



The Art of Thinking and Contemplation
Socrates, Buddha and Christ
Guardini's *Gegensatz* and *Metánoia*

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of
R. Guardini's book "Der Gegensatz"



December 4-6, 2025

International Conference
(in English & Italian)

The Art of Thinking and Contemplation

Socrates, Buddha and Christ

Guardini's *Gegensatz* und *Metánoia*

Patronage of the Rome Catholic Studies Program,
Pontifical Gregorian University

In collaboration with: Pontifical Athenaeum Sant'Anselmo
(Faculty of Philosophy), Rome, CUA McLean Center for
Study of Culture and Values, Washington, DC, Pontifical
Teutonic Institute Santa Maria dell'Anima, Katholische
Akademie, Guardini Stiftung, Berlin.

On the occasion of the centenary of Romano Guardini's work "Der Gegensatz", the conference aims to address the crisis of thinking and to investigate the possible relevance of "thinking in contrapositions" (*Denken in Gegensätzen*) from a theological, spiritual and interreligious perspective, as well as from a philosophical one, together with experts and students. In this work, Guardini outlines the theoretical and hermeneutic foundation of his epistemology, whereby two contrapositions (*Gegensätze*) constitute dynamically a tension in a space of relation. In contemplative knowledge (*Anschauung*), one form of knowing beyond thinking, the contrapositions, unmixed and unseparated, form a unit in tension. In his works on the great figures of thinking (*Denkergestalten*), he calls the exercise of thinking the asceticism of thinking (*Askese des Denkens*). In the context of his philosophy of the living-concrete, Guardini understands *metánoia* as a change of sense (*Um-Sinnung*). Based on his reflections, the figures of Socrates, Buddha and Christ, each of whom, in a different yet related way, represents a change of sense in life and thinking, will be evaluated as examples. The conference ends with a day of "Applied Thinking" in which the students evaluate the forms of thinking in "contrapositions" in the context of their own scientific research.

L'arte del pensare e della contemplazione
Socrate, Buddha e Cristo
Guardini: *Gegensatz* e *Metánoia*

In occasione del centenario dell'opera di Romano Guardini "Der Gegensatz", il convegno si propone di affrontare la crisi del pensare e di indagare la possibile attualità del "pensare in contrapposizioni" (*Denken in Gegensätzen*) da un punto di vista teologico, spirituale, interreligioso e filosofico, insieme ad esperti e studenti. In quest'opera, Guardini elabora la prospettiva teoretica ed ermeneutica della sua epistemologia, nella quale le contrapposizioni costituiscono dinamicamente una tensione in uno spazio relazionale. Nella conoscenza contemplativa (*Anschauung*), al di là del pensare, le contrapposizioni formano un'unità senza essere né separate né confuse. Nelle sue opere sulle grandi figure del pensiero (*Denkergestalten*), Guardini definisce l'esercizio del pensare come ascesi del pensare (*Askese des Denkens*). Nel contesto della sua filosofia del concreto vivente, concepisce la *metánoia* come *Um-Sinnung*, cioè come una svolta di senso. Muovendo da queste riflessioni, saranno considerate esemplarmente le figure di Socrate, Buddha e Cristo, le quali rappresentano, in modi diversi e tuttavia affini, il processo di una svolta di senso della vita e del pensare. Il convegno si concluderà con una giornata dedicata al "pensare applicato", in cui gli studenti valuteranno le forme del pensare in contrapposizioni nel contesto della propria ricerca scientifica.

Program Schedule

Thursday, December 4, 2025
(Morning: C012, Afternoon: F007)

Venue: **Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome**

09:00 – 09:30 | Opening Session

- Prayer with Fr. Roby Kannanchira
- Rev. Aaron Pidel sj
- Prof. Yvonne Dohna Schlobitten
- Prof. William Barbieri
- Prof. John Boyle

09:30 – 10:30 | Keynote Address

- Speaker: Prof. Heinz Sproll

10:30 – 10:30 | Coffee Break

11:00 – 13:00 | Plenary Session I

Metánoia in Socrates

Moderator : Prof. Andrea De Santis

- Prof. Holger Zaborowski - *Repentance and Self-Acceptance. Guardini, Socrates and the Desire for God.*
- Prof. Alessandro Stavru - *Il morso della vipera: confutazione, turbamento e trasformazione negli interlocutori di Socrate*
- Prof. Andrea Di Maio - *Socrate e/o Gesù: una sorta di opposizione polare?*

13.00-15.00 Lunch Break

15.00-17.00 | Plenary Session I

Metánoia in Buddha

Moderator : Prof. Robert Fusco

- Prof. Paolo Trianni - *Il Buddha: la sapienza del vuoto*
- Mag. Suchanek - *The silent Revolution of Knowledge - why we need to expand our methods of experiencing the world.*
- Dr. Hu Yeping - *No-Self as Compassionate in Buddhism*

17.00 -18.00 Discussion

Friday, December 5, 2025

Venue: Pontifical Athenaeum Sant'Anselmo, Rome

Greetings

- Prof. Jákó Örs Fehérváry, O.S.B., Rector
- Prof. Andrea De Santis, Dean

09:00 – 10:00 | Keynote Address

Dr. Paul Metzloff

10:00 – 10:30 | Coffee Break

11:00 – 13:00 | Plenary Session III

Metánoia in Christ

Moderator : Prof. João Vila Cha sj

- Prof. Isabella Bruckner - *Vivere le contrapposizioni. Un tentativo sulle beatitudini*
- Prof. Andreas Scheib - *Intuition as subjective cognition- Cognition as subjective intuition*
- Prof. Andrea Grillo - *La conversione a Cristo come Gegensatz. Lo sfondo teologico di una filosofia del concreto vivente*

