
THE WORD OF THE GUEST EDITOR

Pope Francis and the politics

The importance of the voice of Pope Francis in the international political scene is an issue that does not admit of discussion. Some criticize him for his position in front of the system, and others follow him even without being Catholic. A Pope who does not go unnoticed and arouses passions. Nobody would have thought that, at this stage of a secular liberal culture, a Catholic pontiff was the political man of the moment.

This can have many readings. On the one hand, it can be thought that political and economic liberalism is coming to the end and, as a sign of this, is seen a new post-secular era where a pontiff becomes the most authoritative political voice. On the other hand, it may be thought that it is a new version of nineteenth-century socialism and that it is no more than a good utopia.

However, the Pope rides. There is no head of state who does not need a photo with Francisco to seal his legitimacy. There is no academy in the world that has not organized a scientific seminary on what the Pope says. There is no serious newspaper or magazine of divulgation that does not have it in some of its covers.

The relevance, of the pontifical word in the field of national and international politics, is because this pope leaves no topic unaddressed. Nothing human is foreign to him. As example, have been the subject of papal reflection: war and peace; the liberal system; the market economy; environmental pollution; migrants; political refugees; prisoners; children, young and old people; cardinals, bishops and priests; homosexual relationships; homeless; native populace; Christians, Jews, Islamists; workers and trade unions; morality, politics, science and art. And always, in the center: Jesus

Is he a politician or a religious leader? He is a religious leader who is not a politician and therefore is concerned with the true God whose work is the world and the man, and the suffering of his creation. The Pope's primary objective is to return to man, to each man, his dignity, and for that he must speak in a situated way: of the concrete man and not of the ideal of man; of real democracy and not of the democratic ideal; of existing inequality and not of a posteriori theoretical equality at the financial capitalism; of true love for the other understanding its circumstance and not from moral principles that condemn the weakness of the human been. To deal with the concrete man -that is to say of this man here and now-, is to speak in a situated way, providing data of what happens and denouncing injustice.

When Pope Francis speaks in these terms, he is not a politician but a

pastor. A shepherd who smells like sheep because he is among them and therefore he knows them; and a shepherd who gives his life for his sheep by risking it in every denunciation of the establishment. That is following Christ. For Christian theology, Jesus Christ is the second person of the trinity who incarnates in a concrete man of history, suffering the greatest of humiliations until the death of the cross, only to reconcile man with God. The incarnation is the great act of reconciliation, made by a divine person, who is God, to save from the suffering that causes sin to all human persons. The political reconciliation claimed by Pope Francis has theological foundation within Christian belief.

When Francis denounces unjust structures on the political plane as the sole cause of men's suffering, he is not making politics, but Christianity. But it is hard to see it because we are accustomed to centuries of a part of Christianity that was not a savior but a collaborator of injustice. That is why some non-Christians do not understand Pope Francis, and other Christians criticize him. When a Pope comes to turn the established system, seems to be a problem, to the point of disqualifying him as a legitimate Pope.

In the present issue of the magazine *Politics and Religion*, which specializes in *Politology of Religion* according to the imprint of its director. Miroљub Jevtic,¹ we take Pope Francis and the *Politics* as our first interest. Professor Miroљub Jevtic has installed a new concept in the academic study of Church-State relations. Thanks to his visionary understanding of the problem, today there is a new space of debate that allows to move the problem from the field of religion to the field of theology, analyzing the political function of religion, beyond the Church- State.

The present issue by my edited, does not pretend to give truths about what this Pope does, or what a pope should do. It is only intended to make available to the reader different topics to open the debate. For this reason, I have called a group of professionals in the dialogue between theology and politics to publish their views on the current pontificate. The positions are all different. Some are Catholics, some Protestants and some Gnostics. This diversity is good because it allows us to approach the themes placed in the political field by Francisco, but from different disciplines, political positions, religious confessions and cultural contexts.

The reader will have before him a wide range of critical issues in relation to Pope Francis and the politics. All were accepted under the criterion of allowing freedom of expression to an open debate that helps to clarify conflicting points. The public can easily observe that not all the articles published here agree in full with the pontifical word. However they have in common the concern for the link between religion and politics and the

1 Cf. Miroљub Jevtic, "Political science and religion", *Politics and Religion*, Vol.1 (n. 1) 2007.

new course that in secular societies is taking the word of a religious leader.

I am grateful to all my colleagues and friends who have accepted my invitation to be a part of this special issue of Religion and Politics, and especially its director, Miroljub Jevtic, for giving me a second chance to introduce the theme “Francis” in the world of political science.

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