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# Introduction

Our theme “Religions of the Book” serves to remind us of the important role sacred writings play in the world’s great religions. As we search for ways to overcome division and violence in our world, the sacred texts that serve as the basis for uniting people in a holy vision of world peace and mutual love are a treasured resource. A religion of the book helps to form a “people of the book,” a Qur’anic term, as one of our authors in this issue points out, that Muslims use to refer to those bodies of believers whose religion is based on a revealed text. Included among such groups would be those belonging to the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim faiths.

While the adherents to these three faith traditions do not exhaust this category, they are bound together by sharing a faith rooted in one God and in a common ancestor in the faith, Abraham. More than ever is it important that believers of these three great traditions find some common ground and appreciation for each other’s beliefs, values and struggles. To that end the articles in this issue address both the need to live as believers who struggle to reconcile the demands of faith with the changing times and as adherents to the spiritual disciplines exemplified in the prayer and mystical traditions of the various faiths.

Scott C. Alexander, professor of Islam at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, directs our attention to that particular period in history known as the Enlightenment, when all three traditions found it necessary to discover a way to respond to the modern age with its elevation of reason over religion. By featuring three men, each of whom helped bridge the growing gap between rationalism and revelation in their own faith tradition, the author reminds us that a living faith need not fear the quest and questioning of the human mind. Paul Lachance, O.F.M., associate professor of spirituality at Catholic Theological Union, then takes us deeper into each tradition by considering representative mystics and how their writings witness to this rich facet of each faith. Mystical concepts such as *ayin* in Judaism, *kenosis* in Christianity, and *fana* in Islam serve to draw all believers into the necessary state of self-emptying and its explicit manifestation in some form of poverty so that God might be all in all.

The practice of prayer is at the heart of the faith life of all the children of Abraham and three contemporary voices, Rabbi Herbert Bronstein, Helen Cahill,

O.P., and Syafa'atun Elmirzana, speak from a personal experience and understanding of prayer within the community of faith. Each author witnesses not only to the unique nature of prayer in their respective tradition but also to the profound regard for a practice that deepens their communion with their God and with others. Finally, Rita George Tvrtkovič writes of interfaith dialogue and trialogue that has been part of the Chicago landscape for almost a quarter of a century. The spiritual daughters of Abraham from all three traditions have found a way to keep the communication going and to enter more deeply into an appreciation of each other's faith and religious practices.

The annual Sophia Award for Theological Excellence given each fall at the Washington Theological Union brought Janet Ruffing, R.S.M., professor of spirituality and spiritual direction and noted author, to give the Holy Wisdom lecture. Dr. Ruffing chose to speak on spiritual direction as a sacred place where a sacred tale is told, casting this process as a form of collaborative spiritual autobiography that testifies to the ongoing presence of grace. We are happy to present the text of her lecture here. One of the entries from the 2002 Theological Reflection Essay contest so impressed our panel of judges that they recommended its publication. Ms. Betty Sheetz offers readers a provocative re-reading of the Pauline injunction found in the Letter to the Ephesians, "Wives, be submissive to your husbands" (5:22), that can call hearers to growth rather than to groan. Finally, Daniel Grigassy, O.F.M., associate professor of Liturgy at the Washington Theological Union and the grandson of a Catholic priest, reflects on the story of the Eastern Catholic Church, a body of twenty-one distinct churches largely unknown to many Roman Catholics.

We are particularly honored to have Daniel McLellan, O.F.M., and Donald Senior, C.P., the presidents of the Washington Theological Union and the Catholic Theological Union respectively, reflect on the role of these schools of ministry at a time of crisis in the Church. Our two other columns also provide a look into areas of ongoing interest: the current developments on the ecumenical scene and an exhortation to recommit ourselves to the pastoral liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council in light of more recent revision statements. We conclude with a serving of book reviews.

We would like to take this occasion to thank Daniel Grigassy, O.F.M., and James Scullion, O.F.M., as they depart from the editorial board of *New Theology Review*. Dan has been our book review editor for six years, and throughout this time his work was marked by a dedication to detail, a gentle approach to potential reviewers, and the affable camaraderie of a son of St. Francis. Jim served for five years on the board and was sub-editor for several issues. We are most grateful for their contribution to this journal. We welcome Kevin O'Neil, C.Ss.R., as our new book review editor, and Francis Horn, O.S.A., and James Okoye, C.S.Sp., to the editorial board.

# Judaism, Christianity, and Islam circa Nineteenth Century C.E.

Three Responses to the  
Enlightenment Challenge

*Scott C. Alexander*

Every age brings its own challenge to the life of faith. The author presents three figures from the Enlightenment who addressed that period's resistance to reconciling reason and religion: the Jewish thinker Moses Mendelssohn, the Muslim reformer Muhammad 'Abduh, and the Catholic scholar Alfred Loisy. Each met resistance and fear; each influenced the movement of his respective tradition into the modern world. All three courageously witnessed to the possibility of development and renewal rather than regression and disintegration.

## *Introduction*

This essay looks at a specific period in history (1783–1905) when each of the three Abrahamic traditions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—underwent significant development. There are two major reasons for focusing on this period: the need for an interval of time to elapse before the importance of events can be appreciated, the unique character of this period in the unfolding of all three religious traditions.

*Scott C. Alexander* is professor of Islam and director of Catholic-Muslim Studies at Catholic Theological Union.

First, in many instances, the more lasting effects of historical events are only fully evident after a century or more. This is especially true in the case of the persecution of minorities in any given society (e.g., the chattel enslavement of Africans in the U.S. and the Holocaust of European Jewry) where the legacy of atrocities seems to have its full impact long after the suffering of the initial victims. Thus, if we want a better understanding of many of the conditions of the present, a desire that has taken on a certain urgency in our post-September 11th global context, we would be wise to search the historical record of one to two hundred years earlier.

Second, unlike other historical periods when common threads or themes in the evolution of the Abrahamic traditions are not so obvious, the nineteenth century is one when all three were reacting to the challenges set before them by Enlightenment rationalism, albeit in very different circumstances and very distinct ways. This fact provides us a readymade framework within which to engage in some rudimentary yet meaningful comparative analysis.

The dates 1738 and 1905 identify the period during which seminal thinkers worked and wrote. The three key figures and works that will form the main focus of this investigation have each made highly influential contributions to the development of the Abrahamic traditions in response to the Enlightenment. They are: Moses Mendelssohn and his *Jerusalem*, first published in 1783; Muhammad 'Abduh and his *Treatise on Divine Unity*, first published in 1897; and Alfred Loisy and his *The Gospel and the Church*, first published in 1905. This analysis seeks to demonstrate just how significant the intellectual and social developments of this period are for understanding, not only where we have been as Abraham's children, but where we are today, and where we might be going.

### *The Enlightenment and Religion*

According to Immanuel Kant (d. 1804), the motto of the Enlightenment was "*Sapere aude*"—"Dare to know!" For Kant and others like him, the 'daring' had to do with the psychological and political risks inherent in the Enlightenment mandate to ask questions that would challenge the nature and authority of knowledge and institutions sanctioned by the weight of centuries of tradition and related power structures. To subject even the most sacred of traditional beliefs and practices to rational empiricism was daringly to declare that no longer would any perspective or interpretation of the "facts" be regarded as privileged. For many of the intellectual pioneers and heirs of the Enlightenment, traditional religion would no longer be granted immunity from scientific investigation.

There seem to have been two main schools of thinking about religion that emerged during the Enlightenment. The first can definitely be described as hostile toward the subject. It branded religion as the enemy of both reason and the

human “freedom” that many Enlightenment thinkers naively considered the natural byproduct of uninhibited rationalism. The second main school of Enlightenment thinking about religion was characterized by attempts to reconcile the dictates of empiricist rationalism with traditional religious identity, in the hopes of arriving at a synthesis of the two. The result would be *modern religion*, something both those in the first school and their traditional religious opponents would have considered an oxymoron.

### *Reason or Revelation?*

In many ways, the exponents of the second school were faced with a new version of a much older Western challenge: *How does one reconcile reason and revelation?* Frequently held to be the father of Jewish Hellenism, Philo of Alexandria (d. c. 50 C.E.) made this the guiding question of his life’s work. He found his answer by espousing a two-sense theory of biblical hermeneutics and a two-fold theory of truth in which he associated the literal with the body and the allegorical with the soul, allowing neither to supplant the other. In this way, Philo used allegory to make room in Judaism for the exercise of reason in the pursuit of philosophical truth, while at the same time affirming the validity of the revealed law.

There are, however, significant differences between the way the reason-versus-revelation problem manifested itself in the late antique and medieval periods and the way it took shape in the context of the Enlightenment. Though a philosopher like Philo disagreed with a literal interpretation of anthropomorphic references to the divinity found in sacred Scripture, he did not adopt a suspicious approach to the claims of prophecy and scripture.

Enlightenment epistemology operated on a novel set of assumptions that cast the reason-versus-revelation question into an entirely different light. The most revolutionary among these was the principle of “maker’s knowledge.” It held that human beings can only really know what they themselves have either produced or are able to reproduce. According to this principle, whatever is rationally conceptualized as a product of human ingenuity is very likely just that—a product of human ingenuity. Thus, no matter how fundamental any aspect of culture may appear to be—including concepts of deities and myths about creation that are the stuff of prophecy and scripture—investigation will eventually yield proof of its human origins.

Although he himself did not coin the principle of “maker’s knowledge,” Giambattista Vico (d. 1744) developed it as the theoretical heart of his “new science”—a methodology for the critical analysis of human culture and all its institutions, including religion. The curious thing about Vico’s work is his insistence that biblical religion, because it is revealed and not a human product, cannot

ultimately be subjected to the analytical scrutiny of the “new science.” Scholars have debated Vico’s exemption of biblical religion, attributing it to everything from fear of excommunication to a desperate move to preserve a sense of meaning in history.

Although Vico was perhaps the greatest Catholic Enlightenment thinker of his day, he straddled the fence between the two Enlightenment schools of thought on religion. His exception not only permitted him to avoid a radical deconstruction of Christian truth claims, but it also allowed him to shrink from the challenge of articulating a fruitful Catholic response to the expanding rationalist critique of religion.

The challenge Vico sidestepped was vigorously embraced by key Jewish Enlightenment thinkers who were committed to developing an authentically dual identity as both religious Jews, dedicated to traditional Jewish praxis, and modern rationalists, convinced of the virtues of unfettered intellectual inquiry. If ever there was a figure that best fit this description, it was without question Moses Mendelssohn.

### *Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786)— Father of the Haskalah*

Mendelssohn is almost universally hailed both as the greatest Jewish thinker of the German Enlightenment and as the father of the Jewish Enlightenment or *Haskalah*. For the many Christian anti-Semites of his day, Mendelssohn was a contradiction in terms. He was one of the most brilliant, philosophically illumined and culturally sophisticated men of eighteenth-century Europe, yet religiously he chose to remain a Jew. Still, for many of his admirers Mendelssohn both taught and embodied the Enlightenment ideals of emancipation from political and social oppression, freedom of intellectual inquiry, and tolerance of diversity. Indeed it was through his influence that Wilhelm Christian Dohm argued for Jewish civil emancipation, in reponse to which the Hapsburg emperor Joseph II issued the *Toleranzpatent* (“charter of toleration”) of 1782. This decree abolished a number of laws that relegated Jews to the status of second-class Austrians.

In *Jerusalem: Or On Religious Power and Judaism*, published just three years before his death, Mendelssohn lays the foundation of the Haskalah and, thereby, lends enormous credibility and plausibility to the project of bringing Judaism into fruitful dialogue with modernity. As the subtitle indicates, Mendelssohn insists that both religious authorities and the state ought to forswear any and all attempts to regulate religious conviction. Mendelssohn argues: “Excommunication and the right to banish, which the state may occasionally permit itself to exercise, are diametrically opposed to the spirit of religion” (73). Here we can see the intersection of Mendelssohn’s religious and moral convictions as a Jew, his identity as a member of a marginalized religious minority, and his Enlightenment politics.

Many Christian polemicists publicly wondered how traditional Judaism with all its centuries-old commandments and prohibitions was at all compatible with Mendelssohn's deeply rooted commitment to the emancipation of the human spirit and person. In *Jerusalem*, Mendelssohn answers this question with what would become one of the pivotal theses of his life's work. He argues that Judaism is not a "revealed religion" in the way Christians typically interpret this concept. Whereas Christians understand the value and superiority of their religion to inhere in revealed truths, Jews maintain that the substance of the revelation of Sinai was legislation, not a set of truths. This is significant, he claims, because it means that revelation in Judaism regulates behavior, not thought. As for "saving truths" and "universal propositions of reason," Mendelssohn maintains that "[t]hese the Eternal reveals to us and to all other men, at all times, through *nature* and *things*, but never through *word* and *script*" (90).

The crux of the Christian polemic leveled at Judaism in Mendelssohn's day was a recasting of the Pauline perspective on Jewish law as a source of bondage. Based on Paul, the Christian polemicists who attacked Mendelssohn were trying to prove just how dead and irrelevant Judaism was—especially as a rule-centered tradition in a period in which multiple circles of intellectuals and others were buzzing about the importance of individual freedoms. Mendelssohn manages to turn this polemic inside-out, transforming it into a classical modern apology for traditional Judaism. He insists that Christianity is infinitely more constraining and restrictive to the human spirit in its claims to possess—in historically conditioned, yet avowedly unchanging dogma—the greatest and most central of universal truths.

Mendelssohn's work directly inspired subsequent generations of *maskilim* (Heb. "enlighteners"), from whom emerged the "science of Judaism," a means of demonstrating the vitality and vibrancy of Judaism in the face of a modern ethos. This movement facilitated the integration of the Jewish community into larger societies and served as a forerunner of what came to be Reform Judaism.

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### *The Enlightenment and "Orientalism"*

**I**n many locales outside of Europe, especially in the Muslim Middle East, the Enlightenment project became incorporated into an "Orientalism" that Edward Said has famously identified as a Western discourse "for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said, 1978: 3). Such thinking

is a glaring example of a sinister colonial and imperialist distortion of the emancipationist themes permeating the work of figures like Mendelssohn. When integrated with racism, “Orientalism” can and has been twisted into a powerful justification of the perpetual subjugation of non-Western peoples by Western powers.

***Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905)—  
Modern Muslim Revivalist***

While still in his twenties, Muhammad 'Abduh met the foremost Muslim anti-imperialist thinker and activist of his day, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897). Afghani lived in Cairo from 1871 to 1879 where he taught philosophy and agitated for social and political reform. He blamed the crisis in the Egyptian economy on an unholy alliance between the British and Khedive Isma'il, the titular Egyptian ruler. Afghani's solution for a Muslim world in the grip of Western colonialism and imperialism was what came to be known as Pan-Islamism, a religio-political theory calling for Muslim countries to throw off foreign domination by uniting into one powerful and centralized *umma* or “community” of the faithful. The young 'Abduh became one of Afghani's close disciples.

'Abduh soon became a leading reformist thinker and activist in his own right. As editor of the Egyptian government newspaper from 1880 to 1882, he participated in the 'Urabi coup, and was subsequently banished to Beirut. From Beirut he moved to Paris where he founded and edited, along with Afghani, a journal dedicated to the cause of Pan-Islamic revival. When he finally returned to Cairo in 1889, he devoted most of his energies to revivifying Islamic theology for the modern period.

