The 2nd International Colloquium on Christian Humanism in Economics and Business was held on IESE’s Barcelona campus in October. It was chaired by Domènec Melé and Martin Schlag, who also organized the meeting, and took as its theme “Christian Humanism at the Service of Development.”

The opening session was moderated by Monsignor Luis Romera, professor of philosophy and rector of the Universidad Pontificia de la Santa Cruz in Rome, reviewing Christian humanism in the current context, said that “recovering humanism means developing a vision of society and existence in which ethics are not seen as a code imposed by the entrepreneur or politician but rather as something intrinsic.”

Miguel Alfonso Martínez-Echevarría, professor of the philosophy of economics at the University of Navarra, posed the question “does Christian humanism make sense in economics?” and concluded that we must not fall into the trap of believing in “the supposed anthropological neutrality” of the economy. “It is a waste of time to have pretensions of ethics of the economy or of commerce which approaches the economic phenomena with the lamentable and baseless prejudice that there exists a neutral humanism which supposedly gives foundation to economic theories.”

Melè, professor of business ethics at IESE, talked about what Christian humanism can contribute to development, such as the wisdom, values and principles that ensure development is at the service of people, motivation and the fomenting of virtues such as solidarity, justice, truth and individual responsibility.

Maria De Benedetto, professor of administrative law of economics at the Università Rome-Tre, said, “econom-
ics should be judged by the light of the values they want to achieve. This implies a redefinition of profit, a strong regulation of financial markets and a moral and legal evaluation of consumer priorities.” She added that a leader must be the architect of the collective conscience, and that a real leader is one capable of reintroducing ethics into the *raison d’être* of business.

The view of Philippe de Woot, Emeritus Professor at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, rejected the narrow definition of the *raison d’être* of business as being the production and distribution of services. In his view, the role of the firm is to create and innovate and to harness science and technology in order to transform it into material development and social well-being.

The entrepreneur is the essential figure, he said, someone with vision, a taste for risk and the ability to convince others to back them.

A panel of three business people then talked about their vision of Christian humanism. Kim Tan, trustee of the Transformational Business Network, talked about his experiences of investing in projects designed to boost development. Jon Gallostra, managing director of JG Engineering, discussed the challenges of applying humanism in a medium-size business.

In the colloquium’s concluding session on “Fraternity in a Global Economy,” Stefano Malferrari, director-general of Monte Paschi Monaco SAM, compared the Western world “to a wealthy family where the financial success of a generation has had an unwanted consequence on the following generation: the loss of initiative and dependency on the parents’ investment, assets and revenues because the family leader has not supported the growth of the human and intellectual capital of the family.”