



Full Title of presentation:

‘It was a whole manner of thinking, a whole world view that loomed before me.’ (Histoire et esprit, H. de Lubac): Re-thinking Patristics as a Source for Theological Renewal Today

Abstract:

The most pressing task in theology today is to heal the artificial division between theology and life (Daniélou). Lived thousands of years apart from us, can the Church Fathers offer any fresh insights for healing this division? In this presentation, I first offer a critique of two problematic approaches to relate patristic theology to theological problems in modernity. First, Adolf von Harnack has popularised the image of patristic theology as the culprit of the fall of theology into a problematic metaphysical doctrine of God that is distant and removed. A second prominent approach blames ‘Western’ patristic theology (e.g. Augustine) for the problems in modernity and recommends a return to ‘Eastern’ patristic theology (e.g. the Cappadocians) as a source for theological renewal. I shall argue that both of these approaches are problematic in light of historical scholarship. In the second part, I make a case instead that the patristic monographs of the ressourcement theologians (de Lubac, Balthasar, Daniélou) offers a rich resource to reflect programmatically how patristic theology contributes fresh insights for dealing with theological problems in modernity.

Pui Him Ip (University of Cambridge)
Re-thinking Patristics as a Source for
Theological Renewal Today

Roundtable seminar VI/2017

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