

refer to the statistics on Catholic higher education published in 1990 by the Congregation for Catholic Education, the following countries are missing: Czechoslovakia (three university institutes), Hungary and Ireland (one university institute each), Yugoslavia (two), Lithuania (one), Austria (joined with Germany: five) and Portugal (with one Catholic university). This would mean that there would be a total of 220 university institutes in Europe, 23 of which would be universities in the full sense (1,036 worldwide, with 191 universities).

The real difficulty lies in distinguishing the true universities, of which the universities of Louvain and Leuven could constitute a model, the faculties of canon law, the 'university institutes' and all institutions included in the term 'higher education', which are of very different size and importance. Within the same country, France, if one can cite five Catholic universities (as well as three 'Ecclesiastical faculties': the Centre Sèvres des Jésuites, the Facultés dominicaines du Saulchoir, and the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg), similar categories often hide very different realities: while Lille, counting on its regional industry, is rebuilding a 'Fédération Universitaire et Polytechnique' around its 'Grandes Ecoles', Paris has preferred to privilege the religious and theological sector amid a very dense university fabric and Angers has tried to strike a delicate balance between its old university tradition and the call for professionalism.

Nearly everywhere, the student body has become very heterogeneous with practising Catholics, non-practising Catholics, sociological Catholics and non-believers. Links with the civil society have become more stable: the reality of Catholic higher education has now been recognized and defended even if, as in France, the Catholic universities are left to the mercy of a subvention that is voted every year because of the absence of a convention with the State.

Attitudes towards the Catholic Church, which is, in principle, the main authority under which these institutions fall, are extremely subtle. What Father Boné wrote about Belgium could easily apply to the evolution of Catholic institutions of higher education in Europe in the last 20 years, which has witnessed a certain form of 'declericalization'. The elements which prove this are very clear:

Whereas until the sixties all the rectors were ecclesiastics nominated by an administrative body mainly composed of the Catholic hierarchy, today only two rectors out of seven are ecclesiasts. The rectors of each institution are nominated according to different procedures: the nomination is often made officially by the organizing powers after proposition of the governing council. The organizing powers are often Christian laymen who control the institution; the presence of the Catholic hierarchy is very small, and sometimes consists of only one person, who is sometimes not even required statutorily.

And Father Boné adds:

It is clear that this situation shows the ecclesiastical responsibility and commitment of the Christian laics in the service of the Catholic university and that this marks considerable progress in the adult vitality of the Christian population. This is a reason to rejoice. But the corollary of this evolution is the participation and vigilance of a greater number of people within the institution in order to promote its Christian specificity which is left less and less to the head of a diocese or a religious dignitary than in the past (p.47).

Translated from the French

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This survey of the Catholic institutions of higher education in Europe is the fourth volume of a series which already comprises a study on Asia (103 Catholic universities and colleges in 1983), Latin America (published in 1985) and North America and Canada (published in 1988). The methodology has changed: we have abandoned the long questionnaire and have let each country give information on their Catholic institutions of higher education (history, description, identity), on the stakes and the problems with which they are confronted. A short bibliography and a list of institutions with their address, date of foundation, principal faculties, institutes and schools completes these essays.

The following countries are included: Belgium (E. Boné), England and Wales (J.S. Cuming), Spain (M. Marroquin), France (L. Collin), Germany (N. Lobkowitz), Holy See (A.A. Roest Crolius), Italy (A. Bausola), Malta (V. Borg), Netherlands (J.F.M.C. Aarts and J.G.J.M. Wennink), Poland (T. Kulokowicz), Scotland (B.J. McGettrick) and Switzerland (A. Schenker). If we