

## ***From the Editor***

Do we live in an age of disunity and hopelessness or an age of unity and hope? There is so much polarization in the church and the world today that the question may seem patently absurd. For Christians, however, dare we long for, dare we call for, dare we strive for unity and hope? In the Roman Catholic lectionary, the readings for the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary come from Revelation 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10a; 1 Corinthians 15:20–27; and Luke 1:39–56. These selections include stories of birth, reflections on death, and Mary’s stirring *Magnificat*, all of which prod readers to reflect on the faith, hope, and love communicated in these passages and inspire meditation on the miracle that life has the last word, not death. In an age of many pandemics when we are surrounded by death-by-virus, death-by-hatred, and death-by-ecocide, the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love call us to combat the forces of despair, disunity, and isolation.

On March 27, 2020, in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pope Francis issued a special *Urbi et Orbi* blessing. In his homily about Jesus calming the storm at sea (Mark 35–41), the pope sensitively addressed the fears of a people living in a locked-down environment. He rhythmically wove Jesus’ query, “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” throughout his pastorally focused encouragement to live *into* the theological virtues as we navigate the storm of the pandemic. He taught:

The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love.<sup>1</sup>

The authors in this issue help illuminate the many different ways God’s redeeming love, providing the foundation for Christian faith and hope, is revealed and received in daily life. In an age of pandemic-sized fear, their work keeps attention focused on the good news that death does not have the last word.

<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, *Extraordinary Moment of Prayer* (March 27, 202), [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco\\_20200327\\_omelia-epidemia.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200327_omelia-epidemia.html).

John Thiel's article "*Dei Verbum*: Scripture, Tradition, and Historical Criticism" identifies an important gap in the embrace of historical criticism by the Catholic Church. When seeking to understand the revelation that is God's Word, why is historical criticism accepted as a tool for understanding Scripture but not tradition? Thiel analyzes the debates over the drafts that ultimately became *Dei Verbum* against the historical struggle to define the sources of revelation, from the Council of Trent to Vatican II. How might the use of historical criticism with regard to interpreting magisterial teaching enrich the faithful's understanding of and access to the saving divine Word of revelation?

Believers are called to a deeper understanding of revelation through the ongoing process of conversion. Utilizing the thinking of both Pope Francis and Friedrich Schleiermacher, Christy Lang Hearlson argues for "a twofold conversion to the child" in "Ecological Conversion as Conversion to the Child: Becoming Caregivers, Becoming Childlike." Drawing the reader's attention to different interpretations of Mark 10:15, Hearlson suggests that children are a source of revelation in the Christian tradition awakening believers to a profound ecological conversion. To care for the Earth is to care for our children. Hearlson contends, however, that adults need to reclaim the child's capacity to relish and observe what is small, allow for a spirit in all things (animism), and attend to the urgency of the moment in order for us to understand the responsibility to care for the child and care for the Earth.

In his work, "William Desmond, Jean-Luc Marion, and the Passion of Charity," Ryan Duns, SJ, studies the dynamics of revelation by putting Desmond into conversation with Marion to demonstrate how Desmond's metaphysics "might contribute to the task of theological reflection." Duns explains that Marion's approach to "revelation as *apokalypsis*" "gives precedence to God's self-donation and manifestation," thereby de-emphasizing the human subject's attempt to control the acquisition of knowledge and truth. Duns claims that Marion "stands in continuity" with *Dei Verbum*. Desmond's notion of the "godsend," according to Duns, shares an affinity with Marion's apocalyptic logic. He argues that "both thinkers regard mystery's manifestation as an event taking place at God's initiative, not ours."

We move from how philosophy can clarify the communication of the transcendent in the immanent to how realist cinema might not only do the same but actually be a site for divine encounter. Joel Mayward argues in "The Fantastic of the Everyday: Re-Forming Definitions of Cinematic Parables with Paul Ricoeur" that "a film can be about God's interaction with our world as well as a means for God's actual interaction with us." His application of Ricoeur's understanding of parables to film provides additional insights into understanding revelation. Mayward contends that "theocinematics—a cinematic theology which takes film qua film seriously—is not only possible, but beneficial to our understanding of God."

The authors of the theological roundtable on the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Ut Unum Sint* provide sober and realistic accounts of reasons to hope (and lament) when it comes to ecumenical relations. Their reflections on the twenty-five years since Saint Pope John Paul's encyclical, however, collectively reflect the Christian longing for unity-in-diversity in the encounter with the divine presence through revelation.

Roger Haight's *Faith and Evolution: A Grace-Filled Naturalism* provides the occasion for a very spirited review symposium. How do we discuss divine agency in the Anthropocene? Do we need a new paradigm for the dialogue between faith and science? How do we name the God of evolution? What is the critical correlation between faith and scientific culture? These are some of the topics our authors consider in their evaluation of Haight's work. Their work and Haight's response offer yet more perspectives on how the divine (in Haight's term, "Presence") is revealed.

The articles and special features of this issue offer a variety of approaches to considering divine revelation and our response to it. Together they give reason for Christian hope (1 Pet 3:15). In his May 20, 2020, general audience, Pope Francis taught that "Men and women who pray know that hope is stronger than discouragement. They believe that love is more powerful than death, and that surely one day it will triumph, even if in times and ways that we do not understand."<sup>2</sup> As a Christian community we may dare say that though we live in age of pandemic, we live in an age of hope grounded by faith and animated by love.

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Correction: Volume 47 Number 1 (June 2020) misstated the issue of *Horizons* dedicated to Fr. Gerard Sloyan. It is Vol. 21 No. 1 (Spring 1994).

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The editors of *Horizons* mourn the passing of Paul J. Crowley, SJ, editor of *Theological Studies*, who died August 7, 2020. Paul was a creative, energetic, and supportive editor, who was particularly concerned with getting women theologians published. We honor his achievements as editor and celebrate his life of Christian witness.

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As always, I thank our authors for sharing their scholarship with our readers, and I thank all the members of the *Horizons* editorial team for their inspiring creativity, diligent work, and unwavering commitment to excellent scholarship.

ELENA PROCARIO-FOLEY  
*Solemnity of the Assumption*  
 August 15, 2020

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, *General Audience Catechesis on Prayer-3. The Mystery of Creation* (May 20, 2020), [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2020/documents/papa-francesco\\_20200520\\_udienza-generale.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200520_udienza-generale.html).