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DANIELE CALZETTA

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La Réforme trinitaire de la pensée : étude quinquennale du Dictionnaire dynamique de l'ontologie trinitaire

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Trinitarian Ontology
Relation
Gift
Easter
Communion

This article examines Trinitarian Ontology as articulated in Piero Coda's Manifesto, For a Reform of Thinking and developed in the Dynamic Dictionary of Trinitarian Ontology (DDOT). In response to the crisis of classical metaphysics, it proposes a radical reconfiguration of thought grounded in revelation and structured by the relational logic of the Trinity. After outlining the genesis and development of the DDOT project, the study identifies its key principles: the relational reinterpretation of Being, the paschal structure of ontology and truth as an event of communion. It then considers the methodological and ecclesial implications of this perspective, highlighting its convergence with contemporary magisterial emphases on synodality, theological formation and ecumenical dialogue. Trinitarian Ontology thus emerges as both a metaphysical framework and a paradigm for the renewal of thought and ecclesial life.

Ontologie Trinitaire
Relation
Don
Pâques
Communion

Cet article examine l'ontologie trinitaire telle qu'elle est formulée dans le Manifesto, Pour une réforme du penser de Piero Coda et développée dans le projet du Dynamic Dictionary of Trinitarian Ontology (DDOT). En réponse à la crise de la métaphysique classique, elle propose une reconfiguration radicale de la pensée, fondée sur la révélation et structurée par la logique relationnelle de la Trinité. Après avoir retracé la genèse et le développement du projet DDOT, l'étude en dégage les principes fondamentaux : la réinterprétation relationnelle de l'être, la structure pascale de l'ontologie et la vérité comme événement de communion. Elle en examine ensuite les implications méthodologiques et ecclésiales, en soulignant sa convergence avec les orientations récentes du magistère concernant la synodalité, la formation théologique et le dialogue œcuménique. L'ontologie trinitaire apparaît ainsi comme un cadre métaphysique et un paradigme pour le renouveau de la pensée et de la vie ecclésiale.

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Introduction

In recent decades, the relationship between metaphysics and revelation has re-emerged as a central concern in both philosophical and theological inquiry. Growing awareness of the limits of classical metaphysical frameworks, together with the cultural and epistemic transformations characterizing the present historical moment, has led many thinkers to reconsider the foundations of philosophical reflection in light of the Christian understanding of reality.[1] Within this broader horizon, trinitarian ontology has gradually come to occupy a distinctive position.[2] Its contribution lies neither in the establishment of a new school of thought nor in a mere terminological revision of classical metaphysics. Rather, it proposes a reconfiguration of the act of cognition itself,

1 Cf. David C. Schindler, "Metaphysics within the Limits of Phenomenology: Balthasar and Husserl on the Nature of the Philosophical Act," *Teología y Vida* 50, nos. 1-2 (2009): 243-258; Dennis Vanden Auweele, "Metaphysics and the Catholic view," *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 75, no. 3 (2014): p. 265-283; Jean-Luc Marion, Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer, *The Enigma of Divine Revelation. Between Phenomenology and Comparative Theology* (Cham: Springer, 2017); Justin Sands, "After Onto-Theology: What Lies beyond the 'End of Everything'," *Religions* 8, no. 5 (2017): 1-24; Balázs M. Mezei, Francesca Aran Murphy and Kenneth Oakes, *Introduction: The Newness of Revelation*," in *The Oxford Handbook of Divine Revelation* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021), XXI-XXX; Beáta Tóth, "Christian Revelation as a Phenomenon: Jean-Luc Marion's Phenomenological "Theology" and Its Balthasarian Roots," *Religions* 15, no. 2 (2024): 1-15; Almudena Molina, "Political Theology After the End of Metaphysics: A Revision via Jean-Luc Marion's Critique of Onto-Theology," *Religions* 16, no. 6 (2025): 1-15.

2 Referring to the *Manifesto*, Vito Limone wrote: "Quest'opera, che propone una revisione radicale dell'ontologia classica alla luce della rivelazione cristologica, ha non solo contribuito in modo che appare persino decisivo al dibattito contemporaneo fra teologia e filosofia, in Italia e all'estero, ma lo ha anche a tal punto condizionato in profondità che molti centri di ricerca e studiosi ne sono stati ispirati e altri, ancorché privilegino altre prospettive, non possono non confrontarsi con essa" (Vito Limone, "Il Dizionario Dinamico di Ontologia Trinitaria. Ricezione e innovazione del *Manifesto*," in Massimo Donà and Vito Limone (eds.), *Rifrazioni trinitarie*, Roma, Città Nuova, 2025 (*DDOT* 10), 17-18. Examples of this fruitful dialogue and influence include the Spanish research group, as shown by the studies by César Redondo Martínez: *La encarnación trinitaria de la teología. Reflexiones a partir del método teológico de Piero Coda* (Madrid: Ciudad Nueva, 2021); *Jesucristo, Pascua trinitaria. Hacia una ontopersonología cristológica* (Madrid: Ciudad Nueva, 2024); the Czech research group, cf. *Trinitarian Ontologies. Towards a Trinitarian Transformation of Philosophy*, (Eduard Fiedler and Pavel Frývaldský, Baden-Baden, Verlag Karl Alber, 2025); and the group around the Giuseppe Lazzati Centre for Development Culture in Taranto, cf. Piero Coda and Antonio Incampo (eds.), *Sguardi trinitari sul sociale. Per un nuovo pensiero agente nel territorio* (Bari: Cacucci, 2025). For further reading on this topic, see also Damiano Migliorini, *Ontologie relazionali e metafisica trinitaria. Sussistenze, eventi e gunk* (Brescia, Morcelliana, 2022); John R. Betz, "What's New in the New Trinitarian Ontology? A Commentary on Klaus Hemmerle's Theses Towards a Trinitarian Ontology?," *Modern Theology* 39, no. 1 (2023): 131-158; Christophe Chalamet, « Ontologie(s) et modèles trinitaires. Quelles pistes pour la théologie systématique contemporaine ? », *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 113, no. 1 (2025): 91-109.

