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## **On the Theological-Practical Importance of the Relation between a Scientific Paradigm of Understanding of Man, the World and the Universe and the Paradigm of Faith**

### ***O teološko-praktičnem pomenu odnosa med znanstveno paradigmo razumevanja človeka, sveta in vesolja ter paradigmo vere***

*Abstract:* One of the most actual theological and cultural questions nowadays is the question of a harmonious relation between the scientific-technological paradigm of the understanding of man, the world and the universe and the paradigm of faith. This question does not just have relevance of a biblical, dogmatic or ethical-moral nature, but it also has the relevance of a theological-practical or pastoral nature as well. This theological-practical field of discernment of the relation that is pointed out above is the primary object of this article. Undertaking a discernment of this kind, it is possible to start with the problem of the so-called cosmic pessimism. This problem has immeasurable consequences in the cultural and practical area of life and many other problems are connected to it. On the theological side of the coin, many segments of understanding the faith with respect to the paradigm of science today do not always show an attempt at the harmonious fitting of the elements of the faith into the totality of the realization of life. There is the issue of developing theology in the modern and postmodern periods and the often lack of recognition of the scientific picture of the world. There are also some other theological elements which are very challenging regarding this entire debate, such as the question of the motives for genuine moral living, relations to people with different beliefs and worldviews, some practical issues regarding the models of evangelization, and practical actions of the parish and the other Church communities, etc.

*Key words:* Faith, Science, Paradigm, Implications, Praxis

*Povzetek:* Eno izmed najbolj aktualnih teoloških in kulturnih vprašanj današnjega časa je vprašanje skladnega odnosa med znanstveno-tehnološko paradigmo razumevanja človeka, sveta in vesolja ter paradigmo vere. To vprašanje ni relevan-

tno zgolj z biblijskega, dogmatičnega ali etično-moralnega vidika, temveč je relevantno tudi po svoji teološko-praktični oziroma pastoralni naravi. Glavna tema pričujočega članka je prav teološko-praktično razločevanje glede zgoraj omenjenega področja. Pri izvajanju tovrstnega razločevanja je mogoče začeti s problemom t. i. kozmičnega pesimizma. Ta problem ima neizmerne posledice na kulturni in praktični ravni življenja, s čimer je povezana vrsta drugih problemov. Znotraj teologije današnjega časa je mogoče opaziti, da številni segmenti razumevanja vere v odnosu do znanstvene paradigme ne izražajo vedno prizadevanja po skladni umestitvi verskih prvin v celoto polno uresničenega življenja. Tu se pojavlja vprašanje o razvoju teologije v moderni in postmoderini dobi ter pogosta odsotnost priznanja znanstvene podobe sveta. Pojavljajo se tudi druge teološke prvine, ki predstavljajo velik izziv za celotno razpravo, kakor denimo vprašanje razlogov za pristno moralno življenje, odnos do ljudi z drugačnim prepričanjem in svetovnim nazorom, praktična vprašanja glede modelov evangelizacije ter praktičnega delovanja župnije in drugih cerkvenih skupnosti itd.

*Ključne besede:* vera, znanost, paradigma, implikacije, praksa

## 1. Introduction

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The practice of faith depends on the understanding of that reality. This means that certain theological notions have a direct influence on practical living and pastoral practice as well. There are some different degrees of influence in the practical area of living of some realities regarding faith, but some of them are very influential and crucial today for a realistic and profound living in the totality of life. The dimension of faith must be incorporated into an integral and total vision of life, as well as other important dimensions of living. The questions related to the connection between the paradigm of science and that of faith is of great importance at this moment of history, and it seems that an understanding of this will influence immensely upon the living of faith in the future. That is the reason why is important to undertake the task of theological-practical discernment of this connection in the very practical or pastoral area of life, beginning from the notion of the universe to the notion of some other, much more practical areas of living. This kind of connection between theory and practice is determined by the wish expressed above and is limited to some specific questions. The problem itself is huge and demands many other articles in order to study its numerous aspects.

## 2. The unfinished universe

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The universe is in a certain sense the general frame and a point of reference of the human thinking of physical reality; its understanding and the picture of it influences greatly, even though often unconsciously, some very practical dimensions

of living. In this sense, the idea of an unfinished or imperfect universe is very demanding. The idea of the universe as an unfinished reality is hardly accepted in many theological, but also in many practical segments of the Church's life and in the lives of many believers. Many theologians actually do take some different scientific elements into account while theologizing about some theological issues, but, generally speaking, it is still not possible to say that the attitude of a serious and profound interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary connection of the theological elements and those of the sciences has become the dominant attitude in the broader theological framework. On the part of many theologians there is some sort of a vague notion of the importance of scientific issues and their relevance for human life and for the world today, but also for an understanding of the implications of this regarding some theological concepts (Haught 2017, 9). That is why this very problem is found in many theoretical and theological-practical and pastoral issues today. This problem has many implications; here we intend to point out some of them.

