

Rocco BUTTIGLIONE

A RECAPITULATION OF THE SESSION

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends. I think it has been a real experience for us to have participated in this meeting because from its very beginning we have felt that we participate in a real community, and I think that all of us have a duty to acknowledge this and to thank Father T. Styczeń. All of us who came to Lublin from different countries have a duty to recognize it and to thank with full gratitude the members of the Institute of John Paul II, the Rector of the University here in Lublin, Father Styczeń – who has been the soul of this meeting – for what they have done for us. They have given us a particular privilege, a privilege that can seldom be enjoyed in our times, the privilege of participating in what a university really is: I would call it a friendship of free men, a community of free men that is directed towards the ultimate truth about man, and it is, by the way, the experience that I have always had when I have come here to Lublin, or when I have met people from Lublin elsewhere in the world. A deeply-felt human friendship that recognizes in itself, in its utmost profundity, a call to bear witness to truth, to the truth about man and to the truth about God. I wonder whether this could be a definition of friendship according to Aristotle: there is a kind of friendship in which one is not only interested in the good things one can derive from one's friends – for instance, the excellent cooking here in the *Unia* Hotel – one is interested not only in the fact that it is agreeable to spend time with them, and share wonderful jokes, but one is interested in the fact that, with them and through them he enters more deeply into the truth about man. And I think that this thought has entered into all the contributions and also into the planning that governed our meeting.

We started with *homo homini res sacra*: man is sacred to the other – it is not difficult to find here a reminiscence of the thought *homo homini lupus*. There is an original experience of man which is the starting point of everything. If one has not had this experience, if one has never experienced the other man as a sacred object, if one has the experience of the other man as a wolf against which he has to defend himself, then it is not even possible to begin with philosophy. Philosophy, at least philosophy as I have discovered it here with my friends in Lublin, and with Professor Seifert in Liechtenstein, is precisely this, just an insight into this experience of the sanctity of man, and this friendship leads to a direct experience of this sanctity.

And here we find the *Introduction to the Symposium* by Father Styczeń. I wanted to quote from this introduction, but then I found a sentence in another contribution by the same Father Styczeń that could better summarize all that we have tried to do: “Is it possible that history could go against the raising of conscience?” – a quotation of a quotation taken from Karol Wojtyła’s “*Myśląc Ojczyzna*” (“Thinking about the Fatherland”). “Is it possible that history could run against human rights?” I think that this question gives us a good introduction to all that we have done, but particularly to Professor Seifert’s lecture – perhaps an introduction to all the philosophy of Seifert, and not simply to this one contribution to our symposium. This philosophy is anything but an attempt to defend man against the pretension that history should be able to determine what man is. The personology of Seifert, at least in one sense, is the intuition of this dignity of man that does not stand powerless against the flow of history, but which can rule history. This intuition of this dignity of man is rooted in the fact that man can grasp truth in itself, can incorporate truth in itself, can make his life a witness to the truth. This seems to me to be Josef Seifert’s central idea which recurs again and again in different forms and is in one sense also the soul of his philosophy, making it so classical and at the same time so modern, so essential and so existential. This is *diligere veritatem omnem et in omnibus*, to love all truth in all things, not only in all men, but in all objects, to understand the vocation of man to be a microcosm, to reflect the whole truth of reality in his own soul through acts of living devotion to each specific object, recognizing the value of the object, and forming his own soul according to the value that inhabits this object.

In this sense, we enter into a new and specific domain of human existence: I truly become myself through the recognition of the other – of the other man first of all, of the other person – but also of all other values that are present on the horizon of my experience. I truly become myself through this act of self-donation: recognizing the value of the other, giving the other the respect and the love that is due to him, means discovering what I really am, what I was created for, namely to participate in the life of the other, but at the same time to participate in the life of God, to participate in the care and in the love of God for every other human being. And this last remark leads us from the lecture of Professor Seifert to that of Father Jacek Salij – to the God-man perspective. I was particularly moved by one quotation which, I think, again is the centre of the lecture: “The Church has given Poland Christ: that is the key to understanding this great and fundamental reality, namely, man.” What personology, the philosophy of the person and of truth gives us in an essential framework, has become flesh and becomes existentially present in the history of one nation, of all nations, but in each nation in a particular way. And in the history of a nation it becomes present in the history of each particular human

