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Rousselot, Pierre, SJ (1878–1915)

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Royackers, Martin, SJ (1959–2001)

Martin Royackers, SJ, Canadian missionary to Jamaica, pastor from 1994, was found murdered at the side door to St. Theresa’s Church in Annotto Bay, Jamaica, on June 21, 2001. At the time of his murder, St. Mary’s Cooperative, a farming cooperative partly sponsored by the Jesuits, acquired 60 acres of government land for poor farmers. It is believed that his murder may have been a reprisal directed toward the Jesuits for their support of the land acquisition initiated on behalf of the farmers. Royackers, a farmer since childhood, was a strong advocate for both the practical and the spiritual empowerment of the people. In an article on the evangelical importance of lay catechists, he said: “there are many churches with no priest who depend on lay leaders to be their pastors . . . Catechists are lay people who are at the frontlines of making the Gospel and the Church a part of people’s ordinary lives.” The people empowered Royackers.

Rousselot, Pierre, SJ (1878–1915)

Pierre Rousselot was born on December 29, 1878, in Nantes, France, and died on April 25, 1915, in Eparges, France. He received licentiates in classical and modern languages from the Sorbonne in 1899, studied philosophy at the French Jesuit House of Studies, Jersey, England, from 1900 to 1903 and theology at the French Jesuit House of Studies, Hastings, England, from 1905 to 1909. He earned a Ph.D. at the Sorbonne in 1908. Rousselot entered the Jesuits in Canterbury in 1895 and was ordained a priest in 1908. He was a professor of dogmatic theology at the Institute Catholique, Paris, from 1909 to 1914. In that year he was mobilized and was killed in action in 1915.

Rousselot pursued a philosophy of knowledge, love, participation, and connatural-ity in the work of St. Thomas for his two Sorbonne theses: L’intellectualisme de saint Thomas (1908) and Pour l’histoire du problème de l’amour au Moyen Âge (1908). The first of the transcendental Thomists, Rousselot demonstrated that the “intellectualism” of St. Thomas was completely different from static rationalism and discursive reason. He showed that for Thomas, the highest form of knowledge was the preconceptual insight of the intellectus, an immediate grasp of the singular under the influence of love, the kind of knowledge exercised by God and the angels and also by humans in the Beatific Vision. Likewise, intelligence for Thomas is the synthesis of cognition and affection. His interpretation of Thomas significantly influenced Joseph Maréchal and Bernard Lonergan.

Rousselot applied this philosophy to the theology of faith in his essay, “Les yeux de la foi” (1910). The eye of faith is an act of insight by which a person, under the influence of love and connaturality, grasps a truth of faith.

Father Włodzimir Ledóchowski, the superior general of the Jesuits, issued a letter July 15, 1920, forbidding Rousselot’s opinions to be taught or defended by Jesuits. Father General Jean-Baptiste Janssens later upheld the prohibitions on the basis of passages in Pius XII’s encyclical Humani generis (1950) on the rational character of the credibility of the Christian faith. Since Vatican II, these prohibitions are no longer considered to be binding.

See also France; Philosophy; Theology

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