

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ROOTS OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

Pedro BARRAJÓN¹

1. L.C., Prof. PhD, Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum, Italy
Corresponding author: pbarrajon@legionaries.org

Abstract

The following paper focuses on new ways of analyzing the economic crisis which unfortunately led to social, economic and human discomfort. The starting point of the discussion is presented in "Caritas in Veritate" which presents the line drawn between developed and underdeveloped countries. People are faced with the choice of deciding their own destiny. The anthropological theme therefore plays a significant role in understanding the situation because it represents the only long-lasting solution for beating the crisis. The paper emphasizes the importance of a new humanistic synthesis (made out of different forms of humanism such as liberal, atheistic or Christian) in understanding, dealing with and overcoming the recession. The article concludes by stressing the importance of a fundamental humane and Christian value and that is hope. The current crisis represents a challenge to man and society, but people have to perceive it as a development opportunity. Our society must once again be able to reach the knowledge and techniques of a harmonious synthesis in the middle of which we find the individual who is destined to live in community with himself, with others and with nature.

Keywords: *economic crisis, anthropology, humanism, Christianity, hope.*

The topic of the economic crisis has lost, during time, like many other topics, the power of its significance. That is why, nowadays, there are many attempts to use new languages in order to express this social, economic and human discomfort.

INTRODUCTION

We should start from the description made in "Caritas in Veritate" which speaks about the current situation from a developing perspective. In number 22 we read that "the development picture is polycentric". There are no unitary reasons for underdevelopment. There are numerous factors which complete each other. That is why we are invited to free ourselves from the "ideologies which artificially simplify the

reality". From time to time these simplifications can be useful for pedagogical purposes, but they do not help when we want to fully understand certain situations. One of the fundamental laws of our conscious is that it must be adequate to the subject in order to be true. When the subject is simple, the conscious doesn't have any problems in understanding it. However, when the subject is more complex, like in the case of social and economic realities, our conscious may only be partial and therefore it is difficult to display a full objectivity.

But starting from "Caritas in Veritate" one may claim that nowadays, aside from the occidental economic crisis which we are interested in, "a less obvious, than it was in the past, dividing line between rich and poor countries" is being drawn. However, one may observe that "not only the global wealth is rising in absolute terms, but also the disparity". The major problem of distributing wealth remains one of the major topics of economic ethics. This is because we have learnt how to produce but not how to equally place. This unequal placement is not only obvious between rich and poor countries, but also inside the developed countries where there are poor social classes, which didn't exist before. Here is where one can find extreme misery and the wealth of some people is contrasted with the poverty of others, making the misery even more painful and dehumanizing.

Alongside this incorrect distribution, there are some illegal and corruption phenomenon and the right to work is not respected by the transnational and local organizations. Very often the support offered to them is interrupted by the international organizations because of the irresponsibility and of the frauds committed. Excessive protection forms on behalf of the rich countries are still persisting, by means of too strict usage of the right of intellectual propriety.

These endemic phenomena of inequality between different countries have led in 2008 to a phase of economic uncertainty which provoked disorientation both at a socio-economic level and at the level of understanding the economy in itself. The theory of recurrent economic crisis, which states that the periods of euphoria and stability are followed by periods of uncertainty and shadows, seems to be valid. Therefore this crisis, which will end not as easily as it was initially thought, opposes the initial idea of an unlimited economic growth.

The current crisis is more than a simple recession because it is not only about a temporary increase in productivity in some countries, but as the American economist K. Rogoff claims "one cannot see a rapid solution which will lead to the transfer of wealth from creditors to debtors". This economist states that it is not about a big recession, but that we are facing a more severe ordinary recession, one that can be defeated by means of classical instruments, such as a more efficient fiscal policy or higher loans from the national bank or from international institutions. He speaks about a contraction, such as the one in 1929, when there was a severe financial crisis. This contraction appears when not only the production, but also the debit and the credit are affected. It may appear that the use of words is irrelevant, but that's not the case because if the diagnosis isn't correct than the treatment will also be inefficient. Rogoff offers the example of a person who has pneumonia. The medicine required for healing it is different from the ones used for a simple cold. A conventional recession can be treated in a short period of time. The economic trends change in a few months if the measures are adequate. But if we speak of a contraction, then the measures have to be different and the recovery period will be longer. The author states that 4 years will not be enough for this and that the fiscal measures are not sufficient if they are not accompanied by other measures in order to ensure a lower level of inflation.

