

The “New Humanism”

The church has traveled a long way in study and reflection to a new, humanistic view of the world. On its journey it discovered anew its sources and their relevance for appreciating the modern age. In this regard we can speak about a new humanism which has taken shape within the secularized world. This way of thinking places the human being and not God at the center of its thinking. Christianity has much in common with this new humanism. Christians embrace the principle that they bear responsibility for their brothers and sisters and for the course of history (cf. GS 55). Furthermore, Christianity enriches humanist ideas and attitudes by adding the divine reality. God and humanity do not face one another as rivals, and the affirmation of God in no way lessens or denies human responsibility for the secular world (cf. GS 34).

The Christian humanist Teilhard de Chardin caught well the human and divine dimension about which we speak in the following text:

We are deserters? We are sceptical of the future of the material world? We are disgusted by human labor? Oh, how little you know us... You suspect us of not sharing in your worries, your hopes, your elation at penetrating the secrets and conquering the powers of Earth. “Such feelings,” you say, “can only be shared by people who fight together for their existence. You Christians, however, profess yourselves already saved!” As if, for us, as much as and still more than for you, it were not a question of life and death that the Earth succeed, even in its most natural powers! For you (and precisely here you are not human enough, you do not go to the very limits of your humanity) it is only a question of the success or failure of a reality which, even if visualized with the features of some super-humanity, remains vague and unclear. For us, in factual truth, it is a question of completing the triumph of the very God. I grant you, one thing is bitterly disappointing: many Christians live their lives as do other people, too little conscious of the “divine” responsibilities of their lives. They take it easy, without feeling goaded or drunkenly driven to advance the Kingdom of God in all areas of human endeavor. But ascribe that to our frailty. In the name of our faith we have the right and the duty to commit ourselves passionately to the things of Earth... You are humans? “Plus et ego!” (*The Devine Milieu*, New York, 1960, 38-39).

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