

Giacomo Canobbio

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Making Theology in “Catholic” Perspective¹

Preface – From the theology of mission to a “missionary” theology – Which idea of theological knowledge? – Which Journal for this University?

Preface

The history of *Urbaniana University Journal – Euntes docete* reflects the development of the University of which it is an expression: the contributions published in the 75th anniversary issue attest to this, highlighting how some authoritative faculty members have not only shaped the Journal physiognomy but also, consistently, the published contents. This orientation also depended on the ecclesial circumstances that dictated the agenda of an educational institution primarily aimed at educating those who would have dedicated their lives to the proclamation of the Gospel, especially in the Global South. In this sense, even the current title of the Journal, which has chosen to retain the original one – *Euntes Docete* – serves as a reminder that the perspective it aims to adopt is a missionary one; however, it is no longer simply in line with the idea of missions from the past centuries, that is, as an activity that the Church carries out in territories where the Gospel has not yet permeated the local culture. Instead, it is seen as the activity of the Church as a whole, following the dictates of *Ad Gentes 2*.

This explains the attention to the phenomenon of atheism that has been the hallmark of an Institute of this University (ISA): the phenomenon of mass atheism, especially in countries of ancient Christian tradition, necessarily resulted in careful and “apologetic” research, in the high sense of

¹ The contribution is based on Giacomo Canobbio’s speech delivered at the event dedicated to the 75th anniversary of *Urbaniana University Journal – Euntes Docete* (Pontifical Urbaniana University November 7th 2023).

the term, in a university that was founded on the impulse of the necessary formation of missionaries and/or pastoral workers in “mission territories”. It brings to mind the diagnosis proposed in 1943 by the work of two French JOC assistants, Y. Daniel and H. Godin, *France Pays de mission?*. This was a symptom of a shift in thinking about mission, albeit within the same idea of mission; in fact, the perspective had shifted from territories to human groups no longer permeated by the Gospel, noting that the regime of Christendom in Europe had waned now and the Church had to undertake its missionary activity everywhere. This was the spirit of the *mission de France* too, and, within it, that of the worker priests, implemented through their being *au coeur des masses*.

The above perspective comes to maturity with the Vatican II Council, which no longer conceived of mission as one of the Church’s activities (although *Ad Gentes* still reflects this view), but rather as the very essence of the Church’s life. The reception of the Council, passing through *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) to Pope Francis, has accustomed us to think that the Church and mission – or, to put it in the language of EN, the Church and evangelization – are inseparably connected.

From the theology of mission to a “missionary” theology

Such an attainment gave rise to the recognition of a new peculiar theological style: as a matter of fact, if theology is the critical reflection on ecclesial life, from the constitutive missionary nature of the Church only a missionary theology could be originated.

To avoid misunderstandings, this does not coincide with the theology of mission or missiology; rather, it indicates a theology for the mission. Thus, all the disciplines that make up the encyclopedia of theological knowledge should have a missionary purpose, oriented to illustrate that a Christian life – in all its forms, including legal ones – is possible in all cultures. These cultures should be understood not simply as recipients of the proclamation – as if it were an evangelization of cultures – but as places where the Gospel is received in an original form, although it should not be forgotten that in mutual communication there is not a distilled Gospel, but always one that is vitally received in cultural forms, which together constitute the tradition understood – in the line of the School of Tübingen and John Henry Newman – as the very life of the Church.

The history of this University and, with it, of its Journal attests that, especially in the early decades, the fundamental orientation was to train for a mission understood as the communication of Western knowledge to peoples who had yet to be reached by the Gospel. Vatican II – whose goal had been outlined in the opening speech by John XXIII, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*, with the often-cited distinction between the deposit of faith and the mode of communicating it – prompted a shift, although only in a programmatic sense. Some passages from GS and AG, reflecting the vision of Catholicity outlined in LG No. 13, indicate the need – based on the historical data highlighted in GS 44 – to rethink Christian life in the typical forms of each culture. The echo of this need will be felt in the 1970s, especially during the 1974 Synod on “Evangelization in the Modern World”, to whose apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, this University has dedicated valuable scholarly studies. It is known that this apostolic exhortation resulted from the difficulty faced by the Synod in finding an agreement between two different visions: the one proposed by bishops from the Global South, reflecting the emerging instance of contextual theologies, and the one defended by a good part of European bishops and theologians, concerned with safeguarding the truth of the Gospel from the risk of being reshaped according to cultures.

