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# GIOVANNI MOIOLI'S THEOLOGICAL PORTRAIT. THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MILANESE THEOLOGIAN'S DEATH

## INTRODUCTION

In 1984, two independent and prominent theologians completed the course of their earthly lives. The achievements of one of them, Karl Rahner (1904-1984), undoubtedly have a recognized and undeniable, though not without debate, place in the development of theology. However, the scientific attainments of the other, Giovanni Moiola (1931-1984), for various reasons, still demand due recognition and review. The year 2024 marks the fortieth anniversary of his untimely death, which occurred on October 6, 1984. This event provokes and provides a legitimate oppor-

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tunity to remember him and his contributions to theological research work desiring to acquaint the widest possible circle of people with his theological portrait. In order to achieve the relevant goal, first his biography and the environment of his life and activities will be reconstructed. Then his rich and varied theological writings will be presented in a synthetic way. Subsequently, the fundamental theological themes present in his work will be extracted. The final, but no less important thread of the article will be to locate significant research works dedicated to his thought. Finally, the resulting reflections and conclusions from the research work will be included in the summary.

## 1. BIOGRAPHY

Giovanni Salvatore Antonio Moioli was born on May 4, 1931 to Joseph Moioli and Victoria, née De Vecchi, in the town and municipality of Vimercate, in the province of Monza and Brianza (MB), in the Lombardy region. He had a harmonious and profound relationship with his parents and his four siblings (his eldest brother Paul also became a priest). From 1942 to 1946, he received his middle school education (grades 1-4 at the Minor Seminary of Peter the Martyr in Seveso (MB). Then, from 1946 to 1950, he continued his education at the middle school (grade 5) and at the high school (grades 1-3) in the Minor Seminary of Venegono Inferiore, in the province of Varese (VA), whose rector was Father Giovanni Colombo (1902-1992), future Archbishop and Cardinal of Milan (Dell'Orto, 2010, p. 214-215).

Next, between 1950 and 1954, he studied theology and prepared for the ordination to the priesthood at the Venegono Inferiore Theological Seminary. As a result, on June 27, 1954, he was ordained to the presbyterate by the later Blessed Cardinal Alfred Schuster, to whom he also dedicated several of his writings. From 1954 to 1956, Moioli continued his theological studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome while living at The Pontifical Lombard Seminary. In 1956, he took up teaching duties at the Minor Seminary of Masnago -Varese. On July 2, 1958, he defended his doctoral thesis entitled *Teologia della devozione berulliana al Verbo incarnato* (Berullian Devotional Theology of the Incarnate Word), written under the supervision of Professors Antanas Liuima SJ and Karel Vladimir Truhlar (Colombo, 1985, p. 8-9)<sup>2</sup>.

2 Worth a visit Website of The Theological University of Northern Italy, *Biografia di Giovanni Moioli*, <https://www.ftismilano.it/biografia/> (2023 X 31).

From 1958 to 1961, he served as a spiritual father for high school students at the Archbishop's Minor Seminary of St. Peter the Martyr in Seveso and as lecturer for prefects of theology. Moioli was transferred to Venegono Inferiore in 1961, where he worked as a spiritual father at the minor seminary (until 1964) and as a professor of theology of spiritual life at the Theological Faculty of Venegono Inferiore within the Major Seminary, and from 1962 also as a professor of dogmatic theology. While from 1969, he taught spiritual and systematic theology at the Inter-regional Theological Faculty of Milan, later renamed to the Theological Faculty of Northern Italy, where he became a full professor in 1974 (Dell'Orto, 2010, p. 217).

