

TRADITION AND MODERNITY TASKS FOR CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY AND THEOLOGIANS

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Abstract. Modernity challenges contemporary faith in various ways. In this context, this article wants to provide an outline of the tasks for modern theology and theologians. There are some underlying assumptions. First, the transmission of faith in the 21st century cannot do without an active appropriation by the believers themselves. Second, theologians, among others, should facilitate this process of appropriation by providing a large variety of different 'products'. To that extent, a critical yet constructive and sympathetic dialogue with modernity remains an essential notion. The Thomistic perspective on nature and grace, adopted here, facilitates this much needed attitude of dialogue which may take place on many different levels. Furthermore, participation in the public debate, feminisation and themes relating to the social question are identified as important Church issues. They challenge modern theology and theologians to develop activist, world open spiritualities next to quietist, contemplative versions thereof. Meanwhile, Christian tradition provides many examples.

In spite of the proclaimed demise of religion in a once near future of classless society (Karl Marx), in spite of the apparently increasing awareness of the death of God (Friedrich Nietzsche) and in spite of the supposedly ongoing suppression of man's intellectual laziness (Sigmund Freud), faith, the Roman Catholic Church, is still very much alive today. Consequently, every now and then, one would want to draw up the balance of all our labouring as theologians. But not only would we want to see if the treasure which was confided to us was well kept and if our investments paid off. We would like to find out also if our business plan is still accurate. Are we on the right track and are we well equipped for our task? What is more, could we somehow improve our performance?

We draw on the richness of tradition which could be described with a metaphor: tradition as a bundle of threads or strings. Some of them are short, but others are very long. Some consist of a single thread, whereas others have been strung together to form a longer one. Some got knotted, while others need to be unravelled. Some have been cut short in history, but they could or should be extended to the present. Anyway, it must be clear that tradition is not a simple object like a velvet cushion, a nail file or a hammer.

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The recent Regensburg address by Pope Benedict XVI could serve as an example of that. On a visit to Germany, the Pope referred to Greek philosophy as a necessary foundation of Christian rationality,² but, to be honest, this has not always been self-evident. Early Christian writers like Tertullian (ca160–230) would have been surprised, to say the least, because to him philosophy was a “doctrine of men and demons.”³ Pope Benedict’s criticism of medieval nominalism, according to which God acts unreasonable if he feels like it, seemed justified. But, this strand of theology, as it does with William of Ockham, arose out of an authentic inspiration. God, first of all, is omnipotent, and, for that reason, good is whatever God wants it to be, even if human reason perceives it as evil. Another example is the *limbus puerorum* with its discussions about the whereabouts and the punishment of the unbaptised children.⁴ It became the object of a theological slimming-down process, in which considerations tend to spill over from the realm of dogmatic theology into that of pastoral theology. Consequently the limbo becomes a hypothesis or is reinterpreted as a mere metaphor, used in a pastoral setting. This development itself seems to be part of a general tendency to give less vivid depictions of the *tractatus de ultimis* (treatise on Last Things).⁵ Thus, it becomes clear that the Church’s teachings are not just a matter of *sic et non* (yes and no) but of hermeneutical discernment as well.

In the Face of Modernity

Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis – *Times change and we change with them*, the old Latin saying goes. As a matter of fact, time changed to such an extent that if we look at our world of today we seem to look in a broken mirror. Fragments appear, fragments of us, our fellow man, the natural world, our worldview and of God. I will give you some examples.

First, the days have long gone, when the Church could actually impose its teachings on believers, on non-believers and on the whole of society as well. Long gone is the rather morose mentality of the 1864 encyclical *Quanta Cura*

² BENEDICT XVI, *Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections* (12 September 2006). With alterations at www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/index_en.htm.

³ Compare TERTULLIAN, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*, VII. 1. “Hae sunt doctrinae hominum et daemoniorum.”

⁴ P. GUMPEL, *Limbus*, in J. HÖFER, K. RAHNER (ed.), *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. VI, Freiburg–Basel–Vienna, ²1961, 1057–1059.