Beyond the linguistic problem which is important in understanding reality in its full complexity, the fact that the occidental world didn't expect this recession or contraction of current times raises the question whether or not the occidental

economic system considered the engine of society is adequate, and if the model of society, economy and person underneath is correct or one should start a series of reflections on the new economic model based on a more precise conception about the human being as a whole.

The description made by Caritas in Veritate about the disequilibrium between rich and poor countries should be integrated in the current economic crisis which "forces us to make some choices regarding the destiny of the individual, who cannot disregard his or her nature".

This is the main reason for choosing the anthropological theme, trying to understand better the situation which we are in. In fact, if the economy is not based on clear and well-defined anthropological concepts which respect the human, then it will be very hard to overcome the crisis or, if we do overcome it, it will only be a temporary and not a profound solution.

The complexity and the interconnections between the problems that we have spoken about earlier lead us to reflection, and to a "unitary understanding and the accomplishment of a new humanistic synthesis". In my speech I don't intend to present this new humanistic synthesis, but simply to draw some directions which will lead to reflections regarding this topic.

A NEW HUMANISTIC SYNTHESIS

I would like us to stop for a moment and reflect upon the phrase "the new humanistic synthesis" in order to correctly include the economic world.

One may speak about a synthesis, which from what we know, implies joining together different elements in one common perspective. The Hegelian synthesis is very well-known in the history of philosophy and it denies the hypothesis of the thesis, also claiming its positivity by means of the *Aufhebung* phenomenon, in which elevation reached a superior level. The synthesis also represents a coherent and unitary vision of reality which recovers the most important elements of the detailed analysis in order to offer an internal unitary coherence.

Caritas in Veritate speaks about a new synthesis because the complexity of the present

situation implies a more profound vision on the human mystery in its full complexity and on the capacity of social relationships in order to have a less individual but more integrated judgment of the individual in its entirety.

One may speak about a humanistic synthesis which echoes in the whole humanistic tradition and which first developed during the Italian Renaissance and then in the European one, even though Christian humanism dates back to the preaching time of Jesus and to the time of salvation through passions, death and resurrection as well as from the times of the first Christians who witnessed those events that changed history and profoundly transformed the human personal self, reconstructing it due to the gift of divine grace.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF HUMANISM

I will now try a simple reflection regarding humanism. Let's start by saying that there isn't just one form of humanism, but that during the course of history many forms have been put forward. The humanism from the Italian Renaissance is best-known and it stresses human freedom and dignity, trying to improve the cultural, historical and natural conditions. Often this type of humanism is presented in opposition to the Christian humanism, but this is not true because this humanism represents the natural root which gave birth to the Christian humus.

There is also an atheistic humanism which does not acknowledge the fundamental relationship between human and divinity as a founder of its own dignity, but on the contrary it presents every form of religious experience as a fake, causing bad passions. The most representative historical atheistic humanism is the Marxist one which speaks about human fulfillment by means of struggle between classes and which leads to a perfect communist society with its vague and ethereal descriptions.

There is also a liberal humanism which we will present later and which fights for the recognition of human's civil rights, often based on trust in the human nature which should be a good one if it's not in contact to the society. In the 20th century the existential humanism was borne nourished by the reflections of some

philosophers for whom existence is more important than essence. According to them the humans are built by the blind abandoning in their own freedom which we don't know where it is going to lead because the individual condemned to be free doesn't find a meaning to his existence but rather an existential anxiety which leads him towards death. For another philosopher of existence, Martin Heidegger, the human must accept the truth of existing by going out of the entities and this is how he finds the first meaning of existence, but the human being is not capable of escaping the trap of immanence.

Different non-Christian humanistic historians had a flourishing period, but later they lacked the arguments in support of human life and which could offer a secure guideline for its existence. One may say that today there are many people in search of the "new humanism" and who can offer solid background to social, economic and political life. We will try in this conference to point out some characteristics of this new humanism which has to be able to offer culture an ethical incentive and to remove the confusion generated by today's culture.