Through the nomination of Cardinal Giovanni Colombo, Moioli served as a member of the Congregation of the Ambrosian Library from 1979 to 1984 (Castenetto, 2009, p. 12). As it was to turn out a few months before his death on 27 April in 1984, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini (†2012) appointed Moioli as a director of the Parallel Section of the Theological Faculty of Northern Italy within the seminary studies in Milan. Surrounded by the care of relatives and friends, he died on 6 October in 1984 at the family home in Vimeracte as a result of deteriorating health caused by incurable cancer (Dell'Orto, 2010, p. 221)<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. THE OPERA OMNIA

To promote the theological legacy of Giovanni Moioli, the Giovanni Moioli Center for the Study of Spiritual Theology (*Centro Giovanni Moioli per lo studio della Teologia Spirituale*) was established. Its idea was conceived and initiated by professor father Giuseppe Colombo (1923-2005), then dean of the Faculty of Theology of Northern Italy. It also has custody of the theologian's published writings, as well as manuscripts collected as part of the so-called (*Fondo Giovanni Moioli*) Giovanni Moioli Collection (Stercal, 2005, p. 19-20).

Thirty years after the Italian theologian's death, the publication of the *Opera Omnia*, which had been published during his lifetime, began. An editorial team headed by Dora Castenetto and Caludio Stercal planned the publication of fifteen volumes, which are still being compiled. The following is the layout of *The Collected Works* by: volume number, original title (translated), city and year of publication:

<sup>3</sup> The following institutional websites remain an important source of information: Centro Giovanni Moioli per lo studio della Teologia Spirituale, <https://www.ftismilano.it/archivi-facolta/fondo-giovanni-moioli/centro-giovanni-moioli-per-lo-studio-della-teologia-spirituale/> (2023 VIII 11); Materiale Fondo. Breve descrizione, <https://www.ftismilano.it/archivi-facolta/fondo-giovanni-moioli/materiale-fondo-breve-descrizione/> (2023 VIII 11); Materiale del Fondo, <https://www.ftismilano.it/materiale-del-fondo/> (2023 X 31); Struttura, <https://www.ftismilano.it/biblioteca/struttura/> (2023 X 31).

- Volume I: *La teologia spirituale* (Theology of Spirituality), Milan 2014.
- Volume II: *Guida allo studio teologico della spiritualità cristiana* (Guide to the Theological Study of Christian Spirituality), Milan 2021.
- Volume III: *La "figura" del cristiano* (The Figure of the Christian), yet unpublished.
- Volume IV: *Preghiera, mistica e liturgia* (Prayer, Mysticism, Liturgy), Milan 2017.
- Volume V: *Matrimonio e verginità* (Marriage and Virginity), Milan 2017.
- Volume VI: *Santità e forme di vita cristiana* (Holiness and Forms of the Christian Life), Milan 2018.
- Volume VII: *Scritti sul prete* (Writings on the Priesthood), yet unpublished.
- Volume VIII: *Figure cristiane nella storia* (Christian Figures in History), Milan 2019.
- Volume IX: *Cristologia. Studi* (Christology. Studies), Milan 2020.
- Volume X: *Cristologia. Momento storico. Lettura delle fonti* (Christology. Historical Moment. Reading of the Sources), Milan 2024.
- Volume XI: *Cristologia. Proposta sistematica* (Christology. A Systematic Approach), Milan 2015.
- Volume XII: *Teologia sistematica. Studi* (Systematic Theology. Studies), Milan 2022.
- Volume XIII: *Il quarto sacramento. Note introduttive* (The Fourth Sacrament. Introduction), yet unpublished.
- Volume XIV: *L'Escatologico cristiano. Proposta sistematica* (Christian Eschatology. A Systematic Approach), Milan 2014.
- Volume XV: *Indici* (Index), yet unpublished (Castenetto, Stercal, 2014, p. 5-6)<sup>4</sup>.

### 3. SPIRITUALITY

The source point for all of Giovanni Moiola's theology, but also for his vision of the Christian life, remains the Divine Person of the historical Jesus. The uniqueness and centrality of the person of Jesus Christ derived from His distinctive mystery of the Son of God-Man available in the history of the world defines the shape of the Christian faith. The experience of revelation accessible in Christ and His person was assimilated and conveyed in the writings of the New Testament and read in history by the community of believers, the Church. The faithful remains a flesh-and-blood person who is animated and organized by the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. The Christian's faith lived out in a particular episode of history finds its inviolable foundation in the history of the ecclesial hermeneutics of faith in Jesus. For this rea-

