

## In Memoriam Enrico Vitali

Enrico Vitali was one of the founders of the European Consortium for Church and State Research. He belonged to the generation of great legal scholars – Alberto de la Hera, Alexander Hollerbach, Joseph Listl, Francesco Margiotta Broglio, Axel von Campenhausen and others – who understood from the beginning the potential of the Consortium but had the discretion not to impose their dominant presence in its direction and management. He helped organize the Consortium’s first conference, which took place between Parma and Milan, and served as president in 1998, later becoming emeritus in 2011.

Enrico Vitali embodies a figure that is not usual among the Consortium members but was widespread – and to some extent still is – in the legal departments of the Italian Universities: that of the professor-lawyer, the scholar and teacher of law who at the same time practices it in the courtrooms. To these two characteristics Vitali combined a third, that of being a man of great culture, ranging from literature, music and especially painting.

From the beginning of his academic career, he taught at the University of Milan and helped make this University an important centre for the study of Canon law, Ecclesiastical law and Comparative law of religions, training young researchers and calling other colleagues to join him in teaching.

He was a strong defender of the secular State, but always with measure and without harshness. He was the first president of the Italian association of professors of Canon and Ecclesiastical law and was a member of the joint commission between the Italian State and the Holy See for the preparation of the law that should have implemented the marriage provisions contained in the Agreements of Villa Madama. He wrote important books on marriage law and criminal law, analysing the (now disappeared) provision on the vilification of the State religion. At a time when this topic was still unexplored, he emphasized the importance of sociology for ecclesiastical law studies.

Able to appreciate life’s many pleasures, Vitali went through it with elegance and lightness. Even when he had to take sharp and sometimes harsh positions,

he always did so with a grace and style that came, I believe, from his familiarity with the art world. His departure makes the Consortium and the Italian University a little poorer.

*Silvio Ferrari*