The Declaration of the African and Malagasy bishops at the end of the Synod should be remembered as an important legacy of this period: it illustrates the programmatic conviction of the need to move from adaptation to incarnation without denying – contrary to what had been declared almost simultaneously in Accra in the meeting of representatives of other Christian Churches – that communion between the Churches should remain, thus overcoming any form of autarchy². That Declaration was a symptomatic expression of a process underway in the Churches of the Global South aimed at claiming an original reception of the Gospel.

After fifty years, this process can be evaluated with critical detachment, but the demand it presented is not to be forgotten and is still relevant in the

² Cf. G. BUTTURINI (ed.), *Nuove vie del Vangelo. I vescovi africani parlano a tutta la Chiesa*, EMI, Bologna 1975: *Dichiarazione finale dei vescovi africani, Evangelizzazione e corresponsabilità*, 287-291.

current season of ecclesial life, also in the form that the ongoing Synod has taken. Without disregarding the value of the doctrine and related ecclesial practices typical of the “Western” tradition, the Church and theology as well feel challenged to reconsider the relationship between the Gospel and cultures, understood as the symbolic system in which people interpret and construct their existence.

A “missionary” theology cannot be but a plural theology, which should not be identified with a fragmented theology. In this regard, the International Theological Commission’s 1972 document on the Unity of Faith and Theological Pluralism – which in fifteen theses illustrated the relationship between the unity of faith and theological pluralism, with the concern to distinguish a legitimate pluralism from one that breaks unity – cannot be forgotten³.

Although the call for theological pluralism originated with Vatican II, it had always been present in the history of theology: it would be sufficient to think of the theological schools that, from medieval scholasticism, had opposed each other to the point of polemic disputations, which had also required magisterial interventions⁴.

³ This is the framework of the proposal of Bernard Lonergan, who had participated in the drafting of the *Theses* and had published his own commentary. In the just-mentioned volume, which collects the contributions of some members of the Commission, however, a text by Lonergan is not published, although it was cited by J. Ratzinger in his commentary on the first *Thesis*, recalling conversion above all: faith is related to conversion and not to differences in degrees of understanding (19). However, the Canadian Jesuit will publish a re-elaboration of his contribution to the work of the CTI (*Il pluralismo dottrinale* [Doctrinal Pluralism], Edizioni Paoline, Catania 1977, or. 1971) in which he illustrates his idea: a plurality of peoples entails a communication plurality. It has to be said in another culture what has not been said so far. This denotes the vitality of the faith, which is for all peoples and is therefore assimilable by all. To confine the Catholic Church to the classicist mentality would be to keep it outside the modern world, prolonging the crisis that has already been troubling it for too long (cf. *ibid.*, 22). Pluralism must therefore be pursued, without fear of becoming relativist. Pluralism «is based on cultural difference, on the greater or lesser differentiation of consciousness, on the presence or absence of religious, moral and intellectual conversion» (transl. from *ibid.*, 61).

⁴ One example is sufficient, the issue *De auxiliis*, which is not as trite as it might seem to a superficial reading. One of the key themes of the incipient modernity was at stake: freedom.

With Vatican II’s recognition of the plurality of cultures, pluralism took on new contours, with the risk of concealing the unity of faith as well as the unity of theological knowledge: if cultures are the hermeneutical pattern of faith, it becomes difficult to find a point of convergence among different contextual theologies.

In the light of these introductory sketches, the question arises if the present cultural-ecclesial circumstances can be taken as an opportunity for rethinking the peculiarities of Urbaniana University and, at the same time, the configuration of its Journal.

Before delving into these two questions, it seems useful to briefly reflect on the idea of theological knowledge.

Which idea of theological knowledge?

This brief reflection originates from the observation that universities – not only the ecclesiastical ones – reflect a conception of knowledge as “assembly work”: the necessary division into faculties, institutes, and research centers mirrors the fragmentation of knowledge. This fragmentation, at least within the scope we are closely concerned with, can be attributed to the shift from placing “being” at the center to placing the “subject” at the center⁵. The fragmentation of knowledge in general has also had repercussions in the theological field. In this way, analysis takes precedence over synthesis, aligning with scientific knowledge, with which theological disciplines must necessarily engage in dialogue.

