

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, among them: What methods did the great witnesses in history use (St. Paul, Blaise Pascal, Newman) ? What reasons for believing come from science? How can we announce the kerygma today? What is the relationship between a conversion experience and its being intellectually understood? How can we dialogue with evangelicals? A whole day will be dedicated to the question of evangelising Muslims, including testimonies of conversion and a sharing of experiences with evangelicals from the United States.

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

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

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**
Prof. Paul Clavier (Department of Philosophy, University of Lorraine, France), Emmanuel Community
- 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)
- 3.30 p.m. Break
- 4.00 p.m. **The Conversion to Catholicism of 20th Century Intellectuals**
Speaker : Frédéric Gugelot (Université de Reims, France)
- 5.15 p.m. **Great Figures: John Henry Newman and Apologetics: Some Lessons from his Life**
Speaker : Sr. Kathleen Dietz FSO, Vice-Chancellor, diocese of Erie, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
- 5.45 p.m. **The Reasons for Believing Found in Astrophysics**
Speaker: Prof. Paul Mueller sj (vice director of the Vatican Observatory)

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. **Islam in Comparison with Monotheisms that have been Falsified**
Speaker: Père Pierre Lambert op (Emeritus lecturer, universities of Fez, Rabat and Casablanca ; co-author² of "Le Choc des religions" (The Clash of Religions) Presses de la Renaissance)

10.30 a.m. Debate

11.00 a.m. **Announcing Christ to Muslims: What are the Seeds of the Word?**
Speaker: Fr. Henry Fautrad (Emmanuel Community, Light of Christ Group)

12.15 p.m. Holy Mass

1.00 p.m. Lunch

2h30 p.m. **I was a Muslim ...**
Two testimonies ...

3.30 p.m. **Evangelising Muslims: Report on an Evangelical experiment**
Speaker: Pastor Randy Johnson (Common Ground Team, USA)

4.30 p.m. Break

5.00 p.m. **Witness from the Light of Christ Group**
Speaker: Blandine Becheras (Emmanuel Community)

6.00 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)

² With Dalil Boubakeur and Daniel Sibony.

- 10.15 a.m. Debate
- 10.40 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11.00 a.m. **That they all may be one (Jn 17:21)**
Speaker: Pastor Joe Tosini (founder of the movement John 17, Phoenix, Arizona)
- 12.00 p.m. **The Church and Domain of *Trinità dei Monti*: an example of apologetics through art and science**
Speaker: Didier Repellin, architect
- 1.00 p.m. Lunch
- 2.00 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