
Council of Europe: Holy See's 50th anniversary in Strasbourg. Feix (theologian), religious pluralism on the continent "is and will remain a fact"

(Strasbourg) "Religions have contributed" to the "foundations and values on which the European architecture was built at the service of peace". This is, in brief, the point made in the closing speech of the seminar "Building Europe Together" which came to a close yesterday at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Strasbourg. The event was held to mark the 50th anniversary of the Holy See's observer status at the Council of Europe. Mark Feix, Professor of Ethics and Moral Theology at the Faculty and Coordinator of the Seminar, provided an historical reflection on the contribution made by religions. Moving from the 1949 Treaty of London, which established the Council of Europe, and notably the debate on what are the roots of the continent - Catholic? Christian? Religiously plural? -, he showed how "the Greek-Roman heritage, Judaism and Islam have also shaped the European identity" together with Christianity. "Pluralism in Europe is and will remain a fact", Feix said. As for the debate around the fact that no reference is made to the Christian roots in the European Treaty, Feix stressed the potential of Article 17 on dialogue between the European institutions and religious communities: "Churches are thus allowed to have their say today", "not just a reference to the past". Moreover, Feix pointed out, "Christians should not so much make Christian values live, but rather to live values as Christians. It is a condition to safeguard the freedom to believe or not to believe. And it is also the richness of sharing ethics and values with others as we live together in fraternity".

Valentina Bombelli