

Zubiri and the Imperative of Theology in the 21st Century

Editorial

The last issue of *The Xavier Zubiri Review* (2005) dealt with the challenge of science and Zubirian philosophy for the 21st century. This is one of the research areas delineated in our list of ten major issues, published in the 2004 issue of *The Xavier Zubiri Review*. The sixth and eighth challenges were a *comprehensive ethical theory* and a *systematic theology*. Neither of those goals has yet been achieved, but the essays collected in this volume, produced in cooperation with the Fundación Xavier Zubiri in Madrid and the Metanexus Institute in Philadelphia, reveal the ferment in the areas of theology and ethics, and demonstrate the importance of these subjects. Of course, theology does not now (and never really did) exist by itself; rather, it must interact with other areas such as science, philosophy, political theory, environmental and stewardship concerns, and economics. The essays in this volume show that Zubirian scholars are aware of these connections.

Armando Savignano discusses Zubiri's philosophy of religion in light of his theory of religation and of the theological dimension of man. God is discovered in the integral human person, not through any particular organ. He is not an impetus for action, but the ground for being and realizing oneself. It is only through religation, in which we are open to God, that we can speak of man's theological dimension.

Jordi Corominas next delves into the issue of the modernist crisis of the early 20th century, in which Zubiri as a young man was immersed. He discusses the situation of the Catholic Church in the 20th century vis-à-vis this crisis, and how Zubiri suffered through it but ultimately weathered the crisis. He covers Zubiri's early modernist positions and their theological evolution in light of the fathers of Vatican II. He covers the impact that this early crisis had on the development of Zubiri's philosophy, theology, and life. He concludes by asking if we have yet surmounted this crisis, and the role that Zubiri's thought can play with respect to it.

Diego Gracia also discusses the crises of Zubiri's early life, and the impact on him of the philosophies of life current in Europe in the early twentieth century. The aspiration of the human being to a full and endless life contrasts with the certain historical religious views, provoking another interior crisis for Zubiri. This crisis resolves itself through Zubiri's sojourn in Germany and his studies with Heidegger and others. He develops the notion of the religation of life as fundamental, its religation to what Christian theology expressed, through St. Paul, in the category of *mysterion*.

Jesús Conill-Sancho investigates a different aspect of Zubiri's thought during this same period. He notes that after 1931, Zubiri moves away from Ortega's ideas and toward his own conception of "personal religion," which he first expounded in a 1935 essay, "In Regard to the Problem of God." There, through his analyses of human subjectivity and human existence, Zubiri concludes that

the person is even more fundamental than existence and life itself. Superseding the focus of Heidegger and Ortega, Zubiri develops his notion of our *implantation in reality* and the radical basing of religion in one's *personal life*. These themes will be of the utmost importance in Zubiri's mature thought, especially the grounding of the theological problem in religion.

Germán Marquínez Argote next considers the question of why man is religious? He compares and contrasts the responses of Tillich and Zubiri, noting the similarities even though they were not acquainted either personally or through reading of each other's works. He attributes the similarities to the influence of Heidegger on both. He notes that Tillich stresses "the dimension of depth" wherein we are confronted with "that which concerns us unconditionally," whether we call it "God" or not. This is quite similar to Zubiri's notion of religion "to a power of the real which is ultimate, possibilitating, and impelling." It is from this fundamental experience of every human being that there arises a concern for the ultimate ground of our existence and the possible answers. These answers, for Zubiri, are the diverse religions that have existed throughout history, even including such negative forms as atheism, agnosticism and the present-day indifference to religion.

Guillerma Díaz Muñoz investigates the personal and spiritual relationship between Xavier Zubiri and Viktor Warnach during the period 1935-1944, at time when Zubiri was formulating some of his mature theological ideas. She also discusses the repercussions of an unpublished manuscript sent by Warnach to Zubiri in 1940 on Zubiri's subsequent essay, "On Supernatural Being: God and Deification in Pauline Theology".

Enzo Solari also is intrigued by the relationship of Zubiri and Heidegger with respect to theology. He notes that in spite of appearances, Heidegger's philosophy includes a series of theses about God, the sacred, religions and Christianity. Though he seeks to remain at least methodologically agnostic in *Being and Time*, he still raises the problem of God and of faith, albeit in a non-philosophical manner. Later he returns to look for the divine in the context of sacredness that defines it, and in the context of the threat to life inherent in the modern technological mentality. This suggests his influence on the strongly phenomenological philosophy of religion developed by Zubiri.

The Xavier Zubiri Foundation of North America hopes that this volume will be a stimulus to Zubiri scholars everywhere to redouble their efforts with respect to Zubiri, theology, and ethics. Interest runs high in this subject, and in fact there were so many articles of high quality submitted on the subject of Zubiri and theology that they could not all be published in this volume of the *Review*. The next volume will therefore be devoted to this same subject area. Contributions to it are of course welcome.

Thomas B. Fowler