Schedule
March 20, 2009

Morning Session
Dr. Robert Miller II presiding
Associate Professor of Old Testament
The Catholic University of America

10:00 AM “Introducing Paul the Theologian”

Dr. Frank J. Matera
The Andrews-Kelly Ryan
Professor of Biblical Studies
The Catholic University of America

— Coffee Service —

11:30 AM “Paul’s Theology of the Cross”

Dr. Hellen Mardaga
Assistant Professor of New Testament
The Catholic University of America

Afternoon Session
Dr. Francis T. Gignac presiding
Professor of Biblical Languages and
Director of the Biblical Area
The Catholic University of America

2:00 PM “Resurrection: The Center of Paul’s Theology”

Dr. Paul J. Achtemeier
Professor Emeritus
Union Theological Seminary—PSCE
Richmond, Virginia

— Coffee Service —

3:30 PM “Theology & Worship: The Later Years of Paul”

Dr. John Paul Heil
Professor of New Testament
The Catholic University of America
Introducing Paul the Theologian
And Overview of Paul's Story of Redemption
Frank J. Matera

Introduction
Paul’s Theological Method

Although he was not a theologian in the contemporary sense of the term, Paul wrestled throughout his life with the meaning of the gospel that God revealed to him at his call and conversion. He reflected on (1) the human condition, (2) the person and work of Christ, (3) the nature of the sanctified community, (4) the meaning of life in Christ, and (5) the hope of the sanctified. Paul is the great theologian of Christ’s death and resurrection. He applies the gospel of Christ’s death and resurrection to all the pastoral problems he encounters. In addition to this, he rereads Israel’s scriptures in light of what God is presently doing in Christ.

The Shape of Paul’s Redemptive Story

The Human plight apart from God
Humanity finds itself in a situation from which it cannot extricate itself. It is under the cosmic power of Sin. Paul describes this story most fully in Rom 1:18–3:20, and he presupposes this understanding of the human condition in all of his letters.

God’s response to the Human Plight
In light of his call and conversion—his Damascus Road Experience—Paul learns the depth of the human condition and God’s solution to it. God sent his own Son to rescue humanity from its plight.

The Community of the Sanctified
Those who have been rescued from the power of Sin and Death, now live in the sanctified community of the church: the body Christ, the Temple of God.

The Life of the Justified and Redeemed
The moral life plays a central important role in Paul’s redemptive story. The moral life is intimately related to the gospel Paul preaches. It is made possible by the power of God’s indwelling Spirit. Those who belong to the sanctified community live a morally good life in grateful response to God’s work of salvation in their lives.

The Hope of the Redeemed
The final part of Paul’s redemptive story is not yet complete. Although already justified and reconciled to God, believers are not yet saved. They will only be saved at Christ’s Parousia, when the general resurrection of the dead will occur and Death, the final enemy, is defeated.

God in Paul’s Redemptive Story
For Paul, God is preeminently the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. Romans 9–11 is Paul’s most important discussions about God. The God and Father of Jesus Christ (1) justifies the ungodly, (2) raises the dead, and (3) manifests saving righteousness on behalf of humanity.
I. Texts in the Authentic Letters of Paul Where the Words “Cross” or “Crucifixion” are used.

a. The Letter to the Galatians

Paul founded the community at Galatia, but after he left Jewish-Christian missionaries came and told the Gentile-Christian members of that church that the must observe the Jewish Law and be circumcised. In effect, they insisted upon the Galatians observing the Mosaic Law in addition to believing in Christ. When Paul learned of this, he wrote his letter to the Galatian community to correct this misunderstanding of the Christian faith. He emphasizes the unique importance of Christ and his redemptive sacrifice on the cross, and the freedom of Christians from the burdens of the Mosaic Law. Paul insists that observing the Mosaic Law meticulously and embracing circumcision does not lead to a relationship with God. Rather, one must follow God’s way to salvation and holiness through faith in Christ and his redemptive death on the cross.

- Gal 2,19-20: For through the law I died to the law, that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me.
- (Rom 6,6: We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin)
- Gal 3,1 O stupid Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?
- Gal 3,13 Christ ransomed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written “Cursed be everyone who hangs on a tree,” that the blessing of Abraham might be extended to the gentiles through Jesus Christ, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
- Gal 5,11 As for me, brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case, the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.
- Gal 5,24 Now those who belong to Christ [Jesus] have crucified their flesh with passions and desires.
- Gal 6,12 It is those who want to make a good appearance in the flesh who are trying to compel you to have yourselves circumcised, only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.
- Gal 6,14 But I may never boast except in the cross of our lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
b. The Letters to the Corinthians

Paul arrived in the city and had some success among the Jewish populace, but it was the Gentiles who were the most receptive to his preaching. After Paul left the community, Apollos, an eloquent speaker and Jewish-Christian, preached at Corinth. Soon Paul received disturbing news about the Corinthian community. Several problems and questions arose after Paul’s departure: disorders in the Corinthian community, questions about marriage and virginity (7,1-40), offerings to idols (8,1-11,1), problems in the liturgical assembly, questions concerning the possibility of a general bodily resurrection. In the second letter to the Corinthians Paul mentions the crucifixion to defend his own authority.

