

**Ianire Angulo Ordorika and Susana de Sousa Vilas Boas (eds.), *Riesgos y fidelidades: Miradas teológicas para un mundo plural*, Barcelona: Herder Editorial, 2025, 424 pages, ISBN 978-84-254-5223-9.**

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This work, *Riesgos y Fidelidades – Miradas Teológicas para un mundo plural* [*Risks and Fidelities – Theological Perspectives for a Plural World*], edited by Ianire Angulo Ordorika and Susana Vilas Boas, demonstrates the attention and care of these researchers for a topic that is so pertinent at every moment in the Catholic Church's dialogue with a world that is constantly raising new problems and that requires, more than answers, paths of reflection and bridges of dialogue.

The book, in an attempt to respond to Pope Francis' call in the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* on universities and ecclesiastical faculties, is divided into three parts: *La actualidad de los orígenes* [*The actuality of the origins*], *Voces para el diálogo* [*Voices for dialog*] and *Teología al servicio del encuentro* [*Theology at the service of encounter*]. In this way, the publishers have designed the structure of this work in order to demonstrate, as stated in §5 of *Veritatis Gaudium*, that 'Christian-inspired theology and culture have lived up to their mission when they have been able to live with risk and fidelity on the frontier.' To this end, they gathered reflections that were the fruit of theological research carried out at the Universidad Loyola Andalucía (Faculty of Theology – Granada) and that reflected the risks and fidelities that each theologian is experiencing.

There are lines of thought running through all the reflections, where it is easy to find unity in plurality. Faithfulness refers back to the origins, which is why the first part of this work, *La Actualidad de los Orígenes*, updates and reads the richness and diversity of today's world in the Bible.

Junkal Guevara Llaguno reflects on how Ezra is 'modified' and 'updated' in each historical moment in the different historical communities where it is meditated upon, without ever having lost its identity. For Ianire Angulo Ordorika, 'theology is called to offer a response from the faith to the challenges that each historical circumstance throws at us and, in this task, Scripture plays an essential role' (p. 43). For this reason, he invites us to meditate and allow ourselves to be challenged and to learn from the faithfulness of Ruth and Achior.

Carmen Roman Martínez shows us that if we are in a time of crisis, we are also always in a time of criterion, since the criterion 'is what leads us to think

and seek solutions in a reasoned way' (p. 70). That's why we need to get closer to Jesus Christ and the circumstances in which he lived. His Person illuminates every moment in which we live. He is the criterion for our discernment and living.

Ignacio Rojas Gálvez shows us how the First Letter of St. John connects with our reality, inviting us, in faith and fidelity, to risk becoming a creative minority that transforms every existential encounter into places of encounter in love. In a context where the Christian faith is marginalized, it witnesses the birth of different Christian groups that propose alternative developments to the apostolic faith. It analyzes the different factions living in the community, presenting the apostolates that support their affirmations, and delves into the simultaneously peripheral character of the readers of the Letter: socially marginalized and theologically on the edge.

This first part, *La Actualidad de los Orígenes*, concludes with a paper by Bruno Nicolás D'Andrea, which shows how the dialogical attitude of the Church Fathers requires an understanding of the plurality and challenges that our times present. Risk always implies greater vigilance in seeking and living fidelity. This brings us to the second part of our book: *Voces para el Diálogo*.

Manuel Porcel Moreno begins his anthropological journey by showing us the human understanding of God. He reminds us that affirming God's death has a contradictory meaning since, if God is dead, then he is not God, because, in fact, he did not live or that he is simply an image, an artificial idea that man makes of God. For this reason, the proclamations of God's various deaths do not touch the true essence of divinity, but rather its idolatrous representations, and the great authors on the question of God helped to purify the perception of God rather than prove his death. For our author, declaring that God is dead is due to the fact that for centuries God has been thought of reductively according to a conceptual model that has emptied the fundamental dimension of love, which is the intimacy revealed by divinity, of its essence. The aim of this essay is to show how the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whose love was revealed in Jesus Christ, manifests himself to each of us as a paradoxical phenomenon. The author starts from philosophical considerations about the death of God and reflects on revelation, challenging us to rediscover, from the point of view of phenomenology, the believer's way of being in the face of God.

According to Andrzej Sarnacki, this philosophical-theological line can be seen in the way Catholic theology has related to inculturation over the centuries and in the risks that are evident in our world today. This author addresses the interest that Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony aroused among intellectual elites, which subsequently developed into a ferment for cultural change.

Margarita Saldaña Mostajo presents the figure of Christian de Chergé, prior of a community of seven monks. Under his guidance, the community opted for a life of prayer and helping the people, and were eventually martyred in Algeria. Christian de Chergé is presented as a model of a person who, in fidelity to

his faith, courageously opens himself up to the ever-challenging newness of reality and dialogues, with all the risks that this entails, with what is different.

This brings us to the third and final part of this book, *Teología al Servicio del Encuentro*. Enrique Gómez García begins by telling us that, while it is true that there has never been so much reflection on man as there is today, it is also true that we are increasingly aware of how much we ignore about him, which calls for a more holistic and integrative reflection. Who is the human being? The answer to this question cannot be left unanswered by theologians and believers.

For many centuries, beginning with the Judeo-Christian tradition, man has always been thought of from God's point of view as a being who occupies a special place in the work of creation, because he was created in God's image and likeness. Today, this way of understanding the human being requires openness to dialog with a plurality of sensitivities, including ecology, dignity and the role of women in society and in the empirical and technical sciences. In this reflection, Gomez Garcia gives two readings of the accounts of the creation of the human being. One comes from the Magisterium of John Paul II and the other from the systematics of Michael Burdett, trying to find possible ways of dialoguing with the challenges raised by feminisms and transhumanisms.