4 A detailed bibliography can be found at: Gallivanon, F. (1985), *Bibliografia di Giovanni Moiola, Teologia. Rivista della Facoltà teologica dell'Italia settentrionale* nr 1/10, p. 15-22.

son, faith persists a thoroughly personal matter as well as a profoundly ecclesial-social reality. Christian faith cannot disregard the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, the promise of His Spirit fulfilled in history, the Apostles and their successors equipped by Him with the salvific means and mission. It cannot hide behind or from history and society because faith is based on the incarnate Word in history. Christian faith remains eminently historical-salvific and trinitarian-christological, as well as ecclesial-personal, thus protecting itself from erroneous conceptions of monism in either a Christological or anthropological form. Moioli, in his theology of spirituality, maintains in constant reference the faith of the Church (*fides quae*) and the faith of the believer (*fides qua*), which, as a result, allows him to formulate the concept of Christian spiritual experience avoiding the risk of a purely individual and subjective experience of faith. The Christian as a person, in his own moment of history, equipped with a memory derived from Spirit, reads the meaning of the absoluteness of the person of Christ (Moioli, 2014a, p. 138-150).

Moioli's theology of spirituality, while developing his own methodology, remains in organic correlation with the theological-systematic cognition of God, unifying the tremendous value of diverse spiritual experiences and confessed truths of faith. The theology of spirituality that he developed combines with the theology of faith in such a manner that the phenomenological presentation of the experience of faith relates to understanding of God through Christ, which is subjected to interpretation. The polarization of those two theologies has resulted in a careful reflection on issues concerning holiness of Christian life, virginity, marital spirituality, priestly vocation, and lay institutes. What also breaks through in their analysis is the question of Christian prayer (Moioli, 2017a, p. 194-204)<sup>5</sup>.

The unique and universal form of Christian life is revealed in various existential figures that express its richness and meaning throughout history. The individual personalities of the saints, however, are united by focusing on Christ standing by the community of the Church, following Jesus until to the cross in order to make an enduring memory of his person. Holiness thus defined integrates the objective dimension of faith, as well as the personal experience of its content by the individual Christian. Moioli does not write hagiographies of the saints he examined

5 Posthumously, some of Giovanni Moioli's materials and conferences have been compiled and published: Moioli, G. (1997). *Il peccatore perdonato. Itinerario penitenziale del cristiano*, Casale Monferrato 1997: Piemme; Moioli, G. (2010). *Centro dell'anima è Dio. La „Fiamma d'amor viva” di Giovanni della Croce*, Carmelitane Scalze Monastero di Sassuolo (ed.), Roma: Edizioni OCD; Moioli, G. (2010). *Itinerario di comunione. Il „Castello interiore” di Teresa di Gesù*, Carmelitane Scalze Monastero di Sassuolo (red.), Roma: Edizioni OCD; Moioli, G. (2010). *Fiumi di grazie. Gli „Scritti” di Teresa di Gesù Bambino e del Volto Santo*, Carmelitane Scalze Monastero di Sassuolo (ed.), Roma: Edizioni OCD.

such as: St. Teresa of Ávila, St. John of the Cross, St. Francis de Sales, Pierre de Bérulle, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, venerabile Elena Da Persico, blessed Alfred Ildefons Schuster, etc., but analyzes their christocentric form of life and the specifics of their personal charism during their time (Castenetto, 2019, 9-27).

#### 4. CHRISTOLOGY

In his christological research, Moioli consciously confronts christological thought throughout its development from antiquity to the present. He originally and critically reads pre- and post-Nicene, Chalcedonian, Scholastic and Modern Christology. Owing to that, he builds the concept of a historically unique Christology based on the uniqueness of the sonship of Jesus of Nazareth in relation to the Father, thus completing the Christology of God-man ontology. As well as that, he protects his Christology from neoscholastic metaphysical conceptualism based on the concept of (supreme) being and causality, as well as from the modernist tendency to reduce Jesus' Divinity in order to affirm his historical humanity. The divinity and humanity of Jesus of Nazareth are to be understood neither functionally nor in parallel, but in the unity and fulfillment of the person of Jesus (Kwiatkowski, 2009, p. 91-94).

