

EDITOR'S PREFACE

On a number of occasions Pope Francis encouraged dialogue and *parrhesia*—bold and open discussion—as a way of arriving at the truth. In his recent visit to the United States of America, he told the bishops:

The path ahead, then, is dialogue among yourselves, dialogue in your presbyterates, dialogue with lay persons, dialogue with families, dialogue with society. I cannot ever tire of encouraging you to dialogue fearlessly. The richer the heritage which you are called to share with *parrhesia*, the more eloquent should be the humility with which you should offer it. Do not be afraid to set out on that “exodus” which is necessary for all authentic dialogue. Otherwise, we fail to understand the thinking of others, or to realize deep down that the brother or sister we wish to reach and redeem, with the power and the closeness of love, counts more than their positions, distant as they may be from what we hold as true and certain.¹

It is essential for the Church to listen and engage in dialogue with people in various fields in order to discern God’s will and respond to new questions and challenges arising from the present-day situation. In the modern world where knowledge has become so vast yet so fragmented, no one sector of society, not even the Church, can claim monopoly of wisdom and insight. This is

¹Pope Francis, “Pope to U.S. bishops: be shepherds in unity and dialogue,” http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/09/23/pope_to_us_bishops_be_shepherds_in_unity_and_dialogue/1174163 (accessed October 23, 2015).

true even of theology which must take into account the fresh data coming from historical studies, sociology, anthropology, psychology, medicine, technology, climatology, etc. to be able to make sense of God's Word to contemporary society. The Church can learn from people in the academe, where theology can be enriched by knowledge acquired from various other disciplines.

When asked to explain how he understood the Ignatian principle *sentire cum ecclesia* (thinking with the Church), Pope Francis said: "We should not even think ... that 'thinking with the church' means only thinking with the hierarchy of the church."² It means also taking account of the *sensus fidelium*, what the Spirit-led ecclesial community believes in. While respecting the legitimate authority of bishops and pastors to teach the faith, mature Christians are not passive followers of everything taught "from above" but are themselves genuine discerners of God's will, particularly on personal issues they face in their own lives. It may be that the Spirit of God is blowing "from below."

This issue of *Landas* offers a variety of essays by responsible theologians and professors who write with candor and conviction on topics in their own respective fields of expertise.

Leo-Martin Angelo R. Ocampo (*Dissentire cum Ecclesia: Healthy and Unhealthy Dissent in the Context of Catholic Education*) examines the issue of how the Church should deal with dissenting views of theologians and professors in the university. While recognizing that an unhealthy dissent can be employed to weaken the faith of Christians and subvert the authority of the Church, the theologians' exploration of alternative ways of understanding Christ's teaching is essential for the development of doctrine in the Church and its appropriation to various pastoral contexts. St. Thomas Aquinas describes the Church magisterium

²Antonio Spadaro, S.J., "A Big Heart Open to God: The Exclusive Interview with Pope Francis," *America*, 30 September 2013, 22.

as a collaboration between theologians who hold the *cathedra magistralis* and the bishops who exercise the *cathedra pastoralis*.

Rosa Maria Alonso i Terme (“The Order of Love in Saint Augustine of Hippo and Saint Thomas Aquinas”) compares the treatment of the order of charity towards people in the writings of the two great doctors of the Church. She notes their similarities as well as differences in dealing with the question. Their divergent viewpoints can be attributed to the two theologians’ contrasting family environment and personality, historical and geographical contexts, and intellectual education and philosophical outlook.

Joaquin C. Yap, Jr., S.W., (“Christology in the Service of Faith”) notes that the various quests for the “historical Jesus” have often been plagued by an *a priori* principle derived from the Enlightenment: a rejection of the supernatural and a deistic understanding of God. But historical criticism without such a philosophical presupposition can illumine the world in which Jesus lived and, more importantly, help the believer to encounter, know, and adore the Jesus of the Gospels. Yap writes:

If it is hard enough to know a human person, how much harder it must be to know a divine person, one who lived on earth 2,000 years ago, whose extant “biographical” material are just as old and do not add up to form a complete biography in the modern sense of the word. This is precisely where the “tools” come in ... which equip the theologian *working as a believer and never simply as a “scientist”* to formulate “speech about Christ” (Christology) that is responsible, defensible, and ... accountable. Benedict XVI took pains to delineate his own hermeneutical method in producing, not a Christology as he himself says, but something closer to Aquinas’ achievement: a theological reflection on the mysteries of Christ. Such an enterprise can be done with scholarly integrity only with the help of historical-critical tools, but must always transcend the inherent limitations of these tools. It can only be done with a faith-hermeneutic (103–104)

Norlan H. Julia, S.J., (“Mary in Pope Francis’ Gospel of Mercy and Joy”) examines the role of Mary in Pope Francis’ personal

life and mission. As a background to understand the Pope's Mariology, the writer discusses first how the Pope sees himself before God, how he understands the mission of the Church, and how his *teología del pueblo* sets the poor at the heart of the People of God. Mary is foremost a mother of the sons and daughters of the Church, a kindhearted refuge of sinners and compassionate helper of the afflicted. Julia writes:

For Pope Francis, Mary is Jesus' gift to the Church, a gift given to the Church by Christ as he was about to die on the Cross. Mary is the expression of Christ's love for His Church whom he did not want to journey without a mother, hence the final word of Christ to his mother, "Woman, behold your Son" (Jn. 19:26-27). (117)

She is also the Star of Evangelization, a model of discipleship for all Christians to emulate.

Timoteo J. M. Ofrasio, S.J., ("Music for the Solemnities and Feasts of the Lord in Ordinary Time") discusses the history, the theology, and the Mass prayers of the Solemnities of the Holy Trinity, the Body and Blood of Christ, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, and the Solemnity of Jesus Christ King of the Universe, in order to draw out the theological themes that should ideally permeate the liturgical songs for these feasts. In line with the principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, the writer stresses the importance of expressing and celebrating the respective theological contents of these feasts in the liturgical songs. In addition, the writer discusses some of the essential characteristics of liturgical music and the role music plays in instilling the true spirit of the liturgy. Lastly, he offers some critique on the choice of musical accompaniment in vogue today.

Michael Demetrius H. Asis ("Exploring the Principles of Biblical Hermeneutics in Two Biblically-Based Homilies") investigates the complexity of biblical interpretation. The historical-critical approach to interpretation cannot surely be neglected because of the historical character of biblical revelation.

Yet, must one determine only the original meaning of the biblical text and the literary genre employed to express its meaning? Studying the sermons of St. Augustine and Rev. David Q. Liptak, the writer comes to the following conclusions: 1) “First, it is clear that both homilies presuppose that the biblical text as a whole presents itself as testimony of religious witness and not simply as a historical document to be subjected to thorough critical scrutiny.” 2) “Second, both homilies display an explicit affinity to a rhetorical sense of Scripture.” 3) “Third, given the more rhetorical style of both homilies, meaning is uncovered in the very performance of the text to uncover the ‘world in front of it’” (cf. 154–155). In other words, biblical interpretation must have an existential referent and must be capable of construing a world that is feasible only if contextualized and reappropriated.

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