

CONCLUSIONS

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Thank you Mr Chairman.

Dear Colleagues, As you have understood, already when we decided to devote our XI Session to a conceptual analysis, I was aware of the risk that this session led us to deviate from our main task, which is to exhibit those contributions from social sciences that would be the most important for the social teaching of the Church. We might be too attracted by philosophical speculations which indeed are very interesting, especially for the eldest among us who contribute less to the active research in our disciplines. The subject we chose, *The Conceptualization of the Human Person in the Social Sciences* has been very stimulating during this session, while also increasing our knowledge. Therefore the risk to which I alluded is still there. We should be aware of it during this general discussion. I was aware of it when I drafted what I shall say today. I would like now to begin with an overview of the work of this session.

Of course, this overview will be confined to our subject-matter *stricto sensu*, Conceptualization of the Human Person. I noticed that this session allowed some authors and scholars to go beyond the subject, taking the opportunity to talk about scientific questions or social phenomena that were dear to their heart. This is normal, but I will not talk about that.

Concerning philosophy, you probably noticed a certain convergence among speakers to congratulate themselves on the fact that the classical notion of personhood has been revived. This was the main theme of Professor Berti. He was not contradicted by Rocco Buttiglione when he talked about the objective part of John Paul II's phenomenology and later about the important role of subjectivity in the reactions of individuals vis-à-vis this objectivity, as well as in their spiritual opening towards others.

Angelo Scola has chosen not to talk about the ancient roots of modern concepts whereas Minnerath insisted on them. Looking at the future and mentioning the link between Christian anthropology and sociology,

Cardinal Scola emphasized the fact that the challenge addressed by modern society to the Church is that the Church has to find a way to develop still more Christian thought on personhood.

Georges Cottier presented his reflections on liberalism and liberal ideology. He explained very well the reasons why he saw some menaces for the human person. The Social state advocated by this ideology, is claimed to be able to satisfy three goals: autonomy of the individual, freedom and equality. But there are no good arguments to show the compatibility among these three notions in an atheistic world.

You probably expect me to now review the conceptualizations in our four disciplines: law, political science, economy, sociology. But another discipline has emerged in our debate: psychology. When I think about it, this seems to have been positive. The economists feel the need to resort to psychology to review the conceptualization of agents and psychology has taken a great place on the time we devoted to sociology. Jon Elster's presentation concerned psychology; his text has shown how it is justified to add to the old distinction between rational behaviour and visceral behaviour, another distinction with three poles: interest, passion and reason.

The place of this reflection in the life of people has been shown magnificently by Margaret Archer who, remaining a sociologist, showed herself to be also a psychologist, a philosopher and a theologian. She has convinced us that the person was a judge of his or her social identity, and had the capacity to influence society's internal discourse.

Going on with sociology, I have noticed that our colleague Zubrzycki presented John Shotter's contribution as inspired by social psychology. I noticed also that the long quotation in epigraph of John Shotter's paper comes from Merleau-Ponty who studied the psychological approach to scientific practices. John Shotter, studying constraints imposed by the social environment on people reflections, concluded that, observing the surrounding society, the individual adjusts his behaviour to his environment.

Harré has suggested replacing the theory of roles by the theory of positioning, examining the system of rights and obligations which defines the norms according to which individuals interact with each other and thus influence the evolution of society. This is a new field of research which attaches upon the identity recognised to each person. Contribution to such a theory would be a task for social psychology and cognitive psychology.

I could go on like that but I won't do it. At this point I have to put an end to the review of the different presentations of this session for lack of time. I must give my apologies to my colleagues who talked about law, political sciences and economics. I will talk briefly about these disciplines

and this will enable me to approach afterwards some points which could be further discussed this afternoon.

As for law and political sciences, an overview has already been given by our colleague Herbert Schambeck. I confine myself to mention an impression which I drew from the discussions. In these two fields, historical and cultural differences seem to have a particular influence, even if international law and the promotion of human rights tried to limit the effects of this influence. As for international law, unfortunately we have to notice that its impact encounters so many obstacles that it could even have opposite results to what the original authors in the postwar wanted to achieve, whether they were inspired by the concern for liberty, which Professor Glendon emphasized, or by the respect of human dignity, which was stressed by Professors Kirchhof and Schambeck. As to the weaknesses of international organisations we heard the criticism of Janne Matlary and we appreciate the assessments made by Kirchhof and Skubiszewski.

Here it has been very satisfactory to learn about the different experiences with law and political science in the US, in Britain, in Germany and in Latin countries before examining the Moslem and Buddhist traditions in Asia. We shall remember that conceptualizations of the human person and their implementation into institutions went through different developments in different areas of the world.

