



#meeting14

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Meeting for Friendship amongst People
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A continuous wonder: Biblical characters on the edges

Rimini, August 25th, 2014 – “A tradition of the Meeting, but not one to be taken for granted, Joseph Weiler’s presentation at the Meeting: a lecture on the Bible as a living and decisive reality.” With these words Stefano Alberto, Professor of Theology at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, introduced Joseph H.H. Weiler, President of the European University Institute, to the public of the eni Caffè Letterario at 11:15 a.m.

Weiler began with the consideration of only three cases, among many laws and rules of conduct indicated in the Bible, when even life is subject to the ethical principle: apostasy, murder and incest. The reading proposed and interpretation of texts (at public’s disposal) illustrates an example of incest.

The Professor examined the episode of Lot’s two daughters (Gen. 19, 1-38). “It is about marginal people and stories, and you can see that also from the text: it is sparse with little information. It leaves space for the reader’s speculation.” The professor opened an audience discussion about the deepest meaning of the text, coming to a more humane and reasonable interpretation: though the two daughters have apparently deceived the father, involving him in the act of incest, there is “another component, mysterious, but reasonable which moves the protagonists’ behavior. Worse than incest is the evil of not having descendants.” So, in the plan of salvation, there is no condemnation, but justice.

Weiler also proposes the figure of Tamir, Judas’ daughter-in-law (Gen. 38, 1-30) and, from different passages of the same book, the figure of Ruth, up to the encounter with Boaz. Weiler proposes the synthesis of the dialogue among the people participating: “Marginal characters, like Lot’s daughters, of whom we don’t even know the names, are also Ruth and Tamar, Peres’ mother. But both of them are quoted in King David’s genealogy and therefore are in Jesus’s ancestry. For the God of the Bible there is not a “forever,” but there is always forgiveness, and the possibility of restitution.” The professor talked about the Pope’s message at the Meeting, exactly where he mentioned “the peripheries of the mystery of sin, pain, injustice, ignorance.”

Weiler, at the end, answered publicly the numerous questions which emerged from the lecture “Europe: ideal or idol worship?” which was held on Sunday 24th at Sala Neri: “The issue of rights is only a battle, but it is not war. I tell you what is my fight: the hope of being every day in front of God without embarrassment or hypocrisy. When I die, I hope I can say that I lived like that for at least ten days.”

While concluding, Stefano Alberto said: “This is the flesh of the Mystery. There is a test. Do these words shock, bother, frighten us? Destiny has not left man alone: it is not a measure, but implicates the obligation of becoming aware of the action of God in our lives. God knows all, even contradiction and evil. Condemnation is not for us. It is necessary that fear is conquered in order to notice that the Lord is the Lord, and He is Mercy.”

(G.L.)



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www.meetingrimini.org

47923 Rimini, Via Flaminia, 18
Casella Postale 108
Tel. + 39 0541 783100
Fax + 39 0541 786422

Stefano Pichi Sermolli

Meeting Spokesperson, Head of the Press&Communication Office

Press Office: Erika Elleri

Tel: 3480138786

E-mail: erika.elleri@meetingrimini.org