LIBERAL HUMANISM

History has demonstrated once and for all that Marxist humanism was a utopia which cost humanity millions and millions of human life. But we may ask ourselves if the alternative of capitalist humanism is more convincing.

It isn't very easy to describe the essential characteristics of liberal or capitalist humanism. We will try to describe the liberal humanism of catholic inspiration represented by the American author Michael Novak. He names his position "democratic capitalism" and describes this type of capitalism using three characteristics: "a form a democratic government, an economy based on markets and opportunities, an ethic-cultural pluralistic system, and in the broader meaning of the term, liberal." Only inside a pluralistic-liberal system one may build a market economy and a form of democratic government. The anthropological and ethical bases of society (values) result in an economic (market) and politic (democratic) organization. Using these arguments the author states that market economy

favors democracy and that democracy leads to a system of market economy, even though there may be some democracies in which there is no fully developed market economy and there are some market economies where there is no democracy. Individual freedom leads to political freedom and to free commerce. In other words, democratic and economic logic require an ethico-cultural base and a certain idea of the individual and its community, such as freedom and sin, the mutability of history, the importance of economies, auto-limitation and reciprocal collaboration represent some ethical and cultural assumptions without which there is neither feasibility nor democracy and free market.

The Church doctrine considers that free market is "an important social organism due to its ability to ensure efficient results in the production of goods and services." Many times exactly the free market is the most efficient tool for resource distribution and efficiently solves the needs, like Pope John Paul II said. These free exchanges set a person's possibility to choose in the middle and its freedom justifies the objectives of justice: "moderating the excesses of some unique profit organizations, responses to consumer demands, the efficient use of economies and resources, awards offered for organizational efforts and innovation capacities, the flow of information so that it is really possible to purchase products in a fair competition".

The question is whether or not the market can offer solutions for a social politics that can satisfy all needs, but especially the needs of poor people. Related to what many people call market idolatry, the social doctrine of the Church emphasizes its limits because the individual needs more than just products. In other words, the market has a significant role in society, but the market has to serve the individual and not the other way around. When the market is perceived as a "God of machines" which automatically solves all social problems without taking into account certain corrections that have to be made by the State for an equal distribution of goods, than the market gains significant value and everything must be sacrificed for it.

Liberal humanism emphasizes one of the most important human assets and that is freedom. The Council Vatican II stresses the value of freedom for every human being when it claims

that freedom "is an imminent sign of the divine image of the individual. God decided to make the human responsible for his own decisions and therefore he will seek the Creator on his own, and by adhering to it alone the individual may reach full perfection." Being free is a gift from God who wished to impose his image and this image is the supreme freedom. But true human freedom doesn't mean to do something that should be done out of whim or passion. We must remember that human freedom was influenced by the original sin and by the personal sin and therefore the grace of Jesus is needed to eliminate the sin from the inside.

THE NEW CHRISTIAN HUMANISM

Liberal humanism has its flaws, but we will criticize it a little bit later. Now I wish to present some characteristics of the new inspirational Christian humanism which can renew economy and can help it overcome the current crisis.

The new creation and the new man

Let's begin by analyzing the adjective "new" which describes the term "humanism" and we should try to understand it starting from its biblical meaning. The idea of novelty is expressed in Greek by two concepts: "neos" which means "new in time", more recent, even "young" (meaning that it is not mature yet) and "kainos" which describes a qualitatively better fact or situation than the previous one. Both terms are present in the Bible. "Neos" refers to the novelty that brings salvation whereas "kainos" describes the novelty of the divine action, being the bearer of a new nature for the human being. In this respect the action of God is always new, because there is nothing old in God, everything is renewed.

The biblical novelty uses the divine holiness as its most important fundament. In this respect the creation is new. Before the original sin, everywhere in the world we could find God's divine holiness. After the sin the sacred character was lost. But this novelty of the world, lost through sin, can be recovered through God's special intervention in history. This is why, the people of Israel expected during exile, a new

Exodus, a new release: "God is preparing for something new" (Is 43, 19). Israel must admit this divine action in history with a "new song" (Is 42, 10; Sal 149, 1).

