

Studia Moralia

53/1

GENNAIO - GIUGNO

2015

Stefano Zamboni

Luce della fede, verità dell'amore. Sulla tesi di fondo dell'enciclica *Lumen fidei*

Giorgio I. Mantzaridis

Lo spirito dell'etica cristiana

Alfonso V. Amarante

Pastoralità come criterio morale

Terence Kennedy

Marriage in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas

Martín Carbajo Núñez

The contribution by religions to peaceful coexistence in Society

Antuan Ilgit

Patient's autonomy and informed consent. An end-of-life case study from Turkey

* * *

Presentazione dei libri

Di Pietro Maria Luisa – Faggioni Maurizio Pietro

Bioetica e infanzia. Dalla teoria alla prassi

Giuseppe De Virgilio (a cura di), *“La vocazione alla santità”*.

Prospettive nel 50° della “Lumen gentium”. Studi in onore di Terence G. Kennedy

Alfonso V. Amarante (a cura di), *Fedeli alla chiesa del Redentore*

Scritti in onore di Sabatino Majorano

Claudio Bertero, *Persona e comunione. La prospettiva di Joseph Ratzinger*

* * *

Konferenzbericht *Glaube und Moral*

Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church (CTEWC)

Konrad Glombik



THE CONTRIBUTION BY RELIGIONS TO PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE IN SOCIETY

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This paper is intended to illustrate the contribution that religions can make to peaceful coexistence in society¹. This is now more necessary than ever, because our globalized world is subject to severe tensions. Good and evil have acquired global dimensions, placing in our hands the ecological balance and our common future. Paraphrasing Lorenz' famous expression, we can say that "the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil can set off a tornado in Texas"².

The twentieth century has been "the bloodiest in human history"³ and nowadays the situation does not seem to be improving. According to the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research⁴, 2013 has been the year with more wars and violent conflicts since the end of the World War II, a number that goes on the rise since 2006. Obviously, it is necessary to find a more stable foundation for peace.

Many authors assert the need for global ethics (e.g. Jonas) and propose a more active role of religions in the public sphere, in order

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¹ The original text corresponds to a conference pronounced at the 5th Symposium for Muslim-Christian Dialogue, organized by the Franciscan Family at Istanbul (Turkey), 26-27 September 2014, on the subject: "Contributions of Religions to Peace".

² Edward Lorenz used this phrase to explain the Chaos theory, but it has also been used to express the perils of a very interdependent world. Cfr. R. C. HILBORN, «Sea gulls, butterflies, and grasshoppers: a brief history of the butterfly effect in nonlinear dynamics», in *American Journal of Physics* 72/4 (2004) 425-427.

Sommario

1. A secular age

- 1.1. Immanent humanism: "etsi deus non daretur"
- 1.2. Scientism

2. Proposals to ensure peace

- 2.1. Global ethics
- 2.2. Interreligious dialogue

3. Religions and peace from a catholic perspective

- 3.1. Religion wars, an expression of immaturity
- 3.2. Nostra aetate: interreligious and intercultural dialogue
- 3.3. The seeds of the word (*semina verbi*)

4. The spirit of assisi

5. The necessary change of mentality in the spirit of assisi

Conclusion