

EDITORIAL

Tribute to Prof. Maria Clara
Lucchetti Bingemer

Editores

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Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Received

June 17, 2024

Approved

June 18, 2024

Passion for mystery, passion for the world

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How to cite this article: Almeida, E. F. *et al.* Passion for mystery, passion for the world. *Reflexão*, v. 49, e2413795, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.24220/2447-6803v49a2024e13795en>

To think viscerally and passionately about the mystery and the world at the time of the death of God is the tireless task of one of the most powerful theologians in the contemporary Latin American theological scene: Maria Clara Luchhetti Bingemer. His vast work woven by threads as distinct as Fundamental Theology, Eschatology, Theological Anthropology, Mysticism, and Theopoetics, when thought of in the larger horizon of the tapestry he knew how to design, makes a striking result visible: passionate hands wove it. Curiously, in a text where she comments on the reflection that Simone Weil elaborates on the importance of myths, a thinker to whom she devoted herself ostensibly, Maria Clara describes the posture that the mystery itself, due to its excessive nature, demands: all hermeneutics that seeks to approach it require contemplation. The mystery in its heap of meaning occurs in the flesh-fabric of the world. For this very reason, it requires a type of inquiry that, in the specific case of our theologian, translates into a miniature attention. Your theological reflection is done with your fingertips.

In this sense, in Maria Clara, the refusal of any kind of primacy of intelligence over the heart, over hope, and the *páthos* of faith is unmistakable. *Lex orandi – lex credenti* is a kind of medieval mantra in the pen of a contemporary theologian who has not allowed herself to be taken by the forgetfulness that theology is the intelligible skin that covers and protects the theopathic arteries and veins that pulse in the bodies of the world, in the world of bodies. Maria Clara's theological tapestry never disregarded orthodoxy; however, it repositioned, redefined, and updated it. It can be said that Pope Francis' advisor on the theme of Synodality would fit well under the nickname of a *theologian of tradition*, if by this one wanted to point to a theological practice that knew how to resort to dogma not only as a point of arrival, as Karl Rahner would say, but above all as a starting point, which calls for new readings, so that it may be an instance of openness to otherness, never a place of authoritarian closures.

For Maria Clara, the source of orthodoxy is doxology, it is the experience of the mystery, not an experiment *about the mystery*. This visceral way of thinking about the mystery of the world makes his theology a theology from below, a theology in search of otherness in the vulnerability of worlds. Suppose it is a matter of feeling the pulse of mystery in the heart of the Real. In that case, it is necessary to ask about the presence of love and its derivatives, in the architecture of both dogmatic affirmations and the supposed places of the presence of mystery in the world.

Maria Clara realized very early that mysticism is the language, by nature, of this auscultation. In Clara's worlds, however, the mystics are found outside the medieval cloisters. They are, as she herself says, in the streets, in the factories, in the deafening noise of the machines, in the prisons, in the hells of so many origins and ideological formats. Mystics are delivered to poverty, to the world's vulnerability, in this true flash of creation and epiphany of otherness. From this theological perspective, literature takes on a special place from this bottom-up bias with which its theopathic tapestry is woven. She is called to this scene to express life as it is, in the ambiguity of its course, in the truth of its event, in the obscure clarity of its plots. In a way, Maria Clara's reflection is inscribed in what Adélia Prado emphasized: "Either everything is blessed or nothing is blessed." Here is the strength of this liberation theologian, reflected both in her theological texts and the political contexts of her work as a theologian and researcher: visiting borders, opening doors so that the repressed of theology, in times of fundamentalism, can appear. To do so, one must always split oneself; one must often remain silent, one must listen to criticism from both sides, from the priestly supporters who think the theologian is advancing too much and also from the opposing supporters who think the theologian is not advancing enough.

This dossier aims to bring visibility to the creative power of this Brazilian Catholic theologian, who, among other things, has been a breath of fresh air and an invitation to resistances and re-existences in the contemporary theological world.