



**EUROPEAN MEETING OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
6TH-12TH July 2009**

WORKSHOPS

Friday – 10th of July 2009

University of Rome Tor Vergata

Ore 15.00

School rooms of the Faculty of Economics – University of Rome Tor Vergata

1st TIME: CULTURAL AND PASTORAL ANALYSIS WITH WITNESSES

WE WERE HOPING...

**WAITING THE RISEN: THE YOUTHS AND THE HOPE IN EUROPE
THE CRISIS OF MODERNITY**

«We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see». (Luke 24, 21-24)

«The present crisis, however, has less to do with modernity's insistence on the centrality of man and his concerns, than with the problems raised by a "humanism" that claims to build a *regnum hominis* detached from its necessary ontological foundation. A false dichotomy between theism and authentic humanism, taken to the extreme of positing an irreconcilable conflict between divine law and human freedom, has led to a situation in which humanity, for all its economic and technical advances, feels deeply threatened. As my predecessor, Pope John Paul II, stated, we need to ask "whether in the context of all this progress, man, as man, is becoming truly better, that is to say, more mature spiritually, more aware of the dignity of his humanity, more responsible and more open to others" (*Redemptor Hominis*, 15). The anthropocentrism which characterizes modernity can never be detached from an acknowledgment of the full truth about man, which includes his transcendent vocation.». (From the Holy Father's Speech Benedict XVI to the Rectors of European Universities – 23rd June 2007)

This first stage is characterized by a **situation of dismay, waiting, research**. The crisis of the disciples of Emmaus can, in its different aspects, match the **today's crisis of modernity** and also recall us, as students, to all the **difficulties we can meet by announcing Christ inside the university world**.

Do you think the modernity is crossing a period of real crisis? According to you, which are the main risks of the technological and scientific progress in the world of today? What does it happen when the progress is not serving the human being and when we promote earth's values without any reference to God?



How is the situation of the University system in your country? Which the main strength points and resources? And which are the problems?

Which are the main disappointments and difficulties you had to face to during your academics career? There has been time, during which you have been overcome by discouragement? Is it hard for you to witness your own faith in University?

OUR HEARTS WERE BURNING WITHIN US...

THE MEETING WITH THE RISEN: THE YOUNGS AND THE NEW LIFE IN EUROPE THE BROADENING OF THE REASON

«A second issue involves the broadening of our understanding of rationality. A correct understanding of the challenges posed by contemporary culture, and the formulation of meaningful responses to those challenges, must take a critical approach towards narrow and ultimately irrational attempts to limit the scope of reason. The concept of reason needs instead to be "broadened" in order to be able to explore and embrace those aspects of reality which go beyond the purely empirical. This will allow for a more fruitful, complementary approach to the relationship between faith and reason. The rise of the European universities was fostered by the conviction that faith and reason are meant to cooperate in the search for truth, each respecting the nature and legitimate autonomy of the other, yet working together harmoniously and creatively to serve the fulfilment of the human person in truth and love». (*From the Holy Father's Speech Benedict XVI to the Rectors of European Universities – 23rd June 2007*)

«Yet *eros* and *agape*—ascending love and descending love—can never be completely separated. The more the two, in their different aspects, find a proper unity in the one reality of love, the more the true nature of love in general is realized»(from the Encyclical *Spe Salvi*, 25-26).

To live as Christians in the University the Holy Father Benedict XVI shows us a particular way, that is **to broaden our own idea of rationality, so that the reason could meet with efficacy the Truth**. In fact, only a reason opened to the faith can lead to the deeper Truth about the human being. That is the God's Love.

Faith and reason can communicate in a fruitful way in the University world? Or they are often put in antithesis? How can faith and reason cooperate together, maintaining their own proper autonomy, to search the Truth? How can we put them at the service of the human being fulfilment?

How do you think that your growing in the reason, obtaining new technical and scientific competences by studying, could combine with your own growing in your faith? How to witness in the University world to a "faith friend of the cleverness"?



CAMING BACK TO JERUSSALEM...
WITNESSES OF THE RISEN IN UNIVERSITY: THE YOUNGS AND THE
INTELLECTUAL CHARITY
THE REALISM OF THE FAITH

«A third issue needing to be investigated concerns the nature of the contribution which Christianity can make to the humanism of the future. The question of man, and thus of modernity, challenges the Church to devise effective ways of proclaiming to contemporary culture the "realism" of her faith in the saving work of Christ. Christianity must not be relegated to the world of myth and emotion, but respected for its claim to shed light on the truth about man, to be able to transform men and women spiritually, and thus to enable them to carry out their vocation in history. In my recent visit to Brazil, I voiced my conviction that "unless we do know God in and with Christ, all of reality becomes an indecipherable enigma". Knowledge can never be limited to the purely intellectual realm; it also includes a renewed ability to look at things in a way free of prejudices and preconceptions, and to allow ourselves to be "amazed" by reality, whose truth can be discovered by uniting understanding with love. Only the God who has a human face, revealed in Jesus Christ, can prevent us from truncating reality at the very moment when it demands ever new and more complex levels of understanding. The Church is conscious of her responsibility to offer this contribution to contemporary culture». *(From the Holy Father's Speech Benedict XVI to the Rectors of European Universities – 23^d June 2007).*

Pope Benedict XVI recognizes the "**realism of the faith**" the basic Christians' contribute in the University. This realism is based on the fact that at the centre of our faith there is not a set of theoretical thoughts but the meeting with Jesus Christ.

Which are the risks of a faith confined to "the world of the myth or of the emotion"? An intellectual and abstract faith? How to announce in the contemporary culture the "realism" of our own faith? How to **match "love with comprehension"**?

