

COLLABORATION AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, University of Navarra and Universidade Católica Portuguesa undertake a scientific collaboration on the following research theme: “Occidentes. Horizons and Projects of Civilization in the Church of Pius XII”

OCCIDENTES

Horizons and Projects of Civilization in the Church of Pius XII

The idea of the West, not unlike the idea of Europe (which partially shared the trajectory of the former), has been the subject of the most diverse interpretations since ancient times, which have attempted to define its extension and limits both on a territorial and cultural level, in a crescendo of complexity especially since the discovery of the American New World. If at the beginning of the twentieth century the increasingly frequent recourse to the concept of "West" was functional to legitimize the symbolic passage of the torch from Europe to the United States as the moral guide of the so called "Western world" - it is no coincidence that the first university course dedicated to the "History of Western Civilization" was inaugurated in 1919 at Columbia University in New York - in the aftermath of the Second World War the processes of economic, political, cultural, and social globalization have helped to shape an idea of the West as an organic entity, animated by the same basic values (such as the democratic form of the state and a capitalist model of economic development), fueling an imagery that has been growing stronger during the Cold War decades.

In contrast to this homologating vision, the Catholic Church in its various articulations distinguished itself during the pontificate of Pius XII for a significant plurality of approaches, in Europe as in the Americas, contributing to keeping alive the dialectic between different ideas and models of the "West". In this regard, it is worth mentioning, for example, the insistence on an idea of substantial democracy and participation which, starting from the pontificate of Pius XII, began to characterize the reflection and action of the Catholic world, often in the wake of a personalist vision from which the openness to the dimension of religious freedom and human rights in the Second Vatican Council was later derived. From another point of view, one can underline the critical attitude towards the capitalist system, which still during the Pius XII's pontificate - in continuity with the doctrinal elaboration of previous pontificates - led in some cases (especially in Latin America) to imagine a "third way" between capitalism and collectivism, destined to leave room for more realistic attempts to humanize the market economy.

Against this background, the years of Pius XII (1939-1958) appear to be relevant – as regards the Catholic World and more specifically the Holy See – for the shaping of a peculiar approach to the international socio-political reality, starting from the European context, where the confrontation between the different ideas of the West is affected by the lacerations produced by the Second World War, which led to a division between a Western Europe under the umbrella of US protection (where the process of European integration begins) and an Eastern Europe hegemonized by the Soviet Union. In a context largely dominated by the new bipolar dynamic, a significant element of continuity with the pre-war order is instead represented by the authoritarian regimes of Spain and Portugal, which in their intentions continue to embody the ideal of a "Catholic corporate state" on which in the 1930s many Western Catholics reflected, including those who became protagonists of democratic reconstruction in their respective countries after 1945. In the same years the birth of the State of Israel (1948) redefined - once again - the territorial borders of the West, creating an outpost of great symbolic value in one of the historical sources and ideals of European culture (Jerusalem), not without tensions with the Christian communities present for millennia in the Middle East. In the Western hemisphere, the relationship with the American world - in particular with the globalizing ambitions and the Protestant root of its liberal culture – is experienced by the Holy See (which

shares with the United States the commitment against the spread of communism) not without moments of dialectical tension, as both claim the role of authentic interpreter of the demands of Western civilization. The lack of full identification between the Christian West and the capitalist West is even more evident in Latin America, where the cultural, political and even religious influence of the United States stimulates - as a reaction from relevant sectors of local Catholicism - the search for ideal links with other models of Western civilization, different from that of the United States: in this regard the appeal of Francoism and the Salazarist Estado Novo in Hispanic America and Brazil respectively should be underlined. On the other hand, in the years of Pius XII a "neobolivarian" ideal of continental integration also takes shape in the subcontinent, which found in the prodromes of the European integration process a relevant term of comparison. Pius XII's response to the complex pastoral and social challenges of the region also seems to combine the collaboration between the local Churches and American Catholicism – a collaboration repeatedly invoked in previous pontificates, which will become topical again against the backdrop of the *Alliance for Progress* launched in 1961 by president John F. Kennedy – with an approach aimed at enhancing the specificity of the subcontinent: the birth of the Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM), whose General Conference met for the first time in Rio de Janeiro in 1955, and the foundation of the Commission for Latin America (1958) are emblematic in this respect.

In the light of the above, the recent opening of the Vatican archives from the period of Pius XII (2 March 2020) offers a precious opportunity for those who wish to critically explore the ideas of "West" and "civilization" that Western Catholicism (European, North American and Latin American) has consciously or unconsciously conveyed throughout the pontificate of Pope Pacelli, in the most diverse areas. The breadth of published and unpublished sources currently available to scholars also suggests the opportunity to develop research on such wide-ranging topics by networking among academic institutions recognized on the international scene which, in the framework of stable collaboration and in respect of the widest freedom of scientific research, can share and integrate their respective competences in order to open up original and interdisciplinary research paths.

This is the aim of the present project, which puts at the service of a common historical research objective the scientific expertise of four universities (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, University of Navarra, Universidade Católica Portuguesa), which are characterized as a whole by a wide range of methodological perspectives – from global history to economic and social history, from the history of international relations to the history of thought – and by the interest in a historiography capable of create dialogue between the local dimension of historical phenomena and global perspectives. The enclosed collaboration agreement expresses the conviction that a synergy between the respective research efforts – open from now on to the future contribution of other scholars – can represent an added value, enriching the work of individual researchers and placing it within an international horizon.

The project, over the first four years, proposes four areas of study to the participants, suggesting these paths of research:

- 1) The Holy See and the West in the post-war world order, with particular reference to:
 1. Euro-Atlantic relations
 2. Relationships with European countries behind the Iron Curtain
 3. Decolonization processes
 4. The Middle East and the State of Israel

- 2) Civilization, inculturation, indigenist movements: on the borders of the West
 1. Catholicism, Protestantism and indigenous peoples in Latin America
 2. The horizons of the Church in Africa and Asia: missionary commitment, *implantatio Ecclesiae* and the challenges of decolonization
 3. Tradition, liturgy, arts: the problem of inculturation
- 3) Church, Catholics and democracy: comparing experiences
 1. European Christian Democrats and the prospects for continental unity
 2. Latin American Catholicism between authoritarianism and democracy
 3. Catholics and religious freedom: experiences in comparison between the United States, Europe and Latin America
 4. Other Wests? The international resonances of Spanish National Catholicism and the Portuguese Estado Novo
- 4) Lead the development. Catholics and socio-economic modernisation
 1. In search of a "third way" between capitalism and communism: persistence and decline of the corporatist idea in the Western Catholicism of the 1940s and 1950s
 2. The social market economy: the theoretical foundations of the German way and the lack of transposition in many Catholic countries
 3. The Holy See, Western Catholics and the problem of underdevelopment
 4. Against the civilization of consumption? Western churches and "American way of life" during the pontificate of Pius XII

For each thematic area/sub-area, specific research units composed of researchers from the universities involved in the project can be identified, which will define the timing and methods of the research work. Dissemination of the results will take place preferably through periodical seminars (even remotely) and scientific publications (monographs, journal articles and collective volumes), favoring *open access* wherever possible. An international conference will also be organized for each thematic area, which may take place at one of the participating universities.

The scientific supervisors for this collaboration agreement are:

- for Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore: Prof. Dr. Paolo Valvo
- for Pontificia Università Gregoriana: Prof. Dr. Roberto Regoli
- for University of Navarra: Prof. Dr. Pablo Pérez López
- for Universidade Católica Portuguesa: Prof. Dr. Paulo Fernando de Oliveira Fontes