community, in the history of each friendship between men and of each family, because there is no friendship among men so close and so rich as the friendship of the man and the woman who share their lives and create a family. For “Man cannot be fully understood without Christ; or rather, man cannot fully understand himself without Christ. He can neither understand who he is, nor what his due dignity is, his vocation or his ultimate destiny. He cannot understand any of this without Christ.” These are the words of John Paul II in Victory Square in Warsaw. The essential truth, the *logos*, has become flesh. And of course, we can still know the *logos* through the *semina verbi* that are contained in the world around us, in values, but this cognition has, in a sense, the function of making us aware of the greatness of the task of recognizing value as value, God as God. Whoever recognizes the full extent of this task cannot pretend to be saved through philosophy. He recognizes that what is demanded of man is more than he can do; he recognizes that the real answer to the value of the world, even more so than poetry and philosophy, is prayer, prayer to God that He come and that He make me capable of responding, of giving that answer of full self-donation which, for man with his unaided nature, is impossible. And here one can quote Plato – Plato in the *Phaedo*: at a certain point it is evident that we can go no further; how beautiful it would be if one would come from the other side of the Sea of Being to enlighten us. We have had a wonderful discussion on just this point: the relationship between philosophy and revelation. St. Augustine described this relation as the relationship between the old law and the new. The old law shows what should be done, the new law gives the insight, the energy and the love to actually do it.

The second session was dedicated to man and society. Can these principles – the recognition of truth, the discovery of the value of the human person, the existential presence of this value in that community which we call the Church – can all this shape our everyday lives? What relationship does this have to the human power of working, of wresting from the earth that which is needed for the subsistence of the human family – this was the theme of Mr. Alphons Horten: *Ipse sibi et alii providens ex providentia divina*. Who is this *ipse*? Oneself taking care of oneself and of others out of God’s providence. I think that this “oneself” is everybody: everybody has responsibility for other men, the “oneself” is the father and the mother – I beg your pardon – the mother and the father of a family who care for their children, but this means also in a very specific way the entrepreneur, the man who has from God the specific gift of seeing the natural resources, of seeing the human needs that can be satisfied through these natural resources, of putting the natural resources together – and of the natural resources, of course, the most important is always the labour of man – and of taking upon himself the risk of experimenting with hypotheses about production, that is, of believing that these resources really can be used,

can be brought to satisfy these human needs – and of ensuring that the men who have these human needs can really pay for the merchandise produced. The act of caring for the other is incorporated, in the lecture of Mr. Horten, into the idea of the entrepreneur: the entrepreneur is one who must care for others *ex providentia divina*, but no man can do this if he does not experience at the same time that God takes care of him, and in his own solicitude participates in a higher one, namely, God's care of us. The assumption of risk – and to be an entrepreneur means assuming risks – cannot be fully accepted without confidence in divine providence. And this also gives that interior generosity of heart which allows one to be just to others; and Mr. Horten has shown us that also in the field of enterprise we have a human relationship – that enterprise is a human relationship, a community, a society of capital in one sense, but in another sense it is a community of persons, a way of caring, the one for the other. He has stressed more the obligation of the entrepreneur to take responsibility for others, but one could say that there is also a reciprocal task and duty of the workers toward the entrepreneur and the enterprise that all may succeed together in achieving the common purpose and the common good. And the common good is ... well, our families are closely bound to it: that the people whom we love may live.

Damian Fedoryka, in one sense, gives us the existential presupposition of what Mr. Horten has illustrated. There is one thing that I wish to quote: "The practical consequence of bracketing receptivity and self-donation as integral aspects of human existence and as the foundation of society, is a strict exclusion of the origin and the goal of human existence from public life. And that is a crime. Such bracketing is also a strict and formal exclusion of the other as source and goal of human life. It destroys parenthood which is the source of a community and common life. And it destroys marriages as the embodiment of the highest form of mutual self-giving. This truly is a crime." I would add: it also destroys enterprise. But it has already been added by the forcible intervention of Fedoryka in yesterday's discussion. What are receptivity and self-donation? The person affirms himself only through the recognition of the other; and the recognition of the other always implies the recognition of an objective truth that is not dependent upon me, or rather, it may be dependent upon me, but first of all I am dependent upon it, and only if the first kind of dependence on objective truth is recognized can the other be dependent upon me. If this is recognized, we then enter into the dynamism of the human community. What is the reason why men work? Men work in order to protect the lives of their families, that they may nourish their children; and this is the dynamism of interpersonal relationship which also enters into the economic life. If this is broken, if the recognition of the value of the other is not the first and fundamental value recognized, then any community among men becomes im-

possible. There is only the calculus of reciprocal utilities, and no society based on this calculus alone can last for long. T.S. Elliot wrote in the Choruses of "The Rock": "What the Stranger says: 'What is the meaning of this city? / Do you huddle close together because you love each other?' / What will you answer? 'We all dwell together, / to make money from each other'? / or 'this is a community'?" Is the modern city a place that is based upon mutual recognition as the motive force constructing a community, or just a partnership of people who live near one another in order to profit from one another? And if the latter is the only reason for a community, can this community last for long? Of course, I am not saying that profit is not in itself good, or is, rather, in itself bad. I only say it is not an adequate reason for the existence of society. Profit is the indication of the good health of an enterprise, but in the end neither the entrepreneur nor the employees work for profit: they work so that their families may live. They have families if there is this recognition of the value of the other, otherwise they have no families, and society disrupts. So here we find, I think, the personalistic foundation of all human activities in the social sphere.