Moioli's Christology is based on the history of salvation, the creator of which is God sending his Incarnate Son into the world. Therefore, the Jesus of faith cannot be separated from the Jesus of history, since the mystery of his person is also revealed in his redemptive action. Christology and soteriology are in a mutual relationship based not on the intellectually imposing necessity of salvific atonement, but on the gratuitousness of God's love in the creation and redemption provided for in Christ. For Moioli, the history of Christ reveals not only the truth of a given time, but above all the absolute truth, universal in the concreteness and particularity of His person. He overcomes the Enlightenment dichotomy between immutable truth and changeable history, transcends the rupture between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith on the basis of Jesus' historicity, which reveals His particular and unique personal identity, and therefore also the divine and salvific character of His work. The absoluteness and universality of the Christian religion finds its foundation in the unique history of Jesus the Anointed One, which cannot be relegated to the obsolete past, because it has become in Himself the revelation of the truth about God and man. The Hegelian conception of history as a historical process of gradual revelation of truth is overcome in Jesus as the paradoxical Absolute, that is, the true unity of the God and the Man (Brambilla, 2020, p. 16-21).

The absoluteness of the event of Jesus determines that Revelation can be interpreted as history, but at the same time history can be conceived as Revelation. In

Christ, God's relationship to the world from its very beginning is revealed, because of him it is conceived and foreseen in such a way that it is the center not only of the work of redemption, but also of the act of creation. The beginning and purpose of creation is contained in the unity of God's plan foreseen and read in the eternal Word, which was made flesh by the Holy Spirit. At the same time, Moioli's christocentrism has the characteristics of a trinitarian christology framed historically and salvificly, rather than in formal and separative concepts of grace and freedom, nature and supernature. The Christology he had constructed also bears some distinctive hallmarks of soteriology, built on the concept of the Mediator of salvation (distinct from the idea of the Savior) and on the model of the Paschal Covenant (Moioli, 2015, p. 160-173, 339-357).

## 5. SACRAMENTOLOGY

In the context of sacramentology, Moioli had notably addressed the analysis of individual sacraments such as the Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the sick, Holy Orders and Marriage.

### **Eucharist**

Moioli notes that *Vaticanum Secundum* began to portray the sacrament of the Eucharist in a new way by situating it much more clearly in the mystery of the Church as a community celebrating the Holy Liturgy. The *Concilium Tridentinum*, on the other hand, framed the Holy Mass more from the individual-ritualist side paying attention to sacramentality, real presence, and the Sacrifice of Christ in order to defend Catholic doctrine against the errors of Protestantism. The sacrament of the Eucharist expresses and manifests the identity of the Christian community, organically and hierarchically organized in obedience to the command of the Lord Jesus in doing what He did in the Cenacle. The unspeakable importance of the Eucharistic celebration for the existence and life of the Christian community stems from the fact that it is the very thing that forms the memory which manifests the Sacrifice of the New Covenant. According to Moioli, Christ's death constitutes the sacrifice of the New Covenant in the sense of Christ's obedience to the Father up to his death on the cross, which at the same time becomes an expression of supreme love understood as the gift of his life to the Father and to people. Christ's death on the cross is not one of the successive sacrifices offered to God under the Law, but fulfills in itself and surpasses the meaning of each of them, which is why the New Testament does not hesitate to call Jesus himself a "temple," "altar" or "sacrifice" for Christians. Christ's death is not only the sacrifice of the New Covenant, but consti-

tutes the new People of God in the absolute obedience and love of Jesus, which results in a life of communion, guaranteed by the resurrection. The celebration of the Holy Mass cannot be interpreted as a recurrence of the Sacrifice of the Cross, but its *representatio* of the salvation accomplished by Christ for us. Moioli considers the unity between the Mass and the Sacrifice of the Cross by referring to various theological concepts, opting for the model of the oblations as the concluding event of history. Moioli's analyses of the question of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, on the other hand, refer to the Council of Trent's doctrine on the Eucharist, through the teaching of Paul VI in his encyclical letter *Mysterium fidei*, up to phenomenological approaches (Moioli, 2022a, p. 18-32).