The new Christian humanism is based on the new creation which has already been announced by Isaiah prophet as a return to the original paradise, where universal peace lasts. This new creation is described as a new sky and as a new earth. Besides the new creation, the Old Testament also promised a new David, a new time, a new holly earth and a New Jerusalem where people will live forever with God's love. Sinai will have a new name and there will be a new alliance because God will give the individual a new heart and a new spirit.

The novelty promised in the Old Testament becomes real in the New Testament where Jesus is preaching the new doctrine, presenting the people of his times from the simplest ones to the well-thought ones. Jesus gives a new commandment for brotherly love and establishes a new alliance with the spirit of the Eucharist.

This is the novelty of context in the New Testament and here is where one should include the Pauline doctrine of the new individual who is at the biblical core of all Christian humanism. This doctrine starts from the fact that Saint Paul considers Christ's renewed humanity the new Adam. Like Christ, any man merged with him through baptism becomes a re-created man in law and in the spirit of truth. The one who is into Christ is already a new creation or a new creature. What is old has already past. The human being becomes whole again through baptism and through the power of truth. Therefore this man is not renewed in the inside because of the action of the spirit. And it is the duty of the Christians to renew themselves with another man and live a new life. It is a renewal made by the Holy Spirit in which the man becomes the image of the one who created him. The New Paulinian Man is inserted in a new creation which groans under the weight of this world and is longing provisional release while the world is moving towards the universal renewal which will come when God's righteousness reigns in heaven and on the new earth. It is then when Jerusalem will shine like a bride ready to receive her husband and God will dwell with the righteous. The new name of each

individual is a sign of the absolute novelty of live in which they will live in the sky which represents the renewed world of creation: "I renew all things." God will renew the world and the human being will renew himself through the act of salvation performed by His Son. This means that the absolute novelty present in the world is Christ reborn: "Christ brings every novelty by bringing himself" and he is fundamental for all novelties. The New Christian Humanism presents Christ as an incredible novelty, as a supreme example of every man's novelty.

In a biblical sense Christian humanism becomes new through Christ's novelty. But the term novelty also represents the significance of a new proposal which, starting from Christian events has been the bearer of Christianity in a more or less precise manner.

Christianity has always been known as a bearer of a humanism which had different names in the course of history. In the 20th century the French philosopher Jacques spoke about an "integral humanism". Pope Paolo VI, without using the term "Christian humanism", introduced the concept in *Popolorum Progressio* Encyclical: "It is a plenary humanism which has to be promoted." What else does this refer to if not to the development of the individual as a whole and of all human beings? An enclosed humanism, insensible to the values of the spirit and of God, may apparently have great chances of prevailing. There is no doubt that the individual can work the land without God, but without him humans will end up working against other humans. Exclusive humanism is an inhuman humanism. Therefore humanism is not real unless it is opened towards perfection. Far from being the ultimate proof of values, the human being cannot become complete unless it transcends, according to Pascal's statement: "man far exceeds man."

Christian humanism takes into account the Christian vision of the individual and it can be characterized through the following: integral, harmonious, relational, transcendent and Christ.

When we say integral, we say that Christian humanism is trying to avoid some reductionisms that can be found in contemporary anthropologies. The first one is probably the biological humanism. We speak about the so called anthropologies with biological roots which reduce the individual

to a simple biological phenomenon. Pope John Paul II spoke about an adequate anthropology, an anthropology that reflects the man as a whole and not only in one single aspect. If humanism is not integral there is the risk of reductionisms, the risk of considering a part representative for the whole and the risk of not taking into account the particularities of the individual. Therefore, from a historical point of view, there were many non-integral humanists. The best well-known was the Marxist individualism. J. Maritain said about it that "it doesn't have the purpose of accomplishing a complete unity of the individual unless the individual gives up his own opinions in favor of the monism of collective life and it demonstrates a profound inhumanity because it obliges the individual to respect its orders."

Humanism has to be harmonious in the sense that it makes the human's different components relate in a balanced and hierarchical way. This balance is both at an internal and external level (between the individual and the society). Finding this balance represents the responsibility of every person and of the society in different historical periods.

