

CHRIST

Convener: Michael E. Lee, Fordham University

Presenters: Robert Lassalle-Klein, Holy Names University

Christopher Collins, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry

In his paper, “New Horizon for Global Contextual Christologies: Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino on the ‘Historical Reality’ of Jesus,” Robert Lassalle-Klein argued that the “historical reality of Jesus” establishes a new horizon for contextual christologies emerging around the globe. The talk answered three questions: (1) What did Ignacio Ellacuría mean by the “historical reality of Jesus?” (2) Does this shift from the “historical Jesus” to the “historical reality” of Jesus create a horizon for historical research into Jesus that is distinct from the three previous quests? (3) What is the significance of this shift for emerging intercultural theologies defined by the option for the poor?

In response, Lassalle-Klein first summarized the concept’s philosophical and theological roots (Zubiri, Heidegger, Einstein, Rahner, Augustine, biblical theology), and its focus on Jesus’ basic historical stance toward the history and people of Israel, his Father, his mission initiating the Kingdom of God as good news to the poor, and (at another level) the resurrection experience of his disciples. Second, he established the concept’s originality in light of biblical theology. Third, he analyzed Jon Sobrino’s claims that the historical reality of Jesus is the real sign of the Word made flesh, which finds its *analogatum princeps* among the crucified peoples of today, as a case emblemizing its significance for contextual christologies around the globe.

Chris Collins focused his paper, “The Christological Grounding of Social Solidarity in *Caritas in veritate*,” on the vision that Pope Benedict XVI offers for the Church as it faces a multitude of social concerns today. Collins argued that the grounding for Benedict’s social teaching stems from his Christology. Therefore, in order to understand better the way that *Caritas in veritate* articulates the prophetic call that the Church receives today to work for integral human development, Collins sought to identify Benedict’s Christological ideas that root such a notion. Specifically, Collins examined Benedict’s development of the notion of a “Christo-centric fraternity” which serves as a bedrock principle for the establishment of social justice.

Having drawn out this connection between Christology and social fraternity, Collins moved to examine how in Benedict’s theological project, Christology is shaped in the context of the celebration of the liturgy. This sacramental and liturgical hermeneutic then becomes a place of enrichment of theological vision not for a privatized devotional faith, but for an outward-looking mission for the people of God, to work for peace and justice and development of all peoples.

The presenters began the discussion portion of the session by responding to an insight in each other’s work. This initial discussion then opened to the

questions and input of the wider group. While there were points of harmony in the two presentations, for example, the possibility of universal brotherhood expressed in Benedict's thought possesses interesting resonances with what scholars of the Galilean Jesus see in Jesus' retrieval of the Isaianic literature, a central point of contention stood out. How is the source and fullness of fraternity to be understood? In an exclusive manner such that only the baptized Christian may participate in it fully? Alternatively, can it be understood to be a possibility for those who take a stand in their historical reality that resonates with that of Jesus, thus opening the possibility for an intercultural and interreligious fraternity? The implications of these questions for each Christological model produced a vibrant exchange of ideas and a very successful session.

MICHAEL E. LEE
Fordham University
Bronx, New York