

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

JANUARY 2009 SESSION OF ASSESSMENTS

MRT4200 Religion, Culture & Theology

Fri 23 January 2009

09.15 – 10.15

To answer only **ONE** question:

1. Whenever we pray, *Your kingdom come, your will be done*, we are making religious statements that impinge very directly on our personal and social life. Elaborate on the link between prayer, personal and communal, and our moral life.
2. Show how St. Paul's discourse in Athens (Acts 17, enclosed) can be considered as a model for the evangelisation of culture.
3. 'The interesting story (of religion in the last 50 years) is not simply one of decline, but also of a new placement of the sacred or spiritual in relation to individual and social life. This new placement is now the occasion for recompositions of spiritual life in new forms, and for new ways of existing both in and out of relation with God'. Elaborate on this statement by Charles Taylor (*The Secular Age*) by discussing the opportunities and obstacles contemporary postmodern culture offers to religion.

Paul at Athens (Acts 17: 16-33)

¹⁶New while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols. ¹⁷So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentile, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. ¹⁸And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, "What would this idle babbler wish to say?" Others, "He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities," –because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

¹⁹And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming?" ²⁰"For you are bringing some strange things to our ears; so we want to know what these things mean." ²¹Now all the Athenians and the strangers visiting there used to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new.

Sermon on Mars Hill

²²So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. ²³"For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with the inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you."

²⁴The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; ²⁶and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children,' ²⁹"Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.

³⁰"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, ³¹because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

³²Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, "We shall hear you again concerning this." ³³So Paul went out of their midst.