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grounding thought in revelation as its foundational event and conceiving the Trinity as its constitutive form.

A decisive moment in the articulation of this proposal is Piero Coda's *Manifesto: per una riforma del pensare,* the foundational text of the *Dynamic Dictionary of Trinitarian Ontology (DDOT)*. In this work, Coda argues for the necessity of an epistemological re-establishment grounded in a trinitarian understanding of Being as relational gift.[3] The *Manifesto* situates this project within what it identifies as an epochal crisis of contemporary thought,[4] a crisis that calls for a renewed capacity to interpret history and reality in light of the event of Jesus Christ. Within this perspective, the truth of Being is disclosed as the dynamism of agapic self-giving revealed in the paschal mystery.

The *DDOT* project constitutes the most systematic attempt to develop this intuition into a coherent intellectual program. Conceived as a "dynamic dictionary," it does not simply assemble concepts, but seeks to generate a living network of reflection in which philosophy, theology, and ecclesial experience converge. Through a series of volumes exploring conceptual, historical and methodological dimensions, the project progressively articulates a relational ontology rooted in the mystery of the Trinity. This article examines how trinitarian ontology, as developed within the *DDOT* project, functions both as a metaphysical framework and as a methodological paradigm for contemporary thought. More specifically, it investigates how the trinitarian conception of Being as relational gift reshapes the structure of thought itself, thereby opening new possibilities for philosophy, theology and ecclesial life.

The article proceeds in three stages. The first section presents the *DDOT* project by tracing its development from the *Manifesto* and outlining the trajectory of its principal volumes in order to show how the project builds a conceptual lexicon of trinitarian ontology. The second section identifies the key principles of trinitarian ontology, with particular attention to the relational reinterpretation of Being, the paschal structure of ontology, and the epistemological consequences of conceiving truth as an event of communion. The final section turns to ecclesial implications, highlighting resonances with contemporary magisterial reflections on synodality, formation and ecumenical dialogue.

3 Piero Coda, "*Manifesto*. Per una ontologia trinitaria," in Piero Coda, Maria Benedetta Curi, Massimo Donà, and Giulio Maspero (eds.), *Manifesto* (Roma, Città Nuova, 2021) (*DDOT* 1), 41-56.

4 Piero Coda, "L'ontologia trinitaria. Un invito a ripensare il pensiero," *Śląskie Studia Historyczno-Teologiczne* 55, no. 1 (2022): 7.

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From the *Manifesto* to the *DDOT*

The *DDOT* project was launched in 2021 at the *Istituto Universitario Sophia* as a hermeneutical and collaborative laboratory in which the Trinity serves as the methodological principle of a new form of knowledge. This initiative emerged from the recognition that traditional metaphysical frameworks struggle to account for the relational and revelatory character of Being, as articulated in the *Manifesto*. As Vito Limone observed,

> *il DDOT rappresent[a] una filiazione fedele del Manifesto e ne esprime la ricezione, riprendendo e sviluppando il metodo, le tematiche e i percorsi di ricerca in esso enucleati; e al contempo ne costituisce anche una innovazione.*[5]

The adjective "dynamic" reflects this character: a form of knowledge that continually regenerates itself, like light refracting in multiple directions without ever being exhausted.[6]

This reframing of the concept of the dictionary transforms it from a static repository of concepts into a constantly evolving map, a reflection unfolding within a network of differences. The *DDOT* may therefore be described as a living intellectual project whose development reflects the dialogical structure of trinitarian thought. It concretely realises what the *Manifesto* calls *Weg-gemeinschaft*, "a journey in community and a community on a journey,"[7] in which knowledge and research become acts of communion and reciprocal giving.

The deeper roots of this project lie in a broader long-term movement that goes back to the reception of Klaus Hemmerle's *Tesi per una ontologia trinitaria* (*DDOT* 2). Positioned at the intersection of philosophy and theology, Hemmerle's work moves beyond a metaphysics of substance towards a relational ontology centred on communion. As Coda observes, the *Manifesto* draws on this legacy while also moving beyond it, opening a broader dialogue with patristics, Eastern theology, and sapiential traditions.[8]

The relationship between Hemmerle and the *DDOT* may therefore be described as one of filiation, but also of transfiguration. According to Hemmerle, thought is never solitary; it always unfolds through encounter and reciprocity. The *DDOT* develops the epistemological implications of this conviction: truth is a relational event rather than a possession. This constitutes a profound reform of Western thought, not by replacing one system with another, but by transforming the very form of knowledge.

