

## **RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITAL CULTURE**

**June 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Ljubljana, Slovenia**

**Organization: Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana**

Dear colleague,

We cordially invite you to the scientific conference, which will take place in Ljubljana, on June 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The conference will focus on the topic of religious experience in the context of digital culture.

### **Main questions and aims of the conference**

The development of technology has experienced a tremendous expansion in recent decades. We have entered the digital age, in which most information is already digitally described and allows for digital processing and use. The term "digitalization" does not refer only to the technical aspect but also to the psychological, social, societal, cultural, and spiritual impacts of digitalization. Digitalization encompasses all levels and areas of human life and significantly transforms them: from family, health care, education, and politics to religion and spirituality.

Artificial intelligence has emerged as a central technology of the present and future. The significant progress in AI development affects not only the human environment and reality but also human being itself—both externally and physically, as well as internally. It shapes and changes the human body, experiences, and ways of thinking, posing a challenge to our understanding of ourselves and reality.

The focus of our conference is on religious experience in the digital age. Various authors highlight how digital technology has, on the one hand, enabled new forms of religious and spiritual presence among people. The new way of communication brought about by digital technology has profoundly affected the experience of the human being as person and member of a community, especially when it comes to religious community. This includes the sharing of theological and spiritual content and experiences, religious education, the organization of religious events, and networking. On the other hand, it also appears to have various negative impacts, such as separation from the physical religious community, the depersonalization of religion, and the disappearance of traditional religious practices. All these phenomena demand a contemporary (critical) response from theology, philosophy, and other humanities. These disciplines must examine relevant phenomena, reject them where necessary, and provide the foundation for developing ethical, pastoral, catechetical guidelines and regulations for life in the digital age. We must find an appropriate compromise or middle path between enabling the development and use of science and technology on the one hand and protecting human dignity and humanity on the other.

One of our starting points is to utilize a phenomenological and personalist approach to explore how religious life can be lived within the digital world. Phenomenological analysis shows that the transformation of the digital world and one's understanding within it also changes one's capacity for

religious experience. Therefore, a particular focus of the conference will be the altered experience of the world, which people not only perceive as "disenchantment" (in Max Weber's sense) due to digitalization but also as a sense that the world is entirely available and controllable. However, in this attitude toward the world, developing a religious experience becomes challenging, as it essentially entails the revelation of something unexpected, unpredictable, and uncontrollable, and is thus transcendent. An important research question will be the exploration of the possibility of fostering a different attitude toward the world, enabling individuals to experience transcendence in today's world, permeated by digital technology. We pay special attention to the relational nature of human experience, which includes the study of experience from the perspectives of intersubjectivity, empathy, resonance, communication, collective mentality, and community. We will also try to place all this in the understanding and development of a theology of proclamation. A new way of communicating between people, a new experience of faith for the individual and in the community requires new ways of proclaiming Revelation today.

**Professor Janez Vodičar**

**Professor Bojan Žalec**

**University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology**

Presidents of the Program Committee

**Suggested topics:**

Transparency, surveillance and privacy in the digital age

Communication in the digital age

Intersubjectivity in the digital age

The importance of body in the digital age

Relationship problems in the digital age

Technology, AI and intercultural and interreligious relationships, communication and dialogue

Digitalization, AI and education

Pastoral and catechesis in digital culture

Digitalization, AI and media

Digitalization, AI and mental health

Experiencing transcendence in the digital age

The image, presence and revelation of God in the technological age

Digitalization of religious practices

Use of technology and AI in announcement and evangelization

The need for religious experience in the digital age

Spirituality in the digital age

Religious community in the digital age

The deadline for the confirmation of participation and for the preliminary title of your paper is: **March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025**. Please **include** the title of your paper, your affiliation (affiliated

institution), address for mail correspondence (e-mail address), and your academic title and position.

The deadline for submission of the abstract (final title of the presentation, abstract 200-300 words + 5-7 keywords): **April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025.**

**Papers and presentation:** Time allotted for each paper is 20 minutes; keynote lectures will last 40 minutes (plus 20 minutes for discussion). The language of the conference is English.

Please send **abstracts** to e-mail address: [Jonas.Miklavcic@teof.uni-lj.si](mailto:Jonas.Miklavcic@teof.uni-lj.si)

Participation in the scientific conference is **free of charge**. Participants are responsible for their own travel and accommodation costs.

**Contact person:**

Please send all **applications and possible questions** to our contact person **Dr. Jonas Miklavčič** to the following e-mail address: [Jonas.Miklavcic@teof.uni-lj.si](mailto:Jonas.Miklavcic@teof.uni-lj.si)

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Conference webpage:

The programme will be sent to you after we receive confirmations of attendance.

Best regards,

Professor **Janez Vodičar** and Professor **Bojan Žalec**, Presidents of the Program Committee