

“WHEN THE MAGISTERIUM INTERVENES. . .”

- Topic: “When the Magisterium Intervenes. . .”  
 Convener: Richard Gaillardetz, University of Toledo  
 Moderator: Amanda Osheim, Boston College  
 Presenters: James Coriden, Washington Theological Union  
 Ormond Rush, Australian Catholic University  
 John Strykowski, St. James Cathedral, Brooklyn

This three-year research seminar is dedicated to a study of the disciplinary exercise of magisterial authority, with special attention to new developments in fundamental theology, ecclesiology and cultural analysis.

Our first presentation by John Strykowski, “Bishops and Theologians: Lessons from Service in Rome and in Washington,” drew on his extensive experience working in two separate dicasteries of the Roman curia and as past Executive Director of the Secretariat for Doctrine and Pastoral Practices. He reflected on some of the factors that contribute to a distance between theologians and bishops, including the lack of advanced theological training and the tendency of some bishops to assume an omni-competency in the face of often quite complex theological questions. Strykowski also lamented a certain tendentious tone that has often marked the CTSA’s form of discourse, a tone which in his view only exacerbates tensions with the magisterium. Strykowski insisted that there is more to the contemporary theologian-magisterium relationship than ecclesiastical tension. He pointed out a number of instances of fruitful episcopal and theological collaboration, particularly in the service to the many formal bilateral ecumenical dialogues. He encouraged theologians to continue to plumb the depths of our Catholic theological tradition and called for a renewed dialogue between bishops and theologians as a way of overcoming the inevitable conflicts that arise.

Our second paper, offered by Ormond Rush, “Theology and the Prophetic Office in the Church: Pneumatological Perspectives on the *Sensus Fidelium*-Theology-Magisterium Relationship,” took as its starting point *Lumen Gentium*’s affirmation regarding the participation of the whole people of God in the threefold offices of Christ (as priest, prophet and king), it focused on the “prophetic office” (the teaching office), and addressed the tensions that remain in Vatican II’s vision. For example, *Lumen Gentium*’s chapter three, on the teaching authority of the hierarchy, took an approach which failed to incorporate the shifts the council had taken in the previous chapter on the whole people of God. Addressing this and other unresolved tensions in the conciliar teaching, Rush offered a proposal for working towards a synthesis of Vatican II on the church’s teaching office and some implications for a theology of magisterial intervention.

Our final paper by the canon law scholar, James Coriden, “Canonical Perspectives on the Ecclesiastical Processes for Investigating Theologians,” took as its point of departure Bradford Hinze’s survey of “magisterial interventions,” their resulting actions, and some of the procedures associated with them, which had been presented at the 2009 CTSA convention. Coriden proceeded in five

steps: (1) A reminder of our common context, that is, both theologians and bishops have legitimate roles in the same community; (2) a reflection on what is going on canonically when the magisterium intervenes; (3) a consideration of why the *Doctrinal Responsibilities* document has not been used to mediate disputes with theologians; (4) an exploration of the various sets of canonical procedures currently in place that are activated in instances of ecclesiastical intervention; (5) a brief consideration of reasonable expectations regarding the conduct of magisterial investigations.

The discussion in response to these papers was lively and included consideration of the possibility of engaging in a follow-up project to the *Doctrinal Responsibilities* document. There were also a number of laments regarding the recent magisterial interventions concerning American women religious.

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