Humanism is relational when it cannot be individualist and when it is opened to relationships with others. An important flow of humanism, and especially of the bourgeois liberal humanism, was to consider the subject closed to relations, enclosed in itself. The subject may then become a monster of perfection. It is not capable of escaping from itself. This man "is suppressed by his inside, useful only for himself, rooted in illusion and in the lie of a false conscious" according to J. Maritain.

Transcendent humanism: Christian humanism introduces the individual to the religious dimension, to transcendence. Many contemporary humanists are atheists and want to build without involving God or behind his back. On the contrary, Christian humanism starts from the idea that God is the transcendent creator and that man receives life as a gift and is ontologically dependent on his Creator. It is not about the dependency of a slave, but that of a son, because he expresses his freedom in his inner glory: "the glorious freedom of God's sons." This truth which is situated in the centre of Christian anthropology becomes a contradictory sign in a

secularized society which claims the absolute autonomy of existing and acting and which considers that religious faith is an antagonist of human happiness.

It is about Christian humanism. Christian humanism cannot ignore Christ's model as a perfect model for any humanism. Number 22 of *Gaudium et Spes* is significant in understanding the human: "In reality the real light of the mystery of man lies in the mystery of the verb TO EMBODY."

Adam, the first human being, represented a future human figure of Christ. Christ, who is the new Adam, revealing the mystery of the Father and of his love discovers the man himself and shows him his true vocation.

THE FAILURE OF A CERTAIN ECONOMIC MODEL (M. MAGATTI)

After presenting these fundamental ideas about the Christian humanism, let's try to understand the current crisis taking into account a book written by Amuro Magatti, an Italian sociologist and economist, a university professor at the Sacro Cuore Catholic University in Milano, and entitled "The great contradiction: the failure of freedom and the streets of its redemption." The author claims that the current crisis presents a great contradiction which can only be overcome if humans can successfully release themselves of all human and spiritual richness, a release that can come from real freedom and only if the individuals think that the ultimate reason for the present situation is the spiritual origin.

Magatti identifies two central concepts that lie at the core of the present conception about the economic life: the individual freedom and the technical-scientific production. He starts from anthropological considerations borrowed from great philosophers such as Heidegger who notes that "the greatest threat for humans doesn't come from machines and technical appliances that can have lethal effects. The real threat has already targeted the man." Heidegger wanted to show that technical-scientific thoughts, although necessary, are insufficient because technique needs a rationale justification. He asks questions and gives answers that go beyond the content, reaching vital problems for each individual.

When it comes to the concept of liberty which dominates our society, Magatti considers that it was reduced to the simply subjective will of the power. The concept of freedom which developed in the occidental society doesn't want any outside conditioning or any moral rules that come from outside our own will. The main driver of this freedom is not the good, but the simple opening towards a large number of possibilities and to as many satisfactions as possible. We speak about a shift from need to pleasure and the fundamental principal of reacting is that of making what we want without any external conditioning. This conception about freedom is close to the one present in Emily Dickinson's statement "I dwell in possibility." The human being with his wish of dominating reality and himself in an absolute manner chooses those possibilities which are easier for him, without any reference points. Therefore the man becomes anthropologically and morally self-referent for himself. There aren't any other intrinsic connections, any naturally moral law or divine commandments. He is the one who imposes the law upon himself. According to Magatti this freedom which formally means to be able to extend your own possibilities fails because basically it proposes a quantitative solution: the more possibilities, the greater the freedom. The result is an extended society in its possibilities of choosing, and bewildered in choosing the best one. This freedom becomes absolute and creates a profoundly individualistic society.

The second aspect analyzed by Magatti is the technique that enlarges the free capacity of the individual to express his own strengths. Freedom opens infinite horizons; the technique explains the power of freedom. Humans want to expand the power they feel they have on themselves and on the world and therefore the world is being transformed.

These two thirsty engines (the unlimited freedom of choosing and the power on the world) create the necessity for continual adaptation. In order to be successful men have to display a continuing performance, leaving aside the ones who are not up to the challenge: the unemployed, the diseased, and the old. In order to keep up to the required level certain techniques are employed required by this continual performance

of eliminating the normal effect of the passing of time on the human body. An ideal of maximum satisfaction is being proposed but because the possibility of a personal infinite is eliminated, the multiplication of opportunities is sought. In this way the transcendent experience allows a space for narcissist self-improvement and the search for new and sophisticated sensations. Once the spiritual base is eliminated, the technique reimposes the infinite, but not the transcendental one, but the false one based on power and territory. Therefore the technique created to be on the human's side becomes the monster that ends up destroying it.

