

EDITORIAL

A Mediterranean meeting for the dialogue

This issue of the European Journal of Science and Theology reports some papers presented during the meeting '*Building the Earth, rebuilding Lebanon, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Giorgio La Pira, a perspective for the future*'. The meeting was held in Pisa on the 24th of February 2007, in the hall of Pisa Provincial Administration. It represented the start point of a project of translation in Arab of the works of Giorgio La Pira, professor at the University of Florence, member of the Italian parliament and mayor of Florence in the fifties of the XX century.

It was organised by Lodovico Galleni, of Pisa University, thank to a grant of the Pisa Provincial Administration which hosted also the meeting and with the aid of the Biblioteca Cateriniana - Pisa, of the Giorgio La Pira Foundation – Firenze and of the Metanexus Local Societies: Etruscan Local Group (Universities of Pisa, Perugia, della Tuscia) and Metanexus Local Society: Lebanon Communio Study Circle (Notre Dame University - Zouk Mosbeh – Lebanon). Thanks are also due to the Compagnia di Santa Bona in Pisa and to the Scuola di musica 'G. Buonamici' in Pisa.

This was one of the projects related to the dialogue between Science and Faith. Pisa, the city of Galileo, is the *locus typicus* for this dialogue. The suggestion came from Cardinal Pietro Maffi who was bishop of Pisa from the beginning of the XX century until his death in the year 1931. He was an astronomer and was nominated president of the Vatican Observatory - Specola Vaticana. Thank to his work Specola became one of the main astronomical observatories of the world. His idea was to make Pisa as the city of the dialogue and he proposed the construction of a monument to Galileo in the Cathedral Square as a symbol of the dialogue. But this project was stopped by the local administrative council.

In this view, linked to an old fashioned anti religious feelings, the city of Galileo must be, on the contrary, the city of the struggle between Science and Faith. This was an historical mistake because Galileo was also a man of faith and because Pisa, a part from Galileo, was the city of dialogue in many different occasions. In a recent contribution we summarized some of the main events and people who, in Pisa, or anyway related to Pisa, developed the dialogue [1].

For Galileo, we reported a letter written by Bishop Maffi to the director of the Oxford Observatory, H.H. Turner, where he underlined that clouds of human passions upset a day of glorious discoveries. Now those clouds were definitively removed and Pisa spoke of Galileo in every monument and name of its institution. An antireligious choice deprived the city of its peculiarity.

Recently some activities were carried on in Pisa and they were devoted to the recovering of this tradition. A first meeting opened to Italian researchers, teachers and students the perspective about Science and Theology. The introduction was held by Antje Jackelen, at that time professor at the Lutheran School of Theology, in Chicago, USA and today Bishop of the Dioceses of Lund (Sweden) [2]. The meeting was partially granted thank to the European Advisory Board of the CTNS (Berkeley, California).

A second meeting was held in Saint Petersburg and was dedicated to a discussion between Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox theologians and scientists on the problems opened by evolution [3]. This meeting was also partially granted by the European Advisory Board of the CTNS (Berkeley, California). A second meeting Pisa-Saint Petersburg was held in Pisa in December 2004 to remember the first centenary of the entrance of Pietro Maffi as Bishop of the archdioceses of Pisa. In this case, the meeting was dedicated to the study of two scientists and priests: the Roman Catholic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and the Russian Orthodox Pavel Florenskij [4]. This meeting was realised also with a grant of the Metanexus Local Society Initiative and by the Pisa Provincial Administration.

The work of Bishop Maffi as President of the Vatican Observatory was reported with the publication of the catalogue of the documents of his archives regarding the Observatory and this work was possible thanks to the Opera della Primaziale Pisana [1]. In addition, a project of translations was carried out involving both the Metanexus Local Society Initiative and by the Pisa Provincial Administration [5].

