

Mark L. Poorman presented a syllabus as well as a series of creative questions that shape theological analysis for graduate students in pastoral ministry field education. Poorman emphasized the need to encourage students to engage in praxis by moving from their use of the social sciences as the preferred or exclusive lens through which to regard ministerial experience. Students use the praxis-oriented series of questions in order to integrate the concerns of the social sciences but also to push their reflection to the theological, to the use of Scripture and tradition in coming to awareness and decision about their pastoral action.

The general discussion occurred within the context of the presentation and responses; in that discussion many of the thirty persons in attendance contributed theoretical questions and practical examples of effective teaching aimed at moving students of theology beyond the initial stages of reflection to grounding in praxis.

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#### KARL RAHNER SOCIETY

- Topic: Rahner and the Development of Doctrine  
 Convener: Melvin E. Michalski, St. Francis Seminary  
 Moderator: Ann R. Riggs, Marquette University  
 Presenters: Mary E. Hines, Emmanuel College  
               Paul G. Crowley, Santa Clara University  
               Richard Lennan, Catholic Institute of Sydney

The presenters' ten-minute summaries of their papers, which had been distributed in advance on the Society's web page ([www.theo.mu.edu/krs](http://www.theo.mu.edu/krs)), provided an occasion for a lively discussion among forty participants. The complete texts will be published in volume 12 of *Philosophy & Theology*.

Mary Hines' paper focused on the question: "How Relevant Is Rahner Today?" She cautioned that two extremes must be avoided: (1) to dismiss Rahner as having nothing to say to us today; and (2) to insist that Rahner has answers to all questions. Hines argued that Rahner continues to be relevant today for many reasons, among them the fact that while it is true that the earlier articles remain foundational to Rahner's thinking, there is development in his approach to dogma. He moved forward and took history more seriously than in his early articles. From a study of Rahner's early articles on development Hines concluded that Rahner saw the possibility for "new" expressions of faith arising out of: (1) theological discussion; (2) the sense of faith entrusted to the whole church; and (3) confirmation by the church's authoritative teaching office. In post-Vatican II

works Rahner proposed a change in the primary language of ecclesial development, namely: the language of the emerging world church should be theological rather than dogmatic.

In the back of her mind Hines had two current specific issues, the question of defining Mary as coredeematrix and the issue of women and priesthood. Regarding these two concrete questions of dogmatic development Hines commented that Rahner suspected that additional Mariological definitions would not be for many an aid to the mystical spirituality he advocated for the future. With regard to the question of the ordination of women, Hines stated that, for Rahner, an appeal to the formal authority of the magisterium alone was not enough to close the question.

Paul Crowley's paper examined the notion of doctrine, suggesting a pliable model inspired by usages of "dogma" in the early church, which reflect both teaching and confession of faith. Secondly, he discussed Rahner's theory of doctrinal development in light of Newman's theory. For Crowley, Rahner's theory shares Newman's emphasis on "mind" or "faith consciousness." The truth of doctrine remains at an ideational level. Such a model of doctrine cannot unify on the basis of its authority alone because it does not attend to the human experience of faith.

Crowley finds that William Lynch's notion of faith and dogma as a poetic embodiment of truth offers an attractive model that accommodates fundamental insights of both Rahner and Newman. Finally, Crowley, following Rahner, argued that short creedal formulae, a possible modern equivalent to the ancient *regula fidei*, are an example of doctrinal development appropriate for situations within the world church.

Richard Lennan's paper focused on Karl Rahner's understanding of the relationship between history and the church's doctrine. It located doctrine within Rahner's view of the church as the sacrament of Jesus Christ in history and the development of doctrine as a response to issues raised by the church's historical existence. Lennan used Rahner's theology of priesthood as a concrete example of Rahner's understanding of doctrine and its development. Rahner gave priority to faith as the response to the Spirit who drew people into God. The priest is called as a vehicle through which the Spirit can touch others. For this reason, the priest's life as a mystagogue mattered more to Rahner than the particular actions of the priest. The particular action, especially preaching the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist, needs to flow from a person open to God. Rahner could envisage ordaining people who reflected such a spirit.

Finally, Lennan asserted that Rahner's theology of development continues to offer insight that the truth contained in the church's doctrine can be lived in more than one way.

The Karl Rahner Society held its ninth annual breakfast meeting on Saturday, June 12, with approximately forty members participating. George Dennis O'Brien, President Emeritus, University of Rochester, addressed KRS members regarding his understanding of Rahner's "theology of sexuality."

O'Brien maintains that *the* issue of sexuality is "Sex before God." O'Brien's essay, "Sex before God: The Body Of Prayer" had been distributed in advance on the Society's web page.

O'Brien highlighted the writings of the French-Bulgarian psychoanalyst, Julia Kristeva. In her writings she has developed a significant anti-Freudian account of the unconscious. Kristeva argues that the realm *before* the emergence of the ego from the Oedipal conflict contains essential psychic structure, a sort of proto-self, which if ignored by the transcendent ego creates a profound crisis of spirit and person. O'Brien asked whether this relates to what Rahner says about God's creation having meaning, structure and Spirit.

For O'Brien the most striking of Kristeva's insights is that one can—and must—discover human meaning *before* the Law of the Father in the Realm of the Mother. The most striking illustration of Kristeva's point that there are two worlds of meaning, one *symbolic*, (the Law of the Father) the other *semiotic*, (the Realm of the Mother), is found in her essay *Stabat Mater*. Denial of the semiotic fundamentally cripples *becoming a person*. O'Brien asked whether Kristeva's insights relate to Rahner's view that the modern world is living in the illusion of "clear scientific concepts," a world without "mystery."

O'Brien's presentation was followed by table discussion and feedback to the presenter. The discussion focused on Rahner's notion of "Realsymbol" and on the primordial unity of spirit and matter, and the question of whether the terms "sacrament" and "sacramental" attempt to express something of the symbolic/semiotic bridge about which Kristeva writes.

In the following business meeting Nancy Dallavale, Fairfield University, was nominated and elected to the steering committee of the KRS. The other committee members are: Denise Carmody, Brian Linnane and Melvin Michalski, coordinator. Robert Masson is past coordinator and editor of the "Rahner Papers" published annually in *Philosophy & Theology*. Topics under consideration for the Rahner session at the CTSA convention, June 8-11, 2000, are "Rahner and Barth" or "Rahner, Catholicism and Public Life." Robert Masson will issue a call for papers and the steering committee will review the proposals.

Melvin Michalski gave a brief report on the Second Innsbruck Rahner Symposium, February 25-27, 1999. The KRS is exploring with the University of Innsbruck the possibility of a joint publication of Rahner papers, possibly both in English and German. A second issue that is being addressed is whether it might be possible to establish an intensive 6-8 week German language study program in Innsbruck. The course would be taught by someone knowledgeable in theology and having a solid background in teaching German.

The breakfast, as always, ended with several anecdotes about Rahner himself.

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