- 1 Cor 1,13: Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?
- 1 Cor 17-18: For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with the wisdom of human eloquence, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its meaning. The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are saved it is the power of God.
- 1 Cor 1,22-24 For Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Gentiles alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Structure:

The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (1,18)

…we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1,23).

- 1 Cor 2,2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.
- 1 Cor 2,8 Rather, we speak of God’s wisdom, mysterious hidden, which God predetermined before the ages of our glory, and which none of the rulers of this age knew for, if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.
- 2 Cor 13,4 For indeed he was crucified out of weakness, but he lives by the power of God.

c. The Letter to the Philippians

The letter to the Christians at Philippi in northern Greece was written while Paul was imprisoned and in danger of death. The letters begins with an instruction about unity and humility within the Christian community at Philippi (1,27-2,18). It is in this context that the first reference to the crucifixion occurs. In chapters two and three Paul warns of Jewish-Christian teachers who threaten to impose the burdens of the Mosaic Law and circumcision on the Philippians. The second reference to the crucifixion occurs in this context.

- Phil 2,7-8 Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on the cross.
- Phil 3,18 For many, as I have often told you and now even tell you in tears, conduct themselves as enemies of the cross of Christ.
Summary

With regard to Christian anthropology Paul relates his understanding of the crucifixion to the nature of the human condition. Before Christ’s death on the cross, all human beings were sinful in nature. Trying to observe the Mosaic law and being circumcised did not restore Israel’s sinful relation with God or the broken covenant. Paul explains that Christ was crucified on the cross to restore the covenant between God and his people, Jews and Gentiles alike.

With regard to Christian soteriology, Christ’s death on the cross brought salvation. This work was performed by Christ but through the power of God.

Paul’s theological insights about the cross are related to Christian ecclesiology. According to the apostle, the cross brings unity to the community. All Christians, Jews and gentiles alike, are one in the body of Christ. This is due to their common baptism. By being baptized in the name of Christ, Christians participate in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Paul’s understanding of the cross has implications for the moral behavior of the members of the community. Christ was crucified like a slave. Accordingly, the members of the community should be humble and obedient as Christ was obedient to the will of the Father.

Finally, Paul’s interpretation of the death of Christ is related to Christian Eschatology. In the letter to the Philippians, after mentioning the crucifixion, Paul declares that our home is heaven where we wait for our savior. People who are crucified and baptized with Christ are waiting for the final salvation made possible by Jesus’ death on the cross.

II. Paul’s Theology of the Cross and the Gospel of John

- The prologue (1,14)
- The dialogue with Nicodemus (Jn 3)
- The Good Shepherd discourse (Jn 10)
- The farewell Discourse (Jn 15-16)

III. Conclusion

The apostle explains to his gentile audience why the Mosaic Law and circumcision are no longer perceived as the way to salvation. To do so he focuses on the importance of the cross. With Paul’s mission, the gentiles become members of Christ, with no previous connection to the Jewish religion, entering the community and co-existing with Jews in the same community. Therefore, it is necessary for Paul to explain the how and why of the cross. He does the same thing for the resurrection. Therefore, although Paul does not uncouple the resurrection from the cross, he gives the cross its own place in the history of salvation.
Paul’s Theology of the Resurrection: The Key to Coherence in Paul
Paul J. Achtemeier

Introduction - Paul as Coherent Thinker
A. Progress in Pauline theology in works of J. C. Beker – apocalypticism; E. P Sanders - Judaism a religion of grace.
B. Abiding problem: can one use term “coherent” in relation to Paul’s Theology
C. Nature of our sources for Paul’s thought.
D. Amid contingent expressions of Paul’s theology, is there a coherent center?

I. Justification by Faith
A. Doctrine of Justification by faith as possible center
   1. Core of Paul’s theological thinking lies in idea that one gets right with God through faith in Jesus Christ
   2. Martin Luther found center here.
B. Justification as center involves a number of problems
   1. Assumptions re. “works of the law” in 1st century Judaism
      a. Paul and the Pharisaic view
      b. Romans 7 invalid as support for despair in law
   2. No consistency in way Paul understands purpose of law
      a. Custodian until Christ came
      b. Furnish knowledge of sin
      c. Foster increase of sin
      d. Faith and relation of law
      e. Varying use of word “law”
C. Alternative conclusions
   1. Paul is inconsistent thinker – no coherence to his theology
   2. Justification by faith is not core of his theology
      a. Absence in many letters
      b. Unlikely to be theme of Romans