5 Vito Limone, *Il Dizionario Dinamico di Ontologia Trinitaria*, 19.

6 Massimo Donà, "Per un nuovo inizio," in *DDOT* 1, 3-8.

7 Piero Coda, "For a Trinitarian Ontology," 31.

8 Piero Coda, "Le tappe di un percorso," 25.

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This development becomes more concrete in the subsequent volumes. *Unità* (*DDOT* 3) and *Il grido* (*DDOT* 4), which may be regarded as complementary works, articulate two fundamental dimensions of trinitarian ontology. The former explores the christological understanding of unity as a communion of differences, moving beyond both the monistic tradition of the Greek One and the modern dialectic of synthesis. The Johannine revelation[9] highlights a unifying principle that does not deny plurality. On the contrary, it grounds reciprocity between distinct beings. Trinitarian unity is therefore based on the idea that distinction is the condition of communion.[10] By contrast, *Il grido* examines the negative through the figure of Christ's lament. The cry of the forsaken Christ is presented as the locus where love is revealed as an excess that surpasses all harmony. Here, trinitarian ontology assumes a distinctly paschal character in which laceration and communion are not opposed, but presuppose one another. Crisis consequently acquires a revelatory rather than a merely destructive significance. Thought finds its truth in the wound that opens it to the other.[11]

Pierangelo Sequeri's *Il grembo di Dio. Ontologia trinitaria e affezione creatrice* (*DDOT* 5) marks a further development in this regard. The theme of the *insediamento* of the ascended Christ in the divine womb opens a cosmic and eschatological horizon. Creation is no longer seen as a reality external to God, but as one inhabited by Them. "*Nell'intimità trinitaria di Dio è insediato a pieno titolo – per sempre e quindi da sempre – un essere umano.*"[12] This statement entails a radical rethinking of the relation between the created and the uncreated, insofar as creation is understood as affection, as the expression of the generative dynamism of divine love. Sequeri thus introduces the category of *pro-affettività*,[13] which renders the essence of trinitarian gift in phenomenological and theological terms. Being appears as a dynamic process of reception and generation, marked by hospitality. The concept of *agápe* is given a new articulation in this context. It no longer designates merely an interpersonal relation, but a cosmic mode of affection that constitutes the ontological fabric of the redeemed universe. Creation theology thus becomes a phenomenology of intimacy, in which the very ontology of phenomena assumes the traits of tenderness. Being does not merely relate; it is moved and sustains the world.

9 Jn 17:21: "Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, may they also be in us."

10 Cf. Limone, *Il Dizionario Dinamico di Ontologia Trinitaria*, 18, n. 22.

11 Piero Coda, "*Manifesto,*" 41-42 and 51-52.

12 Pierangelo Sequeri, *Il grembo di Dio. Ontologia trinitaria e affezione creatrice*, Città Nuova, Roma, 2023, p. 18.

13 Vito Limone, *Il Dizionario Dinamico di Ontologia Trinitaria*, 24.

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The following volumes further develop the theological genealogy of this vision. *Neoplatonismo e teologia. Il IV secolo* (*DDOT* 6) examines the reception of Greek thought in patristic theology, showing how the dogmatic formulations of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) constitute the emergence of trinitarian doctrine as the result of a providential encounter between Greek wisdom and the intelligence of revelation.[14] At this crossroads, a new ontology takes shape: Greek *logos* is reconfigured by Christian *agápe*, and substance is rethought in terms of relation. The *Manifesto* explicitly recognises the decisive significance of this event:

> A *crucial junction* was historically produced in the West, which now resonates with a universal significance. It is the encounter between philosophy from the Greek mold […] and the understanding of revelation on the other hand from the biblical-Christian mold.[15]

This encounter grounds the very possibility of contemporary trinitarian ontology understood as a philosophical approach that must remain open to being evangelised in order to remain faithful to its own truth.

This trajectory continues with *Tommaso d'Aquino. Croce-via per una ontologia trinitaria?* (*DDOT* 7). The interrogative form of the title signals both a recognition of Aquinas' enduring significance and an openness to further development. In his theology, the metaphysical tradition of Greece is preserved while being reinterpreted in the light of revelation, particularly through the conception of *esse* as an act of donation. As the *Manifesto* notes, in Aquinas and other medieval thinkers, the resources of Greek philosophy, the evangelical experience, and the theology of charisms intertwine to generate a new understanding of Being as *communio*.[16] Thomism, therefore, does not present itself as a closed system but as a fertile field for the reform of thought. *Actus essendi* thus evolves from a static foundation to *gestus amoris*, when interpreted within the framework of the Trinity. Understood as the effusion of Being, creation becomes the trinitarian act par excellence, in which the very substance of reality is constituted as relation. The *Manifesto* recognises Aquinas as "crossroads" of trinitarian ontology: a point at which classical metaphysics of Being opens itself to the language of communion.

