

Ninth Rome Symposium
Give Account of the Hope that is in you
Apologetics for Today
February 15th-17th 2019

Organised by the Emmanuel Community
with the Pontifical Redemptoris Hominis Institute (Lateran University)



Presentation

From February 15th to February 17th 2019 the Emmanuel Community, in cooperation with the Pontifical Redemptor Hominis Institute (Lateran University), organises a symposium with the title: *Give Account of the Hope that is in you: Apologetics for Today*.

For over fifteen years, the *Rome Symposium* has brought together people who wish to reflect on the challenges of the New Evangelisation. The ninth Symposium intends to study the challenges of apologetics – the theological science of arguments in favour of the faith and of its credibility.

Many individuals and communities have undertaken works of evangelisation and acquired a rich and varied experience, but the reflection on what makes such missionary praxis convincing for human reason has rarely been set down or drawn together. This lack of development can be a hindrance to furthering the mission.

Within Catholic circles there is a crisis in apologetics. Prior to the time of the Second Vatican Council apologetics developed unevenly. It was often thought that providing 'arguments that held together' would be enough to obtain conversions, and those who did not convert could consequently be suspected of bad faith. In short, conversion was confused with the simple conclusion of a line of reasoning. The clear limits in this approach led to an opposite reaction: thinking that conversion was a purely irrational, supernatural and inexplicable experience, having nothing to do with the arguments of reason. This led to a catechesis and to pastoral programmes for youth and young people founded on emotiveness and group dynamics, where the intellect was left unfed. This happened precisely at a time when dominant culture became subjectivist and increasingly corrosive for the faith. The pendulum swung from apologetic rationalism to sentimentalist irrationalism.

It is time to think out an apologetics adapted to our contemporaries, taking account of the specific expectations of men and women today, and of the characteristics of a post-modern society sometimes termed “liquid”¹.

The Symposium will look at several themes: how did the great witnesses in history proceed (St. Paul, Blaise Pascal, Newman); what reasons for believing come from science; how can we announce the kerygma today; what is the relationship between conversion as an experience and understanding it through intellect; how can we speak about faith to Muslims; what dialogue can we have with evangelicals; what does Pope Francis teach us about how to speak for today...

As is customary in the Rome Symposium, keynote speeches will be complimented by testimonies giving account of the theological intuitions that might explain why these witnesses’ initiatives are fruitful and convincing.

The Symposium will be translated in three languages: English, Italian and French.

Symposium Programme

February 15th – 17th 2019

Friday February 15th 2019 (Villa Aurelia)

- 9.00 a.m. Morning Prayer
9.30 a.m. Greeting : **Prof. Denis Biju Duval**, President, Redemptor Hominis Institute
- 9.40 a.m. **An Apologetics for Today ?**
Speaker : Archbishop Rino Fisichella (President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelisation)
- 10.30 a.m. Debate with a respondent and questions from the public
10.45 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11.15 a.m. Panel 1 :
- **Great Figures: St Paul, apologist?**
Jean-Baptiste Edart (Professor of Exegesis, Université Catholique de l’Ouest, Angers, France), Emmanuel Community
- **Great Figures: Blaise Pascal**
Dan Arbib (philosophy teacher, ENS Paris)
- 12.15 p.m. Holy Mass
- 1.00 p.m. Lunch
- 2.30 p.m. **Conversion and Intellect**
The Theological Anthropology of Conversion: when people ‘convert’ it is always linked to a personally convincing intellectual experience.
Speaker : Prof. Denis Biju Duval (President, Redemptor Hominis Institute)

¹ Cfr. The term comes from the philosopher Zygmunt Bauman.

- 3.30 p.m. Break
- 4.00 p.m. **How can we give account of a conversion today ? The apologetics implicit in a literary work.**
Speaker : Didier Decoin (writer, Goncourt Academy, Paris) (to be confirmed)
- 5.15 p.m. **Great Figures: Cardinal Newman**
Speaker : International Centre of Newman Friends
- 5.45 p.m. **The Reasons for Believing Found in Astrophysics**
Speaker: Slawomir Sledziewski (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) (to be confirmed)
- 6.15 p.m. **Creation and Evolution**
Speaker : Prof. Gianfranco Basti (Lateran University, Rome)
- 7.00 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration
- 8.15 p.m. Dinner

Saturday February 16th 2019 (Villa Aurelia)

- 9.00 a.m. Morning Prayer
- 9.30 a.m. **Why is Jesus the Saviour ?**
Speaker : Dr Vittorio Messori (journalist, writer², apologist, Italy)
- 10.30 a.m. Debate
- 11.00 a.m. **Dialogue with Evangelical Christians**
Speaker: Peter Poppleton (John 17) (Moderator, City of the Lord Community, Arizona)
- 12.15 p.m. Holy Mass
- 1.00 p.m. Lunch
- 2h30 p.m. **I was a muslim ...**
Two testimonies ...
- 3.30 p.m. **Announcing Christ to Muslims ? What are the seeds of the Word ? Re-reading testimonies.**
Speaker : Fr. Henry Fautrad (Emmanuel Community)
- 4.30 p.m. Break

² Author of *Crossing the threshold of hope*, interview of saint John-Paul II; *The Ratzinger report, Jesus hypothesis...*

- 5.00 p.m. **Giving Account of our Charism of Evangelisation**
- *Two communities explain how they evangelise and why they use the methods they have chosen*
 - *Comunità Nuovi Orizzonti*
 - *Emmanuel Community*
 - *Evangelising Muslims : the account of an evangelical experience*

6.30 p.m. **Panel with the day's speakers**

7.00 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration

8.15 p.m. Dinner

Sunday February 17th 2019 (Centro Culturale San Luigi, French Embassy to the Holy See)

8.30 p.m. Morning Prayer

9.30 p.m. **How can we reach our contemporaries in a post-modern liquid society ?**
Speaker : Prof. Emmanuel Gabellieri (philosopher, Vice-rector of the Catholic University of Lyon, France)

10.15 a.m. Debate

10.40 a.m. Coffee Break

11.00 a.m. **The Church and Domain of *Trinità dei Monti*: an example of apologetics through art and science**
Speaker: Didier Repellin, architect

11.45 a.m. **Pope Francis, a language for the heart**
Speaker: Holy See Press Office

12.30 p.m. Lunch

1.30 p.m. Departure for *Trinità dei Monti*

2.30 p.m. **Visit of the Convent at Trinità dei Monti**

- anamorphoses
- astrolabe
- anamorphoses
- library
- refectory of Andrea Pozzo
- cloister

4.00 p.m. Holy Mass, church of Trinità dei Monti

4.45 p.m. Conclusions