⁵ JOHN PAUL II, *Heaven is fullness of communion with God*, in *L’Osservatore Romano. Weekly Edition in English* 28.07.1999, 7; *Hell is the state of those who reject God*, in *L’Osservatore Romano*, 4.08.1999, 7; *Purgatory is necessary purification*, in *L’Osservatore Romano*, 11/18.08.1999, 7. Compare keywords such as “metaphor”, “depiction”, “idea”, “symbolical language” and so on.

(With how great care) and the enclosed *Syllabus Errorum* (Syllabus of Errors).⁶ It withered away. Today, dialogue with modern society and with modern man through massive condemnations is considered to be an unfruitful approach to things which also darkens the genuine inspiration the Church could draw from what it is not. The 2nd Vatican council testifies to this by encouraging the faithful to read the signs of the time⁷ and as a consequence to do away with the image of the Church as a perfect society (*societas perfecta*), which is closed within itself and surrounded by a society which is imperfect or even hostile. Hence, even without the trade mark *Roman-Catholic*, something may still be of value. The draft European Constitution, for example, did not become worthless, once it was decided that Christian tradition and the invocation of God should go unmentioned in the preamble. It may be deficient, but worthless, no. What is more, it is a valuable document and, paradoxically, its social paragraphs proclaim, albeit *sotto voce*, God and European Christian heritage.

Second, historians and social researchers have shown how believers identify with Christian tradition. The appropriation thereof is fragmented, partial or even superficial. It may be a conscious decision or not, sometimes more emotional than intellectual. Meanwhile this partial identification often remains cloaked under a veil of public religious practice. Of course, this fragmentation is not a completely modern phenomenon. In *The Cheese and the Worms* historian Carlo Ginzberg describes the unpretentious, 16th century Italian miller Menocchio who invents a cosmology of his own, with bits and parts from Christian tradition.⁸ Furthermore, the Church did not strive for comprehensiveness. Uneducated believers best remained unaware of “more difficult and more subtle questions”⁹ and bible reading in vernacular was being scrutinised. More importantly, in the last two centuries the traditional and in large parts medieval Roman Catholic worldview lost its credibility and fell to pieces. By the way, fragmentation could explain why a closed and world denying fundamentalism becomes attractive. In order to provide more internal coherency, the fundamentalist believer may incorporate modern technology on the one hand, while he or she rejects the scientific insights on which this technology rests on the other.

⁶ H. DENZINGER, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum* [*Kompendium der Glaubensbekenntnisse und kirchlichen Lehrentscheidungen*], P. HÜNERMANN (ed.), Freiburg–Basel–Vienna 40th 2005, 2890–2896 and 2901–2980. Compare error 80: “Romanus Pontifex potest ac debet cum progressu, cum liberalismo et cum recenti civilitate sese reconciliare et componere.” For a translation of all errors into English, see: www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds2.v.i.iv.html.

⁷ *Gaudium et Spes. Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*, chap. 4.

⁸ C. GINZBERG, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, Baltimore 1980.

⁹ Thus the Fathers of the Tridentine council in the Decree on Purgatory (DH 1820).

In our days, tradition, the Church's relationship to society, other confessions and non-believers, and the beliefs of the faithful themselves strike us as flexible to different degrees. Tradition is subject to changing interpretation, as is its content, and this becomes more obvious when the time gap between past and present widens. Apparently, the Christian worldview lacks cohesion, and therefore believers must apply a certain amount of DIY (do-it-yourself) when confronted with tradition.

Most likely, the explanation lays in the modern phenomenon of "self-reflexivity",¹⁰ i.e. the ability to reflect upon oneself or the group to which someone belongs, to put questions to ourselves like: where do we come from, who are we and who do we want to be, what do we stand for, which goals do we want to attain and in which manner? Human and social sciences, theology, historical awareness and managerial skills, for instance, facilitate individuals and institutions to find the answers and, once underway, to make adjustments. But, at the same time, science induces fear and uncertainty, because choices are clearly relative, subjective and tentative. We want to be this and not that. We opt for this specific tradition and discard another. We aim at this and this and not at the other thing. In addition, knowledge of possible, desired, unwelcome and real outcomes influences the decision making process, because we would want to develop procedures which prevent negative results to come about. Results can be ambiguous, positive and negative at the same time. In brief, it becomes difficult to foresee one's actions.

