

There is a famous phrase in our (*Italian*) history: “you are killing a dead man”; I think that after two days of such intensity it is my duty to be as brief as possible. To me these conferences are precious because meeting so often and debating themes so profound has nurtured true friendship. As Domingo just said, I began my work with the Foundation in 1996, two and a half years after its birth, and ever since we have striven to make progress, to build something, to bear testimony to something. These seventeen years have been very fruitful.

Today I wish to close our Conference with a few words that Pope Francis addressed to all of us a few days ago, words that I find particularly illuminating. He told us that this crisis is not purely economic or cultural, it is a human one and our conference has come to the same conclusion. It is man who is suffering and can be destroyed. If there is something that should continue to be the focus of our work, of our commitment, it is this profound passion for man.

This is why the title of this conference is stimulating: *rethinking* does not mean repeating what we have been doing over the past decades, it means acting on this passion to reformulate our thoughts. We will have to discover anew what audacity and wisdom are and how these two forces can urge us forward in our work, strengthen our commitment, promote encounter.

Once again, as Pope Francis said, this is not a cultural crisis, it is the crisis of man.

Secondly, what I find particularly illuminating is the awareness that our faith must help us create a culture of encounter, of friendship, within which we can find brotherhood, we can learn to talk to those who do not think as we do, or do not share our faith. I love these meetings of ours because they give us a chance to listen to the voice, the thoughts, of people from different backgrounds and different religious orientations. We must rediscover within us this ability to create a culture of encounter and friendship. Our global world, however rich in technology, is often sadly lacking in that respect.

Let me remind you of a theme so dear to Pope Benedict: respectful dialogue with all. At times some people might think that since CAPP is a papal foundation, and so close to the Pope, its outlook and behavior are bound to be rigid, almost sclerotized. It is not so. Pope Benedict helped us rediscover the importance of dialogue respectful of other peoples’ truth and it is something we must learn step by step.

This is interesting. Lisbon, 2010 therefore not so long ago: Pope Benedict underlined this very aspect, *dialogue respectful of other peoples’ truth*. Not only that, he underlined this was something the Church was learning, something that was not yet so obvious to the Church herself. We need to rediscover what “dialogue respectful of other peoples’ truth” is.

This is why I underlined the importance of a culture of friendship, of encounter. Our conferences try to offer us a venue for searching together, understanding together, motivated by a profound love for

man. I think this should be the ever present motivation of our encounters, of our walking together. To me this is fundamental.

The other feature that I wish to emphasize is the image of a Church ever more open, no longer self contained. Many of you identify with the Catholic religion, many of you have gone through a personal path of spiritual growth: Pope Francis helps us find new vigor in our quest, he says “the Church must look outward, reach out to the existential peripheries, wherever they are”.

You may remember that a few days ago Pope Francis spoke of “drawing room Christians” – he uses very stimulating expressions that sometimes make us smile. Over a cup of tea these Christians get involved in fine theological discussions and talk unemotionally about global poverty. But this is almost snobbery. With his approach, somewhat Latin American but so true, he is helping us understand that we must reach out to the peripheries of human existence.

There is another theme I wish to quote: Pope Francis invites us to be respectful but courageous Christians. In his recent speeches he has repeatedly emphasized the theme of courage. There is no fixed scheme or special approach: what we must do is look into our heart and ask ourselves what it means to be a Christian engaging in respectful and yet courageous dialogue.

I do not have templates to recommend, I leave it up to you, to your heart, to find out what it would mean for you, for the testimony you are striving to offer, to have greater courage.

There is one last theme on which I would like you to meditate. Yesterday there has been much talk about the overwhelming role of finance in our society. A few days ago Pope Francis used stimulating words on the subject – I know that to people as knowledgeable as you are they may sound naïve. He referred to the Tower of Babel, quoting a biblical Hidrash text (Old Testament, therefore we are in a Judaic environment). I will read it to you. It is about a biblical Hidrash of a 12th century rabbi who tells the story of the Tower of Babel and says that in order to build it the first thing to do was to make bricks. How does one go about it? Kneading mud, mixing it with straw, shaping the brick, cooking it in a kiln. And then the bricks had to be taken up the scaffolding to build the Tower. Each brick was a treasure since so much work had gone into it. If a brick fell it was a national tragedy, the guilty worker was punished. That brick was so precious that if it fell it was a drama. But, Pope Francis continued, if a worker fell nothing happened, it was no big deal.

This is what is happening today. If banks are ailing it is a tragedy. There is a frantic search for solutions. But if people die of hunger, if they suffer from malnutrition, if they are sick, little attention is paid. This is the crisis we are going through now and the testimony of a Church “poor and for the poor” goes against this mentality.

I remember that when this Latin American Pope, and yet Peter’s successor, used the expression for the first time a reporter from a big international press service came to see me and the first question she asked was: what does “a Church for the poor” mean? I tried to explain about the whole Latin American school of thought, because undoubtedly it was that specific background that inspired the Pope’s words. The lady seemed satisfied and ready to leave me but I motioned her to stay and continued: you have been intrigued by the second part, “a Church for the poor” but you seem to

have forgotten about the first. She asked: what is it? The Pope speaks of a Church “poor and for the poor”.

This is an extremely delicate subject. I am neither a banker nor an economist and Prof. Quadrio Curzio would be horrified by what I am saying. For about six years the Western world has been experiencing a dramatic fall of production accompanied by soaring unemployment and a severe contraction of families’ purchasing power. This is no news to you. To make matters worse the trend for youth unemployment is depressingly negative, implying a future of underemployment and further reduction of purchasing power. These are the seeds of continuing economic contraction.

From the beginning of the crisis political and monetary authorities throughout the world have tried to limit the consequences of falling incomes with ad hoc policies. But the result has been extremely disappointing, as you know better than I do. Austerity policies have resulted in higher taxes and an increasing fragility of the whole system. Even in the last few days we have heard representatives of all the governments insist on the urgent need to create jobs through policies that - let me say it - seem sadly inadequate. Perhaps these policies seem inadequate because they are very likely so.

The answer to the first signs of an ominous economic crisis, way back in late 2006, has been strongly interventionist, aimed at preventing what looked as an unavoidable economic correction. This was because our present development model is based on a form of centralized planning of the economy through monetary policies. The Western model is based on the central role of the banking system and on the monetary policies enacted by central banks, ultimately responsible for the so called economic development.

I have talked long enough, but I think we’ll have to keep thinking about all this. Perhaps the financial dimension of our model of economic development has been overly large. But one thing is certain, we must rethink our vision of solidarity, we must revise our development model. I hope that our future conferences will help us make further efforts towards this goal because the problem is not purely monetary. We must come up with something new.

As our conference draws to its close I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the organizers, to the Scientific Committee and its President, Prof. Quadrio Curzio, to the Foundation which offers us these moments of fruitful and profound reflection. And a big thanks to all of you because your presence is proof of what we are trying to do: to follow a path, to meet again, look into the future and discover what we can do together. And a final thanks goes to all those who have worked so hard, so professionally, to make the event such a success. Thank you Marta, these two days have been a privileged moment, a great occasion for all of us.

I look forward to the next conference, to share with friends the wish to rediscover how we can help build a world more true and more human.