

randomness has "always been the lot of the poor" and symbolizes the Reign of God (Matt 22:2-14; Luke 16:19-31). Thus, what does Rodney King have to do with Christian faith and theology? "God's grace is associated not with order but with disorder, not with well-established rules of behaviour but with randomness, . . . with the 'messy and open qualities of heterogeneous open spaces' " and, thus, with those who live there. Where then, he asks, is the proper place for the Christian theologian?

Bryan Massengale developed a "socioethical reflection upon the conditions for the possibility of urban violence" which lie "in the dynamic of indifference." The victims and perpetrators of urban violence are those deemed "the refuse of society." At the heart of urban violence "is a dynamic which enables the majority of society to . . . be tolerant of the waste and carnage of certain . . . human lives.

After exploring how groups are socially defined and come to be "regarded with indifference, Massengale noted that theologians are shaped and affected by dominant social discourse but must see themselves challenged by urban violence to further develop social sin as a category of analysis and reflection and to seek more inclusive narratives which celebrate rather than deny difference.

Finally, Shawn Copeland explored the theme of urban violence in terms of its challenge to the soteriology question, raising the need for a fuller exploration of its concrete meaning for the poor and the marginalized.

The entire group as part of its discussion raised again the need for fuller discussion of the workshop theme by the CTSA as a whole.

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CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

*FULLNESS OF FAITH:
THE PUBLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THEOLOGY*
by Kenneth and Michael Himes

Presenters: Kenneth Himes and Michael Himes

The Catholic Social Teaching group discussed Kenneth and Michael Himes' *Fullness of Faith*. The primary effort of this book is to practice public theology by bringing specific theological doctrines to bear on concrete social problems.

After a first chapter locating their position on the question of the status of public theology, the authors proceed to carry out, rather than simply talk about, the task of a theology that seeks to speak beyond an ecclesial audience in a pluralistic society. They draw upon the doctrines of original sin, the Trinity, grace, creation, Incarnation, and the communion of saints in order to address the issues of self-interest versus the common good, human rights, the consistent ethic of life, the environment, patriotism, and social solidarity.

The authors began the session by presenting the concerns that led to the writing of the book and describing the process of coauthorship. Their primary concern is that the Catholic tradition contribute to the public conversation on issues of import for society. The question that received the most consideration in the group discussion was where the kind of conversation that is advocated in *Fullness of Faith* is to take place. In a society where the dominant institutions are shaped by languages at odds with that of Catholic social teaching, where are persons to consider and present perspectives on contemporary issues in light of their religious tradition? If one answers, "the Church," one runs into two difficulties. First, there are sometimes severe limits placed on conversation in the Catholic Church, particularly on issues regarding gender. Second, it is not sufficient for the conversation to be simply within the Church. The point of public theology is to have Catholic perspectives enter into the wider public discussion. Kenneth Himes commented that he thinks that this sort of conversation goes on much more than we think.

The second issue that received a great deal of attention is that of an uncertainty on the part of the Catholic Church and community with regard to *how* to enter into public discourse. There is an uneasiness, Michael Place argued, about imposing a particular perspective on others. More specifically, public discourse often leads to issues of whether and how to use coercion for the sake of public order. Given the history of Catholic intolerance toward other communities, Catholics now seem to back away from public discussion whenever it reaches the issue of coercion. Catholics, Place urged, need to develop a language for talking about the proper use of coercion, since public discussion necessarily leads to question the role of law, and that involves the matter of coercion. At that point the suggestion was made that John Courtney Murray's work could provide resources for reflection, particularly the shorthand dictum, "As much freedom as possible, as much coercion as is necessary."

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