

## **Truth, apologia, mission. Pneumatic ecclesiology in the writings of Romano Guardini.**

### **Summary**

Romano Guardini (1885-1968) is one of the most outstanding theologians of the 20th century. He can be called a "man of borders": by birth of Italy, by residence of Germany, by education of a theologian and philosopher, by avocation an expert in literature, art, psychology and pedagogy. The Work entitled *Truth, apologia, mission. Pneumatic ecclesiology in the writings of Romano Guardini* is an attempt to set off on the "borders" that the professor from Munich has been travelling across and get to know them fruitfully. It is about getting to know Guardini's view of the spiritual reality of the Church in three dimensions: truth, apology and mission.

The aim of the work is to answer the question: How does a vision of the Church clearly centred on the Holy Spirit serve the truth, fulfill an apologetic function and lead to evangelisation? In three chapters the theo- and Christological starting point, pneumatological content and ecclesiological effects are presented.

The research hypothesis of the work is that pneumatic ecclesiology in its three fundamental dimensions - truth, apologia and mission - contained in the writings of Romano Guardini, was not only invaluable to contemporary theologians, but is also relevant to the challenges of the 21st century. Also nowadays, the knowledge of the experience and thoughts of the professor from Munich can help to defend the truth about God and the world and man against the loudest and most influential currents of modern philosophy, which can generally be described as scepticism about existence and knowledge of truth.

The truth about the divine reality revealed in Jesus Christ, the teaching about the 'Spirit and the Bride' and the idea of the 'awakening of the Church in souls' contained in the writings of the Munich theologian can still support the theological understanding of these realities and help in their apology today. A thorough analysis of the issue left by the theologian-pastoral Guardini may also help shed important light on the issue of the 'new evangelisation'.

The research goes along the line marked by signs: God → Christ → Holy Spirit → Church. The concept of the work is based on the analysis of some texts concerning the ecclesiological content of Romano Guardini's writings. In the first chapter the theo- and Christological starting point is approximated. First, the answer to the question: what is the theo-logy of the Munich professor - in a

literal and narrow sense - what are the characteristics of his word about God. The truth about "God far and near" is shown. Then Guardini's Christological thought of a "human" God - Jesus, who is our Lord - was presented. The second chapter is a presentation of the pneumatological content of the writings of a thinker born in Verona. The aim of this part of the work - entitled "in the Holy Spirit" - is to show the richness of the Third Divine Person and its actions. The last chapter is a closer look at the ecclesiological effects: the theme "Spirit and the Bride" and the idea of "awakening the Church in souls". All these contents are shown in three dimensions: truth, apology and mission, and thus against the background of the views/currents with which Guardini has argued. Moreover, taking into account his key pastoral commitment to show the uniqueness of Jesus, who "brings a holy reality" to which man should open himself.

The author hopes that showing the theo- and Christological starting point, indicating the pneumatic content of Guardini's writings and outlining the ecclesiological consequences is a coherent and comprehensive presentation of the pneumatic ecclesiology of the Munich-based professor and will help to 'justify this hope, which is within us' even today. In this way, the fundamental priestly and scientific mission of Romano Guardini will be continued, as shown by the inscription on a plaque in the St Louis University Church in Munich commemorating the late professor and academic pastor: "So meine ich es mit meiner Seelsorglichen Arbeit: Helfen durch die Wahrheit" - "This is what my pastoral work is about: helping through the truth".

Romano Guardini's teaching on the Church is extremely valuable today - when the institution of the Church is being attacked at almost every turn, the community of believers in Christ is the most persecuted group of people in the world, and in addition, some 'people of the Church' are blowing it up from within with scandals and infidelity to its vocation.

We are dealing here with a very Catholic ecclesiology.

First of all, it is ecclesiology that is deeply connected with pneumatology. This is all the more important because Catholic ecclesiology is accused of being without the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, Guardini managed to 'reconcile fire and water'. His ecclesiology has been described positively and apologetically at once. Reconciling the defence of the basic truths of the faith with their creative message available to the recipient was quite an art, worthy of imitation.

The size and importance of the work of the professor from Munich is further demonstrated by the fact that he did so in very difficult times and in a difficult place. First, the *belle époque*, then increasingly raging Nazism, the Second World War, followed by social and cultural changes and the flourishing of prosperity did not ultimately prevent Guardini from maintaining freedom and independence of thought and the mission 'helfen durch die Wahrheit'. (helping with the truth).

Synthetically speaking, Guardini:

1. He says very deep things about God.

2. He teaches about Jesus Christ in a completely existential way.
3. He communicates things about the Holy Spirit that are incredibly theologically creative.
4. He contemplates about the Church in a reliable and at the same time delightful way.