

MORAL THEOLOGY (II) – TOPIC SESSION

- Topic: One Baptism and Global Solidarity
 Convener: Leocadie Lushombo, i.t., Jesuit School of Theology, Santa Clara University
 Moderator: Barbara Anne Kozee, Boston College
 Presenters: Hilary O. Nwainya, Saint Thomas University
 Amanda Rachel Bolaños, Duke Divinity School

In response to the moral theology topic session’s call for papers on the topic of “One Baptism and Global Solidarity,” the two proposals addressed the communal virtue ethics needed to affirm the vision of a people of God sealed in One Baptism.

Amanda Rachel Bolaños, from Duke Divinity School, presented a paper titled “The Virtue of Solidarity: A Baptismal Account of Reclaiming Charity.” In this paper, she offers a close analysis of the virtue of solidarity as a prescription to help repair the potentiality of what the virtue of charity ought to be and look like. She turns to *mujerista* and other Latina feminist theologians, using the method of *lo cotidiano* as a means of practicing accountability within the overarching virtue of charity, arguing this through the lens of a baptismal grounding. She specifically engages Ada María Isasi-Díaz’s claim that the virtue of charity, a term often associated with love for one’s neighbor, has mainly been expressed through one-sided giving, typically a donation of what we have in excess. Charity has been overused and must be replaced by the virtue of solidarity. She agrees with Isasi-Díaz’s resort to solidarity, but Bolaños argues that charity is not to be replaced by solidarity because charity is not the problem. The one-sided giving to the least off out of the better off’s abundance suggests a significant lack of genuine relationality in the way the virtue of charity is currently practiced, which she considers both problematic and unethical. She argues that the issue is not charity itself but mislabeling certain behaviors as charity when they are merely a semblance of it. She agrees with Isasi-Díaz’s emphasis on solidarity; she believes that by focusing on the virtue of solidarity, we can gain a clearer understanding of the concepts of relationality and friendship that the true essence of charity calls us to embrace. In exploring solidarity through the lens of *lo cotidiano*, which she develops throughout the paper, we can restore charity to its rightful place, enabling Christians to actualize it and reclaim charity as a sustainable theological virtue.

Hilary O. Nwainya from St. Thomas University presented a paper titled “Towards a National Ethos of Recognition: Leveraging ‘One Baptism’ to Address Ethical and Social Fragmentation in Nigeria.” Drawing on Ephesians 4:3-6, this paper advocates for cultivating a culture of recognition as a means to embody the reality of “One Baptism” and African communitarianism. African communitarian values, particularly those rooted in the palaver tradition, foster inclusive dialogue and consensus-building. These principles can inspire participatory governance, restore justice, and rebuild social trust. By integrating “One Baptism” with African palaver ethics, we can foster a shared identity and promote national unity. In highlighting Nigeria’s social fragmentation, he described how continuous misrecognition continually denies Nigerians their dignity. Nwainya argues that affirming “One Baptism and Global Solidarity” requires embracing a comprehensive, sustainable, and purposeful culture

of recognition. He confirms that the non-recognition of others as equal subjects is a component of what we call original sin, regardless of the context and forms of this non-recognition. He draws attention to the need to recall the historical failures of non-recognition to move forward in the practice of “one baptism in solidarity.” He calls for “One Baptism” as bridging the divide, promoting communal harmony amidst diversity, and advocating mutual recognition, interconnectedness, and collective identity. Reviving a culture of recognition in modern Nigerian society can powerfully shape initiatives that address sectionalism, identity politics, religious intolerance, nepotism, poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and terrorism, fostering unity and progress. He advocates for the integration of theological and traditional insights to encourage the consideration of diversity as an asset for recognition. He suggests an African participatory tool known as the palaver as one way to build a culture of recognition, considering that the palaver system fosters open expression, empowering individuals to voice their concerns, testimonies, and insights boldly. This tool for dialogue not only reinforced communal solidarity but also deepened collective understanding and resolve, allowing recognition to take shape.

The ensuing discussions critically raised questions about the need to deepen the vision of *lo cotidiano* and palaver in the context of “One Baptism and Global Solidarity,” as they respectively encompass the grace and messiness of daily life and aim to enhance the ethics of recognition toward a shared destiny of justice, peace, and human flourishing. Another line of questioning discussed the role of palaver in refugee settings and the need to consider how people’s voices, including refugees and women, can be excluded, silenced, or truncated from the start. Palaver can truly affirm One Baptism in solidarity if it does not overlook the structural conditions of exclusion.

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