

## EDITORIAL

It is a great joy to be able to celebrate the publication of the 50<sup>th</sup> edition of *Islamochristiana*. That this journal has appeared every year since 1975 is a cause for thanksgiving to God and to all those who have dedicated themselves to the vision that has inspired *Islamochristiana* since its beginnings: namely, to promote the study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations in the spirit of dialogue, reconciliation and cooperation commended to the Church for its work in this field by the Second Vatican Council.

It is therefore highly appropriate that the first essay in this volume has been contributed by Professor Valentino Cottini, who provides an expert account of the history of *Islamochristiana* from its foundation and early years through to recent developments. The essay, written in Italian, will be of interest to many who value *Islamochristiana*, so we have taken the step on this occasion of providing substantial summaries in French and English, rather than the brief abstracts that normally accompany essays.

A remarkable fact about *Islamochristiana*, and surely a major reason for its long-term success, is that for its first 47 editions it was mainly produced under the skilful guidance of just two Editors, first Professor Maurice Borrmans and then Professor Cottini. In his essay Professor Cottini underlines the enormous contribution of Professor Borrmans, without whom *Islamochristiana* is virtually unimaginable. Professor Cottini's tireless work over many years has likewise been essential to the journal's continuing success, and we are very grateful for his continuing support.

In contrast, the last three years have seen more changes. For the 2022 and 2023 volumes (*Islamochristiana* 48 and 49), Professor Diego Sarrió Cucarella took on the role of Editor (*ad interim*), and invited Dr David Marshall to collaborate with him as Guest Editor. In 2024 Professor Sarrió Cucarella's term as President of PISAI came to an end and in January 2025 it was announced that the Holy Father had appointed him to be Bishop of Laghouat in Algeria. We acknowledge gratefully all that Professor Sarrió Cucarella did for the last two volumes of *Islamochristiana*. Meanwhile, Professor Wasim Salman, the new President of PISAI, has also taken up the role of Editor of *Islamochristiana*, with David Marshall remaining as Guest Editor.

This volume includes eleven essays, including the one by Professor Cottini already mentioned. A group of four essays focuses on Jerusalem. Yazid Said considers Jerusalem in the Christian theological imagination and in Islamic claims, exploring the implications for today of bringing these perspectives into dialogue with each other. David Neuhaus provides an expert overview of the policy of the Vatican towards Jerusalem from 1917 to the present. His discussion of all the most significant Vatican documents relating to Jerusalem from this period makes this essay an extremely valuable resource. Agapios Abu Saada's essay (in Arabic) discusses the status of Jerusalem as the supreme holy place of global Christianity in the consciousness of local Christians and also addresses the situation of the churches in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. A joint contribution from Elizabeth Martejn and Ruba Totah shows how the writings of the Lutheran doctor and ethnographer, Tawfiq Canaan (1882-1964), an

inhabitant of Jerusalem, illuminate aspects of the city's multi-dimensional history and the intertwining of the religious worlds of its different communities with Palestinian culture.

Two essays explore questions in the interface between Muslim and Christian religious thought. Gonzalo Villagrán draws from writings of the influential Islamist Sayyid Qutb an account of his implicit understanding of citizenship, which is then brought into an illuminating dialogue with Catholic social thought, with particular reference to Jacques Maritain. Mahdi Moraveji considers Mahmoud Ayoub's writing on redemptive suffering, a theme typically assumed to be central to Christianity but alien to Islam. Moraveji assesses the compatibility of Ayoub's approach with mainstream Šī'ī theology, concluding that despite weaknesses in Ayoub's argument, the case can be made for the presence of the theme of redemption in Imāmī Šī'ī theology. Turning to more practical matters in the Christian-Muslim encounter, Ann Logie's essay addresses a topic highly relevant to Christian and other religious minorities in the United Arab Emirates – the state's policy of institutionalising the concept of tolerance. Logie argues that, although an authoritarian state, the UAE has successfully promoted its version of tolerance as 'true Islam' (over against terrorism), drawing on the theological authority of Abdallah bin Bayyah, the 'Abrahamic Family' concept, and the *Document on Human Fraternity*. Wasim Salman's essay (in Arabic) focuses on the relationship between power and Islam in the writings of Aziz al-Azmeh, who explores this theme from the origins of Islam through to the present, with particular emphasis on the role of the '*ulamā*'. Finally, a pair of contributions from Pierre Masri and Diego Sarrió Cucarella focus on a Christian Arabic text from the tenth century. Masri provides a new critical edition of the reply by the West Syrian scholar 'Īsā b. Ishāq b. Zur'a to a now lost refutation of the Christians by Abū al-Qāsim 'Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad al-Balḥī. Sarrió Cucarella provides an introduction to this text and an English translation of it.

In the rest of this volume you will find the usual substantial section of "Notes and Documents", offering an overview of recent developments in Christian-Muslim relations around the world, together with book-reviews in English, French and Italian on a wide range of publications. We hope all readers will find much here to enrich their thinking and their work.

We also include pieces in grateful commemoration of two figures who contributed greatly to the work of PISAI: Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, who served as President 2006-2012, and Justo Lacunza Balda, President 2000-2006.

We express our sincere thanks to all those who have contributed essays and book-reviews to this volume of *Islamochristiana*. Many thanks also to colleagues at PISAI: to Eugenia Di Gregorio for her indispensable work on "Notes and Documents" and on many other aspects of the production of this volume; to members of the editorial committee for their valuable advice and suggestions; and to members of the Secretariat for their help and support.

As we mark with gratitude this year's significant milestone in the history of *Islamochristiana* we also look to the future confident that this good work will continue to flourish – *ad multos annos!*

Wasim SALMAN  
David MARSHALL