

SELECT GROUPS

- Topic: A Discussion on Eucharistic Theology
in Jean-Luc Marion's *God without Being*
- Convener: Xavier John Seubert, OFM, Villanova University
- Moderator: Michael Scanlon, OSA, Villanova University
- Presenters: Xavier John Seubert, OFM, Villanova University
Regis Duffy, OFM, St. Bonaventure University
Michael Scanlon, OSA, Villanova University

Michael Scanlon moderated and introduced the session. He began by indicating how Marion invites us to think of God outside the structures of ontotheology (immutability, impassibility) and to think of the unthinkable under a figure (icon) that is unthinkable. Love (*agape*) is an appropriate icon because love is enriched by the absence of all limiting conditions. Since love must be experienced rather than known, one must look for the supreme gift of love, which Marion finds in the eucharist. In postmodernist fashion Marion plays with the equivocal meanings of "present" in the eucharistic event—present as tense and present as gift—with accent on the latter and deconstruction of the former as the "here and now" of the metaphysical tradition.

Xavier Seubert's paper looked to Marion for a model of sacramental engagement. A major obstacle to the development of a theologically adequate paradigm of sacramentality has been the development of the notion of substance in Western thought. This has resulted in a statically envisioned permanence of the individual thing and the permanent presence of the human subject. In his discussion of the relation between subject and reality in terms of the structures of the icon/idol dynamics, Marion retrieves a relational understanding that is essential to an authentic sacramental event.

Seubert explained how in Marion's thought the human need to contour the utterly Unparticular is at the basis of the distinction between icon (authentic sacramental engagement) and idol (inauthentic stopping of the human infinite aim in the particular). Based on these dynamics, Marion develops a vision of the essential relationality of reality, subject and substance and thereby establishes the foundation for authentic sacramental engagement.

Regis Duffy's presentation began by briefly summarizing two important "givens" in Marion's thought: 1. God is more accurately described in terms of giving than of being. 2. The icon allows the intention of the invisible to occur visibly. In taking seriously Marion's dictum that the eucharist is a test of any theological systematization, Duffy suggested some questions that arise from

Marion's position on the eucharist developed in the book's fifth chapter, "On the Eucharistic Site of Theology."

Duffy discussed how Marion insists on the importance of an adequate hermeneutic that leads us to the event. Christ at Emmaus is the model for this hermeneutic and the only one that is theologically adequate. It is not so much that the Christ, the Word, disappears from the disciples' sight as that they have become implicated in the eucharistic event. Marion then proceeds to the question of "real presence" especially through his discussion of time. Duffy's critique centered on Marion's use of "*in persona Christi* theology" and the lack of an epicletic dimension.

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