



‘Attorno al Cibo’ Event

Today, the event ‘Attorno al cibo per costruire dialogo, incontro, confronto e pace’ brought together people from a variety of backgrounds to dive deeper into food as a means to create peaceful dialogue.

The conference started off with an anthropological approach from Ernesto DiRenzo, from Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata, connecting food as a factor of social integration and solidarity.

He focused on the notion that food evokes a sense of sharing, socialization and symbolic dimension to society. Yet in turn, there is also the side of negative stigmatization which must be brought to awareness. However, it is clear that food is a part of the collective life and to underline this, we can imagine hosting friends over for dinner. The offer of welcoming and providing for others is like creating family, an intimate connection of togetherness. Decisions are made around the table, case in point, being the number of political events in which leaders from all over the world are brought together for discussion. The act of eating is universal and yet it is also a very personal act. When we have the chance to try food from another place, it is like taking a cultural trip.

Stories of food and integration were shared as well. Salvatore Stingo, the President of Agricoltura Capodarco Cooperativa Sociale, presented their work in the field of agriculture involving people with disabilities. The association provides a consistent job for those with disabilities and there are specialized options for everyone in the field of organic agriculture. Working with agriculture puts faith in the market and demand. Additionally, nature cures and provides space for friendship and growth for those taking part in the community.

The President of ARSIAL, Antonio Rosati, shared the notion that food comes along with extraordinary moments of life, but we have different rules for relating to them. We have different concepts in which we can eat food or even waste food. To support local food is to truly taste the culture of a place. Across food, we find humanity, countries, religions, traditions. Furthermore, food shopping, a daily routine, is a political act in which we must do with intelligence.

The roundtable featured a lively discussion between representatives of various religions. The speakers included Sandro di Castro, representing the Hebrew community, Paolo Trianni, representing the Catholic community, Mansur Abd al-Hayy Baudo, representing the Islamic community and lastly, Svamini Hamsananda, representing the Hindu community. Each representative brought forth their



own unique perspective, yet the integration and beauty of the mosaic of differences was celebrated. The interrelation of these various religions, and the heart and soul of food was a topic of interest. The speakers cited different food traditions, including rules, fasts, prayer, vegetarianism, spirit and hospitality. A common theme was that food is a sacred thing, that provides not only nutrients but also maintains and sustains us. By respecting ourselves, others and our precious environment, we may make food choices in line with protecting our ecological systems to create sensibility and respect for what we eat.

Overall, this event brought forth a sense of interdependence and acceptance for the intricate variety in the world. May we celebrate our differences, yet unite under the fact, that food has the power to bring people together.