

## CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

- Topic: Paths Toward Reconciliation  
Convener: Margaret R. Pfeil, University of Notre Dame  
Moderator: Brian D. Berry, College of Notre Dame of Maryland  
Presenters: Rosemarie E. Gorman, Fairfield University  
Raymond J. Webb, University of Saint Mary of the Lake

In conversation with the Catholic social tradition, Rosemarie Gorman and Raymond Webb addressed distinct but complementary theological paths toward reconciliation. Gorman ("Embracing the Other: The Will Toward Reconciliation in the Midst of Conflict") adopted a view from the margins, exploring the contributions of Miroslav Volf, Desmond Tutu, Jon Sobrino, and Ignacio Ellacuría to a nascent theology of reconciliation. Normative peacemaking practices that are historically situated and grounded in distinct contextual theologies illuminate the path toward reconciliation, she argued. While Volf objects to strict opposition of the categories of oppression and liberation, his account of the embrace as the object of action for justice resonates with Sobrino's emphasis on discipleship in his theology of the cross. Following Jesus for both Sobrino and Ellacuría means directing the will toward reconciliation by taking the crucified down from the cross, embracing the other by actively responding to human suffering, including the effects of socioeconomic structures of violence. Like Ellacuría, Desmond Tutu roots his theology of reconciliation in praxis and regards Christian non-violence as a presumption that needs to be overridden. Drawing on the African understanding of *ubuntu*, Tutu emphasizes the radical interrelationship of all humanity as the ground of practices of restorative justice.

Resonating with the spirit of *ubuntu*, Ray Webb ("Solidarity: A Dialogical Path toward Roman Catholic-Muslim Reconciliation") developed an idea suggested by Cardinal Francis George that "solidarity" offers a dialogical way forward in Christian-Muslim relations. Webb drew on the work of John Paul II to describe solidarity as an action, an attitude, a moral duty, and a virtue that contributes to the common good and requires self-sacrifice. In the Catholic tradition, solidarity takes root in "communion," which reflects the trinitarian life of the one God. The ecclesial reality of communion is related to solidarity as being is to action, as theory is to praxis. For Muslims, the Oneness of God anchors the notion of solidarity. Human unity is a reflection of God's Oneness. Both religious traditions positively support respect for the other, the possibility of the salvation of the other, and cooperation with the religious other.

Webb identified a dynamic developmental process of growth in solidarity. Gradually, believers are coming to see that human interdependence entails moral responsibilities and that interreligious dialogue is a constitutive dimension of faithful practice. Areas requiring further expressions of solidarity include integral development, exploration of the role of religion in societies, care for creation,

and education regarding the need for reconciliation between Muslims and Christians.

Gorman and Webb invited discussion among those in attendance by commenting briefly on one another's presentations. Gorman suggested the importance of considering the context within which Muslim interpreters are located. The view of Muslim scholars may be quite different from that afforded by a local conflict situation. Webb affirmed Gorman's point that victims of oppression still have power, and he wondered briefly about further distinctions to be drawn between the South African and Salvadoran contexts.

Their comments sparked a wide-ranging conversation about the theory and praxis of reconciliation. Accountability surfaced as an important dimension of the reconciliation process, as seen in the two civil suits pursued in the case of the four American churchwomen murdered in El Salvador. In such instances, the African concept of *ubuntu* would accord a central role to the community in requiring some response to the harm done. One person suggested that we give more attention to the role of memory in reconciliation, while another cautioned that memory is dangerous and has the potential to inhibit as well as nurture healing. Modeling the presenters' emphasis on praxis, one participant sought advice on how to establish a program in his local context to foster dialogue among Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

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#### EARLY CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Topic: Salvation as Reconciliation  
 Convener: Alexis James Doval, Saint Mary's College of California  
 Presenter: Alexis James Doval, Saint Mary's College of California

Doval's paper was entitled "Athanasius on the Reconciling Power of Jesus' Death." In the *De incarnatione*, Athanasius presents a fairly complex soteriology, which is usually noted for its clear expression of the solidarity model of atonement by deification: God becomes human that humans might become divine. He also treats other aspects of Christ's saving work including the crucifixion. In particular, he addresses whether it was fitting or necessary for Christ to suffer and die the way he did, a question not often asked by other Church Fathers.

Part I of the paper briefly outlined the larger picture of the incarnate Word's mission, to take on a human nature, and by living, dying, and rising in solidarity with humanity, destroy death and restore incorruptibility and the knowledge of God to the human race. Part II then focused on sections 19-25 to see how within