Therefore Magatti proposes a new connection to technique, which cannot be perceived as a solution to all problems but it can neither be demonized. Technique is useful but it has to be enclosed into an adequate context. Technique and humanism have to reconcile in order to offer a unitary and integral vision of the human being. Technique appeared due to the individual's power given by God to dominate the world with his intelligence and with his capacity of being a co-creator transforming the world in a useful way, displaying the superiority of the spirit upon matter. But if technique becomes a new divinity whose worship has to sacrifice the man himself, then the technique represents an idol that has to be avoided.

A NEW ECONOMY, MORE HUMANISTIC AND MORE SPIRITUAL

The current economic crisis has precise financial, cultural, social, economic and political reasons, but at its base there are some wrong ideas about the individual, inadequate for expressing what he really is. Probably the rational key of man has been reduced to commercial dimensions and it lacks in free relationships. Caritas in Veritate insists upon this concept which is not new, but it has never before been so strongly emphasized by the social doctrine of the Church. Charity overcomes justice and it completes it through the logic of giving and forgiving. "The city of man" is not built only according to law and needs, but more importantly it is built upon free relationships, understanding

and communion. Charity presents God's love in human relationships and offers theological and economic value for each engagement in the world. The main reason for the crisis is forgetting these values. They aren't the only ones that can support a society. But without them, the others are insufficient. A society in which all relationships are commercial becomes an inhumane society.

It is necessary to integrate the commercial values into other values, and therefore offering a new meaning to economy. Among these values a capital role is played by offering. The gift is one of the interpretative keys of the human being: "Man is made to give and this expresses the transcendental dimension." The anthropological dynamic of the gift has its roots in the fact that God represents the ultimate gift and his presence is spread throughout the life of the individual, and it overcomes the laws of justice. Moreover it overcomes its merit because the rule of giving is the surplus. It is the law of abundance presented in the many miracles of the Gospel. The true gift gives birth to love and it tends to give without measure. The truth itself is a gift but as long as it needs a superior enlightenment and it isn't borne only out of human thoughts, it represents a light that reaches the intellect which opens towards it, as shown by Pope Benedetto XVI.

This means that the construction of a fair society where the law of giving is imposed represents a blessing from God. Charity is the force that forms a community that unites people by using those options where there are no limits or barriers. A community of people can be built by us, but it can never be a fully fraternal community, or one that can be pushed beyond any boundaries, or even to become a truly universal community: the unity of the human race, a fraternal community beyond any dividing can only be borne by invoking the words God and Love.

This means that the society, if it wants to come out of the crisis even stronger, has to rediscover certain fundamental values, among which is the principle of free: "economic, social and political development has to be human, and free as an expression of brotherhood."

The Church's social doctrine expresses this principle, which must be analyzed in a social context, in the principle of solidarity. Pope John

Paul II spoke about the importance of this principle in social encyclicals, especially in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. Wanting to be solidary with the others means turning yourself into a gift and opening in a concrete and operative manner towards the needs of others. This is why the current crisis needs to correctly apply this principle as a free and eminent form.

This important economic contraction represents a wonderful opportunity to see which is the fairest and the most human way of organizing the economic and social life. "Man is in fact an author, the centre and the end of the entire social and economic life." "The centrality of the individual, the person as a means for the Church and the society represents an essential principle for renewing the society and overcoming the crisis."

The essence of the economic crisis and contraction is not just a technical one, nor an esthetic one, it is spiritual. It is very important to rediscover the most profound part of the human's interior, emphasizing not only on the psychological part, but also on the spiritual one. Benedetto VI admitted in *Caritas* that "the development issue is strongly related to the human's conception of the soul, because our Self is sometimes reduced to the psyche and the health of the soul is mistaken for emotional kindness. These contractions start from a profound misunderstanding of the spiritual life and lead to the refusal of the idea that the development of the individual and of the people depend on solutions to spiritual problems."

