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Archivo Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús. Roma (Italia)

1ª edición, 2024

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Calle Princesa, 31, planta 2, puerta 2

28008 Madrid, España

www.editorialsinderesis.com

IMAGEN PORTADA

The Glory Window. Chapel of Thanksgiving, Dallas (Texas, EE.UU.)

DISEÑO Y MAQUETACIÓN

Oscar Alba

IMPRESIÓN

Editorial Sínderesis

ISBN: 978-84-10120-40-2

Dep. Legal: M-13986-2024

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BIBLIOTECA TEOLÓGICA GRANADINA

TEOLOGÍA PRÁCTICA

Puntos de vista para una práctica
teológica en la academia,
la pastoral y la sociedad

Susana Vilas Boas (ed.)

UNIVERSIDAD LOYOLA
ANDALUCÍA

EDITORIAL SINDÉRESIS

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PRÓLOGO

En su visita como Padre General de la Compañía de Jesús en febrero de 1994 a la entonces Facultad de Teología de Granada – aún faltaban bastantes años para su integración en la Universidad Loyola – el P. Peter Hans Kolvenbach tuvo un interesante discurso a la comunidad académica de la Facultad.¹ En dicho discurso, el P. Kolvenbach fue repasando los fines que la Constitución Apostólica *Sapientia Christiana* – el documento que entonces regía las instituciones universitarias de la Iglesia – daba a las universidades y facultades eclesiásticas. Entre estas funciones destacaba particularmente el P. Kolvenbach la de dar “formación superior a los alumnos en las propias disciplinas según la doctrina católica, prepararlos convenientemente para el ejercicio de los diversos cargos y promover la formación continua o permanente de los ministros de la Iglesia” (*Sapientia Christiana*, 3.2) Si el P. Kolvenbach destacaba esta función es por entender que esta se había realizado históricamente de manera privilegiada en la Facultad de Teología de Granada, tanto por el compromiso de la Facultad con la formación de los candidatos al sacerdocio diocesanos y religiosos desde 1939, como por su apertura temprana a la formación de laicos y laicas ya en 1973, formaciones que siempre se han planteado desde un punto de vista fuertemente pastoral.

¹ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, "Misión de las facultades de teología en la Iglesia." *Proyección* 42 (1994): 83-94.

Comentando este punto decía el P. Kolvenbach que, en sus palabras, “el saber teológico tiene, como todo saber científico, una dimensión teórica, a la que una facultad... no puede renunciar.”² Sin embargo, afirmaba también el P. Kolvenbach que la reflexión que realiza una facultad de teología es, en sus palabras, “reflexión sobre la palabra de Dios revelada” y, por lo tanto, “un saber que, por su propia naturaleza, se proyecta decididamente sobre la vida de los destinatarios de esa Palabra”. Por todo ello, para el P. Kolvenbach el saber teológico es un saber esencialmente destinado a la praxis puesto que quiere llevar a la persona a “confrontarse con la palabra salvadora de Dios y a responder en su vida a ella.”³ Por lo tanto, el saber teológico tiene una dimensión esencialmente pastoral y práctica.

El P. Kolvenbach destacaba también como la Facultad de Teología de Granada tenía, en sus palabras, “la fortuna – y la gloria – de haber servido intensamente, desde sus orígenes, a la formación de futuros agentes de pastoral”, y como la Facultad no debía renunciar a este rasgo distintivo. En palabras del entonces P. General, no debe “sentirse, en modo alguno, como Facultad de inferior categoría, en relación con otras en que esta orientación pueda estar menos presente.”⁴ Quedaba, por tanto, claro la importancia en la labor teológica, personal e institucional, de la orientación pastoral y práctica de la teología. Dicha orientación es además característica de la espiritualidad ignaciana al permitir dar forma a la llamada a encontrar a Dios en todas las cosas propia de la espiritualidad de San Ignacio.

La Prof^á. Vilas Boas, en su paso por nuestra Facultad recogió esta antorcha de la vocación pastoral de la teología y realizó un fantástico trabajo de ampliar horizontes y establecer contactos en este campo a través de las redes universitarias de la Compañía de Jesús. En ese esfuerzo descubrió la fuerte presencia de esa vocación pastoral en otras instituciones de las redes de la Compañía de Jesús, y más allá. Además, la Prof^á. Vilas Boas pudo realizar estancias de investigación en dos importantes centros teológicos jesuitas: Facultés Loyola París y la Facultad de Teología Católica de Innsbruck. Ambas instituciones son parte de la *International Association of Jesuit Universities* (IAJU)⁵ y de su asociación regional europea *Kircher Network*.⁶

Fruto de estos contactos y conversaciones surgió el proyecto de este libro que aquí les presentamos: *Teología práctica. Puntos de vista para una práctica teológica en la academia, la pastoral y la sociedad*. Esta obra quiere recoger las diferentes perspectivas sobre la teología pastoral y práctica actualmente existentes en diferentes instituciones teológicas de la Compañía de Jesús en Europa y EE.UU. (Universidad Loyola,

² Kolvenbach, 88.

