

anagogical imagination is the presupposition of the capacity of the human person to be transformed in deep and profound ways. Garcia-Rivera elaborated on this proposal and discussed its implications for aesthetics and for other important theological concerns, especially for the "option for the poor."

William Spohn responded positively to Garcia-Rivera's presentation but raised two points for further discussion. First, whether Tracy's analogical imagination is actually as restricted as Garcia-Rivera presents it. Second, he raises the issue of whether a wider view of theological aesthetics needs to ground the author's view.

Gary Riebe-Estrella similarly appreciated the presentation, but raised some questions regarding the legitimacy of Garcia-Rivera's move to the anagogical imagination based on the concept of "mestizaje." Riebe-Estrella expressed strong reservations about the origination of "mestizaje" itself, and how this phenomenon functions in relation to the dominant culture. Garcia-Rivera believes that the real question for people of multiple cultures is how to negotiate strategically between the various cultures they inhabit rather than how to develop some new transformed culture that incorporates the respective distinct cultures.

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PATRISTIC THEOLOGY

- Topic: The Spirit Is Moral Teacher
Convener: John J. O'Keefe, Creighton University
Moderator: Lauren Pristas, Benedictine College
Presenters: James Le Grys, *The Thomist*
 Julia Fleming, Creighton University
Respondent: Michael Hollerich, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul

The intention this year was to move the patristic theology group toward greater dialogue with issues of contemporary systematic theology. Both of the papers in this year's section did this, though in different ways.

In his paper "God-Language and the Pedagogy of the Holy spirit according to St. Gregory of Nyssa," Dr. Le Grys discussed the way in which patristic theology, in particular Gregory of Nyssa's *Against Eunomius*, contributes to the contemporary debate about "god language." According to Le Grys, patristic

theology, like its modern counterpart, accepted the notion that the nature of God is unknowable in se. That is, no language used to describe God presents a complete and exhaustive portrait; God is essentially a mystery. Eunomius was mistaken when he attempted to argue that the word "agennetos" somehow described God's nature. Nevertheless, according to patristic theology, some names for God are considered to be more appropriate than others because they are contained in Holy Scripture and are revealed. Le Grys suggests that the particular language of revelation ought to be given more attention by modern theologians interested in the "names of God."

Julia Fleming's paper "Raw Vegetables, Unfit Preachers, and Healings from a Body Nearly Dead: the Spirit as Moral teacher in John Cassian's *Conferences*" explored the way the Holy Spirit seems to work outside the normally expected channels when leading the ascetic to growth in the spiritual life. Fleming argues that Cassian, despite the strong recommendations he makes about the path one ought to follow toward spiritual maturity, provides ample space for the Spirit to work in surprising ways. A striking example is the Abba Paul who "would not permit himself to see even the garments of a woman, much less her face." Poor Paul was struck with an illness requiring that he be cared for by women for the rest of his days. In his incapacity, the Spirit healed others through him and perhaps even healed Paul himself of his misogyny. According to Cassian, the Spirit is a patient teacher who builds upon success and failure and cannot be restricted to any particular method. These are good lessons for any generation.

Michael Hollerich's response and the comments that followed tended to focus on the first paper. Some suggested that the discussion of names needed more nuancing. For example, patristic theology understood that Scripture offers many "names" for God, but gives pride of place to the three persons of the Trinity. Most agreed that the importance of revelation in any discussion of names cannot be overemphasized. Fleming's paper generated comments about the nature of patristic understanding of the spiritual life. Too often we do not appreciate the nuanced maturity of some of these ancient authors.

The session concluded with a discussion of the purpose of the patristic theology group. Since patristic scholars meet the week before the CTSA, all agreed that this group should work to increase dialogue between historical and systematic theologians. Topics should be selected that are likely to be of interest to the systematicians.

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