

Barcelona's claim: Building a people-centred economy

A discussion on several economic proposals gives the go-ahead towards The Economy of Francesco's international meeting

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On March the 4th Barcelona has hold one of the 250 activities going on all around the world to prepare for The Economy of Francesco's international meeting. Participating in the event there were scholars in Economics, voices from the social background and members of the ecclesiastical community.

During the lectures, the speakers have exposed alternatives to the current economic model. Bernat Sellarès, organizer and rapporteur, has stressed the relevance of such discussions. "Since Assisi's conference wants to become a space for a deep and slow-motion dialogue, the preparation process plays a main role", the History of Economic Thought Professor has explained. Social responsibility, environmental protection and questioning of the traditional conception of 'growth' have been some of the tackled points.

In their diversity all the submitted proposals are based in the same beliefs, expressed in the Pope's invitation letter to Assisi. Franciscus calls to study and practise a different economy, "one that brings life not death, one that is inclusive and not exclusive, humane and not dehumanizing, one that cares for the environment and does not despoil it". And to achieve his goals, the Pope is relying on the young people without making any distinction because of race, religion or origin. "I am confident above all in you young people, who are capable of dreaming and who are prepared to build, with the help of God, a more just and beautiful world", he writes.

The main amendment to the neoliberalism model is about who's placed in the economy's centre. While the current paradigm is based in the individual, the submitted proposals were all about persons. "The individual as an autonomous creature who doesn't need anybody is a fake", has explained Alfredo Pastor, emeritus Professor at IESE Business School. "The main character should be the person, who needs from the orders to develop itself. The community plays a key role".

In this regard, Bernat Sellarès has criticize the lack of pluralism in the economy. "If we take as exclusive the certainty that individualism drives us to the collective welfare, we may extinguish the communion fire and harden our hearts", he has alerted.

Among the proposals Carles Armengol, member of the Centesimus Annus Foundation, has presented a circular economy model as a positive answer to the exhaustion that our planet is facing. "We must reinforce our efforts to repair, reuse and redistribute", has defended Armengol. "The planet is rich, therefore the poverty is just Humanity's fault".

Also Father Ignasi Foses, prior at Monastery of Montserrat, has brought the monastic wise to the economics world. Using the Rule of Saint Benedict -which was written in the XVI century- the Father has spoken about organization and jobs profile. "Leadership management and entrepreneurship can be an spiritual adventure", he has said.

All around the world, we are seeing how the youngest ones raise up to fight for a change. On November 29th-21st young students and scholars in Economics, entrepreneurs and managers from 115 countries will answer the call of the Pope and attend to Assisi. Among the public, some have already asked for the next meeting in order to get some feedback of the international meeting. Alfredo Pastor has addressed the young students in the room: "If you want to be successful in changing things, it's mandatory that you keep in touch with those who think like you, because this is completely out what we call mainstream. You have a nice and challenging job, usually I think that my generation has done a little contribution on improving the Humanity and Economics concept: everything is still to be done".