I would like to now address a question to all authors of these presentations. When we talk about conceptualizations should we not wonder what are the sources and the explanations of their developments? For instance we could focalize on the different meanings of words used in the past and present political writings, on the difference between the decisions of courts and the implementation of written laws.

Since I talked so much yesterday about economics, I will not come back to it today. I will confine myself to a side commentary about the organization of our exchanges. The study of our discipline was made along a plan going from normative economics, to positive economics and to applied economics. Why is it that we see no echo of such a plan in our discussions about philosophy, law, political sciences, and sociology? The answer may be that a similar plan would not have been useful for the other disciplines. Why? Perhaps in these other disciplines conceptualization of the person appears as a purely positive subject (incidentally, when saying positive here I am not assuming the positivist ideology which was criticised by Georges Cottier). Isn't it true that reflection and teaching of the Church give a great place to normative morality? Is it not true that this teaching is meant for faithful who are troubled by political decisions in economic and social

fields? Is it not true that our contribution to the development of the Social Doctrine should result from confrontation of our positive analysis with the Christian principles? These are all the questions I would like to raise. Maybe they are just rhetorical. I am not so certain about it.

I have to come to the end of the time I decided to devote to my overview, which was certainly too short, too personal, too subjective. I apologize for all that and I would like now to pass over to the issues to be discussed this afternoon. You probably thought about what I said last Friday and about what has been written in note then circulated. I will tell you now what I think about future decision.

First of all, what is the assessment of this present session? For the first time we dealt with a subject which lies somewhat upstream from the substantial concerns we dealt with in the previous sessions. I think the experience has been positive. The presentations have been useful for us, at least for me. These presentations will be interesting for the readers of our *Acta*. They will be interesting also for us when we have to think about the follow-up to the session. I hope that these writings will be useful for those who, in the Church, have to think on how to enrich Christian teaching. After some additional work we should publish something interesting in the series of our *Acta*.

A more delicate question is to know how can the subject-matter of this session be integrated in the program of future works of our Academy. You have probably understood what I think about that: I think that we would be wrong if the *Acta* of this session should be later considered as having marked a turning point in studies of the Academy towards more speculative thinking, somewhat away from the study of the social problems of modern life. Since we know each other well, I gathered that you have different opinions on this point. What I have just been saying does not mean that I would be definitely against a sort of follow-up to this session. For instance it might be thought useful to have further studies in order to better explain some of our present conclusions. But as for the general thread of our future activities, personally I would not ask for long investigations along the way opened with this session, such as a program lasting for several years like those carried out on globalization, democracy and so on. I take this stand because I feel our mission is basically to keep a profitable dialogue with those who work, much more than we do, in the field. The utility of our discussions would be on the wane if we should decide to devote ourselves exclusively on a philosophical reflection about social sciences.

My October note draws several options for future works. The *first option* would be to leave some time to reflection, leaving to our next session

in 2006 all decisions about the follow-up beyond the publishing of our *Acta*. The *second option* would be to try and collect supplementary material, which would be worthy of being known by us and by readers of the proceedings, this without deciding on what to be done later on. I put this option in the list because it is a possibility, but I don't know really where it could lead us. I think that those who were more active for suggesting this option belong to the Italian delegation, which is unfortunately not represented now. Therefore we are missing a considerable part of opinions. The *third option*, would be an internal document of the Academy to remind ourselves of what we have done and what we have learned from the discussion on our present subject. When I am talking about an internal document, I mean that this would not be for publication, but only for our internal use. The *fourth option* would be to prepare a special publication of the Academy. We should then define the exact coverage and the goal of this publication, so that we could make it clear in the near future the sort of book we want to publish. The drafting of the document would involve of course some of those who have made presentations here. If we chose the latter we should talk already now about the goals and the purpose of this possible book.

I would like now to be more precise about my opinion on these four options. First of all, I already said that the second option in my opinion could not offer us much. On the contrary, I quite like option number three, in other words a short document for internal use of the Academy just to memorize what has been done. Probably it is the least attractive option: during the short history of the Academy there have been several calls to build good archives. I am sure they are being built, but I don't think the demand for using them is any great. It is indeed rare during a session to remind, or to hint at, what has been done in previous sessions. As for option number four, in other words the publishing of one document of the Academy, it could be very interesting but of course we need a certain consensus. A hundred per cent consensus does not exist in the academic world, but we should not underestimate the difficulty. Let us remember what was our experience with the two books *Democracy in Debate* and *Work and Human Fulfilment*. These are the two reference points we have when we think of a synthetic publication on the conceptualization of the human person.

I would like to recapitulate my proposals. Option number four is very interesting but very difficult. Option number three is possible but less interesting. I see no justification for option two, and maybe at the end of the afternoon we will accept option one, according to which we won't have anything on, until April. Thank you.