We come now to the second day *Hominum causa omne ius constitutum est*, "because of man has every law been constituted." Professor Waldstein has explained to us the double-meaning of "because of man." Law and State are an expression of concern for man. The existence of the Law and of the State is possible because there is man, but even more so because there is an eternal law, as well as a natural law; in one sense, these do exist for the sake of man. This is so not only in the sense that the law is directly useful for man, but also in the sense that in the beginning, God created the world in order to enter into a loving relationship with the human person. And each human person has been intended by God since the beginning, as well as all values which are not immediately related to man but which are nevertheless mediately related to man – God created them so that man could embody them in himself through an act of recognition and of gratuitous love. This does not mean that God does not also love them for their own sake, but simply that he wants man to participate in this act of gratuitous love. Professor Waldstein shows us that legislation should be understood as an expression of jurisprudence – jurisprudence is the human search for truth, for truth that regulates the life of the human community. And in this sense he has given us a tremendous presentation, or rather a tremendous refutation of the positivistic principle: *ius quia iussum*, the law is the law because it has been established, because someone with the authority to do so has established it (*quod principii placuit, legis habet vigorem*, all that the prince establishes must have the force of the law). Now, in the place of the prince we have a democratic community. (By the way, I do not think that such

was the true meaning of the Latin sentence, but this is the way in which it has been interpreted for seven centuries, more or less.)

The position of Waldstein seems to run quite in the opposite direction: *ius quia iustum*, something is law because it is itself true, because it corresponds to the nature of things. Then, the task of the lawyer, of the man of law, of the judge, is to say what is in itself just. It cannot consist simply in the interpretation of the existing law. I remember something else. I beg your pardon for my Latin quotations, but I studied law like Professor Waldstein, and jurists love this kind of quotation: *nulla videtur esse lex que iusta non fuerit*, an old saying, also repeated by St. Thomas Aquinas: There can be no law that is not just, because if it is not just, it is not law. In light of this, one understands the heavy burden that Prof. Waldstein puts on the shoulders of the judge: he cannot be happy because he succeeded in finding a solution which keeps him from entering into an absolute conflict with the opinion of the majority or with the existing law, because such law is not law at all if it is not just.

And I must say that here our discussion reached one of its culminating points, perhaps one of its most serious points, and I think that it should be linked to the introduction by Prof. Styczeń. In the introduction, Prof. Styczeń spoke of the judgement of the German Constitutional Court: What would the one most concerned here, namely the unborn, say to this verdict if he were given a chance not only to scream silently, but to speak openly on the matter which is to decide on his life or death? Would he say: "I thank you?" – that you found a way to salve your conscience, and perhaps also a way to take one more step towards the possibility that in ten, fifteen, or twenty years a better law is made – or would he rather say: "I Accuse!" As a politician I understand how difficult it is to make a good law or to change the law for the better in the matter of abortion, but on the other hand we should never forget that it is not only a matter of quantity or of strategy. Each human life is an absolute value in itself, and many hundreds of thousands of such lives are lost every year, or many millions, rather, I should say. And whatever the division of responsibilities among different subjects, there is always someone who suffers an absolute wrong. This is the most important political issue of our time, which compels us again and again to question our consciences. Whatever we do is not enough. Here again, Christians must return to the position of prayer which was indicated in the beginning. When one knows that he should do more, and knows he cannot, then he should ask the Lord to send him the strength, the energy, the ideas that he does not have.

I shall not give you a summary of Father Szostek's lecture for two reasons: firstly, because true beauty cannot be summarized, secondly, because it is still in your ears. I can add a third reason: because it is too late. I wish only to point out one thing: as long as there is a university there is a chance for de-

mocracy; as long as a university committed to truth, to the authority of truth, exists, we have one of two fundamental institutions that preserve the authority of values, the authority of truth as such. The other is the family. Of course, without families – no universities. But also without universities – no families, because what the family begins the university fulfills, brings to perfection: the construction of the human personality in the service of truth, of love, and ultimately of God.