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Pope Benedict XVI's early Contributions to Fundamental Theology – 1955-1961

Abstract

The article portrays Joseph Ratzinger's early contributions to the discipline of fundamental theology. This investigation reveals a personalist approach: revelation is ultimately an encounter of two persons. The formative influence of Gottlieb Söhngen, Bonaventure and Guardini are discussed; as is Ratzinger's much celebrated 1959 inaugural lecture at Bonn University. The content of his unpublished course in fundamental theology is summarized; likewise that of the much noted 1961 Genoa lecture he had authored for Cardinal Frings. Upon sound biblical and patristic bases, but also via excursions to philosophy and non-Christian religions he demonstrates the symphonic relationship between faith and reason.