Restating the spirituality of man is a job for religions which according to Magatii consider themselves anti-environmental places which are not guided by mercantilist, materialist or commercialist principles, places where new values are borne, places of creativity. Benedetto XVI names them "spaces for the creative minorities where people live guided by a different spirit, with a new conception about the existence".

Reconsidering the soul as an essential component of the human being is the job of religions, as we said before, but especially of Christianity which considers that "the man evolves when his spirit grows, when his soul gets to know himself and the truth that God showed him, when he speaks to himself and to his

Creator”, considering at the same time that “the man deprived of God is restless and sick”. Social and psychological alienation and the numerous neurosis which characterize the opulent society lead to spiritual causes.”

Christian humanism expresses the spirituality of the person as an antidote to anthropological reductionism which turns the human into a little more developed animal than the others. The welfare of our society can become overwhelming for the individual if there is an empty place in his soul and if “the soul feels abandoned even in front of the many bodily and psychic therapies, producing grief. There is no plenary development of the common universal good without the spiritual and moral kindness of the people, taken into consideration in the entire soul and body.”

The spirituality of the individual is present in every expression of truth and love. The truth is always inside us but it tends to get outside in order to receive the gift. Every act of love displays something similar. More is being experienced and we feel ourselves up above. Therefore one can reach the spiritual dimension of the individual which is present in the center of every economic organization and of every authentically integral development.

The new Christian humanism doesn't forget, by means of a healthy realism, a very important topic such as that of the original sin. A perfect society cannot be built in our world. However we should try to direct the human progress towards the arrival of the Kingdom of God, without forgetting the existence of evil and sin. Christianity has an element of utopia, however moderate, being conscious of the existence of the original sin which displayed various consequences both to the human nature and to the society. There is the personal sin of every man which, although being reduced to singular, creates pervert systems and mechanisms where the intertwining of bad actions create structures that induce evil. To ignore the fact that humans have a wounded nature, inclined to evil, represents the cause for major educational, political or social errors. Long ago, the economy was added to the list of fields which present strong effects of sin. We have strong proof exactly from this period. The conviction of being self-sufficient and of being able to eliminate the evil present in history

by the individual's own actions has led people to confusion between happiness and relief as imminent forms of material and social welfare. The conviction about the autonomy of the economy which mustn't accept moral influences has pushed the individual to use the economic tool in a destructive way. On the long term, these convictions have led to economic, social and political systems which destroyed the freedom of the individuals and of the social bodies, which exactly for this reason haven't been able to assure the justice that they promised.

CONCLUSION: A VIEW TOWARDS HOPE

In conclusion Christian humanism is offered to the individual. Pope John Paul II, speaking about the poison of the sin that can be found in the human heart and which destroys the social and economic structures, asked himself whether or not we can trust the human and he considers that the answer is yes: we can still have faith in the human being. Despite the fact that the human heart is full of abnormal feelings and wishes and that the human choices may be wrong, there is no reason not to trust the man who has been saved by Christ's sacrifice.

This opens us to hope. In front of the economic contraction and of the crisis which seems never-ending, we must relate to the fundamental humane and Christian values and therefore to hope. The current situation represents a challenge to man and society. Challenges should be viewed as growth opportunities. The current situation demands new eyes and a new heart on behalf of the individual, elements presented by the prophet Ezechiele. But this new perspective can only be opened if the materialistic perspective of the human events and of the individual himself is overcome, a transcendent view which perceives religion not as an enemy of development, but as a great ally.

Speaking about the development of the prehistoric man, a well-known researcher of the religious phenomenon, Julien Ries, claims that “the history of religions reaches a crossroads, a starting point on the long journey of humanity, meaning prehistory. Here he meets a man who

received the name of homo faber and with him he starts the journey towards history. Very soon we find this character painting caves and making inscriptions on rocks. Homo faver becomes sapiens. Analyzing the pictures, the inscriptions, the drawings, the behavior towards the dead, this religion historian notices that this man believes in a reality that goes beyond this world, but which is expressed in this manner. The conclusion is clear. Homo faber and homo

sapiens prove that they are religious human beings.”

Our society must once again be able to reach the knowledge and techniques of a harmonious synthesis in the middle of which we find the vocation and dignity of the individual, destined to live in profound community with others, with nature and with the reality on which another reality is based.