

*Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"*

*Luke 24,32*

Trying to describe the Summer Session of the Phoenix Institute is doomed from the very beginning due to its richness, let alone sharing some thoughts that through their nature are rarely transmissible. Keeping them to myself on the other hand would be even worse than incapable conveying, so let me tell you about the good that I have experienced at Notre Dame to pass it further and to express my gratitude.

If I were to close everything that I have experienced at Notre Dame in only one phrase (what a daunting prospect!) I would call it 'burning of the heart'. On coming to Notre Dame, I did not realize that I would find there something I had been seeking for the last 18 months. Full of hesitation and worries about my future, being at a crossroads and not satisfied with my present graduate studies, I was looking forward to the Summer Session of Phoenix Institute as an opportunity to regain the clarity of thought or at least break from the dejection, yet at the same time I was fairly doubtful whether it could be possible. To my surprise, reality proved to be much better than my expectations and the needed change turned out to be not only possible but actually happening.

My heart was burning at many occasions. It was burning when I was going through the careful and moving selection of recommended readings for the class on heroism, when I was silently participating in some of the lessons or when I was watching my teachers lecturing wittily and brilliantly. However, my heart was burning the most and has started its 'inner journey' during conversations on the bases of the Universe with wise and open people, whose advice was so firm and clear yet nevertheless so gentle. Mostly thanks to these sparkling conversations and an opportunity to observe true examples of virtuous lives combined with a possibility to lead a little more spiritual life by myself than before, I have started to retrieve peace of mind and joy. Surprisingly, the abundance of classes and demanding homeworks, which made us stay till early hours in the morning, were not an obstacle but a very helpful device and an incentive to rethink numerous personal and professional issues. These are the grounds, the first and the most important concerns from which others are stemming from, so let me thank for them primarily.

There are of course many other aspects to be discussed. Educationally, the Summer Session at the University of Notre Dame is a wonderful academic experience, especially beneficial to someone who is used to European universities. Well conceived courses, which had separate topics yet strictly corresponding contents, should be mentioned at the first place. International atmosphere, when speaking about apparently obvious matters, provided an exceptional opportunity to exchange views and ideas among students and the faculty. It did not only help to get to know more about different cultures, but also to understand better one's own origin and to elaborate a common vision of shared problems. It was inspiring intellectually but first and foremost, true friendships were born in the meanwhile. I believe that without the perspective of friendship, the vast majority of our discussions would likely turn out to be plain and fruitless.

It was the possibility to meet more experienced scholars and students that made the Summer School of the Phoenix Institute an occasion to clarify not only my mind about future career and professional life. I expect that thanks to watching my lecturers, I will be able to prepare myself better to the role of an academic teacher in the future. What's more, staying a month at Notre Dame helped me to gain a little bit of self-confidence and encouraged me to develop some new ideas and to continue the good ones.

It has been almost a month since I came back to Poland. Daily routines and duties are a call for quiet leadership, perseverance and being open to new appealing and challenging possibilities. Therefore, the most important task is to keep the spirit of the Phoenix Institute and Notre Dame. My friends in Warsaw have noticed a subtle change in me. I am glad that my Notre-Dame-experience has not only subjective but also objective dimension, at least to some extent, so let me thank once again dr Evans and the Phoenix Institute, all the people whose help made my coming to Notre Dame possible, all of my teachers, co-students and last but not least, those people whose personal example and eagerness for conversations, no matter how late it was and how tired we were, influenced me so much.

Please, excuse my very personal style. I believe that I am writing to friends. The men who were going to Emaus as soon as they realized Who they had just met, *set out at once and returned to Jerusalem* [Luke 24, 32], so let me wish you and me to keep our hearts burning and to be able at every moment to set out *at once*.