

Univerza v Ljubljani
Teološka fakulteta



Uniwersytet Papieski
Jana Pawła II
w Krakowie

LISTENING AND SPIRITUALITY

International Scientific Conference

Ljubljana, December 10th, 2022



Organization

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies

The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, Faculty of Theology

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On-line

Program and abstracts

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(Institute of Moral Theology and Spiritual Questions of Modern Culture)

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Editor:

Ivan Platovnjak

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PROGRAM

On-line: <https://uni-lj-si.zoom.us/j/96290080952>; ID: 962 9008 0952

14:30-14:40 Welcome speeches

Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Ljubljana Prof. Dr. Janez Vodičar
Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Zagreb Prof. Dr. Ivan Šestak
Dean of the Faculty of Theology at The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow Prof. Dr. Jan Dziejczak
President of the Organizing Committee Asst. Prof. Dr. Ivan Platovnjak
Member of the Organizing Committee Asst. Prof. Dr. Erika Prijatelj

(Chairperson: Erika Prijatelj)

Lectures

14:40-14:55 Tone Svetelj (USA): *Philosophy of Listening – Does it Exist?*

14:55-15:10 Arto Mutanen (Finland): *On Philosophy of Music*

15:10-15:25 Đurica Pardon (Croatia): *Hear, Give Ear and Listen! The Sense of Hearing and Will of Listening in the Bible*

15:25-15:40 Vassilios Bebis (Greece, USA): *The Blessing of Ears in the Eastern Christian Sacrament of Baptism: Dogmatic and Ethical implications*

15:40-16:15 Discussion and Break

(Chairperson: Tone Svetelj)

Lectures

16:15-16:30 Erika Prijatelj (Slovenia, USA): *From Hearing to Listening from a Psychoeducational Perspective*

16:30-16:45 Ines Skelac (Croatia): *A Role of Listening in Gestalt Psychotherapy*

16:45-17:00 Antun Volenik (Croatia): *Active Listening in Pastoral Accompanying and Pastoral Consoling*

17:00-17:15 Tanja Pate (Slovenia): *Listening to Spouse and Listening to God*

17:15-17:45 Discussion and Break

(Chairperson: Antun Volenik)

Lectures

17:45-18:00 Wojciech Zyzak (Poland): *Saint John of Avila – Doctor of Listening*

18:00-18:15 Ivan Platovnjak (Slovenia): *Listening Prayer*

18:15-18:30 Ahmet Türkan (Turkey): *Listening and Spirituality in Islamic Thought*

18:30-18:45 Stanislaus Alla (India): *Virtue of Listening in Hindu Spirituality*

18:45-19:00 Discussion

19:05 Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Without listening there is no communication or real interpersonal relationship. Listening enables us to learn to speak, to discover, and to learn about the world around us. As important as listening is, listening is always put to the test. Every human being has an immense desire to be heard, but it is not easy to find a person who is able to listen to another person and hear them fully.

There are many books and a great deal of research on the importance of listening in relationships, revealing the different ways to listen holistically as well as the value of listening to God and recognising his voice. But there is much less literature that speaks directly to the importance of listening in spirituality. That is why in this international scientific conference we explore listening in spirituality, which we understand as a way of life that enables people to search for and find the content, purpose and meaning of life and the answers to life's deepest questions. Walking this path leads one to a holistic relationship with oneself, others, creation and transcendence, the absolute, which, for believers, is God. Believers live their religious spirituality on a personal and communal level in the spirit of holy scriptures, rituals and the community to which they belong within their religion. So, we approach the research from different perspectives: philosophy, anthropology, psychology/psychiatry, medicine, exegesis, theology, ethics, religious studies, etc.

ABSTRACTS

Prof. Dr. Tone Svetelj, Hellenic College; Boston College, USA, tsvetelj@hchc.edu

Philosophy of Listening – Does it Exist?

Abstract: Why should Philosophy be concerned about the activity of listening? It seems that Western Philosophy has focused so much on speaking and argumentation that, with only a few exceptions, it has completely ignored the importance of listening. Even though the notion of philosophic dialectic implies listening, there is an almost total neglect of listening. The inadequacy of these views is calling for a rediscovery of good listening as a “virtue of virtue”, necessary for understanding one’s own and the other’s character, leading to its transformation.

Keywords: Philosophy of Listening, Silence, Virtue

Adj. Prof. Dr. Arto Mutanen; Finnish Naval Academy & Finnish National Defence University, Finland, arto.mutanen@gmail.com

On Philosophy of Music

Abstract: It seems obvious that music has expressive power which can be seen from the characterization of music in which several kinds of expressive phrases are used (Sharpe 2004). However, this cannot lead to linguistic interpretation of music. In ordinary linguistic communication both speaker and listener are competent users of the language (Tymoczko 2011). Tymoczko (2011) compares music to magic in which the difference between magician and audience maintains the astonishment. A similar structure can be seen in the theory of music in which in which mathematical theories are emphasized (Tymoczko 2006; 2011) or semantical analysis of musical notations has been implemented (Rantala 1988). Music is not only performance of the composer and musicians, but also of listeners. Hence, listening to music has intrinsic value (Varkø 2015) which makes listening emotionally and cognitively remarkable as evidenced by concerts and religious services.