II. Fate of Jesus as coherent center
A. Death of Jesus on Cross
   1. Paul identifies it as central to his understanding of Christ
      a. Central to his message – I Cor 2:2; Gal 3:1
      b. Prevents misunderstanding of source of power of Paul’s preaching
      c. Provides key to apostolic life
      d. Has universal significance
      e. Death on the cross used in several ways
         1’ Reason to give generously
         2’ Point of objection to his message, but nevertheless central
B. Problem in identifying Christ’s death on cross as central core of Paul’s theology
   1. Various understanding of cross as sacrifice
      a. Christ as pascal lamb allows escape from death visited on others
      b. Sacrifice necessary for initiation of (new) covenant
      c. Sacrifice allows us to become Righteous in covenantal relationship
      d. Sacrifice as offering for sin
2. Various understandings of Christ’s death and the law
   a. Delivered us from law as such
   b. Delivered us from curse of law
   c. Death allows us to fulfill law
   d. Death as act of obedience annulled Adam’s act of disobedience
3. Problems with variety of understandings
   a. Christ’s death in relation to covenant
   b. May be analogies, but not useful for central core
   c. Paul either incoherent, or death is not central conceptual core of his theology
4. Other concepts would yield similar results

III. Need to alter terms of search for coherent center of Paul’s theology
   A. Not doctrinal center, but “generative center”
      1. Seek central conviction out of which Paul’s theology grows
      2. Isolating that conviction
   B. Generative center is conviction that God raised Jesus from the dead
      1. Evident that resurrection is important for Paul’s theology
         a. Christians will also be raised to life in presence of God
         b. Transformation of bodies of flesh into bodies of spirit
      2. Coming glory already felt in present
         a. Baptism into Christ’s death
         b. Power of the Spirit
      3. What sets resurrection of Christ apart
         a. One event Paul singles out as of absolute foundational importance
         b. Constituted Jesus Son of God with power
   C. Key not simply that Jesus rose from dead
      1. God raised Jesus from the dead
      2. Importance for Paul’s conversion/call
   D. Resurrection as generative center offers way to reconstruct Paul’s resulting theological reflections and hence convictions

IV. Implications that follow God’s raising Jesus from the dead
   A. Need theological framework in which resurrection played key part
      1. Jewish apocalyptic framework
      2. Question of justice of God
      3. Paul adopted and adapted that framework
         a. New age had already begun, but old not yet ended
         b. Paul’s solution
   B. God raising Jesus indicates something different about his death
      1. Apocalyptic tradition about divine figure to appear
      2. Key to Jesus uniqueness among Jewish martyrs
   C. God did not want Jesus to remain dead
      1. Jesus’ death not result of his own transgressions
         a. Jesus’ death then for benefit of others
         b. Central thought in all reflections about meaning of Jesus’ death
         c. “Inconsistencies” in reflections about Jesus’ death derive from death of Jesus as level one derivative
2. Those who put Jesus to death opposed God’s will
   a. Basis for death was their understanding of Hebrew Law
   b. But Law was given by God
      1. Law overpowered by sin
      2. Also confirmed in Paul’s own life
         a. The way Paul speaks of his life prior to call/conversion
         b. Illustrated in Romans 7
   c. What Paul understood by Greek term nomos (law)
      1. Understood “law” as “torah”
      2. Torah had as its purpose to communicate God’s will
         a. Meaning of term “works of the law”
         b. Never meant “principle” or “rule”
   3. Variety of uses of law points to “law” as second level derivative for Paul

V. Summation
   A. Paul’s thought coherent on basis of resurrection as generative center
      1. Analogy: spokes and hub of wheel
      2. Such an analogy lacks dynamism of true generative center
   B. Paul’s Letters represent theologizing on basis of generative center
Theology and Worship in the Later Letters of Paul
John Paul Heil

Paul as the preeminent and paradigmatic person of prayer and worship

Paul’s letters as epistolary rituals of worship:

1) The original setting for the public performance of these letters was communal worship. Their audiences listened to the theological concepts, particular problems, and pressing concerns Paul addressed to them, as they were gathered together, probably in house churches, for worship.

2) Each letter begins and ends with the same ritualistic greeting that divine “grace be with you,” which sets a liturgical tone for the entire letter. Paul worships within the letters themselves, thanking, praising, and praying to God for the benefit of those listening. In addition, Paul refers to the liturgical worship of his audience, their singing of psalms, spiritual songs, hymns, etc., and requests that they reciprocate his prayers with prayers of their own for his benefit. Furthermore, Paul employs the cultic language that describes the suitability of sacrificial victims when he exhorts his audiences on how they are to extend their worship beyond their liturgical assembly and into their everyday lives, how their moral living is to be an act of worship.

3) When his audiences hear Paul praying for them in his letters, his prayers have a performative effect, as they make him part of, indeed the epistolary presider of, their communal worship. His prayers, then, begin to take effect in the very hearing of them by his audiences. When his audiences hear Paul praising and glorifying God in his letters, they are drawn into his own worship, inspired to imitate him as one who worships God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ not only in a liturgical assembly but in and through his everyday living.

Colossians: Encouragement to walk in all wisdom as holy ones in Christ

Ephesians: Empowerment to walk in love for the unity of all in Christ

Titus: Exhort and reprove in accord with hope for eternal life from our Savior

1 Timothy: In faith practice the Godliness that has a promise of life for all

2 Timothy: Fight the commendable fight for the grace of salvation through faith