In 1897 'Abduh's most influential work *Treatise on Divine Unity* was published. The *Treatise* is more of an indirect than a direct response to the Enlightenment challenge. Though he was certainly well acquainted with modern Western thought, he saw himself more as an advocate for a modern Islamic renaissance than an advocate for integrating Enlightenment rationalism into modern Muslim culture. In fact, not unlike Mendelssohn who saw the key to lasting cultural enlightenment for the Jews in the very roots of traditional Judaism, 'Abduh saw the key to a similar transformation for Muslims in a reinterpretation of the dawn of Islam in the early seventh century.

'Abduh's narrative of the history of the religious human race is an evolutionary approach with strikingly modernist overtones. It begins with references to the “childhood” and adolescence of humanity in which religion was tailored to people's respective developmental aptitudes. Although he is not explicit, he seems to suggest that the religion of ancient Israel was the religion of humanity's childhood and Christianity was the religion of its adolescence. The decay and

corruption of the religion in the adolescent stage is attributed, not to a particular religious tradition, but to rampant sectarianism and the perverse belief “that there is no harmony between religion and the intellect and that religion is one of the most vehement enemies of disciplined learning” (Ar. 152–54; Eng. 132–33). With the rise of Islam, ‘Abduh maintains, humanity has been given a unique opportunity for perfection by being granted what it never fully possessed: autonomy of the will (*istiqlal al-irada*) and autonomy of opinion and thought (*istiqlal al-ra’y wa l-fikr*) (Ar. 147–48; Eng. 127).

In his *Treatise* ‘Abduh develops four basic arguments for both his Western and his Muslim audiences. The first is more implicit than explicit. It claims that the Muslim world has no need to import the European Enlightenment to jump-start its own intellectual renaissance. The second, closely related to the first, insists that inherent in the dawn of Islam is an imperative that the intellect be freed from superstition and *taqlid* or “servile conformism,” to established traditions of thought or praxis.

The third is a critique of so-called Muslim authorities that insist on servile conformism as authentic Islam. ‘Abduh argues that those who forbid reinterpretations of Islamic law or ban the use of modern technologies that might enhance the welfare of Muslim societies are committing the cardinal sin of *shirk* or idolatry. They are denouncing the benefits of the human intellect as one of God’s most magnificent instruments of guidance and solicitude. The fourth argument maintains that freedom to inquire rationally after truth is not absolute. Rather, once the intellect has recognized the veracity of a prophet’s message, it must accept every aspect of that message, even those elements, which it does not yet fully understand. This does not entail accepting apparent incoherencies, but it does imply the willingness to live with them until one finds a way to reconcile them.

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***Alfred Loisy (1857–1940)—  
Heretic and Hero of Catholic Christianity***

**I**n 1879, the year Jamal al-Din al-Afghani was expelled from Egypt for fomenting revolution against the khedivate, and three years before Muhammad

'Abduh was exiled for his participation in the 'Urabi coup of 1882, Alfred Loisy was ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood in his native France.

In 1890 Loisy was appointed as a professor of sacred Scripture at the Institut Catholique of Paris, but in just three short years the nature of his scholarship had come into serious question. Among other things, he claimed that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, that the creation stories of Genesis should be read symbolically not literally, and that church doctrine underwent development in the Scriptures itself. What would come to be standard assumptions in late twentieth-century Catholic biblical scholarship was enough to have Loisy removed from his teaching position, and to spark an exegetical controversy which would move Pope Leo XIII to issue in November 1893 his anti-rationalist encyclical "on the study of sacred Scripture," *Providentissimus Deus*.

During the time of Loisy's expulsion from the his teaching position, he worked on a number of essays that became part of a larger project designed to be the basis for a modern reform and renewal of Catholic theology. Many of these essays were reworked and published in what is arguably his most important work, *L'Évangile et l'Église* or *The Gospel and the Church*. This work is an apology for Catholicism in response to a series of lectures by the great German Lutheran patristics scholar Adolf Harnack (d. 1930). Harnack denounced the institutional Church as an amalgam of accretions: "The whole outward and visible institution of a Church claiming divine dignity has no foundations whatever in the Gospel. It is a case, not of

distortion, but of total perversion."

Loisy was perfectly poised to respond to Harnack's bold and obviously anti-Catholic thesis. Like Harnack, Loisy was an enthusiastic heir to Enlightenment rationalism. In fact, he was quite sure that the Catholic Church would not survive the modern period if it did not respond in some fruitful way to the challenge that the Enlightenment posed to a whole range of traditional church teachings. Harnack believed that, by separating the warp of eternal, unchanging truth from the woof of changing historical context and the development of tradition, he could identify the essence of Christianity. Loisy seriously doubted that this was possible, for he saw no way for the human being to discern critically and objectively any aspects of a religious tradition that are not products of the human experience in history. He maintained: "Whatever we think, theologically, of tradition, whether we trust it or regard it with suspicion, we know Christ only by the tradition, across the tradition, and in the tradition of the primitive Christians."

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Loisy was a thinker who rose to respond to the Enlightenment challenge. However, the content of his response and its insistence on the human, historical, and thus critically assessable dimension of almost every aspect of the faith was, to the ears of the magisterium of the day, heresy. Instead of heralding Loisy as laying the foundation for a Catholic theology which could be at once authentic and at home in modernity, in 1907 Pius X condemned him as a “modernist” and numbered him among “the most pernicious of all the adversaries of the Church” (*Pascendi*, 1907: sec. 3). He was excommunicated shortly thereafter on March 7, 1908. What is both ironic and tragic is that he died in June 1940, a little over three years before Pius XII’s issuance of the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943), which began the process of admitting as orthodox and even encouraged use of the very modern methods of biblical criticism that earned Loisy his condemnation.

### *Conclusion*

Each of these three figures significantly influenced the way his respective tradition met the challenge of the Enlightenment. Mendelssohn laid the groundwork for thinking, out of which emerged a Reform movement that would be the touchstone for identifying various brands of modern Judaism. In similar manner ‘Abduh influenced those who made their mark on the development of modern Islam. As for Loisy, the same centralized ecclesial structure that so quickly and efficiently silenced him would, only a few years after his death, begin to institute the very practices that he advocated.

Of the three Enlightenment responders it was the Catholic, and not his elder Jewish brother nor his contemporary Muslim brother, who experienced the most resistance to change, the deepest fear of modernity, and one of the most common expressions of radical extremism—actual expulsion from his faith community. Perhaps there is a lesson here for those of us who jump to rash conclusions about the religious and cultural “other.”

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# Mysticism in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam<sup>1</sup>

*Paul Lachance, O.F.M.*

While recognizing the differences and variations within the mystical traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the author locates two areas of common emphasis in the writings of Rabbi Moses De Leon, Angela of Foligno and Rabi'a al-Adawiyya: self-emptying and mendicancy.

As we enter a new millennium, it is becoming more and more crucial that members of the religious traditions of the world understand and mutually enrich each other by sharing some of their spiritual treasures. This will enable them better to collaborate in the common effort to respond to humankind's thirst for the infinite and to stem the forces of violence and destruction. An appreciation of some of the salient elements of various traditions can work toward these goals. To this end a glimpse at some of the features of the mystical traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam is offered here. Perhaps the best way to arrive at insights into these mystical traditions is to examine the lives and/or writings of various mystics themselves, for they are the ones who incorporate these values and they witness to this incorporation by means of their lives.

Lest we presume that what appears to be common among these traditions is an exact correspondence, it is important to recognize that there are in fact important variations within and among the traditions themselves. Furthermore, the considerable problems involved in the actual translation of texts from another culture and another period in history often prevent an accurate presentation of the thought of the respective mystic. Despite such limitations, this

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essay will attempt to provide a comparison of two basic areas of apparent commonality among the mystical perspectives of the Jewish Rabbi Moses de Leon, the Christian Blessed Angela of Foligno, and the Muslim Rabi'a of Basra.

The first characteristic reflected in the lives of these mystics is that of personal self-emptying. This emptying process seems to be understood as a way of purifying the consciousness and, thereby, opening the mystic to the fullness of ultimate reality or mystical union with the divine. The second common trait, a correlate of the emptying process, is the living out of some form of poverty. This aspect of life style enabled the religious seekers to strip themselves of possessions and to live a marginal, sometimes misunderstood, and often persecuted, life at odds with the prevailing or conventional culture.

### *The Jewish Tradition*

Given the current revival of interest in mysticism, it is not surprising that in the Jewish tradition there is considerable attention, both scholarly and popular, being paid to the Kabbalah. Literally translated "tradition" or "the handing down of things divine," the Kabbalah is considered the sum or pinnacle of Jewish mysticism. Its literary production, more intensive in certain periods of history than in others, has been preserved in an impressive number of books dating back to the late Middle Ages. The Kabbalah contains a theosophical symbol referred to as *ayin*, the Hebrew word for "nothingness." Over time, this mysterious term took on a variety of meanings and thus no consistency can be found in its use.

*Ayin* appears in the works of the early medieval Kabbalists in Provence and Spain. It was later used extensively by Rabbi Moses De Leon, the author of the Zohar. The Zohar, the greatest and most influential text of the Kabbalah, was written in northern Spain near the end of the thirteenth century. (The importance of Spain in the development of Kabbalah cannot be overestimated. The claim has been made that the mystical interpretation of the erotic language of the Song of Songs, the biblical book considered the mystical text par excellence, was the creation of Spanish Kabbalists.) Some scholars maintain that in its glorification of poverty as a religious value, the Zohar was influenced by the Spirituality, the radical wing of the early Franciscan movement to which Angela of Foligno belonged. Whether or not this was indeed the case, the Zohar's understanding of symbols, including the term *ayin*, which it used extensively, became a central tenet of devotion for later Jewish mystics, such as the teachers of Hasidism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

For the Kabbalists, *ayin* is part of the elaborate system of the *Sefirot*, a work that highlights aspects or dimensions of the infinite. *Ayin* also corresponds to the stages of divine manifestation and attributes of the divine essence. In the

thirteenth century it became the appellation for the first and highest *Sefirah*, that of divine power. As such it was considered the source of all divine and material existence. It denoted the inner recesses of the divinity. Since God's being is ineffable and incomprehensible, the employment of *ayin* indicated that the only appropriate way to describe the divine essence is paradoxically by way of complete negation.

Rabbi Moses de Leon offers the following explanation: "God, may He be blessed, is the annihilation of all thoughts; no thought can contain Him. Since no one can contain Him (with) anything in the world, He is called *ayin*. This is the secret of what is said: 'Wisdom comes into being out of *ayin* . . .'" *Ayin* served as a bridge between the completely hidden and inactive Godhead and the emanated divine *Sefirot*. The relationship between the first *Sefirah* and the Godhead itself, the secret of being and non-being united in the symbol of the *ayin*, was a constant subject of mystical inquiry in the Kabbalah tradition.

For the Kabbalists, everything emerges from *ayin* and everything eventually returns there. Since the task of the religious seeker was to climb step-by-step the ladder of emanation leading from the first to the tenth Sefirot, *ayin*, the first and highest divine emanation, became the supreme goal of mystical ascension. In the Hasidic phase of Kabbalah, the devout are instructed to devote all of their religious energies to self-negation, seeking to empty themselves of all thoughts of and feelings toward the material world. Becoming nothing emerges as the spiritual goal, because nothingness is the essential attribute of the divine. Ultimately, *ayin* enables one to see the world mystically; it provides a window on the oneness that underlies the manifold appearance of created reality; it enables one to preserve equanimity in the midst of chaos; and it becomes an agent of world transformation.

### *The Christian Tradition*

One of the characteristics of the medieval Church was a profound longing for reform, for the transformation of the ecclesial body. Concomitant with this was the emergence of devotion that centered on the passion and death of Christ. This devotion sprung up at about the same time as bridal and nuptial mysticism that was derived from, among other sources, interior assimilation of the message of the biblical Song of Songs. There was another strand of mysticism referred to as apophatic mysticism. Many religious people believed that the path to union with God called for an emptying of all images and concepts so that at the summit of the ascent to God one was totally absorbed in the life of God. This devotional movement produced a new wave of mystics, predominantly, though not exclusively, among the women who comprised the Beguine circles. Beguine

was probably the first identifiable women's movement in history. Among these exceptional women was the thirteenth-century mystic Angela of Foligno.

Angela's classic work *The Liber* consists of two parts: *The Memorial*, which recounts the thirty steps of her spiritual journey, and *The Instructions*, which is a collection of writings that reveal her as a spiritual mother. It is in the first nineteen steps of *The Memorial* that we discover poverty as one of the most dominant characteristics of her spirit. This work contains some of the highest and most daring expressions of mystical union in the history of Christian mysticism. In her burning desire to grow in amorous response to the call of her beloved, Angela sought to align her life with that of Christ and to follow the example of her model St. Francis, stripping herself of all her possessions. It is in the final

steps of *The Memorial* that we read that the most sublime visions and assurances of the presence of God slightly precede but interlace with the experiences of the greatest suffering and despair—the latter diminishing somewhat during her life.

In *The Instructions* an anonymous disciple of Angela reports that during one of her experiences of illumination, she was drawn into the "fathomless abyss of God." While under the impact of that vision, the crucified God-man appeared to her and bestowed upon her soul "the double state of his own life." Hers was an experience of the sweetness of the uncreated

God and, at the same time, that of the cruel death pains of Christ's crucifixion. Angela seems to have shared the very kenotic experience of Christ, through which he manifested divine love by totally emptying himself of divine privilege while hanging on the cross. By entering into the mysterious inner world of Christ's passion, sharing even his abandonment on the cross, she experienced a darkness that was not eliminated but was integrated and inverted (euphemized) in order to disclose the superabundant light and the inner recesses of the Triune God. Thus, instead of a symbol of inexplicable absence, darkness became for her a symbol of ineffable presence.

To further describe the final stages of her union with God, Angela resorts to the theme of divine darkness. This theme she draws from the important revival and development of apophatic mysticism that spread throughout religious circles during the thirteenth century. Using apophatic language (language of negation), she asserts that she saw God as the "All Good" or the "Secret Good . . . in and with darkness." This paradoxical language indicates the subjective blindness or negative mode of perception as well as the transcendental obscurity of the trinitarian life which she claims she is now perceiving. Angela describes

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*Rabi'a is the most  
famous woman in  
Sufism, the mystical  
branch of Islam.*

the moment of mystical marriage so celebrated by the mystics. For her, there is no longer any intermediary between God and herself.

In this vision of God in the darkness, Angela claims that neither body nor soul trembles or moves. The soul sees both nothing and everything; the body sleeps and speech is cut off, an experience akin to what some of the Greek Fathers variously described as *apatheia*, a state of tranquillity, of perfect control of the irrational parts of the soul that have been reordered to receive the fullness of divine indwelling. These visions of God were both in and with darkness. Indeed, as a result of such an experience, everything that could be named is as nothing and fades in the background. Angela's use and pursuit of negations to describe the unnameability of her experience is relentless. The entire created universe has now become transparent to her. She possesses a knowledge achieved through communion, a knowledge of the primal harmony of all that is, as seen from within its transcendent source. In the ineffable abyss of her own nothingness, Angela discovered correlatively the unknowable, unfathomable, and unnamed depths of the Triune God.

### *The Islamic Tradition*

If, as many Muslims maintain, Angela of Foligno could very well be considered a great Islamic saint, then in like manner, the great Muslim mystic Rabi'a al-Adawiyya of Basra could be revered as a great Christian saint. Rabi'a is the most famous woman in Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam. As with Angela, evidence concerning the life of Rabi'a is very fragmentary, and the historicity of many legends about her is an object of significant scholarly debate. Though the accounts of early Sufi saints only briefly refer to her, the most reliable and complete account of her life and sayings appears in the writings of a thirteenth-century Persian poet, Faridu d-Din 'Attar. He begins his account of her life by bringing the gender issue into the forefront: How could a woman be included in the ranks of the male Sufi masters? To this challenge he responds that, from the point of mysticism, there are no class or gender distinctions, all are "one and in oneness." From this he concludes that there is complete equality of the sexes for those on the path to God.

