

Johnson phrased it, "What does it mean to be one?" or, as Shannon put it, "What does it mean to be indivisible?"

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BLACK CATHOLIC BALTIMORE

Presenters: Cyprian Davis, St. Meinrad School of Theology
Jamie T. Phelps, Catholic Theological Union
Thaddeus Posey, University of St. Thomas

This workshop was convened at the request of Roger Haight, then president-elect of the CTSA, under the rubric of appreciating the heritage of the particular city in which the Society was meeting. The workshop aimed to contribute to correcting the misapprehension that black Catholics are a contemporary phenomenon.

Taking as his point of departure the arrival of Lord Baltimore in 1636, historian Cyprian Davis recounted the introduction, reception, and utilization of "African slave" labor in Catholic Maryland. Davis also discussed the early influx of the French, blacks, and mulattos from those islands known today as Haiti and the Dominican Republic as well. He uncovered the presence of a lively and vigorous black Catholic community, English-speaking as well as French-speaking, illustrated by thriving parish churches, schools, and the development of mutual aid and burial societies prior to the Civil War.

Thaddeus Posey, also a historian, concentrated his remarks on the Baltimore-based Oblate Sisters of Divine Providence. In 1829, under the direction of Sulpician Father James Joubert, Elizabeth Lange, Marie Magdalene Balas, Marie Rose Boegue, and Teresa Duchemin founded what is the oldest congregation of vowed woman religious of African descent in the Catholic world. The sisters conducted a school for black resident and day students and cared for orphans. Posey asserted that the sisters were a spiritual and cultural center for French-speaking black Catholics in Baltimore. Posey's research also uncovered at least two Catholic lay societies, the Society of the Holy Family and the Tobias Society, which were devoted to prayer, study, catechesis, and practical acts of charity.

Systematic theologian Jamie Phelps presented an analysis of the missionary dynamics and incipient ecclesiology of John Slattery who was a founder of the

Society of St. Joseph (the Josephites) which was established in the nineteenth century to work with "Negroes." Phelps stated that Slattery anticipated several of the elements in our contemporary notion of inculturation in evangelization, particularly the importance of indigenous clergy and catechists. Indeed, it was Slattery who broke the color bar and opened U.S. seminaries to "Negro" candidates. At the same time, Slattery was a victim of the prevailing racist ideology of the nineteenth century. While Slattery did not assume that "Negroes" were inferior by nature, he did assume that they were inferior due to a lack of appropriate education and socialization.

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COMMUNICATIONS AND THEOLOGY

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Presenters: Paul A. Soukup, Santa Clara University
Frances Forde Plude, Syracuse University
Respondent: Paul J. Philibert, University of Notre Dame

"The very structures of theological discourse are so linked to the structures of communication that we cannot responsibly do theology without a careful consideration of the theories of communication." So summarized Philibert after presentations in which Soukup challenged the U.S. theological community to develop a distinctive approach to theology which seriously considers the mass media and in which Plude proposed that communications theories will impact theology much the same way as liberation and feminist studies have. "If we remain frozen in texts and hermeneutics, we will miss opportunities to communicate," Philibert said.

Soukup's paper on "Theological Reflection and Communication" argued that theologians should address contemporary communication products and processes as fully as their religious and academic forebears did the media of their eras (e.g., Augustine with rhetoric). If anything, the demand for such reflection grows with the increasing influence of communication on culture (the "chief means of information and education" for many according to John Paul II), especially in