

GOD AND TRINITY – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Thinking God/Trinity Interreligiously
 Convener: Darren J. Dias, O.P., University of St. Michael's College
 Moderator: Benjamin Lujan, University of St. Michael's College
 Presenters: Jessica Coblentz, St. Mary's College
 Charles A. Gillespie, Sacred Heart University

Jessica Coblentz gave the first paper entitled “Must a Good God be a Feeling God? An Interreligious and Interdisciplinary Reflection on Moral Arguments for Divine Passibility.” If empathy is constitutive of good and right action, Coblentz queries whether God must be empathetic in order to be good. Since images of God inform what right relations look like, an unfeeling God would not act on behalf of others, but would remain distant and aloof. Coblentz problematizes her considerations noting that “empathy” is often framed in gendered ways. For example, compassionate solidarity is often characterized as a “feminine” quality, maternal and otherwise. Furthermore, God’s empathy exonerates God from complicity in evil, so retrieving feelings for divine passability may have different consequences than intended. She draws on feminist scholars as well as Jewish political thinkers in her considerations. The paper concluded with Elizabeth Johnson’s critique and concepts of a loving (as right action and not an affective state) God in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The second paper presented by Charles A. Gillespie was entitled “Thinking Trinity Interreligiously.” Gillespie examines classical Trinitarian categories in the light of drama and spectacle. He employs a prosoponic exegesis to trace the emergence of persona/prosopon from Trinitarian narrative. Thus, personhood is a dynamic personality that points outward and is in relation with something other than itself. In the emergence of the persona/prosopon from narrative, there is always surplus meaning. Gillespie then turns to the 2019 *Document on Human Fraternity and World Peace for Living Together* co-signed by Pope Francis and Sheik Amhad el-Tayeb as a model of interreligious hermeneutics where there is shared language and yet simultaneously the possibility of different meanings.

A very fruitful and animated conversation followed as a significant amount of time was reserved for discussion with and amongst the large and diverse audience.

DARREN J. DIAS, O.P.
 University of St Michael's College
 Toronto, Ontario