

Foreword

Prof. Michel SCHEUER
President of FUCE

Every year in the spring, on the campus of a welcoming university somewhere in Europe or Lebanon, presidents and rectors and others responsible for their university, men and women passionate about their academic responsibilities, get together for a 48-hour period to exchange examples of their best practices, their doubts and information about their projects. FUCE's General Assembly presents a wonderful annual opportunity for people in charge to distance themselves for two days from everyday life and the weight of management responsibilities in order to discover and appreciate the hosting of another university in a different environment, and to exchange thematic issues and concerns widely shared within our Catholic universities of the old continent.

When the mandate assigned to them by the General Assembly terminated, it seemed useful to current members of FUCE Management Board to conclude this reflection conducted many years ago by gathering the echoes of our annual meetings in a trilingual small volume. This modest book has no other pretext than to share with the reader these reflections conducted during our annual meetings from 2004 to 2012; we simply hope that it will be widely disseminated within our member universities.

The course of action presented in this book clearly points to the three missions of every university: create new knowledge within laboratories and research centers, transmit this knowledge through various teaching activities and serve the society into which this knowledge has been disseminated. But our universities,

member of FUCE, share a common inspiration: the Gospel of Jesus-Christ. This “Good News” gospel sheds light on the academic missions of Catholic universities and continually calls us to serve humanity more by paying special attention through offered teaching and conducted research in our universities, to the weakest, the lowliest poorest, the wounded in life; those who do not have a voice, those left behind by our affluent society.

The publication of this small book provides me the opportunity, in the name of my fellow directors, to thank very sincerely all of those who prepared the annual meetings of the General Assembly, those who accepted to share their convictions, their doubts and projects without forgetting those who contributed, without fanfare to the warmth of the reception reserved to all the participants coming from member universities that hosted our accomplishments, from Lisbon to Lviv, from Lille to Beirut.

Our appreciation goes also to all of those who accepted to work on the drafting of this small book, its translation and layout, not forgetting the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik which was responsible of its technical execution with a lot of flexibility and professionalism.

Finally, I would like to express my deep gratitude and my cordial friendship to all those who, in the last six years, shared humbly this responsibility with me in the service of the Federation in the framework of the Management Board.

This adventure would never have been possible without the everyday vigilance, the discreet competence and the unfailing availability of Laurence VIESLET who, for six years, served the Secretariat of the Federation and held its records day by day; it is with heartfelt thanks that we all owe him and the University of Namur which has made this possible.

Beirut, February 14, 2013

Eichstätt Declaration 2004

The Rectors of 43 member universities of the Federation of European Catholic Universities (FUCE) gathered on May 14 and 15, 2004, in a General Assembly at Eichstätt. While considering the process launched by the Bologna Declaration and willing to contribute fully to the establishment of the European area of higher education and scientific research, in conformity with the Magna Charta adopted in Bologna on September 18, 1998, they stated that:

1. European universities are facing a breadth of collaboration and competition with other academic systems in the world.

Therefore, they should be ready to take up the challenge of achieving high quality and excellence within the framework of autonomy and liberties specific to these kinds of institutions.

2. The European area of higher education and scientific research should be based on the freedom to teach, learn and research, as recognized in the resolution on freedom of education adopted on March 14, 1984, by the European parliament.
3. Universities are also places of meeting and open dialogue, of cultural dissemination, interdisciplinarity and questioning of/by the society, in order to enable each person to discover, in every stage of his/her life, the paths of freedom for development, solidarity and citizenship.

4. In respect of its institutional autonomy and freedom, European universities assume responsibilities involving, on the administrative and quality assessment levels, its participation to the public service of higher education through missions dedicated to teaching, research and service to society. On this basis, these universities accept to be rigorously evaluated by national and international independent and competent authorities.
5. Freedom of teaching and research is a necessary condition so the universities can play their full part in the context of national and international competition and attractiveness.
6. This freedom of teaching means not only establishing freely corresponding institutions but also providing the same access rights to different choices of education and training for all the students. This calls, among other things, for similar conditions of State funding.
7. Catholic universities, members of FUCE, are open, without any financial, social or cultural discrimination to all those who, regardless of their religion and beliefs, are seeking a life-long comprehensive training and continuous personal development, and are concerned with the human and social consequences of their research activities.
8. Catholic universities, members of FUCE, fully adhere to the principles mentioned above; their philosophical foundation is a choice of values derived from the Gospel, falling in the context of openness and freedom dynamisms. In certain countries (Belgium, Netherlands, Hungary, Poland, and Germany), the role of Catholic universities is fully recognized; they are regarded in the same way as other universities.
9. In order to ensure their integration into the new European competitive system, European Catholic Universities request from each Member State of the European Union and from the European authorities the respect of freedom of choice in higher education, while ensuring an equal treatment of all students on academic and financial levels.

How to meet the challenge of competitiveness in the new European Higher Education Area?

Marceliano ARRANZ, Rector
Pontifical University of Salamanca

In his introductory statement, President Patrick VALDRINI (Paris) recalls that the mobility of students and teachers through the countries that were part of Medieval Europe has been prolific since the dawn of the thirteenth century. The main reason for this was, without doubt, the prestige of universities such as Paris, Bologna, Salamanca and Oxford.

The progressive introduction of a new, common European Higher Education Area (EHEA) will make this old custom further increase during the coming years, as the new academic circumstances are blurring the current borders within Europe with rapid speed.

J. PUIGPELAT, Project Manager of the European Commission, delivered his perception of competition within the European Higher Education Area. Another predictable consequence of this recent phenomenon of globalization will be that the academic efforts of the major European universities will become the new cultural references of the old continent. The most likely will be, as a result of changed circumstances, the establishment of a strong competition among the universities that make up the

EHEA, to attract the largest possible number of students to their classrooms.

Catholic universities in Europe will be also involved in this unstoppable movement to compete academically, so that even if the situation and circumstances of each university varies significantly from one country to another, it seems prudent to reflect on how to position the new times.

Following compelling testimonies given by L. CAMPIGLIO (Milano), P. PICOT (Angers) and A. PEREZ ESLAVA (Salamanca), an exchange allowed the contextualization of Catholic universities' issues in the European Area.

The new EHEA caused a difficult challenge from the point of view of competitiveness in Catholic universities that lack public support. Indeed, how compatible can leading research and excellence be in teaching with social price maintenance on the register? The solution that many universities have used is the easiest of all, to pass on the cost of quality in the cost of tuition. This strategy may eventually lead to Catholic universities to maintain some level of quality, but end up becoming elite centers, only affordable to the economically more affluent classes.

Another foreseeable problem will be to seek and find appropriate teachers to meet the changes ahead. Teachers who, in addition to excellent specialists in their subjects, are also sensitive to the moral and religious values to be disseminated and exemplified in a Catholic university.

