

and education regarding the need for reconciliation between Muslims and Christians.

Gorman and Webb invited discussion among those in attendance by commenting briefly on one another's presentations. Gorman suggested the importance of considering the context within which Muslim interpreters are located. The view of Muslim scholars may be quite different from that afforded by a local conflict situation. Webb affirmed Gorman's point that victims of oppression still have power, and he wondered briefly about further distinctions to be drawn between the South African and Salvadoran contexts.

Their comments sparked a wide-ranging conversation about the theory and praxis of reconciliation. Accountability surfaced as an important dimension of the reconciliation process, as seen in the two civil suits pursued in the case of the four American churchwomen murdered in El Salvador. In such instances, the African concept of *ubuntu* would accord a central role to the community in requiring some response to the harm done. One person suggested that we give more attention to the role of memory in reconciliation, while another cautioned that memory is dangerous and has the potential to inhibit as well as nurture healing. Modeling the presenters' emphasis on praxis, one participant sought advice on how to establish a program in his local context to foster dialogue among Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

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EARLY CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Topic: Salvation as Reconciliation
 Convener: Alexis James Doval, Saint Mary's College of California
 Presenter: Alexis James Doval, Saint Mary's College of California

Doval's paper was entitled "Athanasius on the Reconciling Power of Jesus' Death." In the *De incarnatione*, Athanasius presents a fairly complex soteriology, which is usually noted for its clear expression of the solidarity model of atonement by deification: God becomes human that humans might become divine. He also treats other aspects of Christ's saving work including the crucifixion. In particular, he addresses whether it was fitting or necessary for Christ to suffer and die the way he did, a question not often asked by other Church Fathers.

Part I of the paper briefly outlined the larger picture of the incarnate Word's mission, to take on a human nature, and by living, dying, and rising in solidarity with humanity, destroy death and restore incorruptibility and the knowledge of God to the human race. Part II then focused on sections 19-25 to see how within

this larger context, Athanasius understands the passion of Christ. It was first shown how Athanasius, despite using legalistic terminology (God places a "condition" on the possession of grace, which is lost through a "transgression" and for which death is the just "penalty"), does not understand the work of Christ according to forensic categories. Mortality is not an extrinsic legal punishment laid upon humanity but an inherent ontological consequence of dissociation from the source of life. Accordingly, "penalty" means the negative consequence of sin (i.e., alienation from God) and Christ paying the penalty for us means only that he performs an act (the refashioning human nature to incorruptibility) of which we are incapable. Taking into account what Athanasius says about solidarity, we can thus say Christ did not suffer and die in our place so we would no longer have to pay the penalty of death, but rather we can now in solidarity with Christ die a death that leads not to annihilation but to resurrection. In other words, Christ suffers death not so much for us as with us. Doval next showed how Athanasius used the idea of sacrifice as an expression of the value or cost of what is given and the motivation for it was love, thanks, or praise; there is no sense of sacrifice for propitiation.

Doval then turned attention to the texts on the crucifixion (sections 19–25). Athanasius's main interest is to ask if Jesus' suffering and death by crucifixion was either fitting or necessary. He first determines that Jesus would not have suffered a death like ours by natural causes since his body was not liable in itself to corruption. Hence if he was to die a death like ours, it would have to come from an external cause. Since it would be inappropriate for him to take his own life, he had to die at the hands of others. Still this is not enough. Since death represents the consequence of sin, to demonstrate that he has completely overcome death and every conceivable evil that brings it on, he confronts the full force of human sin by dying at the hands of those whose very nature he has assumed for salvation:

Death came to his body, therefore, not from himself but from enemy action, in order that the savior might utterly abolish death in whatever form they offered it to him. . . . He accepted and bore upon the cross a death inflicted by others, and above all by his enemies, a death which to them was supremely terrible and by no means to be faced; and he did this in order that, by destroying even this death, he might himself be believed to be the life, and the power of death be recognized as finally annulled. (*DI* 24)

When Christ enters into his passion and death, he is in a position where humanity in all of its sin and brokenness is poised to unleash itself on him. The very human nature he has embraced in solidarity is now rebelling against him as a bitter enemy. By virtue of this solidarity, all are involved in his death. When he accepts the "supremely terrible death" at the hands of his enemies, he does not respond with judgment and reject the sinful nature he had assumed but remains in solidarity and, as it were, takes it with him—when he dies all die with him. He embraces the full scope of evil that had condemned humanity to death

and completely destroys it. Paradoxically, the attempt to cut off Jesus entirely from our lives by rejecting and murderously crucifying him and thus completing our alienation from God, that is, fixing ourselves in eternal death, actually enables Jesus to receive humanity into himself in the full depth of its alienation. In becoming the receiving object of the full scope of sin, he receives our alienation, our death, into himself and can then offer his boundless forgiveness and a new life in his resurrection. For all of humanity, salvation is an experience of reconciliation wherein we join in solidarity with the destroyers of Christ, but then in repentance we let ourselves be embraced in death with the one who in fact cannot be destroyed. Once this death in Christ is embraced (ritualized by a Christian at baptism), the way is clear to be restored to life, and this is possible through solidarity with Christ over whom death has no hold, for when he rises all may rise with him.

Discussion focused on two topics. We first tried to clarify what Athanasius understood as the relationship between sin and death. Athanasius uses death to mean physical and spiritual corruption, the undoing of the human person into nothingness as a result of sin. He does not mean the completion of an earthly life as originally intended for Adam and Eve (and experienced by Mary the Mother of Christ). We then discussed how Athanasius's presentation of the efficacy of Christ's death for overcoming sin and death seems very much akin to René Girard's theory of *mimesis*, according to which Jesus breaks the cycle of violence by being the recipient, like a scapegoat, of human violence and responding with forgiveness and re-creative love.

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YVES CONGAR ECUMENICAL COLLOQUIUM

- Topic: Translation Project of *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Eglise*
 Convener: Mark E. Ginter, Saint Meinrad School of Theology
 Moderator: Michael Attridge, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto
 Presenters: Susan M. Brown, King's University College, London, Canada
 Catherine E. Clifford, Saint Paul University, Ottawa
 Joseph G. Mueller, Marquette University

The presenters at this year's colloquium are among those scholars currently engaged in the English translation of Yves Congar's *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Eglise* (VFR). For the benefit of those in attendance, Joseph Mueller began with a brief overview of VFR, situating it within the historical context in which it arose. Catherine Clifford delivered the first paper entitled: "Congar on the Case