

FRIENDSHIP IN THE ACADEMIC LIFE

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FOREWORDS

- Dr. Fausto says, alone in his room:

"Philosophy, woe is me! jurisprudence, medicine, and you too...! sad theology I have studied you thoroughly with ardor and patience; and here I am now, poor fool, as wise as before. I graduated, is true, master, doctor, and for ten years I have been leading my disciples as I wish. I see nothing we can know... That's what makes my blood boil! Certainly, I know more than any fool, doctors, professors, writers and monks in the world! Not a scruple, not a doubt torment me any more! I fear nothing about devil, nor of hell: but all joy has also been taken from me. I do not think, indeed, I know anything good, nor can I teach men anything to improve and convert them."

- This text recognises:
 - ✓ The solitary scholar.
 - ✓ The skeptic, who can teach nothing → He leads students just he wants.
 - ✓ Someone with no fear, no joy... Only anger.
- Facing this Faustian man, Francisco Canals teaches:

CANALS: «Social "political" nature of man as he has speech, lies constitutively in the ability of human communication, in language about the fair and the unfair, the good and the bad. This communication corresponds to the exercise of political friendship, and in certain sense, we would have to find in the deficiency of this friendship between men, the motive that drives all "misunderstanding" in a common life. The human theoretical life itself would be unthinkable, in the exercise, without communication between men, who live devoted to the search for true knowledge, and nothing is less suitable to "science" and "philosophy" than their qualification as "solitary knowledge".

- This text states:

- ✓ Man has a social nature: communicating truth through the words,
- ✓ Also, in science and philosophy ≠ solitary knowledge.
- Purpose of this presentation:
 - ✓ To show that friendship is the most appropriate place for academic life,
 - ✓ which allows to create academic schools in a true meaning.
 - ✓ This is what St. John Paul II says in *Fides et Ratio*:

JUAN PABLO II: « It should not be forgotten that reason also needs to be sustained in its quest for a trusting dialogue and sincere friendship. The climate of suspicion and distrust that sometimes surrounds speculative research, forgets the teaching of ancient philosophers, who considered friendship to be one of the most suitable contexts for good philosophizing".

1. LEISURE AND ACADEMIC LIFE

- "School" means "leisure".
 - ✓ Scholé (σχολή) means "leisure"; schola and "school" dervies from here.
 - ✓ Distinguish between:
 - *Ascholía* – opposite to *scholé*:- is the time required for activities whose purpose is the individual and family subsistence, business -nec otium, wage-earning servile labor.
 - *Paidiá* is the time devoted to easy and pleasurable activities, the purpose is to rest before and after work.
 - *Scholé* (σχολή): is the time dedicated to noble activities chosen by themselves. It means that one must have time and one must dedicate this time to noble activities.
- ¿What are the most noble activities?
 - ✓ Aristotle says they are the most autarchic and proper of magnanimous - *megalopsychós*-
 - ✓ and these activities are politics and philosophy.
 - ✓ ... although a wise man needs less than a politician.

→Therefore, leisure is requisite of magnanimity and autarchy, both in political and philosophical life.

- ✓ Aristotle's example is the birth of mathematics in Egypt: "... since the priestly caste enjoyed leisure there"
- But our culture has subverted this order:
 - ✓ The primacy is no longer in the contemplation of leisure (scholé),
 - ✓ but in business productivity (ascholí).
 - ✓ Magnanimous man has been replaced by Faustian man

CANALS: « *In the beginning was the Action.* In the supposed interpretation of gospel text expressed by Faustus just before accepting pact with Mephistopheles, we could see expressed attitude which, for many, defines the modern Western man: the Faustian man. *No one will show you the path you should follow (...); my only advice is: whatever you set out to do, do it without fear,* says Mephistopheles. I do not try to seek happiness, replies Faust. Stillness is contrary to life. *"The optimum measure of a man's mettle is the most agitated activity."*

- ✓ According to Josef Pieper, in the academic life, the philosopher has been replaced, by "worker", utilitarian purposes worker. and the "sophist" that justifies him.
- ✓ It is described by Plato *in Theaetetus*

«Los filósofos disfrutaban del tiempo libre al que tú hacías referencia y sus discursos los componen en paz y en tiempo de ocio (...) Y no les preocupa nada la extensión o la brevedad de sus razonamientos, sino solamente alcanzar la verdad. Los otros, en cambio, siempre hablan con la urgencia del tiempo (...) Además, no pueden componer sus discursos sobre lo que desean». "Philosophers enjoy the free time to which you referred, and their discourses are written in peace during leisure times (...) And they are not concerned about length or brief reasoning, but only attaining the truth. On the other hand, the others always speak with the urgency of time (...) Besides, they cannot write their speeches about what they wish.

- But does the autarchy of wise man turn philosophy into activity proper to a solitary man?
 - ✓ Aristotle states in Book I of the EN that autarchy does not imply solitary life, since man is a social being.
- For this reason, Aristotle includes contemplative activity in the practical life, which should primarily be ordered to contemplation, and "can only be fully developed in a political community".
- Moreover, among friends

- **It is for all these reasons that scholé comes to assign not only the time but also the political, communal place in which contemplative activity is made possible: the "academic school".**
- Now, let's discuss about characteristics of this "academic school".

