

Christian Philosophy facing Naturalism.
September 24–25, 2024
Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow
Conference Invitation Letter

The dispute between naturalism and anti-naturalism has been underway almost since the very beginnings of philosophy. Christian thinkers, by proclaiming that God as Creator transcends the reality He has created, and that human beings as persons transcend the material world, have entered this dispute on the anti-naturalist side. The contemporary dominance in culture of the naturalistic paradigm requires Christian philosophy to reflect on naturalism in the broadest sense (in its various forms), together with its conditions and consequences, and to rethink its relationship to this philosophical tradition. Naturalism rejects the possibility of something existing, being known, or being explained that is separate from the material reality given in empirical cognition. Along with this, it denies human beings transcendence with respect to the natural or social world. In its contemporary iteration, this tradition appeals to the solutions and methods of domain-specific forms of scientific inquiry, relying on them for its own authority. For Christian philosophy, naturalism represents a powerful challenge. It is possible to see in it a threat to Christian philosophy, but it is also possible to discern in it an opportunity for a more critical evaluation of Christian philosophy's previous solutions, and an opportunity to develop new ones. There is a need for a better understanding of naturalism itself, as well as of what the various domain-specific sciences (including the natural and social sciences, as well as the humanities and, currently, neuroscientific research in particular) have to say about the world and about human beings. Systematic and historico-philosophical questions equally still call for debate – in relation to the centuries-old dispute between naturalism and anti-naturalism, as well as the changing place of Christian thought within it. In our own time, one can witness diverse attempts by

Christian thinkers both to critically discuss naturalistic positions and to implement naturalistic approaches or solutions within Christian thought itself. Certainly, the latter cannot ignore the fact that naturalism allows philosophy to maintain cognitive contact with domain-specific forms of scientific inquiry.

The organizers plan to conduct this conference in hybrid mode, combining both online and onsite elements. This model will allow all interested persons to participate, while also offering those wishing to actually come to Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow the possibility of doing so.

Further information will be announced soon on our website:
<http://christianphilosophy.ignatianum.edu.pl>