

## *Common Memory and Collective Forgiveness*

### *Introduction*

The Christianity and Society Center, part of the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross (Rome) and the Confederation of Businessmen Coparmex (Mexico), launch a conference entitled "Common Memory and Collective Forgiveness". The event is sponsored by the Dicastery for Evangelization (Holy See) and it will take place in Rome, as listed in the [Jubilee 2025](#) activities.

For the Christian faithful, the Jubilee is a year characterized by remission of sins and reconciliation. In the biblical world, the Jubilee had a strong social dimension, as liberation from the negative dependence relationships between human beings (slavery, usury, domination, offenses and revenge, etc.). Now it already provides us with an opportunity for reflection, in order to better prepare ourselves to this special year: we should explore new horizons and ways to achieve peace in today's society, wounded in its interpersonal relationships and traversed by social conflicts, including armed ones.

Among other things, *Common memory* advocates for those who have been forgiven to pass on this experience to others, as an act of memory purification and liberation from resentment. The memory of the offense is relevant for forgiveness, but it should not make the person – or a group – captive of pain and revenge. Rather, it should contribute to discovering the others' vulnerability and one's own vulnerability. The impulse to renew a relationship, and reach an eventual reconciliation can arise from this memory.

The spreading of collective forgiveness and apologies since the early 1990s raises a number of issues to explore. *Collective forgiveness* is not simply a group's forgiveness: it requires the group to be an organized structure and not just a sum of individuals. Collectives have qualities distinct from those of each person that make up the collective. More importantly, these groups usually have formal organizational structures, which enable them to make decisions and take action together. Subjects of such acts of collective forgiveness are groups such as – including but not exhaustively – countries and States, the Church, universities, companies, etc., but also ethnic groups or collectives whose unifying feature is the share of the suffering caused by the same type of offense.

However, collective forgiveness is modeled on interpersonal forgiveness. Specialists (philosophers, jurists, theologians, historians, sociologists, etc.) investigate a variety of topics, including the very possibility of the existence of collective forgiveness, offense, memory, truth, responsibility, justice and its limits, guilt, solidarity between generations, storytelling, reparation or public use of history. Collective forgiveness has also brought renewed attention to our society institutions, to their mechanisms of representation or to the loss of citizens' trust in them. These issues influence the soundness of relationships at all levels, the lack of peace and reconciliation in society, in families, in

individuals. Such problems are due not only to the fading among citizens of the culture of forgiveness, but also to the non-recognition of the evil as such, consequently excluding repentance. Eventually, common memory and collective forgiveness influence the judicial and legislative structures of society, facilitating or hindering the creation of contexts favoring the possibility of forgiving and asking for forgiveness.

The conference intends to carefully explore how an organization can initiate processes of recognition of common memory and collective forgiveness in view of the peace needed in today's society. Ultimately, these processes would arise from the consideration of God's forgiveness of each person (theological field), from the awareness of belonging to a community where mistakes need not be definitive (philosophical and relational field) and from creating new processes rendering easier to forgive and ask for forgiveness (field of institutions, justice and law).

## *Practical information*

As part of the official Jubilee events, Pope Francis is calling for a day of prayer on Sunday, May 4 2025. He is inviting all the participants in the Jubilee for Entrepreneurs also to some special activities on Monday, May 5, 2025.

The conference "Common Memory and Collective Forgiveness" will take place on Tuesday, May 6 and Wednesday, May 7, 2025 at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross. The official languages are English, Spanish and Italian. Simultaneous translation into English will be provided.

Before and after every midday break, each participant will be able to choose between: 1) papers prepared by academics in the conceptual definition of collective forgiveness and common memory, or 2) testimonies of businessmen or other people with experiences of offense and forgiveness: overcoming a kidnapping, forgiving those who have defrauded them in business, reaching an agreement with their relatives for difficulties in the company, etc. In both cases, a list of topics and speakers will be available for consultation at the beginning of the congress.

Professors and students of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross will be able to participate free of charge. Alumni, professors and students from other universities will be charged a fee of €150. The fee for entrepreneurs (€1,000 per person or €1,500 per couple) will include lunches, dinners and receptions during those days. Travel and hotel costs are the responsibility of each participant.

Professors wishing to present an academic communication during the conference must submit the final title and the abstract of the paper (approximately 200 words) until October 31, 2024. Paper submission should be sent to Prof. Miriam Savarese: [m.savarese@pusc.it](mailto:m.savarese@pusc.it) until this deadline. The authors will receive a response regarding the acceptance of their papers indicating the room, day and time of the presentation. Each speaker will have 15 minutes to present the paper, including questions. The final text, in English, Italian or Spanish, should follow the editorial guidelines of the journal *Annales Theologici*. Its length must be between 7,000 and 10,000 characters including spaces. The deadline for submitting the papers is June 30, 2025. The authors will receive a response regarding the acceptance of their papers after peer review.

Entrepreneurs or participants wishing to share a personal testimony may contact Professor Cristian Mendoza before February 2025, e-mail address: [cmendoza@pusc.it](mailto:cmendoza@pusc.it).

For any other questions or information, please contact the Centro Cristianesimo e Società e-mail address: [dsc@pusc.it](mailto:dsc@pusc.it)