

RESEARCH GROUP
THE SCIENTIFIC MENTALITY AND QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD
ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

MEMBERS 2022-2023

Professors and researchers

Louis Caruana	<i>Philosophy of science, nature, and religion; the scientific mentality; philosophy and ecology</i>
Luca Di Gioia	<i>Evolutionary explanation and philosophy of religion</i>
Jeevan Mendonsa	<i>Philosophy of science, philosophy of religion, moral philosophy, Alasdair MacIntyre</i>
Paul Mueller	<i>Philosophy and Physics, especially 17th & 20th centuries</i>
Yolanda Rodríguez Jiménez	<i>Philosophical anthropology; personal identity; gender studies</i>
Terrance Walsh	<i>German Idealism, the concept of God, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger; contemporary theories of practical reason and normative ethics</i>

Doctoral students

Hrothgar Algarin Sidaway	<i>The first principle of being in Xavier Zubiri</i>
Ugochukwu Anyanwu	<i>Arnold Gehlen's philosophical anthropology and the current digital age</i>
Jesús Cervantes González	<i>Cornelio Fabro on Aquinas's philosophical anthropology</i>
Diôgo Costa Fernandes	<i>The concept of memory in the works of Henri Bergson</i>
Tiago de Quadros Esteves	<i>Bernard Lonergan and Alister McGrath on science and theology</i>
Rijo John	<i>Humanity-technology relations according to Don Ihde</i>
Joshy Joseph	<i>William James and the philosophy of religion</i>
Jijo Joseph Peruvellil	<i>Anthropocentrism in Teilhard de Chardin and the Deep Ecology Movement</i>
Aimé Kasereka	<i>Gaston Bachelard's views on discontinuous development of science</i>
Pau Manent	<i>Science-theology relations according to John Haught</i>

Hugo José Sánchez Acosta	<i>Xavier Zubiri on time with reference to Einstein's theory of relativity</i>
Humphrey Ude	<i>Models, metaphors and analogies in science and religion, Mary B. Hesse</i>
René Wongbi	<i>Beyond the mechanistic worldview, philosophy of life, Hans Jonas</i>

Corresponding Members and Institutions

Tigi Abraham	<i>Little Flower Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Aluva, Kerala, India</i>
Michael Uzoma Chukwu	<i>St. Joseph Seminary College, 75376 River Road, St. Benedict, Louisiana 70457, USA</i>
Treejo Chakkalackal	<i>Calvary Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Thrissur - 4, Kerala, India.</i>
Tim Maina Macharia	<i>Queen of Apostles Philosophy Centre, P.O. Box 798, Jinja, Uganda</i>
Jean Gové	<i>Philosophy Department, University of St Andrews, Scotland</i>
Gregory Mathew Malayil	<i>Philosophy Faculty, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore, India</i>

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The first semester was dedicated primarily to doctoral students sharing the results of their ongoing research. One event during the second semester was original in the sense that it involved the collaboration with the *Laudato Si' Research Institute* based at Campion Hall, Oxford. One of their invited guest lectures was on a topic related directly to the interests of the research group and was available remotely online. The group members were therefore invited to follow the lecture at home and then to attend a meeting the next day at the Gregorian to explore the implications of the lecture more deeply. This year's one-day workshop focused on the ways science will be relevant in the realization of the future of humanity. It was held at the Vatican Observatory premises at Albano and involved the exploration of this question from four different perspectives. One of the papers was by a Vatican Observatory fulltime astronomer, Dr Richard D'Souza (see the program below). This academic year, six doctoral students joined the group: Hrothgar Algarin Sidaway, Ugochukwu Anyanwu, Jesús Cervantes González, Rijo John, Aimé Kasereka, and Pau Manent. The group also welcomed Dr Paul Mueller who had been for many years Vice-Director of the Vatican Observatory and who does research in philosophy and physics, especially 17th and 20th centuries. A professor of physics and philosophy from the Philosophy Faculty, Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore, India, Gregory Mathew Malayil, expressed his interest in collaborating remotely and he proceeded by participating online in all the meetings. Two members of the group successfully defended their doctoral thesis during this academic year: Humphrey Ude (20/04/2023) and René Wongbi (26/05/2023). The academic output of the research group included the following publications:

Louis Caruana, book review of *A World Without Work: Technology, Automation, and How We Should Respond*, by Daniel Susskind (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt & Company, 2020) in *Heythrop Journal* 64 no. 3 (2023): 441-442.

