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## BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND PSYCHOTHERAPY. STUDYING FAMILY THERAPY AT THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

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### Abstract

Interdisciplinary integration at theological faculties, as envisaged in the apostolic constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*, is a demanding challenge. The empirical-experimental method of the natural sciences, which is based on measurable quantities and their mathematisation, is finding its way into research in the social sciences and humanities. The status of science vis-à-vis philosophy or theology can thus be challenged, which makes the dialogue and interdisciplinary cooperation between different sciences, which is necessary for a holistic understanding of people and their actions, more difficult. The development of psychology is driven by the desire to understand people, their emotions and their actions. To achieve these goals, concepts from philosophy and psychology about people and their function are constantly supplemented by new information from empirical research. The article shows the development of family therapy, which is represented in various study programmes at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Ljubljana. A particular example of interdisciplinary integration is the study programme *Human and Interpersonal Relationships*, which combines the fields of theology, religion, psychology and therapy.

**Keywords:** theology, interdisciplinarity, psychology, marriage and family therapy, relationships

### Introduction

In recent years, some European theological faculties have undergone major changes. The reduced number of students enrolled has encouraged the intro-

duction of new degree programmes in some places that focus on social work, family studies and therapy. It seems that whilst these changes represent a new possibility of integration and the search for a common vision of all the contents already present in these faculties, aiming at a holistic understanding of the human being, they also represent a great challenge, as they combine the knowledge of different sciences. Catholic theology is guided by the Apostolic Constitution on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties, *Veritatis Gaudium*, to strengthen interdisciplinary integration. Pope Francis emphasises: »A theology of welcoming which, as a method of interpreting reality, adopts discernment and sincere dialogue requires theologians who know how to work together and in an interdisciplinary way, overcoming individualism in intellectual work.«<sup>1</sup>

Interdisciplinary integration in theological faculties appears to be a demanding challenge. The influence of spirituality on people's physical and mental health is increasingly recognised in the fields of psychology, psychotherapy and psychiatry. The *World Health Organisation* (WHO) also emphasises that health is not just the absence of disease, but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. The WHO promotes a holistic view of the human being, recognises the spiritual dimension of health and emphasises the importance of taking spirituality into account in health services.<sup>2</sup>

Research in the field of spirituality and psychology aims at an interdisciplinary approach and a stronger integration of the fields of spirituality and psychology. A holistic view of the human being and an interdisciplinary approach requires an understanding of the methodological differences between different disciplines, which enables a more holistic understanding of the human being. Training for therapeutic work extends in many areas to the field of particular sciences, where the empirical-scientific method is applied, and in some areas also to the field of universal sciences when it comes to questions of meaning and dealing with suffering. In this article, we therefore first examine the methodological obstacles that hinder the interdisciplinary dialogue between the natural sciences and philosophy and theology. Without understand-

<sup>1</sup> POPE FRANCIS, *Theology after Veritatis gaudium in the context of the Mediterranean*. Address of His Holiness Pope Francis (21. VI. 2019.), at: [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/june/documents/papa-francesco\\_20190621\\_tologia-napoli.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/june/documents/papa-francesco_20190621_tologia-napoli.html) (13. IX. 2024.).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Nicolene JOUBERT (ed.), *The impact of spirituality on the health and mental health*, Psychology and Psychotherapy in the Perspective of Christian Anthropology, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2018, 1-7.

ing and mutual acceptance of the different scientific methods, it is impossible to establish a dialogue.

