



The Human Person, Natural Law, Human Rights in a Complex and Globalised World



VI Plenary Session 23-25 June 2006 – Most Reverend Eminences and Excellencies, and all of you colleagues and members of the Pontifical Academy of St. Thomas, I greet and thank you cordially for your presence in this sixth Plenary Session dedicated to The Human Person, Natural Law, Human Rights in a Complex and Globalised Society.

Starting from the statement of Card. Joseph Ratzinger during his homily at the Mass ‘Pro eligendo Romano Pontifice’ on April 18, 2005: ‘How many doctrinal winds have we known in these last decades, how many ideological streams, how many fashions of thought... The small boat of thinking of many Christians has been not seldom shaken by these waves – thrown from an extreme to the other: from Marxism to Liberalism, up to libertinism; from collectivism to a radical individualism; from atheism to syncretism, and so on... Having a solid faith, according to the Creed of the Church, is often labeled as fundamentalism, i.e. to let oneself be carried here and there by whatever doctrinal wind, seems to be the only attitude to be up to our modern days. A dictatorship of relativism is being created which acknowledges nothing as definitive, which allows as final measure the own self and its whims. On the contrary, we have another measure: the Son of God, the true Man. It is He who is the measure of the true humanism’ (The Roman Observer, April 19, 2006, 6/7). The words spoken by the Holy Father in Warsaw on May 26, 2006, are: (Today) ‘one tries to give the impression that everything is relative: even the truths of faith would depend on the historical situation and a human evaluation. But the Church cannot make the Spirit of Truth silent... We ought not to fall into the temptation of relativism or subjective and selective interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures (and we can add ‘of the Christian morals’). Only the integral truth allows us to be open to the adhesion to Christ, dead and risen for our salvation’ (The Roman Observer, May 26-27, 2006, 11).

Following then the suggestions of the participants to the fifth Plenary Session of the PAST in 2005, the Council of the PAST has formulated the theme of the present sixth Session in the following way: The Human Person, Natural Law, Human Rights in a Complex and Globalised Society.

How can we characterize the dictatorship of relativism Benedict XVI speaks about in reference to Morals? First of all, relativism excludes the truth from the consideration on moral good and evil. Morals is not any longer an expression of truth, but of the emotions and feelings or – as the Pope says – whims. If it is not the expression of the truth, it is not something objective either; it is the subjective and selective interpretation of our problems.

Together with the exclusion of the truth from morals and objectivity from morals, one also excludes God: the Supreme Good and the Final Goal of human life; and one does not look to God for human happiness or beatitude. Just as God after original sin expelled Adam and Eve from Paradise, in the same way the Christian theologians in the 20th Century expelled God from the human world, both as final goal and special grace.

Consequently, moral theory has been reduced to justice and duty, as it is the case in Kant and in Marx. In M. Weber it goes even further, i.e. excludes from the ethical considerations also specifically moral values. Only the bare facts remain, as Benedict XVI observed, the so called technologico-scientific data.

What kind of remedy to the present crisis after Auschwitz – following the teaching of St. Thomas, can our Session propose? Does something absolute, objective, of truth and liberty, still remain in the morals of St. Thomas?

Distinguished Members of this Academy, I wish you all a fruitful and prosperous work of reflection and thorough study about the human person, natural law and human rights, for the good of all Christians and all men of good will.

In the meantime my best thanks to all of you for your participation in this sixth Plenary Session. Please accept my best wishes for all your work and the important conclusions you will reach.

Father Edward Kaczynski, President