Saturday – 11th of July 2009

University of Rome Tor Vergata

Ore 15.00

School rooms of the Faculty of Economics – University of Rome Tor Vergata

2nd TIME: PASTORAL PROPOSALS WITH EXPERIENCES

WE WERE HOPING...
WAITING THE RISEN: THE YOUTHS AND THE HOPE IN EUROPE
THE CRISIS OF MODERNITY

«As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them». *(Luke 24, 15)*

«Science can contribute greatly to making the world and mankind more human. Yet it can also destroy mankind and the world unless it is steered by forces that lie outside it. [...] It is not science that redeems man: man is redeemed by love. This applies even in terms of



this present world. When someone has the experience of a great love in his life, this is a moment of “redemption” which gives a new meaning to his life. But soon he will also realize that the love bestowed upon him cannot by itself resolve the question of his life. It is a love that remains fragile. It can be destroyed by death. The human being needs unconditional love. He needs the certainty which makes him say: “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (*Rom 8:38-39*). If this absolute love exists, with its absolute certainty, then—only then—is man “redeemed”, whatever should happen to him in his particular circumstances» (from the Encyclical *Spe Salvi*, 25-26).

Also during period of dismay and difficulties, Jesus does not stop staying and walking with us. By this evocative image we can learn a first teaching: **to announce the hope we shall not be still, we have to walk**, being open to a meeting and to the dialogue.

The second teaching is about the fact that **nor the progress nor the development can be absolutized** but should be open to recognize their own limit and to put oneself in obedience to God. In fact only the God’s love can make us really happy and “redeem us” totally. This is not the same for the science.

How do you feel the Lord is walking with you on your own way and in your life as student, also during the difficulties?

How can we testify and announce the hope in University? Which is according to you the real hope we are requested to announce? How to transmit to the others the God’s love, the only one that can redeem us?

OUR HEARTS WERE BURNING WITHIN US...

THE MEETING WITH THE RISEN: THE YOUNGS AND THE NEW LIFE IN EUROPE THE BROADENING OF THE REASON

«He said to them, How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going further. But they urged him strongly, Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over. So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?» (*Luke 24, 25-32*).

The disciples of Emmaus recognize Jesus by his breaking the bread, This fuller meeting should be urged on also inside the life of our Universities and it matches with two fundamental experiences: the **World** and the **Eucharist**.



As a matter of fact, only by meeting Christ in our hearts can be lightened **a new hope**, which is not the hope of this world but a fuller and definitive hope, the one of the “new sky and new earth”.

When the meeting with the World and the Sacraments of the Church can help you to live in a fuller and more deeply way your Christian hope? Which is the role of the meeting with the World of God in your life of University student? Does it take you by orienting and lightening you in your choices? And which role have the Sacraments? How do they enrich your way of faith? How can you undertake to favour the meeting with Christ, even by the World and the Sacraments, of your University friends?

CAMING BACK TO JERUSSALEM... WITNESSES OF THE RISEN IN UNIVERSITY: THE YOUNGS AND THE INTELLECTUAL CHARITY THE REALISM OF THE FAITH

«They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon. Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognised by them when he broke the bread». (*Luke 24,33-35*)

«In Europe, as elsewhere, society urgently needs the service to wisdom which the university community provides. This service extends also to the practical aspects of directing research and activity to the promotion of human dignity and to the daunting task of building the civilization of love. University professors, in particular, are called to embody the virtue of intellectual charity, recovering their primordial vocation to train future generations not only by imparting knowledge but by the prophetic witness of their own lives. The university, for its part, must never lose sight of its particular calling to be an "*universitas*" in which the various disciplines, each in its own way, are seen as part of a greater *unum* »

(From the Holy Father's Speech Benedict XVI to the Rectors of European Universities – 23rd June 2007).

«Dear friends, it is my hope that universities will increasingly become communities committed to the tireless pursuit of truth, "laboratories of culture" where teachers and students join in exploring issues of particular importance for society, employing interdisciplinary methods and counting on the collaboration of theologians. This can easily be done in Europe, given the presence of so many prestigious Catholic institutions and faculties of theology. I am convinced that greater cooperation and new forms of fellowship between the various academic communities will enable Catholic universities to bear witness to the historical fruitfulness of the encounter between faith and reason. The result will be a concrete contribution to the attainment of the goals of the Bologna Process, and an incentive for developing a suitable university apostolate in the local Churches. Effective support for these efforts, which have been increasingly a concern of the European Episcopal Conferences, can come from those ecclesial associations and movements



already engaged in the university apostolate.» (*From the Holy Father's Speech Benedict XVI to the Rectors of European Universities – 23rd June 2007*).

The Pope recall us first of all the virtue of “**intellectual charity**”, inviting particularly the University Professors to educate the future generations not only by teaching but also by the witness of their own life.

It is also his own hope that the Universities could become “culture laboratories”, as a privileged spaces to point out the unity of the knowledge and consolidate the dialogue between the topics and the comparison between professors and students, as already hoped in 2000 A.D. by John Paul the II. [Cfr: John PAUL II, *Speech adressed to the participants to the world meeting of University professors, Saturday 9th September 2000*].

How can we favour the cooperation between professors and students inside our Universities? How can we live an authentically intellectual charity putting our cleverness and our competences to serve our neighbour? How can the different topics cooperate one each other and dialogue with the theological knowledge? How can pour Universities become “cultural laboratories”?

How should we witness the faith in the academics world? Which is the role of the associations and movements engaged inside the University apostolate?