In the second part, we will focus on the field of marriage and family therapy, which has been established as a study programme at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Ljubljana. This applies in particular to the preparation of the interdisciplinary undergraduate programme, which is part of the first cycle at the Faculty and combines the fields of theology, religion and psychotherapy. Working together, the programme provides students with a holistic view from different perspectives of who a person is, how they give meaning to their lives, how they work, what motivates them, what their values are, where certain value and idea systems come from and according to which psychological laws they function. It illuminates people in their diverse relationships to others, to society, to themselves, to the natural environment and God. In recent decades, the field of psychotherapy, which in its beginnings was primarily concerned with people as individuals, has increasingly recognised that it is necessary to understand people in their relationships to gain a comprehensive understanding of them. Similarly, modern theology does not talk about God himself, but about faith, which is first and foremost man's relationship with God. In recent decades, philosophy (e.g. E. Levinas, J. Maritain, M. Buber, L. Wittgenstein) has begun to talk about the world of relationships, which the religious tradition has long called the »spiritual world«.<sup>3</sup> The name of the programme *Human and Interpersonal Relationships* indicates the importance and intertwining of multifaceted relationships in which a person lives.<sup>4</sup> The interdisciplinary nature of the study programme, which combines theology, religious studies, psychology and medicine, represents a major challenge in terms of methodology and content.

## 1. Methodological obstacles to interdisciplinary dialogue

In today's world, where science is becoming more and more specialised and scientific disciplines are becoming ever narrower, calls for cooperation between the individual sciences are becoming ever louder. Interdisciplinarity should contribute to a higher quality of knowledge, as topics or fields of study

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Mari OSREDKAR, *Teologija odnosa. In beseda je človek postala*, Ljubljana, 2016., 12.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. TEOLOŠKA FAKULTETA UNIVERZE V LJUBLJANI, Podatki študijskega programa Človek in medosebni odnosi (1. X. 2023.), at: [https://www.teof.uni-lj.si/uploads/Predstavitevni%20zbornik%20\(2023-2024\)%20%C4%8CMO%20\(4\).pdf](https://www.teof.uni-lj.si/uploads/Predstavitevni%20zbornik%20(2023-2024)%20%C4%8CMO%20(4).pdf) (13. IX. 2024.).

are often complex and cannot be properly understood from the perspective of a single discipline alone. Interdisciplinary dialogue should not be limited to related disciplines (e.g. natural sciences), but should also be extended to methodologically specific sciences, such as philosophy and theology. However, this dialogue is characterised by many problems and obstacles. The natural sciences with their methodology also influence most of the social sciences and even the humanities on the one hand and philosophy and theology on the other. Recognising the problems is crucial for the possibility of a genuine mutual dialogue, so that there is not just virtual communication in which the interlocutors do not understand each other, and each speaks their language despite similar words. The conviction is that each science is unique in its methodology and the only correct view of reality can emerge in each discipline. In some eras, theology was particularly susceptible to this.<sup>5</sup>

The success of the natural sciences in the new century has secured them a privileged place in contemporary society, and their methodology has become a model and often even the only criterion that determines scientificity as such. The science with which the natural sciences investigate nature is increasingly conquering the fields of those sciences that deal with »culture« and the spiritual creations of man. The difference between particular and universal sciences is often overlooked: The empirical sciences, which belong to the particular sciences, have a thematically limited object of investigation and a predetermined method. Philosophy and theology are universal sciences: Their object of enquiry is the whole of reality, and there is a fundamental methodological difference between them. Philosophy relies exclusively on human reason for questions about the whole of reality and even for its method, whereas theology relies on faith in God's revelation, in which fundamental answers to the whole of reality and human life are given. Theology thus presupposes faith in revelation, which also determines its method. Although philosophy and theology are not based on the empirical method of the natural sciences, they provide people with comprehensible and convincing answers.

The empirical-experimental method, which is based on measurable variables and their mathematisation, is finding its way into research not only in the social sciences but also in the humanities. As philosophy and theology cannot be limited to such methodological starting points, some believe that their knowledge is less scientific. They are often categorised as »soft sciences«

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ricardo CAPPONI, *Desafíos de la psicología a la teología*, in: *Teología y vida*, 43 (2002) 1, 21-32.