This reconfiguration paves the way for a further development of the project, expressed in *Fenomenologia e Rivelazione* (*DDOT* 8). Here, the trinitarian perspective encounters contemporary phenomenology (Jean-Luc Marion, Michel Henry and Jean-Yves Lacoste) to explore the

14 Piero Coda, "*Manifesto,*" 25.

15 Piero Coda, "For a Trinitarian Ontology," 24.

16 Piero Coda, "*Manifesto,*" 47.

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possibility of a thinking of appearing that does not reduce donation to what is merely given, but recognises it as event. The *Manifesto* had already identified this point of contact when it emphasised the need for a radical repositioning of the relationship between philosophy and theology, grounded in the "*effettivo darsi fenomenologico dell'esperienza dell'E/essere*."[17] The idea of a phenomenology of *agápe* enables a clearer understanding of trinitarian ontology as a relational event characterised by reciprocity, thereby challenging its conventional perception as abstract theory. In this regard, the *DDOT* is tasked with developing a new lexicon of gift. Truth no longer signifies possession. It is understood instead as an emergent quality that arises through reciprocal giving. Being appears as the epiphany of the other, and philosophy becomes an exercise in hospitality. What phenomenology had already intuited as a gift without restitution finds its fulfilment in trinitarian revelation: love that gives itself without the possibility of return constitutes the very mode of divine Being.

This theoretical and methodological development leads to its practical and ecclesial implications. The later books of the *DDOT*, *Gli ultimi sono/saranno i primi* (*DDOT* 9) and *Rifrazioni trinitarie. Un primo bilancio del Manifesto* (*DDOT* 10), extend the reflection beyond the strictly ontological domain by translating the relational and paschal principles of the earlier volumes into concrete forms of ecclesial praxis and social engagement.

The progressive development of the *DDOT* volumes therefore reveals more than a mere editorial project. To grasp its full significance, it is first necessary to identify the fundamental principles that structure its vision. The following section examines the key principles of trinitarian ontology, focusing on the relational reinterpretation of Being, the paschal structure of ontology, and the epistemological implications that arise from conceiving truth as an event of communion.

Key Principles of Trinitarian Ontology

Trinitarian ontology entails a theoretical reorientation. It suggests that the truth of Being should be understood as subsistent relation in its very essence, that is, as freedom fulfilled in alterity. Being does not signify persistence but the act of giving itself. The *Manifesto* articulates this trinitarian foundation by describing divine Being as self-donation expressed in the act of self-giving without expectation of reciprocity or compensation.[18] The ontological structure of reality is thus reconfigured: substance becomes event, identity becomes relation, and truth becomes participation. Even metaphysical language is transformed. As the *Manifesto*

17 Piero Coda and Maria Benedetta Curi, "*Manifesto*," 223.

18 Cf. Coda and Maria Benedetta Curi, "*DDOT* 1," 132.

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suggests, "*la parola principale di un tale pensare non è più il sostantivo, ma il verbo*."[19] Being is therefore no longer conceived as a pre-given foundation but as an emergent phenomenon arising from the process of donation itself. Ontology thus moves beyond a logic of static identity towards a relational logic of self-giving, in which reality becomes intelligible within the dynamic movement of communion.

This relational reinterpretation of Being also finds resonance in the tradition of Christian metaphysics. As Coda observes in dialogue with Joseph Ratzinger, the Christian understanding of revelation leads to the recognition of *relatio as a "modalità primitiva ed equipollente del reale"*,[20] alongside substance itself. A similar intuition is developed in contemporary Orthodox theology, particularly in the work of John Zizioulas.[21] Drawing on the Cappadocian Fathers, he proposes an understanding of Being as communion, according to which the mystery of the Trinity reveals communion as the deepest ontological structure of existence. As Zizioulas writes, "only in communion can God be what God is, and only as communion can God be at all."[22] This perspective further implies that "the person cannot be conceived in itself as a static entity, but only as it relates to others."[23]

Therefore, trinitarian ontology represents a contemporary effort to rethink metaphysics in light of the revelation of the Triune God, revealing a clear convergence with the Eastern theological vision of communion. Its specificity is evident in what may be termed a paschal ontology. Here, the decisive reference point is the mystery of the Crucified and Risen Christ, in whom the *Logos* manifests as charity. In its intrinsic paradox, the Cross becomes the very locus of ontology. The paschal turn is grounded in the recognition that access to Being is granted through Christ. The Logos emerging from revelation is what Paul called the *λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ* (1 Cor 1:18), the word of the Cross arising from the crisis of history and bearing within itself the mark of the paschal event.[24] The trinitarian

19 *Ibid.*, 208.

20 Piero Coda, "L'ontologia trinitaria," 12.

21 Alongside thinkers such as Pavel Aleksandrovich Florensky, Sergei Nikolaevich Bulgakov and Lev Karsavin, leading figures in the Russian Orthodox tradition and key players of the "Silver Age" – to whom a forthcoming volume of the *DDOT* will be dedicated, highlighting the ecumenical nature of the ontological-trinitarian proposal – John Zizioulas is identified as a thinker within the Greek Orthodox tradition: cf. Maria Benedetta Curi, *Percorsi Bibliografici*, in *DDOT* 1, 294, 307.

