

SEMINAR ON MORAL THEOLOGY

The Moral Theology Seminar of the 1989 CTSA meeting focused on a discussion of two pastoral letters: *Partners in the Mystery of Redemption* and *The Many Faces of AIDS*.

The panel for the section on the women's pastoral consisted of Patricia Beatie Jung (Wartburg Theological Seminary), Patrick McCormick (Immaculate Heart Seminary), and Margaret Steinfels (Editor, *Commonweal*).

Prof. Jung began the seminar by arguing that despite their theoretical validation of fatherhood as a vocation, the bishops failed to reform traditional theological and cultural assumptions about the proper role and responsibilities of men in the personality formation of their children. She also criticized the bishops' failure to bless the public vocations and ecclesial ministries of married women, noting in the process that the bishops operate with the assumption that a married woman's ideal, if not only proper, place is the home.

Prof. McCormick began by noting the positive inclusion of many different voices in the pastoral as a part of the experiential base of it. Yet he noted that these voices were not totally attended to during the analysis which led to analysis being done in the traditional mode by bishops or males. Additionally, he noted that, in distinction to the pastorals on peace and the economy, theological experts were not consulted. There was no theological analysis by or of feminists. Again, while women's voices were heard, no significant attention was paid to women in the analysis of the issues.

Ms. Steinfels noted that the letter opened the door to a wider vision of women's issues. Additionally she thought the process of developing the pastoral a valuable experience for the bishops. The letter repudiates sexism and repents of it in the church, which Ms. Steinfels saw as a novel experience. Finally, she noted that the letter calls for the moral accountability of women in society, which provides a positive context for the discussion of women's issues.

The AIDS panel consisted of Eileen Flynn (St. Peter's College), Denis Brodeur (SSM Health Care System), and William Spohn (Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley).

Prof. Flynn raised several interconnected issues. She proposed a hunch that the AIDS debate is being carried out in a patriarchal context and reflects a certain dualism. She discussed the question of tolerating a lesser evil in a compromised situation and examined the issue whether the use of condoms as a lesser evil is the first step on the slippery slope. Prof. Flynn concluded by asking whether a moral theologian can raise honest issues about AIDS and still survive as a moral theologian.

Dr. Brodeur suggested that while the AIDS crisis has not raised new ethical questions on health care, it has focused discussion on all the issues that have been

ignored before. For example, the limitations of the public health model for tracking illness, the importance of social attitudes when it comes to treating a disease or limiting its spread, and the significance of the patient in the course of treatment. He then identified several other public health issues.

Prof. Spohn addressed the question of whether physicians are obliged to treat persons who are HIV positive or who have AIDS. He outlined the historical discussion of this issues and presented several models of patient-physician relationships to determine which would be most appropriate for addressing the current situation.

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