which, in contrast to the »hard knowledge« of empirical-mathematical methodology, do not possess sufficient exactness. Since the concept of science embodies the ability to recognise the truth, it is assumed that the exact sciences are closer to the truth and that their knowledge is more well-founded. The supremacy of the natural sciences also leads to their supremacy concerning the concepts of reason and rationality. What is reasonable and rational is assessed according to the »logic« (logos, reason) of the natural sciences. This blurs the boundary between the concept of science and the concept of natural science, and they are often used as synonyms. Part of this development was also the emergence of a new psychology, commonly referred to as »modern«, based on the worldview of naturalism and the methods of natural science, which became the only legitimate version of psychology in the West.<sup>6</sup> Philosophy or theology can thus be denied the status of science, and its rationality is seen as less valuable for scientific »objectivity«.<sup>7</sup>

With such prejudices, however, it is difficult to start or maintain an authentic dialogue. If natural scientists deny a priori scientific knowledge to philosophers or theologians, they cannot accept them as authentic dialogue partners in the common search for truth. Authentic dialogue is only possible at the level of equal interlocutors who are open to each other – which also means that they believe in the mutual relevance of their sciences.<sup>8</sup> But even with such openness to dialogue, one of the obstacles is to interpret the language of the interlocutor based on the meanings that the terms used have in one's sphere.<sup>9</sup> When a physicist talks about the »big bang« theory, a theologian can hastily link it to the biblical account of the beginning or creation of the world. On the other hand, the physicist may interpret the question of the Creator as a cosmological question about the beginning of the universe, although the question of creation in religion appears in a completely different context and with

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Eric JOHNSON, Toward a unified Christian Psychology, in: Nicolene L. JOUBERT (ed.) *Psychology and Psychotherapy in the Perspective of Christian Anthropology*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2018., viii-xi.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Branko KLUN, Metodološke ovire pri dialogu med filozofijo, teologijo in naravoslovnimi vedami, in: Janez JUHANT – Bojan ŽALEC (eds.), *Na poti k dialoški človeškosti. Ovire človeškega komuniciranja*, Ljubljana, 2010., 69-78.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Günther PÖLTNER, Voraussetzungen eines gelingenden interdisziplinären Gesprächs zum Verhältnis von Religion und Evolution, in: Ulrich LÜKE – Jürgen SCHNAKENBERG – Georg SOUVIGNIER (eds.), *Darwin und Gott*, Darmstadt, 2004., 9-27.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Alister E. MCGRATH, Dialogue view, in: Michael RUSE – Alister E. MCGRATH – Bruce L. GORDON, *Three views on christianity and science*, Michigan, 2021.

a different orientation than the question of the beginning in cosmology.<sup>10</sup> All science depends on pre-scientific assumptions that are rooted in the immediate experience of life. »A physicist may see colour as an electromagnetic wave, but when he looks at the face of a colleague in conversation, he sees no waves. Similarly, we could say that a biologist can define the concept of death, but this meaning will not exhaust the comprehensive meaning of death that he experiences in his life, especially in terms of his mortality.<sup>11</sup>

With its method, natural science represents one of the possible ways of questioning, and by no means the only or only correct one, as it often imagines. John C. Lennox underpins the proof that the natural sciences are limited by their methods with vivid illustrations, for example: »Imagine my Aunt Matilda has baked a cake; we now give this cake to a group of world-renowned scientists to analyze. Biochemists will teach us about the structure of proteins, fats and other components of the cake; chemists about the elements present; physicists will know how to study the basic particles in a cake; and mathematicians will no doubt provide us with a variety of elegant equations to describe the behaviour of these particles. So, we know how the cake was made and what it is made of, but suppose the scientists were to ask why it was made. We can see from the smile on Aunt Matilda's face that she knows the answer because she baked the cake. But it is quite obvious that even the best scientists in the world cannot tell us why she baked it based on her research. Science can answer questions about the texture and structure of the cake, but it cannot answer the question of intent: 'Why?'«<sup>12</sup> The way we ask questions is crucial because it determines in advance what kind of answers we can expect. With its method, natural science represents one of the possible ways of asking questions and not the only or only correct one, as it often imagines. The explanation provided by the natural sciences is not necessarily the only possible rational explanation. There can be several explanations, all of which are equally true. »Suppose you ask: 'Why does water boil?' I can answer, for example, that it is because the gas flame transfers energy to the copper base of the kettle; this heats the water and the water molecules move so fast that the water boils. But I can also answer that the water is boiling because I want to make myself

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Branko KLUN, Metodološke ovire pri dialogu med filozofijo, teologijo in naravoslovnimi vedami, 71.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Branko KLUN, Metodološke ovire pri dialogu med filozofijo, teologijo in naravoslovnimi vedami, 73.

