then, a new degree program appears, which is audiovisual communications. And a brilliant idea occurs to someone: "Let's have these students take economics!" I ask you: Future movie screenwriters or television producers, what do they care about the balance of payments, aggregate demand, national income, the money supply, and so on? What lunatic put economics in their academic program? But, since we live in an unfree world, where the state imposes everything via official bulletin, all the poor audiovisual-communications students have to study economics.

Well, I secured my chair in this University in the year 2000, more than a quarter of a century ago. The economics department met at this institution, which had just separated from Universidad Complutense. To avoid there being 200,000 students at the Complutense campus, the decision was made to create a campus in south Madrid, in the so-called socialist red belt, with the hope of turning it into a Popular Party blue belt. This is how the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos came into existence; it emerged from an implicit pact between the Communist Party and the Popular Party. Then I passed the public examination, I obtained my chair, and the economics department met for the first time and decided where professors were needed. Obviously, they were needed for economics, business administration… And then, "Here, in audiovisual communications, they have put an economics course. Who wants to teach it?" I was one of forty teachers there. Nobody raised his hand. Some people looked up at the ceiling; others pretended not to have heard. And then I asked, "These audiovisual communications students, who are they? What is their profile?" They explained to me, "Well, it's a new program we have created, and it's becoming very popular at this university. It's a potpourri. We have aspiring television producers, screenwriters, movie directors, business

communications specialists… all these areas." And then I said, "That interests me. I (the one with the highest academic rank) will teach them." And, eventually, it has been one of the best decisions of my life! It was the result of this thought: "If I conceive the market as an extremely complex system of communications between human beings, this program is the perfect fit for explaining my viewpoint." My view on entrepreneurship and the spontaneous market order fits with the profile of these students who wish to build their career in audiovisual communications. And since then, I have been responsible for this course, and it has always been an honor and a pleasure for me to teach it.

Two or three years later, the students were so satisfied that they made me an unusual and almost revolutionary proposal. They said, "Professor, we do various practical assignments in our audiovisual communications courses, and though we haven't planned this, we think your lessons could have considerable impact. Would you let us record them?" They looked for the help of the Juan de Mariana Institute and, after careful thought, I agreed. Finally, they recorded the lessons and published them through Internet and YouTube. And those recorded lessons, which began as an experiment, have gone viral all over the world. They have brought me a fame I would never have imagined. Over 70,000 people follow those classes every day. A thousand times more than the 70 students officially enrolled! And, in terms of the total number, we're talking about hundreds of thousands, even millions of people, including the President of Argentina, Javier Milei as he has explained many times. The lessons have been translated into English, Italian, and other languages. And this whole educational revolution began because an obscure, ignorant, and statist government employee insisted on including an economics course in the audiovisual communication study program. One more proof that God writes straight (in gold letters) with crooked lines, and sometimes even with very crooked lines. It is one of life's paradoxes.

Well, what I teach my students is the spontaneous order of voluntary social cooperation in which all human beings participate — including you and me and eight billion other people, who get up each morning, feeling excited or not so excited, and trying to discover and create new ends they consider valuable and the

means to achieve them. We do not do this alone; we do it by spontaneously interacting with others, without anyone's directing the process from above. And these interactions give rise to coordinating forces that make possible the existence of what we know as society. We can also call it a market. And, since we are part of this process, it is key that we understand its essence, its basis, and its rationale.

Economics is the youngest of the sciences, and it has had a revolutionary impact on mankind. Why is this so? Because economists have discovered and revealed the existence of a spontaneous order which no one has designed and no one could consciously create or direct. This order, which rests on liberty, is what permits human civilization to advance without limits and in a manner as coordinated as humanly possible in each set of historical circumstances. And this message is revolutionary, because it rules out coercion, violence, and (above all) the state. The state is not necessary for social cooperation. Lao Tzu and his disciples were already saying this twenty-five centuries ago in China: The state is a distorting entity, because it is based on coercion and violence, and it generates and incites all types of conflicts and discoordination. Ever since the emergence of this great discovery of economic science, there has been a clash of worldviews, a monumental conflict, because we come from centuries and centuries of systems based on the authoritarian exercise of state power in different forms: the pharaohs of Egypt, the Roman republics, emperors, absolute kings… Then the classical liberal revolution arrived, and classical liberals came on the scene. But classical liberalism carries within itself the seed of its own destruction (since it accepts the existence of the state and mistakenly assumes that the growth of the state and the abuse of its power can be limited and controlled). I myself was such an idiot that I was a classical liberal until the year 2000. Thank goodness I finally saw the truth that year and realized that the only approach consistent with human nature is to be an anarchist. But beware: not an anarcho-communist, and much less an anarcho-terrorist. Do I look like someone like that? No. I am a proper anarchist as required by God! That is, a private-property anarchist and advocate of libertarian capitalism: an anarcho-capitalist. And I explain it in this radical way from the first day of class,

so all my pupils know, with full transparency, what my philosophical background is. I am not the typical hypocrite with a hidden agenda, like so many other professors, who seem impartial, but who introduce their own social engineering agendas under an apparently neutral teaching style. No. From the first day of class I always explain my underlying philosophical position, but with love, a bit of humor and in a context of liberty. And above all, I do not demand that my students change their political ideas. If they wish to go on being communists or, like the majority, lukewarm social democrats, of course they can go ahead. I will not impose anything on them by force; because, as I have explained, my teaching philosophy is that of love in a context of liberty.

