

## LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Sacraments, Sacramentality and Liturgy: An Interreligious Approach  
 Convener: Sebastian Madathummuriyil, Duquesne University  
 Moderator: Layla Karst, Loyola Marymount University  
 Presenters: Jonathan Martin Ciraulo, St. Meinrad Seminary  
 Elizabeth Groppe, University of Dayton

The session began with thirty-minute presentations, followed by a discussion that helped the assembly delve deeper into some crucial questions that emerged from the two presentations.

Jonathan Ciraulo's paper, "The Ontological Demands of Cult in Hinduism and Christianity," analyzes the cultic practices of Hinduism and Christianity. It asks about the broader philosophical presuppositions of worldviews that consider material religious cult to be spiritually efficacious. His presentation makes a case for broadening the horizon of interreligious dialogue to include a positive analysis of the concrete religious practices of Hinduism, even though Catholics have historically tended towards appreciating the more philosophical and less cultic aspects of Hinduism (the Upanishads, Advaita Vedanta). He argues that strong notions of cultic efficacy in both Christianity and Hinduism tend to correspond to forms of metaphysical realism, such as the pairing of secondary causality and sacraments as instrumental causes in Aquinas. Similarly, in Hinduism, a denigration or minimization of religious cult tends to accompany views in which nature as a whole is illusory (Shankara), while those thinkers who attribute a real ontological density to the world (Ramanuja, Madhva) also have much higher valuations of cultic practices. Ciraulo explains how this ritual ontology leads toward a realism that is insistent upon the efficaciousness not only of ritual acts but also of all finite acts, which is seen with a particular clarity in Purva Mimamsa. Thus, he concludes by arguing that elevating rather than diminishing the role of cult in both Hinduism and Christianity can bring the Christian and the Hindu conceptions of God and the world closer together rather than farther apart.

Elena Procaro-Foley, professor of religious studies at Iona College, read the paper of Elizabeth Groppe, "'My Harp is Turned to Mourning' (Job 30:31): Reimagining the Church's Response to the Destruction of the Temple Interreligiously," in her absence. Within the context of the convention theme "Thinking Catholic Interreligiously, Groppe's paper engaged the Jewish liturgy of *Tishah b'Av*, a day of communal lamentation and mourning, highlighting its nuances for the Jewish-Christian relationship. She started her presentation by outlining the practice of *Tishah b'Av* and analyzing its historical-theological context and implications. Then, she offered a comparison of the response to the destruction of the Temple in the Jewish liturgy with the response in some early Christian literature. She concluded with some reflections on Catholic practices stimulated by engagement with the Jewish liturgical tradition. She noted that because of the unique historical relationship between Christianity and Judaism, "thinking Catholic interreligiously" in terms of the Jewish tradition differs from engaging other religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism.

Layla Karst moderated the intense and lively discussion surrounding the questions and comments from those in attendance.

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