For decades astrophysics and evolutionary biology have been supplying the scientific field with much data and many discoveries which clearly show the fact that the universe is a reality that is evolving and that is still coming into being. For the scientific world as a whole and other fields of human thinking, theology especially included, this means that a real attitude towards the world and the universe must seriously consider this fact, as clearly pointed out in the theological tradition of Teilhard de Chardin (8–9). For theology this means that its imagery cannot be the same as that of the medieval times and of the prescientific world. The universe can no longer be interpreted as a fixed reality that in some blurred physical beginning was perfect and complete. It is very important, theologically speaking, to distinguish between the idea of the unfinished universe and its imperfection and the fact of original sin, and of the sin as such. However, that does not mean that the universe was ever perfect and finished; it is actually coming into being, and always with new possibilities (9). This does not contradict the theological truth of Christ's glorious return at the very end of the time but spreads a new light on the human understanding of the world and on the whole setting of practical issues.

This setting includes the very position and role of man in the world, the image of the world, but also of God and then of the Church and its actions. The static and prescientific understanding of these realities produces a completely different attitude in respect to that of the evolving and the unfinished universe. Science gives us a picture of man, the world and the universe that in many aspects has outgrown some religious concepts and images and that is why Christians today have to assimilate a new picture of these realities; a picture that not only has to penetrate their thoughts, but also their devotional life (10).

Speaking of devotional life, the comprehension of prayer, and especially of the whole frame of folk piety, these statements have very profound practical implications. Medieval imagery is still very penetrating and still dominates these realities in many Catholic circles today. The truth is that the folk piety is and will always be very important. It is not possible to enter here into debate on the contemporary

forms of this kind of piety. But it must be pointed out that an understanding of the imagery used in this piety and in many forms of prayer has to be constantly renewed and that this renewing has to include a different attitude even with respect to realities such as scientific elements and discoveries regarding the universe, the world and the picture of the man today and in the future. Otherwise, there will continue to be a sad rift in devotional life, in many aspects of the pastoral practice, and in other areas of living. For proper actualization of the devotional dimension of the life of faith it must be singled out that improper faith imagery produces a practical accentuation of some specific and mainly hard and demanding elements of devotion. These are mainly connected with the question of sin, suffering, death, penance, etc. Not neglecting the reality of sin and its consequences, it must be pointed out that the narrowing of the perspective of the devotional life down to these questions only produces the sad consequence of a diminishing and sometimes disappearance of the elements of joy and hope from the life of the faith. That is why in many cases devotional living is turned to some sort of the subsistence. The devotional life of the faith demands a new way of connecting with the elements of science, nature and culture in order to recognize on a much larger scale the spiritual necessities of people, but also in order to be enriched in itself and to contemplate much more the beauty of creation. In this sense, the evolutionary way of thinking of life and of the world must be accepted and connected with a genuinely devotional life and that is one of the main imperatives for spiritual living today (King 2017, 192–194).

This way of thinking opens a dynamic and creative view of life and world. In this way, the believer has the possibility of taking seriously the question of evil and sin, while not narrowing the perspective of his spiritual life only to that question. In fact, one can see some endless possibilities to growing spiritually; recognizing the beauty of the nature and of the cosmos. Without this last element there is no chance for a profound, mature, and deeply filled spiritual life.

A very present separation between devotional life and other areas of living produces some other effects today. Herein are emphasized the most important of these. The first one is a kind of practical separation in respect to the integral and total vision of life. That is why many people (many believers included) live their lives opting for the side of science and postmodern culture or for the side of faith and in that way practically losing the total vision of life. There are presently some blurred elements of one paradigm or another while accentuating just one of them, but without their true connection. It must be pointed out that the very practical area of living of the wide majority of people encounters problems of this kind very often.