<sup>12</sup> John C. LENNOX, *Ali lahko znanost razloži vse*, Log pri Brezovici, 2021., 40-41.

a cup of tea.«<sup>13</sup> The two explanations do not contradict each other but complement each other. Both are necessary if we want a comprehensive explanation of what is happening.

The development of psychology is driven by the desire to understand people, their emotions and actions and to offer them effective help in developing and overcoming various problems. Achieving these goals requires the convergence of two research strategies: Induction and Deduction. Concepts from philosophy and psychology about human beings and how they function are constantly being supplemented by new information from empirical research. These concepts, which have been verified by numerous experimental researches, gain their significance in the context of efforts to achieve a holistic understanding of the human being, taking into account anthropological theses that can give deeper meaning to the results of empirical psychological research. Uncovering the complex reality of human life is a demanding process that requires different methods and interdisciplinary communication.<sup>14</sup> Interdisciplinarity requires humility, the willingness to accept a different perspective, a different view of the same reality. Psychology and psychotherapy inspired by Christian anthropology are based on important assumptions about human nature. The human person is a cognitive subject (an agent of cognitive reflection) and a subject of cognition (what he or she and others think about). Psychology therefore considers the dual aspect (objective and subjective) of human life and cognition. Psychotherapy aims to help people in their development and overcome obstacles on the way to optimal development. Christian psychology and psychotherapy can therefore not be equated with ideology. Anthropological starting points derived from philosophy, theology and psychology provide a solid scientific basis for thorough empirical research and the subsequent interpretation of the results. Christian psychologists and psychotherapists make extensive use of the achievements of modern psychology, but when reviewing the theories and assumptions about life and health proposed by other schools of psychology, they use the Christian view of humans and the world.<sup>15</sup> The Christian orientation accepts the existence of God and

<sup>13</sup> John C. LENNOX, *Ali lahko znanost razloži vse*, 40–41.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Romuald JAWORSKI, The Concept of Person as Anthropological Basis for Christian Psychology and Psychotherapy, in: Nicolene L. JOUBERT (ed.) *Psychology and Psychotherapy in the Perspective of Christian Anthropology*, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2018., 14–28.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Steben SANDAGE – Jeannine BROWN, *Relational Integration of Psychology and Christian Theology. theory, research, and practice*, New York – London, 2018.



their influence on the lives of individuals and societies as the highest truth.<sup>16</sup> These concepts of humanity and God enable the interpretation and application of the manifestations of religious life in intrapsychic functioning and interpersonal relationships.

## 2. Family therapy

Family therapy as a form of help for psychiatric, emotional and relationship problems first emerged in the 1960s in the United States of America. Previously, people with such problems were mainly treated psychiatrically on an individual basis, often separately from their family and social environment. The treatment of psychological, emotional and relationship problems focuses on the individual, not the family or other important relationships. The pioneers of family therapy shifted the focus from the individual to relationships, from individual treatment of mental problems to family or relationship-based treatment. In the second half of the last century, family therapy was one of the new psychotherapeutic approaches that made its way alongside the hitherto familiar psychoanalytic approach, which, under the influence of Sigmund Freud, set the general tone of rejection of spirituality for most of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup>