22 John G.F. Wilks, "The Trinitarian Ontology of John Zizioulas," *Vox Evangelica* 25 (1995): 63.

23 *Ibid*.

24 Piero Coda, "*L'ontologia trinitaria*," 18-22.

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rhythm of reality becomes historically manifest in Him. Paul's words, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor 13:13), can therefore be interpreted as expressing the structure of Being. The truth of Being no longer coincides with the stability of the identical but with a relational dynamism that transforms identity into communion through the traversal of negation. For this reason, the *Manifesto* affirms that the contemporary crisis can recover its meaning in light of the paschal event:

> That is how today's *krísis* can recover its truest meaning: that of an unprecedented promise produced once for all (*ἐφάπαξ*) in the crucified Christ's cry of why, borne through this *kairós* in the *krísis*.[25]

Crisis is not merely a historical or cultural symptom, but the theological locus in which the truth of thinking is disclosed. The Cross becomes the site of the dramatisation of the "non," understood as non-coincidence, which is assumed and transfigured. This dramatisation is what the *Manifesto* calls "the challenge of the 'not' of freedom"[26] in which each is "gift to the other in the T/third 'between' the two."[27] Ontology thus acquires a dramatic and relational character, in which communion arises precisely through the crossing of difference and negation.

These conceptual elements define the core of trinitarian ontology. Being is no longer apprehended as a closed, self-contained identity, but as a dynamic event of communion grounded in the trinitarian life of God and historically disclosed in the paschal mystery of Christ. Relation, gift, participation, and communion thus acquire a central significance, providing the conceptual tools for articulating a vision of reality in which ontology and revelation converge. In this framework, existence is understood as fundamentally relational and participatory, where divine self-giving constitutes both the rhythm and the intelligibility of Being itself.

This vision cannot remain at the level of speculative formulation. If Being is intrinsically relational and participatory, this insight calls for a corresponding transformation in the way thought is practiced and in the Church lives in history. Trinitarian ontology therefore opens beyond itself, inviting a reconfiguration of the very method of thinking and a deeper integration with ecclesial life in light of the logic of communion.

25 Piero Coda, "*For a Trinitarian Ontology. A Manifesto*," in John Milbank, Ryan Haecker, and J.D. Lyonhart (eds.), *New Trinitarian Ontologies, Volume I* (Eugene, Cascade Books, 2025), 29.

26 *Ibid*.

27 *Ibid*.

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Trinitarian Ontology and *Magisterium*

The transition from ontology to praxis is a necessary development of the relational and paschal understanding of Being. Once Being is recognized as relational gift and truth as an event of communion, its implications extend to the historical forms of theological reflection and ecclesial life. Trinitarian ontology thus functions not only as a metaphysical framework but also as a methodological paradigm capable of illuminating the ongoing renewal of the Church.

As the *DDOT* project has progressively shown, the revelation of the Triune God discloses a vision of reality in which relation, reciprocity, and communion belong to the very structure of Being. This perspective resonates with the contemporary cultural context, in which the limits of models centred on isolated identity and self-sufficient subjectivity have become increasingly evident. Within this broader horizon, trinitarian ontology both intercepts and articulates a deeper demand of contemporary thought: the search for a conceptual framework capable of accounting for the relational character of existence.

A similar shift becomes visible in current processes of ecclesial renewal. The growing emphasis on communion, participation, and shared discernment in the life of the Church reflects an implicit awareness that the Christian understanding of reality is intrinsically relational. The contemporary *Magisterium* has repeatedly emphasized this point. In the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*, Pope Francis situates the reform of ecclesiastical studies within this vision, affirming that

> the joy of truth (*Veritatis Gaudium*) expresses the restlessness of the human heart until it encounters and dwells within God's Light, and shares that Light with all people. For truth is not an abstract idea, but is Jesus himself, the Word of God in whom is the Life that is the Light of man (Jn 1:4), the Son of God who is also the Son of Man.[28]

This vision acquires a deeper ontological significance when interpreted in light of trinitarian ontology. If the revelation of Christ manifests the relational self-communication of the Triune God, then truth can no longer be conceived as a static object of knowledge, but must be understood as a living event unfolding within the encounter between God and humanity. The reform of theological studies called for by *Veritatis Gaudium* thus corresponds to the epistemological reorientation described in the *Manifesto*: a transition from forms of knowledge centered on isolated subjectivity towards a relational and dialogical understanding of thought.

