

## EDITORIAL

*2017 was marked by the loss of three figures of great importance for PISAI and for Islamochristiana. The first to return to God was Prof. Mohamed Talbi, followed only a few days later by Prof. Ali Merad. Both of them, in different ways, had collaborated with PISAI in past years through courses and conferences, and beyond this, had written articles and given useful and occasionally decisive assistance to the editing of Islamochristiana. Fr. Maurice Borrmans recalls this with great emotion in his tributes to each of them In memoriam. We had certainly not anticipated that we would be publishing in the same volume a memorial to the same Fr. Borrmans. As we all know, Islamochristiana was the beloved child of Fr. Maurice, who founded it, together with the staff of the institute, in 1975 as the signature journal of PISAI and later served as editor in chief until 2004 with only minor interruptions. After this, as our devoted readers can well see, he did not relinquish his interest in the journal: he proposed and wrote articles, reviews, and presentations of books; he solicited – and indeed, perhaps “tormented” through his insistence – new proposals of authors and themes and thus affected the current direction of the publication. Islamochristiana loses in Fr. Borrmans not only a great collaborator but its founding father. We know that we have inherited something burdensome but beautiful, and seek to honour it as we can. The timing of his passing, coming at the end of 2017, did not permit us to dedicate this entire volume to him, as the primary contents had already been determined. At PISAI, we have rededicated our library, to which he also bequeathed his personal collection, under his name. We believe that Fr. Maurice Borrmans was one of the most significant figures of the twentieth century in the difficult, demanding, and exciting realm of dialogue between Christians and Muslims. With profound emotion, we honour him, conscious of what he accomplished both for our institute and for this journal, with the certainty of faith that he will continue to protect and assist us with his wisdom and with his witty and indulgent grin.*

*Meanwhile, history presents its usual highs and lows. We have the unpleasant feeling of repeating again our evaluation of what has occurred in the world and in Muslim-Christian relations. The long wave of fundamentalism, unfortunately present for the most part in the Muslim world, has not yet exhausted its momentum, despite the defeat of the so-called “Islamic State” (Da‘ish, IS, or ISIS) on the ground. The situation in the Middle East, in Syria and Yemen in particular, remains terribly complex, and as usual, most of the victims of the conflicts are civilians. Death does not*

*distinguish between Muslims and Christians. In matters of geopolitics and economics, local and international powers avail themselves of both religious sentiments and the age-old conflict between Sunnīs and Šīʿīs to gain slivers of influence and economic advantages. If today, the Middle East claims the primary attention of the international media, persons living in countless other situations, particularly in Asia and Africa, are affected by the difficulties of this period and reflect the same economic, socio-cultural, and religious problems.*

*Again, as always, “there is nothing new under the sun.” In vain, it seems, come the appeals for peace from religious authorities, in the first place the heartfelt requests of Pope Francis but also those of great Muslim leaders. The section Notes and documents in this volume of Islamochristiana gives us abundant examples of those seeds of peace, whether large or small, and whether sown by Christians or by Muslims.*

*Beyond the local and international conflicts for land and resources (we could consider for example, the possibility of exploiting fossil fuels and drinking water), a pressing problem affects the entire planet: ecology and the care for creation. On May 24, 2015, Pope Francis, well aware of the menace that threatens all of humanity, promulgated a major encyclical that, recalling Francis of Assisi, he entitled *Laudato si’*. *Laudato si’* and Ecology is therefore the title we chose for the present volume of *Islamochristiana*. Following this as our sole criterion, we did not invite experts in Muslim-Christian dialogue to make a contribution, but specialists in either the Christian tradition or the Islamic tradition. Bringing together these articles will give as objective a picture as possible about important currents in each of the two religions regarding the theme of ecology.*

*Mira Sievers concentrates her study on the development of the concept of creation in the *Qur’ān* as read in chronological perspective, Martín Carbajo Núñez emphasizes the change in perspective necessary to leave the throwaway culture, while Grégoire Catta traces the theological and anthropological development of the Catholic tradition, highlighting the novelties that emerge from this encyclical. Kiara Jorgenson engages in a presentation of the thought of the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann, who unites in an original way the concept of God with that of creation, Adnane Mokrani analyses the theological and spiritual principles of ecology from an Islamic point of view, while Jaime Tatay and Catherine Devitt note a progressive convergence of both religions and “lay” organizations concerning the major themes of sustainable human development. Mazin Qumsiyeh takes observations about the stability of biologically diversified ecosystems as a point of departure to apply those same principles to human sociology, and finally, a note by Jason Welle informs us about the little known Šūfī cited in Pope Francis’s encyclical.*

*Regarding Muslim-Christian dialogue in history, Diego R. Sarrió Cucarella presents an introduction, the Arabic text, and a translation of the Letter of al-Qūṭī, a brief medieval anti-Islamic polemic, and Rémi Caucanas revisits the 1967 edition of *Journées Romaines*, a particularly significant year due to the influence of the just-concluded Second Vatican Council. For a perspective on contemporary dialogue,*

*Christian Salenson reflects on the figure of the Trappist monk Christian de Chergé and his attitude in the face of the violence of which he eventually became a victim, while Gonzalo Villagrán Medina and Juan Antonio Macías Amoretti analyse and compare the concept of ethics in Catholicism and Islam. An analytical and synthetic study of school textbooks in Jordan for the teaching of Islam closes the array of articles in this volume.*

*This edition of Islamocristiana therefore presents itself as particularly rich and, we believe, interesting. A substantial series of Book reviews completes the volume, witnessing that the theme of Islam and Muslim-Christian relations continues to excite the scholarly world as it animates debate between women and men of our time.*

*In its own small way, Islamochristiana desires to continue as a faithful mirror to this extraordinary interest.*

Islamochristiana