

SBTM, CTEWC, and The First

SBTM is a Portuguese acronym that stands for [Brazilian Society of Moral Theology](#). Founded in 1977, SBTM gathers Catholic theologians who work with ethics aiming to “create an environment of reflection and encounter among theological ethicists in Brazil.” Every three years, SBTM has an Assembly to elect a new leadership team, reflect about its trajectory, and develop priorities for the next three years. In this year’s Assembly (Nov. 08 and 09, 2021), the following theologians, most of them members of the [CTEWC](#), were elected: [Mário Marcelo Coelho](#) (President), [Alexandre A. Martins](#) (Vice-President), Moésio Pereira de Souza (Secretary), [Marta Luzie de Oliveira Frecheiras](#) (Second-Secretary); [Andre Luiz Boccato de Almeida](#) (Treasurer); and Oton da Silva Araújo Junio (Second-Treasurer). They will take the baton passed from the team led by [Maria Inês de Castro Millen](#), the first woman president of SBTM, for the past six years.

SBTM has a close relationship with the CTEWC. Many SBTM members have been active participants on CTEWC [conferences](#) and projects. SBTM also has promoted the CTEWC work in Brazil, with actions that include the translation into Portuguese of the books following the [Conferences of Trent and Padua](#). International CTEWC members have also spoken in SBTM conferences in Brazil, such as Antonio Auntiero (Germany), Claudia Leal Luna (Chile), MT Davila (Puerto Rico), and Bryan Massingale (USA) who spoke in the last events. Some CTEWC member also published in [SBTM books](#), such as James Keenan (USA), Andrea Vicini (Italy), Pablo Branco (Argentina), Edwin Vásquez (Peru) and several others.

In this year’s Assembly, it was possible to feel the close relationship that SBTM cultivates with CTEWC. This was highlighted several times during the meeting. One of the most fruitful connections between SBTM and CTEWC during this Assembly was the positive influence that an article published in [The First](#) had in leading a discussion about the role of this Brazilian group of theologians and to discern a topic for SBTM next conference. One of the members brought to the Assembly discussion the article [“Bridges Built and Burned in Ethical Discourse”](#) by [Mary M. Doyle Roche](#), published on November 1, 2021 in the CTEWC newsletter.

In this essay, Roche draws from the insight of Sarajevo 2018 on the need to build bridges among theologians and between theology and the broader society in an interdisciplinary, intercultural, and global perspective. But she stresses that now is time to cross bridges: “Crossing bridges takes courage to move into a liminal space and hope that you will be welcomed on the other side.” Then she adds: “People of good will might disagree about some of the particulars and so we all need to cross a few bridges. I cross bridges to learn from others about their experiences. I cross bridges to access resources. I discern which bridges to cross according to whether the dignity and beauty of marginalized people are sincerely lifted up and honored. I don’t cross for doctrinal debate that leaves little room for the bodies of the brutalized. Self-care dictates that I cross only where no unjust toll is levied, where I and others are not dehumanized in the process.”

SBTM members gathered in Assembly took time to reflect on the need of building bridges and the courage of crossing them, to create a dialogue with the other, breaking silos and prejudices. The understanding is that theological ethics must take this challenge of crossing bridges to go beyond borders that separate us from other disciplines, perspectives, methods, ideologies, institutions, countries, cultures, and so on. As a result, SBTM members elected the topic: “Cross Borders: An Urgent Call for Theological Ethics” for its next conference in September 2022.

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