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## *Ad lectores*

This Spring-Summer 2017 double issue of *Antonianum*, appearing as it does only a few months after the autumn 2016 one, once more brings to you a certain number of weighty contributions having to do with matters raised in the Papal Encyclical on our common home. A joint essay brings to the reader an interdisciplinary reflection carried out, in the form of a seminar, by scholars of philosophy, history, theology, law, economic ethics and philology, engaging over several months in considering rather more deeply the implications and the potential of the Franciscan tradition in respect of environmental ethics. The uniquely prominent attention that, beginning already with the Romantics, is focused on Francis of Assisi by poets, persons of letters, historians, artists, musicians, film-makers – not only in the West but also in the East, not only by Catholics but also by Protestants and the Orthodox, not only by Christians but also by Muslims and Buddhists, not only by religious believers but also by non-believers – is shown to safeguard the indispensable inclusivity of a pedagogy intended to favour "taking care of our common home." The Franciscan gift of a symbolic reading of creation, as an alternative to a merely materialistic-"economicist" one; the Franciscan view of the law, calling for universal brotherhood; together with the understanding of being rich in material things as being open to sharing them, with a view to the common good, preferring to put things to good use rather than resting content with merely owning them – all of these open up before us avenues of reflection sure to be fruitful.

In this seminar-type itinerary one may place the 2 May 2017 gathering, at the St. Bonaventure Theology Faculty (the *Seraphicum*), on the occasion of the presentation of Ernesto Dezza's book on Scotus' teaching on creation (*La dottrina della creazione in Giovanni Duns Scoto*); the author teaches philosophy at our University, and the book was published in the "Medioevo" series of our own Antonianum publishing house. The first speaker on this occasion was Orlando Todisco, who teaches philosophy at the institution that was hosting the event, the Seraphicum, which is the Pontifical Theology Faculty of the Friars Minor Conventual. He highlighted, in Dezza's research, one of the fundamental questions of the present debate on the origin of the Cosmos, one that is very much

in evidence also in the Encyclical "*Ludato si*'": "Accident or necessity: the Greek alternative to the Biblical-Christian teaching of creation out of nothing." On the one side, the teaching is founded on the primacy of "nature"; on the other side, it is premised on the primacy of culture; one considers that it is necessity that is certain, the other is certain of freedom. For the Greek way of thinking, it is not indeed freedom that is the root of being, but necessity; that is the rationality that leads to thinking that all is but "natural." The "*physis*" would then be the only measure and point of reference. Over against this primacy of rationality favoured by the Greeks, Scotus puts up his choice of the primacy of the will, source of the awe inspired by the awareness of being in the world though not having any right to be, and of being here at the coming together of many gifts. These are the outlines, the characteristics of a Franciscan existence, one that claims nothing for itself and freely gives everything to others.

Responding to points made by Professor Todisco and by the other scholar speaking at the book presentation, Professor Davide Riserbato, who himself teaches philosophy at the Antonianum, Dezza foresees further developments, promising to continue working on those texts of Scotus's that seek deeper insight into that "greater plan that God has for the world, which is that of bringing into being something / someone that is other than Himself and that yet has the capacity to love Him and to enter into fellowship with Him. All this in accordance with the key theme of Scotus' theology: Christocentrism." Indeed, according to Dezza, the cosmos, for "the Subtle Doctor, is not only brought forth *ex liberalitate ad extra*, but is also a noetic cosmos". Dezza likewise looks forward to further teamwork regarding God the Creator, together with Professors Riserbato and Nannini. Professor Andrea Nannini has specialised at Salerno University's Centre for the study of the philosophy of Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the age of Humanism ("Centro FitMU Studi di filosofia tardo-antica, medievale e umanistica – Università di Salerno"), and it gives us great pleasure to be able to publish in this issue his own article, which lets us benefit from his illuminating discussion specifically of Distinctions 35 and 36 of the first book of both the *Lectura* and the *Ordinatio*. These are the same topics that were earlier discussed between Dezza and Riserbato in their conversation on: "The Thought that Creates: The Eternal Foundation of the Ideas: Essaying an

Overall and a Further Reading of the Teaching of Duns Scotus". We are, therefore, looking forward to learning more from fruitful work by the Dezza – Nannini – Riserbato team, helping us to explore further the typically Franciscan themes present in the Papal Encyclical.

