

**Direct Service between Athens and Jerusalem:
On the Purpose and Organizing Principles of the
*Dominican Colloquia in Berkeley***

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THE GREATER PART of the current issue of *Nova et Vetera* comprises articles based on papers presented at the colloquium held at the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in Berkeley, California, in July 2014 entitled “What has Athens to Do with Jerusalem?” Initiated at the request of the Master of the Order of Preachers, Fr. Bruno Cadoré, the colloquium was the first of a recurring triennial symposium series, the *Dominican Colloquia in Berkeley*, subtitled “Philosophers and Theologians in Conversation.” As this publication marks the beginning of an ongoing effort, it calls for not only an expression of gratitude to the editors of *Nova et Vetera* for allowing us to present you with a portion of the outstanding scholarship that is the fruit of the colloquium, but also an explanation regarding the overall aim and value of the colloquia series itself.

As its subtitle suggests, the colloquia series is designed to bring philosophers and theologians into conversation concerning matters of mutual interest. Such an undertaking might seem like merely one more example of academia’s current infatuation with interdisciplinary dialogue. While the contemporary trend toward interdisciplinary approaches has much to commend it, we would argue that an ongoing dialogue between philosophy and theology is of the greatest importance for these two disciplines. While there is a unique integrity and proper methodology for philosophy and for theology, neither can do

justice to its subject matter or attain its fullest expression without being in contact with the other.

Philosophy's importance for theology is seen rather readily. Since philosophy is, at least potentially, universal in scope, it touches on the most fundamental questions of human existence that theology, too, must address: the meaning of life, the nature of the world, the ultimate fate of existing things, and the reality of a divine being or beings. Thus, the subject matter of philosophy clearly overlaps with that of theology. Philosophical method, too, is of the utmost importance for theology. Theology is, by its very nature, a *human* science of the divine, subject to logic and hermeneutic principles. Indeed, divine revelation itself, if it is to be true communication between God and man, must express itself according to the limitations of human language and in continuity with the human intellect's already existing grasp of the world. While divine revelation illuminates and transforms, it does so through a human medium; while it may provide a glimpse of the ineffable, it does so in a manner still accessible to the human heart and mind. Divine revelation encounters philosophy the moment it is explicated and expounded.

Philosophy's need to reckon with theology is perhaps not quite as obvious. And yet philosophy, if it is to be a search for true wisdom, must ask questions of a universal nature, reflecting on the whole of existence and the meaning, source, and end of everything. Theology, although based in religious belief rather than human reason alone, is similarly oriented to the universal truth of things. Its conclusions, then, should be of interest to philosophy. Can philosophy remain a truly open inquiry if it fails to consider theological or religious answers to the questions it is asking? Can it exclude reasoned reflection on a meaningful mode of human experience and remain an authentic, sincere search for the truth? What is more, in seeking answers to its own questions, philosophy searches for ultimate causes. Such ultimate causes lead us to consider "that thing which we call God" as the source of the existence, intelligibility, and goodness of human life and the world around us. Avoiding theology would seem possible only if philosophy were to refuse to deal with ultimate questions and to content itself with the particular and partial. But such would leave us with a form of rational inquiry much less than philosophy has understood itself to be, and with no plausible claim to be a seeking of true wisdom.

That there is something essential for both philosophy and theology in their mutual cooperation is not, of course, a new claim. Theology's

dependence upon philosophical reflection is an insight to be found in ancient, patristic, and medieval understandings of philosophy. During the medieval period, when theology was seen as queen of the sciences and the highest of human activities, philosophy was *ancilla theologiae*, its handmaid. And even after the revival of Thomistic philosophy in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the idea of a “Christian philosophy” articulated by Maritain, Gilson, and others was an acknowledgment that there was an essential complementarity between philosophy and theology, even as each maintained its own distinct character and proper integrity.

And it is a particular part of the tradition of the Order of Preachers, in the spirit of St. Albert the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas, to see the complementarity and mutual relevance of philosophy and theology. St. Albert the Great, patron saint of the sciences, is known for his attention to the philosophical and empirical sciences in the service of theology. St. Thomas Aquinas is rightly famous for his incorporation of Aristotle—and, indeed, the whole of the Western intellectual tradition, from the Church Fathers through Neo-Platonism and to the Islamic commentators—to develop a singular systematic and synthetic theological vision. Together, these great saints have formed the foundation of the Dominican order’s 800-year-old intellectual tradition, a tradition that has taken the integration of faith and reason as the starting point for study, contemplation, and proclamation of the Gospel. In many ways, the mission of the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in Berkeley and the *Dominican Colloquia in Berkeley* is but a continuation of the ancient Dominican tradition of bringing philosophy and theology together.

