

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

for Ongoing Reform and the Pitfalls of Resistance." Mueller gave the second paper, entitled: "Blindness and Forgetting: Epistemological and Ascetical Situation of the Prophet-Reformer. Susan Brown gave the third paper entitled: "Congar's Conditions for Authentic, Non-Divisive Reform in Part II of VFR: The Reformer's Character is Crucial." Time was allotted after the presentations for questions and open discussion by those present.

In his overview, Mueller explained that Congar's study of reform in the church appeared in a context somewhat like ours. French Catholics who accepted the secular society were divided against those who opposed the state's removal of the church from the integral national identity. The bishops' guarded approvals and disapprovals of the measures of the Vichy regime encouraged this division and ended up lessening the hierarchy's authority in political and ecclesial spheres. In this climate, the disturbances of World War II made room for the flowering of an array of reform movements in many areas of church life. Some of these, the Vatican encouraged, while others it opposed with suspicion and sanction.

Clifford focused on the ecclesiological bases underpinning the need for ongoing reform in the church's life. These, Congar developed in Part I of VFR. The church is subject to the dynamics of history. Thus, various forms and expressions of Christian faith must adapt in each new stage of the church's development. Congar described two pitfalls which may lead some to confuse present forms with timeless tradition. He calls these "the Synagogue" and "Phariseism." Since such terms convey a supercessionist view today, Clifford suggests reinterpreting them as "institutionalism" and "formalism" respectively. Both reformers and those who fall into these pitfalls are motivated by concern for the purity of, and fidelity to, the gospel.

According to Mueller's paper, Congar argued for a reform that aims to improve the way the church's concrete life expresses its permanent essence for a given historical age. But Congar's principles imply that reformers can neither know the essentials of the Christianity they aim to express more truly, nor the degree to which this essence is expressed truly by concrete forms of the church's life; nor can they change such concrete forms without forgetting something about the church's essence. Because God's prophetic call impels true reformers to act under these circumstances, their spiritual lives must be humble, public and respectful of opposition to reform.

Brown pointed out in her paper that reform initiatives can destabilize and divide and are often resisted by those responsible for unity and continuity. Yet such initiatives can provoke the spiritual and intellectual growth which contributes to effective preaching of the gospel. In part II of VFR, Congar described four conditions for nonschismatic ecclesial reform. The would-be reformer must love the church and appreciate its pastoral dimension, must remain in communion with the whole of the church, must understand setbacks as opportunities to improve a reform proposal, and must discern (through research

conducted with the proper dispositions) the original thrust of the church's Tradition and privilege that. Such conditions suggest that the very character of the reformer is crucial to any reform within the church.

The questions and discussions which followed, revolved around several areas: the possibility that Erasmus may have inspired Congar's notion of reform; the difference between "reform" and "renewal"; the development of Congar's pneumatology from VFR to his later works; and how Congar might evaluate the church today, forty years after the reforms of Vatican II, given the clergy sexual abuse crisis.

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SPIRITUALITY

- Topic: Spirituality of the Body and Reconciliation
 Convener: Diana L. Villegas, Acton, MA
 Presenters: Colleen Griffith, Boston College
 James A. Wiseman, Catholic University of America
 Jennifer L. S. Bader, Boston College

Colleen Griffith argued for a more intentional reconciliation of body and soul in the living of Christian spirituality. She reminded us that the Catholic tradition has never endorsed an actual dualism, but has rather endorsed a hierarchical ordering of body and soul. She reviewed the origins of this understanding in the teaching of Augustine and Aquinas, and gave examples of the way in which this hierarchical ordering has affected the experience of bodiliness into the present day. Today hierarchical ordering still implicitly influences spirituality, as in the case of asceticism that highlights transcendence of the body, or spiritualities where bodily differences between male and female form the basis for relationships of domination or inequality.

Griffith suggested elements for a contemporary understanding of bodiliness, taking into account the social and physical sciences. The body is an animate organism with physiological components not dependent on consciousness, yet these components are essential for the existence of a conscious being capable of self representation. The brain as part of the organism makes possible capacities once considered part of the soul. The body is also a sociocultural site in that it is the body existing in and shaped by a particular cultural/historical milieu that significantly impacts the shaping of identity. The body is a product of consciousness and will. These elements contribute to a spirituality that experiences the body as the location for Christian spirituality, thus avoiding a separation of "the