

INTRODUCTION

The current issue of AUC Theologica is dedicated to the theme of Iberian theology, exploring its historical depth, theological innovations and contemporary relevance. The articles in this special issue examine the distinctive theological contributions from the Iberian Peninsula, highlighting their impact on anthropology, liturgy, cultural memory, and poetic expression. This issue underlines how Iberian theology engages with modern challenges while remaining deeply rooted in its historical and spiritual traditions.

At the same time, dialogue between Iberian theology and the wider theological traditions of the West and East remains an essential task. Theological discourse, shaped by historical and cultural particularities, benefits greatly from encounters between different traditions that share their historical riches in different ways. The Western theological tradition, with its philosophical precision and institutional frameworks, and the Eastern tradition, with its mystical depth and patristic continuity, offer complementary perspectives that enrich theological reflection.

Looking at Western Europe from an Iberian perspective has a unique significance. Historically, Iberian theology has maintained both a critical and a creative engagement with theological developments in Western Europe, especially in relation to the Reformation, Enlightenment rationalism, and modern secularisation. While sharing common theological foundations, Iberian theology has its own way of integrating spirituality, historical consciousness, and a strong connection to the social and cultural realities of the Global South. Moreover, the richness of Iberian theology lies in its interdisciplinary approach, drawing on philosophy, literature, anthropology, and the arts to construct

a theological vision that is both contextually relevant and globally engaged. While focusing on Iberian theology, this issue invites further engagement with the theological voices of Eastern Christianity, fostering an ongoing conversation between different theological traditions that can illuminate contemporary ecclesial and cultural challenges.

The first article, “Behold the Human Being”: Messianic Anthropology for Our Times’ by Enrique Gómez García, provides an in-depth analysis of Xabier Pikaza’s theological contributions, focusing on his concept of messianic anthropology. The article traces the development of Pikaza’s thought over nearly half a century, illustrating how his theological project addresses contemporary crises such as economic inequality, exclusion, and social violence. Through a Christological lens, the study proposes a theological anthropology rooted in gratuity, poverty, and universality.

Alfredo Teixeira’s ‘Christian Memory in Contemporary Music Creation: Tensions and Transitions’ investigates how contemporary musical compositions engage with Christian memory within the framework of secularised modernity. The article critically examines the reconfiguration of religious elements in contemporary musical aesthetics, drawing on Max Weber, Theodor Adorno, and Michel de Certeau. It argues that religious symbols and themes, while no longer necessarily tied to traditional Christian structures, continue to inform artistic expression and cultural production in innovative ways.

The next article, ‘Insights on the Eucharist in the Iberian Peninsula: Theological and Pastoral Challenges from the Life and Thought of Mercedes Carreras Hitos (Madre Trinidad)’ by Susana Vilas Boas, explores the theological and pastoral implications of Madre Trinidad’s eucharistic spirituality. The study presents Madre Trinidad as a significant, though often overlooked, figure in the Iberian theological landscape. Her life and thinking offer insights into the renewal of eucharistic devotion and its role in shaping Christian identity and practice.

Finally, ‘Poetry as a Kenotic Exercise in José Tolentino Mendonça’s “The Days of Job”’ by Alex Villas Boas examines how the poetic language of José Tolentino Mendonça functions as an exercise in kenosis or self-emptying, drawing on biblical exegesis, patristic interpretation and contemporary philosophy. The author argues that Mendonça’s poetics not only engages with the theological aesthetics of resistance but also creates a space for political spirituality, offering a reconfiguration of theological discourse through poetry.

Taken together, these contributions affirm the vitality of Iberian theology in addressing contemporary cultural, philosophical, and artistic challenges. Theological reflection, as these articles reflect, is not only an academic exercise but also a means of understanding and responding to the complexity of human existence in its spiritual, social, and aesthetic dimensions. By bringing biblical hermeneutics, theological anthropology, aesthetics, and lived religious experience into conversation, this issue of *AUC Theologica* is a significant step towards dialogue between the West and the East, from the margins of the continent. Our deepest gratitude!

This issue invites scholars, theologians, and readers from different disciplines to engage with the theological questions presented here and to continue the dialogue between Iberian theology and culture in an ever-expanding way.

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