

SCIENTIFIC TEACHING OF SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY

INTROD. In keeping with the primary objectives of our Society, this paper proposes to introduce and to promote an exchange of views among our theologians on the scientific teaching of sacramental theology.

I. *Determination of the Sense of the Title:*

A. In itself:

1. Recall recent discussion on the *real* definition of theology (e.g., Roschini); and on scientific apologetics (Cotter).
2. Theology is a science (St. T. I, Q. 1.).
3. Therefore, only proper method of teaching any part of theology is *scientific* teaching.

B. For purpose of this paper:

1. Subject-matter of sacramental theology must be determined and selected and taught scientifically.
2. Scientific method of teaching, as here understood, will include both an accepted *theological* method and a satisfactory *pedagogical* method.

II. *Objectives:*

1. The principal end of a theological education is to make a man a theologian and not a mere practitioner. (Dr. O'Connor, PROCEEDINGS: Vol. I). Especially pertinent in matter of teaching sacramental theology.
2. Pius XI, *The Catholic Priesthood*, Pages 38-45, N.C.W. ed.
3. *Catech. Council Trent* (ed. McHugh and Callan, 1937) Part II, N. 1, pages 141, 161, 199, 213, etc.
4. Practically, therefore, our objective is to enable the seminarian to assimilate sacramental theology in a way that will vitally and permanently influence his preaching (instruction) and administration.

III. *Subject-Matter in Sacramental Theology:*

1. Should dogmatic and moral theology of the sacraments be united?
 - (a) Negative: dogmatic is better presented as in the dogmatic synthesis—by a dogmatic professor—no adequate text as directive for united course.
 - (b) Affirmative: avoids overlapping and repetition—sets moral practice and administration in dogmatic foundation—method of St. Thomas.
2. In dogmatic part, commonly accepted content and division for “De Sacramentis in Genere” and for “De Sacr. in Specie.”
3. Determination of actual material to be presented.
Note: treated under Specific Suggestions.

IV. *Method:*

1. “Ad Angelici Doctoris rationem, doctrinam et principia.” Canon 1366 (2); Cfr. C. 589 (1).
2. Method of St. Thomas analyzed.
3. Method of St. Thomas does not dispense us from proper pedagogical method in daily class.

V. *Specific Suggestions:*

A. Theological:

1. The source of revelation digested with such *fulness* as to afford a firm foundation for scholastic analysis and synthesis.
2. Scriptural exegesis must be precise and sufficient.
3. More liberal use of carefully selected Patristic passages—Historical development.
4. Selection and mastery of Decrees of Church.—Decree to Armenians; Trent; Catech. Trent.
5. Theological reasons developed more fully from the context of the *Summa Theologica*.

B. Pedagogical and Practical:

1. In selection of material, teacher must offer enough collateral material to give *real* meaning to the text.

In other words, teacher's method must be scientific "*in fieri*," i.e., illustrating the "*habitus theologiae*." Teacher must show a wide and personal knowledge and appreciation of his text.

2. In presentation: clearness, adequacy, and especially synthetic summation.
3. Reading assignments—class reports—value of English readings.
4. In testing: frequent oral and written tests and discussions. Tests should also be study guides, formative of "*habitus theol.*"
5. The teaching should be fully in line with correlated modern problems: e.g., Mystical Body—Lay Priesthood—Cath. Action—Liturgy.
6. Finally, Sacramental Theology affords us a grand opportunity to review all theology under unifying principle of the Redeemer.

VI. Recent Works as Guides:

1. M. Daffara, O.P., *De Sacramentis*. (Roma: Marietti, 1944).
2. E. Doronzo, O.M.I., *De Sacr. in Genere—De Bapt. et Confr.—De Eucharistia*. (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1946-1949).
3. L. Lercher, *Instit. Theol. Dogmat.* IV, 2, p. 1. (Oeniponte: Rauch, 1948).
4. A. Piolanti, *De Sacramentis*. (Roma: Marietti, 1947, 2 ed.).

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Digest of Discussion

Father O'Leary, C.P., went over the Outline briefly and succinctly. He stressed especially: I-B-2; II-4; IV-2, 3; V-A1, 5; B-1, 6.

Father John P. Haran, S.J., asked to add one objective—the personal, priestly spirit as acquired through the deeper knowledge and fuller living of sacramental holiness.

The Fathers discussed the question under III-1. The discussion revealed that in all Jesuit schools, the dogmatic and moral teaching of sacramental theology are kept separate. Father James Monks, S.J., started a helpful discussion of ways to keep sacramental teaching free from routine. Here, the daily preparation of the teacher was stressed. The following members took part in the discussion: Rev. Fathers Robert E. Egan, O.S.A., Gentle Crowley, O.F.M., John P. Haran, S.J., James L. Monks, S.J., and Louis E. Sullivan, S.J.

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