

CHRIST TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Christology and Liturgy in East and West
Convener: Patricia Walter, O.P., Aquinas Institute of Theology
Moderator: Randy Rosenberg, Fontbonne University
Presenters: Khaled Anatolios, Boston College
Thomas Cattoi, Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University
Mark Yenson, King's University College, at the University of Western Ontario

Khaled Anatolios' presentation, "The Liturgical Mind of Christ: The Paschal Mystery in Byzantine Liturgy," had as its point of departure Alexander Schmemmann's appeal to reunite theology and liturgy and his claim that the liturgy of the *Triduum* is particularly revelatory of core Christian beliefs. Anatolios examined Byzantine liturgical texts for Lent and Easter in terms of their soteriology. The cross and resurrection are inseparable, "interpenetrating manifestations" of the mystery of redemption, yet salvific efficacy is attributed to the cross through use of a plethora of biblical images and themes. Just as the liturgical texts show the inner relationship between the cross and resurrection, so too the believer appropriates salvation in Christ through repentance, simultaneously expressing sorrow for sin and trust in God's mercy. Anatolios described this dialectic as "doxological contrition." In the liturgy, the Christian is simultaneously in God's presence and conscious of the gulf caused by sin. If sacramental participation gives us access to the divinized humanity of Jesus, then perhaps the worshiper's stance of "doxological contrition" gives us clues as to Christ's saving work. Perhaps the sinless one takes on sin "*specifically in the mode of repentance.*" Anatolios thus sketches the direction of a "liturgical Christology from below."

Thomas Cattoi's topic was "The Human and the Cosmic: Christological interpretations of the Liturgy in Thomas Aquinas and Maximos the Confessor." Although Aquinas states that the Eucharist celebrates the whole mystery of salvation, he sees the Eucharist primarily as the representation of the redemption attained through Christ's death on the cross, making this redemption present and effective for those celebrating the Eucharist. There is an analogy between the hypostatic union and the Eucharist. Divinity alone can save, but this was accomplished and made visible through Christ's humanity. So, too, in Eucharist Christ makes present the one sacrifice of Calvary through the *imago repraesentativa*. Thomas used a narrative hermeneutic of the various actions in liturgy. Maximos the Confessor, however, used a hermeneutic of cosmic Christology. Just as the hypostatic union joins the visible and invisible, the divine and human, without division or confusion, so too the Eucharist is a cosmic event in which *theoria* and *praxis*, heavenly and earthly realities unite in an anticipation of the eschatological transformation of humanity. The two approaches are complementary, Thomas linking the liturgy to Christ's action on Calvary and Maximos to the cosmic and eschatological significance of the Incarnate Word.

Mark Yenson's presentation was entitled "'Godhead Here in Hiding': Maximus, the Humanity of Christ, and Transubstantiation." Throughout the centuries theologians have made links between the Christological and eucharistic ontology. There seems to be at least a tension between asserting consubstantiality of Christ's humanity and divinity, without the destruction of his true humanity, and the description of Christ's mode of presence in the Eucharist as one in which the substance of bread and wine are changed into or replaced by his body and blood.

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Maximus the Confessor's distinction between principle (*logos*) of nature and mode (*tropos*) of existence might be helpful in understanding transubstantiation not so much as a suppression of created reality as their reception of a new mode of existence through Christ's presence in them, becoming truly *living* bread and *life-giving* wine. Creation is open to transformation and eschatological fulfillment through God's relationship to it. So the communicant is also transformed. Yenson does not suggest replacing "transubstantiation;" rather, along the lines of Maximus' ontology, he proposes bringing to it an understanding of a "perichoretic inherence of created being in the life of God."

A lively discussion of the papers ensued, moderated by Randy Rosenberg. Among the topics of conversation were the importance of noting the specific context of liturgical texts and the status of the term "transubstantiation."

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