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Editorial

On 21 September 2015, in the aftermath of the 31st International Old Catholics' Congress, scholars of theology and religion gathered for a workshop on *Challenging Catholicism – 125 Years Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches: Contexts and Challenges*. The meeting was organized by the Department of Old Catholic Theology of the University of Bern and the Old Catholic Seminary at Utrecht University. The papers of the workshop – four of them are published here – offer a theological bouquet that seeks to both challenge and further Old Catholic theology on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the Union of Utrecht.

Challenging Catholicism can be understood as referring to the challenge that Old Catholicism posed to (Western) Catholicism in the 19th century. Accordingly, Dirk Jan Schoon (Amsterdam/Haarlem) spoke on “The Union of Utrecht among the World Christian Communions: A Comparative Perspective” and Angela Berlis (Bern) offered a paper on “Celebrating the Union of Utrecht – from its 25th to its 125th anniversary.” Thus, senior scholars of the history of Old Catholicism contextualized the emergence and development of the Union of Utrecht in the setting of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

A further set of papers was dedicated to another meaning of *Challenging Catholicism*: a Catholicism that is challenging to society. Franz Segbers spoke on “How might the Catholicity of the Church be a theological answer to the challenges of Globalisation?”, while Peter-Ben Smit (Utrecht/Amsterdam) offered his thoughts on “A Liturgical Perspective on Society? – *Actuosa participatio* and the Dutch ‘Participation Society’.” These papers sought to make typical theological notions from the Catholic tradition fruitful for a meaningful ecclesial engagement with contemporary society.

Lastly, two short papers were offered by Jack McDonald (Louvain/Brussels) and Eleuterio J. Revollido (Urdaneta City). In the spirit of true ecumenism, they formulated challenges to contemporary Old Catholicism. McDonald underlined the broad range of spiritualities that are part of the Anglican tradition and the wide spectrum of ecumenical partners of Anglicanism – which Old Catholics see as a challenge to do justice to. Revollido gave an outline of the witness of the Philippine Independent Church that understands its Catholicity to include advocacy on behalf of the marginalized, which indeed constitutes a challenge to Old Catholi-

cism. Due to personal circumstances, a third (Roman Catholic) paper by Stephan van Erp (Louvain) could not be presented.

Angela Berlis and Peter-Ben Smit, conveners and editors