

In Memoriam

Ulrich Winkler

On 27 January, only a few weeks before his sixtieth birthday, Professor Dr. Ulrich Winkler, left us. He was a prominent scholar in the field of Intercultural Theology and Interreligious Studies, based for many years at the University of Salzburg, Austria. From 2016–2019 he held the Laurentius Klein Chair for Biblical and Ecumenical Theology at the Theologischen Studienjahres Jerusalem before he returned to Salzburg in 2019. Ulrich Winkler was for many years a significant force in the European Society for Intercultural Theology and Interreligious Studies, ESITIS. He was connected to the ESITIS board from 2008 and hosted our second biannual conference in Salzburg in 2009. On the board, he served as vice president 2013 – 2016 and as president 2016–2017. Ulrich Winkler was an innovative scholar with a distinct practical sense, he was an entrepreneur in the field who worked tirelessly to connect people, organize conferences, get funding, and to publish conference volumes – everything were crucial to keep ESITIS going as a research network. He co-edited *Interreligious Hermeneutics in Pluralistic Europe: Between Texts and People* (2011) based on the Salzburg conference, *Contested Spaces, Common Ground* (2016) after ESITIS' conference in Bilbao, Spain, and *Shifting Locations and Reshaping Methods: Methodological Challenges Arising from New Fields of Research in Intercultural and Interreligious Studies* (2018) after our conference in Lublin, Poland. He was a mentor for several young scholars entering into the field of Intercultural Theology and Interreligious Studies.

Colleagues in ESITIS describe Ulrich Winkler as warm-hearted and humorous, and as a meticulous organizer, reliable and always updated on the latest scholarly developments in the field as well as any practical question that typically arises in an organization like ESITIS. He always found a solution, and never spared himself in his effort to contribute and take on responsibility. He could come across as quiet, but always easy to engage in a conversation. He rarely sought attention for himself, but encouraged and supported others to take the scene. Not that he did not enjoy attention, but you could rather sense that his spiritual ideals of modesty was deeply imprinted in his personality. He could, if you encouraged him, tell adventurous stories from his very exciting life, his travels, his encounters with colleagues. Thanks to him, we also have a wonderful memory bank from all the ESITIS conferences he attended, where he always brought his advanced

camera – and the pictures are all well organized and presented on the website of University of Salzburg.

The present and former board members of ESITIS are sending our deepest condolences to Ulrich Winkler's family, friends, and colleagues. We will miss him sorely in our network, not only as a person, but also for his scholarship and vision for the field.