Another challenge will be the attention to disadvantaged students. It would be unfair to our universities to devote their main efforts alone or preferentially to more academically inclined students, neglecting those students that for one reason or another are unable to keep up with the best.

In any case, it seems necessary to establish some barriers to prevent globalization wiping out the distinctive character of Catholic universities. If our universities do not want to lose their identity, they should avoid any suspicion of profiteering, renouncing employability used as the sole or main criterion in

planning their strategies. To achieve this goal, it is necessary that the curricula of our universities do not neglect the values that differentiate and identify us from other universities.

It would be unfair, however, to think that the new EHEA only have problems with Catholic universities. Used wisely, the new European academic framework can also be a source of useful reforms and new opportunities.

For example, the use of mandatory external evaluations as a tool to improve the facilities for the centers and the selection of their teachers. Nothing would be more useful to ensure the progress of an academic center, than to undergo periodic review and evaluation.

You could also use the curriculum reform to influence the cultivation of those values that should distinguish the Catholic universities from all others.

Finally, it is even possible that the explicit manifestation of the Catholic character of our institutions can become an important element of competitive attraction between large segments of the population.



A Catholic university: Why? How? World socio-economic mutations Positionings and challenges which lie ahead of European Catholic Universities

Thérèse **LEBRUN**, *President Rector*
Catholic University of Lille

It is from the vision of Man, promoted by the Catholic faith, and from a lucid and positive look at today's world, that we must draw the principles of action for Catholic universities. 'Lucid' means that there is neither indulgence nor bias involved. 'Positive' means that we have to consider the world as it is, become convinced that we are all responsible, and therefore act to reinforce more solidarity.

This sentiment was expressed by the late **Michel FALISE** (Lille) in his opening statement: "Technical and scientific changes along with economic progress are not considered as a real evolution in the fullest sense of the word, in other words a humanity evolution, unless they influence the human being, all human beings. This kind of evolution does not only involve economic assets but also social, cultural and spiritual ones. It influences not only certain privileged social groups but all men throughout the world."

The world situation constitutes the starting point of any reflection concerning the position of Catholic universities and the challenges they face. On one hand, this is the only way to appreciate the "Why" or the reason for their existence in the 21st century; do they have the same relevance they had when

they were established? What do they offer specifically? Do they constitute a part of this world or not? On the other hand, we have the “How” of their actions; are their involvement modes inviolable or can they evolve?

Defining the world situation is often limited to that of “globalization”. This however, only constitutes the major symptom of the creation of a society of knowledge. This society is characterized by the increasing development of research, education, production and information dissemination. Globalization is the acceleration of trends that have always constituted a part of history, but recently accompanied by an unprecedented increase of the scope and pace of trade. Overdeveloped financialization, that accompanies this movement, is the result of overusing all new possibilities of information transmission, to the detriment of other dimensions of social and economic life.

Consequently, new balances emerge between economic powers and reduced counter-powers, which create flagrant inequalities between nations and also within them. Although we may notice an overall increase of wealth, we must witness, in parallel, an increasing vulnerability and, therefore, a deterioration of social bonds coupled with a rise of exclusion phenomena. Traditional powers become less protective and religious or secular institutions are less understood.

Catholic universities are therefore evolving in an ambivalent world. If borders are losing their impenetrability (resulting therefore in a special intercultural dimension for youth), there are wide segments in our societies that shut themselves off from the rest of the world. While standards of living and availability of goods and services are increasing, significant disparities for accessing these improvements remain. Simultaneously, the question is raised as to whether this development model would be sustainable or not, due to the risks pertaining to a production that seems ignorant of the fate of our planet.

These are enough reasons to urge Catholic universities to involve themselves! A university is basically a place for sharing knowledge and carrying out research. Thanks to the dialogue

between faith and reason, and also with its increasing tendency to disseminate education, the Catholic university introduces a special educational dimension. This is why it never stood still; it was never remote from this world, but constituted an active agent. The Catholic university should get involved intellectually and creatively, amidst the difficulties it is encountering nowadays. It should think globally but act locally, in order to be different in the eyes of others. Moreover, every Catholic university must evaluate, interpret and apply every common principle of action.

Therefore, the university must preserve a truly Catholic trend, sharing its approach with teachers, researchers and managers, who are mostly recruited according to their skills and for the reason that they approve of the university's main goal. We should differentiate culture from a quest for truth, by offering to all students a basic education in human sciences, human rights, consciousness of self and others and Christian humanism.

Catholic universities must spare no efforts to provide students with individual attention and care. The Catholic university reveals an entire project and constitutes itself the first witness. In addition to the above, it must be innovative without bending to fads; it must be centered on individuals, concerned with their results, constructive, and demanding concerning the efforts individuals should make. Our teaching must raise, in all its aspects, a sense of responsibility for the common good.

Our students must be prepared to coexist, as coexistence is the key to living together harmoniously. Coexistence enables us to get to know others well, to know everything about their culture before establishing contact with them or welcome them into their university. Our education will be based on a Christian inspiration so the students may acquire both wisdom and a sense of critical detachment and self-evaluation. This will raise awareness of the problems of life as they really are and not as they appear.

This cultural intersection must be translated in educational terms through the development of interdisciplinary means, in order to better integrate the dimensions of human sciences. This type of education would not imply an incompatibility, but

rather a complementarity between the material and immaterial, between the “hard” and “soft” sciences. Students must extend this approach at a later stage, once they begin to integrate their professional milieu. They must comply with it and constitute a source of just rules that carry values, which are conducive to building a more fraternal world.

Let us not be afraid to promote commitments of any kind, when they really care about human beings. Let us be our students’ places of participation within our own bodies, to raise them on commitments so they will be able to assume their responsibilities. Then, they will learn how to substitute criticism for action.

Let us encourage the youth that are within our responsibility, to a sense of initiative, entrepreneurship and innovation. Let us make them reasoned and creative users of ICT, and promoters of a truly human and not a virtual society. Let us guide them towards a sustainable and responsible development domain. Let us raise their awareness about migration and integration issues; let us initiate them into aspects and challenges of globalization. Let us call them to wonder about local and global governance, as well as the establishment of a more global pacifist society and protect them from the dangers of manipulation and conformism. Simultaneously, in order to make this step operational, we must establish new partnerships, strengthen our links with the socio-economic network, institute new forms of cooperation, develop creativity on all academic levels, and particularly deepen our ties to promote Church and Christian education.

It is up to Catholic universities to be witnesses and actors for the world. This corresponds to our vocation and requires constant adaptation efforts. We have to respect, more than ever, cultural and religious diversity, particularly that of academic community members. This is largely how we will be recognized as open institutions, isolated from the beliefs and history of others.

What importance should we give to human sciences, Interdisciplinary issues and the ‘common sense’ approach in our academic programs?