28 Pope Francis, "*Veritatis Gaudium*," *AAS* 110 (2018), 1.

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This same shift also clarifies the meaning of synodality. From the perspective of trinitarian ontology, synodality is not merely an institutional reform, but an ecclesial expression of the relational ontology revealed in the Trinity. Since divine life is communion among persons, the life of the Church cannot be adequately described through monological or self-contained structures. Rather, it unfolds through processes of listening, participation, and reciprocal discernment that historically reflect the relational dynamism of trinitarian life. In his address at the opening of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, Pope Francis insists that the synod is fundamentally a spiritual event grounded in the action of the Holy Spirit: "The protagonist of the Synod: it is the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit is in our midst to guide us, it will be a good Synod."[29] For this reason, he rejected any reduction of the synodal process to parliamentary logic or ideological debate. A synod, he explains, is a *syn-odos*, a "journey together" guided by the Spirit.

On this reading, the synodal process appears as a concrete expression of the relational ontology outlined above. Just as trinitarian ontology conceives Being as communion emerging through reciprocity and difference, the synodal path of the Church seeks a form of unity that integrates plurality without suppressing it. Drawing on the pneumatology of Basil of Caesarea, Pope Francis describes the Holy Spirit as the principle of dynamic unity that harmonises diversity within the Church.[30] This generates a "harmony of differences," where "harmony does not mean synthesis but a bond of communion between dissimilar parts."[31] This provides a significant ecclesiological key: the Church appears as a communion in which different charisms, cultures, and perspectives converge in Spirit-given unity. Synodality therefore reflects the Church's pneumatological structure: the Spirit remains the source of communion and the principle that integrates diversity without erasure.

A similar correspondence can be observed in the field of theological methodology. In his address to the International Theological Commission, Pope Francis outlines three fundamental orientations for contemporary theology: creative fidelity to tradition, openness to interdisciplinary dialogue, and the collegial practice of theology.[32] According to Pope Francis, tradition is a living reality that develops within the Church. The

29 Pope Francis, "Address at the opening of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops," *AAS* 115 (2023), 1086.

30 *Ibid*.

31 *Ibid*.

32 Pope Francis, "Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to members of the International Theological Commission," *AAS* 114 (2022), 1511-1514.

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well-known image of a "living river"[33] expresses precisely this dynamism while rejecting reductive forms of "backwardism" that equate fidelity with immobility. From the perspective of trinitarian ontology, this reflects an understanding of truth as unfolding within the relational history of revelation.

Pope Francis also emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary dialogue, corresponding to what *Veritatis Gaudium* describes as the "strong" form of transdisciplinarity,[34] in which different forms of knowledge are oriented in the light of the Gospel. Here again, the convergence with the methodological orientation of the *DDOT* project becomes evident: philosophy, theology, and ecclesial experience are called to interact within a living network of reflection. Knowledge thus assumes a relational character. As Coda suggests, it dwells within the "*dimorare dialogale e sinodale del pensiero in-Cristo*,"[35] emerging through participation in the Church's communion and in Christ's filial relationship with the Father.

The latest volumes of the *DDOT* further translate these ontological principles into Church life. In *DDOT* 9 the "least" is identified as the locus for testing the logic of *agápe*. Read in the light of the Trinity, the preferential option for the poor assumes an ontological rather than merely ethical significance. The parable of the workers in the vineyard (Mt 20:1-16) illustrates the primacy of gift over merit. Trinitarian ontology thus resonates with Pope Francis' reflections in *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*.[36]

33 *Ibid*.

34 Pope Francis, "*Veritatis Gaudium*," 9-10.

35 Piero Coda, "*L'ontologia trinitaria*," 20.

36 Cf. Luca Casarini, *La cospirazione del bene*, con Gianfranco Bettin, con un testo di Papa Francesco (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2024); Armando Nugnes e Carmelo Torcivia, *Il segno della fraternità. Per una lettura teologica a partire da Fratelli Tutti* (Trapani: Il Pozzo di Giacobbe, 2021). What also emerges is that the very genesis of trinitarian ontology arises from a provocation – the cry of the "least" – and returns to that same place as its field of application. This dynamic echoes the methodology long developed within contextual theologies, which seek to translate theological reflection into concrete settings. The "Mediterranean Theological Network" stands within this landscape. Founded in 2023 and inspired by the visit of Pope Francis to Naples in 2019, it presents itself as a sign of how theology can take shape from and for specific contexts. Cf. the *Manifesto* of this network, entitled "Per una teologia del Mediterraneo" published in Marseille two years ago (https://icm.catholique.fr/la-rencontre-lieu-de-revelation/). This request is articulated in Pope Francis' address delivered on 21 June 2019 at the conference "La teologia dopo la *Veritatis Gaudium* nel contesto del Mediterraneo," which was organised in Naples by the "San Luigi" section of the Facoltà Teologica dell'Italia Meridionale. A further meeting of this Network took place in Palermo, at Facoltà Teologica della Sicilia on 24-26 June 2024; more recently, on 13-15 June 2025, the diocesan seminary of Rabat of the Archdiocese of Malta hosted an international and transdisciplinary seminar on the theme: "*Sulle rotte del Mediterraneo. Linee di metodo per una teologia del Mediterraneo*." Several contributions have been published in this vein: Giuseppina De Simone,

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DDOT 10, for its part, offers a synthetic assessment of the reception of the *Manifesto* while outlining future directions. Across these volumes emerges a vision of truth grounded in relational openness rather than conceptual closure, in which knowledge acquires authority through its capacity to generate shared meaning.[37]

This same ontological horizon also sheds light on contemporary theological formation. Antonio Rosmini's four pillars, *"l'unicità di scienza, la comunicazione di santità, la consuetudine di vita, la scambievolezza di amore,"*[38] already point towards a model in which intellectual, spiritual, and communal dimensions are inseparable. Pope Leo XIV takes up and develops this intuition by presenting theology as sapiential, incarnate, and dialogical. In his address to the Pontifical Theological Academy and the Lateran University he underscores the intrinsic link between the Church's intellectual mission and its pastoral life. From this perspective, theological reflection arises from the lived reality of the Church and remains inseparable from it.

