

argument that only the believer can know the relation between God and being is indicative of his respect for a certain sense of contextualization. Nevertheless, even as Boeve acknowledged Hemming's intricate analysis of the difference between theology and philosophy, he pushed Hemming on "the precise relationship between the two." Boeve answered his own question through an analysis of Hent de Vries' and John Caputo's interpretations of deconstruction as method (reason) and prayer (faith), respectively. It is as if in the fecund space between method (reason and philosophy) and prayer (faith and theology) that the particular, contextualized space that Boeve desires emerges. His response was followed by a public discussion, a "buzz" that remained for the entire convention.

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THEOLOGY AND ECOLOGY

Topic: The Vocation of Theologians in Response to Ecological Degradation
Convener: Jame Schaefer, Marquette University
Presenters: William French, Loyola University of Chicago
Elizabeth Johnson, Fordham University
Kevin Irwin, The Catholic University of America

Moral theologian William French launched the panel of theologians representing different specializations who had been asked to focus on (1) the circumstances that prompted their theological research, writing and teaching on ecological degradation, (2) the most effective responses they have generated thus far, and (3) future compelling research on their horizons. The intrusion of a nuclear weapons facility near his grandfather's otherwise serene farm initiated French's early childhood awareness of threats to the environment. Later observations of conservation practices in Italy that contrasted with the wastefulness of Americans and the escalating growth in the rate of a consumptive population stimulated his concern for other species and ecological systems. Among his most effective theological responses have been deconstructing the postmodern anthropocentric claims over ecological systems and reconstructing theology to consider humans within ecological systems, placing environmental concerns within strategic national concerns so the health and well being of future generations are factored into national strategic policy, and advancing the debate about natural law to a more physically inclusive understanding of natural law. In the future, French plans to expand natural law thinking to consider "laws" about human reproduction and biospheric sustainability. If we broaden our vision to consider the

common good of the planetary ecosystem, he suspects that we may be able to develop powerful appeals to natural law that support the use of birth control.

Beth Johnson pointed to trees growing on her block in Brooklyn, the Atlantic seacoast where she spent her childhood summers, and teaching science at the junior high school level as experiences that prompted her to fall in love with Earth. Her work as a feminist theologian deconstructing the female/male dualism in Christian theology and Church practices led to attending to the parallel dualism of human/Earth as she became increasingly outraged over the destruction and degradation of ecosystems and violence against other species. Plumbing the depths of God's loving call to the person to receive the gift of vocation as a theologian, she followed a line of questioning from "who am I" to "whose am I" and discovered a network of more-than-human relationships that constitute the vast community of being. Our love for God who creates, sustains, redeems and promises a future for Earth motivates us to fall in love with Earth and consider her our neighbor. This rationale led her into several effective dimensions of research and writing, including the wedding of insights from ecofeminism to a theology of the Holy Spirit and articulating the need for a genuine paradigm shift in Christian theology from the human subject to the cosmos of which the human is a part. She anticipates future research on "everything" that Christians profess and identified for this "great project" specific tasks for biblical, systematic, sacramental, moral and spiritual theologians.

Kevin Irwin's entry into developing a theological response to ecological degradation occurred when he was teaching sacramental theology at the university level, became aware of the plethora of environmental problems, and realized that the liturgical world view needed to be repaired. Venturing into interdisciplinary studies to rework and enrich theology to address environmental problems, he looked through a sacramental lens to determine implications for worship. The bread and wine used in the sacrament of the Eucharist took on new meaning as he moved beyond the visible to the invisible. He concluded from a review of the Eucharistic liturgy that the goodness of creation must be made more obvious and that the paradigm of being at home on Earth while journeying to a new heaven and new earth must be stressed. Because he is becoming increasingly interested in exploring a wider understanding of sacrament, he expects that his next book will focus on the sacramentality of all reality as the bearer of God's presence and saving activity.

In the discussion that followed, participants shared diverse ways in which they have been responding to ecological degradation from their theological specializations. Among these were experiential approaches to the beauty of Earth, developing a sense of dependence on Earth for bodily and mental well-being, taking liturgical practices into life situations, and probing the relationship between human and other beings. The successful organizing of a "green team" on a college campus was described. Involving students in environmental assessments of campuses was urged. The need for research and teaching to be informed by ecological science and evolutionary biology was underscored with

a call to pursue possibilities for initiating interdisciplinary studies on the environment at our institutions. Several expressed the desire to investigate the Catholic tradition more deeply to determine the availability of fruitful notions that can be retrieved and brought to bear on ecological problems. Some helpful resources currently available for classroom use were identified.

Ideas for the session to be held at the next CTSA convention were floated. Considerable interest was expressed in examining environmental violence and specifically environmental racism as a form of violence, which fits well with the convention's reconciliation theme.

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THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Topic: Philosophical Wisdom and the Wisdom of the Theologian
 Convener: James Le Grys, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
 Moderator: Robert Schreiter, Catholic Theological Union
 Presenters: Mark Johnson, Marquette University
 Gregory LaNave, Catholic University of America Press
 Respondent: David Burrell, University of Notre Dame

This session examined the question of the nature of philosophical wisdom and of the contribution of this particular wisdom to the all-embracing wisdom sought by the theologian.

Mark Johnson's paper, "Aquinas and the Theologian's Vision," discussed Thomas Aquinas' doctrine on the nature of sacred doctrine or theology, and asserted that for Thomas theology is the highest wisdom possible, higher than even the discipline of metaphysics, the highest discipline among the philosophical sciences—although it has tasks analogously similar to those of metaphysics. Johnson noted how recounting some disagreement among commentators on the works of Aquinas can result in a deeper appreciation of how Thomas characterizes his theological profession, and how he practices it. First of all, since for Thomas theology or *sacra doctrina* is a wisdom (and therefore functions somewhat like first philosophy), theologians must devote much of their effort to understanding the basic principles of the faith, and to defending them when they come under attack. But second of all, of particular interest is Thomas's contention that theologians must often lay bare certain doctrines that might in reality fall under the heading of one of the philosophical disciplines, because those doctrines are presupposed to the theological principles which are the theologian's main concern. This means that theologians must study philosophy intently in order both to develop sound reasoning habits and to be able to judge