

Orlando Espín commented on the nonreception of popular faith expressions by church authorities. John Thiel urged a retrospective line from the church's current faith expression backward to the tradition. What the people have received and assimilated into their faith life is the tradition!

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### MEDIEVAL THEOLOGY

- Topic: Development of the Doctrine of Salvation in the Middle Ages  
 Convener: Michael Gorman, St. Francis Xavier University,  
 Antigonish, Nova Scotia  
 Presenters: Matthew Levering, Boston College  
 Joan M. Nuth, John Carroll University

The CTSA's Continuing Group for Medieval Theology heard two papers on the topic of the development of the doctrine of salvation in the Middle Ages. The program was put together on the basis of an open paper call with blind refereeing.

The first paper, by Matthew Levering, discussed the role of analyses of the Old Testament in the development of medieval soteriology. Medieval Christian theologians considered the Old Testament to be a full part of God's providential revelation and action, not merely a bygone phase of the divine plan. Their analyses differed from Patristic approaches, primarily in that they were extensively concerned with the literal (as opposed to the spiritual) sense of the OT books; indeed, under the influence of Jewish authors, especially Solomon of Troyes and Moses Maimonides, they argued for the reasonableness of Jewish law literally interpreted. They also focussed on how Christ fulfills the Law, a difficult topic in light of the fact that there are many parts of Jewish law that Christians do not follow. They solved this problem by making distinctions among types of laws and then making corresponding distinctions among different senses of fulfillment.

In the twelfth century, such interpretations were carried out by figures such as Andrew of St. Victor, Peter Abelard, Gratian, and Peter Lombard. In the thirteenth century, Christian reflection on the Old Testament continued in the same vein, led by such authors as Alexander of Hales, William of Auvergne, Robert Grosseteste, and Albert the Great. It is not until the *Summa Fratris Alexandri*, however, that we find systematic reflection on the OT and its relation to salvation in Christ. This work features a very long (if unwieldy) consideration of the OT and how Christ fulfills it. Only by making use of this *Summa* did Thomas Aquinas develop his own theory of Christ's fulfillment of the law,

emphasizing the crucial role of Christ's passion and thereby reconciling the charity-based theory of Abelard with the satisfaction-based theory of Anselm. In this way, Franciscan and Dominican thinkers cooperated to develop new insights into the doctrine of salvation.

The second paper, by Joan Nuth, examined the relationship between mystical experience and theology in the case of Julian of Norwich. Nuth began by summarizing some results of Mark McIntosh's recent study *Mystical Theology: The Integrity of Spirituality and Theology* (Oxford/Malden: Blackwell Publications, 1998). In the Christian understanding, theology, worship, and reality itself take the form of *exitus-reditus*, which can be understood as divine *cataphasis* and creaturely *apophasis*. This pattern finds its high point in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Further, Christian mysticism is directed not only to God but also to fellow creatures, in a way that includes an appropriate emphasis on bodiliness and historicity and leads toward a sharing with others. This pattern is found in Julian's experience and theology. Her own experiences arose out of God's self-expression in scripture, and they led her to experience the *apophasis* of the paschal mystery in her own life. This experience was a fully bodily one and bore the marks of its own historical setting. Finally, Julian "knew from the start that the insights gained through her experience were not meant for herself alone."

Understood along these lines, Julian's "theological prioritizing" has important implications for theological methodology. Her own mystical experiences allowed her a glimpse of the world as God sees it. This is the perspective from which "all is well, sin is nothing, and everything is accomplished as God intends." The themes of sin and salvation appear different in this light. Human judgment, which includes the teaching of the church, has its place, but it is relativized by the higher understanding of divine judgment. In this way, mystical experience "serves a critical function for theology." Even if it is unlikely that all theologians will be mystics and all mystics theologians, at least they can engage in some kind of dialogue and mutual sharing, to the enrichment of both.

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