



Aquinas' social ontology and natural law in perspective

Insights for and from the social sciences



2024 will mark the 750th anniversary of Saint Thomas Aquinas' "dies natalis", and 2025 the 800th anniversary of his birth. For centuries, Aquinas' philosophical and theological legacy has illuminated many minds in search for a harmony between faith and reason, both in theoretical and practical matters. His thought has also been a main inspiration of the social doctrine of the Church. It is not by chance that the first Encyclical on social issues, *Rerum Novarum* (1891), was penned by the same Pope that undersigned the *Aeterni Patris* (1879), whereby Aquinas' thought was highlighted as an intellectual reference to confront the challenges of modern times. Obviously, the reason for this lies not in Aquinas "modernity", but rather on his enduring social ontology, which nevertheless has rarely been approached in a systematic manner and in dialogue with modern social thought.

This is why, in keeping with its original mission, the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences would like to celebrate Aquinas' anniversary with a workshop devoted to Aquinas' social ontology and natural law, in fruitful dialogue with modern and contemporary social thought. In doing so, the Academy also wants to commemorate the contribution of Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), who died 50 years ago, to bring Thomism in dialogue with our times. This academic effort is particularly aligned with the Encyclicals of the Popes on social matters, *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), *Laudato Si* (2015) and *Fratelli Tutti* (2020).

The workshop will be structured in four sessions: 1) Social Ontology and Theological Keys; 2) Natural Law and the Social World; 3) Economics, Politics and Governance; 4) Human Nature, Technology and Social Change.

