

LIMINA – Theological perspectives from Graz

A programmatic overview*



1. LIMINA: Thresholds

What is the aim of a new theology journal in central Europe? The traditional canon of theology, as well as topical issues of theological, church, or religious concern are already extensively covered. This journal pursues an entirely new positioning within the field.

LIMINA dares to venture beyond traditional and conventional concepts of theology journals.

It serves as a think tank and discussion forum at the threshold to new constellations between societies, cultures, churches, and religions. It is evident that such thresholds continue to emerge. Even more so, the virulent changes in modern constellations do not follow a consistent pattern anymore, they have become unpredictable. *LIMINA* positions itself at the thresholds where current shifts and fractures are most evident. The journal approaches its subject with the awareness that there is no fixed viewpoint that allows for unimpeded observations across changing times and landscapes.

LIMINA sets out to uncover thresholds – places – and thus new departure points for reflection.

This positioning reflects a certain theological affinity: Theology has always been a threshold discipline providing discourse for narratives, beliefs, hopes and practices of groups and societies within the context of their immanent and transcendent reference points as an alternative position to reason and rationality. In turn, theology itself draws from all these points

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of reference. Over time, this resulted in a pluralisation creating different yet interrelated theologies.

Currently, theologies from different religions and traditions exist between highly polarised forces, from fundamentalist ideologies to contextually and transdisciplinary open, and critical-rational concepts.

The theological positioning of LIMINA honours the maxim of the Second Vatican Council in its duty of “scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel” (Gaudium et spes 4).

This anchors LIMINA within the tradition of conciliar theology. As the journal of the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Graz it also follows the faculty’s own focus on *theology in current contexts*.

LIMINA transcends traditional subject boundaries and encourages a close dialogue with non-theological disciplines.

The journal recognises the current situation of these thresholds as a sign of the times and thus moves the discourse beyond traditional boundaries between disciplines and methods towards changing dynamics.

LIMINA offers contributions and perspectives that

- honour the scientific, ecumenical, and interreligious orientation of conciliar theology in line with the Second Vaticanum;
- creatively and curiously investigate new spaces and concepts from that departure point;
- are open to critical examination, and develop and test innovative critical-constructive positions.

This can only be achieved in close dialogue with non-theological disciplines, especially the humanities and cultural sciences, whose perception and integration are an elementary aspect of the journal’s own theological concept.

This positioning is formally characterised by the journal’s scientific quality, openness to unconventional methods and experiments, open access to everyone, and engagement with young academics as an educational and publishing resource.

2. Open passages

The journal's title alludes to complex passages in the present and open passages within theology. The present religious pluralist signature plays a central role in this.

The world seems currently abound with possibilities of individual or collective upheaval, turning points, status quos being overturned, change.

Presenting and discussing different religious, interreligious, and theological perspectives is at the core of LIMINA.

Theologies often deal with experiences of transitions and breakthroughs, and related images, stories and symbols. They examine and reflect passages and interdependencies between divine and material realities or worlds from the beginning. LIMINA takes up this mantle of theological research and redefines its characteristics: individual-biographical, group-specific, political, ethical, cultural, and religious according to the chosen topics that ideally offer an exemplary passage through virulent issues in each journal publication.

- Future forces
- New nationalisms and the vision of one humankind
- The phantom of freedom

are exemplary key themes of the inaugural phase of the journal.

3. Social borders

LIMINA sets out to

- identify border areas, explore scientific no-man's-lands, ask unpopular questions that are of critical social and cultural importance;
- analyse and comment on social borders that raise fundamental questions regarding humanity and solidarity, human rights, and the dignity of each individual;
- intervene in conflicts as an advocate for justice, forgiveness, life, and a future for all.

LIMINA understands border areas and the complex issues surrounding them as an opportunity to construct new interpretations of the world and options for action without forcing a closed systematisation of thought and behaviour on it.

Rather, such border areas should inspire a system-critical awareness of society and politics, religions and churches, culture and education, as well as the humanities and theologies themselves. **LIMINA** stands for a systematically open theology conscious of the constitutive role of practices and traditions. It incorporates both aspects in its constructive-critical discourse with current ideological and scientific positions.

**The theological maxime is:
Love of and for differences.**

Its theological maxime is: Love of and for differences. Not because identity and unity should be dismantled at any cost, but because they need to blossom into respect through freedom and love in order to hold fast in the face of differences.

4. “Ad Limina”?

The journal’s title will remind readers familiar with church proceedings of the term “ad limina”. Bishops of the Roman Catholic church are required to regularly come to Rome for a visitation *ad limina apostolorum* to report to the pope and the Roman dicasteries on developments in their diocese and to receive direction for the future. However, the persons in charge of this journal are no bishops and, thus, are not bound by the same accountability.

LIMINA is primarily a theological journal. As such it is not in service of the church, but fosters a special relationship with different Christian churches.

The journal works with the local church in the region where it is based but also has ecumenic and interreligious ties across the country. Its role within the church is to introduce and highlight findings, concepts and viewpoints to ecclesiastical organisations, which from experience, are hardly considered within the confines of church activities or considered difficult subjects. At the same time, it communicates critically examined knowledge about traditions of the faith it is affiliated with to the outside world.

In its role, **LIMINA** uses its scriptural, historic and analytic resources to maintain the connection to the origin and diverse aspects of church and religious traditions.

**LIMINA is a discourse-oriented catalyst
for religious belief and knowledge.**

The journal is positioned at the thresholds of religious stories of faith and listens to the voices that speak of life and future despite all odds. It translates and amplifies the communicative and future-oriented potential of these voices in the interest of humankind.

5. Liminal theology

The programme of **LIMINA** can be described as liminal theology. In discourse with plural religious concepts as well as secular approaches the journal sits on the threshold to future social, cultural and religious constellations. The aim is to practise theology as an academic discipline at these borderlines and points of passage. Thus, **LIMINA** dares to cross between borders and investigate beliefs, including those often considered unassailable, from both sides – religious tradition and secular position.

**Liminal theology always defends reason in its border-crossings
without falling into the trap of reductive rationalism.**

It keeps the gate open to the unspeakable and the unimaginable and seeks to find a language that emerges at these thresholds. It awaits God as the source and force encompassing and transcending all borders on either side.

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On behalf of the editorial team

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