Michel SCHEUER, *Rector*
FUNDP - Namur

To foster reflection on the theme and encourage debate, the Federation Council invited four privileged witnesses, who came to share their expectations and/or their experience in terms of human sciences education, interdisciplinary issues and the ‘common sense’ approach regarding university programs, especially within Catholic European Universities.

Jacques ARNOULD, French Dominican, agricultural engineer, Doctor of History and Theology, and researcher at CNES (Centre National d’Études Spatiales) was the first speaker. His research and publications target creationism and dimensions of ethical, social and cultural space activities. He called his presentation: ‘Back in Creationism Land and Icarus Sky’. After briefly expounding upon the main lines of the debate concerning evolution and creationism, he drew attention to the current issues of the debate, with statements such as “What is the relationship between Church and Society, and between sciences and Society? Every college student should be confronted with such questions.”

Subsequently, he developed, what should be in his opinion, a further awareness of spatial ethics. Jacques Arnold argued that this was a not a question or a procedure of ‘authorization/

banning,' which is often imposed on a sensible domain of activities, or on an ethic domain reserved for decisions of ad hoc committees exclusively composed of specialists, but rather a broader philosophical reflection in terms of the purposes and consequences of a particular human activity, leading to a code of good manners, and the laws, and treaties that govern this specific field of activity. In this context, the main challenges of the coming years could cover the following issues, which deal with the issue of humanity confronted by potential extraterrestrial life; management of space debris, communication rules in a common heritage and space observation and surveillance. In conclusion, the speaker stressed that the trust displayed by scientists is far greater than that of politicians. According to him, this trust might increase the responsibility of scientists. It was therefore essential to prepare our future researchers for this important responsibility *vis-à-vis* Society. Jacques ARNOULD ended his presentation with a vibrant plea for giving major importance to philosophical, theological, epistemological, and ethical reflection, leading to a more widely held 'common sense' approach.

"Which Non-Technical Education Should we Provide Scientists With and How Can We Organize It?" **Dominique LAMBERT**, Doctor of Physics and Philosophy and Professor at the University of Namur, gave this as the title of his presentation. Firstly he identified the principal reasons that justified the introduction of social courses within the academic curricula of sciences, which are called "exact":

- The determinant character of sciences' ethical impact on contemporary society: embryo manipulation, nanotechnology and the environment.
- The scientist is not only a high-level technician in his expertise field, but also an important social actor.
- The scientist must be able to transgress his/her knowledge limits, to involve himself/herself in interdisciplinary matters, which require the ability to take into consideration elements from other disciplines and not just his/her own.

- The scientist is confronted by multiculturalism, and thus with cultural, social, philosophical and religious values that inevitably interfere with this practice and/or his/her teaching.
- Students of 'exact' sciences must be able to understand the central role of major philosophical and religious assumptions in the branches of Genesis and scientific teaching.

In light of these above statements, Dominique LAMBERT proposed to establish an Education in Human Sciences, designed for scientists in the four following major areas:

- A historical and epistemological education, also incorporating elements related to the history of scientific discipline.
- An education in 'sciences-technologies-societies', identifying the social issues of sciences and technologies.
- An ethic education incorporating, on one hand, elements of fundamental ethics and anthropology, and, on the other hand, elements of applied ethics, such as sustainable development, north-south relations, etc.
- An education in religious sciences: history of religions and secularism, outline of the Church social doctrine, issues of "sciences and faith", etc.

Having identified the reasons for providing a "non-technical" education for students of "exact" sciences and having sketched out the main axes of what could be such an education, the speaker wondered what could be the most concrete way of providing such education. According to him, three models were theoretically possible:

- Education is integrated directly by teachers in their scientific courses.
- Education is provided by a Specialized Institute (philosophy etc.), that is exterior to departments and/or concerned faculties (sciences, medicine etc.).

- Education is provided by a particular structure, integrated into departments and/or concerned faculties, that is composed mainly of teachers possessing double majors, (sciences and philosophy, sciences and theology).

On the basis of the experiment conducted several decades ago by the Department of “Sciences, Philosophy, Societies” within the Faculty of Sciences and Medicine in Namur, Dominique LAMBERT clearly favored the third model that ensured an education accompanied by technical and scientific realities that were also proposed to students. On the other hand, this ‘integrated structure’ promoted the collaboration of all teacher-researchers, in terms of their teaching activities and research. In conclusion, the speaker pleaded for integrated and progressive courses, starting from the first year of college education that offered, at each level of technical and scientific education, a series of introductory lessons to critical knowledge and to the history of discipline and ethics.

After the first two lectures, given by teacher-researchers working in the field of academic education and research, it was time to listen to the testimony of two important employers from the private and public sector: What were their expectations regarding the education provided in our universities to their future employees?

Jean STEPHENNE, an agricultural engineer, is a CEO of a major multinational pharmaceutical company, employing more than five thousand employees. The following question was the source of his reflections: ‘Developing Vaccines for the World: Exact Sciences or Human Sciences?’ While acknowledging the excellence of the education provided by Belgian universities, the speaker stressed the need to educate men and women who, in addition to acquiring ‘classic’ managerial skills, would have also developed human skills in terms of governance, social responsibility for enterprises, management of human resources and entrepreneurship.

Jean STEPHENNE proceeded to expound upon four managerial skills that should, in his view, be the subject of teaching in college:

- Innovative thinking: researching information, finding solutions, flexible thinking in order to generate ideas, analysis of different options and encouraging innovation.
- Leadership: ability to influence, build trust, communicate, generate passion and motivate others.
- The quest for excellence: the ability to drive change, promote continuous improvement by management of projects, and evaluation of investment profits.
- Motivation and development of employees: building relationships, promoting teamwork, developing as better human beings, sharing knowledge and building trust.

He concluded his lecture by correcting the title of his presentation, 'Developing Vaccines for the World: Exact Sciences and Human Sciences'. He encouraged the Higher Education officials in Europe to reinforce, within their academic program, the part related to human sciences, common sense and the social responsibility of future university graduates.

Jean-Jacques VISEUR is a lawyer, who is involved in local and national politics. He is also the former Minister of Finance, Mayor of Charleroi City and President of the Board of Directors at Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL). In the light of his political commitments, the speaker stressed how our societies have moved from 'democracy' to 'emocracy'. He stated that in fact, decisions were often based upon the emotional impact of certain facts, and upon one public stance or another. He pointed out that politics were becoming more and more trapped in a timescale of immediacy, whereas education required time for reflection and consolidation. He also emphasized the significant decline of ideologies and doctrines nowadays in the West.

He identified three 'failures' of politics in Western Europe at the dawn of the 21st Century. These failures still constituted a challenge for university officials:

- Techniques often take precedence over human sciences in political reflections.