13:00 – 14:30 | Lunch Break

(Refectory reserved for speakers only)

14.30 -16.30 Plenary Session IV Contemporary Approaches 1

Moderator : Prof. Isabella Bruckner

- Prof. Roberto Fusco - *Socrate e il santo: esercizio del pensiero, tensione ascetica e metánoia dall'antichità alla prima agiografia greca*
- Prof. Massimiliano Zupi - *Il Der Gegensatz di Romano Guardini: una logica per pensare l'essere come metaxý e come generazione*
- Prof. João Vila-Chã, SJ - *Through Thought to Thinking: Contemporary Voices.*

16.30-17.00 Break

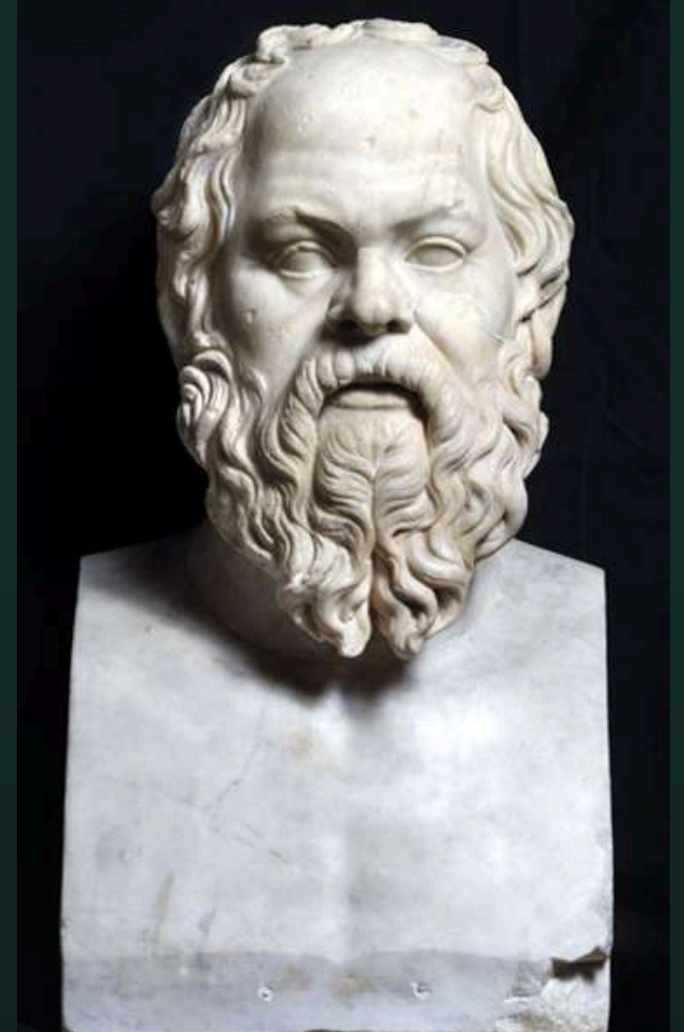
17.00- 19.00 Plenary Session V Contemporary Approaches 2

Moderator : Dr. Hu Yeping

- Prof. Robert Flanagan - *Beholding the Tension between Being and Becoming*
- Prof. René Micallef sj, *The Thinking in the Bible*
- Prof. William Barbieri - *To See Anew: Training One's Gaze with Guardini*
- Prof. Yvonne Dohna Schlobitten - *Epoché and silence. The wounds of the mind*

19.00-20.00 Discussion

20.00 Dinner at Via della Lungara 18, Rome



Saturday, December 6, 2025

Venue: Library of Santa Maria dell'Anima

Applied Thinking

Greetings and Moderation :

Prof. Yvonne Dohna Schlobitten

Prof. William Barbieri

Prof. Thomas Sherman sj, Prof. Tiziana Lorenzetti

Introduction: Formation of young researchers

Dr. Larissa Gerg

Presentation of a propaedeutic program

Prof. P. Peter Lah sj, Prof. Dr. Dr. Matthias Theodor Vogt, Dr. Maureen

Kipronoand and Prof. Peter Beer

Pontifical Faculty of Educational Sciences AUXILIUM, Rome

Sr. Dr. Josmy Jose FMA

Observations

Dr. Gabriel von Wendt

Meeting with all the students and researchers

- Valuation and preparation of a proposal for a course on "Exercising thinking and contemplation"

List of young researchers from the Pontifical Gregorian University (Faculty of History and Cultural Heritage, Catholic Studies), Guardini Stiftung Berlin (Forum) and from the Athenaeum Sant'Anselmo

Jaya di Domenico, Katie Thompson, Elena Sidoni, Ruta Giniunaite, Caterina Tessacini, Annmarie Dinan Hansen, Audra Ball Rose, Luis Beimfohr, Kolbe Joseph Bergeron, Arthur Gruffydd Vickery, Vincenzo Sborchia, Enrico Uberti, Simon Müller, Julie Adamik, Helena Zell, Kali Pietre Llamado, Gloria M. Sosa, Sergio Ribalda Vicente, Cecilia Cofrancesco, Haroon Malik, Nikita Semenikhin, Francois Vaccaro, Claudia Roselli, Anna Deane, Benjamin Lochie, Kate Ruane

ORGANISERS

- Prof. Yvonne Dohna Schlobitten (dohna@unigre.it), Catholic Studies Program of the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome
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- Prof. William Barbieri (barbieri@cua.edu), CUA McLean Center for Study of Culture and Values, Washington, DC