The other consequence is a wrong picture of the physical beginning of the world and man and the physical dimension of life which, connected to some misconceptions of the Holy scripture, produces a sad religious blindness in the face of the reality of science and a negative cultural attitude dominated by elements of religious fanaticism (Vranješ 2018, 96). A wrong picture of the universe has a profound influence in this area because a rigid fix and static picture of that reality cannot incorporate the elements of change, evolution and the world's deve-

lopment recognized by scientific standards. And that again contributes to the fragmentation of living and to the phenomenon of an increasing distancing of the total and integral vision of life.

### **3. The threat of the cosmic pessimism**

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An issue which is very connected to the understanding of the unfinished universe and its practical implications is the problem of the cosmic pessimism. This kind of pessimism is especially singled out by John F. Haught (Haught 2017, 12–17). This problem is philosophical in its nature but very practical in its consequences. It is a problem of the conviction that there is no greater reality in respect to this life and world and, consequently, there is no deeper meaning nor greater purpose in the human life. With all this is connected the influence of scientific naturalism that produces the conviction that the totality of being can be reduced to the results of science. The practical religious implications of this kind of pessimism go from the issue of not taking seriously the question of God in practical living to the issue of pessimistic convictions in the face of questions such as suffering, disease, accidents and death. With no greater purpose in life, a human person does not expect much at the end of life and that fact practically leads to a sort of disinterested behavior in respect to religious questions. These are the reasons why, on the one hand, many people practically do not live expecting any kind of afterlife, and why, on the other, many Christians, in response to this and expecting the afterlife, do not engage themselves in the transformation of this world. Most people today actually live their lives practically closed in a frame of immanence, and some do extend their expectation according to the model of metaphysical naturalism. The minority do expect an afterlife of a genuine religious nature, and many expect some kind of the vague extension of living, but with no greater meaning. The span between the understanding of a deeper meaning of life and those regarding its purpose is increasing all the time.

Theoretical and practical threats for theologians in the debate regarding cosmic pessimism must be singled out. The threats of this kind consist in the fact that in perhaps not taking seriously the idea of the unfinished universe only weakens their potential to be a real opposition to this kind of thinking, and in the fact that this kind of behavior contributes to an intellectual implausibility of the Christian faith (12–14). These are the reasons why theologians are invited to study new scientific discoveries and issues and to undertake the task of theological discernment of the possible connections to and implications of these issues for theology. That way, they have the possibility of remaining in line with the contemporary thought and culture and at the same time offering some important Christian answers regarding crucial matters of human existence. This is especially important for responding to the problem of cosmic pessimism. This way of thinking of the universe and of human life as something pointless, something to which only men in their imagination give some deeper meaning, is exponentially increasing in the concrete shapes of post-

modern culture. As a product of the scientific naturalism, this threat is very influential, and it seems that its influence in the scientific world and in contemporary culture is growing very quickly. If theologians are not aware of this problem and if they do not study these issues properly – in other words, if they do not have an interest in the scientific story of life – that only weakens their intellectual position. It is very important also to point out that a kind of an attentive and profound theological work in respect to these questions represents a unique opportunity for a deepening of the interdisciplinary cooperation with other sciences.

#### **4. A new way of transmission of scientific and theological insights**

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A new kind of awareness and of taking seriously of the connection between the elements of the paradigm of science and those of the faith demands a new way of transmitting their insights and results (Delio 2017, 39). This task of bringing closer different scientific and theological insights regarding the universe and the world implicates finding new images and some new elements of the language of transmitting these insights to larger groups of people. This concerns especially different groups of the lay faithful, but also the priests, theology professors, seminary instructors, certain community leaders, etc. This issue is connected to the problem of a certain reworking of Christian theology, and especially its language. For this to happen there is a necessity for some sort of updating of theology in respect to the scientific picture of the world. This updating is not a short-term task; it is an ongoing and permanent obligation of theology in all periods.

On the other hand, the urgent necessity for genuine scientific research that is not ideologically guided and that is not intended to interpret every aspect of human life or the world is today even more pressing. Regarding this issue, the scientific and technological paradigms today ought to be perceived in a broader and correct sense, especially in respect to a dangerous attempt to explain every aspect of human life starting from a scientific position only. This attempt is not a new one; its history has a century and a few decades more of advanced development. But the pressing issue urging science and ethics today is its accelerated application in almost every important practical segment of life and society.