Luca Di Gioia, "The Crisis of Ontological Determinism and the Question of Realism in an Evolving Universe: Insights Stemming from the Concept of Information", in *Ugo-na-Orji, Fs. L.I. Ugorji*, ed. J. N. Uzochukwu and U. S. Ugochukwu (Owerri: APT Publishers, 2022), 245-267.

Jeevan Mendonsa, *Alasdair MacIntyre's Views and Biological Ethics: Exploring the Consistency* (Newcastle upon Tyne UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022), pp. 260. ISBN 9781527591301

Yolanda Rodríguez Jiménez, book review of *Ensayo de antropología filosófica. El arte de mezclar conceptos y plantar desconceptos*, by Ivone Gebara (Navarra: Aletheia, Verbo Divino, Estella, 2020), in *Gregorianum* 103 no. 4 (2022): 901-903.

This year's meetings are indicated below.

Meeting	Presenter	Topic
27 Oct 2022	Tiago de Quadros Esteves	Bernard Lonergan and Alister McGrath on science and theology
24 Nov 2022	Diôgo Costa Fernandes	The genesis of the question of memory in Henri Bergson
20 Dec 2022	Humphrey Ude	Mary Hesse's Network Model of Theories: a critique of the scientific 'Theory of Everything' and the God-Hypothesis debate
19 Jan 2023	Jeevan Mendonsa	Scientific Accounts of Divine Action: A Wittgensteinian Critique
09 Mar 2023	Tim Ingold (online from Oxford)	Creation beyond Creativity
10 Mar 2023	Louis Caruana	Follow-up discussion on Ingold's online lecture
22 Apr 2023	Workshop	Details below

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Workshop
Saturday 22 April 2023
Specola Vaticana, sede: Castel Gandolfo – Albano Laziale

Scientific Transformation of Humanity?

Extrapolation has always played an important role within the scientific method. It refers to the way we infer future events by extending our knowledge beyond what we have already observed. The central question for this workshop refers to extrapolation in its most general sense. Given recent scientific and technological developments, what aspects of the future of humanity can we infer? Many thinkers feel entitled to make probable predictions concerning a rapid and drastic transformation not only of society and of technological culture but also of the human species itself. Some of these predictions, based on current science, are consistent with theological doctrines in eschatology regarding the end of the world and the afterlife, but others are not. How should we deal with such conceptual discrepancy? The workshop explores four possible trajectories.

09:00 – 09:51	Train: Termini to Albano Laziale
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee
10:30 – 11:45	“An astronomical perspective of the fate of our Universe.” Richard D’Souza (Vatican Observatory)
11:45 – 13:00	“Body, Soul, Death, and Diachronic Personal Identity” Yolanda Rodríguez Jiménez (PUG)
13:15 – 15:00	Lunch (local restaurant)
15:15 – 16:30	“Technological Superintelligence: An Existential Threat for the Future of Humanity?” Jeevan Mendonsa (PUG)
16:30 – 17:00	Coffee
17:00 – 18:15	“Future togetherness: possible interpretations of Teilhard de Chardin” Louis Caruana (PUG)
18:43 – 19:35	Train: Albano Laziale to Termini

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Luca Di Gioia	<i>Evolutionary explanation and philosophy of religion</i>
Yolanda Rodríguez Jiménez	<i>Philosophical anthropology; personal identity; gender studies</i>
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Doctoral students

