



Foreword

Culture, spirituality & psychopathology: Integrating clinical and theoretical perspectives

Goffredo Bartocci

I am extremely honored to welcome you to the Pre-Congress Special Symposium: *Culture, spirituality & psychopathology: Integrating clinical and theoretical perspectives*, jointly organized by the World Association of Cultural Psychiatry (WACP) and the Royal Society of Medicine (RSM).

As scholars in Human Science we are aware that we face a colossal task, when we try to understand how the spiritual sentiment conveyed in the existing and predominant religions. The importance of developing this field of study is undeniable; in fact the III World Congress of Cultural Psychiatry has received such a large number of reports on the relationship between spirituality and culture, that the Scientific Committee of the Congress was compelled to organize a Pre-congress day, to better focus general theoretical issues on this topic. In our opinion the study on cohabitation (or clash) of religion and human well being, must be based on an interdisciplinary approach, here represented by collaboration between the two major medical associations, that share their practical experiences in Saint Paul's Cathedral, a place rich in theoretical history.

I am aware that the psychological study of spirituality may appear too distant or even too conceptual for clinicians, as they are burdened by more practical issues: migration, public health, culturally sensitive diagnosis and correct use of psychotherapy and drugs. However, I am addressing you as a clinician, and as a clinician I feel the need to continue to raise the topics of psychiatry and religion in conferences, as I am convinced that this field of study cannot be overlooked by either anthropology or psychiatry.

This Symposium has been organized in the prestigious scenario of St. Paul cathedral, a place chosen by Prof. K. Bhui, who in this way wanted to demonstrate (with a decision that goes beyond my bare words) that the topic of spirituality and mental health can be studied respectfully by theological science together with medical epistemology.

As chair of this Symposium, I wish to express all my gratitude to the lecturers and to the audience for being here.

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Goffredo Bartocci
World Association of Cultural Psychiatry
Former president and founder

Correspondence to: Goffredo Bartocci, MD.
Italian Institute of Transcultural Mental Health, *Director*
Via Massaua, 9 – 00162 Rome

mailto: goffredo.bartocci@waculturalpsy.org