The beginnings of family therapy are based on a paradigm shift in psychiatry. Harry Stack Sullivan offers an alternative definition of psychiatry when he writes that it is the study of what happens between people since an individual's personality cannot be separated from the interpersonal relationships in which a person lives.<sup>18</sup> Research into the families of symptomatic individuals has shown that by taking relationships and family experiences into account, psychopathology can be understood differently than before. The beginnings of the development of family therapy can be traced back to important groups of mental health experts who were primarily concerned with understanding schizophrenia and the role of family relationships in the development of the symptoms of this mental illness (Gregory Bateson, Jay Haley, John Weakland, William Fry and Don Jackson). In addition to the research and study of mental illness, the foundation of family therapy was also laid

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Romuald JAWORSKI, *The Concept of Person as Anthropological Basis for Christian Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. John PETEET, *Spirituality and mental health*, in: *Southern Medical Journal*, 100 (2007) 6, 654–659.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Harry Stack SULLIVAN, *The psychiatric interview*, New York, 1954.



by psychoanalytically trained therapists who worked with families in their practices and are associated with the development of multigenerational family therapy (Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, Carl Whitaker, James Framo, David Rubinsztein, Geraldine Spark). In addition to understanding current family relationships, multigenerational family therapy also attaches great importance to the transmission of emotional content across several generations. Murray Bowen theoretically defines the so-called process of triangulation or the formation of emotional triangles in the family. He suggests that the stress that occurs in a relationship does not only stem from the relationship itself. An unresolved conflict between two family members is unconsciously moderated by a third party. In the family, such an unresolved conflict between the parents is most often resolved by a child with its (symptomatic) behaviour because it is most susceptible to resolving the emotional tension in the family system due to their need to belong.<sup>19</sup> The psychoanalytic psychiatrist Salvador Minuchin developed a new therapeutic approach for families, which he called structural therapy.<sup>20</sup> Minuchin emphasises that structural family therapy deals with problems in the family system itself, whereby the therapist needs to recognise and influence the relationship patterns between the family members and the relationships between the individual family subsystems. Through structural interventions, the therapist attempts to destroy dysfunctional family patterns and replace them with more functional ones. Most families try to solve their problems with first-order changes, with changes in individual behaviour. Minuchin, however, assumed that the family structure can only be significantly changed by changing the second order, i.e. by changing the family rules.<sup>21</sup>

Family therapy was born after 1970, when the *American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy* published the first standards for family therapy training programmes, thereby shaping the standardisation of the profession and the approach was also recognised by a national health organisation. With the fundamental development of family therapy in the United States of America, psychotherapeutic practice in Europe is slowly moving towards the treatment of the whole family. In Europe, the most important developments are taking place in Italy and Great Britain. The »Milan Group« (Gianfranco Cecchin, Guiana Prata, Luigi Boscolo) made an important contribution to the understanding of the role of the family in therapy. They realised that many fami-

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Murray BOWEN, *Family therapy and clinical practice*, Lanham, 1978.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Salvador MINUCHIN, *Families and family therapy*, London – New York, 1974.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Saša POLJAK LUKEK, *Ko družina začne znova. Temeljni pojmi družinske terapije*, Celje – Ljubljana, 2024., 17-18.

lies who seek therapeutic help resist change. This paradox has also been used as a therapeutic technique, namely circular interviewing or triadic interviewing (when one family member is asked what happens between two others). In the UK, family therapy was combined with social work, paving the way for family and individual counselling. In the 1980s, individual directions of family therapy began to be defined that were no longer tied to a single therapist. Systemic family therapy, narrative family therapy, problem-orientated therapy, transgenerational therapy and others were developed under the umbrella of family therapy.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. At the UL Faculty of Theology

At the Faculty of Theology at the University of Ljubljana, Christian Gostečnik developed relational family therapy (RFT), an innovative therapeutic model for dealing with families and couples that combines three fundamental relationship theories, namely interpersonal analysis, object relations theory and the psychology of the self, and is supplemented by fundamental findings from neuroscience.<sup>23</sup> The basis of the theories is represented by the concept of relationship. From the perspective of the relational family model, the therapeutic relationship is the one that can most deeply replicate the experience of the detached, disavowed and hidden parts of the psychological experience of the therapy participants. This allows therapy participants to name and evaluate those parts of their experience that were previously unknown to them, but which have guided and shaped their systemic and reciprocal interactions. Therapeutic interventions in relational family therapy aim to connect the present with past experiences, raise awareness of the past and take control of present forms of relationship formation, which is achieved by changing the individual's experience and perception.<sup>24</sup>

