

Series Preface

Renewal

Conversations in Catholic Theology

Edited by Lewis Ayres and Medi Ann Volpe

Continue your search without tiring and without ever despairing of the truth. Recall the words of one of your great friends, St. Augustine: “Let us seek with the desire to find, and find with the desire to seek still more.” Happy are those who, while possessing the truth, search more earnestly for it in order to renew it, deepen it and transmit it to others. Happy also are those who, not having found it, are working toward it with a sincere heart. May they seek the light of tomorrow with the light of today until they reach the fullness of light. But do not forget that if thinking is something great, it is first a duty.

For this purpose, without troubling your efforts, without dazzling brilliance, we come to offer you the light of our mysterious lamp which is faith. He who entrusted this lamp to us is the sovereign Master of all thought, He whose humble disciples we are, the only one who said and could have said: “I am the light of the world, I am the way, the truth and the life.”

These words are from the Second Vatican Council’s closing message to Thinkers and Scientists, delivered on December 8, 1965. While they were addressed first to those beyond the Church, they can—and should—speak to us all. These words remind us well of the importance and the duty of thinking as a bringing toward the light of reason that which may be known and a showing to reason of the resources we have received in faith. In this call to those beyond the Church’s

boundaries is hidden one of Vatican II's great charges to those within the Church: the charge to think for renewal, using all the resources we can appropriately bring to bear.

“Renewal” is a series of books offered in aid of contemporary Catholic conversation, although readers of theology across the ecumenical spectrum will, hopefully, find them stimulating and rewarding. This series will offer resources that seek to further the work of the Council, exploring, excavating, explaining aspects of the faith that we have inherited. Some volumes in the series will have a strongly historical focus, excavating old treasures in order to aid us now—these may concern figures from our Patristic or Medieval heritage—while others will focus on figures more proximate in time. Some books will bring a treasure that is new, that is primarily in a constructive mode. Theologians or themes well-known and under-studied, those who shaped the distinctive emphases of Vatican II, as well as those whose theologies represent different moments in modern Catholic thought, all will be welcomed—as long as their concern is the constant search for the flourishing of the Catholic conversation.