

## **Free zone - Theology, "servant" of all sciences**

**New frontiers by Roberto Cetera and Antonio Staglianò**

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The debate on the "re-foundation of theology", promoted by Archbishop Paglia in these pages, provokes important reflection on the level of method, first of all.

(...)

If, however, one speaks of "re-foundation" it is possible that one fears the risk for theology to have relied too much on other foundations than Christian Revelation and its dogmatic development in the tradition of the Church, because of the need - obviously indisputable - to "philosophize within theology".

(...)

Here then is the question we ask with frankness and simplicity: shouldn't the desired re-foundation take place if (and only if) theology becomes a "servant" of philosophy and of all knowledge? "Theology as a servant" is a very traditional image if we think about it. To understand it, however, we need to look with "new eyes" at the historical encounter between theology and philosophy.

(...)

It is therefore necessary to re-found philosophy "using" the knowledge of the Catholic faith, so that philosophy can then be useful not so much to the explanation of the Christian mystery, as to remove "the absurdities" of the language of faith in the eyes of the lay public and its critical reason.

(...)

New horizons of understanding reality are being opened today by the sciences, in particular by the new elementary particle physics, entangled with astrophysics, which calls for a rethinking of the old cosmology. These are cognitive gains that theology cannot fail to take into account in order to proclaim the word of God and the gospel in the context of today's human challenges. In this framework, theological thought should be entirely rethought.

(...)

Even in more recent times, with the decline of nineteenth and twentieth century ideologies, theological production has been committed to rejecting the last resort constituted by post-modern and relativist thought, which is a philosophy nonetheless.

(...)

The frontier that is open today is rather another one: that of science. This matters not only to non-believing intellectual circles, but also to the common feeling, because of the scientific dissemination carried out in detail. Considerable opposition to believers' thought, but also unexpected opportunities, come from neuroscience, as from astrophysics, and even more

from quantum mechanics. Neuroscience challenges the concept of psyche and soul, astrophysics problematizes theological anthropology, quantum mechanics questions matter, time and reality. We do not think that philosophy is dead, and that the true metaphysics lies in quantum mechanics, in the words of Stephen Hawking. There is no doubt, however, that theological study that cannot be reduced to mere abstract speculation, must necessarily measure itself against these different aspects.

(Original Text: Italian – Translation by Leonardo Stefanucci, revised by Fabrizio Mastrofini)