Formation, therefore, does not precede ecclesial life as a preparatory stage, but unfolds within it as one of its constitutive expressions. Its relational character becomes evident in practices of shared learning and common life. Ecumenical dialogue, in particular, finds in this framework a renewed foundation. Unity can no longer be understood as uniformity, but rather as the reconciliation of differences through a shared participation in divine life. The mystery of the Trinity thus provides the ontological grounding for a form of unity capable of integrating diversity without dissolving it. The Nicene faith emerges here as a decisive point

L'utopia mediterranea. Lo straniero diventa prossimo, in Antonio Trupiano and Veronica Petito (eds.), *Il seme dell'utopia* (Napoli-Salerno: Orthotes, 2022), 83-106; Giuseppina De Simone, *Il Mediterraneo come luogo teologico nell'oggi della fede e del dialogo interreligioso*, in Luigi Borriello and Maria Rosa Del Genio (eds.), *Mistica e dialogo interreligioso nel contesto del Mediterraneo* (Trapani: Il Pozzo di Giacobbe, 2023), 43-55; Giuseppina De Simone and Claudio Monge, *La misura mediterranea dell'umano*, Roma, Castelvecchi, 2024; Vincenzo Di Pilato, "Il Senso, l'ospitalità, l'incontro. Verso una nuova civiltà mediterranea," *Apulia Theologica* 6, no. 1 (2020), 107-123; Vincenzo Di Pilato, "L'Oltre' di Dio rinvia all'altro del fratello. Le religioni al servizio della fraternità," *Apulia Theologica* 7, no. 1 (2021), 117-140; Vincenzo Di Pilato, *Dialogo tra credenti per la pace tra i popoli del Mediterraneo: da Francesco d'Assisi alla dichiarazione di Abu Dabi*, da Napoli a Bari, in Armando Nugnes and Gianni Criveller, *Dialogo tra credenti: profezia di pace* (Milano, Glossa, 2023), 211-232; Vincenzo Di Pilato, *Fraternita*`, in Santo Pagnotta (ed.), *Parole per il dialogo* (Bari, Ecumenica Editrice, 2023), 75-91; Vincenzo Di Pilato, "Per una teologia del Mediterraneo," *Città Nuova* 68, no. 4 (2024), 72-73; Giuseppina De Simone, Vincenzo Di Pilato and Vito Impellizzeri, "Per una teologia del Mediterraneo," *L'Osservatore Romano*, 24 August 2023, 7.

37 Vito Limone, *Il Dizionario Dinamico di Ontologia Trinitaria*, 32.

38 Piero Coda, "Antonio Rosmini nella '*Veritatis Gaudium*'. Unità del sapere e ontologia trinitaria," *Divus Thomas* 126/1 (2023): 159.

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of convergence. In the Apostolic Letter *In Unitate Fidei*, the Pope presents the Nicene faith as a living foundation for contemporary ecclesial life and ecumenical dialogue. As he emphasizes,

> the Nicene Creed does not depict a distant, inaccessible and immovable God who rests in himself, but a God who is close to us and accompanies us on our journey in the world, even in the darkest places on earth.[39]

Further developing this perspective, in his address at the symposium Nicaea and the Church of the Third Millennium: Towards Catholic-Orthodox Unity, Pope Leo XIV highlights the interconnected significance of the faith of Nicaea, synodality, and the question of a common date for Easter. The Council of Nicaea appears not only as a doctrinal milestone, but also as the beginning of a synodal path that continues to shape the life of the Church. Referring to the participation of Eastern and Western delegates in the recent Synod on Synodality, he notes that it

> went on to encourage the development of "ecumenical synodal practices", including forms of consultation and discernment on questions of shared and urgent interest.[40]

What unites Christians, that is, faith in the Triune God, in Christ as true God and true man, in baptism, resurrection and eternal life, surpasses what divides them. As Leo XIV states, quoting the document for the 1700th anniversary of Nicaea by the International Theological Commission, "what we have in common is much stronger, quantitatively and qualitatively, than what divides us".[41]

Such considerations converge with the pneumatological vision of synodality articulated by Pope Francis. The vitality of ecclesial life and ecumenical dialogue does not derive from structural uniformity or negotiated compromise, but from the action of the Spirit, who sustains communion within diversity. Synodality thus emerges as the concrete enactment of trinitarian communion in history, while ecumenical dialogue unfolds as a shared journey of listening, discernment and mutual reception. The same underlying vision continues to shape the reflections of Pope Leo XIV on theological practice. In his address at the Pontifical Academy of Theology, he presents theology as a form of wisdom capable of uniting scientific rigor and missionary dynamism. Rooted in the Gospel, theology is intrinsically ordered towards communion with God and

39 Pope Leo XIV, "*In Unitate Fidei*," 7, available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost_letters/documents/20251123-in-unitate-fidei.html).

