

Editorial

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October 31, 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the debut of the Protestant Reformation (October 31, 1517), a historic event marked by the public display on the doors of the Wittenberg Cathedral of 95 Theses by Martin Luther, at that time an Augustinian monk and professor of Theology at the University of Wittenberg, as well as parish priest of the Wittenberg Church.

Martin Luther is known to be “the father of the Reformation”, and his theses condemning the abuse of the indulgences system at the time were indeed a public challenge to a theological debate on this subject (Durant 2015, 18), even the next day at the university, but no one at that time dared to take on the displayed challenge (White 1992, 82), and some even wondering about a man’s boldness to speak against a whole system. His intention was not to create a new church, as an alternative to the existing Church, but to reform the Universal Church through a true return to the ideal of the Church, seen by Martin Luther, only in the Sacred Scripture.

The translation from Latin into German and the printing of Martin Luther’s theses contributed to the rapid spread of his ideas, especially

in the educated environment of Germany. If by 1520 Luther wrote in Latin, specifically addressing intellectuals, from this year he began to write, as a patriot, in German. Thus, Luther published three papers in 1520, namely: *An open letter to the Christian nobility of the German nation on the reform of the Christian heritage* (*An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von das christlichen Standes Besserung*), *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, *Treaty on Christian Freedom* (*Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*). (Bettenson 1963, 197-199; Cairns 1992, 284-285; Durant 2015, 28-33; Oțetea 1968, 26), which will constitute the program of religious reform. (Durant 2015, 28) In his first paper entitled *Letter to the Christian nobility of the German nation on the reform of the Christian heritage*, Luther addressed the civil hierarchy, the nobility, through which Luther challenged the superiority of the church's spiritual authority over civil authority, claiming that there was no difference between clergy and laypersons, because every Christian through baptism becomes a priest. Secondly, because any Christian becomes a priest by baptism, then it means that he has the right to interpret the Scriptures as his mind takes him. Third, Luther said that the Sacred Scripture should be our supreme authority in terms of teaching (doctrine) and practice. (Durant 2015, 18, 28-29)

It was said that the translation of the Bible into German was the most significant gift that Luther gave to his people, but the significance of this is even greater, is an universal one, because the translation of the Bible into the language of the people, which accompanied everywhere the introduction of the Reform meant the nationalization of prayer, which completed the literary and philological work of the Renaissance, and the popular language gained the same dignity that the classical languages possessed. (Oțetea 1964, 438) In the work *Treaty on Christian Freedom*, Martin Luther also talks about the central role of consciousness, and freedom of consciousness has become the cornerstone of the Reformation,

freedom that is a prerequisite for all other freedoms such as freedom of opinion or freedom of choice. According to Luther, the state was no longer called to legislate for souls, and secular power can neither inspire faith nor stop unbelief. By limiting the action of the state and the church to their own sphere of activity, establishing a clear distinction between civil and religious matters, Protestant ideas have secularized the state, raising it above confessional controversies, thus constituting the autonomy of modern secular civilization. (Oțetea 1968, 267-282).

As an indisputable fact, thanks to his work, Luther broke down the crust of the traditions and the cochlea of authority that had frozen European thought. If we should judge the greatness through its influence, then Luther could be placed among the most powerful personalities of the modern world. Luther marked the moral life and the institutions of the Western world, putting an end to the celibacy of the priests, and turning to secular life the energies that had long been directed towards asceticism, monastic piety or passivity. Luther's influence, albeit late and indirect, is also found in philosophy, affecting Kant's fiddiness, Fichte's nationalism, Schopenhauer's volunteering, and the Hegelian concession of the soul to the state. Luther's work also influenced German language and literature in a way as decisive as the King James Bible on English language and literature. Its influence varied according to the proximity or distance from Germany. It is thought by some that no other thinker or writer has left such a strong impression on German spirit and character, being the most powerful character in German history, and his compatriots do not love him less because he was more German than all the Germans. (Durant 2015, 161,162)

Philosopher Petre Țuțea said of Martin Luther that among the many things he said, one is truly extraordinary, namely that there is no truth except the Bible, and that he (the philosopher) needed a

lifetime to discover it. (Țuțea 1997, 22) Perhaps, however, it should not be a lifetime for someone to discover this great truth...

Sorin Trifa said that with the passing of time, the ideas of Martin Luther's Reform spread across Europe, significantly influencing Zwingli's work in Zurich, Calvin's in Geneva, or John Knox's in Scotland. The Reformation in Germany significantly influenced the Reformation in England, but at the same time the birth of the Anabaptist movements, thus leading to the spread of Christianity in North America, India, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. This was the impact that, in the providence of God, Martin Luther, the Wittenberg monk, had on Christianity and on humanity in general. The author said, quoting Robert Rothwell, who asserted that Martin Luther's spiritual inheritance continues to live further, finding itself today in the creeds and beliefs of all Protestant Churches around the world. (Trifa 2015, 26 oct.)

The impact of the Protestant Reform initiated by Martin Luther, by publicly displaying the 95 theses, on October 31, 1531, was enormous at the level of all Christianity. Now, however, on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, perhaps there are Christians who feel the need to discuss and relate only to the five pillars of the Reformation: *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Fide*, *Sola Gratiae*, *Solus Christus*, *Soli Deo Gloria*.

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