In the same vein as opening ourselves up, in fidelity, to the responsibility and risk involved in dialoguing with others, Jaime Flaquer García, using a theological methodology, reflects on the primitive soteriology of early Islam, starting from the Koran, in an attempt to find some light on Islamic anthropology and theology.

Each religion understands the word salvation in different terms. Even within Islam, the answer is not easy, because there are different anthropologies and theologies within Islam itself. What does Islam save from? Who saves and what are the conditions for salvation? What role does God's mercy play? What place does grace have in Islam? All these questions lead us not only to reflect on theology, but also on anthropology. Flaquer García's main thesis is that the Koran combines God's omnipotent and omniscient character with a call for human responsibility in contributing to their salvation. This brings us to the problem of human freedom. Our author will reflect on the problems raised by these concepts, showing their connection with the Judeo-Christian tradition and the elements of divergence that determine religious pluralism.

For Luis María Salazar Garcia, fear is one of the basic emotions of the human being. However, underneath this emotion there are very diverse experiences, ranging from physiological reactions to pain to incapacitating phobias or religious fear of mystery. Starting from a differentiation between the experiences linked to fear, Salazar Garcia reflects on fear from a theological point of view: the fear of Jesus and that of the disciples, trying to draw some conclusions about the relationship between Christian life and dangers. Grace helps us to read and live fear differently in our lives.

Our plural world requires dialogue and, above all, a *union of hearts* so that we can integrate, for the good of all, with balance and harmony, what reason is

dictating to us and which, at times, seems to push us apart and seems to want to ‘cut’, if not ‘annul’, lines of thought that appear to be irreconcilable. Susana Vilas Boas has found the formula to unite us in our vulnerabilities and differences: Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Absolution.

In forgiveness, absolution and reconciliation converge, understanding it as a dynamic and not as a chronologically determined act. The healing character of absolution must produce real consequences in all the realities wounded by sin. Absolution and reconciliation, if authentic, must converge in the dynamic of forgiveness. While absolution points to the past – the eradication of condemnation, reconciliation points to the future, to the hope of restoring broken relationships. Reconciliation, in order to be, must be a visible manifestation of forgiveness, or a path towards its consummation, and is the inevitable consequence of authentic forgiveness. Salvation is offered to both the victim and the oppressor. Neither is isolated in this process. Forgiveness restores human dignity, both for the victim and the oppressor, without undermining the sense of justice. Forgiveness does not mitigate, nor does it try to hide the debt or erase the wrong done, but rather seeks to definitively interrupt the desire for revenge that feeds itself in an *ever-widening circle*. God’s action in the dynamic of forgiveness means that the resumption of relationships, with God and between people, takes place under the mark of justice that condemns the crime, but points to the salvation of the person who committed the crime, since there is a person before the crime. The ‘healing’ caused by forgiveness does not remove the sense of cross and suffering from the memory, but teaches it to live in another way, in a salvific way, where the vulnerability and responsibility of the victim and the aggressor are assumed, dialogued and reconciled as a path to peace. This, argues Susana Vilas Boas, is the mission of today’s theology, which must give visibility and intelligibility to the concepts of absolution, reconciliation and forgiveness, so that they become, in every ecclesial and social context, effective and operative means of a culture based on human life and salvation and not on the survival of some to the detriment of others.

José Antonio Sánchez Ortiz reminds us that Pope Francis has set the Church on a path of conversion, leading it to rethink its nature, structure and mission. Francis thinks, desires and wants a synodal Church that risks reaching out to everyone. To this end, the Pope invites us to return to the sources, to the origin and essence of the first evangelization, in order to find the strength, the light, the creativity, the fidelity, the keys that will help us discern and revive the Gospel in every situation of our present. And it is in returning to the sources that the Pope discovers the vitality and strength of the kerygma for the Church’s evangelizing action, since the kerygma has its roots in the Trinitarian mystery, the Alpha and Omega of our entire existence.

Diego Molina Molina reflects on the risks of synodality in the 21st century. There is great diversity within the Church, which can be seen especially when dealing with cutting-edge issues. Pluralism, which brings with it relativism, is part of our world, our culture, and is very deeply rooted within the Church

itself. With Pope Francis, ecclesial dissent is no longer a taboo, but a challenge. Today we know that this dissent goes not only through the public sphere, but also through figures within the Church itself, who show great difficulty in accepting the path of synodality defined by Pope Francis.

This context leads us, according to Molina Molina, to reflect on the characteristics of synodality that we should pay attention to, the conditions for a synodal Church to really emerge and what aspects the Church should work on to embody the ideas that are already found in current ecclesiological reflection. The author considers Baptism to be the basis for the development of a synodal Church, and then goes on to develop two aspects which he believes are fundamental and on which reflection is urgently needed: the idea of unity and the participation of all in the Church.

The richness of this book, *Riesgos y Fidelidades – Miradas Teológicas para un mundo plural*, is the result of several factors: the conception of the book's structure thought up by its publishers; the competence of the reflections which, starting from fidelity, risk answers for a plural and difficult world like the one we live in today; the unity that results from the interrelationship that each reflection has with the other parts and its whole.

We highly recommend reading it. In a world as plural as ours, the richness of its reflections challenges us, forcing us to rework concepts, ways of being, ways of acting. Those who read it will necessarily have new tools to lead their lives with greater discretion and meaning.

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