

KARL RAHNER SOCIETY

Topic: Rahnerian Resources for the Renewal of Episcopal Ministry
Convener: James K. Voiss, Saint Louis University
Presenters: Andreas Batlogg, *Stimmen der Zeit*
Mary Hines, Emmanuel College

This year's annual meeting of the Karl Rahner Society Program Group considered how Rahner's theology might contribute to renewal of episcopal ministry. Andreas Batlogg began the session with a presentation on the complexities of Rahner's own relationship with bishops and his reflections on their role in the church. Three points stand out from Batlogg's presentation.

First, as a priest and theologian in the Jesuit Order—an order which constitutionally renounces aspirations to ecclesiastical appointments—Rahner saw his work as a service to the church in cooperation with bishops. During World War II, he enjoyed a good working relationship with Viennese Archbishop Cardinal Theodore Innitzer and he later served as theological adviser to Franz Cardinal Koenig at Vatican II. Second, although Rahner never taught ecclesiology, he wrote about the church coming to be from God's saving will ("werdende Kirche"). This line of thinking intersected with his discussion of the *ius divinum* and the potential for development in the forms of episcopal ministry. Third, in his comments on the appointment of Karl Lehmann as Archbishop of Mainz, Rahner spoke hopefully of Lehmann's "courage to onesidedness, and audacity to stand up for decisions that will not please everybody."

Mary Hines' contribution surveyed the breadth of Rahner's writings on the episcopate, drawing our attention to some of the *Brennpunkte* (hot button issues) from the conciliar and post-conciliar periods. Hines gave special attention to three aspects of Rahner's writings on bishops: the bishop and the local church, bishops conferences, and the role of the Magisterium. In these areas Hines emphasized Rahner's hope that bishops would have freedom to exercise their *iure divino* episcopal ministry with less intervention by centralized roman administration. Following Vatican II, Rahner had envisioned this kind of freedom as an appropriate development for the church, lending flexibility to the concrete expressions of episcopal ministry in response to the diverse conditions in which that ministry is exercised around the world.

Both Batlogg and Hines provided participants in the session with bibliographical resources for future reference.

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