A Sign of Hope

by Donald Senior, C.P.

New Theology Review (NTR) is celebrating its 25th anniversary in a bold way! NTR was founded to bring the best of Catholic theology to an audience engaged in the pastoral life of the Church. The journal was originally a collaborative effort of Washington Theological Union (WTU), Liturgical Press, and Catholic Theological Union (CTU). That founding mission will continue, but with the closing of WTU, the journal will now be published exclusively by CTU. We are truly grateful to our former partners for their contributions over the years that made NTR a journal of great quality.

But the change in NTR is not simply a shift in ownership. As previously announced, NTR will now be totally online, published by CTU through the resources of its Paul Bechtold Library. This will be an “open access” online journal, which means that anyone anywhere in the world who has access to the Internet will be able to read the rich contents of NTR free of charge. We wanted to adopt this format as a matter of principle, fulfilling the mission of Catholic Theological Union to serve the global Church.

As NTR celebrates its silver anniversary, the Church is also celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. That ground-breaking event marked a profound turning point for the Catholic Church in the modern world. The dynamism of the Council was made possible by several currents of life already present in the Church prior to the Council: the liturgical movement that wanted to bring new life to the Church’s worship; the biblical movement that strove to make the riches of the Scriptures more accessible to the laity; and a renewal in theology that saw influential thinkers such as Karl Rahner, Yves Congar, Henri deLubac, Gustav Thils, and, yes, one Joseph Ratzinger exploring the extraordinary heritage of Catholic theology with new eyes and new awareness. In many ways, the various decrees of the Second Vatican Council amplified and gave official sanction to a new consciousness that was already dawning in the life of the Church universal.

As we all know, the Church is still struggling to absorb the vision of the Second Vatican Council. But then as now, good theology, a deep appreciation of the Scriptures, and a luminous and informed celebration of the Church’s liturgy remain vital for the life of the Church. That is where the mission of New Theology Review plays its part. We intend that the articles, reviews, and columns that will appear on these virtual pages will bring the very best of theology and Scripture to you, our readers. And because our online journal now has an unfettered global reach, we look forward to contributions from theologians and other scholars from around the world—opening our eyes to the extraordinary diversity and vitality of the Church universal.

Our inaugural issue is a case in point. This special anniversary issue includes a series of papers from an international 25th anniversary colloquium sponsored by the Lay Centre in Rome, an exceptional institution whose roots trace back to the impulse of the Council. The Lay Centre provides a vibrant community life for lay women and men pursuing doctoral studies at Pontifical Universities. It also serves as an oasis in the city of Rome, offering a rich array of lectures and continuing education courses for a wide audience. CTU and the Lay Centre have re-
Recently forged a collaborative alliance—the inclusion of these colloquium papers, in which CTU participated, is a sign of that collaboration. Outstanding theologians such as Cardinal Walter Kasper; Dr. Donna Orsuto; Rev. Dr. Ruth Patterson; OBE; Dr. Sarah Bernstein; Lisa Buratti; Susan M. Timoney, STD; and Robert White, will have their thoughts amplified throughout the world through the new reach of NTR. In the future a host of other outstanding writers will be reviewed by our editorial board and made accessible to you.

We at CTU are proud of this new venture and are confident it will be a great success. On behalf of CTU and the readers of NTR, I want to express in a special way my thanks to our founding editorial board for this online format: CTU faculty members Melody Layton McMahon, Director of CTU’s Paul Bechtold Library; Dawn Nothwehr, OSF, Professor of Theological Ethics; and Brother Antonio Sison, C.PP.S., Assistant Professor of Theology. Without their dedication and expertise, the new format and vitality of NTR would not have been possible.

In his beautiful address at the opening of the Second Vatican Council, Blessed Pope John XXIII challenged the “prophets of doom” and affirmed that a new dawn was breaking over the Church. It is a time for hope, not gloom, the Pope asserted. We feel the same way!

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