³ Kolvenbach, 89.

⁴ Kolvenbach, 90.

⁵ <https://iaju.org/>

⁶ <https://kirchernetwork.org/>

Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, Fordham University, Facultés Loyola París, Facultad de Teología Católica de Universität Innsbruck), así como en otras instituciones cercanas (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Universidad Católica Portuguesa, Institut Catholique de Paris, Universität Munster). Además, de recoger estas posiciones, este libro quisiera mostrar las conexiones entre ellas y apuntar a caminos de desarrollo convergentes de las mismas.

La Biblioteca Teológica Granadina, desde el comienzo de la colección en 1938, ha querido recoger las líneas principales de trabajo e investigación de la Facultad de Teología de la Compañía de Jesús en Granada, hoy parte de la Universidad Loyola. Por ello, veíamos muy importante el poder apoyar este proyecto de publicación y poder ofrecer dentro de nuestra colección este esfuerzo académico de conectar y potenciar el trabajo en teología pastoral y práctica realizada en el entorno amplio de la Compañía de Jesús.

Quisiera aprovechar estas líneas para agradecer a la Profesora Vilas Boas, y a todas las instituciones y académicos que han colaborado a este libro, su contribución e invitarles a seguir desarrollando esta línea de trabajo. Deseamos que este libro, así como las conexiones académicas que lo han hecho posible, ayuden a seguir desarrollando una teología que sepa poner en el centro la formación de los agentes de pastoral y ayudar a llevar la palabra de Dios a sus destinatarios últimos, como destacaba positivamente el P. Peter Hans Kolvenbach de nuestra Facultad de teología en su visita a la misma en 1994.

Gonzalo Villagrán Medina, SJ

Director Biblioteca Teológica Granadina

INTRODUCTION

BOOK PRESENTATION

This book is the result of countless meetings and reflections on practical theology and how it is established and affirmed in today's context. Over the course of more than a year, many dialogues were held with theologians and philosophers, and the most representative echoes and experiences of today's academic theological reality are gathered here. The contribution of 16 researchers from 8 higher education institutions – Facultés Loyola Paris¹; (France), Fordham University (USA), Institut Supérieur de Pastorale Catéchétique – Institut Catholique de Paris (France), Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium), Universidad Pontificia Comillas (Spain), Universidade Católica Portuguesa (Portugal), Universität Innsbruck (Austria), and Universität Münster (Germany) –, makes this work an unavoidable reference in the field of academic theological reflection, and the diversity of languages used is an asset in reaching the most different theological and academic contexts.

I would like to thank everyone who has collaborated on this project, particularly those who took on the challenge of writing the texts presented here. The research and reflection continues, but it now has a starting point for a more systematised and compiled dialogue. In fact, concerns about the place of theology in the contemporary world and in universities continue to emerge and are increasingly relevant in the face of the academic, ecclesial and socio-cultural reality. In particular, questions about what is known as practical theology

¹ Ex Centre Sèvres – Facultés jésuites de Paris.

have been growing both inside and outside theological circles. In fact, since the creation of the discipline of practical theology, questions have been raised about it and about theology in general. On the one hand, there was a desire for a name capable of encompassing practical theology, as an academic discipline and as an operative part of theological praxis; on the other hand, there was a desire either to bring the name closer to pastoral theology and praxis, or to distance it from this dimension, keeping it in a strictly academic-sociological sphere. Nowadays, the questions are of a different nature. Theology as an area of academic knowledge is under the influence of contemporaneity, and it's hard to see whether it's possible to talk about a theology that isn't practical, that is, that is limited to theoretical reflection without taking into account the reality in which it operates.

From this point of view, the term 'practical theology' loses all relevance, leaving the specificity of the discipline diluted in pastoral care, systematic theology, moral theology, catechetics, etc. However, the specificity of the methodology and approach of practical theology means that this dilution does not occur. On the contrary, practical theology has the mission of bringing reality into theological study and bringing theology into reality. This is precisely the dynamism that is presented in the first section of this book, entitled *Theology and Academic Study*. Here we see how practical theology has a unique status within university academic study.

From a philosophical point of view, and using MacIntyre's thought, Artur Ilharco Galvão presents the relevance of education for integral human formation and, specifically, its importance in higher education. From this understanding, the author presents the meaning and importance of theological study, both in the context of university education and in the personal and social impact it has. Closely linked to this chapter is the next, where the theological reading of Paul Ricœur's philosophy, opens up to a second dimension of practical theology – the mission of 'becoming close' to reality. In this case, theological university formation is understood as both 'theological praxis' and 'practical theology', with the integrality of formation being presented in the specific spheres of theological action: in the sphere of academic knowledge; in the ecclesial and pastoral sphere; and in the social sphere.