As a consequence, it is tempting to take refuge in a quietist attitude, as theological escapism takes hold: a relativistic *anything goes* attitude; nostalgic wallowing in kitschy images of the past; calls for clarity and clear-cut authority. However, the more we flee from complex reality – that is my concern – the more the differences between Church and world will grow. Church becomes a sub-culture and its impact inevitably diminishes. It will find its authority further undermined. Quietism or escapism, however, do not suit modern day theology and theologians.

Tasks for Theologians and Theology

Vita...saltem fit phantasia... – in this manner the 16th century Dutch martyr Cornelius Musius commented to the neglect of the intellectual dimension in monastic life. If the use of books is prohibited, Musius wrote, *life will become a fantasy*.¹¹ Similarly, it is our task as theologians to seek ways in which we can revitalise, renew, reform, and distinguish what is obsolete from what is

¹⁰ See A. GIDDENS, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge 1990 and A. GIDDENS, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Cambridge 1991.

¹¹ Cornelius MUSIUS (Cornelis MUYS), *Solitudo, sive vita solitaria, laudata*, Antwerp (ex officina Christophori Plantini), 1566.

dynamic and well alive. We do this with heart and soul, but, above all, with our head – that is the typical vocation of the theologian and the reason why theology is a worthy member of the Academy. So, where lay our points of interest? What issues need to be addressed? If tradition is not a CD that got stuck and plays the same bit of music over and over again, how do we deal with our cultural and religious heritage?

On Theologians and the Public Debate

If we want to fully grasp the relationship between Church and society, and the contribution theologians and theology could make, we cannot conceive of Catholic faith and tradition as an antithesis to nature. As a matter of fact, that is a Calvinist heresy. God created the world (*creatio prima*) and he continuously maintains and supports his creation (*creatio continua*). Therefore, it would demonstrate a lack of confidence if nature was reduced to a mere antithesis of Church, tradition or faith. Grace works through nature. It elevates nature but it does not replace it. In this respect, the contribution of theologians is to translate Christian values, Christian tradition into the secular sphere. They should bring issues to the fore to which present day culture seems inattentive or neglectful. They must stand up for what is weak and vulnerable, and show the risks of modern-day idols like economic growth, a career or an ideal at all costs. A few years ago the Dutch auxiliary bishop of Roermond Everard de Jong pleaded for a less stressful life with more resting points. It would be beneficial to the sexual life of couples. “Sexuality”, he wrote, “is the Sunday of a relationship, a day off.”¹² Nature and grace comprise the realms of Church, tradition, faith, science, philosophy, culture, the arts, and technology; in short, everything. This is the very reason why the task of theologians and of theology is much broader than simply rearticulating tradition.

So, let us assume for the sake of the argument that the modernisation process is a kind of hellish machine which rolls in one direction only and which flattens everything in its tracks. We might want to stop this Goliath, ignore it or deny its significance, positive and negative. However, this seems not the most sensible thing to do. We should look, first of all, for opportunities, chances and positive results of the modernisation process. And among the achievements of our modern society, I range the possibility to do away with our ephods, to leave for another country, to participate in another culture, or to escape the bonds of family, village life and traditional society – in *Genesis 2:24* we find the Old Testament archetype. Furthermore, we may call our present day society *modern*, *radically modern*, or even *post-modern*, but people still need love and a sense of direction, people still face illness and death, seek an honest means of

¹² E. De JONG, *Seksualiteit: lust of last?*, in *Katholiek Nieuwsblad*, 4.02.2000.

living, recognition, and so forth. Theology and theologians should contribute to the debate as how man could fulfil all his *desideria naturalia* – all his natural needs – best within the confines of society. Debate means dialogue, discussion, exchange of arguments. It is not just a matter of convincing our discussion partners of our right and their wrong, but a continuous process of mutual learning.

An interesting example in this respect is the Dutch *Heyendaal Institute* of the Radboud University in Nijmegen. Together, theologians and scientists research avenues for dialogue and ways to discuss theologically and scientifically the domains of philosophy, science, social law, economics and medicine. I will give you the titles of some current projects. “Memory, do-it-yourself: theology and the arts in a forgetful society.” “Neuroscience, theology and philosophy.” “How do religious concepts come into being?” and “Dementia and identity”. The title “Dementia and identity” may exemplify the reason as to why theologians are involved in the secular also. Man is a human person on the basis of him or her being *imago Dei* (image of God), while modern conceptions of man and woman being able to make deliberately choices or to freely create his own personality (both vital, innate potentialities) are perfectly compatible with the *imago Dei* notion. For this reason, discussion or dialogue are not only possible but also required. Meanwhile, the goal of such a discussion is not to give a once and for all answer, but to give directions, to raise doubts, to look whether other viewpoints are possible, and so forth.

