

THE ITALIAN NEUROBIOETHICS STUDY AND RESEARCH GROUP: PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE NEUROSCIENCES FROM A PERSONALISTIC APPROACH

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The term “Neurobioetica” is the Italian translation for the English neologism “Neurobioethics”, introduced by James Giordano, US neuroscientist and neuroethicist, to emphasize the necessity of multidisciplinary and the role of the humanities for a comprehensive and well grounded reflection on recent neuroscientific discoveries also in view of their application to man. Founded in March 2009, the Italian Neurobioethics Multidisciplinary Research and Study Group of the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum (APRA) in Rome has gathered experts and scholars from the fields of Medicine (Neurology, Psychiatry, Pathology, Forensic Medicine, etc), Biology, Philosophy, Moral Philosophy, Moral Theology, Sociology, Bioethics, Law, Psychology, Media and Communication, etc., to discuss recent neuro-biotechnological advances from an anthropological perspective that attributes value and dignity to every Human Person, regardless of her status or condition. As part of the Science and Faith Institute and the UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Right of the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical Athenaeum, our Neurobioethics Group is so far the only Italy based group with a strong emphasis on the application of an interdisciplinary methodology through a personalistic “lens” and monthly meetings. The interests of the members of the group are diversified: a seminar on “Consciousness and the Dignity of the Human Person” has been hosted in September 2009, one on “Brain Stimulation, ethical, social and legal implications”, in April 2011. Within our aims are the study and discussion of the following issues: 1) The Dignity of patients with severe impairments of consciousness, like the so called “vegetative state” and similar conditions; 2) The mind-brain-body dilemma; 3) The dilemma of neural enhancement in healthy subjects using pharmaceuticals developed for clinical conditions of impaired memory and attention, but also their use in the military personnel and health professionals, along with the wide application of neurotechnologies, all requiring a profound ethical reflection and urgent actions; 4) The methodology of an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach to modern Neuroscience; 5) The possible application of an Aristotelian-Thomist model to the most recent studies on Neuro-morality. The people, mission, international collaboration also through videoconferencing, present and future projects of the Italian Neurobioethics Study and Research Group are addressed through the use of selected iconographic material. pharmaceuticals developed for clinical conditions of impaired memory and attention, but also their use in the military personnel and health professionals, along with the wide application of neurotechnologies, all requiring a profound ethical reflection and urgent actions; 4) The methodology of an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach to modern Neuroscience; 5) The possible application of an Aristotelian-Thomist model to the most recent studies on Neuro-morality. The people, mission, international collaboration also through videoconferencing, present and future projects of the Italian Neurobioethics Study and Research Group are addressed through the use of selected iconographic material.

Disclosures: none