

REPORT FROM EUROPE (by Roman Globokar)

Islamic ethics and interreligious social ethics: Report from the annual meeting of moral theologians and social ethicists in Innsbruck, January 3-5, 2018 (by Roman Globokar)

The Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Innsbruck organized the 45th annual meeting of moral theologians and social ethicists from 3 to 5 January 2018. It was attended by around 35 university professors and doctoral students from Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia. The address of this year's meeting was: Islamic Ethics and Interreligious Social Ethics (Islamische Ethik und interreligiöse Sozialethik) The main lecturers were Reza Hajatpour, professor of Islamic religious studies at Erlangen University in Germany, and Hansjörg Schmid, head of the Swiss Center for Islam at the University of Fribourg.

Reza Hajatpour presented the key elements of Islamic ethics and its basic sources, which are revelation, tradition, theology, law, literature and philosophy. He emphasized the fact that Islam has not developed a systematic ethical theory and that it is left to many interpretations. There are many guidelines and ethical narratives about behavior and action in personal and social life. In any case, the Koran plays a fundamental role in the development of ethical norms, but it is also in this area there are various interpretations of the same written words. The basis of the Islamic ethics is the human desire to fulfil his/her life. The fulfilment is a human project, as the Islam does not pay special attention to the grace of God. However, God gives humans in their lives people who can help them to find the right path.

Raza Hajatpour also explained how Islam looks at individual bioethical questions. He is more supportive of the development of modern science in relation to certain issues, since the embryo does not receive the status of a human person at the time of conception, but according to the interpretations of various authorities between the 42nd (the person is physically determined) and the 120th day (the soul is given to the foetus) after conception. Thus, an abortion could be allowed until the day of ensoulment. Most authorities allow the contraception. They are also fairly open in the field of genetic research, since they believe that Allah has given this capacity to the mankind. In principle, they are not against cloning. For the argumentation of cloning, even the famous proverb of Koran 5: 32 applies: "Whosoever has spared the life of a soul, it is as though he has spared the life of all people. Whosoever has killed a soul, it is as though he has murdered all of mankind."

Hansjörg Schmid introduced the concept of interreligious social ethics developed at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland (<https://www3.unifr.ch/szig/de/>). Recognizing the

plurality of different religious beliefs, they want to create opportunities for coexistence and mutual enrichment. They want to overcome some uniformized universal ethics and allow different practices that coexist and promote each other in dialogue. As the basis for the common ethics, the lecturer highlighted five basic goods protected by Islam and Christianity: life, reason, offspring, property, religion. These goods correspond to the basic needs of man, such as health, safety, belonging, recognition and meaning.

Schmid is convinced that the post-secular society also allows religious communities to form a common social space. In this new context, laicity is one of the worldviews options, which means that it has its own legitimacy in the public space. The lecturer developed the concept of post-secular theology of signs. According to him, it is necessary to find out what are the signs of time in the modern world (eg. environmental catastrophes, migrations) and how different worldviews perceive and interpret these signs and how to shape common actions in order to respond properly as a society. Religious beliefs and religious affiliation are encouraged to take on co-responsibility for the future of the world. Solutions are in forced consensus and uniformity of attitudes, but in the coexistence of religious and lay positions.

In the plenary debate, we highlighted the challenge of pluralism and dialogue in the modern world. Above all, it is necessary to work on surpassing the various prejudices and finding opportunities for mutual enrichment between Islam and Christianity. The historical and cultural context must also be taken into account. It is also very important to know what to expect from the interreligious dialogue: greater convergence or preservation of its specifics in greater mutual respect. We found some common challenges in the ethical reflexion. A revelation is the basis for ethics both in Christianity and in Islam but both in both religions is not uniquely defined, in what way the holy scripture legitimizes the individual ethical principles and concrete action of the believer. We also talked about the relation of religions to the concept of human rights in history and today. We agreed that pluralism has its own boundaries and that the existence of a democratic society is only possible when recognizing certain foundations (respect for human dignity and freedom, social justice, equality ...), which enable coexistence within diversity.



The keynote speakers and organisers of the conference in Innsbruck 2018

The Concept of Intrinsic Evil in Catholic Theological Ethics: Report from the workshop at the Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Vienna, January 30-31, 2018 (by Nenad Polgar)

On January 30-31, 2018, the Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Vienna was hosting a workshop entitled The Concept of Intrinsic Evil in Catholic Theological Ethics. The workshop aimed at bringing together a number of prominent English and German speaking theological ethicists and philosophers in order to discuss the role of the concept of intrinsic evil in the tradition, its (ir?)relevance for the contemporary ethical discourse, and, most importantly, a possibility of going beyond it by finding alternative ways of addressing the issue of moral evil. Inspired by Pope Francis' efforts to bridge the gap between theology and Church practice, the workshop explored whether it is possible to maintain awareness of the complexity of moral issues, without sacrificing the ability to recognise moral evil and what kind of theological ethics is needed to achieve this task.

Invitation to Conference on Radical Ecological Conversion After Laudato Si', Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, March 7 – 8, 2018 (by Julie Clague)

Sponsored by the Embassies of Georgia, Germany and the Netherlands to the Holy See in collaboration with the Pontifical Gregorian University, and the Joint Diploma in Integral Ecology Group of the Pontifical Universities, a conference on Radical Ecological Conversion After Laudato Si', Discovering the intrinsic Value of all Creatures, Human and Non-human will take place at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Piazza della Pilotta 4, 00187, on March 7 – 8 2018.

The conference will bring together priests, religious, scientists and teachers to explore the implications for the Academy, the Church, and Society of the teaching of Laudato si' on the intrinsic worth of all creatures, and the need to re-order human society so as to respect them, and the natural order of the Creation.

Through scholarly presentations and dialogue, the conference will identify ways the Church may, together with other partners, bring about the radical ecological conversion of individuals and of economic, social and political agencies and communities.

For those who wish to attend the conference please, register at georgiaholysee@gmail.com

The organising committee registers your attendance, provides printed programs and coffee during coffee breaks; however we are unable to provide further meal services.

Registration is free of charge and open instantly and will close on 26 February.

Invitation to the study day on Amoris Laetitia at Pontifical University Comillas in Madrid, March 14, 2018 (by José Manuel Caamaño)

Jornada de estudio sobre Amoris laetitia: "La teología moral del Papa Francisco: ¿ruptura, continuidad o progreso?": 14 de marzo en Madrid.

PDF of Program on the Newsletter

Publication of new book:

José Manuel Caamaño (ed.), "La tecnocracia", Sal Terrae, Santander 2018:
<https://gcloyola.com/es/ciencia-y-religion/3118-la-tecnocracia.html>