- Politics often tend to be a monodisciplinary science, becoming, therefore, more specialized at the expense of trade, knowledge confrontation and interdisciplinarity.
- ‘Common sense’ issues are often tackled in the private sphere; in politics, the intervention of these issues is often seen as dogmatism.

At the end of his lecture, Jean-Jacques VISEUR launched a clarion call for our universities to continue educating men and women concerned with interdisciplinarity, and stated that they should be able to give meaning to their action.

Working in small groups allowed the participants to exchange experience, results and discuss any difficulties they had encountered. All the participants shared the same conviction, which is that the education provided within our Catholic European Universities must encompass both interdisciplinarity issues and ‘common sense’ approaches.

Pontifical Urbaniana University – Rome
May 8-10, 2008

The human environment in our universities: What kind of formative human relations we propose through teaching, research, governance and university life?

Laurence VIESLET, *FUCE Secretary*
University of Namur (FUNDP)

From 8 to 10 May, 2008, the FUCE General Assembly was held in the Pontifical Urbaniana University of Rome.

This meeting provided an ideal opportunity to submit the full membership of five Lebanese Catholic universities to the Assembly's vote. However, the dramatic situation in Lebanon leading to the restriction of access to its airport prevented the representatives from taking part in the meeting. It is in these particular circumstances, within an atmosphere of thoughts and prayers for the Lebanese colleagues, that their membership in the Federation was unanimously approved. The good news was immediately transmitted to them by phone.

The first intervention of the day focused on teaching was held by Prof. **Stephane BAZAN** from Saint Joseph University of Beirut¹. Far from the classical pattern reflecting teaching as a rigid process where roles are fixed and limited to a teacher/learner relationship inherited from traditional education models,

1. Due to the circumstances mentioned above, Prof. Bazan could not reach Rome and her speech was read in the course of the meeting.

Prof. BAZAN examined teaching as a multidimensional learning process. The role of a University is to provide a framework for teacher/learner relationships while creating a climate of trust and respect, usually implemented by regulatory or organizational elements. The capacity of an institution to offer its actors new tools, new processes, in response to changes that might arise, is conducive to fruitful relationships, which are at the heart of learning.

Prof. BAZAN's statement explained some of the recent changes within Saint Joseph University that potentially put at risk the balance existing between teacher/student relationships: transition to ECTS, ICST developments, production of Digital Natives, Lebanon's particular context (openness to others, desire to emigrate, etc.). In response to these various changes, the University reaffirmed its readiness to support new teacher/student relations, manifested by the increased accountability of actors which enabled restoring respect and trust. Subsequently, special efforts have been made to permit and enhance educational innovation.

After reviewing some concrete examples implemented at USJ, S. Bazan concluded that changes imposed by the globalization of information, communication and training facilities have direct impact on the practice of academic teaching. This requires the evolution of all universities in order to keep intact the relational web existing between its different components. To that effect, new technologies must be considered as a tool to be carefully used rather than a potential danger.

The research part of the day was handled by two teachers from our institutions: Albert Florensa (Barcelona) and Martine Raes (Namur).

A. FLORENSA² focused on introducing an ethical reflection in research activities; he began with the assumption that the adherence of our universities to the European Higher Education

2. Due to compelling last minute family circumstances, A. Florensa was also prevented from attending the meeting.

Area is an occasion that must be seized to add and strengthen the ethical dimension in our teaching programs, and especially in research activities. In order to do this, the speaker suggested four primary tasks:

- To define accurately the level of ethical competence that every student should possess at the end of his/her studies in order to build a career in research.
- To ensure to all researchers an education program in research ethics.
- To create or develop specific forms of teaching in ethics.
- To integrate elements of ethical reflection in number of very diversified forms of teaching, while specifying its degree of responsibility in acquiring ethical competences.

M. RAES expressed how, in a teacher's relationship with students, the teacher can stimulate curiosity, discovery and enthusiasm for research. She explained how research can be progressively integrated into teaching from the very first university years. She stressed to what extent the transmission ratio between teachers and students can pass on messages. In this respect, teachers bear some responsibility for messages they convey, as they must meet the public expectations (according to the discipline, year of study, etc.), integrate the concepts of transversality and demonstrate the open spirit and humility of whoever transmit it. Research demonstrates every day that knowledge is in constant evolution and could not be considered as being permanently fixed. The teacher's role is considered a lever for action and knowledge and it is the teacher who has the responsibility to stimulate more curiosity and learning. It is also crucial to put into perspective the knowledge taught, to make students aware of their current and future responsibilities in their working life.

After a brief overview of the different contexts in which European universities are evolving, **Thérèse LEBRUN** (Lille) examined, specifically, the governance of the Catholic university. Like all universities, Catholic universities face a challenging and increasingly competitive context (whether to

attract new students, academic staff or funding sources) in which combinations and mergers are legion and behind the big risk factor of compromising various components specific to Catholic institutions. In this context, governance in universities is changing quite fundamentally. Depending on local and international situations, the financing mode will be, for example, taken into account: where public money is scarce, research for private funding will require from the institution to search for a delicate balance between values it has made its own and the return on investment expected by those granting additional advantages.

In the second part, Th. LEBRUN focused on the modification of internal relations within the University, regretting in particular the increasingly litigious nature of these relations which goes hand in hand with the general trend observed in our society. Disagreements and arguments are being handled more and more in a legal way. This strongly deteriorates, as Th. LEBRUN stated, “the human and Christian relations of sharing, respect, mutual concern, even in a situation of conflict or risk of opposition, if not total rupture”. She added however that new modes of relations “call for a permanent, transparent, structured and constructive dialogue [...]”. Moreover, she stressed on the vital importance of communication, both internal and external.

The statement goes on to tackle the active role of students in the university’s governance. This student participation calls for an assumption of responsibility that helps them build their character; find their values, bearings and vocation.

In conclusion, Th. Lebrun summarized the specific nature of governance within Catholic universities as follows:

- “• Recognition for all.
- Respect and dialogue in an ambiance of trust and transparency.
- Equal dignity of actors.
- Clarity of each one’s roles and responsibilities.
- Partnership and teamwork.”

Catholic University of Portugal, Lisbon
May 14-16, 2009

The new behavior of our students: Questions and challenges which lie ahead of Catholic universities

Thérèse LEBRUN, *President-Rector*
Catholic University of Lille

The university has always been a crossing point where 'sedentary' teachers give 'nomad' students the necessary knowledge, to enable them to keep to the plans they formulated for their adult lives. Being an open world, despite inevitable protectionist tendencies, "A place for maturing and problem solving" (J. Merhej), the university embodies permanent knowledge alongside the means of disseminating this knowledge. It is also 'in tune' with Society because of this constant flow of young people and the efforts of the instructors to understand them.