Humphrey Ude	<i>Models, metaphors and analogies in science and religion, Mary B. Hesse</i>
Joshy Joseph	<i>William James and the philosophy of religion</i>
Jijo Joseph Peruvellil	<i>Anthropocentrism in Teilhard de Chardin and the Deep Ecology Movement</i>
Tim Maina Macharia	<i>Epistemology of religion, testimony, and authority</i>
Jeevan Mendonsa	<i>Evolutionary explanation and moral philosophy, Alasdair MacIntyre</i>
Michael Uzoma Chukwu	<i>The Process of Knowledge in Nicholas Rescher and Aquinas</i>
René Wongbi	<i>Beyond the mechanistic worldview, philosophy of life, Hans Jonas</i>
Diôgo Costa Fernandes	<i>The concept of memory in the works of Henri Bergson</i>
Treejo Chakkalakkal	<i>Nature as inherently dynamic, A.N. Whitehead, Dispositionalism</i>
Hugo José Sánchez Acosta	<i>Zubiri on time with reference to Einstein's theory of relativity</i>
Tiago de Quadros Esteves	<i>Bernard Lonergan and Alister McGrath on science and theology</i>

Corresponding Members

Tigi Abraham	From: <i>Little Flower Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Aluva, Kerala</i>
Jean Gové	From: <i>Philosophy Department, University of St Andrews, Scotland</i>

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During the planning session at the start of the academic year, the members shared their views about their own research and decided about the specific topic for second semester: *Philosophical and theological issues related to Transhumanism*. The group also drew initial plans for a one-day workshop to explore some aspects of the philosophy of technology. This academic year, three doctoral students joined the group: Hugo José Sánchez Acosta, Diôgo Costa Fernandes, and Tiago de Quadros Esteves. Moreover, two guest members participated in some sessions during the second semester: Prof. Ulf Jonsson from the Newman Institute, Uppsala, and Prof. Ernesto Baltar from Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid. Two corresponding members continued to be actively engaged in the group's events: Dr Tigi Abraham, from the Little Flower Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Kerala, and Jean Gové, from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. Four doctoral students, members of the group, have successfully defended their thesis during this academic year: Michael Chukwu (20/12/2021); Treejo Chakkalakkal (17/03/2022), Jeevan Mendonsa (23/03/2022), and Tim Maina Macharia (27/06/2022). The highlight of the year's activities was the one-day workshop held at Vatican Observatory premises at Albano. In view of a future joint-publication, four members of the group explored the question of technology from different perspectives (see the program below). During this academic year, the academic output of the research group included:

Publications:

Yolanda Rodríguez Jiménez, "Verso una visione relazionale della persona" *Gregorianum* 103/1 (2022): 119-134.

Yolanda Rodríguez Jiménez, "La continuidad de la identidad y el cambio. Una aproximación analítica a la ética", *Efemérides Mexicana* 39/116 (2021): 244-273.

Terrance Walsh, "Il Covid-19 e la crisi dell'autocoscienza filosofica" *Gregorianum* 102/4 (2021): 853-868.

Presentations:

Michael Chukwu, "Human Knowledge, the postmodern condition and God", at St. Anthony of Padua Community Activity Building, Luling, Louisiana, USA (June 1, 2022).

Jeevan Mendonsa, "Scientific Perspectives on Divine Providence: A Critique of the Non-interventionist Approach" for the Conference *La provvidenza di Dio e il senso della vita umana*, held at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome (November 11-12, 2021).

Jeevan Mendonsa, "The Moral Traditions of Aristotle and the *Bhagavad Gita*: A Brief, Comparative Study from the MacIntyrean Perspective" (online presentation) for the Conference *Cross-cultural Encounters*, held at the Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Turkey (June 15-17, 2022).

Louis Caruana, "Will there be a place for us? Artificial intelligence and a jobless future", Gregorian University Institute of Psychology Conference (October 28, 2021).

Louis Caruana, "Integral Ecology: natural-scientific dimensions", for the conference entitled *Transitioning to Integral Ecology? Transdisciplinary Approaches for the Grounding and Implementation of a Holistic Worldview*, held at the Gregorian (June 6-8, 2022).

The other members of the Research Group proceeded, during the year, with their respective areas of research. The full list of the group's activities is indicated below.

