FORUM: IL RUOLO DEI CARISMI NELLA VITA ECONOMICA E CIVILE



I carismi hanno un impatto anche nella vita civile, politica ed economica dei popoli? Oppure la loro azione si situa a un livello pre-economico/politico/civile, livello che potremmo chiamare personale o spirituale?
Il forum cerca di rispondere a queste e altre domande, e raccoglie, dopo il saluto del Preside dello IUS Piero Coda e un'introduzione di Luigino Bruni e Barbara Sena, alcuni dei papers presentati e discussi durante il convegno internazionale "The charismatic principle in the economic and civil life", svoltosi a Loppiano (presso il Polo Lionello Bonfanti) il 28 e 29 maggio 2010.
Ciò che ha ispirato il forum è la convinzione che il "principio carismatico", essendo un principio costitutivo della dinamica storica, si ritrovi alla base anche di molte esperienze economiche e civili, sebbene a tale principio non venga ancora riconosciuto il suo giusto posto. Il convegno, promosso dall'Associazione "Heirs" e dall'I.U Sophia, ha visto la partecipazione di oltre cinquanta relatori provenienti da molti Paesi e da molte discipline, tra cui Sociologia, Economia, Teologia, Storia.

An opening greeting

di PIERO CODA

1. It is a joy, for me and for the entire academic community of our University Institute, to extend a warm welcome to all the participants of this international Seminar.
Among others, I would like to particularly mention with gratitude the organizers of the event: professors Barbara Sena and Luigino Bruni; the HEIRs Association (Happiness Economics and Interpersonal Relations), with its president professor Pier Luigi Porta of the "Bicocca" University of Milan; the Faculty of Social Sciences of the St. Thomas Aquinas Pontifical University "Angelicum" of Rome, with its Dean, professor Helen Alford, o.p.; and the entire scientific committee of the Seminar.

2. The sincere joy, which I feel to express on behalf of all, is surely motivated by your numerous and qualified presence. But also by the suggestive, innovative and challenging topic that brings us together in these days.
In fact, it seems to be an important and positive sign that we can share our thought and life experiences about "The Charismatic Principle in Economic and Civil Life".
Today more than ever - as Benedict XVI (the sixteenth) has underlined - there is need for a "new trajectory", a new "impulse" of spirit and thinking to indicate the routes the human family is called to sail upon the open sea of a future that involves everyone.
Already a century ago, the philosopher Henri Bergson, looking ahead, wrote that «the grown body of humanity awaits a supplement of soul», just as social and economic, scientific and technological development «needs a new mysticism».
And this has occurred throughout the course of history. So much so, that it is surprising why the strategic contribution of the "charismatic principle" to the progress of civilization has been so little emphasized.
It is precisely for this reason that the specific value of the present seminar is so significant. It implies crossing a *historical approach*, which looks at how the charismatic principle has in fact been operating in the course of the centuries, with a *prospective approach* capable of perceiving the symptoms of its presence today, in order to support and promote its cultural efficiency in an intelligent way.
Obviously, both approaches refer to a *broader horizon* that can help to complete and illuminate them. This horizon directs us to the endless and philanthropic source of the charismatic principle and to the track of light that it gradually unfolds, in synergy with our free and mutual assuming responsibility.

3. But there is a third reason for our joy today: the fact that this Seminar is also hosted by our small and still young University Institute.
Because it was precisely a charismatic impulse that brought the Sophia University Institute into existence, namely, Chiara Lubich's charism of unity.
This charism stems from Jesus' prayer to the Father: «*that all may be one, just as You and I are one*» (John 17:11), a charism born in the heart of the tradition of the Catholic Church, but also recognized and embraced by other Churches and other religious and cultural traditions.

According to the intuition of Chiara Lubich, Sophia has a task: to teach that Wisdom which makes us (to quote Chiara) «sharers in God's plans for humanity, to embroider patterns of light on the crowd», participating in its trials and sufferings and fermenting philosophy, theology, science, economics, politics, ... (etcetera) with the yeast of love. Sophia, therefore, intends to be a laboratory of dialogue between peoples, cultures and fields of knowledge for the formation of new generations, a place in which life and study are intertwined, in the research and transmission of anthropological and ethical foundations of a culture animated by unity.
In this biennial of specialization, students learn how to put their own field of study in dialogue with the others.
At the basis of Sophia's academic life is the relation between persons, which sets the tone for the relation between the fields of knowledge (our students come from twenty-four different disciplinary backgrounds) and between the cultures (twenty-seven different countries are represented): thus allowing for the knowledge acquired, enriched by this variegated communication, to contribute to the integral and overall development of the person and society. The students called it - in the inauguration hymn - «a house for everyone».
For this reason we are especially happy to be here today with you!

4. I'd like to conclude this brief greeting with the words of one of our students describing his experience here:

> *«For me it is like that of a child who wants to look over a wall, to see the beautiful things on the other side. In the "average" experience, we sometimes get to see over the top; like jumping from time to time, but the jump doesn't leave us in position long enough to contemplate what we see: it's fleeting. Here at Loppiano, it is as if someone puts us on their shoulders so we may constantly see the other side. We can always make the choice to look down to the ground or behind us, or even to climb down - but the means are there to see what is most beautiful».*

This is my wish to all of us for this Seminar! Thank you!

PIERO CODA
Professore ordinario di Teologia sistematica presso l'Istituto Universitario Sophia
piero.coda@iu-sophia.org