The attempt, as it has been implemented in Italy, to characterize the (too many) theological faculties according to a single perspective (anthropology, ecclesiology, theological-fundamental, sacramental, etc.) reflected the desire to have a point of convergence for various disciplines. Still, it does not seem to have been very successful: course programs and attached bibliographies do not convey that the overall perspective is pervasive. It should be noted that in the institutional cycle, fundamental content must be provided, respecting the *Ratio Studiorum* established by ecclesiastical authority to ensure that each academic institution does not proceed freely

⁵ Cf. G. FERRETTI, *La frammentazione della Teologia all’interno dell’attuale situazione di frammentazione del sapere*, in G. LORIZIO – S. MURATORE (edd.), *La frammentazione del sapere teologico*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo, MI 1998, 15-51.

without offering students what seems necessary for the role they will play in the Church; consequently, it becomes difficult to present all the treatises according to the perspective chosen as characteristic of a faculty within a university. It is even more challenging to integrate the exegetical, historical, and juridical disciplines into the planned perspective, given that each of them has its method and specific content that cannot be bent to an orientation that might apply only to systematic theology or moral-spiritual theology.

Coming back to medieval *Summae*, stemming from a systematic design, is out of question⁶. Nonetheless, the question remains if research can be convergently oriented to attempt a rebuilding of unitary theological knowledge without losing the specializations developed from modern times on⁷.

The recommendations of *Veritatis gaudium* 4c about inter- and trans-disciplinarity move in that direction. As it is known, the Apostolic Constitution places this instance at the third place among the criteria for the renewal of ecclesiastical studies: «From this follows the third fundamental criterion that I would propose: inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches carried out with wisdom and creativity in the light of Revelation. What distinguishes the academic, formative, and research approach of the system of ecclesiastical studies, on the level of both content and method, is the vital intellectual principle of the unity in difference of knowledge and respect for its multiple, correlated and convergent expressions».

Nothing new, one might say; this need has been making headway for decades in the theological reflection, although the difficulties are apparent throughout: the divergence, even up to the mutual defense of autonomy, of the disciplines has deep historical roots, and it is delusional to think that it can be overcome quickly. That the rewriting of the statutes of ecclesiastical universities according to the dictates of the apostolic constitution does not seem to have achieved this goal so far is a sign of this.

Nor can we be surprised by this difficulty, which is not only organizational but methodological too: it is correct that the different disciplines

⁶ The most eminent example of this genre is St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* and the still earlier *Summa de Bono* by Philip the Chancellor.

⁷ Other forms of knowledge/practice feel this urge: let's think about medicine and its growing awareness of specialization limitations and the pursuit of a holistic approach.

proceed each one according to its own method. This has evolved over time, even in dialogue with analogous non-theological disciplines (the historical and legal sciences, for example), and it can be presumed that abandoning it would be a loss of value in terms of knowledge.

Therefore, the question arises of how to achieve the unity of knowledge without losing the contributions of different disciplines.

The starting point seems to be the awareness that all ecclesiastical disciplines have a theological connotation: they relate to the life of the Church in its various aspects. This means that the point of convergence is the ecclesial life, which does not exist without the two-fold reference to the Word of God and history. It is in history that the Word gives and says itself, and consequently every critical reflection on the life of the Church must take place in a historical form, that is, in the form of the cultures in which the Word exists and is spoken.

Without rehashing the discussion about the already mentioned contextual theologies that have characterized the seventies of the last century, it seems undeniable that a missionary theological reflection should aid the reception of the Word in the histories of peoples starting from their cultures. These are not merely recipients of reflection but subjects of it.

The adoption of this perspective is likely to require two conditions: that all the theological disciplines practiced in an ecclesiastical university recognize each other in their respective functions, and that each of them remains open to the others. The common objective is to demonstrate, all together, the plausibility of the Christian experience, seeking points of intersection with people’s lives in their actual condition, which must therefore not only be known but also included in the reflection. In this sense, it can be hypothesized that among the disciplines, there is one that serves as a pivot and keeps alive the inspiring principle of the university’s educational and research proposals. Gianni Colzani’s wish⁸ which Sandra Mazzolini recalls in her contribution to the 75th *Urbaniana University Journal* anniversary issue⁹ should be carefully considered as a research hypothesis for this university.

⁸ Cf. G. COLZANI, *Dall’Ateneo alla Pontificia Università Urbaniana. Le grandi linee di una “teologia della missione”*, in ID., *Pensare la missione. Scritti editi e inediti*, a cura di S. MAZZOLINI, Urbaniana University Press, Città del Vaticano 2012, 69-90.