Meeting	Presenter	Topic
21 October 2021		Planning session
18 November 2021	Joshy Joseph	The Nature of Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century: As a Cause for the Pragmatic Turn
16 December 2021	Jean Gové	Cognitive Acquaintance and Thinking about God
20 January 2022	Jijo Paruvélil	Comparison between Deep Ecology and the Teilhardian evolutionary view with special reference to the role of humanity in the universe
29 March 2022	Prof. Terry Walsh	Jeffrey P. Bishop's paper: "Nietzsche's Power Ontology and Transhumanism: why Christians cannot be transhumanists"
07 May 2022	Workshop	Details below
24 May 2022	Dr. Tigi Abraham	Michael Dickson's paper: "The Imago Dei and the Imago Mundi"

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Workshop

Saturday 7 May 2022

Specola Vaticana, sede: Castel Gandolfo – Albano Laziale

Humans and machines: conflict or collaboration?
Four approaches and their theological implications

08:30	Meet at Stazione Termini
09:00 – 09:51	Train: Termini to Albano Laziale
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee
10:30 – 11:30	Paper and discussion: Luca on Gabriel Marcel
11:45 – 12:45	Paper and discussion: Yolanda on Hannah Arendt
12:45 – 14:00	Lunch (bring packed lunch)
14:00 – 15:00	Paper and discussion: Jeevan on Don Ihde
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee
15:30 – 17:15	Guided visit of the Observatory Museum
17:15 – 18:15	Paper and discussion: Louis on Hans Jonas
18:43 – 19:35	Train: Albano Laziale to Termini

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During the first semester, the coordinator L. Caruana was on sabbatical abroad, but continued to organize the group's meetings as usual. The year started with a fruitful planning session that resulted in the decision to divide the year's work in two parts, the first semester dedicated to discussing some of the members' own research and the second dedicated to a specific topic. The topic chosen for the second semester was: *Philosophical and theological issues related to artificial intelligence*. Moreover, the group decided to broaden its membership by contacting and inviting previous members who are now abroad. Tigi Abraham (PhD PUG 2019) joined the group from his institute in Kerala, India, and is happy to commit himself on a long-term basis. David Nanatt (PhD PUG 2020) from Kerala, India, and James Kabata (PhD PUG 2018) from Nairobi, Kenya, participated in some sessions but realised that their present duties and commitments do not permit a regular participation. Since last year, two members left the group: David Nanatt, who completed his doctorate and returned to India, and Lubos Rojka who has other research interests. There were two visitors who attended some sessions only: Jean Gové (PhD student, St. Andrews Scotland), Anyanwu Ugochukwu (Licentiate student PUG). Apart from the research activities listed below, one can mention that Yolanda Rodríguez Jiménez published a paper entitled "La persona y el mundo natural. Un estudio comparativo entre Lynne Rudder Baker y Robert Spaemann" in *Gregorianum* 102, 1 (2021) 129-149; L. Caruana published the Italian translation of his book *Science and Virtue*; the other members of the group continued working in their respective areas of research.

Meeting	Presenter	Topic
29 October 2020	Planning session	Planning session
19 November 2020	Jeevan Mendonsa	"Moral Relativism and Anti-Thomism: Objections against MacIntyre's Moral Philosophy"
3 December 2020	Tigi Abraham	"Knowing Emotions: Truthfulness and Recognition in Affective Experience", evaluation of the book by R.A. Furtak (2018).
17 December 2020	Luca Di Gioia	"The crisis of ontological determinism and the question of realism in an evolving universe: insights stemming from the concept of information".
14 January 2021	Humphrey Ude	"The Role of Models in Theory: the phases in the development of model in philosophy of science"
25 February 2021	Treejo Chakkalackal	Ian G. Barbour's paper "Neuroscience, Artificial Intelligence and Human Nature: Theological and Philosophical Reflections".

18 March 2021	Tim Macharia	Scott Midson's paper "Robot-Theisms and Robot-Theists"
22 April 2021	René Wongbi	Noreen L. Herzfeld's paper "Creating in Our Own Image: Artificial Intelligence and the Image of God".
20 May 2021	Terrance Walsh + Louis Caruana	Edmund Furse's paper "The Theology of Robots" and Sean Barker's response

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