

- Topic: Ecumenical Colloquium on Yves Congar:
Congar and Christian Worship
- Convener: Mark E. Ginter, St. Meinrad School of Theology
- Presenter: Richard J. Beauchesne, Emmanuel College
- Respondents: Maxwell Johnson, School of Theology,
St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota
Harry Pappas, St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church, Minneapolis

Drawing from published works as well as personal communications, Beauchesne's paper argued a triphasal thesis about Congar's understanding of worship: (1) that worship is primarily one's life lived in faith, hope and charity; (2) that only then can worship become liturgy; (3) that, in fact, worship consists of two phases: existential and celebrational, life and liturgy. Ecumenically speaking, Beauchesne made the first phase of his thesis consonant with themes dominant in the Christian East and non-Catholic Christian West based on Congar's interpretation of Rom. 12:1. From the perspective of Orthodox Christianity, the doctrine of deification is a more comprehensive view of worship as life than Roman Catholicism has had in the previous three centuries. From the perspective of Protestant Christianity, Congar concurs that the baptismal priesthood of all believers specifically defines a Christian as a Christian.

Johnson highlighted four ecumenical implications of Congar's approach and raised two issues for further clarification and discussion. First, the ecumenical implication of "Christian worship as life" belongs to the patristic era, especially in interpreting such passages as Rom. 12:1. Second, since Congar's theology of "worship as life" is, first and foremost, a theology of grace, it may contribute to aiding the "Joint Statement on Justification" between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation in 1998. Third, by emphasizing baptismal priesthood, there is no question but that sooner or later, especially with regard to Eucharist, ecumenical dialogue has to deal with the question of ordination, with who presides at Eucharist and how ordination itself is understood and interpreted. Fourth, many Lutherans, Anglicans, and others would welcome the idea that the sacraments are Jesus' healing touch for us today. The two issues needing further clarification are the role of the Holy Spirit in worship and the relationship of the Church to the world.

Although not very familiar with Congar, Pappas was delighted to find Congar drawing upon the Christian East in profound ways, e.g., in recovery of a theology of divinization (theosis). In general agreement with Beauchesne's presentation on Congar, Pappas noted particularly that Bishop Kallistos (Timothy) Ware summarizes the priesthood as: one, some, all. There is one priest, Jesus Christ. Some Christians are ordained for leadership, not mediation, separated out from all Christians.

After Beauchesne made some preliminary comments in light of Johnson and Pappas's responses, the succeeding discussion was broad and wide-ranging. The

particular breadth of Congar's own works does not lend itself to be easily manageable in one colloquium. For example, participants mentioned *The Mystery of the Temple* and *Lay People in the Church* as monumental contributions to contemporary Catholic theologies of worship.

Some of the more controverted points included a quote from Congar in personal correspondence to Beauchesne: "There is no sacrament of priesthood (except Baptism); there is a sacrament of Orders. . . ." In addition to the inability to quote this idea from any other published work, Beauchesne also proposed that Congar likewise seems to have rejected the notion of sacramental "mediation" through the priest. With these two controversial ideas, the question was raised: is there an effective role for the presbyter, and, if there is, what is it?

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