



ART AND CRISTIANISM
SEMINARS ON SACRED ART
Introductory lesson
Firenze, 9 aprile 2019

The course aims at addressing the great Christian-related themes to give the students the basic tools to understand the birth and evolution of the art lived in the faith.

There are terms that we must learn to understand their specific meanings otherwise we run the risk of confusing plans and subjects.

When do we say CHURCH what do we mean? Is the Church a material building, made of stones and stucco? Is it an institution? Is this a story? Peter is the first stone, but Christ is the living Stone. Terrasanta is not a museum, nor is it an archaeological park. Going into the Holy Land means entering into the time of God, who is always present. Every day in Bethlehem is Christmas.

We need to know the foundations, the history, the traditions: if we do not know these aspects we will not be able to innovate, as we have been told endless times. Draw on the "depositum fidei", on the treasure of the holiness of the Church. But the Church made many mistakes. Men made many mistakes, and this is reassuring, it comforts us during this life journey that each of us has undertaken. Because it means that we can do it, too, with our mistakes, sins and miseries. Think about what a perfect Church would be: unreachable, cold, glacial.

History cannot be erased. The great collection of the Vatican Museums that we will see in a few minutes begins right from the pagan, greek-roman age. Christianity was born within the Roman Empire (which was the known world at the time), causing a silent and implosive revolution. There were Christian slaves and Christian masters: and St. Paul addresses both, urging them to live their own Christian condition. And sicne then, "There are no slaves or masters, but one race, the race of the children of God." And the Empire collapses on itself. 250 years of persecution against Christians. And today? We have just concluded what was termed "the century of martyrs" (reading the document "The Five Paradoxes of the Century of New Martyrs"). Persecution changes methods, but remains and it is very pervasive.



We will begin from God the Creator, that is, He who has done all things from nothing, the world and the heart of every man, all different from each other. Think about God's creativity, he never repeats himself!

The Bible is closely related to us. Take the Pentateuch (that is, the first 5 books) and read Exodus, chap. 25-28. Because? Is God who needs the Ark? We are the ones we need to see, to test, to meditate. We are made of flesh and bones, we have intellect and will, we have 5 senses, we want to touch reality, we can not see the supernatural. The man without a sign of God fabricates idols: hedonism (the idol of the beautiful flesh), materialism (the idol of material possession), relativism (the idol of personal selfishness).

But the Church (and we are resuming: Who is the Church? What is the Church? Men joined to Christ through his visible chief, the Pope) instead of worrying about building altars, painting pairs, sculpting Madonna and Saints, to order precious goblets and ostensiers, should not care for the poor, the last? It is here that nests heresy (which means choice) when we adopt the "aut aut" system instead of "et et".

There is a need for this and that, the beautiful churches for everyone and a roof for everyone (without transforming the Church into an NGO ...: it is the Church's duty to form the consciousness of every man so that he can engage in social life and take charge of some problems). So: church and poor, liturgy and caring for souls, prayer and bread. There is a crazy hunger for God, for the word that heals, for the smile that soothes, bandages and heals the wounds, the embrace of God given by men and women!.

Become artisans of a carved, painted, engraved and lived Bible.

In the courtyard of the Vatican Museums you will see a Tomato! (Gio Pomodoro is a famous Italian artist) and then the first image of the Trinity, the first attempt to represent one of the main mysteries of our faith. You will see Giotto's painting depicting the Child Jesus with his fingers in his mouth: this is a huge innovation both for Giotto's times and for our own, if we are aware of the meaning of gestures in art. A god who not only becomes a man, but he is a man like us, he is a baby with his fingers in his mouth: in opposition to the Pantocrator's stereotype.