

A meeting between  
Marcelo Gleiser and Gianfranco Ravasi

# LISTENING TO INFINITY

ARE WE CLOSER TO GOD?

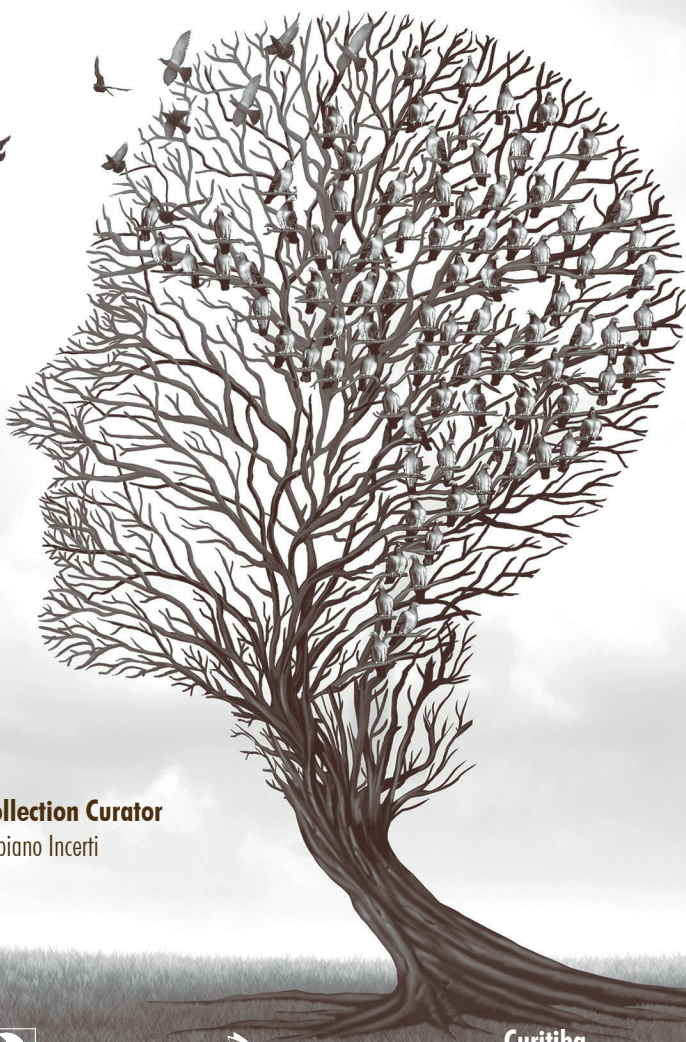


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ARE WE CLOSER TO GOD?



**Collection Curator**

Fabiano Incerti



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## PRESENTATION

The evening of April 11, 2016 will be remembered at the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná. On the University Theater (TUCA) stage, one of the greatest intellectual and influential Catholic thinkers, Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, sits for a frank and transparent conversation with one of today's most respected agnostic astrophysicists, Brazilian professor Marcelo Gleiser. The theme that provokes and approaches them is the question for God. From different and equally profound perspectives, as the conversation progresses, they give an example of what seems to be the urgency for our times: we need to dialogue. And both teach us that, before being a concession, dialogue is an exercise that requires openness, learning and the recognition that the other, while *picking me apart*, is the one that completes me.

This is the spirit of the *Courtyard of the Gentiles*, project from the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Culture: believers and non-believers dialoguing on fundamental issues for human existence, regarding culture, science and faith. Held in symbolic spaces in different cities around the

world, it brings together personalities from the universe of arts, economics, science, politics, and academia. Those are Benedict XVI's words to the Roman Curia in December 2009 that inspire this creative and thought-provoking initiative, which has since generated real encounters and active listening: "Today, in addition to interreligious dialogue, there should be a dialogue with those to whom religion is something foreign, to whom God is unknown and who nevertheless do not want to be left merely Godless, but rather to draw near to him, albeit as the Unknown".

It was the partnership with the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), the Archdiocese of Curitiba and FTD Education that made it possible for the PUCPR Science and Faith Institute to hold the first edition of *Courtyard of the Gentiles* in Brazilian lands and released, with the publication of this work, its first collection of books.

May the following pages be inspiring to new times, where the simple gesture of sitting at the table for good conversation is the sign of the most powerful human and spiritual convergence.

Good reading!

**Fabiano Incerti and Rogério Renato Mateucci**

Curitiba, summer of 2018.







## PREFACE

*Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*

**John 8:32**

*It is perfectly true, as the philosophers say, that life must be understood backwards. But they forget the other proposition, that it must be lived forwards.*

**S. Kierkegaard**

The conviction that knowledge leads us to the best of worlds is reckless; most of the time, it is based on critical judgment and ideological choices that tend to eliminate differences. The best of all worlds assumes a kind of eugenic and biased purity, the condition of a desired emancipation of man at all costs. From this perspective, the well-informed reason decides about right and wrong, creates and destroys, emancipates and condemns. History has given us enough grounds to prudently distrust progress reduced to products of objective rationality.

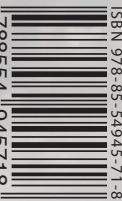
Our time, based on hegemony of a triumphant reason, dominated by a technoscientific vision, has specialized in the descriptive understanding of the world and loses, day by day, the primordial intimacy with enchantment. Today, the world shares a conviction resulting from the triumph of the lights of Reason, definitely pushing back myths, superstitions and religions. The







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