2. COMMUNICATION OF TRUTH

- What is the academic school?
 - ✓ The aim will be none other than philosophy.
 - ✓ If philosophy is the sapiential search for truth promoted by leisure → the academic school is the community of those who philosophize.
- The starting point is that every man has a natural inclination to know the truth, as Aristotle states.
 - ✓ Primarily to know the truth of God, as St. Thomas teaches.
 - ✓ This knowledge receives the name of "wisdom", a knowledge that: "... among all the studies of man, is the most perfect, sublime, useful and joyful"
- Truth is expressed by the word.
 - ✓ That is why the word expressing truth, constitutes human society.
 - ✓ And, here together with the first natural interest, proper of man, to know the truth of God, this is to live in society.

3. EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC SCHOOL

- Leisure is requisite for academic activity, as well as for teaching.
- When Aristotle states the needs of leisure for noble activities, he includes education.
- Education can be the useful, but also of what is noble.
 - ✓ For example, reading, writing, music and drawing. And not so much because of their usefulness, but through them another knowledge can be reached.
- But if we look at philosophy, St. Thomas recognizes that in his study no one is self-sufficient, and that is why we need to learn from others.

- In fact, the light and teaching of truth is the activity that St. Thomas identifies as most proper for participation in the divine government of the world by rational creatures.
 - ✓ Therefore, teaching truth is an activity fruit of natural interest, which completes in man what is common to animals: generation and offspring breeding.
 - ✓ But in this case, it becomes fruit of rational interest to know truth about God and live in society, when this society is constituted by masters and disciples.
 - ✓ ... which, due to its characteristic leisure as the noblest activity, is now called "school".
- Indeed, free time and leisure is required to listen to the master and grow in wisdom.
- Additionally, as we have seen, it requires communicative work of truth and constitutive of society.
- On the contrary, when Faustus says:
 - ✓ that "we can know nothing"
 - ✓ Finds logical conclusion: "I do not believe, in fact, that I know anything good, nor can I teach men anything to improve and convert them".
 - ✓ and the result is the Faustian man, who lives according to Canals:

Canals: «in his tragic loneliness, lost in the public and immersed in the impersonal socialization of pretended 'human relationships', this man could be characterized with the title: 'the man no one looked at'".

- In this condition, the word will not be truly communicative any more.
 - ✓ When sophists denied the philosopher that being exists, who can be known or can communicate by words,
 - ✓ Left them with no other way than persuasion.

PLATÓN: «The speaker should have no other aim than appearance, without caring at all about the truth".

- This is what José M^a Petit suggests, differentiate magisterium from leadership, and academic schools from academic parties: "Only what is true constitutes a school; the opinion, if anything, a party, but not a school. That is why Thomism is a school and not a party".
- What is the difference between the two? Petit continues:

PETIT: "The difference consists in the fact that what is taught is understood by the one who has learned as his own thing, while what is said is sustained by the will of the one who manifests it, since he lacks the certainty of what is stated. To this essential truth a psychological truth is joined. When someone knows something by his own understanding, he does not mind acknowledging he has learned from other, but, on the contrary, who speaks from what is said by other one, who merely repeats, needs to pretend that he does not belong to any school".

- Such is the difference between professor, constitutive of the school, and the leader, constitutive of the party.
- This, St. Thomas identifies four virtues that should characterize the school of wisdom: in the master, mercy and purity up to disciple, but without falling into the misery of error; and in the disciple, humility and docility in front of master.

4. FRIENDSHIP AND ACADEMIC SCHOOL

- But the academic school is not only a partnership of master and disciple, but a friendly partnership.

AR: "We believe, then, that friendship is the greatest of goods in the cities"

- Therefore, friendship should be the greatest asset in the academic school.
- This is what we read, at the beginning, which we now understand much better:
 - ✓ Society is constituted by communication through the true word about social life,
 - ✓ And that is the nature of political friendship.
 - ✓ The academic school is constituted by communication through the true word about the being.
 - ✓ And that is proper to academic friendship, characterized by cordial dialogue ≠ not by a solitary knowledge.
- Friendship is essentially the communication of the truth about one's personal life to one's friend.
 - ✓ Is this truth included in the academic friendship?
 - ✓ Academic dialogue in friendship involves not only the communication of universal truths, but also personal experience of such knowledge: from whom it has been learned, under what circumstances...
 - ✓ It is the "mode" of knowledge, proper to personal subject who knows.

- ✓ In it these truths are given, as they are already known.
- And through this personal way to meet academically, it is possible to have a real friendship.
 - ✓ Academic dialogue is the communication of truth about being,
 - ✓ And personal friendship, where is most properly revealed, "subject and term of friendship love."
 - ✓ Therefore, the most natural of such communication is between those who share friendship.
- It is, therefore, a friendly communication of personal life referred to what is known sapientially.
- Without it, as Canals would say, there would be no history of men, which is constitutively characterized by such a friendly communication:

CANALS: «All possibility of historical life would cease in humanity if there were not in personal life, from the most intimate of domestic and daily life, the friendly communication in which life itself is transmitted and communicated.»

5. ACADEMIC SCHOOL IN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE 21ST CENTURY

- As conclusion, with the intention of synthesis, I would say that the professor in the University of the XXI century should:
 - ✓ Be free by itself from servile times to recover leisure time.
 - ✓ Dedicate this free time to liberal knowledge, especially philosophy and theology
 - ✓ Bbe grateful for what he has received from his professors.
 - ✓ Give himself generously to the teaching of others
 - ✓ Seek intimate and fruitful academic friendships
- The slogan of this academic way of life could be the one rightly enunciated by St. Albert the Great:

SAN ALBERTO: «*In dulcedine societatis quaerere veritatem*».