However, this relative steadiness has been shaken during recent years. In fact the patterning of universities has changed due to two main factors; the increasing number of young people reaching higher education, thanks to the efforts that are deployed everywhere, which aim to provide young people with further education and the diversification, and the extension of higher education, in order to accommodate the complexity and field specializations of the world.

The widespread phenomenon of international openness has finally achieved this transformation, by developing the intercultural aspects of studies and extra-academic life.

It is not only demographic data which needs to be considered; beyond the numbers, mentalities have also evolved. Today's students are the children of a world marked by ruptures in terms of knowledge, as well as considerable socio-economic mutations. Within their families they painfully bear this crisis. This, in turn, affects their psychology, their opinion of the university and of the academic manner of disseminating education.

These findings are not foreign to Catholic universities; they are even closely connected to them. In fact, Catholic universities intend to consider individuals in their entirety, to reflect a vision of world conception guided by the Christian faith. The most difficult ambition to achieve is to successfully reflect this commitment across campuses. They need to know and understand young people more than anyone else; so that young people will understand them, they must also share their testimony. They must incessantly ask themselves "How can we be convincing?"

What is the truly new behavior among students? This can be grouped into three areas:

- The consequences of longer studies.
- The new attitudes in personal and collective life.
- The emergence of new 'hard' and 'soft' addictions.

This behavior need not be rooted or systemized, since there are so many differences between students attending FUCE's many universities. We are going to name three of them: Lebanese people are very marked by the political situation of their country; Ukrainians are still suffering from the moral repercussions of the communist regime; and the English, although they live in a stable country, are always at the forefront of societal changes.

The consequences of longer studies

One of the working groups referred to the “juvenilization” of society; thereby reflecting upon the aging population, which delays the arrival of young people into the “active” world, and highlighting what values young people place upon physical appearance. Catholic universities are experiencing this new influx of young people because of the increasing number of young students that value certain attractiveness, and also an increasing demand to share with other university systems. This increase expands the sociological panel. Universities always welcome their traditional “clientele”, but also extend their welcome to the external environment that is missing from these universities. Among the new registered students, we find an increasing number of foreign students, who are from different cultures and have different religious beliefs. We should welcome them, taking into consideration their inevitable difficulties in adapting to a different environment.

It would require a real effort in order to revive our Christian message to young people who are initially seeking academic excellence not only global education; however, global education seems paramount to them during registration.

It is worth noting that media agents, whose brand names court young people, consider them to be a very profitable market. In fact, young people remain students for a longer period of time, due to an increase in the length of studies globally. We therefore notice post-adolescent students consider that the professional world is too far to reach and embodies more constraints than self-development.

Adult life, that seems totally different than expected because of a state of carelessness on the part of the university, is seen as a very difficult challenge, and the weight of changes which need to be undertaken may appear to be extreme. Students become aware of their future responsibilities, in terms of economic and ecologic governance, and experience a confusing feeling of impatience confronting them on the one hand, and a feeling of impotence on the other hand. It is, therefore, our duty to teach them to

assume their responsibilities; starting by getting them familiar with our information structures and decision-making processes, so they realize that they need to fully participate in society; in a world that existed before them and that will continue to exist after them. It is also our responsibility to pave the way for them to integrate in the business world, by adopting a voluntary policy of internships.

The new attitudes in personal and collective life

Students are a product of “consumerism”. This is reflected in the fact that they can act as demanding consumers, asserting their rights more easily than before, with regard to academic fees. In parallel, a delightful proportion of those commit themselves to unselfish actions, or gestures of solidarity, should not mask the one that rejects any form of engagement under a deep skepticism vis-à-vis collective activity. Two types of students live harmoniously together, as young people of today primarily respect the willingness of each person to develop his/her capacities: The one that is concerned with his/her needs to satisfy his/her desires, and the one that integrates the concerns of the other into his/her life plan. Conflicts between these types of students, related to governing through associations or representative bodies are very rare, so each one of them has the freedom to do as they please, since they do not infringe the rights of the other. This is ultimately a sort of ‘devil take the hindmost’ principle.

Students are also extremely sensible to group memberships. This identity phenomenon, which has always existed, is accompanied nowadays by one particular aspect, which is the possibility of belonging to a virtual world of digital networks. This world might create an unhealthy distance between everyday life and a life governed by the digital networks we seek, and which paradoxically becomes the ‘real life’ for some of us.

Finally, it is clear that the number of students that are religiously committed does not increase in proportion to the number of students who join Catholic universities. Being Catholic is not a source of ostracism but the pastoral dynamism might be affected.

In this case, a dual requirement is necessary for us, so as not to hide our religious principles, to please the newcomers, and simultaneously to adapt our behavior to catch their attention and their adherence. In this area, the general atmosphere of a Catholic university is essential, because it constitutes the starting point of the adherence phenomenon.

The emergence of new ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ addictions

Alcohol and drugs remain a constant danger, a danger which is far from being eradicated. One can even note a resurgence of alcohol consumption during festive celebrations. Many dangers, including loss of control result from excessive consumption that is worsened by mixing these harmful stimulants. Therefore, it is necessary to prevent this through education and dissuasive measures, rather than firm reaction against these excesses.

In the same context, it becomes more difficult to enforce the common good. A cigarette butt thrown on the ground, denoting a lack of care to preserve the cleanliness and integrity of places, it is sad to admit that the classic rules of etiquette are sometimes undermined: one possible solution would be to move from a very paternal attitude to more regulatory behavior.

A more pernicious addiction is caused by digital networks, play areas or social networks that can have a negative influence upon students. They end up living in a parallel world, where adults are excluded and where they cannot distinguish between right and wrong. This dependence may not be perceived through the grades of the students, but may affect the way the students would fail to assume all the pertaining responsibilities when they enter the professional world.

Other than the power of money, digital influence can be considered as a second power. Thus, education must be developed without solely relying on using new communication techniques. While “digital universities” are being established, an overriding obligation to measure the full extent of this transformation is emerging. This should be taken into account without fear or

naivety and we should be at the forefront of providing the student with an education that introduces him/her to the professional world.

There are many questions and challenges ahead of us, reflecting an evolving world, a world which is difficult to master. These challenges are probably linked to the family crises that characterize our society, and are reason enough for Catholic universities not to neglect their specific role; to rely on religious foundations, presenting them with a suitable language free from 'youth-isms' or rigidity. A great ambition would be to ensure that students remain open to both the world and transcendence, and to enable them to go beyond the stage of needs and desires, so they can discern for themselves the trust God has entrusted to us.

How do Catholic universities promote the humanization of society in their missions of teaching, research and service?

Thérèse LEBRUN, *President-Rector*
Catholic University of Lille

In addition to the three traditional missions of a university (education, research and service to Society), a Catholic university must also be at the service of the Church.