⁹ Cf. EAD., *Aspetti del contributo della Rivista alla riflessione missiologica (1966-2022)*, “Urbaniana University Journal” 76 (2023), 2, 215.

Which Journal for this University?

In the introductory pages of the Journal issue which prompted my intervention, drawing on the history of the Journal the current director outlines some goals among which I found the following ones of particular importance: «to project the periodical into the horizon of its more effective presence in the sphere of ecclesiastical sciences»; «the assumption of a method that fosters the acquisition of the right skills to better interact with reality»; «act as a forum in which the observation and the reflection on the facts of life converge»; «Being at the service of mission, [...] but with critical discipline»¹⁰. In my opinion, the last two of these goals could be salient not only for the Journal but also for identifying processes for rethinking the identity of this University.

In light of the above fragmentary considerations and on the basis of these programmatic indications, let me attempt to figure out the function of the Journal in shaping the identity of this University. This is obviously just a suggestion that a reader of theological texts would wish to see implemented.

The Journal could be thought of from two perspectives: (1) as an expression of the common research implemented in the University and (2) as a driver to shape and safeguard the identity of the University. The two perspectives are to be considered in a circular form.

First of all, the already mentioned difficulties that arise in assuming this hypothesis must be taken into account. It must be acknowledged that they arise not only from the proper status of the different disciplines, but also from the subjects who practice them, who are naturally committed to proposing the characteristic themes of the disciplines they practice.

This proposal is based upon an understanding of the concept of “body of professors”.

In our terminology, we sometimes use the expression “body of professors” to refer to the group of professors and researchers working in universities. However, it must be admitted that when thinking of the “body” there is a tendency to think of the sum of several individuals.

A parallel can be observed here with the way the Church is perceived. Especially starting from the Reformation, with the inevitable revival of the

¹⁰ G. ANCONA, *Editorial*, “UUJ” 75 (2023), 2, 9, 10.

value of individuals, the idea of the Church as a corpus has gradually been overshadowed by the idea of the Church as a *congregatio fidelium*, a gathering of the faithful. Studies by Henry de Lubac, such as *Catholicisme* and *Corpus mysticum* are well known, as they sought to recover the medieval vision of the Church (and society) in contrast to the modern view: the former emphasized the common factor, while the latter highlighted the individual aspect. This perspective tends to think of ecclesial communion as a network of relationships among individuals, rather than a fabric on which individuals are “embroidered”. Not surprisingly, recognizing the risk of soteriological individualism caused by the modern cultural context, Vatican II in LG 9 writes: «God, however, does not make men holy and save them merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another¹¹. Rather has it pleased Him to bring men together as one people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness» and in number 7, it picks up the description of the Church as a body, giving this image a singular prominence compared to all other images (cf. LG no. 6), which, however, already emphasize the collective dimension. Nor could it be otherwise, given the development of God’s salvific action. This is an idea that runs through the principal documents of the last Council, even when they address the function of the Church in relation to humanity: to be a sign and instrument of unity, following the model of the Trinity (cf. UR 2; GS 24). In this regard, recent trends in Trinitarian theology, which risk presenting unity as a result rather than a principle of relationships should be indeed critically questioned. In this sense, there can be a correspondence between the reflection on the Trinity and that on the Church: a mirror of the times, which reverberates in all areas of ecclesial life and is also at the origin of the difficulty of implementing collective thinking.

No doubt that these views are a reaction to the processes of massification that led to clericalism. The current emphasis on synodality could even be seen as an attempt to reclaim the primacy of unity – it is no coincidence that the walking together, albeit with a not entirely correct etymology is continually emphasized – although in the general reception there is a

¹¹ The Latin text is very much clearer: *quavis mutua connexione seclusa* as it emphasizes that the bond is at the first place.

risk of duplicating the perspective of individuals who must recognize each other and converge on the same objectives, which, at least in some circumstances, remain the same only verbally. Sometimes rhetorically, it is declared that everyone is listening to the same Spirit, although surreptitiously the outcome of listening is identified with the sum of the different visions of many individuals, with the consequence of conceiving Truth as a result rather than a source. The risk is to sew the colorful costume of Harlequin to which each has added their own patch and is satisfied because it has found place next to many others to compose the whole.

The origin of this vision lies in a pneumatological orientation that thinks of the action of the Spirit from the perspective of plurality rather than unity, while in the New Testament, even where charisms are discussed, the emphasis is on the unity of the body (cf. *1Cor* 12).

Certainly, the opposite risk must be recognized: that of the “abduction” of the Spirit by someone, usually by authority, as history attests.