The development of the innovative RTF therapy model is based on scientific research and publications confirming its effectiveness, which was carried out as part of research at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Ljubljana (research projects, important published results and monographs). This is the foundation on which the concept of education in the field of marriage

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Saša POLJAK LUKEK, *Ko družina začne znova. Temeljni pojmi družinske terapije*, 21-23.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Christian GOSTEČNIK, *Nevroznanost in relacijska družinska terapija*, Ljubljana, 2022.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Christian GOSTEČNIK, *Relational family Therapy. The systemic, interpersonal and intrapsychic experience*, New York – London, 2017.

and family therapy at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Ljubljana is based. By integrating empirical research on family and marital relationships and mental health, the Faculty creates innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to therapeutic practice and education.

### *3.1. Development of study programmes*

Since its foundation, the Faculty of Theology at the University of Ljubljana has not only trained theologians but also many employees in the field of pastoral, educational and social work. In the last two decades, education in the field of work with spouses and families has increased significantly, where students are trained for therapeutic and counselling work as part of study programmes. In 2001, the Faculty began introducing the state-recognised postgraduate programme in Marriage and Family Therapy and in 2004 the Master's and doctoral courses in Marriage and Family Therapy. With the Bologna revision, when specialisations were discontinued at the University of Ljubljana, a second-cycle Master's programme in Marriage and Family Studies, a postgraduate programme in Marriage and Family Therapy and a doctoral programme in Marriage and Family Therapy have been established since 2009. The accommodation at the University of Ljubljana ensures appropriate educational standards, which are very important in this field, and at the same time, we place education on a strong scientific and research foundation. For several years, the Faculty has realised that it would be very useful to develop an interdisciplinary undergraduate programme that would provide common foundations for studies at the Master's and doctoral level.<sup>25</sup>

### *3.2. Human and interpersonal relationships*

The extensive preparation of the new study programme formally began in 2018, with the first generation of students enrolling in the 2023/2024 academic year.<sup>26</sup> During the preparatory phase, the working group demonstrated several times that interdisciplinarity does not come naturally, but requires repeated efforts to understand the language of another (scientific) field.

<sup>25</sup> UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI TEOLOŠKA FAKULTETA, Letno poročilo 2022. Poslovno poročilo s poročilom o kakovosti. Računovodsko poročilo (23. II. 2023), at: <https://www.teof.uni-lj.si/uploads/Letno%20poro%C4%8Dilo%202022.pdf> (14. IX. 2024.).

<sup>26</sup> UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI TEOLOŠKA FAKULTETA, Letno poročilo 2023. Poslovno poročilo s poročilom o kakovosti. Računovodsko poročilo (26. II. 2024), at: <https://www.teof.uni-lj.si/uploads/Letno%20poro%C4%8Dilo%202023.pdf> (14. IX. 2024.).

The basic aim of the first-cycle university degree programme *Human and Interpersonal Relationships* is to provide the first level of theological expertise and the first level of competence in marriage and family therapy and counselling. The profile imparted by the degree programme includes theoretical and methodological knowledge, the ability to apply knowledge in practice, the ability to think in interdisciplinary terms, a spiritual and ethical attitude and basic knowledge of marriage and family therapy and counselling. Two specialisations have been created for the degree programme, the theological-religious and the therapeutic, which have some common themes that are important for both specialisations.