Keywords: Expressiveness of Music, Theory of Music, Emotional Meaning of Music, Cognitive Meaning of Music

Asst. Prof. Dr. Đurica Pardon, Catholic University of Croatia, Croatia, durica.pardon@unicath.hr

Hear, Give Ear and Listen! The Sense of Hearing and Will of Listening in the Bible

Abstract: In biblical texts “hearing” is not just an event which happens in our ears as a natural process of sound. In the Hebrew language, there are three roots which cover a semantic field of hearing. The root *šm'* in most cases denotes physical capacity for acoustic perception. A reaction to the sound of the word from one who hears is expected. The ear (*ozen*) is the physical organ of hearing. The ears are regarded as the instrument by which speech and orders are noted. The ear is considered the seat of insight, responsiveness and understanding. In the ears, a *reaction* to the sound is produced. To „incline the ear” is a synonym for paying attention. The specific semantic content of root *qšb* that distinguishes it from other

semantically related verbs of hearing lies in wilful and consciously attentive listening. Listening (*qašab*) is not just a response and reaction but an action we do consciously and with the full will. Attentive listening is not just the disposition of the auditory organ, nor only the disposition of consciousness, but inclination and attentiveness of all corporal, mental and spiritual capacities. In biblical language “listening” (*qašab*) implies paying attention, comprehending and understanding, giving heed and obeying. From listening an active response to God's words and to another person's needs stems forth. Listening is a source of wilful action in favour of one who is listened to.

Keywords: Biblical Theology, Hearing, Giving Ear, Listening, Spirituality

Prof. Ddr. Vassilios Bebis, Graduate Theological Foundation; Hellenic College Holy Cross, USA, bebis128@gmail.com

The Blessing of Ears in the Eastern Christian Sacrament of Baptism: Dogmatic and Ethical implications

Abstract: The blessing of ears with oil in the Eastern Christian Sacrament of Baptism emphasizes that a person cannot appreciate the words of faith without the grace and guidance of God. The grace of God is manifested in the sacramental life of the Church, helping a person to learn, through active listening, “everything that Christ has commanded his disciples” (Matthew 28:20). The guidance of God is manifested in a faithful person’s spiritual life, helping him/her to listen to God’s voice both in times of social interaction and personal devotion.

Keywords: Listening, Grace, Sacraments, Spirituality, Devotion, Interaction.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Erika Prijatelj, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; Hellenic College, Boston College, USA, erika_prijatelj@hotmail.com

From Hearing to Listening from a Psychoeducational Perspective

Abstract: Like other senses, our hearing helps us adapt and survive. Hearing provides information and enables relationships. Hearing humanizes; people seem more thoughtful, competent, and likable when they hear, not just read others' words.

From a biological perspective, people have outer, middle, and inner ears. They have the ability to transform sound energy into neural messages. Similarly, people need to take several essential steps to psychologically hear the other.

In this presentation, we will explore five steps of empathic listening that can help people grow to understand each other better and become more connected.

Keywords: Listening, Hearing, Understanding, Presence

Asst. Prof. Dr. Ines Skelac, Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Zagreb, Croatia, ines.skelac@ffrz.unizg.hr

A Role of Listening in Gestalt Psychotherapy

Abstract: Contact between two people is an important philosophical topic that can be analyzed from several perspectives. It also holds an important place in the psychotherapeutic relationship between a therapist and a client: in the context of gestalt psychotherapy, listening in a therapeutic relationship presupposes full contact. This relationship, to some extent, corresponds to Buber's I-Thou relation, or the possibility of real contact with another person and then with God. Listening is crucial for contact to take place on a linguistic level, but it implies much more: it shows a sincere desire to be with another person. In gestalt psychotherapy, based on the roots of Husserl's phenomenology, it is not enough to listen but to listen without judgement (*epoché*). This lecture will discuss what it means to listen to someone fully and whether it is possible to "put in brackets" personal judgements and listen without judgement.

Keywords: Contact, Epoché, Listening, Phenomenology, Gestalt Psychotherapy

Asst. Prof. Dr. Antun Volenik, Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Zagreb, Croatia, voleniksj@gmail.com

Active Listening in Pastoral Accompanying and Pastoral Consoling

Abstract: All good communication starts with listening. By nature we are designed more to listen than to speak – we have two ears and only one mouth. However, people often do not understand each other in communication. This communication is particularly important in pastoral accompanying and pastoral counselling as a specific, person-orientated part of pastoral care. In this context, the lecture will show the difference between the terms "listen" and "hear", which are often seen as identical. Furthermore, the concepts of metacommunication and feedback, types and levels of listening and types of listeners will be also discussed.