On The Social Question

We might want to connect the aforementioned dialogue with the social teachings of the Church. Ever since Pope Leo XIII 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (Of new things) it is a more or less coherent doctrine of man and his society.¹³ At its centre stands the notion of charity and, above all, of justice, which is Christianity’s unique contribution to the history of religions and of man. The theme was intensively discussed by the late Pope John Paul II in his encyclicals *Laborem Exercens* (1981), *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987) and *Centesimus Annus* (1991). This last encyclical testifies to the fact that Leo XIII ideal of cooperation between capital and labour was tougher and more relevant than the Marxist dogmas of old. In fact, the contemporary Western European “Rhineland Model” of capitalism stands fairly close to *Rerum Novarum*.

Smoothing the consequences of the war of everyone against everyone, which is the predicament of man after the Fall of Man, Christianity’s “greatest invention” contains a universal and non-partisan dimension. Transcending the borders of ethnicity, religion, individual lifestyle, and so forth, it is connected

¹³ Starting with LEO XIII, encyclicals and other papal documents are made available online at www.vatican.va in various languages.

with the image of God who is God of all creation. The issues which need to be addressed are relatively straightforward. They range from a global perspective to the local and even the individual. There are many different themes, e.g.: protection of nature, the human environment, health care, assistance to the poor and other underprivileged persons, social justice, women's and children's rights, support for the family, and reconciliation, for instance, among ethnic groups. These are issues on which all Catholics can easily reach an agreement, but one could also think of benevolently engaging in alliances with NGO's, groups and initiatives outside the Church. Solidarity, taking on challenges and protest are part of our Christian belief ever since it was founded, and because they are closely connected with the fundamental notion of charity and justice, social action is firmly rooted at the core of the Church's life.¹⁴

On Metaphors and Models

It seems altogether undesirable that theologians cast modern believer, religion or even God in rigid moulds, regardless of the concrete life of the faithful, of the society they live in, and regardless of the fact that God always transcends the limitations of human language and imagination (*Deus semper maior*). After all, religious language is metaphorical, and metaphors need a context in which they can function to the fullest. Therefore, it is most likely that even strong metaphors, like those from the agricultural world will slowly lose their meaning. Something similar may be true for describing authority in the Church or of models of the Church itself. The family metaphor has an important emotional content and it is, therefore, highly evocative, but the family (nuclear or extended) does not adequately describe our modern, rather complex society. Consequently, its evocative strength will become less and less powerful. Furthermore, for someone who was raised in a dysfunctional family it can be painful or even meaningless. References to sheep and herdsmen have become sheepish themselves. God as a pot maker is wholly plausible in an archaic pot making society, but in our modern context God could well be a supernatural software engineer. As specialists of metaphors and models theologians have an important task to fulfil. Old metaphors and models need to be translated into new ones, which are intelligible and therefore plausible in our modern context. If not, theology becomes the science of explaining the incomprehensible. However, this updating process is not an easy one since traditional forms, like *Our Father*, are universally acknowledged and have an important binding function.

Whereas the Church's structures are concerned, it is not an absolute requirement that on the horizontal level each and every institution should be

¹⁴ Compare BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est* (2006).

identical to the other. And, in our complex society, it could indeed be helpful to develop structures according to specific needs. In the Dutch bishopric of Breda, for instance, an experiment is now under way to develop different models for organising parish life. Within this concept, the countryside parish may differ from one in the city, while urban parishes are territorially organised but serve specific groups. In the village of Oosterhout which is a suburb of Breda city, three profiles are being put to the test. There is the *cathedral model*, which stands for the traditional parish that caters to the needs of the young and the old, of families and individual believers and so forth. Next there is the *living room model*, a parish which aims mainly at families with children. A third model is the *Thomas parish* which wants to serve believers, who maintain a more loose contact with the Church. This kind of experimentation is a matter of some importance, as the 19th century and onwards saw believers in the urban environment easily lose contact with the faith of the forefathers.

