

embolism, pregnancy-induced hypertension complications, hemorrhage, and infection. Pregnancy constitutes a health issue for the whole person. It should, therefore, be understood as a medical reality not unlike other medical realities.

From a medical perspective, issues related to reproduction cannot be addressed solely as sexual issues. Respecting the autonomy of medicine means today, as it has in the past, recognizing that moral theology must attend to this perspective in its moral evaluations. Rather than engaging in discussions of the toleration of or cooperation with evil, medicine can, as it has in the past, offer the tradition a different perspective to understand the evil involved.

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## FEMINIST THEOLOGY

### THE CONCRETE FOUNDATIONS OF EXPERIENCE: PSYCHOLOGY, WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE, AND CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS

Two papers were presented in this workshop that explored how feminist psychology can inform feminist theological reflection. In her paper "Mothers and Other Strangers: Psychoanalysis and Feminist Sacramental Theology," Susan Ross used feminist psychoanalytic insights to rethink the relationship of women to the sacraments. Ross turned to the works of Margaret Homans and Jane Flax for an understanding of the subject. Both theorists accept Lacan's view that full subjectivity comes when the child represses his presymbolic physical attachment to the mother and enters into the symbolic order of linguistic and cultural exchange. On this view, the symbolic comes to be associated with the father and so with the masculine while the presymbolic is associated with the feminine. Both Homans and Flax supplement Lacan's theory with nuanced accounts of the position of women with respect to the symbolic. In particular, Homans notes that separation from the presymbolic is less definitive for girls because it in some sense calls for a repression of their own femininity. This ambiguous subject position forces women to be "bilingual." That is, they are conversant in the language of the symbolic but have not fully lost their embodied, presymbolic awareness. Ross drew on the writings of Nancy Jay and William Beers for an understanding of the relation between sacrifice and gender. Jay argues that rituals

of sacrifice serve to expiate the connection to the mother and to substitute a patrilineal heritage. Beers attributes the motivation for such sacrifice to the male need to control what is perceived to be the power of women.

Ross argued that these four theories, which show that the symbolic order depends on the rejection of the feminine, can be used to explain the motivation behind the partial exclusion of women from the sacramental system, especially from the priesthood and the sacrifice of the Mass. The question remains, however, whether women can participate in the sacraments as they are without becoming complicit in their own oppression. In response to this question Ross suggested that women's ambiguous bilingual stance toward the symbolic can serve as a tool to reconfigure the sacramental system. In the first place, women's presence, however limited, can be a force that undermines the dynamics of the system from within. Second, women can use their marginal position strategically to determine when it is in their interest to accept the system and when it is not. Third, biblical scholarship from a feminist perspective can reinterpret scriptural texts that support sacramental theology. Finally, Ross reminded us that the point of worship is to draw attention away from humans and toward God. This theocentric orientation perhaps explains how it has been and continues to be possible for women to find meaning in worship despite the patriarchal caste of the sacramental system.

In a paper entitled "Strategies for Life: Feminist Psychology as a Resource for Theological Anthropology," Anne O'Hara Graff drew on the work of feminist psychologists, including those at the Stone Center and Carol Gilligan, to construct a theological understanding of the self. Graff began her review of the psychological literature by explaining the Stone Center's characterization of women as "selves-in-relation." On this model, the self is understood as fundamentally intersubjective. It is constructed and develops in and through its "awareness and responsiveness to the continuous existence of the other or others." Graff then considered various factors that inhibit the attainment of selfhood. In their own way, the demands of patriarchy on girls, systemic cultural disorders such as racism, classism, ageism, and homophobia, dysfunctional family systems, and the reality of violence and abuse in the lives of women and children, prevent the formation of relationships of true mutuality. Feminist psychologists have also outlined requirements for healing the disconnected self. The process includes establishing a safe environment, remembering and mourning past traumas, and rebuilding the capacity for relationship.

Graff suggested these psychological theories might help us to think again about central elements in the Christian mythos. The model of the self-in-relation lends insight into what it means to be created in the image of God who is a trinity of distinct yet related persons. The psychological observations also allow us to name as sin those factors, personal and systemic, that inhibit authentic relationships. Similarly, grace may be found in the healing process of remembering the past and fostering connection in the present. Finally, Graff suggested that

we might see this process of redemption that relies on both memory and hope as a prophetic activity leading us toward a renewed creation.

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## MORAL THEOLOGY

### MORAL TRUTH: REASON, EXPERIENCE, FEMINISM, AND AUTHORITY

Presenters: James F. Keenan, Weston School of Theology  
Maura A. Ryan, University of Notre Dame  
Christine E. Gudorf, Florida International University  
James J. Walter, Loyola University of Chicago

The theme of this workshop was how various perspectives influence the way in which moral theology is practiced. Reason, experience, and authority are traditional themes, but contemporary developments have enriched these perspectives. Feminism is such a development and has had a critical impact on new material, perspectives, and experiences to be included in discussions of Roman Catholic moral theology.

James Keenan focused on two dimensions of reason. One was reason in relation to the virtues, in particular prudence. The key issue here was prudence as a mediator in the resolution of cases and is related to a larger project of the role of the virtues as the basis for moral theory. Second, and more critical, was the distinction between the deductive or geometric reasoning in the manualist tradition of the nineteenth century and the inductive or taxonomic reasoning characteristic of the age of high casuistry, as well as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the former we have the application of a principle to a case to resolve it, while in the latter we have the principles emerge from a comparison of cases. The method of reason in casuistry was also influenced by doubt raised either from changing socioeconomic circumstances and the relevance of past principles to them or the status of one's salvation consequent to the Reformation emphasis on justification by faith. Thus reason emerged as inductive, to resolve doubt, to appeal to experience, and to be utilized by both clergy and laity in resolving problems. Keenan concluded by noting that we have in common with sixteenth-