

Ave Maria University Philosophy Department Colloquium Series

Marion, Sokolowski, and the Possibility of Natural Theology

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ABSTRACT: Catholic theology has traditionally recognized the possibility of knowing God by rational reflection on his created effects. This is what has come to be known as “natural theology.” The First Vatican Council (1869-1870) famously affirms the ability of human beings to know God through reason without the aid of supernatural revelation. But there are many – both Catholic and Protestant – who have questioned the possibility of natural theology or certain of its aspects for various reasons. In this paper I consider the challenges to natural theology posed by the work of the contemporary French philosopher and theologian Jean-Luc Marion and the contemporary American philosopher and theologian Robert Sokolowski. I try to show the weaknesses in their positions, which seem to deny – Marion rather categorically and Sokolowski with some qualifications – the natural human capacity to know God.

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