Rabi'a lived a life of absolute devotion to God. "O my God," she was heard to have said, "my work and my desire in all this world is recollection of you and, in the afterworld, it is meeting with you. This is what is mine—you do as you will." Sincerity and single-mindedness were her hallmarks. What is especially interesting about Rabi'a is her insistence on mendicancy and absolute poverty as means for achieving union with the beloved. Her intimate relationship with the deity found a balance between a sense of awe before the Totally Other and a disarming

casualness in the presence of her beloved. Her love for God was not only intimate, but devoid of self-interest, a central quality of Sufi mysticism.

The path to the Real articulated by some of the Sufi mystics was based on two fundamental concepts, *fana*, or “passing away of the self” and *baqa*, the “human residing within the divine.” To pass away or to become empty of self is to become like a polished mirror, reflecting the divine image, and at times even to become one with the divine in that image. The concepts of *fana* and *baqa* are thought to be in constant interplay with everything else, but they are found especially in the Sufi’s search for union with God. In the teaching of Bin Arabia, the grand master of Sufi philosophy, union and separation occur simultaneously; the lover perpetually finds and perpetually separates from the beloved. This writer further maintains that in each inhalation of air the Sufi achieves a new form and in each exhalation gives up that form. The goal for the mystic then is to align and fuse personal breath with the eternal divine breath.

Finally, much of Sufi mysticism is characterized by the use of erotic language to describe the mystical path. Much as the biblical Song of Songs influenced Jewish and Christian piety and literature, so pre-Islamic Arabian erotic love poetry entered into the Sufi mystical tradition.

### *Conclusion*

Certain common elements are evident as foundational to the mystical world-views of the three religious traditions examined here. One such element is the use of preexistent love poetry to characterize the mystical union. This can be seen in Judaism’s and Christianity’s use of the biblical Song of Songs and in Rabi’a’s use of Persian love poetry. These examples demonstrate the rich gamut of ways that erotic language can be employed to describe the passionate love of the mystics toward God.

A second point of commonality is the fundamental conviction that if one is to come close to God, ultimate reality, or the Real, one must empty oneself. This emptying is represented as the *ayin* or “nothingness” of the Kabbalah, imitation of the *kenosis* of Christ in Christianity, and the concepts of *fana* or the obliteration of consciousness and its return as *baqa* in the Sufi tradition. In all of these traditions, it is by way of negation—even absolute negation—that one finds the essential paradoxical truth that the more we discover our authentic selves within the deep self, the more we discover ourselves within God, the Absolute, or the Real.

Related to the concept of emptying, a final theme found in all of these mystical traditions is the conviction that, in order to discover God, one must dispossess oneself and become poor. Not only are we destined to become mendicants before one another and to continue to be transformed by one another, but above

everything else, mendicancy is the basic attitude one must assume before the divine Mystery.

As fundamentally different as the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam may be, they hold many values in common. Perhaps mutual fidelity to such values will provide a context within which adherents to these traditions can recognize other elements of commonality. These will include not only their common humanity but also their common search for religious meaning and for the Divine Being of whom this meaning is but a faint reflection.

### *Note*

- 1 This essay is an edited segment of a much longer article, “L’esperienza suprema di unione con Dio di Angela da Foligno e paralleli con altre tradizioni religiose,” in *L’esperienza mistica della beata Angela da Foligno. Il libro: una lettura interreligiosa*. Atti del convegno tenuto in Assisi e Foligno nei giorni 1 e 2 dicembre 2000 (Assisi: Edizioni Porziuncola, 2001) 117–49.

# Prayer in the Abrahamic Faiths

*Rabbi Herbert Bronstein, Helen Cahill, O.P.,  
and Syafa'atun Elmirzana*

The authors, through the lens of Judaism, Christianity and Islam,  
offer reflections on how they understand the practice of prayer,  
particularly as personal relationship with God,  
source of discernment, and embracing all of life.

Interfaith prayer services have made international news within the recent past. Having witnessed events precipitated by religious persecution and war, we have also been moved upon seeing the Pope pray with both Jewish and Muslim leaders. Dialogue groups consisting of members from each of the three religious bodies whose agendas are as diverse as theological issues, civic matters, and neighborhood concerns have sprung up throughout the country. This has been

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especially true since the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Clearly the “children of Abraham” are becoming interested in each other’s unique religious and cultural heritage and are desirous of discovering where and how these traditions intersect.

If, as history reveals, all three monotheistic faiths trace themselves back to the same Abraham, and if, as most contend, they worship the same God, then perhaps they hold other characteristics in common. Since one cannot presume commonality on the basis of external similarity alone, *New Theology Review* asked one member of each of the faiths (all professional religion teachers) to describe how the practice of prayer is understood within her or his tradition. No focus was suggested; no further directions given. A brief analysis of their statements is offered at the end.

### *Prayer in the Jewish Tradition*

Ever since my childhood, at the moment I awaken each morning, as if unbidden, the same words emerge into my consciousness: “I give thanks to You, O Sovereign God living and enduring, that in mercy you have restored my soul to me; how great is your faithfulness!” So I begin the day with thanks.

By the word “soul” I am daily reminded that there is more to my being than the physical. Much later in my life I learned that the rabbi of Kotsk taught his students not to pray for anything material for themselves. When asked, then, what *he* prayed for, he answered, “I pray to remind myself that I have a soul.” In line with this thought, I once heard my daughter, who is also a rabbi, tell her congregation: “Whatever you pray for, the very act of praying itself brings you closer to God.” I myself have come to appreciate a short form of regular prayer advised by the ancient rabbis: “O God, you know our needs before we utter them, and you ordain all things for the best. What is good in your sight, do! Praised are you, O God, who hear prayer.”

That prayer that I recite in the morning is the first of many such prayers. The Jewish tradition provides for morning prayers, for praise of God who gives sight, steadies the steps, and gives strength to the weary; who wondrously forms the astoundingly complex functions of the body, which are continuously working without our conscious effort so that, each day, we are able to stand in praise before God. I pray all of these prayers, not in English, but in our holy tongue of Hebrew. I do this so that in this way each day I am touched with a sense of the sacred. Ever since childhood, I do not merely speak these first words of prayer. I sing them! I do this so that heartfelt melody transforms words of prayer into a prayer of the heart. I hasten to add that my own sense of an “indwelling Presence” or sense of awe in worship came not from so-called “Children’s Services” but from sitting as a child with my family at *adult* worship or around the sabbath

table. There I shared in the prayers in which my parents themselves were immersed.

It is through prayers learned and practiced in childhood that one can begin to glimpse the life of prayer in any faith. From my experience as a rabbi working with literally thousands of Jewish children, I have learned that when one asks a Jewish child to name the first prayer that comes to mind, the child will answer either the *Sh'ma* or the *Motzih*. The *Sh'ma*, which is to be said daily in the morning and at evening, can be translated: "Hear (hearken, listen to, or understand) O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your being" (Deut 6:4-5). This prayer is both a "watch-word of the Faith" and an act of covenant commitment.

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The *Motzih*, the shortest of graces prayed before eating, can be translated: "Praised are you, O God, who bring forth bread from the earth." Reciting this prayer as a child, I also associated the assuaging of my own hunger and enjoying the good taste of food with care for others. Along with saying the prayer, I was taught to put coins into a charity box that was placed on the table. These offerings were meant for those who had little or no food on their tables. The *Motzih* is a form of prayer we call *Bracha* (blessing), and it is the most characteristic form of Jewish prayer. The *Bracha* emerged in the earliest days of Judaism, from the time of the ancient rabbis—about the same time as Jesus lived. A *Bracha* always begins, "Praised are you, O God." Such a prayer is easily recognized. Once I picked up a hitchhiking young man. When I advised him of the dangers of hitchhiking, he said: "But I know who you are!

I've been to your Services at *Bar Mitzvahs* (son of the law) of my friends. I even know some of your prayer in Hebrew! *Baruch Atah Adonai.*" He had heard that phrase so many times that he had actually learned it himself.

Such a prayer of praise is an affirmation, a "Yes" to existence. It is a way of saying: "How wonderful are your works O God!" By means of this prayer, one might praise God for seeing a rainbow, for enjoying flowers, or for meeting a person noted for wisdom. Before reading Scripture, enjoying the first fruit of the season, or celebrating a sacred and joyous occasion, we pray: "We praise you, O God, who have kept us in life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this sacred and joyous time." Such prayers continuously remind us of God's "wonders which are daily with us, Your miracles, morning, noon, and night."

In order to illustrate the importance of prayer in the very ordinary experiences of life, I remind adults and children alike: “You know that we say a *bracha* only on religious occasions.” Then I ask: “What is religious about eating a piece of bread?” If there is no answer, I explain:

You see a small piece of hard matter, a seed. At some point human beings learned to put seeds into the ground. Through some strange marvelous process, the seed in the ground breaks open, puts out roots, takes in nourishment from the soil, and, as if it contained some fantastic laboratory within itself, changes its form and contributes to its own growth. It develops into a beautiful plant with its own many seeds. The more scientists learn about this mysterious process, the stranger, more wonderful, and mysterious it seems to become. Sometime in the past, human beings learned to grind the seeds into a flour, mix the flour with a liquid, and bake bread to eat. For the mystery hidden within the seed and for the wonders of human ingenuity, we praise God.

This simple example shows that in the Jewish tradition, prayer is a very important part of conscious living. Nothing is too small or insignificant to bring us to prayer. This tradition teaches that everything comes from the hands of God, and so there is always reason to praise God and give thanks.

RABBI HERBERT BRONSTEIN

### *Prayer in the Christian Tradition*

The subject of this reflection, the significance of prayer in the Christian tradition, is a bit daunting. The fact that prayer is a priority in my life does not exempt me from wrestling with questions about prayer. I write as a Catholic Christian, a woman religious, and a spiritual director. Listening as a spiritual companion to the prayer of many people enriches my experience and understanding of prayer. The rich diversity in their prayer and in their approaches to prayer is a source of wonder to me, and it makes me realize that prayer is infinitely simple and infinitely complex, personal and interior as well as communal and public. The ways of prayer and the presence and movement of God within an individual and a society are as varied as are the fingerprints of humanity.

In the Scriptures we often encounter Jesus urging us to stay awake, to be alert. Is this not an invitation to pray always by cultivating an awareness of the divine presence of love? There dwells within us a dynamic force or deep longing for “something more.” This is really the human yearning to connect with the mystery we call God, a mystery that is always present and active in our lives. As in any relationship, if we want this love to deepen, we must invest our energies in nurturing its life.

Christian prayer is inspired by and modeled after the prayer of Jesus. I would like to focus on three aspects of this prayer as gleaned from the Gospels: prayer as an integral part of the life of Jesus, prayer as intimacy with God, and prayer as revelation for the people of God.

First, biblical instances of Jesus praying are too numerous to list here. In Luke's Gospel we read that he prayed at significant moments: before his baptism (3:22), in the synagogue (4:16), as he blessed the loaves and fish (9:16), in his tears and sweat in Jerusalem and Gethsemane (19:41; 22: 41-44), and in his sense of abandonment on the cross (22:46). In truth, prayer was a defining characteristic of Jesus' life.

Second, the nature of Jesus' relationship with God, whom he called Abba (a familiar term for Father), is testimony to his personal and intimate experience of the living God. He lived in communion with God, always engaging his affections and sharing his hopes, desires, convictions, pain and sadness. In this relationship of mutual self-disclosure, the prayer of Jesus integrated contemplation and vulnerability. Today we might describe Jesus as a discerning person. He lived in communion with God, in touch with life and in the truth of who he was. Christians too must be discerning persons. They must live by the grace of God, in touch with the movements of God in their personal and communal lives. Living in touch with this mystery assumes discernment as a way of life, a way of searching for and uniting oneself to God's will in life.

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Finally, prayer occurs when God communes with us and we with God. In authentic prayer we are face-to-face with God who is personal, relational, and actively present in all of creation. In prayer we take a long, loving look at reality as we lift up our minds and hearts and pay attention to the action of God in the world. As such, prayer is a contemplative encounter with God, a way of relating to a loving God who desires us.

A short story might illustrate the exercise of Christian prayer. Two women religious, Anne and Margaret, were experiencing conflict with their community leadership. Both women take prayer seriously but each has a different understanding of it. Anne prayed: "God, You are in charge. Where are you? Fix it." Her concept of God was that of an all-powerful "Mr. Fix It," and she prayed for a quick solution to the conflict. She did not share intimately with God what was happening in her in this conflict. She assumed little, if any, responsibility for bringing the conflict to resolution. Her prayer lacked deep interpersonal involvement.

Margaret approached prayer much differently. She shared with God her deeper self, her joys and hopes, her pain and confusion. She daily paid attention to the movements of God in her life. When the conflict with leadership arose, she expressed to friends and to God her own need for comfort and support. When in prayer, she did not mask her feelings and responses, but was open to the “desires of God’s heart.” Led by the Spirit, she spoke her truth in love to the community leaders. Thus, she assumed some responsibility and moved toward others with integrity. This brought her a degree of inner peace.

Like Anne, Margaret experienced God as all-powerful, but her experience of divine power was an invitation to a deep sense of mutuality and partnership. She did not expect God to fix the situation, but trusted God’s direction and guidance in her prayer. It is important to note the connection between the prayer of each woman and the respective images of God. Of the two, Margaret’s prayer reveals a desire to pray like Jesus prayed. She sought to live a discerning life, to enjoy intimacy with God, and to take necessary risks for others. As she experienced a deeper intimacy with God, she grew in freedom in God’s service.

This short story illustrates how Christian prayer, patterned after the prayer of Jesus, possesses an openness and responsiveness to the providential care of God that envelops us all. It is an awareness of and an engagement with the infinite mystery within which we live, move, and have our being.

HELEN CAHILL, O.P.

### *Prayer in the Islamic Tradition*

Prayer is an expression of religious experience in action. It is the soul of every religion. In Islam prayer marks and directs all the activities of Muslims who begin and end their day with prayer. In Islamic spirituality, prayer has at least four different meanings. First, it means *salat* or ritual prayer and daily worship, which is the second pillar of Islamic religion. Prayer also means *dua*, personal or congregational entreaties and petitions to Allah. *Dhikr* is remembrance of God, invoking certain key *Qur’anic* phrases or divine epithets. Finally, *munajah* is devotional conversations between the lover (believer) and the beloved (God). When Muslims speak of prayer, they usually mean *salat*, the ritual prayer or daily worship. That is the meaning that will be explained here.

*Salat* is the Muslims’ daily teacher, guiding them to God and to a life of integrity. The word *salat* comes from an Arabic root meaning “link.” Thus, *salat* is the Muslims’ link or bridge to Allah. *Salat* is like a capsule that contains the extract of all teaching and the goal of religion. In *salat* Muslims become conscious of the goal of life, which is worship of God, the One. Since *salat* establishes contact with God, a Muslim must be in the state of ritual purity to perform it. This purity is crucial, so much so that when one becomes impure, one must undergo

some form of ablution in order to regain ritual purity. While major ablution involves a full bath from head to toe, a minor ablution can be as simple as rinsing or wiping one's hands. In the absence of water, one might use clean sand as a form of cleansing. *Salat* need not be performed in the mosque. However, the place of performance must be clean and as tranquil and free from distraction as possible.

Muslims follow the example of the prophet Muhammad (praised be him) in performing *salat*. He is the perfect example of one who prays. It was told that, when a man once asked him: "Teach me to pray," the Prophet replied: "Come and stay with us a day or two and thus learn your prayers." He also said: "Pray as you see me pray." Thus, his personal guidance and living example are the source of Muslims' prayer.

