

revealed truth claims ought to have a role in determining public policies, requires responses that are theological. Both the need to develop rich public languages and the need to adequately answer public theological claims suggest new commitments among America's religions to explore the possibility that God might be active outside each's own tribal group and an openness to the possibility of writing a common salvation history with denominations (and nonbelievers) previously understood to be outside God's gracious action.

The discussion period focused on more concrete problems such as the question of federal aid to private schools. Positions on that issue varied from no public aid to private schools, to public aid to all schools teaching the impoverished, to public aid to any school that claims religious grounding.

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PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

- Topic:** The Spirit in Practical Theology:
Reflections on Church Renewal in Two Case Studies
- Convener:** Mark L. Poorman, University of Notre Dame
- Moderator:** Mark F. Fischer, St. John's Seminary, Camarillo
- Presenters:** Patrick Howell, Seattle University
Discerning the Spirit in Seattle Church
after the 1984-1987 Vatican Investigation
Mary Garvin, Gonzaga University, and
Pat Parachini, St. Paul's College
Praying Together as a Faith Community:
Discerning and Meeting Diverse Expectations

The Practical Theology Research Seminar continued its examination of methods in practical theology by again considering cases for theological reflection. This year, in keeping with the overall pneumatological theme of the annual convention, both cases concerned the role of the Spirit in practical theological method. Regular members of the seminar received copies of the written case studies in advance, and additional copies were provided at the

session for newcomers. The presenters were asked to provide an oral synopsis of their case study, along with remarks about the particular method which they employed in theological reflection on the case. Consequently, the actual presentations were relatively short in order to provide time for other members of the seminar to ask questions and make observations. Lively discussions followed each presentation.

Pat Parachini and Mary Garvin presented a case titled, "Praying Together as a Faith Community: Discerning and Meeting Diverse Expectations," in which they related their extended experience with the complex issue of mediating among the plurality of personal theologies and devotional preferences in a contemporary religious community of women. The case was prompted by Parachini's and Garvin's assistance to their congregation in preparation for its 1996 general chapter. It centered around three discrete but interrelated meetings of subgroups of the congregation—province representatives charged with teaching other members a process of theological reflection; a multicultural leadership group concerned with the specific topic of prayer and ritual in the community; and a group of sisters gathered to consider the question, "Is Eucharist Still a Source of Meaning for Me/Us?" Garvin's and Parachini's theological analysis of the meetings yielded insights about the methodological significance of experience and feminist theology. The dialogues in the meetings indicated to them the crucial importance of reconstructing organic theological foundations for practices in religious communities.

Patrick Howell presented a case titled, "Discerning the Spirit in the Seattle Church After the 1984–1987 Vatican Investigation," in which he revisited the tension between the local and universal Church by examining the pastoral life of the Archdiocese of Seattle nearly ten years after a well-publicized investigation by the Vatican. The investigation had centered on the ministry of the marriage tribunal, intercommunion, pastoral care of homosexual men and women, the use of general absolution, the sequence of first confession and first Communion, the role of women and other matters. Howell's case and synopsis described a theological reflection process which he conducted with selected pastoral ministers of the Archdiocese in which he asked them to assess the current status of the pastoral life in Seattle. Howell used two means of discernment, first to elicit and then to analyze responses from the participants: he asked the ministers to consider present signs of hope as well as signs of spiritlessness or deadening in the local church's pastoral life, and he analyzed the discernment process itself by looking at factors including social context, personality and character factors, theological analysis, ministerial identity issues, pastoral strategies and how the process built up God's people in holiness.

The group decided to continue with the case format for its meeting at the 1997 annual convention. Possible areas for topics included theological reflection on liturgy, a response to the growing number of priestless parishes, women's

ordination, and the role of the parish council. The group also wanted to pursue the question of the audience for practical theology.

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ECCLESIOLOGY/PASTORAL THEOLOGY (CTSA TASK FORCE)

- Topic: Communion Ecclesiology and Collaborative Ministry
Convener: Georgia Keightley, Trinity College, Washington, D.C.
Moderator: Georgia Keightley, Trinity College, Washington, D.C.
Panelists: Catherine Nerney, Chestnut Hill College
T. Howland Sanks, Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley
John Markey, Denver

At the request of the Bishops Committee on Women in Society and the Church, a task force was organized to prepare a brief study on "communio" as the theological context for collaborative ministry. The convention provided task force members an opportunity to present their work as well as to receive comments, suggestions from CTSA members.

Wanting to produce a study that would assist the Bishops Committee in its discussions and practical planning, the task force proposed to identify criteria for determining how and under what conditions Church ministry actually mediates communio. How is communio mediated through the visible structures, concrete actions that constitute the Church? What particular ecclesial actions, ministerial structures are most effective at realizing communio?

John Markey began by recalling Congar's insight that the community is precisely the effect of the action of the Spirit calling forth the service (*diakonia*) of every person and coordinating these charisms (which is itself a charism) into a single life, a communion (*koinonia*) of service of the whole community to the world on behalf of the kingdom. On this basis, "collaboration" and "ministry" are virtually synonymous terms. The only real question is the mode of collaboration of various ministries and this will largely depend upon the task to be done, the end to be achieved.

Hal Sanks noted *Christifideles laici's* emphasis on communio's organic character. In understanding the Church as a living, functioning body, two