

MESSAGE FROM THE 44TH MADRID THEOLOGY CONGRESS on

‘A WORLD IN DARKNESS. IS THERE REASON FOR HOPE?’

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light (Is 9:2)

You are the light of the world (Mt 5:24)

From 5 to 7 September 2025, we held the 44th Theology Congress on A WORLD IN DARKNESS. IS THERE REASON FOR HOPE?, in which more than 250 people from different countries and continents participated. We were joined in our reflection by specialists in political science, information science, liberation theology and ecofeminist theology, who offered rigorous analyses and proposals for emerging from the world of darkness in which we find ourselves.

1. We live in a world in collapse caused by a series of mega-problems and systems of domination such as colonialism, patriarchy, necrocapitalism, the depredation of nature, armament, xenophobia, racism and aporophobia, the triumph of dystopias and the naturalisation of violence in everyday life and international relations.
2. Discontent has taken hold of Western democracies and is eroding the idea of representation, adherence to liberating values, and civic coexistence. Democracies, once machines of well-being, have become machines of discontent.
3. This can be seen in every electoral process with the advance of extreme right-wing, anti-democratic and ultra-conservative movements, to the point where they now govern in many countries. These are movements that deny the value of egalitarianism.
4. To reverse this situation, we need to think, debate and collectively imagine the future we want to achieve, establish alliances to rebuild a new ‘social contract’ and realise the opportunities offered by ecological transition, technological advances at the service of the most vulnerable, the advantages of a feminist society where everyone lives better, and the diversity that migration brings.
5. Today, warmongering narratives prevail, disqualifying pacifist language and practices and normalising violence. Its most destructive form is Israel's colonial and Zionist project against the Palestinian people, which dates back to the late 19th century and whose greatest attack on life is the current genocide with the murder of more than 64,000 Gazans, the use of hunger as a weapon of war, the forced displacement of all the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip and, ultimately, extermination.
6. The genocide is taking place with the ineffectiveness of the UN and other international organisations, the complicit inaction of Europe, the unconditional support of the United States, and the silence of most world religious leaders, with honourable exceptions, including Pope Francis, who spoke openly of genocide, and the Latin and Orthodox patriarchs, who have just strongly condemned the invasion of Gaza City.
7. We women, who have been swept out of world leadership and are considered incapable of representing the patriarchal God, rebel against discriminatory laws. In many places, we find ourselves acting rebelliously and practising the ethics of care. We defend the vital interdependence of all that exists, beyond exclusionary patriarchal hierarchies and theoretical discourses that often lack concrete action.

8. We believe that radical Christianity, understood as going to the anthropological sources of being, living and coexisting and to the roots of the Gospel, can and must contribute to overcoming the collapse in which the world finds itself. How? Through hospitality towards migrants, refugees and displaced persons, questioning exclusionary neoliberal globalisation, condemning sexism, LGTBQ+phobia and hegemonic masculinities, a commitment to ecofeminism, which implies gender equality and justice and the recognition of the rights and dignity of nature, the non-imposition of the Western conception of Christianity on other cultures, an alliance with social movements and, ultimately, the practice of José Martí's verse: 'with the poor of the earth I want my fate'.

9. To escape this world of darkness, we consider the revolutionary political, economic and ecological thinking of Pope Francis to be of particular importance. He is critical of neoliberalism, which he considers fundamentally unjust, and allies himself with popular social movements in the service of the common good. Francis has pronounced four no's: no to an economy of exclusion that kills, no to the new idolatry of money, no to money that governs instead of serving, and no to the inequality that generates violence. He has made an effort to reform the Church through synodality, although in practice the hierarchical and clerical structure and discrimination against women remain.

10. In a world where darkness and light intermingle, we propose a Christianity marked by pluralism in dialogue, which defends economic, ecological and gender justice and learns to walk on terrain mixed with flowers and thorns, without idealism, but without renouncing utopia. We invite you to walk together from the peripheries to the centre, building bridges for peace, an 'unarmed and disarming peace' (Leo XIV), based on justice, equity and respect for difference, in the midst of a war in pieces against nature and humanity. 7 September 2025.

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