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*Salat is really a  
prayer for peace  
for humanity.*

*Salat* opens with a formula of consecration followed by the proclamation: "Allah is the Greatest!" This affirmation opens one's heart, makes contact with God, and cuts one off from inappropriate relationships. To stand in *salat* is to stand with one foot in this world and the other in the grave. It is to stand in the balance before Allah. A mystic once said that *salat* or daily worship is dying in living. *Salat* is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours: dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, evening, and night. In this way the believer will be in a constant, conscious,

prayerful attitude throughout the day.

The experience of the presence of God in *salat* is ineffable. However, no less important is the realization and expression of the experience in daily life. *Salat* wards off great sins of every kind. The Qur'an states that one who repudiates the faith is the one who maltreats the orphan and does not exhort (others) to feed the poor (107). It is obvious that *salat* can produce a sense of humanity and solidarity exemplified by a kindness to the needy. It is this goal of *salat* as the way of education of character or morals that is symbolized by saying salaam (peace) as its closing. *Salat* is really a prayer for peace for humanity, and it is uttered as an expression of solidarity with all humankind. Thus, one might say that *salat* begins with an affirmation of a relationship with God and closes with an affirmation of the relationship with humankind.

If *salat* is performed with devotion and attention and is accompanied with tranquility of every member of one's body, it is a perfect declaration of faith. It creates a highly elevated feeling of religiosity. A person who performs *salat* will have a soul that is balanced and full of hope without losing awareness of oneself or becoming haughty. The one who prays "does not despair if misfortune

strikes, and does not become puffed up while experiencing good fortune” (70:19). The ideal that *salat* seeks is the creation of a peaceful and just community.

One might say that this kind of prayer fosters spirituality, but it does not require organized religion. It means that belief in God and doing good are enough, with no need to participate in specific ritual prayer. Faith and good works are important in Islam. However, in order for faith to move one in the direction of good work, it must possess a warmth and intimacy in the soul which can be achieved through the practice of *salat*. Thus, *salat* expresses the logic of Islamic faith. Without *salat* as a ritual prayer, faith would become an abstract formulation lacking the ability to motivate the individual inwardly to act with integrity. As a ritual prayer and an institution of faith, *salat* functions to strengthen faith, making one conscious of its implications in daily life. The well known *hadith* (teaching) says, “Faith is not something static that appears once and for always. Faith, rather, is of a dynamic character that knows both the rhythm of negative development (decreasing, failing, becoming weak) and a positive growth (increasing, deepening, becoming stronger).”

Finally, as a ritual prayer, *salat* is thought to establish the social condition of union of servant and Lord believed to be essential if individuals and the community are to be truly safe. Prayer, in its higher form, is contemplative and unitive. It leads to salvation or liberation of the soul from all bondage and imperfection. This in turn leads to appropriate action. Without prayer or contemplation one cannot be in a state of grace or goodness, and without being good one cannot do well.

SYAFA'ATUN ELMIRZANA

### *Prayer in the Abrahamic Faiths*

The importance of prayer in each of the Abrahamic faiths is readily apparent in these three short statements. Certain characteristics are also quite obvious. First is the very personal character of prayer. While communal prayer and the public celebration of religious events and festivals are often mandatory in each tradition, at the heart of genuine prayer is a personal relationship with God. Furthermore, though the holiness and total “otherness” of God is never denied, within this relationship God is perceived as an intimate friend, even a lover. This sense of intimacy with God seems to be the foundation of many of the other features of prayer.

A second common characteristic, and perhaps an implication of the first, is the very human yet all embracing scope of prayer. Each writer indicated that prayer is the context within which all of life is to be lived. Because it attunes us to the presence of God in our lives, it marks the periods of the day, and it

influences the way we make decisions. Thus in each tradition, prayer practiced in this way makes all of life an act of prayer.

Finally, all three faiths maintain that it is within prayer that we seek and discover God's will for us. Though that divine will might be expressed in various religious customs and traditional regulations, it is in prayer that we discern what may be specific to our own lives.

These short statements show that, despite their unique nature and the unfamiliar face they may reveal to the public, each of these three Abrahamic faiths cherishes the practice of profound, even contemplative, prayer. Furthermore, it is by means of such prayer that their members seek an intimate relationship with God that will manifest itself in lives of integrity and harmony with others.

# Heart Speaks to Heart

## Women of the Book in Conversation

*Rita George Tvrkovič*

**Starting from her own experience of interfaith dialogue, the author offers an overview of conversations taking place between Jewish, Catholic, and Muslim women in Chicago, and their contribution to building lasting relationships.**

Muslim and Catholic teenage girls discussing dating and marriage . . . Jewish and Catholic women studying the Bible together . . . Jewish, Christian, and Muslim moms sharing kosher marshmallows. These are just a few snapshots of the conversations taking place between Jewish, Christian, and Muslim “women of the book” in Chicago.

“People of the book” (*ahl al-kitab*) is a Qur’anic term Muslims use to describe religions centered on a revealed text, such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Christians and Jews would not necessarily define themselves in this manner, but I have used the term “women of the book” in my title because it is a convenient way to group these three monotheistic faiths. “Heart speaks to heart” is the famous saying of Cardinal John Henry Newman that, I believe, captures the essence of the kind of dialogue that often takes place between Jewish, Christian, and Muslim women.

This article is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of all the dialogues between Jews, Catholics, and Muslims in Chicago. Rather, I will simply use broad strokes to describe some of the incredibly rich conversations that have been taking place here between “women of the book.”

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## *Chicago Women in the History of Dialogue*

Many consider the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago to be the beginning of the modern interfaith movement. Since that meeting, Chicago has become a leader in interfaith relations: it hosted the second Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993, and it is home to several major interfaith organizations such as the National Conference for Community and Justice, the Interfaith Housing Coalition, the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago, and the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. Chicago remains an important national and international locus of dialogue.

But what about women's place in that history? Were women involved in the 1893 or 1993 Parliaments, or in other more local, grassroots dialogues? Four women gave major speeches at the 1893 Parliament, and nineteen others gave other presentations—a tiny percentage of the total number of talks (nearly 200), to be sure. Men dominated interfaith conversations then, and often do so even today. Yet all-women's interfaith dialogues do exist, although it is sometimes difficult to find out about them. Women's dialogues, at least as I have experienced them in Chicago, tend to be more informal, more local, less connected to official organizations, and thus harder to track. Therefore, women's involvement in the interfaith movement has often been marginalized, even invisible. Despite this, it is crucial that their involvement be known because the ways in which women conduct dialogue can serve as a model for building authentic, lasting interfaith relationships.

I will spend some time describing a few of the dialogues and trialogues between Jewish, Catholic, and Muslim women in Chicago. This article will focus on Catholic Christians, because these are the conversations with which I have had the most experience; not included is information about the interfaith dialogues in which other Christians are engaged. Furthermore, my emphasis will be heavier on the Catholic-Muslim dimensions of the dialogue, since these are the relationships in which I have been most intimately involved. The article will conclude with a brief discussion of some of the contributions these women have made, and continue to make, to the overall dialogue scene.

### *Catholic-Jewish Dialogues*

Catholics and Jews in Chicago have been in formal dialogue since the early 1980s. Many of their initial meetings were sparked by fifteenth and twentieth anniversary celebrations of *Nostra Aetate*, Vatican II's document (1965) on the Church's relation to non-Christian religions which revolutionized Catholic-Jewish relations. Some of the Catholic-Jewish dialogue groups begun in the 1980s con-

tinue to this day. But very few of these formal dialogues have been specifically between Catholic and Jewish women.

One of the only efforts to bring Catholic and Jewish women together in Chicago in recent years was sponsored by Soul Space Retreat Center for women. In 2001, Soul Space offered sessions such as “Studying Our Sacred Texts,” which had Catholic and Jewish women leaders facilitating Bible study; “Spirituality in the Home,” which explored the meaning of Passover from both Jewish and Christian perspectives; and “Building Bridges,” a series of Saturday programs intended to increase understanding and foster relationships between Jewish and Christian women. However, these sessions were not structured to facilitate ongoing dialogue; rather they were meant to offer participants a one-time glimpse of interfaith conversations.

I am not aware of any Catholic-Jewish all-women dialogues active here in Chicago at this time, and there seems to be no call for such a dialogue. Dialogues between Catholic and Jewish women tend to be conducted either within the context of mixed-gender dialogues or in Jewish-Catholic-Muslim women’s trialogues.

### *Catholic-Muslim Dialogues*

Catholic-Muslim women’s dialogues are more common than Catholic-Jewish women’s dialogues today, at least in Chicago. Since Muslim women tend to be more comfortable in single-gender settings (Muslim men and women customarily socialize separately), they have made special efforts to promote interfaith dialogue among women, sometimes with and sometimes without institutional support.

One of the longest-running Catholic-Muslim women’s dialogues in the Chicago area was initiated in the late 1990s by a group of Muslim women associated with the Mosque Foundation in southwest suburban Bridgeview. The Bridgeview Muslim women reached out to the Catholic women of nearby St. Fabian’s Parish, and a monthly dialogue was born. The women have been meeting faithfully every month since then, and most of the group’s founders have remained. Topics discussed have ranged from Scripture and prayer, to religious holidays, as well as local and world events. Each dialogue, hosted alternately at the church and mosque, has a comfortable feel with homemade snacks and seasonal centerpieces that have included candles, flowers, and tablecloths. The women in the dialogue are familiar with one another, they greet each other with an embrace, inquiring about each other’s family or work. They talk about their concerns, they pray for each other. It is evident that these women are not just formal dialogue partners, but at many levels they are also friends.

The tone of the Bridgeview women’s dialogue is in contrast to the more formal, mixed-gender dialogues, most of which tend to have more of a “meeting”

feel to them. The Bridgeview women, on the other hand, try hard to maintain an intimate, welcoming atmosphere. Eager to share their version of interfaith dialogue with others, the Bridgeview group hosted a women's banquet in May 2002 to which they invited nearly one hundred other local Muslim and Catholic women.

### *Teaching by Example*

In addition to the women-led and -instigated dialogue in Bridgeview, Catholic and Muslim women have been leaders in other types of dialogue in the Chicago area, most notably education. Catholic and Muslim women teaching together in local schools can be seen as a kind of women's interfaith dialogue, especially when the students being taught are girls.

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Catholic and Muslim guest educators have taught at both Catholic and Muslim private schools in the Chicago area through the archdiocesan-sponsored Catholic-Muslim Education Project. The very fact that Catholics and Muslims have been teaching together is a powerful symbol of Catholic-Muslim cooperation, and women have taken the lead in this project. The intentional collaboration and easy rapport of the educators speak volumes to students about interreligious dialogue and camaraderie.

At St. Scholastica Academy, a girls' high school in Chicago's northside neighborhood of Rogers Park, the students were entranced by two energetic Muslim women who came to speak to their class about Islam. These women, as much by their open attitude and engaging demeanor as the facts they conveyed, helped the girls learn about Islam and the process of dialogue. If the guest educator had been a Muslim man, the girls may not have felt comfortable candidly asking him about dating, veiling, and polygamy, and even if they had, they may have been skeptical of his answers. For these girls, it was important to hear directly from Muslim women why they wear *hijab* (the veil), what they think of polygamy, and how they understand the interplay between Islam, Muslim cultures, and the treatment of women.

The very fact that these two articulate, intelligent women were representing the local Muslim community in teaching the class did more to dispel the stereo-

type that Muslim women are submissive than any book or lecture could have. The Muslim community could benefit from the use of more women teachers since many of the questions Americans have about Islam are related to women's issues.

The Catholic educator involved in the education project, also a woman, had a similarly positive dialogue experience at Universal, a private Muslim school in Bridgeview. The boys and girls there, taught separately at the high school level, have responded differently to the experience of dialogue in the classroom. The boys have tended to be more aggressive and argumentative in their "dialogue" with the Catholic educator. They like to debate, and many of them have challenged the Catholic educator on doctrines they find illogical: "If Jesus was God, and if he really died, does that mean you believe the world was without God for three days?" The girls, on the other hand, have usually viewed the Catholic educator's presence as an opportunity for a different kind of discussion. The girls always make a concerted effort to welcome their guest and to foster an atmosphere conducive to friendly conversation rather than debate. For example, when one of the girls questioned the logic of the Catholic educator's definition of penance, another student quickly jumped in, trying to "defend" the educator by attempting to explain the Catholic belief in a positive light.

In part due to their positive experience of dialogue in the classroom, the young Muslim women of Universal School planned and hosted a day-long interfaith conference May 2002, inviting students from nearby Catholic high schools to attend. Over two hundred students and their teachers showed up for the event.

As guest educators in private schools, Catholic and Muslim women are helping keep the interfaith movement alive by modeling positive interreligious relationships through lecture and example. Their efforts have inspired the next generation to get involved in dialogue, as evidenced by the Muslim girls' initiative in planning an interfaith conference for their peers.

### *Forays into Jewish-Catholic-Muslim Trialogue*

Sometimes, women-only dialogues have been successful where male-female dialogues have not. Mixed-gender dialogues between Jews and Muslims and between Jews, Catholics, and Muslims have come and gone in Chicago, but at least one triologue in Chicago has so far weathered the political storms. A group of Jewish, Catholic, and Muslim women has been meeting in north suburban Northbrook since the early 1990s. To the best of my knowledge, this is the longest-standing and possibly the only triologue of Jews, Catholics, and Muslims—men or women—currently active in the Chicago area. Let me briefly describe this group, as well as another triologue that met in the Oak Park-River Forest area in the late nineties.

The Northbrook women's triologue grew out of a Jewish-Catholic women's dialogue begun in the mid-eighties. By the early nineties these Jewish and Catholic women expressed a desire to add Muslim women to the dialogue. The group has been meeting as a triologue ever since. The approximately fifteen current members meet roughly five to six times a year. However, since September 11, many of the most dedicated members have been unable to attend the meetings regularly. Precisely because of their expertise in interfaith relations, these women, especially the Muslims, are being called on by their communities to begin new interfaith endeavors, with the result that many of these already busy women—who are professionals and mothers in addition to being promoters of dialogue—have become overextended. Nevertheless, the group is committed to the project and continues to meet.

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atmosphere.*

Oak Park and River Forest, two near-western suburbs, formerly hosted a women's triologue similar to the one in Northbrook. The group consisted of the same twelve women, four from each of the three religious communities. Their ages ranged from the early thirties to the late sixties. The women, all from Oak Park and River Forest, met either at the local synagogue or the Catholic church, since there is no mosque in the area. Initially, the focus of the dialogue was on religious holidays and life events. Later, the women did begin to discuss religious and racial prejudices and more political issues, though the dialogue centered mostly on the details of

quotidian religious practice and family life.

The triologue met only six times in 1997–1998, but even today some of the former members recall those meetings with fondness, and wish to resume them. Especially since the events of 2001, one of the Catholic members has been feeling a call to reestablish the triologue. She believes that the presence of this interfaith women's group could contribute greatly to the strengthening of local relationships, not only at the level of religion, but more basically at the level of community. In her words, "these women are my neighbors. . . . I have lived here my whole life, but I did not know them until we made a concerted effort to meet."

### *Women's Contributions to Dialogue*

**W**e have seen how women are often at the front lines of the grassroots interfaith movement, teaching in the schools and spearheading local dialogues, conferences, and study sessions. However, these initiatives, though crucial, are

not their only contribution, for the *manner* in which women conduct interfaith conversations not only models how to “do dialogue,” but more importantly, how to build lasting relationships. Lasting relationships are essential to the interfaith movement, for they can often keep diverse religious communities talking when nothing else will.

