

It is 1:00 a.m. in the morning, and even though we have not had enough sleep for many days now, we are not tired yet. After a delicious taste of home made dishes from five different cultures, we find ourselves walking outside, admiring the most beautiful sky of our lives with the guidance of one of our professors, who explains the stars, the galaxies and the stories behind the constellations.

Days later, thinking of that experience, I cannot help to realize the gorgeous rareness in this: young students who have an early class the next morning have asked their professor to give a lecture on the sky, the professor has gladly accepted and he is eloquently sharing one of his passions. Anyone can tell this is not something that happens very often.

This kind of experience is a powerful example of what happens at the Phoenix Institute. It is fair to say that this sky above corresponds properly to what the Phoenix Institute manages to achieve down here.

To be part of this is to remain astonished at every moment. The wonder of our classmates' biographies, the imposing character of the medieval *Kartause* and its ancient history, the devotion and integrity of our professors, the deepness of the subjects we discuss, the honesty of everyone's laughter, the feeling of being growing at every step...

Around here it is not weird to talk about Islam and Saint Agustin, about Mozart or the modern art; it is not odd to analyze the elections in Mexico, the Roman Empire, the law in the Nederland; it is natural to converse of the moral conflicts of a physician, of Sophocles, of poverty, of family.

Among us we find interpreters, economists, politologists, lawyers, journalists, philosophers. Some of them have experienced war in the flesh, others know what is like to suffer the consequences of the communist totalitarian regime, one considers to embrace the contemplative life, another one is a mother, one recites

a fragment of the Divine Comedy and a couple more sing the *Salve* in Latin while praying the rosary.

We are all willing to learn, to understand, to listen, but without knowing it, we all also end up teaching somehow. As the days pass, we all disclose ourselves more openly. Very few times I have been looked in the eye as in the Phoenix Institute. You have the sense of being accompanied, understood, confronted and helped by each and every one of your fellows.

The word is inspiring.

The Phoenix Institute is a great environment for recovering and keeping the faith in humankind. It is a place in which truth speaks loud but gently through the voice and actions of all who are present. It provides an intense insight of what we share as human. It makes you question yourself directly about what is your part to play in this world. It also makes you want to start playing it right away. It reveals your being through what you feel and learn at every stage of the course.

In the end, I return home inspired and full of hope, but also with the sense of being gifted, of being touched by something (Someone?) greater. The conscience of my responsibility is flagrant: my task is now to spread such inspiration and hope where I am to be... and it is a beautiful, joyful task. I cannot wait to start.

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