The redactional process of LG 12 teaches us how difficult it had been to reconcile these two different perspectives. The outcome integrates the recognition of the gifts of the Spirit and the task of those who preside in the Church, to whom *omnia probare et quod bonum est tenere* specifically belongs.

Perhaps both risks should be faced, but being aware of them would help to control easy enthusiasm. It should be recognized that, paradoxically, unity is before us, but because it is before us, and we must strive towards it by acknowledging that it precedes us. Not surprisingly, in some circumstances, following Jn 17, the gift of unity is requested.

If this holds for the Church in general – and even more extensively for humanity – it also holds for a university that serves the Church.

In my opinion, the circularity between the university and the Journal can be thought from this perspective.

The history of a university is never a linear one: it reflects not only the needs arising from the original inspiration but also those that have cropped up over time to create adequate educational processes for students; it also reflects the insights of the people who have operated in the University: the history of your Journal described in the 75th issue attests to this.

The final question confronting an observer of an academic institution is: what service can it offer compared to other academic institutions?

Regarding your academic institution, the answer to this question can be developed from two perspectives: 1. Verifying whether the founding inspiration that gave rise to this University remains valid, and if so, how can it be revitalized? 2. Trying to understand why students choose this University and checking if the choice depends on the fact that they find something unique in it compared to others.

The above points can be verified by looking back at the University history. As to this, Gianni Colzani produced an overview in the already quoted essay *Dall’Ateneo alla Pontificia Università Urbaniana. Le grandi linee di una “teologia della missione*. However, it is not enough to retrace our path. It is necessary to observe the global condition of research and educational institutes related – as mentioned above – not so much to a “theology of mission” but to a “missionary theology,” capable of demonstrating “catholically” the plausibility of Christian life.

Taking into account these two indications, the question remains open as to whether and how today the original spirit can be revitalized, making the most of the path taken so far and listening to what is happening elsewhere.

The goal to be achieved is to configure the University in an original form. This involves investing – even economically – in research projects that involve scholars from all nations, rooted in different cultures, and capable of working together for the same goal. However, and first of all, educating oneself and others to think from a Catholic perspective is based upon the awareness that relatively recently established Churches can more fully reveal the riches of the Christian mystery than has hitherto been understood in the Roman-European tradition. The words of AG 22, albeit with somewhat outdated language, come to mind:

«The seed which is the word of God, watered by divine dew, sprouts from the good ground and draws from thence its moisture, which it transforms and assimilates into itself, and finally bears much fruit. In harmony with the economy of the Incarnation, the young churches, rooted in Christ and built up on the foundation of the Apostles, take to themselves in a wonderful exchange all the riches of the nations which were given to Christ as an inheritance (cf. Ps. 2:8). They borrow from the customs and traditions of their people, from their wisdom and their learning, from their arts and disciplines, all those things which can contribute to the

glory of their Creator, or enhance the grace of their Savior, or dispose Christian life the way it should be. (5) To achieve this goal, it is necessary that in each major socio - cultural area, such theological speculation should be encouraged, in the light of the universal Church's tradition, as may submit to a new scrutiny the words and deeds which God has revealed, and which have been set down in Sacred Scripture and explained by the Fathers and by the magisterium. Thus, it will be more clearly seen in what ways faith may seek for understanding, with due regard for the philosophy and wisdom of these peoples; it will be seen in what ways their customs, views on life, and social order, can be reconciled with the manner of living taught by divine revelation. From here the way will be opened to a more profound adaptation in the whole area of Christian life. By this manner of acting, every appearance of syncretism and of false particularism will be excluded, and Christian life will be accommodated to the genius and the dispositions of each culture. Particular traditions, together with the peculiar patrimony of each family of nations, illumined by the light of the Gospel, can then be taken up into Catholic unity. Finally, the young particular churches, adorned with their own traditions, will have their own place in the ecclesiastical communion, saving always the primacy of Peter's See, which presides over the entire assembly of charity».

This text seems to me a guideline for “reforming” the physiognomy of the University through the practice of a “missionary theology” which is a theology in progress, open to new forms of understanding, capable of taking up the tradition in the sense illustrated by DV 8 § 3, and resumed from this passage of AG, following the insights of the School of Tübingen and John Henry Newman in the 19th century.

A look at the history of this University makes it clear that the goal of developing a missionary theology has always been present (it would be enough to consider the developments of missionary law, as well as, obviously, those of disciplines generally considered more theological), although, in past seasons, the concern was predominantly to propose the Christian truth preserved in the form it had assumed in the center of Christianity. These seasons are over.

