in vocabulary (from "matter" and "spirit," "body," and "soul," to the "subject" and his/her "copresence in an act of openness to Mystery") and in style of argument as he moves from his essay "Hominization" (1956) to his work Foundations of Christian Faith (1974). In both cases, however, he stresses the unity of the human person. Secondly, in the view of phenomenology (Husserl and Heidegger), some of which was appropriated by Rahner, meaning and understanding are not fundamentally derived from the sciences, but rather realized in the sciences from our lived embodied experience within the world, with its basic structure of meaning—thus giving new impetus to our understanding of ourselves as subjects. This allows a deeper interrelation and harmony between theology and neuroscience, enhancing our sense of self and of freedom. Thirdly, hermeneutics brings to the interrelationship a deepened sensitivity to the different levels of discourse, of meaning, and of the different kinds of operations of meaning, enabling, among other things, a nuanced creative syntheses of neuroscientific and theological viewpoints. We begin to discover the consonance of the meaning flowing from the neurosciences with theological meanings.

In the discussion period these ideas were explored more fully, and several issues, such as the question of the relationship of unity and multiplicity in Stoeger's proposed definition of "soul," were raised as needing further clarification and development.

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ECCLESIOLOGY

Topic: International Theological Commission: "Memory
              and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past"
Convener: Susan K. Wood, Saint John's University, Collegeville
Moderator: Edward P. Hahnenberg, Xavier University, Cincinnati
Presenters: Bernard P. Prusak, Villanova University
              Christopher M. Bellitto, Paulist Press

Both speakers addressed the 1999 document of the International Theological Commission, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past* (*MR*). Bernard Prusak began by noting that, historically, a document focused on the issue of the church asking for forgiveness is in itself quite remarkable. Unlike Pope John Paul II's *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* or the liturgy (March 12, 2000), *MR* does not specifically ask for forgiveness. Rather, it seeks to clarify "the reasons, the conditions, and the exact form of the requests for forgiveness for the

faults of the past." Thus Prusak's critical assessment focused on these method-ological presuppositions.

MR grounds its understanding of the church in the analogy of the Incarna-tion. It points out the fundamental difference between Christ and church, but wraps this difference in Vatican II's distinction between the indefectible fidelity of the church and the weaknesses of her members—between the Bride of Christ, "with neither blemish nor wrinkle," and her often wayward children. Prusak suggested that *MR*'s use of Colossians and Ephesians (rather than 1 Corinthians) presents a somewhat abstract image of the church's perfection, not unlike Augustine's description of the perfect form of the church that existed before creation or the CDF's 1993 letter on the church as communion, which spoke of the universal church as "a reality ontologically and temporally prior to every individual particular church."

From there, Prusak called into question three distinctions operative in *MR*. First, *MR* distinguishes between the holiness *of the church* and holiness *in the church*. The holiness *of the church* is described in the language of church as holy and spotless body, cosmic fullness, and perfect Mother. Such language must be tempered by a certain reserve. For how can an entity that considers itself always holy and perfect offer credible apologies to anyone? A second distinction is between historical judgment and theological/ethical discernment. *MR* merely raises the difficulty both of determining what actually happened in the past and of deciding how to evaluate today what happened then. Finally, Prusak questioned *MR*'s application of the distinction between magisterium and authority in the church, which allows *MR* to explain how behavior contrary to the Gospel by persons vested with authority in the church need not imply involvement of the magisterial charism. But, given the Crusades and Inquisition sanctioned by popes and councils of the past, shouldn't the principle of historicity advocated by *MR* be applied also to ask: Was this distinction between authority and magisterial value prevalent in the period under consideration?

Christopher Bellitto, noting the complementary roles of the theologian and historian, focused his presentation on the historical concerns in *MR*. He prefaced this presentation by noting some of the background issues: the timing of *MR*, the notions of reform and fallibility, the twin pole of memory and identity, and the apology chic current in society and how this might shape reception of *MR*. Bellitto concluded his introductory remarks by clarifying the meaning of the phrase "purification of memory," noting *MR*'s vision of a purification that is about forgiving, but not forgetting.

Bellitto then spoke of the historian's role in reconstructing and contextual-izing past events. He fears that *MR* has set an impossibly high standard for the historian when it asks, as a prerequisite for moving forward, first, a correct historical judgment of what actually happened in the past (which is hard enough) and, second, "moral certainty" that the historical actors knew what they were doing or saying was objectively wrong. Consistently, *MR* circumscribes the issue

of personal and collective guilt in a way that renders the judgment of the historian nearly useless. In support of this claim, Bellitto noted some of the problematic distinctions identified by Prusak: "the church" vs. her sons and daughters, holiness *of the church* vs. holiness *in the church*, magisterium vs. authority.

The reason for the act of the collective examination of conscience is to identify objects of reform so that we—as a body of members—can move forward in greater fidelity to the gospel. The issue of reform allows the historian to point out (as was understood in the medieval church) that the church as institution can indeed sin and be guilty. Thus both individual and institution are capable of reform. Bellitto ended by evoking his opening observation about timing. The sex abuse scandals today illustrate the tensions pervading this discussion of sin, crime, memory, and forgiveness and challenge the church to learn from examples of reconciliation in other contexts (Holocaust, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, ecumenism, etc.) in order to move forward.

Subsequent questions concerned the theological context of *MR*, the issue of collective guilt vs. collective responsibility, the pastoral difficulty of speaking of the sin of the church, and the magisterium/authority distinction. Discussion allowed a clarification of the presenters' critical assessment of the methodological presuppositions of *MR*, but positive appreciation for its goals.

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MORAL THEOLOGY

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Topic: Virtuous Sex
Convener: Thomas B. Leininger, Regis University
Presenters: Edward Vacek, Weston Jesuit School of Theology
             James F. Keenan, Boston College

Edward Vacek presented a virtue-centered, experiential approach to chastity. The current Roman Catholic approach to sexual ethics has largely abandoned teleological reflection in favor of an absolute deontology that emphasizes intrinsic evil. Yet human sexuality involves great complexity. As a consequence, there is great uncertainty concerning sexual ethics in the church, society, and individual lives. A personalist, teleological approach to sexual ethics that allows uncertainty and aspires to prudence is better suited to negotiate this complexity.

Building upon Aquinas, the Catholic tradition has provided a corrective to act-centered ethical theories through its emphasis on the virtues and anthropology. Differing views of God, grace, sin, and the world lead to different accounts