

Hints for Research Issues

Culture and Society

- What is the identity of our pluralist world? How has Christianity influenced its definition? How does Christianity help to make globalization more human?
- How should we define the common good? What role do religious creeds play in this process? Is it possible to discover the common good in a pluralistic context? What advantages does Christianity offer in the task of defining the common good?
- The problem of a pluralist society: framing the question and attempts at a solution. Is there a crisis of multiculturalism? How should one approach marital questions in a pluralist society?
- The question of identity in a liquid society: Is a common identity necessary? In what sense? Is a liquid society possible, that is, a society without a stable identity?
- Historical studies. The encounter between Christianity and ancient culture: an example of a fruitful relationship; Christianity as an inspiration of culture in the Middle ages; the Christian roots of scientific investigation in the West; Liberty, Equality and Fraternity: 'revolutionary' or Christian ideals.
- Christianity and its vitalizing cultural power. The humanizing potential of Christianity. Christianity and enculturation. Examination of specific cases.
- The process of secularization in a historical perspective. The relation between the Church and political institutions: historical models, the innovative proposal of Gaudium et Spes.
- Cultures of diversion. Is being a Christian boring? Or, on the contrary, can the Christian foster a more intense form of entertainment?

The University

- Christianity in the origin and development of the university. The influence of Christianity on university knowledge and life.
- Christian identity and Catholic universities. The role of Catholic universities in the current university system. Can a university professor be a professed catholic? And a student? What does this imply for their academic work?
- The place of theology in the university curriculum.

Science and Medicine

- Scientists and Christianity: does being a believer influence the progress of scientific investigation? How? Examination of specific cases.

- The relationship between science and faith in God the creator during the Darwinian centennial: the debate started by Collins' article in Nature. Intelligent design: Do we need to refer to God in order to explain nature? The cosmos: the current vision of Christian science and cosmology.
- Social norms and healthy habits: is Christianity the best culture for the creation of healthy lifestyles? Willpower and healthy habits: Is a lay asceticism possible?
- Christian anthropology as the foundation of the doctor-patient relationship. The dignity of the human person and the ethics of clinical research.
- Social Justice and Christianity: the issue of access to healthcare services.
- Current bioethical questions: the first and last stages of life; palliative care; research on the human genome; stem cells. What role does Christianity play in answering these questions?

Law and Economy

- Christian personalist thought and the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights. The influence of the Church's Social Doctrine on the formation of social rights in the 20th Century.
- The problem of immigration. Juridical and sociological study of specific cases. The role of international institutions. Is a common identity possible or necessary?
- The dignity of the person as a fundamental element of the juridical order. Juridical positivism and human rights: various proposals towards a solution.
- The law of equality vs. freedom of conscience in various present day societies: What are the limits of freedom? Juridical systems and the just treatment of people with radically diverse convictions.
- Capitalism and the market economy. Study influence of Christianity in the origin of capitalism. Christian ethics and the market. The evolution of the Social Doctrine of the Church concerning capitalism.
- The economic and moral dimensions of the current financial crisis. Does business ethics lose money or is it actually profitable? Examination of specific cases.
- The concepts of the human person, society, happiness, profit, etc., in economic thought and their influence in the creation of economic policies. How can academic progress inspire a new perspective for the economy?
- Social responsibility and the corporation: the influence of corporations on society and its implications for corporate culture.
- Economic development vs. human development? International solidarity: A right or a duty? Study of the real impact of demographic policies and of various specific cases.
- The influence of Christianity on the fundamental aspects of leadership. The need for a vision of leadership as service—servant leadership—in the political and entrepreneurial class.

Art and Architecture

- Romanticism: mystification of art or secularization of religion? Study of post-romantic art and 20th century movements. The aesthetics of the ineffable. On the relation of religion and art: in Christianity, in other religions, in an agnostic context. The study of specific works, artists, or artistic movements.
- The evaluation of art in a pluralist culture: Is something art just because it is displayed in a museum? Are there objective norms of art? What does it mean to say

that art imitates nature? Discussion of diverse mediums: plastic arts, literature, music, etc.

- The faith as a global culture: Christian iconography as a common language. Is it possible to understand the history of Western art without Christianity? The witness in stone of the Way of St. James: a living globalisation hundreds of years old. The great pilgrim routes as transmitters of culture: Rome, Jerusalem, Santiago de Compostela.
- Modern religious architecture: an open question. Sacred interreligious spaces and the specificity of sacred Christian spaces. Study of concrete proposals.

Communication and Media

- Images of the human person in today's cinema. Is Christianity a reference point for screenwriters and directors? Study of directors, writers, and particular films.
- The commercial and cultural impact of movies with a Christian worldview, for example: The Gran Torino, The Visitor, Bella, The Lord of the Rings, etc.
- What images of the person are spread by the new social networks (Facebook, Myspace, etc.)?
- Does journalism need rules or is all information self-validating? Obeying vs. forming the public's demands. Respecting and defending one's privacy and intimacy: Is it possible in an agnostic ethics?
- The influence of Christianity on the images of men and women: the Christian contribution to fashion.

Interdisciplinary Topics

- The Christian roots of the idea of sustainable development: sobriety and responsibility in the use of water and electricity. Christianity and ecological arguments. Ecology: myths and responsibilities.
- Christian anthropology in the light of the modern science of anthro-biology.
- Christian culture as the basis of the personalist vision of human sexuality.
- Towards a culture of life: Does Christianity alone defend life? What is a non-Christian ethics?