- On an *educational* level, Catholic universities must primarily promote the training of graduates, who will be a humanizing force in society, rather than the accomplices of systems that support inequalities.
- On a *research* level, Catholic universities should conduct an intellectual search inspired by the Gospel, especially when it invites us to restore dignity to those who are excluded.
- On the level of *servicing society and Church*, the mission is extremely delicate. Firstly, this is due to the fact that, in some respects, society barely welcomes the position of the Church, and its followers. In addition, research is sometimes ignored by the Church, since it might go against the Magisterium. If thinking is a risk, the tension between doctrine and research is stimulated and can turn into a real challenge.

A Catholic university must implement these four missions, while keeping the promotion of all human beings, in their entirety, at the heart of its thinking and action. A Catholic university is at the service of all humankind. In the same context, no principle of exclusion is acceptable, even if this latter principle is not always easy to put into practice. It is our duty to be creative, in order to welcome all people, such as:

- Students with limited incomes (by finding alternative financing modes).
- Non-Catholic and non-Christian students (with respect to the beliefs of everyone and with an ethos of reciprocal openness).
- Older people (there is no reason which justifies the fact that education should end when someone stops his/her professional activities).

Beyond the simple theoretical refusal of exclusion, Catholic universities should become protagonists, promoting preferential options for poor people. This must be reflected in the manner in which people are received, the promotion of social justice, the ongoing development of social professionalism, and in the constant emphasis upon cooperation and the best transfer of skills.

But a Catholic university is also in the service of *the human being in its entirety*. What distinguishes men and women from other living creatures is their reflexive capacity; only men and women question themselves about the meaning of their actions. It is therefore appropriate that Catholic universities educate students to question in general, and especially about ethical and theological questioning. Moreover, it is about considering the spiritual dimension of every human being; this dimension that far exceeds the ‘belonging’ to a certain faith or religion. Certain procedures are needed in order to achieve these goals:

- Integrate, within the programs, humanitarian cross-disciplinary trainings that will complement education

disciplines. Include these trainings into curricula and academic transcripts.

- Integrate ethics and a ‘common sense approach’ within each course. This will require teachers who are capable of doing so, or who accept the intervention of experts in their courses to ensure the aforesaid integration.
- Implement actions to promote the social responsibility of universities, for instance, measures concerning the environment, travel, consumption of fluids, energy costs, etc.

All these perspectives do not impose themselves naturally and the political will of all actors of a Catholic university is required. Without falling into the trap of proselytism, we must help promote the development of each person and be at the service of all. If all aspire to a more humane world, it is our duty to promote and develop sustainable aspirations for peace and happiness of all the students entrusted to us.

The challenge is considerable and our means are limited; we must not allow ourselves to be discouraged or to become isolated. There are people in each university who share with us the same vision of humankind and it is our duty as Catholic academics to collaborate with them.

In conclusion, let us go back to our initial question: How do Catholic universities promote the humanization of Society in their missions of teaching, research and service? Furthermore, let us see how our Christian tradition can respond to it more specifically.

First, let us recall that the human spiritual dimension cannot be reduced to any religious affiliation. Therefore, it is necessary that Catholic universities instill the spiritual dimension within various areas; intellectual, aesthetic, ethical and religious. Cultivating this spiritual dimension leads to the harmonization of the individual “I” (while searching for a kind of “symphony” between people) and to experience the conviviality of differences, be they internal or external, in a strong, open, responsible and consolidated way.

Moreover, it is important for our tradition to refer to the mystical dimension of every human being, for we all know that in every life, there are elements that are within the unknowable.

In addition to the spiritual dimension of education, we must also emphasize the practice of contemplation, meditation, participation in the liturgy or common prayers (even between believers in different faiths) and/or participation in humanitarian and volunteering activities. All this is undoubtedly an implementation of the evangelical character of our universities.

Our teaching carries a pedagogical tradition of Christian inspiration that enhances the educational significance of personal and community testimony. We often educate by simply breathing good life into the spirits of others, or by reflecting a life inspired by the Gospel. In doing so, we show the dignity and human relevance of God's plan for humankind.

Our Catholic universities: Welcoming place of dialogue for Islam

Michel SCHEUER, *Vice-Rector*
Saint Joseph University – Beirut

During its General Assembly of 2008 held in Rome, the Federation welcomed as full members, five Lebanese universities that were invited, a few years ago, to attend the plenary meetings of FUCE. These institutions had more successfully bridged the geographical and cultural gap between themselves and European universities (in particular French ones), than with the Catholic universities of Asia, which were mainly located in the Far East, and which constituted India, Japan and the Philippines. Three years later, in May 2011, it was quite normal to witness the General Assembly in Lebanon being simultaneously hosted by the five Catholic universities who had become members of the Federation. During these three days, the participants had the opportunity to meet successively in each of the five universities; Saint Joseph's University in Beirut (Université Saint-Joseph), the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, Notre-Dame University in Louaize, the Antonine University in Baabda and the University of La Sagesse in Beirut. All these universities took great care to prove that the art of ancient oriental hospitality and superb Lebanese cuisine still strongly existed!

The first evening was devoted to a reception for the fifty members, including numerous Muslim and Christian guests, who represented different communities within the country. In his opening speech, Professor **Michel SCHEUER**, President of the Federation, recalled the history of the Federation within IFCU, its projects, achievements, and its annual meetings. Then, he identified some important features of the world in which our existing and future students and graduates would be working and serving. These features included globalization, threats against our public systems of social and fiscal solidarity, 'north-south' injustice, digital division between the 'have-nots' and the 'haves' and either the absence or the multiplication of benchmarks.

Professor SCHEUER ventured to give a definition of the training that our universities should target; "To train competent men and women within their discipline, capable of critical thinking, open to the 'common sense' approach, having experienced research, being concerned with universal matters and therefore open to international dimensions, and also being capable of assuming positions of leadership within society." Having emphasized that these values, present in our Catholic universities, were inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he concluded his speech with a statement fraught with conviction, "Since the word 'Catholic' itself means 'universal', our universities are open to all; women and men, teachers, researchers, staff and students, who can share our values... in full respect of their own philosophical or religious beliefs."

The theme of this meeting fitted into the scheme of the Lebanese interreligious context; therefore, all members were convinced of its importance to each of our Northern or Eastern Mediterranean universities. Indeed, hosting Muslim students and researchers is now a reality in many of our European Catholic universities, wherein students of the second or even third generation of Turkish or North African immigrants are enrolled. And what about the teaching and research missions that, fortunately, motivated many of our Faculty members to hold dialogues with Muslim colleagues, in order to further explore historical, literary and theological Islam?



The Federation Council invited two speakers, one Lebanese and one European, who shared their vision of the role of a university ‘As a place of welcome and dialogue with Islam’ and stimulated reflection within the participants. Each of these two presentations was followed by three brief interventions, with contrasting points of view. In order to better foster debate, the Assembly was held in plenary session and not in subgroups.