### **The Fourth Sacrament**

Undoubtedly, of all the sacraments, Moioli devoted the most attention to penance. It had been subjected to a more meticulous historical-dogmatic analysis, fraught with legitimate questions still demanding adequate answers. Behind the very term "fourth sacrament" lies the profound logic of the identity of the baptized and initiated Christian who, as a result of a serious fall, partakes in the sacrament of reconciliation. He is not an ordinary person who has committed evil or sinned, but a baptized sinner, that is, one who has already experienced the gift of belonging to Christ and inclusion in His Church, which he has violated or in fact lost. Those internal theological and ecclesiological connections involve the necessity to return to God not only in the Church, but also with the Church, which is the place of the Holy Spirit, that is, the forgiveness of sins. For this reason, the Church, equipped with the Spirit of Christ, discerns and defines what conversion to God is and how it is expressed through contrition for sins, confession of trespasses and acceptance of the imposed satisfaction from the priest confessor as the legitimate representative of the Church community. In this way, a genuine confession bears fruit in the form of *pax cum Ecclesia* and *pax cum Deo*. The ecclesial dimension of the sacrament of penance in the theology of Giovanni Moioli demands a thorough and critical study (Moioli, 1996, p. 385-388).

### **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick**

The Italian theologian considers the meaning of the sacrament of the sick by analyzing two circumstances already known since the first scholasticism. The first pays attention to sin and its remission in the context of the believer's death, whereas the second originates from the situation of a serious illness and a need for healing. Moioli cites the interpretation of Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, and Francis Suarez. He notes that the Council of Trent, at the same council

session, defined and defended Catholic doctrine concerning the two sacraments of penance and last anointing (*Doctrina de sacramento extremae unctionis*). Some theologians recognize the fruit of this sacrament “*consecratio mortis*” as a form of full healing of the soul, transition to glory and openness to the resurrection (Michael Schmaus, Alois Grillmeier, Karl Rahner). As Moiola points out, also since the time of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, it had been recognized as an effect of the sacrament to strengthen and heal the Christian subject to weakness or illness, which was clearly taken up by the theology of Zoltán Alszeghy, also Karl Rahner. Moiola states that the source of the sacrament of the anointing of the sick is not grounded in illness, but in Jesus, in his relationship with the sick, and consequently in the Church and her attitude toward the sick (Moioli, 2022b, p. 209-2018).

### **Sacrament of Holy Orders**

It should not be overlooked that the sacrament of Holy Orders, and especially issues concerning the priesthood, were also at the center of Moiola’s research interests. His analyses refer to the historical foundation of the problem addressed, in order to bring to light in the present a revised representation of the priesthood, whose ministry glorifies God and contributes to the salvation of people. By the person of the priest, he means the figure of the Christian established by Jesus in a strictly determined way in relation to the Church, which means that it is impossible to separate him from its reality, which is also the foundation of the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council. In Moiola’s perception of the priesthood, the dimensions of history, dogma, figure, ministry and spiritual life relate to each other (Colombo, 2006, p. 8-10).

What will remain for him an important point of reference is the episcopal theology of St. Augustine (Dionysius-Areopagite, Thomas Aquinas, Charles Borromeo, Cardinal Giovanni Montini) both in the dimension of power and priestly functions, as well as pastoral love directed toward Christ and the Church. In this view, the state of perfection of life is not reduced to the monastic life, but applies to priesthood too (Moioli, 2006a, p. 14-15, 21).