#### **5. Implications regarding moral living and behavior towards others**

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The field of the discernment of the influence of the paradigm of science and that of faith to the moral living of real people is one of the most challenging. It is generally known that scientific naturalism regards all aspects of the human being in the strict evolutionary sense. In other words, according to its advocates there is no need for any other source of ethics and morality. There are two predominant-

ly influential theories; the first which says that morality is the product of biological evolution (socio-biological theory) and the second which says that morality is the product of the reciprocal interaction between biology and culture (genetic-cultural coevolutionary theory) (Črpić, Nimac and Tanjić 2016, 15). Many consequences for genuine Christian living that result from these kinds of reasoning regarding morality are devastating. Many Christians, but also many other people that do not apply strict religious standards to their lives, in different ways practically feel these consequences and that is why many of them cannot incorporate their convictions into their actual moral living.

On the side of the paradigm of the faith there are also some problematic issues regarding moral living and its motivations and intensity if the dominant element of its understanding is the position of the finished and static universe and world. This picture of the universe has a profound impact on the picture of the world and man's position and role in it. Morality cannot be reduced to a selection of important questions; it must be referred to the kind of behavior with which to approach all people. The kind of reasoning of these realities which includes a static picture of the world only produces an attitude that is founded in the conviction that the main motivation of believers to live morally good lives is only to avoid sin, to do good deeds, and to wait until the eternal reality finally becomes their reality. But this doing good deeds in fact does not mean a totally active Christian role in this world and the endeavor of its true and deep transformation. These deeds mainly consist of some sort of good living, but with not too much involvement in world's transformation. This kind of reasoning is very influential and dominates many religious circles today (Haught 2017, 12).

The attitude sketched out above has very practical implications regarding the behavior of the believers towards other people, which means towards the persons with different worldviews and convictions. This kind of the Christian conviction produces a practical disinterest (which is often hidden) in the matters of the world and in dialogue with the others. Other results that are produced by this kind of behavior are some sort of practical disappointment with this world that produces an escape to devotional life and piety only. However, this kind of behavior has other practical implications which are very dangerous for the faith and human living as such. Religious fundamentalism as a practical behavior that is based on fanaticism as a negative religious conviction is very influential in some minor Christian circles. This kind of behavior often does not produce open hostile behavior towards other people, but regularly has a deep influence on the practical devotional, family and certain types of community living.

## **6. Regarding the elements and models of action of the community and of evangelization**

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The practical implications of the elements which are being discerned here are visible on the level of the Church's community actions as well. In this sense the very

first field of discernment is the level of the parish community as the most concrete level of the Church's regular action. This very pastoral level of action is very sensitive to the kind of the conviction of its participants. In other words, the kind of religious convictions that are brought into community circles have a direct influence on the kind of the action which is being realized there. If these attitudes of the pastors and believers do not correspond to the evangelization openness of the Christian faith, this normally means practical closure of the pastoral action of the community (Vranješ 2009, 122–123).

In order to be correct in theological terms, it is important to stress that the pastoral openness of the Church does not have its foundation in different kinds of comprehension of the world as such. The pastoral and evangelization openness of the Church and its orientation towards the world in this sense is an essential part of its very nature. In these times, that structural nature of the openness of the Church as one of its most important theological elements is especially recognizable in the theology of Pope Francis (Repole 2018, 54). Moreover, he sets out this kind of openness of the Church as an undeniable element of its whole pastoral action and describes it using the term *going forth* (EG § 20). This kind of the understanding of the whole Church should be realized in all its smaller communities and especially in the parishes.

Although the Church itself and its openness in a strict theological sense does not depend on different kinds of the understanding of the world as such, a certain kind of understanding of the universe, the world and man may or may not help in the terms of the quality, profoundness and the topicality of pastoral and the evangelization action in the world. This means that a certain kind of understanding of the world influences the very concrete realization of pastoral action. The kind of the understanding of the world that is structurally made up of elements of incompleteness and openness makes the action of the Church today much more profound and actual.

This truth is directed to some very important elements of the inner nature of pastoral and evangelization action and which are pointed out in the Pope Francis's theology. The first and one of the most profound theological statements regarding the Church is the truth that the Church was born of God's will, which means that God himself precedes the Church in love (EG § 24). True love is always relational. This means that God himself is directed to the others and that his Church is also directed to the world. It is possible in this sense to realize why the Church exists for the service of the world and humanity (Repole 2018, 56). Another very important truth connected to this is the fact that the evangelization in the world in this sense is very important for the Church as well because in doing so the Church recognizes some new aspects of the revelation and some new expressions of the Church itself (EG § 116). And finally, in realizing evangelization of this kind the Church is realizing another crucial aspect of its mission and that is a contribution to the transformation of the world and the promotion of a complete and integral humanity (EG § 178).



