

**B**ernadin DUMA, *Personalismul comunitar la Emmanuel Mounier. Un alt mod de a gândi despre persoană (Communitarian personalism of Emmanuel Mounier: Another Way of Thinking about the Person)*, Serafica Publishing House, Roman, 2023, 378 pp.

It's a real joy and at the same time a honor to present to the reading public the review of the book, *Communitarian Personalism of Emmanuel Mounier: Another Way of Thinking about the Person* written by Bernadin Duma, Dean of the Faculty of Pastoral Theology of the Roman Catholic Franciscan Theological Institute in Roman and full professor at the Department of philosophy and moral theology.

The volume opens with a *Premise* (pp. 5-7), followed by three chapters (pp. 9-338), *General Conclusions* (pp. 339-343) and an extensive *Bibliography* (pp. 345-374), through which the author aims to make a critical reconstruction of the communitarian personalism of Emmanuel Mounier from a social, philosophical and cultural points of view. From the beginning we must specify that the basically principles of the philosophical thinking are originated from a constant dialogue with the various vicissitudes that accompany the human being throughout his existence following the common thread of the desire to transform reality in an eminently practice outlook.

The first chapter entitled: *The context of Mounierian personalism* progressively introduces us into the domain of factors that provoked a philosophical reflection regarding the anthropological crisis of the 20th century and Mounier's personalist and communitarian proposal. The Grenoble's philosopher under the influence of Charles Péguy, Gabriel Marcel and Max Scheler, in close collaboration with Jacques Maritain, seeks a total understanding of the personal universe and its development in concrete structures such as social, political and cultural. All this in order to overcome the anthropological crisis that began in the period between

the two world wars, because “we will never repeat too much that our personalism is not centered on a political activity, but is a total effort to understand and overcome the man crisis of the 20th century”. The core of Mounier’s personalism resides in the affirmation of the person’s inner and social, metaphysical and religious values that he exposes with great clarity in the *Esprit* magazine.

We cannot understand the meaning of the person in relation to the structure of the personal universe if we do not explore the sources of access such as anthropological, philosophical and theological ones. All this leads us to the personalistic idea about the person, taking into account the place he occupies in the world, in society and in his near and distant universe as well as the relationships he establishes with his peers on a horizontal and vertical level, is the theme of the second chapter of the book.

The third chapter entitled: *The discourse on the person and the community*, the author presents the methodology that Emmanuel Mounier uses in elaborating his idea of communitarian personalism and the background reflection from a philosophical point of view about the person and his relationship with society in the context of the crisis of European civilization.

In common language, the notions of individual and person are often used interchangeably to denote the same reality. Personalism, on the contrary, makes a clear distinction, namely: with the person, it aims to overcome the individual as a material dimension of human existence by opening it to its spiritual dimension. A person, beside the individual, is body, flesh and soul, somatic, psychic and spiritual totality.

Mounier is aware that the problem of man must be approached in an integral manner, leaving no space for a partial vision, as happened at the beginning of the 20th century. For this reason he proposes two fundamental actions of the person: *internalization* and *externalization*, which together represent a total vision of the human being. In this perspective, the community becomes a crucial point of reference for the growth and development of the person, a motivation for which this topic is approached beyond the conceptual domain, since its analysis aims to explain the

value and importance of the groups present in the community that play a fundamental role in the process of personalization. In this perspective, the community can be considered a privileged place to integrate the persons in which they realize and preserve their own vocation. Therefore, Mounier proposes a gradual system on different levels as possible forms of communal life by ordering them hierarchically and proposes a community progress that starts from the so-called *world of the self*, to then move towards a second level, called *the societies within us*, which opens the way to the *vital societies* to reach the highest level known as the *personalistic community*.

In the *personalist community*, bonds are freely managed, which may or may not build on imposed structures unless if they no derive from an experience of collective freedom that leaves space for compromise and perseverance. In this sense, Mounier states that the first link of the community is love, since love makes up the unity of the community, just as vocation makes up the unity of the person.

In conclusion, we want praise the printed volume, because it gives us the opportunity to deepen the communitarian personalism in the thought form grounded and developed by Emmanuel Mounier in order to be able to overcome the current crises that defy not only the human person and the quality of life, but also the whole society subjected to irreparable changes. So, we congratulate the author for the worthy research work he has done in these years and through which he managed to present us with a paradigm shift in the way we relate to the person and to the society.

**Rev. Dr. Maximilian PAL**