Women-only dialogues like the ones described here have a unique tone and spirit to them. Locally-based groups especially, such as the ones in Bridgeview and Oak Park/River Forest, tend to build some of the strongest relationships. The Bridgeview women meet monthly, discussing not only theology, but also their observance of religious holidays, their family concerns, their lives. Their dialogues are distinguished by attention to atmosphere. The buffet table is lavish, the food homemade. While mixed-gender dialogues usually retain a level of formality no matter how long the group has been meeting, all-women dialogues often have a special warmth and familiarity. It could probably only be during an all-women’s trialogue that Muslims would be offered bags of kosher/halal marshmallows by their Catholic and Jewish sisters after hearing of the Muslims’ inability to make Rice Krispies treats without them. Indeed, “heart speaks to heart” seems an apt description of the special kind of relationship that can develop between “women of the book” who intentionally strive to know one another—not only as people of faith or concerned citizens, but as neighbors, and maybe even as friends.

# To Tell the Sacred Tale

## Spiritual Direction and Narrative

*Janet K. Ruffing, R.S.M.*

**At the heart of the process of spiritual direction is the collaboration between the director and the directee in bringing life's sacred stories into speech. The importance of constellating a central metaphor, discerning conflicting plot lines, glimpsing alternative possibilities in one's story, all witness to the multilayered self and the creative forces at work in the process of growing into a relational rather than an autonomous being, attuned to the presence of God and Christ in one's life and in the world.**

**W**e can think of spiritual direction as telling a sacred tale. This ministry from my perspective is one of the privileged embodiments of the gracious illumination and fashioner of all things that Sophia, Holy Wisdom, is in our ministerial lives. The art of listening sacred stories into speech is a core activity in the spiritual direction process and in many other pastoral ministries that requires the accompaniment of Sophia for its fruitfulness. This attention to story is a theme to which I have returned twenty years after first becoming preoccupied with this insight into the spiritual direction process as essentially a special form of shared narrative (Ruffing 1989).

When I listen to the accounts of my directees, I discover a continual interplay between "what happened" and "what it means." "What happened" is the story I now understand to be a particular form of narrative, suggestive fragments, and entire episodes of the sacred story God and the directee are telling together in their mutual self-presence and in the directee's experience of life and action. "What it means" are the further interpretations tentatively offered and arrived at

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about the internal coherence and meaningfulness of these experiences. Frequently, the directee recognizes a felt sense of the ongoing implications and subsequent actions suggested in the narrative itself. Telling the sacred tale leads to commitment and action—choosing to live in the atmosphere of this tale and to enact it in daily life. The narrative process of spiritual direction over time fosters the development of a graced sense of the directee’s self, personal history, and significance within a community of faith.

My conviction about the centrality of telling the sacred tale in spiritual direction has deepened and expanded through the years. First, the large number of international students whom I have mentored as a supervisor immediately connect with the story focus. Many come from cultures that continue to be primarily oral in style. Familiar proverbs and stories comprise the traditional wisdom of the people. In these cultures, most teaching and learning occurs in the context of shared storytelling; even though narrative remains a universal human activity in every culture, storying is their native home. These spiritual directees grasp the process of spiritual direction more easily through the lens of story than through psychological frames of reference.

Second, for those directees most affected by the cultural shift known as post-modernism, telling one’s sacred story in spiritual direction or another pastoral context helps to overcome the fragmentation of identity and the erosion of meaning that often results from the encounter with conflicting viewpoints and the relativization of religious traditions and their meta-narratives. A surprising effect of post-modernism is an intensified need to order experience and discover meaning through personal narrative (Lescher, 252–53). Betty Bergland asserts that, “between 1945 and 1980 more than five thousand autobiographies were published in the United States. Autobiographies and autobiographical studies focused on ethnic groups and women have especially proliferated in the last two decades in the wake of feminist scholarship and the burgeoning field of ethnic studies. Thus, despite pronouncements about the end of autobiography and postmodern challenges to traditional notions of the self, autobiographical narratives proliferate. . . .” (130).

Third, a focus on the way a directee’s story unfolds helps spiritual directors connect one session to another, to grasp patterns and directions, and to employ

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their pastoral skills of exploration and reflection of feelings in a larger story of life and meanings. Attentiveness to the shape and direction of the sacred tale sharpens potential discernments and leads to discerning among stories themselves (Dunne, 19–21).

### *Spiritual Autobiography*

What is the primary genre of these sacred stories? I propose that they are an oral form of spiritual autobiography. As spiritual autobiography, how are they like or unlike published versions of the sacred journey? People who come

for spiritual direction already have a relationship with God if only in the embryonic form of a desire for spirituality or for a felt connection with the Holy One. The story of the self, all its adventures, longings, failures, relationships, disappointments, committed action, and epiphanies of meaning and of presence are already implicitly a story of the soul. Spiritual autobiographies characteristically create meaning and coherence in a person's life story through the narration of their spiritual adventure. Characteristically, they include a person's life before conversion or spiritual awakening, the gradual process of learning to recognize and follow the leadings of God, a recognition of a pattern of invitation and response that crystallizes into a sense of calling or vocation and the living out of this inter-relational dynamic with God over a lifetime.

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In a written narrative such as Thérèse of Lisieux's *Story of a Soul*, the vantage point of the telling, long after her entrance into Carmel, shapes how she remembers and stories her pre-convent life. So, too, Augustine's *Confessions*, the beginning of this genre in Western litera-

ture, occurs ten years after his conversion. His writing traces his journey through the various philosophical and theological understandings that gradually lead him to convert to Christianity under the guidance of Ambrose. His style of narration is itself an act of prayer since his implied audience is God to whom he addresses his *confessio*. Yet this most literary of men clearly imagines male readers of this narrative as well as God. This "God-soaked" atmosphere of the *Confessions* is characteristic of spiritual autobiography.

Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain* (1948) has been extremely popular in this century. Although the more mature Merton regretted many of his opinions and assumptions in this early work, the reader clearly glimpses the mysterious way God led him through his studies at Columbia into the Trappists. The young monk recounts his early Trappist life from entrance through ordination. Merton continued to write journals, now published in seven volumes, in which he tried to be ruthlessly honest about his life, his profound religious experiences, his intense struggles to follow the continual pull toward greater solitude and solidarity with humanity, and his foolish mistakes. The sacred tale he tells is the story of a self that God gradually transformed over time through empowering grace. The differences between *Seven Storey Mountain* and the later journals clearly show the first story was told within Merton's own limited perspective as a newly ordained monastic priest as well as the censoring limits of particular audiences.

Merton's autobiographical work was heavily edited by the community's official censors until the required time after Merton's death when his papers were opened to scholars. Thérèse wrote her sacred tale at the request of her religious superiors, one of them her own sister, and she addressed each section to the one who requested it. These audiences for both writers dictated choices about what to include or exclude in the process of writing. A written autobiography is always, regardless of its imagined audience, an exercise of selection and patterned arrangement, usually organized around a central metaphor of the self that lends coherence to story. For Merton, it was the journey up the seven storey mountain, a tribute to Dante's influence; for Thérèse, a little white flower transplanted into Carmel. Written narratives often omit what cannot be subsumed within the central tale and its central images.

### *Constellating a Central Metaphor*

These metaphors of the self constellate a sense of the self as well as imply a plot line. Thérèse returns several times to this image of the "little white flower" as a metaphor of the way she understands herself. Like these literary autobiographies, directees rely on key metaphors to convey a sense of the self/God relationship. For example, Krista, during a sabbatical year of healing from "burnout," received in prayer and from nature two key images that foreshadowed her healing and suggested progressive stages of her intimacy with Jesus. Krista says:

[Spiritual direction] early [in the year] was centered on self and on my woundedness. Sometimes I was "thrown" from recent wounds to those of my childhood. This was heightened because I began the program on my father's anniversary and because a tree just outside the door had a "wound" that oozed sap. This tree

could not be avoided, no matter how hard I tried to turn away. Still it “caught” me. Somehow this connected very deeply with a wound in the core of my being.

During the first part of her sabbatical, she could only pray in nature. The tree with its oozing wound became a metaphor for her wounded self. Although the tree is obviously wounded, the wound can heal. The healing plot begins to unfold. Just being in the woodlands nurtured her. As she began to add a nightly examen of gratitude, but still hesitant about re-establishing a duty-bound routine of prayer, she turned inside “seeking the truth within, the God of my heart.” At that time, she says:

I had an image of Jesus standing at the door knocking. He was left standing for quite some time, then I opened the door but left him outside. This continued for months, and it was very healthy as we could chatter at each other, one on either side of the door, without having to look each other in the eye. I was very comfortable with this safe relationship.

In Krista’s ongoing spiritual direction, this image of Jesus outside her door emerged in her prayer. An image, such as this one, changes and evolves sometimes in predictable and at other times in surprising ways. Such images as these suggest possible plot lines. These plot-bearing images emerge from either external reality, as did the tree with the oozing wound right outside the door suggesting eventual healing, or internally in imaginative prayer. Both images suggest Krista requires time for both healing and deepening intimacy with Jesus. Will Krista ever invite Jesus inside? Only time will tell. In the autobiographical narrative, these images may be far more varied than in the more controlled literary form.

### *Episodic and Spontaneous Narrative*

The narrative created episodically in spiritual direction unfolds in a more haphazard way, and with greater spontaneity than written autobiography. As in Krista’s case, God or Jesus may be so active in the directee’s consciousness, the directee begins to tell the story of a relational self rather than an autonomous, individualistic self. Although Krista never consciously opened the door to Jesus, sometime later as she put it, “he crept up on me, snuck in. By the end of the year Jesus was somehow inside and very at home. I don’t know how this happened, I didn’t open the door fully or formally invite him in.” This story is being co-created by Jesus and the directee—we can sense the cracks in ego-control and defense. Krista is happy Jesus is now inside, but he did not wait until

she “formally invited him in.” He takes the initiative and “sneaks in.” This is a self shaped by her relationship with God.

Directees note such surprises when they keep private journals. They use them as memory points for their unfolding spiritual journeys and life’s challenges. When they convert these memory points into sacred tales in spiritual direction, they are trying to capture the main themes and movements, the paradigmatic events rather than a detailed report. Often implicitly influenced by inherited plots, part the creation of culture, part of family, part of the faith community, and part the internalization of broader social norms, the directee launches into the life/story that has unfolded since the last session. This story is continually being recreated in the light of present experience. The vantage point of remembrance is always the present moment of the telling. The narrative patterns are loosely organized; there is both redundancy and fragmentation. A story line that was formerly prominent is replaced by another incident capturing the directee’s attention and affections. The narrative line from the previous session may not return again until many sessions later or not at all. The directee tells the sacred tale in a less edited way than a writer, but shaped, nonetheless, by the directee’s sense of what the director wants to hear and what the directee assumes belongs in this narrative situation. The directee is not necessarily certain about where God was acting or communicating God’s self in the interval between sessions. Frequently, the director’s responses to the directee’s story elicit deeper awareness of these movements. Directees may sense that the two or three events they choose to share in their narratives have some deeper significance or have a depth dimension not yet plumbed and tell the story to probe these possibilities. Directees tell and retell key stories until they yield their significance.

Creating a narrative of an event, in this case an event of “grace” or an experience of “mystery,” already begins to shape its meaning and significance. The director, an interactive listener, participates in shaping the story. The directee tells the sacred tale to this particular director, alert to facial expressions, and responsive to the director’s wonderings about details omitted on the first telling. Over time, the director in a role of attentive “reader” or “audience” imaginatively fills in the narrative gaps, tentatively creating a coherent story in the director’s own mind from the directee’s style of narration, tone, voice, point-of-view, character, action, and central images. Even so, much remains fragmentary because these are not finished, polished narratives. They retain an episodic, spontaneous,

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*This story is  
continually being  
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light of present  
experience.*

and provisional character. By eliciting feelings, images, and subtle experiences of grace, the director helps the directee notice aspects of experience that were not yet articulated but which the directee can recapture in memory.

When God communicates God's self through the events of life, frequently directees only truly appropriate them through this dialogical, narrative process (Ruffing 1995, 240). Few other narrative venues elicit the stories of these depth experiences, especially if they are overtly religious in tone. Few of us ordinarily tell the sacred tale casually in chance encounters or even in friendship circles. It is not the only story of themselves directees tell. They choose the episodes that fit a particular narrative occasion. The audience for all of our autobiographical creations either elicits or inhibits our story.

### *The Multiple Storied Self*

The stories that we and our directees tell ourselves matter. It matters how well we tell our particular stories. Jill Ker Conway, writing on autobiography, emphasizes that it "matters how we remember things." The way we remember determines the plot that guides our future. For instance:

If we remember the past as a series of chaotic events governed by an impersonal and non-moral fate or luck, we create a similar kind of future in our mind's eyes, and that prophecy is usually self-fulfilling. If we see the past as fully determined—by economic forces, by genetic codes, even by birth order and relationships to parents—we see ourselves as victims of those forces, with our best hope a kind of stoic resignation. If we see our past as a moral spiritual journey in time, our imagined future will continue that quest (Conway, 176).

Conway summarizes some of the recent technical, critical, literary, and neurological studies of memory and narrative when she asserts that memory results from the brain's melding together word and images. "It is in the sequencing and interpretation of the information we recall that the forms and tropes of culture take effect" (178). Memory is reconstructed at every moment. Conway suggests that this sequencing and interpretation is an inveterate human habit. She says:

We all practice the craft of autobiography in our inner conversations with ourselves about the meaning of our experience, and those conversations, no matter what language we use, are fundamentally theological or philosophical. Though only a handful of us set about writing down the results and publishing them for others to read, we are all autobiographers. But few of us give close attention to the forms and tropes of the culture through which we report ourselves to ourselves. Though they capture universals in human existence, these forms are not

necessarily the perfect expressions of our experience in our unique passages through time (178).

### *The Discernment of Stories*

Spiritual direction as a narrative process actively invites both the telling of the sacred tale and paying close attention to the potentially incompatible stories directees may be trying to live. In ongoing spiritual direction, during every session directees express their inner autobiographical activity, modified by the assumptions made about both the director's receptivity to this story and its relevance to the story of self and God together, a relational form of autobiography recently receiving more literary critical attention (Eakin, 43–98). The narrative spiritual direction process welcomes the unique particularity of each directee. Every directee has already been encoded with a plethora of possible mythic patterns. In the postmodern context the admission of multiple points of view and horizons of experience has radically expanded these narrative possibilities. When directees hear themselves telling their unique and particular stories that include gender, ethnicity, family history, subculture, sexual orientation, faith tradition, particular communities, and natural environment, they become conscious of the story they are living. These stories may contain hidden conflicts and significant value differences among the various subplots and storylines. Tad Dunne coined the phrase “discernment of stories” to describe an important element of spiritual direction by examining the many storylines of directees' lives in relationship to one another.

Directees absorb stories from films, from celebrities, from confessional talk shows on every imaginable subject, from the plots of sit-coms, soap operas, other television shows, many written forms of personal narratives, and from cultural templates. These often define success in terms of financial status, self-worth in terms of sexual attraction or display, the use of force as the only way to resolve conflict, the violation of human rights and civil liberties as necessary to calm our fears. These stories live inside us right along with the stories of our faith, with the story of Jesus, and with the parabolic stories Jesus told to draw us toward God's desires for us. Discernment of stories suggests that a major function of spiritual direction narratives is to recognize when two or more plots a directee is trying to live simultaneously are in conflict with one another in fundamental ways. Dunne is convinced that these myths or tropes of our culture restrict our

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reconstructed at  
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imaginings, our desires, and consequently our actions. The discernment of stories demands “a readiness to ask whether our desires may be overly restricted by a kind of myth—for instance, the myth that the Bible contains the only truths necessary; or that life is ultimately tragic, or paradoxical, or threatening, or fertile, or complex, or simple, and so on. Each such myth, or story, limits the field of possible desires” (21).

