

*Ad lectores*

The articles in this issue, the first of this ninety fourth year of *Antonianum*, are contributed by four scholars who take part in the International Group for the Exegetical Study of the Gospels (“Gruppo Internazionale di Studio Esetico sui Vangeli” - GISEV). They practise and teach exegesis of the New Testament in different European academic institutions (in Rome, Madrid, Katowice, Valencia) and meet to compare, discuss and advance their work at the Rosminian Fathers’ Antonio Rosmini Missionary College, at St. John Before the Latin Gate, in Rome. The fruitful outcome of those days of study and discussion – of what in Platonian philosophical circles would be called their *dialogon* – is represented by these articles, which are, in this sense, related to those published in the first issue of this journal’s ninety first year (2016).

The question put to the Gospels is the same, even as the search area differs: What is the human being, what is the truth about the human being in the light of the Word of God and of the *historia salutis*, what is the human being’s ultimate destination and what is the human being chosen for, what are the means needed to realize fully the divine plan for the human being. In the 2016 issue, the search areas were the *Gospel According to Matthew* and the *Gospel According to Mark*, while in this issue the question is addressed to the remaining two Gospels, to which the same exegetical method is applied.

In the Lucan corpus, the first object of study is the passage of the *Gospel According to Luke* known as the *Benedictus* Canticle (Lk 1,67-79). Jorge Humberto Morales Ríos underlines the call to the human being, as part of society, of “a people”, to pass, by virtue of God’s visitation, from a state of “negativity” to the Lord’s service, and to being a beneficiary of the Lord’s peace. The *Transfiguration* (Lk 9,28-36) is studied by Artur Malina. Compared with the other Synoptic accounts of it, Luke’s narrative of the Transfiguration assigns particular value to the more human dimension of the disciples’ following of Jesus. Salvador Villota Herrero looks into a characteristic trait of Lucan anthropology, which in turn gives shape to the corresponding soteriology: The human being, assailed by the “Reign of Evil”, regardless of religious or ethnic affiliation, has need of the salvation obtained by the destruction of sin, death, and evil, through the death-resurrection of Jesus. Chapter 10 of the *Acts of the*

*Apostles* is the focus of the study by Luis Sánchez Navarro. In the story of the centurion Cornelius, Luke highlights the universality of the Gospel, which – through the gift of the Holy Spirit – is capable of renewing every human being who looks for God with a sincere heart.

These articles are followed by another four, intended to bring to the fore the anthropological teaching of the *Gospel According to John*. Morales Ríos offers an analysis of Jn 4,1-42: The telling of Christ's encounter with the woman of Samaria, and with her people, is a subtly differentiated tale of persons coming to authentic knowledge of Jesus and of his mission, through faith in him and in the universal salvific significance of his Person. A similar motif is brought to light by Sánchez Navarro in his study of the gift of sight to the man born blind (Jn 9): The road from darkness into light is travelled by the one who is healed and has his blindness from birth replaced by sight, and so it is by everyone who searches for true light by which to see his very own very existence. Noteworthy, too, is the contrast with the passage accomplished, as it were, by the "adversaries" of Jesus; they travel the opposite direction, into blindness. Starting with Jn 12,31 Villota Herrero underlines the close connection in Johannine teaching between soteriology and anthropology: The universal salvation, offered by the Word made Flesh and shown forth in his powerful works, leads to a renewal of all human relations, severely wounded as they have been by the influence of the Evil One and by the consequences of sin. The question that Peter addresses to Jesus. "Why cannot I follow thee now?" (Jn 13,37) is treated of in the closing article by Malina. From looking into the causes of Peter's incapacity for following Jesus at that time, and by considering why it was only the encounter with the Risen One that would enable Peter to follow Jesus, there emerges a "pedagogy of love" that the Church should never neglect.

The anthropological thematics of these articles renders them particularly useful to illustrate the essential role that exegesis has for the Church's mission, going beyond the more easily perceived "traditional" role of exegesis as advancing academic scholarship. Since every translation of Sacred Scripture is already in itself an interpretation of it, there is «the greatest danger» that use of an erroneous translation in the carrying out of the Church's «holy intention to communicate the truth about God and about the human being», may, on some occasion, result in the preacher speaking of «a false god or a human ideal which is not really

Christian» (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 41). Biblical exegesis, it emerges most clearly from these articles to come out of the International Group for the Exegetical Study of the Gospels, is crucial to the carrying out of the mandate to «preach the Gospel to every creature» (Mk 16,15), which the Lord Jesus entrusted to the whole Church and especially to the Apostles. Thus the scholars engaged upon Biblical exegesis appear more than ever as those *theologi qui ministrant sanctissima verba divina... qui ministrant nobis spiritum et vitam*, of whom Francis writes in his *Testament*.

In the *Acta* section of this issue, in addition to the annual Rector's Report, there is also Witosław Jerzy Sztyk's address on vocational pastoral outreach to the young, in reference to the Synod of Bishops. This address, like the Rector's Report, was delivered at the solemn inauguration of the academic year at this Pontifical University Antonianum. It was topical, since our academic year was being launched even as there was in session the Fifteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, on the theme: "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment". *Acta* concludes with the 14 November *lectio magistralis* by the illustrious Biblical scholar, Professor Marco Nobile, Rector Emeritus of the Antonianum (and former Editor of this quarterly journal). As in a *Protrepticus* of his own, Professor Nobile sets out to enlighten younger colleagues, researchers and students, as to the importance of scholarship that does not ignore the multiplicity of fields of knowledge and the variety of cultures, lest we run the risk of immuring ourselves in the impermeable, narrow confines of hyperspecialization.

Stéphane OPPES