

Ecclesiastical Tourism and the Paradox of Happiness

Descrizione

At the first glance the following two contributions look rather diverse – hardly related. Alfonso Casalini writes on the role of catholic and religious cultural heritage and the need for the implementation of modern management tools, especially in the organization of ecclesiastical museums. Timo Airaksinen writes on “Desire and the Socratic Paradox of Happiness” – a philosophic paper as its title clearly indicates. It is triggered by the observation that a lucky person will prefer his good circumstances regardless of the fact that he is and remains unhappy – which is in contrast, but not necessarily in contradiction, of Socrates’ dictum that a virtuous person is always happy, regardless of his circumstances. Are desire and desiring the keys to unlock this paradox? Airaksinen’s desire theory of happiness says that you are gratified and happy when you are able to satisfy your desires. As a consequence, he concludes, “life’s conditions are crucial to the quality and value of happiness.”

Alfonso Casalini would argue that, for many people, religion and ecclesiastical culture are essential dimensions of their life’s conditions. He points out that there are between 300 and 330 million religious tourists, yearly, who generate an estimated turnover of 18 billion dollars worldwide. Do these numbers reflect a desire? Casalini’s assumption is that the “Religious Cultural Institutions” of the Catholic Church are called upon to contribute to satisfy these desires – and his claim is that this has to be done in an efficient way. A precondition is the application of modern management technics. He focuses on ecclesiastical museums to illustrate the problem and demonstrate the need for reforms: “a more economic (but not necessarily monetary) approach is needed.” There are still too many of these “ante-management” museums which “are devoid of website, do not have a social network activity and do not have revenues (or do not indicate them).”

Casalini observes that the growing need of a spiritual-but-not-religious cultural experience implies great opportunities for the ecclesiastical cultural institutions. But there is also the constraint that, e.g., ecclesiastical museums “should not disregard

the statutory objectives that want these museums as a living-heritage of the Catholic religion.” There are trade-offs. This brings us back to Timo Airaksinen’s contribution in this issue and the observation that there are “desirable but impossible-to-get-objects.”

Campi meta