What is certain is that economics revolutionized the world and turned it upside down, because, for the first time, it was shown that we are capable of self-organizing without the existence of any state or external body of institutional coercion. In other words, economics explains the processes of spontaneous coordination that are set in motion by the free interaction of human beings — interaction inspired by human creativity, which is entrepreneurial and coordinating in nature. That is the reason I always begin by teaching entrepreneurship: its characteristics and its coordinating capacity, which lies at the heart of economics. And the emergence of economics opened a small window that let in the oxygen of liberty, which in turn, sparked the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution brought great abundance, and the world's population increased tenfold (from fewer than one billion people then to eight billion people now). But not only that; we are now, per capita, fifteen times richer. And take note: Only a thin stream of liberty has been allowed to flow in. Because from the beginning, economics has been systematically attacked by the enemies of liberty. And not only from the outside. Even within economic science itself, reactionary and pseudoscientific schools of thought have emerged and take over economics departments to again and again justify state intervention. For example, they say to us, "Yes, all of that is well and good, but the market is not perfect. Obviously, we need someone to regulate it. What is this about the streets and public goods being private? How could there not be a government that directs us from above and is also backed by popular sovereignty? Who is

going to oppose popular sovereignty?" Spain has voted for this; therefore, Spain has decided or France has spoken. But what does it mean to say that France has spoken? France is not a being that thinks and speaks; as a being, it does not exist! And this is where the real debate begins. We are going to turn everything upside down with respect to the way we have been taught, because economic science does just that. Don't you think that this kind of teaching sounds like an exciting challenge?

And we see that the spontaneous process of coordination rests on something essential: communication. Because, of course, each human being is like an island, but each person interacts with the rest, and in those interactions, actions take place, and many of them involve exchanges. These actions are embodied in signals that communicate extremely valuable information, like audiovisual communication signals that send messages. These signals are called prices, market prices. We are used to taking prices for granted when we act, as if they had always been there and worked by magic. But no: True prices emerge only spontaneously and in the midst of liberty, and they are the driving force behind social coordination. And in contrast, we analyze what happens when outside coercion of the State and its violence comes into play and see that this is when everything becomes distorted and discoordinated. Civilization is risking its future in this battle of worldviews: between the message of economic science, which has discovered spontaneous social coordination in contexts of liberty, and the defenders of institutional state coercion. But liberty gives us vertigo. We are born in small, family environments. We have a father, a mother, a close circle of people who take care of us, know us, and have direct knowledge of our needs. And, without realizing it, we apply that same framework to the open society and say to ourselves, "There must be someone in charge here too. Who is in charge here? Somebody has to do it, or not?" And every year I recommend that my students read a little essay written in the sixteenth century by Étienne de la Boétie and titled "The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude." As early as 1548, this man was already asking himself these same questions. Why are we so foolish as to obey the state? And also, on the first day of my classes, I normally hand out and require my students to read two additional booklets.

The first one is my article on *The Essence of the Austrian School*. That booklet says something very important: The first forerunners of this approach arose in Spain. They were our great thinkers of the School of Salamanca during the Spanish Golden Age. And for that reason, we should feel doubly proud to follow my courses here in Spain.

All states want to control education, because they want to shape the minds of the citizens, so we will obey and serve the system. Someone could say to me, "Listen, professor, you are a teacher in a public institution, and you are saying this? How can that be?" My answer is very simple: This is something mysterious and divine. Indeed, I am here, I have secured my chair, because I am like a virus introduced into the system to destroy it from the inside. Isn't that incredible? How lucky we are! For decades, the most statist, reactionary professors, self-certified and disguised as progressives, have fought for "academic freedom," but only to go on brainwashing their students and poisoning them with all sorts of statist ideologies, like Marxism and social democracy. Now, the world has turned upside down, and those of us who are really making the most of academic freedom are lovers of liberty. What a paradox!

On the first day of class I also give my students another little book, *The Anatomy of the State*, by Murray Rothbard. You can see that, though Rothbard wrote it fifty years ago, everything he says applies to our country and, in fact, to all modern countries, including France, Germany, UK, and so on. For instance, Rothbard explains that Montesquieu's separation of powers does not exist and that, once the state exists, it is impossible to limit its growth. And what about a constitutional court to supervise the purity of the enforcement of the law? But everywhere, the members of the constitutional court are appointed by the government itself. What a mockery! How do you expect them to supervise effectively the government itself?

And apart from my main books, another book I assign on my syllabus is, of course, *Human Action*, by Ludwig von Mises. I am most proud of this book, for which I have written a sixty-page introduction. And since Javier Milei won in Argentina, people tell me that in Buenos Aires it is not unusual to see people reading it on the subway! It seems that many people have got a copy of

Human Action! And every few months a new edition of *Human Action* is sold out (and in fact we are currently preparing the 17th edition). And remember, the complete title of this book is: *Human Action: A Treatise on Economics*.

In conclusion, this is the essence of what I teach and of my teaching philosophy. My courses, due to their content, their approach, and the intellectual shock therapy they entail, are unique in the world. You may think I am exaggerating, but I am not. And I see every year how my courses change the lives of my students who are extraordinarily lucky. And my students never forget my courses. Because I ask my students only one thing: that they take my courses with as much enthusiasm as I do in teaching them.

Thanks very much to all of you.