Open letter from the Rector, Elio Franzini

The images you see are self-explanatory and are the result of the umpteenth illegal occupation of our university spaces, on the occasion of Halloween on Thursday night.

These utterly abusive parties, organized by largely external groups asking for an entrance fee, were tolerated for many years, as if they were the inevitable price to pay to save our community from worse damage.

However, I am deeply convinced that passive indifference or resignation to acts of obvious illegality is absolutely wrong, even more so on the part of a public university, which has always advocated the defence of law and rights as a fundamental value, to be transmitted to the young generations.

For this reason, we had decided that the university would exceptionally close at 4 pm on Thursday. Students and staff were notified well in advance, so as not to keep them exposed to the events, as had happened in the past. I believe that the strongest reaction to all forms of abuse and arrogance is proving to be, as we are, a cohesive community of people who proudly claim respect for the place where they study and work, both for what it represents and what it actually is – one of the most important historical structures in our country, a valuable and vulnerable public asset, which we have the honour of inhabiting, with the ensuing responsibilities.

Unfortunately, precautionary measures were not enough.

After 4 pm, we were left alone to helplessly witness a crime, resulting in the mess that you see and that may have had far worse consequences, as has recently occurred in similar circumstances at another Italian university.

I am committed to the demanding task of defending law, peacefully and together with our entire community. However, everyone must take responsibility, inside and outside the University, first of all public security authorities, to whom I am appealing on behalf of the whole of our University. We hope that this place, its students and staff, as well as residents in the area, can and shall be safeguarded. We do not believe in extreme positions – either police charges or dangerous passivity – as if there were no other solutions inspired by a peaceful but firm assumption of responsibility, compliance with law, the defence of the most elementary rights of civil coexistence.

We have decided to publish these images to ensure that all are aware and commit to stopping this abuse from happening in the collective silence of the academic community, institutions and public opinion.