



ATHEISM / COURTYARD OF THE GENTILES



The Courtyard of the Gentiles is a department of the Pontifical Council for Culture which intends to respond to the desire expressed by the Holy Father on the occasion of the Christmas Greetings to the Curia on December 21, 2009.

With the *Motu proprio 'Inde a Pontificatus»* of March 25, 1993, the Servant of God John Paul II united the Pontifical Council for Dialogue with Non-believers (founded in 1965 by Pope Paul VI) to the Pontifical Council for Culture.

La Costituzione *Pastor Bonus* assigned to the Dicastery the mission to “foster relations between the Holy See and the realm of human culture, especially by promoting communication with various contemporary institutions of learning and teaching, so that secular culture may be more and more open to the Gospel, and specialists in the sciences, literature, and the arts may feel themselves called by the Church to truth, goodness, and beauty. (art. 166). And in the *Motu proprio «Inde a Pontificatus»* one can read the following: “The Council expresses the Church's pastoral concern in the face of the serious phenomena of the rift between the Gospel and cultures. It therefore promotes the study of the problem of unbelief and religious indifference found in various forms indifferent cultural milieus, inquiring into the causes and the consequences for Christian faith, in order to offer adequate support to the Church's pastoral activity in evangelizing cultures and inculturating the Gospel.” (art. 2)

By suggesting the idea of the Court of the Gentiles, the Holy Father offers to this dicastery the opportunity to give a name which— for use *ad extra* and in a world where communication is an important element of any action to be relevant – provokes curiosity and arouses interest. It therefore deals with nothing else but highlighting through this name, one of the essential dimensions of this Dicastery which we must recognize has lost some of its visibility over the past two decades.

The prospects of development of the Courtyard of the Gentiles are no different from those defined in *Pastor Bonus*, namely: *undertake directly suitable projects* (art. 168) to create space for interaction “*with those to whom religion is something foreign, to whom God is unknown and who nevertheless do not want to be left merely Godless, but rather to draw near to him, albeit as the Unknown.*” (Benedict XVI, Speech to the Curia, 21/12/2009) ; *follow through on those which are undertaken by various institutes of the Church* in the field of dialogue and, *so far as necessary, lend them assistance* (art.168).

To follow the activities of the Courtyard of the Gentiles: www.cortiledeigentili.com

