

The Centenary of the Federation of Catholic Universities: A Conference for Dialogue and Future Scientific Perspectives

On the occasion of the centenary of the federation of Catholic universities and following the indications of Pope Francis to the sector, the university founded by Father Agostino Gemelli has promoted a conference to strengthen dialogue between all realities and to develop future scientific perspectives. From history to the future: starting from the legacies and paths of the last century, with an eye towards new perspectives, a conference titled 'History, Legacy and Perspectives: the Role of a Network of Catholic Universities in Research Development' took place at the Jesuit headquarters in Rome. During the proceedings, one question emerged above all: 'How to reformulate the idea of the founders looking at the next hundred years of the Federation? And what role can a network of Catholic universities play in the development of research, given the centrality and importance of the international perspective?'

Francis recently reminded that the humanism carried by these centres of knowledge 'explicitly fits into the framework of Christian values, and is the identity of Catholic universities - commented the Rector of the Catholic University Franco Anelli - This initial idea is specified by urging universities to pursue educational actions aware of the ends they aim for, university teaching as a tool for full and complete training of the person; to be courageously open to the world; to be promoters of dialogue and confrontation in a context that sees new barriers and conflicts arise every day'.

High-profile names participated in the conference: Yoshiaki Terumichi (President, Sophia University), Aaron Dominguez (Provost, Catholic University of America), Lilian Ferrer (Vice President for International Affairs, UC Chile), Jan Wouters (Full Professor of International Law, KU Leuven) and Peter Hanenberg (Vice-Rector for Research, Universidade Católica Portuguesa).

'The categories with which to interpret the nature and destiny of Catholic universities are two: autonomy and inclusion - emphasized Anelli - Autonomy concerns the government of different regions of human knowledge; the specialization of knowledge is an indispensable trait of the vertiginous increase of human knowledge. We are sometimes terrified by the myriad of disciplines and sub-disciplines and scared (rightly) by the risk of fragmentation and incommunicability. However, the varied panorama of knowledge is included in a wider horizon of meaning. Studying, teaching, and working in a Catholic university means being within a larger project, which gives meaning to our roles. Alone and isolated we can do little; perhaps survive, in a continuous rearguard struggle against potential competitors who have access to astronomical capital and excellent IT infrastructures'.

For more information regarding this conference, please read the attachment sent with the Newsletter.