

## THOMAS AQUINAS – CONSULTATION

Convener: Greg LaNave, Dominican House of Studies  
Moderator: Dominic Langevin, O.P., Dominican House of Studies  
Presenters: Zane Chu, Saint Mary's College of California  
Scott Roniger, Loyola Marymount University

In response to a call for papers, the two accepted proposals addressed the topic of One Baptism for the Thomas Aquinas Consultation.

Zane Chu's "Common Baptism, Common Doctor: The Basis of the Order of Theology in Aquinas" explored the basis of the order of theology, what Aquinas calls the *ordo disciplinae* in the prologue to the *Summa theologiae*. This order has three components, corresponding to the three parts of the *Summa*: God, morals, and Christ. Chu argued that this order emerges from or is founded upon the practice of the sacrament of baptism. This helps us respond to the question of why Christ is deferred to the third part of the *Summa* and, by showing how Aquinas's thought is informed by practices, to postmodern emphases on signs and signification. For Aquinas, baptism signifies Christ's humanity and divinity, and moral teaching effects this signification. It is the beginning *as to us* of scientific theology, which then puts things in order from their causes, i.e., divinity, humanity, and morals. But for a preparation that must return to Christ so as to preach him well and hear confessions as his minister, it was fitting for Aquinas to put Christ in his humanity, as well as his sacraments, at the end, presupposing a beginning in the sacrament of baptism, lived out and co-interpreted by the practice of the church and its reading of scripture, which itself is at the beginning of teaching in the Dominican convent and university. Chu suggested that the *Summa* is a mystagogy that presupposes Christ at the beginning in practice and deepens this signification through scientific ordering that properly positions Christ at the end to return to practice. Christ at the end is the same Christ at the beginning in the scripture and sacraments that signify him and effect what they signify.

Scott Roniger presented on "The Soul of the State in Catholic Political Thought." In recent Catholic political thought, the use of the relation between soul and body to shed light on the proper relationship between the Catholic Church and the state has played an important role. The claim that the church should relate to the state as the soul does to the body is made by Pope Leo XIII, but it has a long history that predates Leo, and there is an interesting historical development of the soul-to-body analogy that extends from Leo to the pontificate of Pope Benedict XVI. In order to get a handle on the question of the soul of a polity, Roniger turned first to classical Aristotelian and Thomistic thinking about the nature of political life, and he then covered some of the answers that have been put forward throughout the history of Catholic social thought, broadly conceived. Roniger traced the history of this comparison of soul-body to church-state from the ancient Letter to Diognetus, to St. Thomas Aquinas, and through the Middle Ages up to Leo XIII. He then showed the ways in which Popes Pius XI and Pius XII, basing themselves on Leo's social doctrine, shifted the "soul of the state" language away from the church, which paved the way for Vatican II to return to the patristic sense of the analogy first articulated in the Letter to Diognetus. This development enabled Pope St. John Paul II to move beyond the analogy and to further

specify the proper relation between church and state. Finally, Roniger showed how Ratzinger built upon John Paul II's thought, and he argued that the modern development from Leo to Ratzinger brings social teaching back into line with the philosophical insights from Aristotle and Aquinas on the nature of political life.

After each talk, a short period of questions and answers followed in a spirit of unity and collegiality.

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