

Editorial

Chiara Lubich. The second section, entitled “Articles,” has three articles by scholars working in the field of interreligious dialogue. The first addresses the Hebrew term for Divine presence and the statement by Jesus that he will be “in your midst,” with comments about Islam. The second explores the relationship between Christian Trinitarian theology and Daoism. The third records the spiritual friendship between Chiara Lubich and Nikkyō Niwano, the founder and leader of an important Buddhist Movement in Japan. These articles are followed by two book reviews:

To the Source

- **Gérard Rossé (Sophia University Institute): “Chiara Lubich’s Paradise ’49 in Light of the Letter to the Ephesians: Jesus Crucified and Forsaken, the Church, and *Agape-Love*”**
The author explores three themes. First is the meaning of the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for the church, humanity, history, and the cosmos in the Letter to the Ephesians. The author then turns to the mystical writings of Chiara Lubich about Jesus Forsaken’s role in the life of the Christian, the church, and the destiny of humanity and creation. Second, the author reflects on the letter’s understanding of church as the Body of Christ brought about by the cross, by which new human persons are transformed and fulfilled in Christ. The author then explores Chiara Lubich’s collective experience of being a cell in the church to further the mission of Christ in the church and the world. Finally, the author explores the role of love—*agape*—both in the letter and in Chiara Lubich’s spirituality of unity.

During the commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, *Claritas* published a special issue devoted to articles by Catholic and Lutheran European scholars in the Fall of 2016. In the Fall of 2017, we will publish another special Reformation issue this time with articles on the present day Catholic and Evangelical ecumenical dialogue by scholars in the United States. For the present issue, we return to our normal format.

The first section is entitled “To the Source.” This section always features scholarly articles about Chiara Lubich’s mystical writings that are recorded in the unpublished text “Paradise ’49.” In this issue, we are publishing the fourth and final article by Gérard Rossé on the Letter to the Ephesians and the writings of

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Articles

- **Joseph Sievers (Pontifical Biblical Institute): “‘Where Two or Three . . .’: *Shekhinah* and Matthew 18:20: Foundations for Jewish-Christian Dialogue and Beyond?”**

The author examines the usage of the Hebrew term *Shekhinah* (“dwelling,” “[Divine] presence”) in the Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible (*Targumim*) and in other parts of rabbinic literature. He shows that God’s dwelling was not limited to the Temple, but was attributed to other contexts. One of the best-known expressions of this idea is found in Mishnah tractate *Avot* (3:2), which reads, “But two who are sitting together and there are words of Torah [spoken] between them, the Divine Presence [*Shekhinah*] rests with them.” The author draws an analogy between these passages and the statement by Jesus in the New Testament: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt 18:20). The author goes on to discuss connections and differences, and he concludes that this comparison may have important implications for the renewed encounter of Jews and Christians, and indeed for interreligious relations in general. In the latter regard, he points to the concept of *Sakīna* in the Qur’an and other Islamic writings.

- **Kin Sheung Chiaretto Yan (Central and South China Seminary): “Prolegomenon to Interreligious Dialogue in China: Daoism, the Trinitarian Relationship, and Christian Inculturation”**

In this article, the author attempts to read the mystery of the Trinity using categories of Chinese thought. He finds helpful

for understanding the Trinitarian relationship the Daoist concepts of the dialectic of harmony containing many elements: the abiding relationship of qi between the yin and the yang, the relationship between being and non-being, Dao and De, the imprints of one and three in all things, and the concept of self-emptying aiming at wu-wei (non-doing) as an ultimate goal of a human being in harmony with the Dao. He also finds that Chinese culture’s values of harmony, humility, and intuitiveness and its emphasis on relationship befit a good disposition for approaching the mystery of the Trinity, which is essential to Christianity. The author argues that the proposal of this prolegomenon is that an in-depth analysis of Daoism and the Christian Trinitarian theology can contribute to the inculturation of the Christian faith in the Chinese context in ways that can contribute to the positive development of Chinese culture in today’s world.

- **Roberto Catalano (International Focolare Center for Interreligious Dialogue): “Spiritual Friendship and Interreligious Dialogue: The Experience of Chiara Lubich and Nikkyō Niwano”**

This study introduces new source materials about the spiritual friendship between Chiara Lubich and Rev. Nikkyō Niwano, founders and longtime presidents, respectively, of the Focolare Movement and of the Risshō Kōsei-kai. The author shows how these two movements, though founded in completely different geographical, social, and religious contexts, are part of a larger phenomenon that characterized the second half of the twentieth century. The article attempts to evaluate the roles of the two spiritual leaders, their spiritual friendship, as well as the

spiritual link their followers had, and still have, in interfaith dialogue between Catholics and Mahāyāna Buddhists and on a wider scale between the faithful of different religions. The author argues that Lubich and Niwano had, in fact, a prophetic role in this context.

Book Reviews

- **Jason Blakely, *Alasdair MacIntyre, Charles Taylor, and the Demise of Naturalism: Reunifying Political Theory*. University of Notre Dame Press, 2016: reviewed by Terence Kersch, CSB (University of Alberta)**
- **David Walsh, *Politics of the Person as the Politics of Being*. University of Notre Dame Press, 2016: Reviewed by John McNerney (University College Dublin)**

The editors of *Claritas* hope that our readers will appreciate the excellent articles in this first issue 2017. Please note that our journal is open access, with no subscription fees for our readers and no publication fees for our authors. We depend on the generosity of our readership. At our website, you will find a tab labeled “Support *Claritas*.” We hope that all who read *Claritas* will be inspired to contribute to our effort to build a more united and peaceful global culture.