

SEMINAR ON HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

In the first session of the Historical Theology Seminar, which met on June 11, Ronald Modras (Saint Louis University) presented a paper entitled "The Masonic-Jewish Alliance: Catholic Anti-Liberalism and Anti-Semitism on the Eve of the Holocaust" in which he demonstrated that, especially from the 1880's onward, Catholic publications and authorities, including the Vatican, tended to identify the opponents of the Christian social order, not only with liberalism and later with socialism and communism, but also with Masons and, behind Masons, with Jews. This tendency to identify and demonize Jews and Masons can be seen in the pronouncements of leading churchmen and in popular Church publications in France (*La Croix*), Italy (*La Civiltà cattolica*), Poland (*Rycerz Niepokolanej [The Knights of the Immaculata]*), Spain, and even in the United States (Charles Coughlin). Leonard Swidler (Temple University) responded by pointing out the moral importance of this overlooked type of anti-Semitism and noted the evils connected with scholarly ignorance about real Jews and real Masons on the part of Catholics, as well as the evils connected with Church secrecy, as here with the condemnation of Masonry without giving reasons. Part of the solution to the problems of Christian anti-Semitism should include a return to the historical, Jewish Jesus.

The second session of the seminar was devoted to the theology of Bartolomé de las Casas. Two divergent views of Las Casas were presented and debated. In his paper, "A 'Church of Others' in the Sixteenth Century: The Ecclesiology of Bartolomé de las Casas," James B. Nickoloff (College of the Holy Cross) identified four emergent traits in Las Casas's ecclesiology. Las Casas initiates a transition (1) from a Eurocentric to an inculturated model of the Church; (2) from a Church of the rich and powerful to a Church of the poor and powerless; (3) from the Church understood as a perfect society to a sinful Church (not only a "Church of sinners"); and (4) from an ecclesiology that affirms "no salvation outside of the Church" to one that recognizes "no salvation outside of justice for the insignificant of the world." Teresa Maya Sotomayor (a doctoral student at El Colegio de México) called for a reappraisal of Las Casas. In her paper entitled "Rethinking the Roots of Hispanic American Theology: Bartolomé de Las Casas and Sixteenth Century Theology," she argued that Las Casas' understanding of the Church's mission to the Indians must be critically reevaluated in light of its limitations. In addition, Las Casas needs to be placed in a broader context alongside of other contemporary defenders of the Indians, including those who disagreed with Las Casas about substantive issues. Finally, she contended that

the contribution of Las Casas should not overlook the evolution and alternative sources of Latin American and Hispanic theology since the sixteenth century.

BRADFORD E. HINZE

Marquette University

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

FRANCIS NICHOLS

Saint Louis University