

Press release n. 53

XXXIV EDITION  
MEETING FOR FRIENDSHIP AMONG PEOPLES  
*THE HUMAN PERSON: A STATE OF EMERGENCY*  
AUGUST 18-24 2013 - RIMINI FIERA

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## Reading the Bible with Joseph Weiler: the trial to Jesus

Rimini, august 20 2013 – The crowd which filled Eni Literature Café in A3 and which, starting at 11.15 a.m., followed the lesson of Joseph Weiler, chief of Straus Institute for the Advanced Study of Law and Justice, for two hours, had the possibility to make a live experience of what the Meeting is. As Father Stefano Alberto said: “The Meeting is not a place where to balance each other stances, but a place where we really look for the truth and, maintaining diversity of stories and appearances “we try to be a real company to each other towards the destiny, the glory of God”.

Weiler' second lesson moves from the central question put yesterday: why did Jesus provoked public Jews authorities insomuch as to incur in a death sentence? Weiler today examined hostility of Sanhedrin which recognizes that Jesus perform many signs of God but, facing his statement to be the Messiah, it accuses him of blasphemy. However, at that time the word “blasphemy” had only a generic meaning of offense to God: which was then the charge leading Jesus to the death sentence?

If we rely on the Acts of the Apostles (6,14) the charge is fundamentally “changing the traditions Moses transmitted to us”, in clear contradiction with the recommendation from Deuteronomy (12,32) “Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.”

Jesus also extraordinarily approaches to the figure 'prophet' or 'dreamer' suggested by the same passage: "If you will arise among you a prophet who will perform signs and wonders and will tell you to follow other gods, you will not hear him, because the Eternal is trying out of you. You will put him to death. "This 'prophet' then - reflects Weiler - is a true messenger of God and can not be guilty. At the same time, God has wanted to tie to Israel for an everlasting covenant: every attempt to change the law will be perceived as guilty. Dealing with the trial, the perhaps more plausible and consistent with the text of both Testaments assumption here is: the Sanhedrin believes that Jesus is the person described in Deuteronomy, the prophet sent by God to test the loyalty of the people of the Covenant. The affirmative answer to the question of Jesus to Caiaphas ("Are you the Messiah?") Makes clear that he is not just a rabbi. It is therefore the duty of the Sanhedrin put him to death, because God is trying out of his people. Next to this hypothesis Weiler had added a

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second one with caution: the Sanhedrin does not believe that Jesus is the person announced in Deuteronomy, but he was the one in fact.

Both hypotheses have major consequences on the conception of God. The first acquits God from the charge of being unfair: Jesus, innocent because accomplishing the task assigned to him by God, was killed but after three days God raised him from the dead. However, in the narrative of the passion something disturbs us. Jesus had to die to wash away the sins of men, and die without blemish. But this implies that someone, killing him, had to sin. So as to let redemption happen, someone has to necessarily break the law. The second hypothesis would offer a solution: Jesus is innocent as he is the messenger of God, on the other hand, those who put him to death are not guilty because the Sanhedrin doing so complies with the Law. There are also deep implications. The Christian must accept that God chose Israel, and that he gave the Law to him only as special witness, with the duty to follow it forever. The Jews must accept that Jesus is the Redeemer of the world, except the Jews who already have the Law. The alliance of the New Testament deal with the world, not the Jews. So - said Weiler - I can say to the Jew: if you do not accept that God has chosen to reveal Himself to the world through Jesus, you have a concept of God too miserable. And I can say to the Christian, on the other hand,: if you insist that Jews should leave their law, you make God a capricious one. In terms of hypotheses, the Jew Weiler outlined the framework of God revelation in a different way. Firstly God reveals himself to Abraham, then reveals himself to a people, then to the whole world through Jesus. Jews must follow the Covenant and the Law without removing or adding anything. But "there is nothing in the Jewish faith - said the speaker - that obliges us to declare false every other manifestation of God to the rest of the world."

(C.C.)

(X.Y.)

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