In various contexts, he cites the decree of the Council of Trent affirming the presence of the sacrament of Holy Orders in the Church instituted by Christ and the various degrees of the sacred hierarchy with episcopal jurisdiction. Referring to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, he recognizes in the priesthood a particular conformity to Christ the Head and Shepherd (*Lumen Gentium*, 21) and the essential difference between the baptismal and the ministerial priesthood (*Lumen Gentium*, 10). In particular, the bishop, as well as the presbyter, remain in the function of building up the community of the Church as New Covenant worship in

Christ and the Holy Spirit, through the proclamation of the word of God and the celebration of the Eucharist. Moioli devotes considerable attention to the analysis of priestly spirituality based on the model of St. Augustine of Hippo, Dionysius-Areopagite, Thomas Aquinas, the Second Vatican Council (Moioli, 2006b, 183-184) .

### **Sacrament of Marriage**

Moioli situates Christian marriage in the concept of the mystery of the relationship between Christ and the Church, that is, the distinctive unity whose *repraesentatio* is accomplished by marriage. Two baptized spouses are sacramentally immersed in the mystery of the Christ-Church relationship and thus become its revelation. The sacrament of marriage can be defined as the mystery of the relationship of baptized husband and wife in the Mystery of Christ-Church. The sacramental sign recalls the Passover of the Lord, who through the gift of the Spirit of love builds the Church His Mystical Body and Bride. The spouses indicate the effective action toward them of the dead and risen Christ, who unites the Church in love with Himself. Moioli points out the importance of the sacrament of baptism through which the Christian completely belongs to Christ, and in marriage the mutual spousal commitment to the other and for the other is made present. In all its completeness of sign and meaning, the Eucharist embodies Christ's love for the Church, which is why the depths of spousal love cannot ultimately be grasped beyond it (Moioli, 2017b, 43-47).

## **6. ESCHATOLOGY**

Giovanni Moioli's eschatology becomes an original part of the already historically rich dialogue of the relationship between history and religion, history and divine revelation, and its evolution in the form of the binomial of history and eschatology, life in mortality and the coming of the Kingdom of God. Exploring the richness of the concept of theology of the ultimate things (*novissima, res novissimae seu ultimae*), he demonstrated an outstanding knowledge of the matter, covered almost locally (eschatological states) and almost chronologically up to the end of the world. He creatively but also critically addressed the new approaches contained in the following concepts: Johannes Weiss' and Albert Schweitzer's consequential eschatology, Charles Harold Dodd's realized eschatology, Rudolf Bultmann's existential eschatology, Karl Barth's dialectical eschatology, Oscar Cullmann's anticipatory eschatology, or the anthropological-utopian "paradise on earth" eschatology. He also devoted much attention to the theology of the future and the theology of hope, referring to its representatives in the persons of Wolfhart Pannenberg and Jürgen Moltmann. In the context of Catholic theology, he referred to the reflections

of such theologians as Jean Daniélou, Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Yves M. Congar among others . Giovanni Moioli's thought surpasses *De Novissimis* eschatology by opting for a historical-salvific eschatology based on the realization and fulfillment of salvific promises understood as an absolute openness to life and a definitive end to death and sin. In this perspective, the parousia, the coming at the end of time, of the Son of Man already relates to Jesus rising from the tomb in human flesh, who definitively defeated death. The Christian is already included in this finality through communion with Jesus, sharing in the promise of liberation from evil and fullness of life in Christ. The eschatological dividing line does not run between time and eternity, the beginning and the "end" of man or the world, but through the existence of the risen Jesus, in whom the fulfilled promise of God offered to man is made manifest. The death or end of man or the world eschatologically is not resolved in the natural law or process of the death of the former or the latter, but its essence is recognized in the rejection of the promise of God attested by the resurrection of Christ in the flesh (Moioli, 2014b, p. 41-48, 75-82, 259-268) .

