

a call to pursue possibilities for initiating interdisciplinary studies on the environment at our institutions. Several expressed the desire to investigate the Catholic tradition more deeply to determine the availability of fruitful notions that can be retrieved and brought to bear on ecological problems. Some helpful resources currently available for classroom use were identified.

Ideas for the session to be held at the next CTSA convention were floated. Considerable interest was expressed in examining environmental violence and specifically environmental racism as a form of violence, which fits well with the convention's reconciliation theme.

JAME SCHAEFER  
*Marquette University*  
*Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

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#### THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Topic: Philosophical Wisdom and the Wisdom of the Theologian  
 Convener: James Le Grys, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops  
 Moderator: Robert Schreiter, Catholic Theological Union  
 Presenters: Mark Johnson, Marquette University  
 Gregory LaNave, Catholic University of America Press  
 Respondent: David Burrell, University of Notre Dame

This session examined the question of the nature of philosophical wisdom and of the contribution of this particular wisdom to the all-embracing wisdom sought by the theologian.

Mark Johnson's paper, "Aquinas and the Theologian's Vision," discussed Thomas Aquinas' doctrine on the nature of sacred doctrine or theology, and asserted that for Thomas theology is the highest wisdom possible, higher than even the discipline of metaphysics, the highest discipline among the philosophical sciences—although it has tasks analogously similar to those of metaphysics. Johnson noted how recounting some disagreement among commentators on the works of Aquinas can result in a deeper appreciation of how Thomas characterizes his theological profession, and how he practices it. First of all, since for Thomas theology or *sacra doctrina* is a wisdom (and therefore functions somewhat like first philosophy), theologians must devote much of their effort to understanding the basic principles of the faith, and to defending them when they come under attack. But second of all, of particular interest is Thomas's contention that theologians must often lay bare certain doctrines that might in reality fall under the heading of one of the philosophical disciplines, because those doctrines are presupposed to the theological principles which are the theologian's main concern. This means that theologians must study philosophy intently in order both to develop sound reasoning habits and to be able to judge

the nature and limits of the philosophical disciplines. This gives the theologian the ability to know when a philosophical teaching might be overstepping its bounds in asserting things that are within the domain of theology.

Thomistic theology's sapiential interest in the principles of sacred doctrine also means that the theologian, for Thomas, has a principal concern with the reading of sacred scripture, since it is from sacred scripture that the prime theological principles come, and it is against scripture that all theological claims must ultimately be assessed. It is no surprise then, that Thomas uses the terms "sacred doctrine" and "sacred scripture" interchangeably.

In his paper, "Bonaventure and the Possibility of Philosophical Wisdom," Gregory LaNave pointed out that the relationship between theology and philosophy can be understood in terms of philosophical wisdom, that is, the way in which philosophical knowledge is perfected. At the heart of Aquinas' understanding of philosophical wisdom lies being as being. Bonaventure looks at philosophical wisdom from two different perspectives.

One perspective considers the capacity of the soul. The philosopher knows the formal conditions for philosophical wisdom (i.e., the knowledge of God as the exemplary cause of all that is), but he does not, as philosopher, know the thing that satisfies those conditions. The theologian knows that this exemplarity in God is rooted in the complete self-communication of the Father in the Word. At the heart of philosophical wisdom, in this view, is the knowledge in faith of God's self-communicative goodness.

The other perspective looks to the object that informs the soul. This perspective is exemplified in the *Collationes in Hexaemeron*. Here the height of philosophical wisdom is described as "omniform wisdom," the manifestation of God in every created thing. The impress of the Word shines forth from the creature and informs the soul of the one who perceives it, provided that there is an "attunement" between the object and the soul, by grace. The person transformed by grace can perceive the Trinity in every created thing. Philosophical wisdom therefore involves not a deduction from what faith knows about God, but attentiveness to what things really are.

This latter kind of argument provides a basis for a discussion with Thomists about the nature of philosophical wisdom. One may compare the doctrines of grace in Aquinas and Bonaventure, and thereby evaluate the latter's claim about the "attunement" of the knower to the expression of the Trinity in the known. One may also compare their understandings of what created things in themselves really are, thus raising the question of Bonaventure's doctrine of being.

Filling in as respondent for Robert Barron, who was unable to attend the convention, David Burrell pointed to some important topics to be considered as research into this question moves forward. An engaging discussion followed.

JAMES LE GRYS  
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops  
Washington, D.C.