This discernment of stories is not limited to the exploration of conflicts between secular and sacred stories. It often involves conflicts among different, competing forms of the Christian story itself, to say nothing of all the other ways of being religious we may encounter in spiritual direction today. Some versions of the Catholic Christian tradition continue to severely limit the possible faith stories women, gays, lesbians, and non-Western members of the Church might enact. The ideological conflicts over the interpretation of Vatican II play out in multiple ways in the faith stories of laity and clergy alike. They determine how we construe our “roles” within the ecclesial community.

Part of Dunne’s remedy for directees caught in a limiting story is the ability to glimpse an alternative possibility. Dunne suggests that “the ability to distinguish between reliable and unreliable stories depends on how educated we are in alternative stories”(21). When directees can imagine an alternative pattern or possibility, they can often create a new story that is more adequate than the original, unreflective one. We are very familiar with this critical approach to the manifest narrative in psychoanalysis or other forms of therapy. Directors can assist their directees by inviting them to imagine an alternative story or by suggesting more than one alternative to stimulate directees’ creative resolutions of these story-lines in partnership with God.

### *Psychotherapy and Sacramental Confession Elicit Different Narratives*

Many directees come to spiritual direction from experiences in therapy. Psychological theories and models form the narrative templates of the elicited story that differs from the one told in spiritual direction. These psychological theories encoded the biases and stereotypes about gender, race, and other aspects of persons present in the cultures of the theorists. Many of them were not entirely compatible with Christianity either.

Directees who have therapeutic experience often have some difficulty in changing their narrative practices when they begin spiritual direction. They may only know how to tell a story of the distressed or troubled self—the ongoing drama of the ego and the surprising evidence that arises from the unconscious. They may come week after week with their burdens and difficulties and be quite unpracticed in an ability to tell the sacred tale of their existential selves compan-

ioned by God in all of the stuff of life, including their particular forms of suffering. Spiritual directors evoke stories of grace and of religious experience. They listen for the light, the movement, the healing potential, the Breath of Sophia rustling the leaves in directees' lives.

Likewise, directees and sometimes their ordained directors fail to recognize how profoundly the practice of spiritual direction within the sacrament of reconciliation may limit the directee's narrative. As is well known, the practice of spiritual direction from the Council of Trent and even earlier until the renewal of this ministry in the post-Vatican II era, was largely although not exclusively confined to the confessional. This mode of spiritual direction had explicit aims of fostering holiness of life as well as of controlling the visionary mystical experience of women and limiting the influence and power these women derived from their privileged contact with God.

In this model it was the confessor's role to forgive sin and determine the authenticity and orthodoxy of visionary experience and to pass judgment on the penitent's sanctity. Visionary mystical experience was so common by the fourteenth century that almost every convent counted at least one such visionary within its community. The relationship between confessor and penitent was ritually orchestrated and remains so today. The only required narrative in confession is that of the sinful self. Nuns were required to confess on a regular basis, and they were required to police themselves by presenting themselves as sinners and to document that sinfulness specifically. Contemplative nuns who sought spiritual direction in confession were also required to disclose to the discernment of the confessor their mystical experiences, especially when they involved any kind of locutions or revelatory meanings. The confessor was obliged to engage in a theological conversation with them in order to "correct" any doctrinal errors. In his combined roles as arbiter of orthodoxy and channel of grace, the confessor sought to determine if the origin of these visions was illusionary or delusional (mental illness today), diabolic, or divine.

The consequences of these judgments were serious. If the confessor authenticated the visions, the mystic could claim the authority to speak for God and

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address rulers, ecclesiastics, as well as ordinary laity (Gilmore, 60–62). They could carry out actions, such as Teresa of Avila’s foundations, write or dictate texts, and offer spiritual counsel or teaching to a circle of followers. Penalties levied in the case of demonic origins of visions varied and could include anything from exorcism to penalties determined by the inquisition during some historical periods. The instructions given to confessors were generously punctuated with misogynist assessments of women and of their potential for authentic spiritual experience (see Tanqueray, 257–69, 700–26). Women were considered susceptible to sexual excess, unnecessarily lengthy speech, vanity, curiosity, lack of rationality, and superficiality. Not only did a woman’s salvation depend on her confessor’s judgment, but her very life as well. Forgiveness of sin and absolution

were rarely a question if the sin story were properly told. The assessment of her religious experience could cost her life and reputation.

When spiritual direction historically or currently is limited to the confessional context, frequently only part of the story of grace gets told. Both confessor and penitent focus on the story of the sinful self. Time constraints confine the conversation to rather brief explorations of other aspects of the penitent’s religious experience and spiritual development. Both directee and confessor may have unconsciously assimilated a hermeneutics of suspicion about mystical experiences. These suspicions may result in the directee’s self-censoring important episodes in the spiritual journey. When directees do risk trying to tell a sacred tale of heightened mystical experience, the confessor may respond as

one did, “Try not to let it happen again.” The directee, inhibited in her attempts to explore and probe the meaning of her quickening religious experience continued to tell a story of sin in confession and to doubt her own experience.

Today the spiritual direction story focuses on the religious experience of the directee. The story of sin and failure may arise when that is the current struggle, but it is not the required narrative for the spiritual direction conversation to occur. Rather, spiritual direction fosters telling the story of interactive grace which is the main plot of the story. The director coaches this narrative into speech. Each directee’s experience is unique and particular. Yet most directees initially create their narratives out of available templates that do not necessarily fit their particular circumstances. Each religious tradition privileges one or another narrative over another. Charismatics favor stories of “being slain in the Spirit” and become anxious if they cannot experience this particular gift. Others

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privilege testimonial witnesses to the saving power of Jesus, public narratives offered in response to an altar call. Others favor radical conversion experiences. Spiritual direction in its more intimate narrative setting encourages directees to discover their unique story of grace with all of its particularities and individual significance.

### *The Postmodern Subject and Autobiographical Theory*

In this last part, I want to look at autobiographical theory and the postmodern subject in an attempt to relate it to narrative in spiritual direction. The postmodern subject is typically understood to be “a dynamic subject that changes over time, is situated historically in the world and positioned in multiple discourses” (Bergland, 134). It sounds like a chameleon form of self that makes itself at home in very different environments—a self that changes from moment to moment and context to context. A more helpful way of describing this phenomenon in adults comes from psychologist Frederic Hudson, who talks about self-renewing adulthood. He says we are either structuring our lives in a life chapter, giving our lives coherence and shape, or we are in a transition, a time of deconstruction allowing more of ourselves to become available to ourselves. Some of my descriptions of the direction narrative suggest that this “more of ourselves” is constantly making its appearance in the discontinuities of episodic narration. Hudson says that our meaning and mission take different forms over our life cycles. He suggests this meaning and mission bestows internal continuity in our sense of self even though adults typically go through cycles of life-chapters and transitions.

Contemporary autobiographical theory takes into account some of the new understandings of the self emerging from postmodernism as well as from developmental psychology and neuroscience. Paul Eakin takes up these questions under the title of “registers of the self.” He wants to answer the question, “which self is speaking in the ‘I’ of autobiographical discourse?” A second and related question is how to integrate our bodies, brains, and our sense of self. The autobiographical “I” is a linguistic self. This notion can lead to the assumption that our identities are only linguistic creations. Eakin draws on cognitive psychologist Ulric Neisser’s “Five Kinds of Self-Knowledge” to point to “the variety of self-knowledge” (35) that constitutes our experience of ourselves. Neisser’s five “selves” are:

1. The *ecological self*: “The self as perceived with respect to the physical environment; ‘I am the person here in this place, engaged in this particular activity’ (36). Present in infancy.

2. The *interpersonal self*: “the self as engaged in immediate unreflective social interaction with another person” (41); “‘I am the person who is engaged, here, in this particular human interchange” (36). Present in infancy.
3. The *extended self*: the self of memory and anticipation, the self existing outside the present moment; “I am the person who had certain specific experiences, who regularly engages in certain specific and familiar routines” (36). By the age of three, children are aware of themselves “as existing outside the present moment, and hence of the extended self” (47).
4. The *private self*: the self of “conscious experiences that are not available to anyone else” (50); “I am, in principle, the only person who can feel this unique and particular pain” (36). Although experts differ as to the emergence of this sense of privacy in developmental chronology, many studies show children as “aware of the privacy of mental life before the age of 5” (50).
5. The *conceptual self*: the extremely diverse forms of self-information—social roles, personal traits, theories of body and mind, of subject and person—that posit the self as a category, either explicitly or implicitly (22–23).

I hope it is immediately clear that the autobiographical “I” who tells a sacred tale in spiritual direction primarily fashions a story from the perspective of the extended self, the private self, and the conceptual self. In these registers of the self, we find the confluence between the temporal dimension of self, its reflection on agency and events, and the capacity to choose to disclose unique personal experience. The extended and private selves produce identity narratives in and through the available conceptual self coded in myth, theories, religion and philosophy.

Neisser’s adding the pre-linguistic, pre-reflexive, ecological, and interpersonal selves points to the sense of self firmly anchored in our bodies. According to Antonio Damasio, “The neural basis” for the self “resides with the continuous reactivation of at least two key sets of representations”: “One set concerns representations of key events in an individual’s autobiography and the other consists of representations of body states” (Eakin, 31). Most of the time for most of us, these representations are in the background although nonetheless continuous. It is this sense of our body-selves that we consult when someone asks what we are feeling in the present moment. Although we could never remain conscious of all that goes on in our bodies all the time, I believe, that our ecological selves and our interpersonal selves register religious experience, most importantly a sense of the presence of God.

When directees begin to tell a sacred tale of experiencing the presence of God, neuro-science would suggest that this is an embodied experience. Both feelings and somatic awareness shift when directees discover “they are not alone,” not

imagining experience within themselves but actually aware of an interpersonal Other. Spiritual directors can assist their directees considerably by drawing out the bodily knowing of the ecological and interpersonal selves in relationship to specific experiences in prayer or in nature that are non-linguistic but nonetheless able to be noticed and appropriated. These registers of the self are clearly part of our ongoing experiencing although they do not specify a content to religious experience.

As mystical life develops in some directees, narratives may shift simply to pointing to an ongoing sense of simple presence of our many selves with God. But since the extended self is also always part of us, when consciousness shifts again we return to the current chapter of our life's narrative that began with birth and that will end with death. The extended and private selves represent for me the moral self, the character or kind of person we have become through our reflection, choices and actions. We choose to tell a certain kind of story with our lives and we tend to tell ourselves that same story in our inner self-talk. These stories offer us a sense of prediction and control over our lives. If our story is a story of victimization or of "things just happening" without our consent or participation, we have not yet become conscious of ourselves as storytellers, as having the capacity to authorize our lives, change our minds and our behaviors, and create another story or chapter in our lives. Spiritual direction is a privileged narrative situation that invites reflection on and revision of our stories. By hearing our stories consciously, we can choose to change our stories. As we change, our stories change.

Our spiritual life is more than this moral agency requiring reflection, prediction, and control. Frederich Buechner asserts in *Telling Secrets* that

It is important to tell at least from time to time the secret of who we truly and fully are—even if we tell it only to ourselves—because otherwise we run the risk of losing track of who we truly and fully are and little by little come to accept instead the highly edited version which we put forth in hope that the world will find it more acceptable than the real thing. It is important to tell our secrets too because it makes it easier that way to see where we have been in our lives and where we are going. . . . It is by entering that deep place inside us where our secrets are kept that we come perhaps closer than we do anywhere else to the One who, whether we realize it or not, is of all our secrets the most telling and the most precious we have to tell (3).

The story we learn to tell in spiritual direction eventually requires us to tell such secrets. Spiritual life eventually requires surrender into a mutuality of relating and being with God. This story is uniquely being uncovered in our postmodern context. Spiritual direction may well be the sacred place where directors encourage directees to tell such a sacred tale.

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# Reclaiming Unity in the Letter to the Ephesians

*Betty L. Scheetz*

The author invites readers to reflect on one of the most argument-inducing lines in the Bible: “Wives, be submissive to your husbands.” After providing an analysis of first-century Mediterranean culture and its household code based on values of honor and shame, she suggests that the Letter to the Ephesians contains a world-changing vision of marriage and all other relationships with the power to transform today’s culture.

A male leader, during the World Day of Prayer ceremony in my community, bowed his head and asked that we all pray for “wives to be submissive to their husbands, *just as the Bible says!*” This commonly quoted statement “Wives, be submissive to your husbands” is often understood to be the key message in the Letter to the Ephesians. This condensed version ignores twenty centuries of cultural changes and misses the original meaning intended by the first-century author of this letter. In this essay I will re-present the household code section of the Letter to the Ephesians through a basic understanding of the first-century Mediterranean culture in which it was written, then bring it forward with suggestions on how this passage can apply to our own lives.

The statement “Wives, be submissive to your husbands” is found in three places in the Christian canon of Scripture: Colossians 3:18, Ephesians 5:22, and 1 Peter 3:1. These few words are the only ones repeated verbatim in all three letters. Perhaps this is the reason these specific words have been pulled from the Scriptures as a core message.

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The First Letter to Peter gives sage advice on how Christian women should act toward their non-Christian husbands. Colossians and Ephesians are addressed to husbands and wives who share the Christian faith. Colossians was written prior to Ephesians and seems to have been written in haste to address problems within the church at Colossae. Ephesians, on the other hand, was carefully thought out and intended to circulate through all of the churches. The Letter to the Ephesians contains more detail in the household code section than does the Letter to the Colossians. According to Hubert Richards, the author of *The Gospel According to St. Paul*, this letter may have been written to clarify the hastily written letter to the Colossians.

### *First-Century Mediterranean Culture*

**W**e listen to these passages through the filter of twenty-first century American culture. By studying first-century Mediterranean culture we can perhaps enrich our understanding of these words in an attempt to hear them in the same way that the original listeners would have heard them. There are three major first-century cultural values that are helpful in understanding the deeper meanings in this Pauline letter: honor and shame, limited goods, and the purity code. These cultural values had a profound impact on marriage and love as understood by first-century people.

Honor was the highest value in this ancient culture and was embedded in the hierarchal male figure. The first-century definition of honor was “a public claim to worth and public acknowledgement of that claim” (Pilch, 1999, 36). The way a male preserved his honor was to act sexually aggressive, authoritarian, defensive, thereby showing concern for his prestige and precedence (see Malina, 1981, 45). The male head of the household, the patriarch, embodied the family honor. If this honor was lost, he would seek to regain or restore it by such means as public challenges or competition, which always involved risk. If honor could be gained or regained, it could also be lost. The Gospels contain many examples of honor challenges, including the temptations of Jesus in the desert (see Matt 4:1-11). As expected in these encounters, Jesus always wins the challenge and maintains or increases his honor.

The female side of honor was shame. Although shame in our culture presents a negative image, for the first-century people it was a positive reference to the female’s sensitivity toward the male honor. Females displayed this sensitivity by being sexually exclusive, submissive to authority, and avoiding risk. They would act with shyness, timidity, and restraint. Women were very passive (see Malina 1981, 45). Acting otherwise would be a threat to the honor of the male figure, whether it was her father or her husband. If a female acted outside set boundaries, there was no recourse to regain her sensitivity. It was lost forever.