All these elements are very theologically theoretical but also very practical and concrete. They show a deep practical connection between the understanding of the Church and its mission and a certain kind of the understanding of the world. The practical acceptance of the model of the unfinished and open universe and world helps the Church community and its participants to develop an open model of action which is directed to evangelization action in the world. The different kinds of the understanding of these realities produce closure of the community within itself and action that is focused on a few central elements of the community's life.

An understanding of the world as an open and unfinished reality helps members of the Church's communities grasp the real and concrete life of people, their problems and dramas, their expectations and possibilities. In this way, they can see and understand the needs of people and the depths of their struggles. In doing so, they can see not only the reality of sin and evil, but also the potential of people for a better kind of living. Furthermore, this new and much more open kind of the understanding of the world helps believers, pastors and their communities in cultivating the freshness of their pastoral activities. This kind of the understanding of the world helps them to see possibilities for the enrichment of their thoughts and initiatives and in the recognition of many hidden opportunities for the dialogue with the people and preparation for evangelization activities. This way, communities can encounter the beauty of creation and new aspects of the understanding of God's revelation.

One of the most important practical elements in respect to the theological acceptance of a much more open and unfinished concept of the world is the theme of creativity and responsible innovation in the Church's pastoral action. A different picture of the world, which is the picture of that reality as something closed and at the same time in the need of the redemption as the only perspective, produces a very specific effect on concrete pastoral action. That is the effect of the pastoral which is directed only to the matters of the conversion, forgiveness and salvation in the strict sense of the term. These are very important and actually crucial realities, but beside them there are some other theological-pastoral realities connected to them and in service of them. One of these is pastoral creativity and innovation which is important especially in these times which are very complex and demanding regarding the practical state of the faith. The closed model of the world which is sketched above influences pastoral action in a way that leads to a narrowed type of action which limits that same action to just some important elements and moments. That is why pastoral action today is mostly limited to the question of sacraments and to some practical issues of the catechetical preparation for them. Of course, there is no intention of generalization in respect to the pastoral reality of the Church with these statements, but the question of creativity in the pastoral is still out of the range of many pastoral circles, especially those of the parishes.

It is possible to notice the closed model of the world in narrowing the Church's action just to one side of pastoral reality. On the other side is the contribution to

the development of the world which is in a state of ongoing development. That contribution is essentially a part of the pastoral action; without it there is neither possibility for pastoral action in the totality of the real frame of the world nor of the Church itself. The world that is evolving is incomplete and therefore always open to creativity (Delio 2017, 43). The Church in its pastoral action must accept and respect the practicality of this truth. This means that the models of that action must be open to that creativity, to its incompleteness and openness. This is in line with the theology of the signs of the time (*signa temporum*) (GS § 4, 11) which invokes the mysterious and still unrecognized divine element and inspiration to become actual in the pastoral action.

Regarding these themes there is a need for pointing out some sort of pastoral fear which is often recognizable in many pastoral circles in the face of the question of creativity and innovation. This does not mean that every aspect of pastoral reality is designated by it. However, generally speaking, it is possible to emphasize the problem with creativity and especially with innovation in the pastoral sphere. It seems that two extremes rule in this area of pastoral action. One is related to the inclination of the so-called secure way with no innovation, and the other with the totally open kind of action with no real strongholds and rules. In order to avoid these extremes and to recognize more the importance of the creativity in the pastoral action, Church's communities must develop a new kind of relation to the world of science and culture. It must be pointed out here that pastoral innovation and creativity does not mean any kind of pastoral irresponsibility, but actually means a kind of pastoral openness which brings together the normative elements of the tradition of the faith and many positive elements of the culture.

The models of the evangelization today are a very important, but also very complicated issue for the Church. First, there is no unique model of action in this sense. Every part of the Church and of the world demands some special modality of action. It is not possible to discern here every aspect of these models and modalities. But it is important to discern some specific issues regarding the themes singled out above which are very connected to some demanding elements of evangelization today. The closed mental picture of the world and universe produces effects on evangelization action in the world. That very world is not seen in a broader sense regarding its ongoing development, but often in a very strict sense as an object of action which is here just to receive Christian evangelization impulses. In this sense, for many Christians, the question of sin and that of the salvation often open the only perspective of action towards the world. Not neglecting the reality of the evil in the world, there is a need for pointing out the excessively pastoral and spiritual accentuation and preoccupation with this reality only in some Christian circles. This strict moral and sometimes spiritualistic perspective closes the view for many positive elements of the world, but also of culture, science, technology and human progress.