The relationship between nature and culture – the point of departure in the discussion on Dezza's book – is likewise germane to the encounter between biocentrism and anthropoccentrism, and is treated of in this article by Sara Lumbreras, who teaches at the Institute for Research in Tecnology at the Comillas Pontifical University: "Will we always be Special? Extending Humanity, Shrinking Uniqueness". The Author reflects on that which is specific to the human being, both in relation to animals – now that some animals are known to act in certain ways that used to be considered as belonging to human beings exclusively – and in relation to humanoids or robots, which carry out operations very similar to those of the human mind, and do indeed sometimes even show potential for greater efficiency. "With this lecture - Lumbreras promises - we propose that, even though extending humanity is the morally correct course of action, for instance, in the case of animals, it could pose some threats when thinking about machines. This lecture is mainly aimed at bringing subjectivity back into the debate, while proposing an objective definition based on strong emergence as a proxy for this subjectivity". On the same wavelength, we find also Konrad Szocik, who teaches at the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów (Poland). Indeed, in his opinion, religious knowledge is to be given its place among the cognitive sciences, as knowledge acquired by natural intuition, rather than as knowledge that is gained by scientific speculation. Religion and its beliefs should thus be seen to be brought forth by nature rather than by reason. As if taking up the nature - culture, freedom – reason, dichotomy, evoked at the presentation of Dezza's book, Szocik appears to intend to lead to a contrary conclusion: "In this context we can assume that a rational background may be more important than an intuitive one for the development of religious beliefs". This Author's contribution to the debate concerning religion and science is surely of considerable value to the study called for in "*Laudato si'*," involving as it does the search for convergence between religion itself and technology,

between the "hard" sciences and ethics, between the world of finance and the demands of social solidarity.

Likewise within the framework of the conversation inspired by Pope Francis's Encyclical, the presentation took place on 9 May this year of *Sorella madre terra. Radici francescane della Laudato si'*, the new book by Professor Martín Carbajo Núñez, who holds a tenured position at our own University, where he teaches moral theology, and who teaches as well at the *Academia Alphonsiana.* We are genuinely pleased to publish in this issue of *Antonianum* an account of that presentation, even as we note that, in only six months, this book has already been published in five editions in four lnaguages. The event was organised by the *Academia Alphonsiana,* and the rapporteur was Professor Simone Morandini, of Venice's "San Bernardino" Institute of Ecumenical Studies, which is the ecumenical section of our University. Professor Morandini has been engaged upon environmental matters for some years now, and is co-author of the volume *La recezione ecumenica della "Laudato si'"*, published by the journal of our Venice Institute of Ecumenical Studies, the *Rivista* di *studi ecumenici* (1-2, 2016). Particular attention is paid there to the environmental views of Orthododoxy, expounded in the contributions of Professors Panaghiotis Ar. Yfantis, Evanghelos Yfantidis and Daniele Cogoni. Especially interesting, too, is the approach of Islam as presented by Yahaya Abd al-Ahad Zanolo. In that same volume, Professor Morandini, together with Professors Vetrali e Nocetti, offers commentary on *"Laudato si'"* in the perspective of mercy. Now, in reference to the book by Prof. Carbajo Núñez, Prof. Morandini focuses on the holistic conception of ecology and, starting from it, analyses certain global ethical challenges, which show up a world shorn of mercy and a prfound social-environmental crisis. I am taking the occasion to wish you all a restful summer.

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