Professor **Hisham NASHABE**, of the Institute of Islamo-Christian Studies at Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ) and co-founder of the Institute, had the honor of inaugurating the first session of the workshop with his presentation: “The University, Place of Dialogue: An Exhortation to Dialogue at the University”. Firstly, Dr. Nashabe insisted that all currents of thoughts must be able to come together at the University, in a quest for dialogue and truth; which implies that no one person held the whole Truth. The University is pre-eminently a place of democracy and therefore of dialogue. The failure of dialogue can lead to violence. The speaker listed a number of conditions that, in his opinion, constituted a preamble to dialogue; he focused particularly on honesty, ‘sine qua non’ condition of any religious dialogue, and on the fact that dialogue does not seek to compel the ‘other’ but seeks to understand him/her. According to Professor Nashabe, university cannot only be a place of reflection; therefore the ultimate goal of dialogue, particularly the religious one, is action. This is because the university is becoming increasingly linked to city life and is a stakeholder in the society it lives within.

In the second part of his presentation, H. NASHABE explored the following question ‘What is the position of pluralism and dialogue in Islam?’ He mentioned several Qur’an verses dealing with dialogue, especially dialogue with ‘People of the Book.’ He explained that when the Qur’an said “Islam leads to the best path towards God”, this means that there are paths other than that of Islam, which lead to God. In his view, Muslims were encouraged to accept pluralism “not as a fact to which they must accommodate, but as a grace”. He ended his presentation with these words: “In the microcosm of Lebanese Universities, pluralism becomes, for

a Muslim, a Supreme Divine Grace. How boring the university would be without diversity? What a fruitless intellectual activity would diversity become without dialogue!”

In response to the presentation of Professor Nashabe, Professor **Christian CANNUYER**, of the Catholic University of Lille, emphasized the responsibility of universities, especially Catholic ones, aiming to establish areas of Islamic theology, which would provide extensive teaching and would constitute, within universities, places for building a Muslim-Christian dialogue in the specific area of theology. He concluded his brief speech with an impassioned plea for a better exploration of religious diversity, in order to “...put forward a theology and anthropology able to legitimize this diversity itself, without attempting either the autonomy or the authenticating integrity of its own tradition”.

Professor **Francesco-Xavier MARIN**, of the Ramon Llull University in Barcelona, developed the concept of dialogue as ‘The University Engine’ and advocated a strengthening and an openness of dialogue within our universities. For him, it was impossible to talk about the university without referring to dialogue as an essential force, “...as a resource that allows the union between identity and otherness.”

Mr. **Abdallah FARHAT**, Lebanese politician and jurist, reacted by classifying the role of Catholic universities under the current events of the ‘Arab Spring’ of the Sunni-Shiite conflict and the positioning of Eastern Christians within this volatile environment. He concluded, “Our Catholic universities are now called to change the dramatic flow of current events; the Nation’s salvation will be realized via the university.”

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Professor **Brigitte MARECHAL** of the Catholic University of Louvain in Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL) and director of CISMOC (Centre Interdisciplinaire d’Études de l’Islam dans le Monde Contemporain) launched the second session of the workshop with a presentation entitled ‘The University: Welcoming Place for Islam.’ She began her speech with a brief description of the current situation of Islam in Europe; unexpected consequences

resulting from Turkish and North African immigration, which many European countries had called for because of the lack of manpower in the 60s; population growth, more than fifteen million persons mainly concentrated in the major cities (noting that their proportion might exceed 10 %), gradual integration of the religious dimension in different European systems; status change from the religion of 'immigrant' to that of a religion among others, integrated within the European reality etc.

Having presented an overall picture of this matter, the speaker invited those present to reflect on the presence of Islam within European universities. This presence manifested itself in two ways; on one hand, in the practical daily hosting of Muslim students and researchers within our universities and, on the other hand, the development of teaching and research programs devoted to Islam. "There isn't a documented study on the hosting of Muslim students and researchers within European universities; it also seems that the presence of Muslim students in European universities does not provoke particularly difficult problems; with the exception of certain requirements such as places of worship on campus. This could be explained by the modest proportion of these students, the relative secularization of Muslims in Europe and/or a real 'openness' shown by universities towards this specific population.

As for Islamic studies, Professor MARECHAL drew the audience's attention to the fact that teaching and research curricula are often developed within Departments of Orientalism, History or Anthropology. This somehow explained the quasi-universal absence of Religious Science programs or Islamic Theology, even if some recent initiatives were undertaken in the UK, the Netherlands and Germany.

According to the speaker, European universities had a very important role to assume nowadays, in order to reach a social cohesion among our pluralistic societies. Teaching and research could focus on three specific challenges related to Islam and the Muslim presence in Europe:

- The absence of an intellectual leadership within Muslim communities.
- Issues related to pluralism, secularism and democracy.
- Difficulties imposed by conviviality and needs to create forums for debate.

Professor MARECHAL concluded her presentation by urging European universities to develop teaching curricula and create centers for research, which, by opening new ways to serve the contemporary society of the old continent, would be devoted to study these three challenges.

In response to her presentation, Sheikh **Mohammed ZARAKET** wondered about the intrinsic character of the relationship crisis between Islam and the West, from the assumption that “It is difficult for the West to be Muslim and for Islam to be Western.” He mentioned some historical, religious, cultural and scientific elements of this difficult conviviality between Islam and the West, concluding by emphasizing the extremely positive and modest experience of the ‘Institut d’Études Islamo-Chrétiennes’ at Saint-Joseph’s University, wherein courses are taught simultaneously by Christian and Muslim believers.

Professor **Samir ARBACHE** (Catholic University of Lille) mentioned a paragraph contained within the previous presentation of Professor Marechal, which tackled “...the lack of academic ‘religious’ disciplines in service of Muslim Europe... the formation of a religious university elite is lagging.” Professor Arbache encouraged participants to consider “...the creation of a Faculty of Muslim Theology according to the academic criteria applied in Europe.”

Mrs. **Hoda NEHME** (Holy Spirit University of Kaslik) wondered about the difficulties of “Europeans-Muslims living together.” In her view, it was often the lack of interest of a European University that did not stimulate it to play a greater role “...for research, Islamic studies and practices.” She concluded her speech by calling upon Catholic universities to involve themselves in a greater commitment to Islamic research and university teaching.



During the third and final session of the workshop, Professor **Aziz HALLAK** (Institute of Islamo-Christian Studies at USJ), made a remarkable summary of the presentations and discussions that had been held. Having been invited to share the experience witnessed in his Institute, he stressed that the originality of such an Institute lay in the fact that the courses were given by both Muslim and Christian teachers. While acknowledging the difficulties, particularly in terms of methodology, he concentrated purely on the contribution of the university in this type of experience; an experience characterized by multiple attempts to build an Islamic-Christian dialogue. He said that the dialogue was actually going through a difficult phase. However, it constituted a vital necessity and this duty or vocation, remained ahead for Eastern Christians.

