

Pro homine ethico

The need for an ethical collaboration between theology and other sciences

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Are we able to live responsibly on our vulnerable planet? The political classes hoped to discover the answer in the idea of 'sustainable development' of the UN's Brundtland-Report in 1987. The present study argues that in a moral sense one can speak neither of a 'sustainable development', nor of 'scientific neutrality'. During the past decades theology itself often followed a similar illusion, by willy-nilly considering itself as 'the conscience' of other sciences. The present economic crisis, caused primarily by a moral decline, wakes us all up from our illusions. It is a clear consequence of our interdependence as scholars that from an ethical perspective the science and the scientist can never be neutral: this moral responsibility can neither be devolved to others, nor taken over from them. Philosophy should not be a handmaid, but rather the ally of theology for the sake of the homo ethicus. This in itself is already a scientific responsibility.

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Introduction

The capacity of thinking and of living rationally on our planet is characteristic exclusively for the human race. Our way of life therefore influences both directly and indirectly all other creatures of the Earth. Consequently, we have a non-negligible and non-transferable responsibility for our shared habitat. The question becomes unavoidable: are we able to live responsibly or we merely live as tyrants and parasites on our very sensible planet, which is neither infinite, nor indestructible?

Paul the Apostle calls the Earth 'patria', received by humankind from the 'Pater', i.e. the Father (Ephesians 3: 14-15). This is where the Indo-European word *patria*, *patrimonium* as well as the German term *Vaterland* derives from. The Hungarian language preserves the idea of 'motherland', showing the close connection between man and the world: the *mother* is from whom one gains his/her *matter* (in Latin, *mater* is the source of *materia*).

The exclusively profit-oriented industrialisation, which strongly established itself in our societies since the mid-nineteenth century, the world wars, the insatiability of multinational companies threaten us with horrific consequences. The destruction of the habitat will unavoidably result in people's alienation from each other and from the environment. All this leads directly to the moral and aesthetical decline of the next generation. Paul, speaking in front of the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers in Athens on the one