The closed picture of the world produces some practical deviations regarding a very important element of the Christian tradition – apology. This kind of the access to the Christian truth and teaching was in the past always necessary and it

will be like this in one way or another in all times. Nonetheless, this time demands a new kind of apology. It cannot be realized today using the same model of the past. That is why Pope Francis demands a creative apology (VG, § 5) that has purpose in the creation of a new and bigger openness to the gospel in every person and especially in those that are a part of the scientific and academic world (EG, § 132). It is very important to point out here two elements that help a better understanding of this issue. The first one emphasizes that the different modalities of evangelization and the need for a new kind of a creative apology of the faith in these fields of life should lead to the creation of new ways of access to and understanding of the arguments of both paradigms: that of the science and that of the faith. Connected to that, the other element speaks of the need for scientific categories that help in the transmission of the gospel's message and that those same categories become the medium of evangelization (§ 132). This obviously means that the contemporary ways of the apology and evangelization demand a new and very theologically and scientifically sophisticated Christian access, especially in the world of the science and culture, but also in the world of the youth and in a certain way in respect to the whole task of evangelization.

There is a need to point out these new ways of evangelization in the world of youth, especially youth at faculties, other academic institutions, and in scientific research and cultural circles as a special example of the issue. Contemporary youth generations in the democratic societies have quite an easy and very open and sophisticated way of access and progress in almost every aspect of science and culture. But, for very different reasons, the wide majority of them do not have the same kind of access to arguments of the faith. This is a very demanding and complicated issue and it is not possible here to study it profoundly. The new kind of evangelization in this world demands a singling out of the problem of the so-called pious way of the evangelization as the only perspective when it comes to this issue. This pious way of action is actually a kind of a bigger reaction of Christians to the challenges to the faith in this world (Matulić 2008, 784–788). The word pious is concerned here just in a very limited sense as the designation of a lack of access to evangelization and is not used in its proper meaning of folk piety in the life of the faith which is (if normal and healthy) very important for that same life. The problem which is pointed out here regards the fact that the need for the kind of the scientific-theological sophistication in the evangelization of the world of the youth is often replaced with the pious element of the faith only and that the necessity for the profound way of the exploration of the faith's arguments often does not exist at all. This way of acting is the easiest, but its consequences for a real evangelization are usually catastrophic. It produces a direct distortion of a real devotion which demands a long path of initiation; it produces the distancing of the Church's life as one extreme or, by a small minority of young people, a childish kind of understanding and living of the faith. These are the reasons why the theologically sophisticated evangelization models are one of the main imperatives for the Church in these times.

## 7. Conclusion

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The question of the harmonious connecting of the elements of the paradigm of the science and those of the paradigm of the Christian faith is one of the most challenging and demanding for theology today. This is not just a dogmatic or moral issue, but one that has deep implications in the field of the practical theology as well. It is easy to understand that the implications which are referred here to are of a pastoral nature in the practice of believers and of the Church community. In other words, the influence of the way of the connecting that is being accentuated above is crucial, especially in this time of history.

A theological-practical discernment of this theme clearly shows its important practical implications. These implications regard a span of elements that go from the question of the theological acceptance of an unfinished universe which is in a state of evolution and of coming into being to the question of the human practical role in the world. This span includes the issue of the cosmic pessimism which has to be taken seriously by theologians if they want to preserve their intellectual position and the possibility of a real and constructive contribution to the field of science and culture. The kind of pessimism that is pointed out here produces a very practical pessimistic behavior toward the questions of God, eternal life, and salvation. On the other hand, for many kinds of the believers, neglecting the evolutionary way of thinking leads them to a kind of devotion that is not totally Christian and does not contribute to a mature spiritual life. If the elements of the two paradigms which are singled out here are in strict opposition, that will certainly lead to some other practical implications such as a closed picture of the Church's communities, especially parishes, and a closed and not very creative way of pastoral action. An attitude of this kind will produce negative effects regarding the behavior of the Christians toward people with the different worldviews as well. Those attitudes are sometimes designated by the elements of a fundamentalist nature. The question of the evangelization is also very important here because a closed picture of the world will certainly lead much more to a kind of an inappropriate apology than to a real evangelization for this time. It is especially important today to adopt a new and constructive way of connecting of the elements of the two paradigms in which a new kind of understanding and language is crucial.

## Abbreviations

- GS** – Second Vatican Council 1965 [Gaudium et spes].
- EG** – Francis 2013 [Evangelii gaudium].
- VG** – Francis 2017 [Veritatis gaudium].

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