Aziz HALLAK highlighted the positive support a Catholic university could offer in Europe, by ensuring a secure area of freedom, to help foster the dimension of critical thinking within Islam. From the 9th to the 11th century, rationality was a priority in Islam; however, revelation was today the supreme authority. A rediscovery of the critical thinking within Islamic studies was a 'must' for the future of Islam and its reconciliation with modernity. Why couldn't European Catholic universities provide Muslim researchers with this space of freedom? It was essential for Muslim intellectuals to engage themselves in this critical work; therefore we must offer them the required area of freedom, in order for them to realize such a purpose.

The discussion that followed reflected a real confluence of the speakers' statements. In conclusion, the Assembly assigned the Council the duty of pursuing this discussion and exploring the feasibility of establishing a university in Europe that could serve as the aforementioned area of freedom and which could be offered to Muslim researchers. This feasibility study should privilege the synergies between universities, members of the Federation, as well as collaborations with other European universities.



Our Catholic universities and the Church

Michel SCHEUER, *Vice-Rector*
Saint Joseph University – Beirut

The **first session** covered the problematic issue of: “**Governance of our Catholic universities and its relationship with the Church**”.

Inspired by prevailing currents in English Schools of Business and North American practices, while taking into consideration an increasingly fierce competition context between universities, **G. YAHCHOUCHI** (USEK) called for greater effectiveness in management within our universities along with greater innovation.

On the basis of a concrete experience in a given country (France) and in a specific university (Lille), **Th. LEBRUN** (Lille) examined obstacles in three areas: the ecclesial scene, the academic community and society. Th. Lebrun tackled successively many issues inherent to the university’s ties with the Church: role (and financing) of theology, role of the great chancellor, the “mission” letter sent by bishops, place of the university pastoral, setting priorities in terms of research, bioethical issues, etc.

The ensuing **debate** raised, in particular, the very different situations from one country to another, the necessity for

developing an anthropological, philosophical and theological vision of the human person, the development of the accreditation concept (not to be confused with quality or habilitation), certain integration difficulties with the concept in the human and Christian perspective, the necessity to have a better understanding of “public opinion” about our universities, the necessity for better integration of bishops within the university, the primordial importance of the rector’s role and/or his rectoral team, difficulties encountered by a participant concerning research and publication life in Roman Pontifical Universities...

M. **Braga da CRUZ** (Lisbon) recalled the comparative study conducted a few years ago by FUCE on the financing of our Catholic universities in Europe. He considered that this study rendered great services to many member universities and he hoped that comparative studies of the same type will be carried out on other themes and, in particular, on the relationship between our universities and the Church, both in its hierarchical dimension and “people of God” dimension.

The **second session** addressed more specifically “**Our Catholic universities as sources of expertise for the Church**”.

Prof. A. **SANCHEZ CABACO** (Salamanca) questioned how the matter is dealt with in a university which expertise is relatively rarely called upon by the Church. Relying notably on the *Ex corde Ecclesiae* and many John-Paul’s interventions, the speaker evoked successively the targeted objective in this specific Church service, the fundamental Catholic identity of the university, paths to follow in order to provide this service and future perspectives. Cabaco then developed a number of leads intended to introduce the potential contribution of Catholic universities to the Church.

After a brief historical reminder concerning the creation and development of the “Gregorian”, **F-X DUMORTIER** (PUG) evoked the important experience of his university as source of expertise for the Church; he specified that contributions are nearly always solicited individually and very often in discretion. Therefore, it is depending on his competences and publications

that a teacher is approached for example by a roman congregation. Relying on this experience of Church service, he encouraged Catholic universities not to wait for the Church's invitations but to stimulate it: the duty of initiating and presenting proposals aiming to "feel with the Church" and prompting a dialogue with its leaders in mutual trust arises here. He concludes by putting forward another challenge, that of Europe as a spiritual and cultural concept; if the Catholic universities do not understand this issue, who will?

The **debate** demonstrated the necessity to pass from suspicion to trust, to acquire an openness of dialogue, to see Catholic universities as part of a "Church", to realize that the quality of tomorrow's evangelization depends in part of academic action today... The role of Catholic universities in service of the Church in Europe, if not in service of Europe, was highlighted by certain participants. Many speakers also tackled the assistance given to new teachers-researchers in order to introduce them to the specific project of Catholic universities and, beyond that, how to make them discover or rediscover the Church, the Gospel... Such exchanges brought into focus the link that unites Catholic universities and the important differences between the institutions: pontifical, Catholic, Christian inspired, linked to bishops or to a religious order, with or without a faculty of theology, with or without public financing.

The **third session** was dedicated to the theme "**Ecclesial bond and secularization: How to live these dimensions within our Catholic universities?**"

Backed by studies conducted by English philosophers and sociologists, **M. HULAS** (Lublin) regarded secularization as a result of globalization leading to an erosion of the European public sphere. He distinguished secularization from secularism, the latter concept evoking a regime, a "religion" where the "secular" replaces deity. He concluded by questioning himself in the light of the writings of the German philosopher and sociologist Jürgen HABERMAS on what religion can offer the contemporary public sphere, and by stating that public sphere needs religion more than ever in order to develop in a harmonious way.

Fr. IMODA (AVEPRO) invited the Assembly to question the role of the Catholic university as an expression, a revelation of the Church in the middle of a secularized world. Inspired in particular by the *Lumen Gentium*, he outlined all possible ecclesiologies within Catholic universities: the “Church” being a servant, a “communion”, an “institution” but also a “prophet and herald”. He concluded by demonstrating how challenges facing the Church are present within Catholic universities; according to him, secularization becomes, thanks to an enlightened education, an opportunity for a more authentic catholicity within our universities.

The **debate** raised and explored many issues tackled in the statements, such as: the role of theology in a Catholic university, secularization as an opportunity, proposals made to students concerning spirituality or social commitment, the university as a privileged forum to search for the truth.

At the end of this debate, F-X DUMORTIER summarized the challenges that, according to him, should be raised by Catholic universities in the coming years:

- The University was instrumentalized by the economic society; it must search for the cause of its existence from within.
- The University has been and still is a privileged place for truth seeking; this applies to all forms of knowledge including theology.
- The University should continuously question itself about its mission;
- The University cannot neglect the religious dimension of the humankind; the Catholic university must dare to propose this cause.

This conclusion was the subject of a very broad consensus among the participants who were rejoiced of having been able to tackle, in the framework of the FUCE General Assembly, this subject which underlies their everyday academic life: “Our Catholic universities and the Church”.