## 7. RECEPTION OF THOUGHT

In 1997, father Paolo Mirabella, in his research paper based on the extensive work of Giovanni Moioli, brings out the rich connections that exist between the theology of spirituality and moral theology, for which the inviolable foundation remains the uniqueness of the historical person of Jesus, the Son of God. Being rooted in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit transforms the believer in his existence, making him a spiritual man, but also acting on the basis of communion with Jesus, as well as prayer, both personal and that of Church (Mirabella, 1997, p. 307-311). A significant position in the reflection on Giovanni Moioli's theology of spirituality is presented by the work of father Guglielmo Cazzulani, published in 2002, who places it in the context of the changes taking place and the development of this scientific discipline. Moreover, it brings to light the contribution of the Milanese clergyman's research work to the theology of Christian life (Cazzulani, 2002, p. 348-354). In 2011, padre Gilberto Depeder OFMConv, at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, received his doctorate in theology, a significant part of which was the christology of Moioli (Depeder, 2013, p. 140-141). On the other hand, the scholarly work of Fr. Pierpaolo Arabia, published in 2017, undertakes an analysis of the relationship existing between faith oriented toward fulfillment and faith flowing from the historical experience of Jesus of Nazareth . He recognizes in the work of Moioli a solution in the form of "theological mediation" between systematic theology and the theology of spirituality, making it possible to rediscover not only the

unity of theology, but to preserve the adequate and correlative reference of *fides quae* to *fides qua*. Framing the Christian experience simultaneously in historical and eschatological terms aims at encountering and communing with God in time and eternity (Arabia, 2017, 353-358).

In addition, several Polish researchers have also taken an interest in the theological legacy of Giovanni Moioli. Father Bogusław D. Kwiatkowski at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome prepared and defended his doctoral thesis in Christology based on Moioli's works in 1997 (Kwiatkowski, 1997, p. 86-92). Father Grzegorz Strzelczyk's work on spiritual experience was published in 2005, with no shortage of references to Moioli's resolutions (Strzelczyk, 2005, p. 61-65.) Then in 2006, father Andrzej Perzyński, in his habilitation monograph on the theological method of the so-called Milan School, refers to the person and achievements of Moioli (Perzyński, 2006, 93-94, 160-162, 301-319). Also, in 2008, at the Pontifical Institute of Spirituality *Teresianum* in Rome, father Marcin Puziak presented a dissertation on spiritual man in the dimension of cognition and spiritual experience (Puziak, 2008, p. 108-109).

## CONCLUSION

It is striking that despite his untimely death at the age of 53, Giovanni Moioli proved himself to be a humble and friendly man, a saintly priest and a creative and critical theologian. His life of devotion to God, pastoral ministry and undoubtedly scholarly work basically played out between Vimercate and Venegono Inferiore and Milan, that is his family home, the major seminary and the theology department. The range of his theological interests from the theology of spirituality to systematic theology is commendable, not counting the conferences or homilies he delivered. Also noteworthy is the fact of his prolific writing output, whether published, for example, as part of *Opera omnia* or collected in an archive dedicated to him. Moioli can be described as a committed theologian of the breakthrough before and after the *Vatican Secundum*. Not only did he read and organize theological concepts conceived over the centuries, but also undertook the challenging task of hermeneutics of ideas and the validity of their argumentation. He was characterized by scientific integrity in proposing solutions or posing problems to which he did not find answers. The abundance of his theological interests and thoughts encourages one to familiarize oneself with his oeuvre, especially in the fields of spirituality or Christology, sacramentology and eschatology. The fortieth anniversary of his death may be a further incentive to get acquainted with his thought for the purpose of critical reading and promotion.

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# GIOVANNI MOIOLI'S THEOLOGICAL PORTRAIT. THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MILANESE THEOLOGIAN'S DEATH

## SUMMARY

Father Giovanni Moioli, who died prematurely on 6 October 1984, is one of the outstanding theologians of the 20th century and a representative of the so-called Milan School of Theology. He left behind many theological works, especially on the theology of spirituality, Christology, sacramentology and eschatology. The vast majority of them were published in *Opera Omnia*, while minor unpublished ones have been deposited in an archival collection dedicated to him. Undoubtedly, at the center of his theology is the revelation of Jesus the Son of God in history an exceptional and one-of-a-kind individual. The acceptance in faith of this particular Jesus determines not only the shape of theology as a science, but also the experience of spiritual life. The article presents a synthetic look at the history of his life, scientific legacy, wishing to encourage the reader to learn more about him and his scientific achievements, which is further provoked by the 40th anniversary of his unexpected death.

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