

by reasserting that their approaches were very theologically based—theological reflection, however, brought to bear both on the conclusions of the biological and psychological sciences and on the data of revelation. The result is a reemphasis on the core meaning of the doctrine and a more meaningful and relevant articulation of it. Several other participants stressed the need for the mediating role of philosophy in the different phases of forging the links between the conclusions of the biological sciences and theology, and in rearticulating the various aspects of the doctrine of original sin. A third theme which emerged was the need to balance the inherent human tendency to sin with the human condition as one that is essentially graced, as stressed in Eastern Christianity and by Karl Rahner.

In this regard the Catholic position which stresses the innate goodness of creation and human life should be preferred to some of the Protestant positions which tend to emphasize the essential depravity of the human condition. Finally, it was mentioned that the theology of original sin should avoid making it the principal counterpoint or reason for the salvific act of Jesus.

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KARL RAHNER SOCIETY

- Topic: A Discussion of Miguel Diaz's *On Being Human: U.S. Hispanic and Rahnerian Perspectives*
- Convener: Howard Ebert, St. Norbert College
- Presenters: Susan Abraham, St. Bonaventure University
Michael H. Barnes, University of Dayton
Conrad Gromada, Ursuline College
- Respondent: Miguel H. Diaz, St. Vincent De Paul Regional Seminary

The focus of this session was on Miguel H. Diaz's book, *On Being Human: U.S. Hispanic and Rahnerian Perspectives* (New York: Maryknoll, 2001). Three respondents gave ten-minute summaries of their respective papers and the author responded briefly to the reviews. The complete texts of the papers and the response were available in advance on the Society's web page <www.theo.mu.edu/krs/>. A discussion followed the presentations. Forty-one people were in attendance.

The first respondent, Susan Abraham, utilizing the tools of postcolonial analysis, raised critical questions of the category of "cultural identity," which is central to Diaz's methodology. Postcolonial theorists are deeply suspicious of identity categories. Such designations easily mask the distortive power of past oppressions. A postcolonial perspective would also be deeply suspicious of the ahistorical tendencies within Rahner's thought as reflected in such notions as

"indifferent freedom." Abraham noted that incorporating and responding to these suspicions raised by a postcolonial analysis would strengthen and deepen Diaz's creative and important project.

Michael Barnes, the second respondent, praised Diaz's extensive knowledge of the Rahner corpus and his insightful correlation of major themes in Hispanic theology with central aspects of Rahner's thought. Specifically, for Barnes, Diaz demonstrates the "surprising degree of compatibility between popular Hispanic theology and the more abstract and universalizing theories of Rahner." While this convergence is important, it can lead to a neglect of theoretical analysis of religion if it is interpreted as uncritical affirmation of popular religion. The neglect of developing a philosophically sophisticated theology runs the risk of isolating religion from the intellectual and cultural currents of the time—currents which significantly shape contemporary lives and imaginations. For Barnes, Diaz's work is an important and necessary "complement" to the popular religion present within Hispanic culture.

The third respondent, Conrad T. Gromada, was positive in his assessment of the direction and content of Diaz's work. He noted that it could be expanded and deepened by including numerous insights from Rahner's essay, "Courage for Devotion to Mary," which appears in volume twenty-three of *Theological Investigations*. For Gromada, the absence of any reference to this essay in Diaz's book is a "curious omission" since it addresses four areas of immediate concerns for Hispanic theology: (1) the basis of Marian devotion in the communion of saints; (2) the marginalized position of Mary in society yet her importance in salvation history; (3) an understanding of Jesus which challenges patriarchal claims; and (4) the necessity for a wide range of individual and cultural responses to God's grace.

Miguel Diaz in his response focused on three areas: (1) Rahner's Ignatian heritage and its relation to the U.S. Hispanic preferential option for the poor and marginalized; (2) the question of one mediator and many human mediations, especially in light of the person of Mary; and (3) Rahner's "transcendental" approach in relation to the experience of atheism in the United States.

A vigorous and wide-reaching discussion followed the presentations. The central topics addressed included the inherent tension between the concept of a universally defined human nature and the necessary basis of all descriptions in concrete cultural contexts, the unique benefits and limitations of bringing Rahner into conversation with Hispanic theology, the economic, social and cultural significance of popular religion and the place of Hispanic experience as a countercultural voice.

The Karl Rahner Society held its annual breakfast meeting on Saturday, June 7, 2003. Fifty-six persons participated. Terry Klein, St. John's University (Jamaica, New York) presented a paper entitled, "The Vocation of the Theologian: A Return to Self." Klein drew upon numerous literary sources to illustrate the "profound continuity between the theological task and the overall task of the humanities." A short discussion followed.

In the following business meeting appreciation was voiced for the many years of service to the society by outgoing coordinator, Melvin Michalski, and by the outgoing editor of the "Rahner Paper," steering committee member, and webmaster, Robert Masson. An invitation was extended to members of the Society to consider becoming the webmaster of the Rahner Society. Mark F. Fischer (St. John's Seminary, Camarillo, California) has generously accepted this position. Ann Riggs expressed an interest in compiling stories of Rahner's life. Those who have interesting anecdotes about Rahner should contact Ann via her email address <ariggs@rivier.edu>.

Discussion of next year's topic focused on commemorating in some fashion (for example, audiovisual presentation, papers, etc.) the centennial of Rahner's birth and the twentieth anniversary of his death. It was noted that Lonergan shared the same anniversaries and collaboration with the Lonergan Society would be fitting. The steering committee will be in contact with the Lonergan Society to explore this possibility. Consultation with members of the Rahner Society regarding the plans for the 2004 program will be conducted by members of the steering committee.

The breakfast ended, as is the custom of the Society, with an anecdote about Rahner.

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CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

- Topic: Social Transformation and the Vocation of the Theologian:
 Learning from Personal Experience
- Convener: Brian D. Berry, College of Notre Dame of Maryland
- Moderator: Brian D. Berry, College of Notre Dame of Maryland
- Presenters: Lee Cormie, St. Michael's College/Toronto School of Theology
 Daniel R. Finn, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota
 Christine E. Gudorf, Florida International University

This session focused on how the personal experience of theologians within efforts for social transformation has affected their thinking and teaching, and what these changes might imply for Catholic social teaching more broadly.

Lee Cormie ("Witnessing to Hope in Global Justice Movements") observed that since the mid-1990s, there has been the irruption of a range of "global justice" movements which are seeking to carry forward the concerns of liberation movements that began in the 1960s, and to resist the neoliberalism of governments and international financial institutions that became established during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Key among these movements are the annual World Social Forums held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, as well as various local and regional