Just as we recognize that natural resources, such as oil and coal, are not inexhaustible, the first-century people believed virtually everything, tangible and intangible, was in limited supply. This society was steeped in the belief of limited goods. Whatever God had made had already been distributed as God chose to give it out. No more could be produced. Examples of tangible goods would be wealth, grain, food, blood, and semen. Intangible goods were such things as honor, love, power, and friendship. There were only two ways of increasing one's supply, through inheritance or by taking it from someone else. Since honor was their highest value, it was the most sought after. Losing a debate or fight meant losing honor, which would then be acquired by the winner. "This competition was created by the ancient experience that everything was limited" (Mueller, 2001, 22).

The Purity Code, also called the Holiness Code, is a set of rules that govern persons, places, events, and things. God ordered the world by distinguishing day from night, winter from summer, and land from sea and sky. Order was an important value to this culture because good order was associated with being closer to God. The rules governing the right order of things are part of the Law found throughout the book of Leviticus in the Old Testament. Everything had a place and, to assure order, everything had to be in its proper place. Anything out of place was seen as unclean, impure, outside, or defiled. If someone or something was out of place, it was important to get the offending person or thing back into its proper place as quickly as possible. Only then was order restored. In this ancient society male and female roles were completely separate from one another. Recall the characteristics of the male and female roles connected with honor. They are exact opposites. A man would become impure or *un-whole-ly* by emulating someone below his status, for example, by taking on the job or characteristic of a woman, child, or slave. If such an action occurred in the public arena, honor would be lost.

Marriage in this society was a business arrangement between two males, the father of the bride and the husband to be. Wives were possessions, like livestock, and love was not an expectation of marriage. Love was seen as "group attachment and group bonding" (Pilch and Malina, 110). Respect was the key element in this understanding of love; emotional feelings of affection were not part of this concept. Life in this first-century Mediterranean culture was harsh, especially for those without power. People were locked into a specific social status based on their gender and genealogy. Thus, to understand these cultural values

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opens a door into a fuller comprehension of the Scriptures, especially the Pauline letters.

### *Greek, Latin, and English Translations*

According to Dr. Steve Mueller, the original Greek and Latin words for “submissive” were *hypotassein* and *subordinare*. In Greek *hupo* means “under,” and *tasso* is “to place in a certain order.” In the Latin translation *sub* means “under,” and *ordinare* is “to order.” The Greek and Latin words have been translated into three different English words: “submissive,” “subordinate,” and “subject.” The specific word used depends on the translation: King James Version, New American, New Jerusalem, or New Revised Standard. All three of these English words are often interchanged with the word “obey.” In both Greek and Latin, the sense of ordering receives strong emphasis, reflecting the first-century cultural value. By the time the translation gets to the English language, the notion of order is diluted. Over the distance of time and space, and with our cultural filters, the English words used are negative and dis-empowering to women in our culture. The synthesis of Ephesians, as used by the leader at the World Day of Prayer, is not good news for women seeking equal status with men. Consequently, many of our young adults are eliminating the readings from the Pauline letters that contain these words. It is important to reclaim Ephesians with a deeper understanding of this beautiful letter. To do so we must “re-order” our thinking.

### *An Overview of the Teaching of Ephesians*

The Letter to the Ephesians is divided into two main sections, “the first dogmatic, the second moral” (Flanagan, 197). Another way of describing these two sections is: this is what you need to believe, and, this is how you are to live what you believe. The statement “Wives, be submissive to your husbands” is in the moral section of the letter. Nevertheless, it is important to have an understanding of the dogma behind this letter if we are to fully grasp the intended meaning in the moral section.

The early Church began as a Jewish sect, similar to the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Throughout the first century the fledgling Church grew rapidly; however, this new growth was primarily due to Gentile converts. Tensions resulting from the mixing of Jewish and Gentile cultures were addressed in the Pauline letters. A common thread woven throughout these letters is the theme of unity among Christians, which is highlighted in Ephesians. Unity in the Letter to the Ephesians begins with the genesis of a new human being created by Christ’s

work and composed of both Jew and Gentile. This new human is instructed to “not live according to the old pattern of life” (Brown, 623). Jesus is upheld as the model for this new being to follow.

The second thread woven throughout the Pauline letters, and a primary focus of Ephesians, is the universality of the Church. The metaphor of the human body is used to emphasize the universality of the Church with only one leader, the head, and that is Jesus. The people are the body, and no one is excluded from becoming a part of the body. Members of the body have different gifts to support the body, but all are of equal importance.

The First Letter to the Thessalonians, the first of the Pauline letters, proclaims that Jesus would come soon and whisk away the chosen to a heavenly dwelling. Pauline eschatology developed and changed throughout the letters, culminating in a different view of salvation in Ephesians, the last of the Pauline letters. There, salvation is achieved through unity and the building of the universal Church. The drastic change was the view of salvation happening here on earth. Salvation is seen as an ongoing process, not a one-time happening. The three themes of unity, universality, and salvation in the dogmatic section of Ephesians set the foundation for the moral section.

### *Morality in Ephesians*

To achieve this unity and bring about the vision of the universal Church, a Christian must act in certain ways. A new way of acting or living for this new being is addressed in the moral section of the Letter to the Ephesians under the household codes which were directions, or moral imperatives, on how members of a household should act. Households consisted of the nuclear family and would include married sons and their families, unmarried adult daughters, and slaves. The household code instructs husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves (Eph 5:22-6:9). The instructions start with the foundation of all human relationships, the bond between husband and wife which then fans out to include the whole household. This is the pattern in which united relationships grow to reach the universal vision.

The metaphor of the body that started in the dogmatic section continues in the moral section. Relationships between humans run parallel to the relationship between humans and God. Jesus is the one who bridges these relationships.

Returning to the phrase that the gentleman used at the World Day of Prayer, we can see if the values of the first-century Mediterranean culture now present a different understanding of the advice given to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5:22-29. At the same time, recall the image of the first-century wife, with the female characteristics of shame: sexual exclusivity, submission to authority, restraint, and timidity and passivity. Apply this vision of the wife to the passage

“Wives, be submissive to your husbands.” Perhaps the image can be sharpened by a recent example of a culture more similar to this first-century people than our own. Imagine you are a woman, a wife, in Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban. How would you respond to this “news”? My response, as I understand the culture, would be: “That is what I am already doing. My only choices are to submit, be severely beaten, or die!” This part of the passage is not news, let alone good news. Pulling this statement out of context disconnects the moral teaching from the dogmatic themes of unity and universality.

The quoted statement above omits a portion of the sentence in the text. The passage as it is translated in the New American Bible reads: “Wives should be subordinate to their husbands *as to the Lord*” (Eph 5:22). Starting at the begin-

ning, the opening word in this passage would attract the attention of the listener. It was customary that household codes address the men first. This deviation continues by first addressing the children and slaves before the men. The first to be addressed in Ephesians are the powerless. “Personal dignity has been granted to subordinate members where it was not given before” (Osiek, 362). It seems that the author of this letter is not so concerned with promoting traditional honor and order. The midsection of this statement merely repeats the status quo. For the women, there is nothing new here; this advice is exactly how they are acting. The part so often dropped in this sentence connects with the Pauline dogma of the new creation, using Jesus as the model of subordination to God.

The remaining passages (Eph 5:23-24) continue to give the women advice on how they should be subordinate to their husbands using the metaphor of the body. The husband is head of the woman just as Jesus is head of the Church.

This statement becomes clearer in the closing statement (Eph 5:33b) where the word respect is used. This is the new way of acting for women. The passage introduces a benevolent respect for the husband that was not the norm in this culture.

The core of the moral advice in this letter is directed at the husbands. Husbands are told to *love* their wives (Eph 5:25a). This is shocking advice to the husbands who view their wives as property. This statement is followed by two examples of how the husband is to love his wife. The first example is a masterful work in metaphorical language depicting how a man should love his wife

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(Eph 5:25-27). The intent of metaphor is to take the reader, or hearer, beyond the mere word, to excite the imagination, and lead one into a deeper experience of a mystery. This metaphor is an attempt to explain the unexplainable—the mystery of love. The artistry of this passage is like holding a holographic picture; with the slightest movement, the image is transformed to a totally different picture. The passage starts with a role reversal as the husband gives himself over to his wife.

The language of the metaphor dances through the mind as the husband begins to slowly and gently bathe her to make her perfect, to make her whole, to make her holy. The actions are full of caring and emotion. It is an intimate, sensual scene between husband and wife. Suddenly, the picture changes to Jesus as the bridegroom caring for the Church. Or is Jesus the bride? Or are the characters God and Jesus? The characters become undistinguishable from one another, the husband from the wife, Jesus from the Church, and the wife from Jesus, Jesus from God. The picture that has been painted is the perfect picture of unity in a universal Church. It is the Pauline view of salvation!

The second example is more concrete than the first. The advice to the husband is to love his wife as he loves his own body (Eph 5:28-30). He nourishes and cherishes his body in the same way that Jesus nourishes and cherishes the Church. Just as man has one body, the relationship of husband and wife should be similarly united.

The advice given to the men is more poignant than the advice given to the women. The old values system is re-ordered, necessitating a paradigm shift. The old order, that caused delineation and division of relationships, has been brought into balance with the new way. The new way opens the door for new and deeper relationships where all are on an equal level. The old notion of love being in limited supply is replaced with a new vision: love, growing and deepening with feelings of affection.

The old view of honor is superseded with a new and daring way. Men are to take on female characteristics coinciding with the benevolent way in which the new man is to act. The highest value in the old way is being replaced with a new value. Honor is replaced by love. The new way of acting and forming relationships is based on love. Unity can only be achieved when there is a balance in the power structure and respect for the human dignity of others.

### *Jesus' Treatment of the Disempowered*

Jesus is the model of this new human, with a new way of acting. To be Christian is to follow Jesus' teaching toward establishing a right relationship with God and with God's family, that is, all of God's children. Ephesians is a retelling of the gospel message. Throughout the Gospels the message of Jesus is to love

one another and love your enemy. Jesus always sided with justice and equality. He defended those who were powerless, worked to elevate their social status, and treated them as equals. The powerless were women, children, slaves, foreigners, the sick (both physically and mentally), and sinners.

The story of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:4-42) is a prime example of Jesus' treatment of the powerless. The main character is a woman, a foreigner, and a sinner who has been ostracized by her community because of her sins. Jesus reestablishes a relationship with this woman and elevates her from her place of suffering and restores her dignity.

A second example of Jesus' treatment of women is in the story of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42), where Martha is doing the household chores and gets a bit miffed at Mary whom Jesus is teaching. Jesus gives Mary permission to step outside the traditional role of women and recognizes her as a student, a role confined to men in this first-century culture. These are two of many such stories that relate to Jesus as a proponent of women.

### *Conclusion*

Synthesizing the message of Ephesians into "Wives, be submissive to your husbands" misses the mark. Scripture used in this manner continues to cause division. Ephesians is a message of hope to the disempowered. The clear message of this letter is directed towards a unified and universal Church. The Letter to the Ephesians gives us more than great insights in how we can contribute; it gives us insights into ourselves. We must all play a part in achieving salvation. As Richards says, "This is what you are; now *be* it" (121).

It is essential to bring this passage forward into our world and apply it to our own lives and culture. I will present one example of applying the message to Ephesians to our culture and include several suggestions for further reflection.

Honor was the highest value in the first-century culture and Christians were instructed to replace that value with another. Money or wealth is a likely candidate as the highest value in the American culture. Is this value a benefit to building relationships? Does it cause division or unity? Is it a value that Jesus modeled? Are we being asked to make a paradigm shift? If so, what would the message of Ephesians suggest to us as a replacement for our value of money? What would our world look like if we changed values? How would we go about making the changes? What is my part in making the shift?

Similar questions can be applied to our family relationships (husband and wife, children, and extended family), work relationships, our church (parish, the wider church community, the diocese, the worldwide Church, and the church leadership), our community, our country, and the world. Creative applications might include asking the questions above in light of the Feminist Movement and

the current crises of sexual abuse in the Church. Now our task is to go *be* what God is calling us to be.

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# Is Roman the Only Way to be Catholic?

A Reflection of the  
Grandson of a Catholic Priest

*Daniel P. Grigassy, O.F.M.*

If you have ever driven through the “Rust Belt” in the northeastern and north-central United States, that territory dominated by steel mills and coal mines, you are likely to notice, especially near urban areas, the gold or silver domes topped by equally unusual three-barred crosses. These onion-domed churches that punctuate several cityscapes belong to the so-called Eastern churches still functioning and even thriving as places of worship. You may have peeked inside one, even if only in that wonderful wedding scene in “The Deerhunter.”

What you are seeing in these churches is a reflection of the long tradition of Eastern Christianity, in both its Orthodox Christian and Byzantine Catholic variants. The people who attend them are first-generation immigrants or more likely their second- and third-generation descendants. Their ancestors were known as Rusyns or Rusnaks, mostly Slavs from the Carpathian Mountain regions in east-central Europe, now in western Ukraine and eastern Slovakia. Through the centuries they acquired a whole host of names given them by others or adopted themselves. Herein lies only one reason for the “byzantine” nature of Byzantine Christianity. Confusion of identities during the first waves of immigration complicated their reception. Are these people who still worship in these churches Orthodox Christians (*not* in union with Rome) or are they Catholics, Byzantine Catholics, or sometimes (wrongly) called Greek Catholics (*in* union with Rome)? [While the term “Greek” Catholic is still commonly used, most “Byzantine”

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Catholics find it pejorative. I will here use “Greek” and “Byzantine” interchangeably along with the more generic “Eastern” Catholics.]

### *From Byzantine to Roman Catholic*

Over the last twenty-one years of teaching liturgy in Roman Catholic theologates, lecturing to adult education series in Roman Catholic parishes, and simply talking about our Catholic Church with other Roman Catholics, it seems that, whenever I ask them to consider Christian churches other than their own, more often than not, they immediately refer to the Reformation churches and the free church traditions of today, so present throughout North America. Less often do they mention the Orthodox churches, the Oriental churches, the churches of the East, and even less often do they have within their scope the Eastern *Catholic* churches, those Eastern churches in union with Rome. Almost forty years ago, the council fathers at Vatican II issued the Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches [*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 21 November 1964], affirming Eastern Catholics and urging Latin Catholics to accept them as *real* Catholics. Yet still so many Romans are shocked to discover that not everyone worships on Sundays the same way they do, that not all Catholics use the same Lectionary or observe the same liturgical calendar, that some Eastern Catholic priests are married with families, and that all of these differences are indeed “approved by Rome.”

This jolt of insight on so many faces has always intrigued me because the awareness of the Christian East and West, especially the *Catholic* East and West, has always been part of my world view. In the early years in Roman Catholic grade schools, my identity was “Greek Catholic,” although there was nothing “Greek” about me. Confusion arose for my classmates, all Roman Catholics and children and grandchildren of western European immigrants. Their ancestors dominated the American cultural scene in the postwar years of expansion in the late 1940s and through the 1950s. I came on the scene in 1950, was baptized and chrismated a “Greek” Catholic, and later came to understand myself more correctly as a Byzantine Ruthenian Catholic. I had two “first”

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communions, one at my grandfather's church and one at the Latin church attached to the school in the suburbs. Only on special feasts such as Christmas and Easter did we participate in Byzantine liturgies. When the call to religious life and priesthood made itself known to me, I moved directly to a Roman Catholic seminary. Ordination could take place only after a canonical procedure that dissolved my relationship with the Catholic East. That "change of rite" freed me to be ordained a Roman Catholic priest validly and licitly.