Thus, we would contend that the conversation between theologians and philosophers is much more than another example of the current rage in academia for interdisciplinary dialogue. The dialogue we are sponsoring between philosophy and theology is intended to broaden, enliven, and enrich each discipline in an essential way. The very structure of the colloquia has been designed to provide a dialogical forum and to encourage interaction across the two domains. Each plenary session’s main paper, while belonging primarily to either philosophy or theology, had significance for both disciplines. Remarks from a respondent, designed to explore the consequences of the paper for the complementary field of study and to provide a genuine cross-disciplinary exchange, followed every main paper. Such pairings, along with significant and lively question-and-answer periods for both speaker and respondent, will continue to be the hallmark of our collo-

quia. As with many conferences, the schedule for our colloquium also included a number of outstanding shorter papers presented in concurrent sessions.

We are pleased to be able to present to you each of the main papers from the plenary sessions of 2014's colloquium, along with the remarks of each respondent. Due to limitations of space, of the nearly sixty shorter papers presented in concurrent sessions, we have been able to include only the very smallest of samplings. Despite these limited offerings, we trust something of the excitement, liveliness, and interest that characterized each day of the 2014 colloquium will be palpable. Each paper, both in the topics it addresses and the questions it raises, gives eloquent testimony to the kind of interchange we hope to continue to foster for many years to come. Although the topic for the inaugural colloquium was left intentionally broad, certain themes emerged as areas of interest and importance for further dialogue. The papers of Robert Sokolowski and Linda Zagzebski reflect the ongoing importance of studies of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and interpersonal relations, not only between God and humanity, but also on the level of individuals and communities. Edward Feser, Michael Dodds, O.P., and Anselm Ramelow, O.P., explored issues of causality and divine action, essential topics for articulating the relationship between God and the world. The articles of John Searle and Alfred Freddoso concern the state of philosophy and its future, raising the question of the status and possibility of philosophical reflection on the world, issues integral to the natural human apprehension of the divine. Finally, the contributions of Michal Paluch, O.P., John O'Callaghan, and Peter Junipero Hannah, O.P., address various philosophical, logical, and hermeneutic aspects of human language applied to divine matters.

While the papers published here already indicate areas of overlapping interest for philosophy and theology, readers will, of course, find many other topics deserving of attention and examination waiting in the wings. The following are but a few examples of controversies, taken from the contemporary scene, where philosophical and theological issues intersect and intertwine. (1) The current debate over the meaning of marriage, integral to the Catholic faith and so many other faith traditions, calls for theological argumentation. Yet, interpreting the meaning and purpose of marriage inevitably depends on presuppositions concerning the nature of the human person, the relation between personal identity, sexuality, embodiment, intersubjectivity, and the common good, and a host of other fundamental anthropological issues that can be adequately addressed only by philosophy.

Theology's attempts to elucidate the notion of marriage in the context of mutual self-giving, the natural law, and the relation of each creature to his or her Creator must also include an appropriation of the insights of a rigorous philosophical anthropology. (2) The ongoing theological debate over how properly to conceive of the relationship between nature and grace demands an adequate philosophical grasp of the meaning of nature—not only of human nature, but of the whole natural world in its proper integrity. (3) Questions regarding the qualitative distinction between humanity and non-human animal life are becoming more acute. Since theologians can no longer take this distinction for granted, a philosophical examination of this distinction is absolutely vital for properly articulating the relationship between God and humanity in general and explicating in particular the ongoing relevance of the Incarnation—Jesus Christ as God become man—in the life of every Christian. (4) Meanwhile, society itself seems adrift, unable to conceive or conjure for itself any overarching purpose for its existence. Such purposelessness cannot long continue, and more and more do we hear stories of individuals and even entire communities suffering in their search for that meaning—turning, for instance, to ISIS or other radical fundamentalist organizations—in order to recover some purpose and order to their lives. Faith, explained by theology, claims to be able to give an account of the ultimate purpose of life, not only of individuals, but of societies, mankind, and indeed, the entire universe. But such theological accounts must present themselves as answers to human questions; faith cannot hope to provide meaning to human existence without the cooperation of philosophy and human reason.

Such is but a sampling of the many possible frontiers that philosophy and theology can and should explore together and is but an indication of the enormous intellectual riches to be discovered by the ongoing dialogue to which the Western Dominican Province and the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology, the co-sponsors of the *Dominican Colloquia in Berkeley*, have committed themselves. Once again, we would like to express our sincerest thanks to *Nova et Vetera* for allowing us to share with you the fruit of our colloquium in 2014. We sincerely hope that you will enjoy this present issue. NEV