

CONSULTATION ON HISPANIC LATINO/A THEOLOGY

Convener: Ramón Luzárraga, Benedictine University at Mesa  
Moderator: Ramón Luzárraga, Benedictine University at Mesa  
Presenters: Robert J. Rivera, St. John's University, New York  
Rebecca Berru Davis, St. John's University, New York

The Latino Theology consultation attracted 18 attendees. The session began with Robert Rivera's paper, "Reading St. Anselm in San Juan: Satisfaction Guaranteed?" engaging in a theo-political reading of Anselm's theory of atonement with a specific focus on his notion of debt. He explored the implications (soteriological and economic) of debt in the context of Anselm's life and thought, and the current economic debt crisis in Puerto Rico. He asked whether Christ's offering of himself (a relief from our debt to God due to sin) enables resistance and suggests an alternative to neo-liberal and colonial economies of debt? Or, does the logic of debt function to form, maintain, and discipline indebted subjects? He concluded that Anselm's notion of indebtedness does not help Puerto Rico in its theologizing about its current situation and how to emerge out of it, and recommended alternative soteriological readings of theology that speak to salvation without this understanding of indebtedness.

Rebecca Berru Davis, in "Cultivating Virtues of Mercy and Justice through an Encounter with Art: Latin American and Latino/a Perspectives," used several visual images as portals of an exercise of visual hermeneutics. She argued how evocative works of art may lead to deeper understandings of mercy and justice, using examples of Latin American and Latino/a art that use religious symbols and themes. Through her examination of the content and context of the art, opportunities for theological reflection emerged. This supported her premise that mercy and justice are best understood through encounter, and art could serve as an affective and effective means of engendering an initial encounter with the mercy of God that leads to a deeper, relational encounter with God. Discussion centered on whether Anselm's soteriology should be engaged at all in the Puerto Rican context. Participants engaged Professor Berru Davis on different examples of art as potential examples of what she spoke about.

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