

Other topics discussed were the significance of Christ's self-emptying for his beatific vision, the nature of Christ's knowledge, whether or not the medieval theologians thought that union with other humans was part of complete human fulfillment, and how Hindu anthropology might view humans' assumption into divinity.

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THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Topic: The Flesh of Adam: Two Medieval Women on Bodiliness

Convener: Anne H. King-Lenzmeier

Presenter: Marie Anne Mayeski, Loyola Marymount University

Respondent: Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Boston College

This session of the continuing group on Theological Anthropology focused on the question of embodiment as a means of understanding the issues of nature, grace, soteriology and other themes. It was the first session of a collaborative effort between this group and the Comparative Theology group which was proposed for 1998 and 1999 by the steering committees of both groups. It proved sufficiently stimulating so that this collaboration may continue further into the future, or at more than one scheduled session per year. In order to facilitate the dialogue between comparative theology and theological anthropology, it was decided that the presenter and respondent would build their papers around specific textual material as well as general theses. The respondent then had the completed paper in advance. The motivation behind using a text or texts is to encourage and enable both the respondent and those present to have clear access to a presentation that might not be in their immediate field of specialization.

The presenter for this year, Marie Anne Mayeski, used two medieval women as examples of how theological anthropology can be understood through embodiment. The first figure presented was Dhouda of Septimania, a ninth-century woman whose *Liber Manualis* was written as a book of formation for her children. Her claim to authority in writing on these topics was that of the need for maternal guidance, which could not be given in any other way from a distance. Dhouda used the concepts of genealogy, ancestry and inheritance to make her theological as well as her practical points to her sons. Mayeski's claim is that Dhouda clearly sees biological descent and genealogy as having ramifications for theological anthropology in that there is no dualism present: "biological descent involves spiritual consequences and obligations; grace is transmitted equally through natural and supernatural ancestors; the social roles, which are conferred

by blood and sexual union, confer religious and ecclesial obligations as well as political ones." Dhouda sees all humanity as descended from the "flesh" of Adam, both in the biological and the spiritual sense. Thus embodiment in the flesh from Adam puts all humanity in a state of brotherhood (sic), which has social and political consequences in the moral realm as well as establishing the spiritual connection of all human beings. All are family; yet the rise and fall of human fortunes in the social and political spheres are also the result of this common inheritance from Adam. She emphasizes the fact that her sons are descendants of the biblical people of faith as well as from a particular biological and material reality which is normally the realm explored by ancestry.

Turning to Julian of Norwich, a fourteenth-century anchoress, Mayeski explored the implications of Julian's *Showings* which is her record of her visions and reflection upon them. Julian's approach to embodiment is more conscious than Dhouda's, due to differences in time and place; she is acutely aware of the plague, and thus is realistic about the body and its functions, while interpreting positively the role the body plays in humanity's understanding of the relationship each person has to God. The simplest of natural functions shows the dignity of the human person, and the care taken in the creation of human beings by God. Mayeski pointed out that Julian's soteriology is refracted through the doctrine of creation, where the created world—and thus the body—is both God's gift and the locus of God's self-revelation. Julian comments on the interdependence of the body and soul, which together grow to maturity. She affirms the connection of the two in her discussion of substance and sensuality in the Long Text. Turning to the issue of soteriology, Mayeski commented at length upon chapter 51 of the Long Text, usually referred to as "the parable of the Lord and the servant." This parable presents the flesh of Adam, the servant, and Christ as one man. Embodiment is as essential for her as it is for Dhouda, but in Julian the implications are primarily soteriological: embodiment is the condition of the possibility of salvation. In this way human embodiment as the mirror of the incarnation of God in Christ serves as a positive mirror for the human person who is one, body and soul. Her realism includes the Fall and the pain of embodiment; this also is witnessed to in the parable.

Throughout her presentation, Mayeski made the point that there is much to learn from these and other medieval figures, and that the dualism of body and soul was not as rigid in this time period as we might assume.

Francis Clooney's response began with an appreciation of Mayeski's presentation and an indication of what he was doing in a Theological Anthropology session (a question he was often asked at the conference). In general, he commented that the presentation naturally brought to mind further questions to explore, such as eroticism, gender, and how this positive view of embodiment is reconciled with the traditional views of the body as the locus of temptation. In addressing Dhouda's sense of inheritance, he drew a comparison with the Hindu approach to the spiritual and the physical, since in Hinduism there is not the same sense of social obligation connected to lineage. Naturally the idea of the

"human family" does not in this case trace itself to Adam, yet there is in the theistic context of Hinduism an understanding of the presence of the divine reality in the totality of interconnectedness. In response to Julian, Clooney commented on the fact that the body itself is to be reflected on carefully, in the physical, since the spiritual presence is held there in a mysterious way. Discussions of the importance of the body are found in the Ayurvedic literature and in the Tantric traditions. Kundalini yoga and Tantrism are just two of the ways in which Hindus attempt to be in touch with the body as a means of activating spiritual power located in the body. Similarities and differences were discussed, and the respondent concluded with the observation that, despite clear differences, both traditions possess a specificity in their attentiveness to the body as it opens the human person to transcendence, regardless of how that transcendence is identified.

Discussion and questions from the twenty persons present at the session were lively, and covered a wide range of topics, from process metaphysics and the theme of interconnectedness to the importance of embodiment as encompassing the physical and spiritual in different methods of healing. While there were some questions purely for clarification, the majority of the questions provoked a wide-ranging and lively discussion of disparate thoughts and issues triggered by the theme of the session and the specific points made by both speakers. Comments were made about the fact that the collaboration between the two groups was fruitful for reflection raised various ideas worthy of further discussion.

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THEOLOGY AS A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

Topic: Teleology in Contemporary Science and St. Thomas:

Is a Conversation Possible?

Convener: Jack Bonsor, Santa Clara University

Presenters: Robert Barron, Mundelein Seminary

William R. Stoeger, S.J., Vatican Observatory Research Group,
University of Arizona

Robert Barron began with reflections on St. Thomas's cosmological teleology. Under the influence of the cosmological speculations of the pseudo-Dionysius, Thomas Aquinas developed, in the course of his career, a richly textured teleological theology. Barron presented five motifs that emerge clearly in the theological cosmology of Thomas.