**Sacra Congregatio Fontis**

1st European Goliardery

Council Meeting

Montecatini Terme 5-6-7 May 2017

Magna Charta

**"The Future of Goliardery[[1]](#footnote-1) in Europe"**

 We, the Goliards of Sacra Congregatio Fontis, goliardic order and cultural association of Valdinievole based in Montecatini Terme - with the support of the goliardic orders Sovranus ac Venerabilis Torrionis Ordo from Pisa and Sovrano Commendevolissimo Ordine Goliardico di San Salvi from Florence and with the participation of eminent Goliards from Bologna, Padua, Genoa, Vienna, Munich and Spain, here with reaffirm and certify the reflections and opinions on the current state of the Italian Goliardery and their future prospects in an European context following the 1st European Goliardery Council Meeting, which can be summarised as follows:

1. Firstly, the contributions of university professors during the Council Meeting allowed us to "travel" back in the historic past of Goliardery exploring some of its unprecedented and uncharted aspects which can be found in the works of great genes of the Middle Age and of the Renaissance such as Dante Alighieri and Leonardo da Vinci.

 2 Secondly, we recalled the importance and relevance of the cultural movement born in the 12th century and made up by students (Clerici vagantes) who - pushed by their intellectual curiositas were wandering from one Schola to another in search of the best teachers across the cities of the vast territory which will later be called "Europe", disseminating ideas of freedom of thought and spirit of independence - and keeping in mind the passion for the worldly life in nomine Bacci, Tabacci Venerisque - in a society fully dominated by kings, noblemen, feudal landowners and ecclesiastic power, with whom our clerici vagantes immediately came into conflict.

 3. From the glories of ancient times, from the successive gradual decadence and loss of importance of the “Goliardery”, we have come to the near past, especially to the years between the end of the Second World War and 1968. With the “Manifesto of the Goliardery" published in Venice in 1946, we could see a rebirth in Italy, with the active participation of numerous university students at freshman parties and goliardic orders. They were trying to climb the hierarchies by all means and adorn themselves with their external signs of recognition such as cloaks, feathers, medals and the typical traditional pointed hats, variously enriched with ornaments. At that time, the relationship between young university-students and former university-students was therefore clearly in favor of the former.

 4. Back to the present, the 1st European Goliardery Council Meeting provided the framework to discuss following topics: "Youth and Goliardery: past and present" and "Goliardic/student traditions in Europe: diversity and future prospects". We have found, according to the opinion of all the participants, as in Italy parties of freshmen and goliardic orders are now frequented only by a small number of students and former - university students, where former, that is those with “white hair”, appear to be the most active and the most part.

 5. The debate then focused on "if" and "how" it is possible to attract Italian students to Goliardery again, given that student associations in other European countries such as in Germany, Austria and Spain are full of young members and seem to be well integrated within civil society and universities.

 6. The Italian Goliardery movement needs to make a change. However, its noble and ancient

principles such as culture, love for freedom, freedom of criticism, cult of traditions, secularism and apolitical attitude must remain unchanged; its traditional external features (dresses, mantels, medals, hats) must remain unchanged; and also its passion for the worldly life and for coming together at parties and dinners with goliardic songs, wine or beer and daring jokes (which are the "salt" of Goliardery) must remain unchanged.

 7. The change must then concern the quality of expression and manifestation of Italian Goliardery, which has been authoritatively defined as too “foul-mouthed” and unpresentable, self-referential and not connected with civil society and the University. It is no longer time for "putting in underwear" freshmen - male or making the "artichoke" to freshmen – females, and even less for semi-violent or obscene acts or behavior. We need a qualitative leap, it is necessary that the culture returns in the goliardic orders, with the assumption of initiatives that are perhaps unusual in Italian student spirit.

 8. At the 1st European Goliardery Council Meeting it has been proposed, for instance, that groups of goliards – who are able to do so – set up music bands following the Spanish example, making use of a repertoire of popular songs which are widely available in the traditions of Italian regions. Moreover, comedies and cabaret shows could be performed. All initiatives involving meetings among goliard orders - open to the participation of experts and ordinary people - need to be promoted in order to discuss not only about goliardery but also about important culture and current issues. The changes should in any case be aimed at making the student accept with sympathy from people on any occasion or event, and for this reason the 'goliardic drive' must be contained and not exceed the right dose of carefree and cheerfulness by avoiding becoming 'obscene' and therefore unpresentable.

 9. Looking forward to receiving comments, further proposals and ideas by all the Goliards who are interested in the future of the Italian Goliardery, the participants to the 1st European Goliardery Council Meeting believe that the proposed changes – and other changes to be suggested in the same line of thought – do not lead to a distortion of Goliardery but rather to an enrichment of it, with the goal of attracting the attention of young students in the broader context of a civil society which is ready and willing to welcome, with joy, the heirs of clerici vagantes in the 21st Century.

**Gaudeamus Igitur!**



1. The term Goliardia (litteraly: Goliardery) refers to a traditional university student association in Italy. Around 80 associations of this type exist in all parts of the country (2002). These associations have a structure similar to the medieval knights’ orders. However in these Academic Orders the sword was represented by the art of dialectic. The Goliardi (the members of Goliardia) refer their origin to Peter Abelard (Latin: Petrus Abaelardus or Abailard), a medieval French scholastic philosopher, theologian and preeminent logician. Goliardic associations can be compared to the American fraternities and sororities (Source: Wikipedia). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)