40 Pope Leo XIV, "Address at the Symposium Nicea and the Church of the Third Millennium: Towards Catholic-Orthodox Unity" (available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2025/june/documents/20250607-simposio-nicea.html).

41 *Ibid*.

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therefore belongs to the very heart of the Church's evangelizing mission.[42] A similar emphasis emerges in his address at the inauguration of the academic year at the Pontifical Lateran University, where intellectual rigor and commitment to the common good are identified as essential dimensions of academic formation. These reflections once again point towards a relational understanding of knowledge, which grows through dialogue and finds its verification in a shared horizon.[43]

Finally, in his address to the communities of the Theological Faculty of Apulia and the Theological Institute of Calabria, Pope Leo XIV further develops the communal dimension of theological work. For him, theology is not merely the acquisition of academic knowledge, but a courageous intellectual and spiritual journey, akin to navigation on the open sea.[44] This journey entails both a descent into the depths of the mystery of God and a movement beyond familiar horizons, in search of new languages and forms capable of communicating the Gospel within changing historical contexts. For this reason, he strongly encourages theologians and students to "do theology together,"[45] cultivating shared inquiry and ecclesial communion rather than isolated intellectual effort.

Conclusion

The trajectory traced throughout this study presented trinitarian ontology as a radical reconfiguration of the conditions of thought. Its originality lies in the transformation of its internal logic. Being is no longer conceived as possession or as identity closed upon itself, but as event and communion that unfolds through relation. The dimensions explored in the *DDOT* project thus converge towards a single insight: the truth of reality is accessible only within the dynamism of participation in trinitarian life. It becomes evident that the reform of thought proposed in and arising from the *Manifesto* is inseparable from a conversion of perspective. Thinking in the light of the Trinity requires a displacement from a position of mastery towards a posture of reciprocity. Knowledge is consequently re-situated in an event that precedes and exceeds the subject, namely the self-communication of God in Christ. This entails

42 Pope Leo XIV, "Address to participants in the seminar promoted by the Pontifical Academy of Theology" (available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2025/september/documents/20250913-seminario-pat.html).

43 Pope Leo XIV, "Address at the inauguration of the academic year at the Pontifical Lateran University," [n. 3] (available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2025/november/documents/20251114-inaugurazione-lateranense.html.

44 Pope Leo XIV, "Address of Pope Leo XIV to member of the Theological Faculty of Puglia and of the Theological Institute of Calabria" (available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2026/march/documents/20260302-teologica.html).

45 *Ibid*.

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both a decentering of the knowing subject and its fulfilment, insofar as thought attains its truth in relation. The cognitive act thus becomes intrinsically dialogical, shaped by the logic of *agápe* which constitutes Being itself.

The paschal structure of ontology thus assumes a decisive meaning. The Cross reveals a communion that passes through difference, negation, and self-gift. The "crisis" that characterises both contemporary culture and the history of thought discloses the space in which Being manifests itself as love, capable of traversing fracture without abolishing it. Trinitarian ontology does not therefore offer a resolution of tension, but its transfiguration: a vision in which unity is realised not despite difference, but through it.

This perspective also clarifies why the implications of trinitarian ontology cannot be reduced to a purely speculative discourse. If Being is relational and participatory, then ecclesial and cultural life must assume forms corresponding to this structure. The convergence observed between the *DDOT* project and contemporary magisterial reflections is therefore not accidental. Synodality, theological formation, and ecumenical dialogue emerge as historical enactments of a deeper ontological truth: communion is the basic structure of reality.

This proposal simultaneously opens a broader philosophical horizon. By reinterpreting metaphysics in terms of relation, gift, and event, trinitarian ontology offers a way beyond the *aporias* that have marked both classical substance metaphysics and modern subject-centered thought. It does not reject these traditions, but inhabits and transforms them from within, allowing their deepest intuitions to be fulfilled in the light of revelation. In other words, it constitutes a passage towards a form of thinking capable of holding together unity and plurality, identity and difference. As a "dictionary" that remains open, *DDOT* reflects the very ontology it seeks to articulate: a form of knowledge that grows through relation, within a network of voices, and that participates in an inexhaustible mystery. Its methodological significance lies precisely in demonstrating that the reform of thought is inseparable from a reform of its practices and modes of transmission.

Ultimately, trinitarian ontology points towards a sapiential horizon in which thinking, living, and believing converge. It invites thought to rediscover its proper place at the heart of experience, where the question of Being coincides with the question of love. In the revelation of the Triune God, Being is disclosed as agápic communion, and truth as the event in which this communion is shared. Thinking in this perspective does not simply entail adopting a new theoretical framework; it involves a path in which knowledge becomes participation, and participation becomes the very form in which truth is disclosed.