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Ad lectores

In this year 2017, which is drawing to a close, we marked the fifth centenary of the start of the Lutheran Reformation, dedicating a day of reflection to "New Readings of the Reformation," on the occasion of the feast day of the University and of its Chancellor (16 January 2017), and now the autumn issue of *Antonianum* is dedicated to the Franciscan secularity of Ramon Llull. Thus Professor Placido Sgroi, of our Venice-based Institute of Ecumenical Studies, takes leave of the fifth centenary of the launching of the Reformation, in his article: "Perennis Reformatio*: Chiesa della giustificazione e della misericordia verso una* koinonia *ecumenica*" ("the Church of justification and mercy towards an ecumenical *koinonia*"), while the monographic series of articles dedicated to Ramon Llull – always dear to the Franciscan tradition, though never labelled as a Franciscan – looks with anticipation to secular modernity: scientific, multi-religious and multicultural.

The Mallorcan Llull's interest in the value of secularity, in the importance of natural reality, hence in the need to come to know it by the empirical method, shows a high degree of consonance with a theological view of nature, with the theology of creation, to which Pope Francis turns in the second chapter of his Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'*. The development of a theology of creation is today urgently needed, both in order to offer a plausible foundation for the dialogue between theology and the empirical sciences, and in order to assure the dignity of a theological discourse to the reflection that is to animate the care of our common home, which is called for by *Laudato si'.* As Pope Francis does, in fact, remind us, it is not possible to conceive of any efficacious intervention for the good of the human and natural environment unless there is first a convergence of the different kinds of knowledge, unless there comes about first a new humanism, which is to overcome the isolation of the sciences. Isolation makes the sciences self-referential, closed in upon themselves, hence incapable of rightly interacting with political, social and environmental reality. Therefore, an ecology that is whole, human and environmental, presupposes thought that is whole, being the integrated product of a scientific community that is brotherly, just as

brotherly is the family of creatures, which moves Francis of Assisi to sing the praises of the Lord of the universe and of history.

Llull is not only a lay person who does philosophy; he is also a thinker who does philosophy in the manner of a layperson, with the language of a *simplex* or *rudis*, as if an *illitteratus*. Moreover, he does philosophy for laypeople, meaning that he treats of subjects that are appropriate for those he is addressing, immersed as they are in politics, in the arts and in the economy. In this manner he even arrives at conceiving an actual philosophy of nature. Interested in the human being as part of created reality, Llull, whose interests extend to the mechanical arts, to music and even to dance, asks himself also about the relationship between philosophy and theology. While on the subject of the lay character of language, of knowledge and of theology itself, Lull develops, too, an interesting reflection on the feminine, which looks forward, in many respects, to the modern sensibility on the matter.

For Llull, the universality of language is safeguarded by the symbol of numbers, which he applies even to the decrees of the faith. Indeed, he imagines a teaching communicable to all, being made available to all. To this end, he actively favours the study of languages. The lay symbols of numbers and languages are for him the ingredients of a vision of reality as a whole. Llull's universality, wholeness, of knowledge intends to recover that of Roger Bacon and Augustine of Hippo, as an antithesis to the rigid autonomy of reason, proposed by Averroist Aristotelianism. The latter would imperil Llull's programme of reuniting all of humankind around one and only creed, illuminated by the Light of Christ.

The inclusivity of Llull, who excludes none, and his vision of the human being's relationship with creatures and with God – subjects close to the Pope's heart in *Laudato si'* – are treated of by the scholars contributing to this special issue, but most of all by Dr. Daniele Baiocco, as is highlighted by Dr. Sara Muzzi, who has coordinated this team of researchers, and who offers here an illuminating introduction to their work. I take this occasion to thank her for her cooperation with our editorial team; this generous cooperation has made possible the pub-

lication of this second monographic issue of *Antonianum* in two years, dedicated to Ramon Llull.

As my term as the Editor of *Antonianum* ends, let me also take this occasion to thank you, our readers, for your attention to our scholarly offerings, and to express my own very best wishes, both for you personally and for your academic endeavours.

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