

## Marta Cartabia Laudatio Copernicus Prize

The tension between Ratio and Fide has evolved over time. Historically, and where better to understand this in the city of Copernicus, it was a veritable tension between the Truth proclaimed by Holy scripture and the truth established by science, by reason.

Our understanding of Holy Scripture has matured. We do not look to the bible for astronomy, of biology and we even have a discerning and critical way, based on established historical methodologies, in the way treat historical claims made in the bible.

We understand the Bible as instructions and teaching for a way of life -- not physics, but metaphysics. Instructions on ethics and the meaning of a meaningful life where science is silent, or should be silent. The Bible addresses questions which science does not ask, and cannot answer.

People, and there are quite a few, including among scholars, who continue to harp on this old version of the tension as a way of criticizing Fide but usually simply demonstrate an ignorance of religion. They like the old version because it allows them to mock religion.

We will forgive them.

The more relevant contemporary tension between Fide and Ratio is not epistemic but sociological. In Europe, We live in a Post Constantin Epoch. The people of faith are a minority. And they are oftentimes mocked. It used to be Cristophobia. Now it is worse – it is Cristoamnesia. At least they do not throw us to the lions.

One result of this sociological reality is sad. Less so in Poland, but very common elsewhere in Europe. People of faith have internalized the teaching of the French Revolution that religion is a private affair which should be kept private and has no place in public. Many Christians when in public, hide the fact of their faith. It is as if they are ashamed to be

Christians. At home, many will make the sign of the cross when they sit down to eat. In restaurant they will not.

Now you are thinking: Is this not meant to be a Laudatio for Marta Cartabia, not a lecture on Fide and Ratio? You are mistaken. I have been talking about Marta Cartabia without yet mentioning her name. Because if there is any merit in my analysis of the contemporary stage of debate of Fide and Ratio I can think of no one more deserving of this Prize than Marta Cartabia.

She, of course, has reached the apex of her professional career. Distinguished Professor, President of the Italian Constitutional Court, Minister of Justice. Respected by her colleagues worldwide. Adored by her students.

Take a look at her books on Amazon – in various languages and covering the whole gamut of what you would expect from a major constitutional law scholar.

But would you expect

Pope Benedict XVI's *Legal Thought: A Dialogue on the Foundation of Law (Law and Christianity)* or *Giustizia e mito: Con Edipo, Antigone e Creonte*

to give but two examples?

And if and when you read these, you will see the perfect line, the perfect synthesis between Fide and Ratio. The Fide is subjected to a rigorous examination with the tool of ratio. The ratio is informed, clearly, by a sensibility deriving from the metaphysics of faith.

What of the sociological challenge I mentioned before? We find here a very similar balance and synthesis. Cartabia's religious identity is never concealed. It is part of the profile with which she is known and for which she is respected. She does not scream about from the rooftops, as some do. But she does not hide it either.

She knows to draw the line, here too. When sitting as a judge, her Bible is, as it should be, the Italian Constitution. But she is a judge who approaches her task, as she should with the sensibility, gentle and refined, formed by Fide.

Why do I say that it is right that it should be so? The cultural heritage of Europe is informed by two traditions – Athens and Jerusalem. That’s who we are. Or at least, that is who we should be. That is true Europe.

Judges are human beings, not machines. There is no one appointed to a court who does not come with certain sensibilities, ethical and moral, formed by his or her past, upbringing, education. It would be aberrational if a court in present day Europe were constituted without the particular sensibility we have inherited by the Jerusalem roots of our civilization as it would be equally aberrational if the tradition of Athens were not present.

What is special about Marta Cartabia that she is the perfect synthesis and harmonization of both Athens and Jerusalem.

Here is another way in which I would like to describe Marta Cartabia.

For me the most significant, moving and profound prophetic statement in the entire Bible is to be found in the book of Micah:

O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

(Walk humbly, but not secretly.)

Marta Cartabia, as Scholar, Judge and Human Being, is the embodiment of this teaching.