The theoretical and technical knowledge imparted by the programme includes the basic contents and contexts of the Christian and general religious view of humans and interpersonal relationships, the convictions and knowledge for basic family care in the area of mental and spiritual health. The programme begins with a general presentation of the humanistic-philosophical, historical-cultural and psychological-sociological foundations and contexts of the image of humans and interpersonal relationships and beliefs. It then concentrates on the characteristics of Christian revelation, the proclamation of faith and pastoral care from a theological and ethical perspective. From the introductory humanistic, philosophical and biblical topics, it moves on to the theological and religious direction to the central theological and religious questions, which are dealt with from the point of view of their methodology and also interdisciplinary (from a philosophical, historical, pedagogical, philosophical, psychological point of view, etc.), to the legal direction and to family therapy and counselling as well as to the central questions of basic mental and spiritual care of family and marriage relationships and to questions of marriage and family therapy/psychotherapy and counselling at the basic level.<sup>27</sup> For a holistic approach and understanding of the human being and their functioning in the implementation of some topics (Biological and medical foundations of the human being and interpersonal relationships, Mental health of adults, Mental health of children and adolescents, Help in crises and intervention measures, Neuroscientific view of the human being and interpersonal relationships), professors from the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Ljubljana and professors from the Faculty of Health of the University of Ljubljana

<sup>27</sup> UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI TEOLOŠKA FAKULTETA, Podatki študijskega programa Človek in medosebni odnosi (1. III. 2023), at: [https://www.teof.uni-lj.si/uploads/Predstavitveni%20zbornik%20\(2023-2024\)%20%C4%8CMO%20\(4\).pdf](https://www.teof.uni-lj.si/uploads/Predstavitveni%20zbornik%20(2023-2024)%20%C4%8CMO%20(4).pdf) (14. IX. 2024).

(for the topic Systemic and legal regulation of the health and social system) are also participating, which means an additional qualitative contribution.

## Conclusion

The extraordinary interest of students in the *Human and Interpersonal Relations* programme shows that the interdisciplinary integration of the fields of theology, religious studies and psychology as well as family therapy is one of the paths of the kerygmatic renewal of theology, which seeks out people where they are, enters into existential questions and dialogue with the challenges of life and leads to salvation in Christ. The programme builds a bridge between the Christian message (kerygma) and modern culture and the perception of modern man. Therefore, it endeavours to provide students with the best knowledge of modern humanities as well as competences in the field of religious knowledge and presentation of theology. At the same time, interdisciplinarity requires the constant and conscious effort of all lecturers so that a dialogue between the different disciplines can take place and man can be seen and understood in all his dimensions. At the same time, the openness of the study programme to new updates with all the new findings of the individual sciences and improvements according to emerging needs is necessary. The Faculty of Theology also supports the quality system of the University of Ljubljana with regular annual self-evaluations of the study programmes.

## Sažetak

### IZMEĐU TEOLOGIJE I PSIHOTERAPIJE. STUDIJ OBITELJSKE TERAPIJE NA TEOLOŠKOM FAKULTETU

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*Interdisciplinarna integracija na teološkim fakultetima, koju spominje apostolska konstitucija Veritatis gaudium, zahtjevan je izazov. Empirijsko-eksperimentalna metoda prirodnih znanosti, koja se temelji na mjerljivim veličinama i njihovoj matematizaciji, ulazi i u istraživanja društvenih i humanističkih znanosti. Znanstvenost filozofije ili teologije vis-à-vis prirodnih znanosti tako može biti osporavan, što otežava dijalog i*

*interdisciplinarnu suradnju između različitih disciplina, koja je neophodna za cjelovito razumijevanje ljudi i njihovog djelovanja. Razvoj psihologije vođen je željom za razumijevanjem ljudi, njihovih emocija i njihovog djelovanja. Da bi se postigli ti ciljevi, pojmovi iz filozofije i psihologije o čovjeku i njegovom funkcioniranju stalno se nadopunjuju novim informacijama iz empirijskih istraživanja. U članku je prikazan razvoj obiteljske terapije koja je zastupljena u različitim studijskim programima na Teološkom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Ljubljani. Poseban primjer interdisciplinarne integracije je studijski program Človek in medosebni odnosi koji spaja područja teologije, religijskih znanosti, psihologije i terapije.*

**Ključne riječi:** *teologija, interdisciplinarnost, psihologija, bračna i obiteljska terapija, odnosi*