



PONTIFICIO ATENEO
SANT'ANSELMO
Roma

This colloquium invites participants to read Ivan Illich as a theological thinker of modernity. In his conversations with David Cayley, Illich argues that the modern world becomes intelligible only when understood as both an extension and a perversion of the Christian message. This is not merely a polemical thesis but a method of discernment. His analysis traces a genealogy of evangelical corruptions: charity becomes administered service, hospitality becomes hospitalization, care becomes sanitary management, teaching becomes compulsory schooling, mission becomes development. What once arose from gratuity, relation, and personal responsibility is thus absorbed into apparatuses that promise the good while organizing its corrupted form. Illich offers no programme. He proposes instead a critical practice of perception: stripping words bare, identifying thresholds of inversion, defending the vernacular, speaking from the margins without turning them into authority. His work enacts a theology of lucidity—at once ascetic and prophetic—grounded in what is fragile, embodied, and exposed.

The colloquium seeks to examine this method and its contemporary urgency: Where do vernacular spaces still remain beyond administration? What kind of theology may emerge outside dispositifs of control? And how can resistance endure without itself being captured by processes of institutionalisation? To read Illich today is to learn how to name the corruption of the good without reproducing it.

Participation

Presence and online. No fee. Registration required.
Registration deadline 10 May 2026.
Please complete the registration form on www.anselmianum.com.

Translation

The main language of the conference is English.
Simultaneous translation into English will be provided for the Italian contributions.

For more information

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Title: Ivan Illich, séminaire à la CIDOC, Cuernavaca, Mexique
Author: Freund Gisèle (1908-2000), Author's right: © GrandPalaisRmn - Gestion droit d'auteur / Fonds MCC / IMEC
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Theological colloquium *Corruptio optimi quae est pessima*

Exploring Ivan Illich as a Theological Thinker

An inter-university collaboration between
Prof. Dr. Isabella Bruckner, Pontificio Ateneo Sant'Anselmo, Rome
Prof. Dr. Gemma Serrano, Collège des Bernardins, Paris
Dr. Anna Sjöberg, Uppsala University, Uppsala



FIDES QUÆRENS INTELLECTUM

Locations:

Pontificio Ateneo Sant'Anselmo,
Piazza dei Cavalieri di Malta 5, 00153 Roma

Pontificia Università Gregoriana,
Piazza della Pilotta 3, 00187 Roma

Dates: May 14th-16th, 2026

THURSDAY, 14 MAY

Aula XI, Sant'Anselmo

15.00 Greetings and Introduction

I. The Gospel and its Corruption

15.30 *Klesis* and *Energeia*: On Mechanisms of Corruption

Anna Sjöberg *Uppsala University, Uppsala*

16.15 Scarcity and Sovereignty: Ivan Illich and Jacques Maritain on the End of the Rules-Based Order

Mårten Björk *Newman institute, Uppsala*

17.00 Coffee break

II. A Hedge-Rider between the Worlds

17.30 Passing the Watershed: The Use of Metaphors in Ivan Illich's Work

Jakob Deibl, O.S.B. *Universität Wien, Vienna*

18.15 The Apocalyptic Illich: The Changing Place of Apocalypse in Illich's Thought, and the Significance of this Figure in Our Time

David Cayley (online) *Writer and broadcaster, Toronto*

FRIDAY, 15 May

Aula XI, Sant'Anselmo

09.00 Introduction

III. Passed Watersheds

09.15 Schooling/Deschooling: Learning as an Instituting and Transformative Practice

Vincenzo Rosito *Pontificio Istituto Giovanni Paolo II, Rome*

10.00 Medical Colonisation and Cybernetic Health Regime

Markus Riedenauer *KU Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Eichstätt*

10.45 Coffee break

IV. (Dis-)Embodiment and Perception

11.15 Ascesis of the Gaze in Times of Virtual Reality

Yvonne Dohna Schlobitten *Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Rome*

12.00 The Decorporalisation of Liturgy and the Body of Christ

Isabella Bruckner *Pontificio Ateneo Sant'Anselmo, Rome*

FRIDAY, 15 MAY

Aula F007, Pontificia Università Gregoriana

15.15 Greetings

V. The Complexity of Tools

15.30 Mimetic Machines, the Tool Metaphor, and the Person

Tomas Ekenberg *Newman Institute / Uppsala University, Uppsala*

16.15 La Digitalizzazione e l'Età del Sistema

Gemma Serrano *Collège des Bernardins, Paris*

17.00 Coffee break

VI. Hidden Narratives

17.30 So Close, Yet So Far: Ivan Illich and Paolo Prodi

Marcello Neri *Istituto Superiore di Scienze dell'Educazione e della Formazione "G. Toniolo" of Modena*

18.15 La vocazione di Ivan

Fabio Milana *FSCIRE, Bologna / Editor of the Opera omnia of Ivan Illich in Italian*

SATURDAY, 16 May

Aula XI, Sant'Anselmo

09.00 Introduction

VII. Thinking Politics differently

09.15 In the Breakdown of Colonial Modernity:

Political Theology from below in the Traces of Ivan Illich

Martin Kirschner and Carlos Mendoza-Álvarez

KU Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Eichstätt, and Dominican Community, San Cristóbal de Las Casas

10.30 Coffee break

11.00 Vernacular Revolutions. Illich's Contribution to a Theology of Common Life

Sebastian Pittl (online) *Universität Tübingen, Tübingen*

11.45 Ivan Illich e la politica che viene

Giorgio Agamben (participation to be confirmed) *Philosopher, Venezia / Editor of the Opera omnia of Ivan Illich in Italian*

13.00 Conclusions