

CREATION AND ESCHATOLOGY – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Another World is Possible: Violence, Resistance and Transformation
Convener: Wendy Crosby, Siena Heights University
Moderator: Rhodora Beaton, Aquinas Institute of Theology
Presenter: Paul J. Schutz, Santa Clara University
Nathan W. O'Halloran, S.J., University of Notre Dame
Michael Anthony Abril, Aquinas Institute of Theology

Paul Schutz's presentation, "En-gendering Creation Anew: Rethinking Gender and Sexuality in a Scientific Age" began our session. Schutz argued that although Pope John Paul II and subsequent popes have affirmed that the creation narratives are not in conflict with evolution or science generally, the magisterium has used and continues to use a "hermeneutic of convenience" when it comes to actually incorporating scientific insights related to the human person. This is especially clear in the *Theology of the Body*, which includes doctrines such as complementarity and the intrinsically disordered nature of homosexuality, both of which are called into question by contemporary scientific disciplines. Schutz turned to the work of William Stoeger to suggest that science and the on-going revelation of God in specific contexts might reveal blind spots in theology, such as the influence of patriarchy. Schutz then offered a few areas where taking science and experience more seriously might cause the magisterium to rethink church doctrine related to women and the LGBTQ+ community. Schutz ended with a call for the magisterium to take its own methods regarding the use of science more seriously rather than merely accepting scientific insights when they are convenient. The discussion following this presentation focused on the entanglement of heteronormativity and complementarity, as well as what to do with "fringe" scientific claims.

Nathan O'Halloran's presentation, "Purgatory and the Eschatological Healing of Wounds," followed. O'Halloran argued for an expansion of the concept of purgatory to include space for the healing of victims in addition to the purgation of sin. To defend this proposal, O'Halloran provided a reading of Perpetua's dreams about her deceased younger brother Dinocrates. In the second dream, Perpetua sees Dinocrates healed from three types of suffering—physical, spiritual, and emotional/social—none of which are related to his own sin. O'Halloran argued that although the idea of purgatory as a place of healing for victims, or *refrigerium* for the dead, has been deemphasized in Western theology, it has always had a place in the tradition in stories such as this. O'Halloran ended by turning to theologians such as Miroslav Volf, Anthony Kelly, and Joseph Ratzinger as offering contemporary openings for an expanded notion of purgatory. In the discussion, there was speculation about whether the proper location for this healing of victims was in purgatory, a paradise in purgatory, or in heaven. O'Halloran leaned toward a paradise in purgatory since the freedom to choose heaven only comes after healing and healing from trauma will entail some suffering.

Michael Anthony Abril's presentation, "Between Progress and Apocalypse: Tension and Violence within Vladimir Solovyov's Cosmic Eschatology" ended our session. Abril focused in particular on a work by Solovyov called *Three Conversations, Including a Short Story about the Anti-Christ* in which Solovyov critiques the

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perspective of Leo Tolstoy. In the dialogue, Mr. Z (representing Solovyov), the Prince (representing Tolstoy), and others are discussing the Anti-Christ. The Prince/Tolstoy promotes a Christianity based on individual morality, the refusal to judge others, and the desire to maintain peace above all else. The Prince/Tolstoy cannot see that the desire to maintain peace by erasing all differences is precisely the mechanism by which the Anti-Christ becomes entangled in history. On the contrary, Mr. Z/Solovyov argues that “to turn the other cheek” does not remove our responsibility to defend the victim. This is a less optimistic view, and it is one that calls for both acts of justice and the interruption of Armageddon to uncover the “peaceful” imperialism of the Anti-Christ. Abril ended with the importance of Christian hope in this moment. The discussion asked whether or not this perspective allowed Solovyov to see through the racism inherent in the forms of social Darwinism popular in Russia at the time. Abril answered that Solovyov never discusses that directly, but his worldview ultimately remained Russian.

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