

Application: FSP Fellowship 2023

Applicants: Michaela Quast-Neulinger / Anni Findl-Ludescher

Affiliation: Faculty of Catholic Theology / RGKW / FSP

---

# Remember and reconcile

Towards peace and justice in an age of fragmentation

## **Workshop**

26 May 2023, 9am – 1pm

Followed by a Lunch

## **Departments of Systematic Theology & Practical Theology**

Faculty of Catholic Theology

University of Innsbruck

Cultural encounters are deeply shaped by the fundamental memories of those involved in these concrete encounters and too often result in actual conflicts, especially when fundamental memories contradict each other, are forged or abused for propaganda issues. This is what we are experiencing in our days.

In societies of increasing fragmentation and polarization, it is fundamental to reflect on how societies relate to their historical memory. Memory, in the good sense of the term, forges the human and cultural identity by reminding us who we were/are, how we got here and helps us to project the future in the present. This essential tension between tradition and innovation can only function properly if we acknowledge the lessons of Paul Ricoeur, namely, that the abuses and manipulation of memory (via distortion, revision or annulment) impede the process of reconciliation, putting the notion of forgiveness in peril. Without forgiveness the traumatic memories of the past (wars, famine, violence, etc.) cannot be healed. The wound will only be superficially closed and then, easily reopened. Understanding the necessary steps to reconciliation implies understanding the dynamics of forgiveness. Only in this way we can construct a healed memory, maintain hope (despite the traumatic memories) and initiate a process of restorative justice.

With the theme “Remember and reconcile. Towards peace and justice in an age of fragmentation” we address an essential challenge in cultural encounters and cultural conflicts. We would like to bring together different disciplinary approaches which critically discuss the relation between remembrance and reconciliation. Within the German speaking context, a culture of remembrance is particularly connected with the Shoah, but we would like to put our focus on present conflicts and tensions, possible parallel structures with regard to the writing of memories and ways towards reconciliation, justice and peace.

Contributions might focus on one of these fields:

### **1. Theoretical-philosophical reflections on remembrance and reconciliation**

Here we are particularly interested in Paul Ricoeur, but also Jan Assmann’s “cultural memory” or Johann Baptist Metz’ “Memoria passionis”. However, we

Application: FSP Fellowship 2023

Applicants: Michaela Quast-Neulinger / Anni Findl-Ludescher

Affiliation: Faculty of Catholic Theology / RGKW / FSP

---

are open to very different theoretical frameworks that reflect the connexion of remembrance and reconciliation, especially from beyond Europe.

## **2. Practical experiences – concrete studies**

This could include ethnographic field work in conflict areas, trauma studies, but also literature and how it takes up questions of memory, forgiveness and reconciliation or studies of the propagandic construction of memories.

## **3. Creating the future**

As outlined above, remembrance and reconciliation are not goals in themselves, but actually aim towards hope, justice and peace. We would like to discuss actual possibilities of creating a common future. In 1992, Paul Ricoeur published “Welches neue Ethos für Europa?”<sup>1</sup>. How could we today answer this question in relation to globally entangled, conflicting memories?

## Contact

Ass.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Michaela Quast-Neulinger MA  
Institut für Systematische Theologie  
Karl-Rahner-Platz 1  
A-6020 Innsbruck  
Tel.: + 43(0)512/507-8545  
[michaela.neulinger@uibk.ac.at](mailto:michaela.neulinger@uibk.ac.at)

Ass.-Prof. Dr. theol. Anna Findl-Ludescher  
Institut für Praktische Theologie  
Karl-Rahner-Platz 1 (Zi. 234)  
6020 Innsbruck  
Tel.: +43 512 507 8652  
[anni.findl-ludescher@uibk.ac.at](mailto:anni.findl-ludescher@uibk.ac.at)

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Ricoeur, Welches neue Ethos für Europa?. In: P. Koslowski (Hg.), Europa imaginieren. Der europäische Binnenmarkt als kulturelle und wirtschaftliche Aufgabe, Berlin/ Heidelberg 1992, 108-120.