



## **VATICAN - THE WORDS OF DOCTRINE by Rev. Nicola Bux and Rev Salvatore Vitiello**

### **'Idea of man' central to Catholic commitment in politics**

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - When two months ago an Italian Catholic weekly said that Catholics did not wish to be mortified within a political party, immediately one of them hastened to contradict; however recent events would appear to confirm what the periodical said. Certainly, the distinction made by the weekly was somewhat subtle for the majority to understand: there is no such thing as a Catholic politician or lay politician, but rather believers and non believers involved in politics. Therefore we would say more simply, that the Christian faith is authentic because it serves not to increase power but instead to stir conscience to delimit power and protect the powerless, the poor and the weak, said secular leader Vaclav Havel, who in 1989 became president of post-Communist Czechoslovakia. This means that Catholics involved in politics - like non believers - must propose the good or the goods to be shared to the conscience of citizens. This principle is valid at every latitude and for every political system.

Jesus said what is of Caesar must be given to Caesar and what is of God, must be given to God, so as to separate political power from divine power, in order to make room for freedom of conscience. It is this freedom which makes it impossible for "neutrality" to exist in politics. Politics, any choice of politics, is never neutral and can never be. But neither are laboratory tests absolutely neutral, especially those which "manipulate" life at its origin, since they presuppose an anthropology, a certain understanding of man, and have considerable influence on the lives of individuals. Legislative measures can never be detached from reality, or they will be useless. Politics has always at its roots an idea of man and women, which demands to be concretised in precise and set political options.

This is why when faced with any political option one must always ask: "What idea of man have these persons in mind? and what concrete political measures do they propose to actuate this idea?". Unfortunately too few persons in politics have the courage to propose anything clearly identifiable, especially at the level of an "idea of man".

What is most concerning is the re-appearance, with dramatic regularity in the parliaments and government structures of many countries all over the world, of proposals which tend to "misrepresent by law" institutes of natural right, such as the family, or legitimate, by means of de-penalisation, what advocates of "aseptic knowledge" intend to make us "swallow" as "sweet death". There are "nonnegotiable principles" such as the family, life and education, on which Catholics cannot compromise, whatever the case, whatever the reason; therefore they cannot be mortified by explicit attacks on what is most sacred, on the part of those who want to destroy the present social arrangement in order to fulfil desires which in reality are whims, or pursue dreams which are nightmares.

There is not only an "economic" revolution, there are many much more dangerous, creeping, ideological, revolutions which claim to re-introduce issues foreign to common sensitivity and which, fundamentally, reveal an idea of man totally ideological and removed from reality, as well as nature. If politics goes astray in this meandering, remember it is never up to Caesar to establish who man is! Men and women of goodwill, believers and non believers, are well aware of this: there exist "nonnegotiable principles" and to fight to defend them, is a sufficient reason to give significance to a whole lifetime. (Agenzia Fides 7/3/2008; righe 41, parole 595)