Finally, in December 2006 an international conference on Teilhard de Chardin took place - *Science and Theology: Teilhard de Chardin universal thinker, an anniversary balance (1955-2005)*. Of great interest, the papers regarding his impact with Africa and Leopord Sedar Senghor, with India and Jules Monchanin and finally the activity of the clandestine Church in Czech Republic during the Communism period where an Academy dedicated to Teilhard de Chardin was founded by Bishop Davideck. The speech was given by Ludmila Javorova who was one of the assistant of Bishop Davideck in his clandestine activity. She was also ordered as a priest. An exceptional choice for an exceptional situation! [6]

Finally, the life and work of Dorothy Stang, a nun of the order of Our Lady of Namur, murdered in Amazonian was presented as an example of Teilhard de Chardin perspective of building the Earth *in Cristo Jesu*. She was a nun of the order of Our Lady of Namur and she was killed for her activity in defense of indigenous populations.

The papers of this conference are at present in different stages of the editorial process.

From these perspectives of persecution and suffering started the idea of presenting the richness of the social activity of thinkers or politics who actively participate to the building of Europe developing the Christian Social doctrine.

Among them is the work of La Pira, as an instrument of the dialogue among populations and cultures living on the different sides of the Mediterranean Sea.

La Pira in Florence promoted many different encounters with the majors of the main Mediterranean towns and his project of friendship and cooperation was presented in a speech held in Beirut.

So far, the idea of a translation of a short biography and of an anthology of La Pira writings in the framework of the Metanexus Local Societies, both from Italy and Lebanon, looked as good start point.

The project was presented in a meeting where the works of La Pira were introduced together with those of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. And with this author a perspective started in Lebanon where his papers were discussed in the Beirut Cenacle and then diffused thank to the hint of Professor Sobhi al Saleh.

The perspectives opened by Giorgio La Pira papers inside the Christian Democratic European Movements and Parties are presented in the paper of Lodovico Galleni. The links with the philosophers related to personalism and with the Teilhard de Chardin project of building the Earth in *Christo Jesu* are underlined in the same paper.

The paper of Edward Alam revisits the La Pira and Teilhard de Chardin approaches in their strong religious components. In La Pira vision, defeats and delays in his political activity for peace were looked in a perspective of poverty (a poverty that was also present in his every day life). There were moments of darkness but with the hope of the final resurrection. His vision is also linked to the Apostolic Exhortation on Lebanon of Pope John Paul II. Here the Pope invited to look to a return to tradition and to the living faith of the dead, but avoiding traditionalisms i.e. the dead faith of the livings. And the main point of tradition in Lebanon was the concept of human person's dignity, a concept that in its political perspective emerged in the meeting.

The meeting was opened by the welcome made by Professor Mario Primicerio, President of the La Pira Foundation, Florence. Speakers were also Giulio Conticelli of the Università di Firenze – vice president of the La Pira foundation (*La Pira and the Abraham progeny*) and Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous (Notre Dame University - Lebanon) (*Alternative Salvations: Marxist and Christian Labour Responses to Violence and Social Injustice in the 20th Century*).

Another intervene of great interest which is reported in this issue was that of Luca Brunelli Felicetti, professor of Medieval Music in the Scuola di Musica 'G. Bonamici' in Pisa. Professor Brunelli Felicetti, among the other activities was also a member of the Jubilee Shouters, a musical group directed by Gianna Grazzini and awarded of the International Prize for Culture 'Giorgio La Pira'. His work is a way to look to the cultural links in medieval music and to put into evidence the strong influence of Arab music on the development of the medieval Christian liturgical music. It is a way to underline the deep links among the Mediterranean cultures also on the side of the religious traditions and their musical expressions.

The dialogue will go on and the hope is, still, in spite of many difficulties, to make Pisa, the city of Fibonacci, of Galileo, of a bishop astronomer as Cardinal Pietro Maffi, the city of the dialogue between Science and Faith, as a tool for the dialogue among cultures and traditions. A first step was made: thanks to a grant of the Pisa Provincial Administration the translation of La Pira biography is in progress and can be visited in the web site of the La Pira foundation [7].

References

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