It is important to overcome fear of new technology as well. Take the podcasts of the 37 years old Dutch priest Roderick Vönhögen who abandoned his doctoral studies at the Gregoriana in order to devote himself to web journalism. He maintains an English language website *Catholic Insider*¹⁵ with, among other things, the Secrets of the Pirates of the Caribbean-casts and Harry Potter-casts. Recently, he told a newspaper that the website does not have to have Roman Catholic written all over it, because most web surfers are far removed from the Church.¹⁶ For example, there is the story of “Jack the Pumpkin” who “travelled to hell and back again”. Jack suffers from trauma over his father’s death and goes to see a psychiatrist. When that doesn’t help, a priest finds him, and they go and light a candle for his father. In stead of presenting a comprehensive theory of the *communio sanctorum* (communion of the saints), which is difficult to grasp anyway, Vönhögen brings a simple, non-theoretical message. And it is relevant on both an existential and a religious level: remember your dead in order to cope better with your life.

On Lay, Religious and Clergy, Men and Women

In the 1950s vocations for the religious life became a problematic, pan-European issue. With a few exceptions and for different reasons, nowadays in Central, Eastern and Western Europe the number of vocations keeps falling. This will have two different but equally serious consequences. On the one hand the volume of priests which is required to attend to the needs of the believers and to govern the Church on a managerial level will decrease. On the other hand, one can predict that the quality of seminary training will gradually decline. Because in most cases priests are educated by priests, a growing lack

¹⁵ <www.sqpn.com>.

¹⁶ M. De HOOG, *Tussen God en Harry Potter*, in *de Volkskrant*, 28.10.2006, 26.

of proficient educators will make itself felt. This means that theologians should discuss ways in which these problems could be dealt with. The admission to the priesthood of *virii probati*, married men with life experience, is not a question that will be decided on the local level, and, since “many are called but few are chosen” (Matthew 22,14), it will be equally difficult to select qualified *virii probati*. Still, it is as crucial as inevitable to reflect on the future of a European Church with less and less priests.

Furthermore, there exists an ongoing process of feminisation of the Church, which ought to be dealt with too. Statistical details for Romania are not at my disposal, but the example of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania shows that some two thirds of the believers are women, and that is more or less the case for all confessions, from modern Neo-Pagans to hyper-conservative Priestless Old Believers. First of all, this means that women should have a more representative role within the Church, from the local parish level and up. Here it would be interesting to tap in on the ongoing discussion of having women deacons, of which the legitimacy is being debated. Moreover, this could open the possibility to create Cardinal-Deaconess as well, who could participate in the administration of the Church worldwide. Misogynistic theologians may decry these propositions, but wanting to give more responsibility to women is, generally spoken, unproblematic from the perspective of theology.

However, the process of feminisation points in the direction of another issue, that is the difference between male and female believers. Might it be that the way in which the Church’s life is structured is not at all interesting to men? Maybe it is too feminine? Prayer groups, OK. Pilgrimages, not bad at all. But, might it be that many forms of more traditional piety and devotion are not so much a man’s thing? We could borrow an argument from modern science, which, in spite of second and third-wave feminism (1960s-1990s), claims that the differences between men and women are not just a question of ideological software, but of biological hardware as well. When the Church’s life is taken into consideration, it seems as if it is more about comfort than challenge, which could explain why men find Church less appealing.

Anyway, the role of the lay people as active participants in the Church making process remains a complex one, and should be seriously dealt with by theologians. My previous remarks testified to that effect. Besides, even if the 2nd Vatican council stressed the proper vocation of the lay, the implicit conception of the Tridentine Council (1545–1563) of lay people as a kind of mini-monks or mini-sisters remains powerful. Seen from the perspective of the many beatifications and sanctifications of the last decades this is apparently not a very viable ideal.