The factor that connects good communication in pastoral accompanying and pastoral counselling is active listening. The lecture will show the basic technique of active listening such as: asking questions and sub-question (direct and indirect – paraphrased) or letting the other person talk while the interlocutor responds in ways that help the speaker find meaning in what they are saying.

The lecture will explore the difference between spiritual direction and spiritual accompanying especially in the context of Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola as well as the role of supervision of people in how to provide spiritual accompanying.

Keywords: Active Listening, Psychotherapy and Pastoral Care, Martin Buber, I and Thou

Asst. Prof. Dr. Tanja Pate, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, tanja.pate@teof.uni-lj.si

Listening to Spouse and Listening to God

Abstract: The foundation of good marital communication is attentive listening. Research repeatedly shows how essential responsive listening is for well-functioning intimate relationships, better dyadic coping behaviour and greater relationship satisfaction. However, on

the other hand, there's an unconscious tendency in partners to respond to one another without fully understanding what they are communicating, sharing, needing, or asking. Marriage and family therapy aims to strengthen listening skills in couples as a strategy for promoting or restoring closeness. In the first part the author discusses qualities of empathic listening, self-awareness, humility, and curiosity. In the second part Bible verses are presented that can help spouses put the Word of God to work in their communication and relationship.

Keywords: Marital and Family Therapy, Listening Skills, Empathy, Love, God

Prof. Dr. Wojciech Zyzak, Faculty of Theology, The Pontifical University of John Paul II
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Saint John of Avila – Doctor of Listening

Abstract: John of Avila (1499-1569), a Doctor of the Church, was a major figure in the spiritual renewal in 16th-century Spain. „Audi, filia” is his spiritual masterpiece. The book is a guide to the spiritual life in which hearing the word of God leads to deeper communion with God. John of Avila derived the title of his treatise from Psalm 45: „Listen, O daughter, and see; incline your ear”. In 113 chapters of the masterpiece the Author advises his readers to listen for God's voice, rather than the voices of the world, the flesh or the devil. With a reference to the Odyssey, he describes Sirens whose enchanting cacophony represents the sources of temptations. However, in contrast to this, the logo on the printed edition of the Catechism of the Catholic Church represents Christ, the Good Shepherd who leads and protects his faithful lambs and draws them to the melodious symphony of the truth (the panpipes)”. Listening to this melodious symphony of the Truth is the best way to develop spiritual ears.

Keywords: John of Avila, Listening, Spiritual Life, Audi Filia, Sirens

Asst. Prof. Dr. Ivan Platovnjak, Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia,
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Listening Prayer

Abstract: Prayer is most often understood by Christians as a conversation with God. Many are not used to being with God in listening silence, which means without words, requests or thanks. Most often they speak to Him about their needs and the problems of others, of the Church and of the world, or they have various devotions. Many Christians are overwhelmed by guilt for not praying enough or for not being present. It seems that many of them have fallen into what Jesus Christ warns against: "But when you pray, do not babble as the Gentiles do, for they think that if they speak much they will be heard. Do not become like them!" (Mt 6:7-8a) In this lecture we want to present a prayer of listening that heeds Jesus' warning and makes it possible simply to be with the Triune God and to listen to Him so that we can hear Him and live a deep personal and communal relationship with Him.

Keywords: Prayer, Listening, Listening prayer, Triune God, Christianity

Assc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Türkan, Necmettin Erbakan University, Faculty of Theology, Turkey,
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Listening and Spirituality in Islamic Thought

Abstract: According to Islam, Allah (God) created human beings in a special way. Mankind has many features that are unlike other living things. One of them is the ability to listen. This feature includes different dimensions, not just listening to a sound. Mankind is a being who can combine many features such as listening to God's word, listening to his/her inner world, listening to others, listening to his/her parents, listening to nature and listening to his/her body. Listening is also the first step toward understanding. It is stated in the Qur'an that Allah created ears, eyes and hearts for people, and for this reason, one should be thankful to Him. The Prophet Muhammad also mentioned many hadiths about the importance of listening. In this study, listening and spirituality in the context of the Qur'an and hadith will be emphasized and the meaning of listening in Islamic mysticism will be discussed.

Keywords: Listening, Spirituality, Islam, Quran, Hadith, Thought,

Assc. Prof. Dr. Stanislaus Alla, Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi, India,
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Virtue of Listening in Hindu Spirituality

Abstract: Hindu theological and spiritual traditions, especially the classical ones, have always emphasized the art of listening. Revelation or *sruti* itself is called as the one that is “heard” or listened to! The voice of the divine, direct or mediated, needs to be listened to. Equally, popular Hinduism also focussed on listening. As people share religious myths and narratives, attentive devotees cultivate the virtue of listening. The presentation attempts to trace the art of virtue “listening” and identify its contemporary manifestations.

Keywords: Hindu Spirituality, Sruti, Vedas

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