Terrence W. Tilley, in the subsequent chapter, goes a little further, making arguments in favour of an *ad intra* fidelity present in a theological study that is meant to be practical and have an academic, ecclesial and social impact: faith. The foundation of faith inherent in theological praxis is highlighted as a guarantee of coherence and deeper meaning for those who develop practical theology today. If this is not the case, theology can easily turn into any other area similar to other areas of knowledge linked to the humanities or drift into utopian ideologies uprooted from both *theos* and the reality in which it moves. Bearing in mind these approaches to theology and theological practice, the reflections of Paulina Pieper, Anni-Findl Ludescher and Michaela Quast-Neulinger,

presented in the last chapter of the section, appear with a conclusive tone, highlighting the relevance of theology - particularly practical theology - for the contemporary world and for the formation and humanisation of the human being.

Having systematised the foundations and relevance of practical theology today, the second section of the book – *Methodologies for Developing Practical Theology* – presents different ways of developing practical theology in an academic context. Given the importance of theological study, how can this knowledge be developed in university courses? Christian Bauer speaks of the importance of not 'drifting' and of connecting 'practical theology' to a systematic foundation, avoiding abstractionisms – incapable of touching reality – and praxis devoid of a truly theological foundation. Starting with concrete ways of encountering reality, Bauer presents schemes and practical examples of a 'working theology' in the socio-ecclesial context. In the same vein, and giving applicability to what Paulina Pieper, Anni-Findl Ludescher and Michaela Quast-Neulinger defended in the first section, Roland Lacroix, Isabelle Morel and Isabelle Narring present the way they think about and develop the teaching of practical theology at the ISPC – Institut Supérieur de Pastorale Catéchétique. In this case, the study of practical theology is closely linked to pastoral theology and catechetics. Using an objective methodology, theology meets ecclesial reality, seeking to ensure that university study helps ecclesial practices, leading to both greater consolidation of the faith and a Christian formation capable of transforming society through its values.

The following chapters reflect another way of thinking about and working with practical theology in a university context. In this case – typical of the Facultés Loyola Paris – it is not theology that looks at reality and goes out to meet it. On the contrary, it cannot be thought of in a unidirectional way 'towards' reality. In the view of the theologians at the Facultés Loyola Paris, theology takes place in the social context, which is where it starts and where it develops. In Frédéric-Marie Le Méhauté's chapter, we can see the methodology used, specifically with the reality of poverty in mind. The theologians sit next to the poor, listen to their stories and, with them, make a Christian reading of them. From this social encounter, theological reflection grows, realising the richness of a *sensus fidei* that is both a point of departure and a point of arrival. It's an unconventional methodology and one that leads Etienne Grieu, in the last chapter of this section, to talk about the importance of opening up practical theology to this new methodology, concretising Artur Ilharco Galvão's philosophical arguments from his concrete praxis. In fact, by highlighting university education in its theological specificity, he postulates that practical theology is not a kind of 'theological sociology'. On the contrary, it advocates a common path in which the poor - the wealth of the Church and a force for the humanisation of societies - are active participants in theological reflection. It is not a question of a 'case study', but of thinking about and developing theology from and with the most excluded.

Following on from these positions comes the last section – *Pastoral Horizons and Theological Applicability Today*. Firstly, François Odinet emphasises that the poor are not an abstract reality on which theology can focus. They are an authority in theological and pastoral matters. In a way, Odinet places reality as the co-origin, source and essence of theology. In a way, in line with what is defended in second chapter of the first section, suffering reality appears to be an unavoidable authority for a practical theology that also claims to be theological practice. For her part, Laure Blanchon concretises and responds to the concerns highlighted by Terrence W. Tilley by highlighting not only the importance of faith for theology, but above all the way in which the suffering reality of the poor and their self-reported lives question, challenge and provoke the meaning and depth of the professed faith that animates theological study and praxis.

The same sense emerges in Leo Guardado's chapter. In this case, the reality of immigrants emerges as the basis and partner of theological reflection. In a context as troubled and marked by migration as the United States, Guardado talks about the impact of this reality both on pastoral work and on the way we think about and develop practical theology. A chapter full of practical examples that open the door to Marta Medina Balguerías' arguments. In fact, in the final chapter, almost in the tone of an open conclusion – which is so characteristic of the dynamism of human reality and, consequently, of practical theology – Medina Balguerías presents the way in which the transmission of faith bears the mark of theology, in a symbiotic intertwining of reality and academic theology. With an emphasis on hope, theology is presented as a force for hope in the midst of suffering, secularism and socio-cultural conflicts that seem to be expanding. In this chapter, rather than focussing on theological action in an academic context, what is presented is the 'other side of the coin': theology at the service of an active, culture-shaping and culture-generating pastoral ministry.

The path followed throughout this book is one that goes from the strength of philosophical and theological arguments to lived praxis. The systematised arguments take shape in the different methodologies of practical theology that have been developed in different higher education institutions. In these, the focus of research varies, not least because of the way in which theology – as an area of knowledge – is thought about and applied – as a practice of pastoral journeying and social transfiguration. This is a dynamism that allows for a more concrete and visible sense of a faith that, when professed, is reflected on and concretised in the here and now of reality.

Susana Vilas Boas