However, one can wonder whether a plural and converging reflection, involving the Affiliated Institutes throughout the world, could represent a new opportunity today.

The question concerns how to rethink the contents of faith and Christian practices from a missionary perspective. This involves the implementation of processes without pretending to achieve immediate results. Although the understandable commitment to transmit the fundamentals of theology to students sent to this University, it seems nevertheless possible that they are transmitted according to the “Catholic” perspective in the sense already mentioned in LG 13, which AG 22 incorporates and develops.

It goes without saying that the focus of research and education should be the ecclesial experience, obviously considered in its Christological-Trinitarian foundation, as it allows for trans-disciplinarity. This involves overcoming the classic division into disciplines and treatises to adopt a reflection by themes, conducted from the different angles represented by the different disciplines. This brings us back to the previously mentioned idea of the “body of professors”.

The driving conviction is that the Journal should be an expression of the research carried out at the University by the “body of professors” and not a collector of research conducted elsewhere. In other words, the Journal should become a place where what is indicated in *Veritatis gaudium* 4c is implemented, but from a “Catholic” perspective. In this sense, the Journal should become a place where the identity of the Urbaniana is preserved and nurtured.

The call to realize inter- and trans-disciplinarity responds to the need to reconstitute the unity or at least the convergence of theological knowledge according to the image of the polyhedron, dear to Pope Francis albeit in a different context¹², which should be read with the note: «The whole is greater than the part, but it is also greater than the sum of its parts»¹³. All those coming from – and practicing – theological research according to the modern orientation tend to think that the whole is constituted by the sum of the parts. Now it is a matter of changing the perspective, something dif-

¹² Cf. *Evangelii gaudium* n. 236: «Here our model is [not the sphere, which is no greater than its parts, where every point is equidistant from the centre, and there are no differences between them. Instead, it] is the polyhedron, which reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness». Please note the term “convergence” in the quote.

¹³ *Ibid.*, n. 235.

ficult to do given the practices which we are accustomed to. The change of perspective is undertaken through laborious trial and error, which initially may appear to someone as a loss of their specificity: the scholastic principle always applies, *quidquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur*. It is a matter of implementing processes to rediscover the original structural unity and make it reappear.

One aspect of the process would be to plan monographic issues of the Journal to be illustrated from various perspectives. These should be considered both for the disciplines practiced at the University and for the methods and results of the research carried out worldwide. This does not involve simply inter- and trans-disciplinarity, but also listening to and giving space to contextual reflection. In this way, the *res* becomes the focal point of the different perspectives so as to show its richness. An approach of this kind requires a considerable commitment, but it is likely to become fruitful both for building a new vision of the University and educating readers and students to adopt the “Catholic” vision typical of this University.

Let me now speak about a thirty-year experience lived at Studio teologico Paolo VI of the Seminary of Brescia which has been publishing an annual *Quaderno teologico* since 1991, usually about three hundred pages long. The coordinator puts some themes on the table and discusses them with colleagues. All together, we choose the theme (usually in June). The coordinator prepares a working sheet to illustrate the *status quaestionis* and the possible contributions from the professors of different disciplines. The working sheet is discussed, and those who agree to contribute indicate which aspect of the theme they intend to address, according to the discipline they teach. In April-May the manuscripts are submitted to the coordinator and two other professors who form the reviewers’ staff. The reviewed essays are handed in to the authors with observations. The coordinator writes an introduction outlining the different essays’ research agenda and passes the text to the contributors; then, based on the received observations, the coordinator reviews it. In June, the *Quaderno* is delivered to the Publisher. The most evident limitation is that the common work does not impact teaching. However, it must be recognized that, in a good faculty group, a climate has grown where collective thinking is possible.

A similar experience promoting trans-disciplinarity occurred at CATI (Coordinamento delle Associazioni Teologiche Italiane). Professor Luigi Sabbarese could also illustrate how collective thinking removed the prejudice of scholars in theology and biblical studies against, e.g., juridical sciences.

The above are small-scale experiences – maybe re-inventing the wheel, nevertheless they point at the possibility not only of a collective way of researching and teaching but also of staying together for thinking, researching, and teaching.

Relying on its history, your university could break down a new way of university outreach and make its Journal the driver to foster and treasure an original way of thought in “catholic” form.

Giacomo Canobbio