On Spirituality

Karl Rahner, undoubtedly the greatest 20th century Roman Catholic theologian, once said that Christianity will not survive unless Christians become mystics – in typical Rahnerian language: “[...] the believer of tomorrow will be a ‘mystic’, someone who has ‘experienced’ something, or he will not be at all, because the piety of tomorrow will no longer be supported by the self-evident public convictions and religious practices of all believers, which until now routinely coincided with personal experience and decision making; and, therefore, common religious education as a preparation for the religious-institutional life will become a rather insignificant drilling exercise.”¹⁷ Why? In traditional and stable society, where children learn almost everything they need to know from their parents, authority and truth are undivided and simple. However, in complex and ever changing modern society the learning process is life-long and divided over many different institutions and persons. Therefore, truth and authority take on a different shape. They become subject to active scrutiny and critique by the recipients, and, for that reason, any claim to authority and to truth must authentically impose itself, argue against competitors and state its case clearly and, above all, convincingly. In this given context, truth is no longer one-way communication without interaction. On the contrary, truth becomes an issue of dialogue and of personal, subjective appropriation. Therefore, according to Rahner, faith cannot be merely ritualistic or an act of reason or of will. Being a believer does not equal customarily performing rituals, knowing all the questions of the catechism by heart, and making *sacrificia intellectus* (sacrifices of reason) all the time. Faith entails a personal, existential “amen”; a “yes” of the intellect and of the heart as well.¹⁸

Of course, by offering access to the manifold threads of our rich tradition lay, religious, priests and bishops can and must facilitate religious experience, but, to do this authentically, faith must have a link with the individual’s life history and experiences. Whilst in traditional society believers wear identical confection suits, in modern society their costumes are one offs, tailor made. If this insight is correct, we may understand how the New Age beliefs of the 1980s and 1990s got a strong foothold on the European continent, and how it challenges Christian faith.

¹⁷ K. RAHNER, *Frömmigkeit früher und heute*, in *Geist und Leben* 39 (1966) 326–342, 335: “der Fromme von morgen wird ein ‘Mystiker’ sein, einer, der etwas ‘erfahren’ hat, oder er wird nicht mehr sein, weil die Frömmigkeit von morgen nicht mehr durch die im Voraus zu einer personalen Erfahrung und Entscheidung einstimmige, selbstverständliche öffentliche Überzeugung und religiöse Sitte aller mitgetragen wird, die bisher übliche religiöse Erziehung also nur noch eine sehr sekundäre Dressur für das Religiös Institutionelle sein kann.”

¹⁸ During the ensuing discussion professor Bernhard Uhde, Freiburg, condensed the Rahner quote into another Rahner quote, *ex auditu*: “Serving God.” Serving God, therefore, means: taking seriously the fact that we are or should become Christian mystic.

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In the history of the Church, theology and spirituality have always been tightly bound together, and, as a rule, theological traditions were translated into spirituality, and vice versa. Consequently, there exists, for example, a Franciscan, a Dominican and a Carmelite theological tradition which is closely connected to a specific spiritual tradition. Similarly, nowadays believers must go look for and find a personal spirituality, while theologians develop ways to translate their insights into practical and usable materials. People are different and therefore spiritualities must be different. There is a spirituality for fighters, for sufferers, for activists, for leaders, for doubters, for seekers, and so forth. In this context, I find it important to stress that many of the great mystics and theologians were controversial figures in their days, e.g. Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Thomas Aquinas and Saint Teresa of Avila. Often these theologians and masters of spirituality were stubborn, difficult and demanding persons who provoked great suspicion. What is more, due to short-sightedness of its leadership, the Church more or less routinely condemned innovators.

Wanting to create viable models which will allow modern man, and modern woman, to appropriate Christian faith, we may want to use the rebellious inspiration of a Saint Francis, a Saint Thomas or a Saint Teresa. After all, faith is not anymore a matter of drilling the believers into thoughtless consumption of religious *prêt-à-porter*. It is, on the contrary, about restyling in a creative manner, about upgrading older versions, about personalising common places, about discovering new paths off the beaten tracks, and about saying “no” too. Dialogue, participation in the public debate, feminisation and themes relating to the social question were identified above as important Church issues in the face of modernity. They challenge modern theology and theologians to develop more manly, activist and more world open spiritualities next to more feminine, quietist and contemplative versions. In this respect, it is of great interest to examine best practices and to evaluate how the Church may structurally facilitate different spiritualities. The charismatic movement rejoices in some popularity, in the Central and Eastern European area as well, but undoubtedly other, more interesting options are waiting to be discovered.