My situation was not unique. Most children of Greek Catholic parents were mainstreamed into Roman Catholic schools in the 1950s, and therefore appropriated Roman Catholic identities. Convenience drove this choice. To send children to new and burgeoning Roman Catholic city and suburban schools staffed by

armies of religious sisters was simply easier than to send them across town to a small Greek Catholic school with fewer students and staff. Not only did convenience drive this choice, but an infectious inferiority complex set in because Greek Catholics were not considered *real* Catholics. This perception propelled them to mainstream as Roman Catholics. The *real* Catholics, most of whom looked very Irish, called us "Uniates," those renegade Orthodox who finally saw the true light and returned to Holy Mother Rome. An added feature that heightened suspicions about these "Greeks" was that they looked all too Russian. In the late 1940s and early 1950s when McCarthyism was rife, one did not want to sport that image. And so Greek Catholics "latinized."

The anti-Communist mood which gripped this country at that time moved Greek Catholics in two ways. First, within their churches, they abandoned Orthodox traditions that, four-hundred years earlier, Romans encouraged them to retain at the Unions of Brest and Užhorod. Byzantine Catholics replaced Orthodox tradi-

tions with Latin customs. They latinized their churches, both the internal and external appointments, their liturgies, their devotional lives, and their customs, in order to be accepted as truly Catholics and truly Americans. Icon screens came down and baroque marble altars with baldacchinos went up. Painted icons came down and painted-plaster statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary went up. Second, within the immigrant families themselves, the instability of identity helped to sway young parents, like my

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father, to yield to the dominant Catholic culture in America (which was Roman) even though he was the son of a Byzantine Catholic priest.

All of this trickled down to this grandson of that priest. My Roman Catholic classmates were puzzled when I received first communion in April, a month earlier than our May date, and no less at the hands of my own grandfather, a priest, indeed a Catholic priest, as much as I would someday be. The event took place at his own church. Next door was the rectory where he lived with his *paŋi*, his wife, my grandmother, where they raised their five children, my father being the youngest. Sunday visits to my grandparents when I was a boy meant going to a rectory, being greeted by a larger-than-life figure dressed in a Roman collar and cassock with a thousand buttons, who sang songs with us and loved us. My classmates were even more intrigued when I was excused from catechism classes for confirmation since my grandfather had already chrismated me as an infant immediately after he baptized me. [“Eucharizing” infants after chrismation was not yet the third and final moment of baptism, yet another Latinization of sacramental practice restored only recently in the Ruthenian church.]

Twenty-five years earlier, my grandfather, Fr. Julius D. Grigassy, a thirty-nine year old Greek Catholic priest, fled with his wife and children from the Communist machine steamrolling over the slippery borders of Russia, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia in 1925. Following thousands of emigrants pouring into the United States and Canada, they settled in western Pennsylvania near Pittsburgh’s coal mines and steel mills. Gainful employment stabilized this enclave of Greek Catholics, and my grandfather ministered to them for the next thirty-four years of his life until his death on the first day of August 1959.

### *From Roman to Byzantine Catholic*

At this point you may be wondering what kind of Catholic hybrid I am, first calling myself Roman Catholic, then Byzantine Catholic, then Roman Catholic again? It happened almost ten years ago when our guardian or religious superior advised the priests in the community that we would no longer assist in local churches on weekends since there were so few priests in the house. He advised us to let things happen: “In time, we’ll all stumble into something.” This was an opportunity to go out to parishes throughout the Washington metro area. One of the many churches I visited was St. Gregory of Nyssa Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Church, Beltsville, Maryland. As I observed the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, an explosion of genetic responses went off deep inside me. The sounds, the smells, the melodies, the movements, the gestures, the prayers, the people—all struck a nerve. And I went back again and again. Very soon I found myself not observing but participating in the rite, fully, consciously, and actively.

One Sunday morning, a very, very old priest sat in the church “with his son,” so I overheard. “Ah,” I thought, “he’s got to be one of the last married priests in our Ruthenian church! So—he *must* have known my grandfather.” After the Divine Liturgy, I approached and introduced myself. Wide-eyed and smiling, he repeated my surname over and over. Yes, he had known him, and, in fact, quite well. Since my grandfather had edited liturgical books, prayer books, calendars, and catechisms, his name had been very well known. Others who had overheard the name approached to greet me. Then they took me to the pastor, a man ten years my junior. Like so many pastors these days, he seemed quite overworked. I offered my assistance but *only* if he really needed help, and he was more than happy to teach me.

For more than six months, I concelebrated the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and Holy Days. [There is no “daily Mass” tradition in the Christian East.] I taped it, played the tape in the car, and sang along with gusto. The complexity of the rite overwhelmed me. Would I ever really “get it”? Its movements and transitions were all so byzantine. Then the day came. The pastor asked, “Would you take the liturgy on Saturday morning? It’s a simple Holy Day. They’ll only be four or five people there.” Still I was intimidated because there is no such thing as “low Mass” or “high Mass” in the Eastern church. Whether four or four-hundred people are present, it is still the same. Saturday morning came and I was a wreck. The pastor gave me perspective: “Oh, for God’s sake, calm down. It’s only you, me, the cantor, Mrs. Wroblewski, *and God!* Just do it!” So I did—with only a few bumps. Since then I have been schooled in this way of praying and hunger for it. Some may dismiss it as “holy babble” or “just smells and bells,” but the texts, gestures, movements, postures, symbols and their meanings are very powerful, rich, and life-giving. They are part of the Christian tradition, *and* they are part of our Catholic tradition.

### *Persecutions and Healing of Memories*

To the casual observer, the Eastern Catholic churches might appear indistinguishable from their Orthodox neighbors. To the uncritical eye, their liturgies look very much the same. These churches have their own hierarchies, their own liturgical and spiritual traditions, even their own code of canon law (1990). They also recognize the bishop of Rome as the principal hierarch, the first among equals. The almost half-million Byzantine Catholics in the United States and double that amount in Canada help make up the seventeen million Eastern Catholics worldwide who are full and equal members of the one universal Catholic Church in full communion with Rome.

At this point it would seem only natural to look to liturgical texts, to explain the gestures, movements, postures, symbols, and customs of the Christian Catholic

East. Rather than consider these important particulars, it is of more value to tell at least part of the Byzantine Catholic story because so few Roman Catholics and so few western Christians are aware of their existence. So often the Latin church is considered synonymous with the totality of Catholicism while never recognizing that it is one among many churches, albeit the largest, which constitutes the Church Catholic. In fact, it is only one of the twenty-two distinct churches forming the universal Catholic Church. The remaining twenty-one are all Eastern Catholic churches.

To explain the formation of these churches would be far too byzantine a venture within these pages. The complicated and fascinating history is one of the reasons so few Roman Catholics and so few western Christians know anything about these churches which are unlike the Roman though still Catholic. I would like to turn to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the world into which my grandparents and parents were born, the context of their stories. When did their churches come into existence? How did they struggle to survive in the midst of hostile forces? My focus will be on my own Ruthenian Catholic church as well as the Ukrainian Catholic church which shares a similar history.

With the exception of the Maronites and Byzantine Italians, each Eastern church has its mirror image on both the Catholic and Orthodox side. The Great Schism between East and West in 1054 C.E. actually began well before that date. As early as the fifth century, the strain in Christian unity was already felt in christological disputes coupled with political rivalries. The churches of Armenia and Persia along with parts of the churches of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem were already splintering. Various individuals, movements, and councils offered plans for reunion. In 1274 at the Second Council of Lyons, dynamics changed so quickly that Saint Bonaventure died thinking that the union had been achieved. The Council of Florence in 1439 also failed to heal the breach. Further attempts at reunion were quieted by hostilities and ill-will until the end of the sixteenth century when the Latin church was in a very defensive posture. To remain steadfast and united to the See of Rome was considered by many to be a dis-value.

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Yet there was movement in the opposite direction from the East. In 1595 the Ukrainian Catholic Church was formed in Poland-Lithuania as a result of the Union of Brest, and in 1646 the Ruthenians under Hungarian rule established communion with Rome at the Union of Uzhorod. As the years moved on, a number of other Eastern Catholic churches were recognized by Rome, such as the Syrian church (1656), the Melkite church (1724), the Armenian church (1742), the Chaldean church (1834), and the Coptic church (1899)—*all* Catholic churches. My family grew out of the 1646 Union of Uzhorod. Many were Hungarian-speaking Rusyns able to trace back to sons of priests becoming priests for more than three-hundred years.

The last several decades in the Ukrainian and Ruthenian Catholic churches have been years of great struggle. After the October 1917 revolution, the Bolsheviks were quick to move against the Catholic Church. Though they were revolting against imperial Russia, they had absorbed many of its anti-Catholic prejudices, and so were quick to move against the Catholic Church in Russia. Most of these churches were Eastern Catholic churches, Ukrainian or Ruthenian, and they were connected with an external imperial force, namely, Rome. In January 1918 the Bolshevik's decree on the separation of Church and State began to have its effects. Religious organizations were deprived of all their rights including the confiscation of sacred vessels and other church property. By 1922 sermons were censored and all nine Catholic churches in Petrograd (St. Petersburg) were closed.

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During decades of revolution and unrest, the Orthodox Church achieved an uneasy accommodation with the Soviet state while persecution of the Catholic churches, both Eastern and Western, was relentless. By the end of the 1930s, only two Catholic churches were functioning in Russia, and terrible consequences remained for the millions of Catholics in Ukraine, Lithuania, and other territories incorporated into the Soviet Union. After the Second World War, western Ukraine became part of the Soviet Union. It was at that time that the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church in Galicia, with about three and a half million members, was declared illegal, its bishops and 1,600 priests sent to Siberian labor camps, and its parish churches and properties handed over to the Orthodox Church. The Greco-Catholics of Ruthenia met a similar fate. In 1947 their bishop, Theodore Romzha, severely beaten several times, was the victim of a botched assassination attempted by the

secret police, an automobile *accident* in which he did not die. While he was recovering in the hospital, someone somehow poisoned him with cyanide. Of his priests, 61 were killed and 150 sent to Siberia. Romzha and several of his companions were beatified by Pope John Paul II in June 2001 during his pastoral visit to Ukraine.

The history of the Byzantine Catholic Church in the former U.S.S.R. is the story of martyrdom and a continuous campaign of persecution. By 1952 it resulted in the death or deportation of 27 bishops, the arrest or execution of over 7,000 priests, the destruction of 8,000 churches, the closure of 3,000 convents, seminaries and academies, the deportation of at least five million Catholics to Siberia and Central Asia, the closure of Catholic hospitals, parish schools, charities, and the suppression of the Catholic press. And *all of this* was virtually unnoticed in the West.

The persecution of the Catholic churches lasted until December 1989 when Mikhail Gorbachev re-established diplomatic relations with the Vatican. In the last fourteen years, Eastern Catholics emerged from the underground with full force while ugly battles still rage with Orthodox Christians, especially over reclaiming Catholic church properties that the Orthodox whisked away so many years ago. Terribly hard feelings still live among these people. Healing of memories is needed after so much suffering, blood, and death.

### ***Byzantine Catholic Immigrants in Roman Catholic America***

The experience of reception into American life for Eastern Catholics pouring into the United States and Canada one-hundred years ago was not a pleasant one. Byzantine rites and customs, in particular the practice of a married clergy, presented a serious problem for the established Catholic world in largely Irish Roman Catholic America. The first blow from the Latin church was a strategic *diminutio capitis*, literally a cutting off of the head: Disable the leadership and you weaken the people. On 1 October 1890, the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, in a letter addressed to James Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore ordered all married Byzantine Catholic priests to return to Europe immediately. It further stated that only celibate priests should be sent in the future to America.

It is clear that the Sacred Congregation was unfamiliar with the terms of the Unions of Brest (1595) and Uzhorod (1646). Likewise, it is also clear that the Romans involved in these Unions four centuries ago did not anticipate this massive emigration to America and the consequent collision of cultures. The valid traditions of Eastern churches preserved by these Unions and endorsed by the

Latin church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had been forgotten by the turn of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. This forgetting nearly spelled disaster for fledgling Byzantine churches in the United States because the majority of priests were married. Loud protests arose from the Greek Catholic clergy and people, and most of the priests did not leave.

Two years after the initial directive, the Holy See issued a derogation of the decree and allowed married members of the clergy to remain in America. However, there was one catch: Married Byzantine priests could remain in the United States *provided* they send their wives and children back home to their country of origin (Slivka, 11, 19). Outrage rose everywhere. Such disconnection from the human realities of family life horrified Byzantine Catholic priests and people.

Large numbers of the faithful followed charismatic priests to turn their allegiance away from Rome and back to Constantinople. Disastrous consequence followed. Let me cite just two: one in Minnesota and the other in Pennsylvania.

In 1891, Father Alexis Toth, a Byzantine Catholic priest, arrived in the United States to assume the pastoral care of the Ruthenian people in Minneapolis. Upon his arrival, he presented himself as a faithful son of Rome and the Union of Užhorod to the Roman Catholic archbishop of Minneapolis, John Ireland. Back home in the Diocese of Prešov in the present day Czech Republic, Toth had been a learned priest and a canon of the cathedral. When Ireland reviewed his credentials and saw he was a priest of the Byzantine church *and a widower*, Ireland refused to grant him faculties. The archbishop lit the fuse and Fr. Alexis exploded. He became embittered and placed himself under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Bishop of San Francisco. In a short time, Toth was so successful in leading thousands of Ruthenian Catholics to the Orthodox Church that he gave the Russian Orthodox Church in America its largest contribution of souls, thus weakening the Eastern Catholic Church and galvanizing Orthodoxy. A high percentage of the membership of the Orthodox Church of America (OCA, 1970) is also rooted in the Ruthenian Catholic Church. In fact, the OCA canonized Fr. Alexis where his icon is honored at St. Mary's Orthodox Cathedral in Minneapolis.

In the early decades of the 1900s, the myopia of the Roman hierarchy continued and grew. Its most disastrous culmination was in the decree *Cum data fuerit* (1929), which prohibited married men from ordination to the priesthood in the

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United States, thus dissolving a practice dating back to the apostolic church. Enforcement of this decree in America rocked the very foundation of the Byzantine church. Parishes were thrown into chaos as parishioners sided with or against their bishops who were compelled under the threat of removal to enforce Roman law. Stories are told of divided families torn between loyalty to the pope and to their religious heritage. Clerical solidarity was fractured as sides were taken. Legal battles were fought in civil courts because ownership of church property was challenged. The final devastating blow was yet another schism in 1938 in which thousands of Byzantine Catholics were led into Orthodoxy by their pastor and new bishop, Orestes Chornock, to a newly created and independent American Carpatho-Rusyn Orthodox Church with its see in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

More tolerance and varied degrees of greater understanding between Roman and Byzantine Catholics have developed over the years, but the status of second-class citizenship to anyone other than Romans has not radically changed. Teaching Roman Catholics about the existence of Eastern Catholics was endorsed in the *Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches* (art. 4). However, I find that most people are woefully uninformed, lay, clergy, and religious alike. *The Program for Priestly Formation* encourages seminary faculties to expose seminarians to the Eastern wing of Catholicism (arts. 68, 126, 167, 534). One wonders how well this has been carried out, if carried out at all.

***Our Future:  
“We Live in Joyful Hope . . .”***

Without stewing on the tragedies of former generations, how can our common Catholic past inform, and perhaps transform, our future? I will note three areas: the possibility of union, liturgical inculturation, and the celibacy question.

***Are Eastern Catholics the Bridge to Union?***

In the recent past, some have proposed quite eloquently that the Eastern Catholic churches are the bridge between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Eastern Catholics have been called the bridge between East and West since they profess the fullness of the Catholic faith and share the liturgical rites of the Orthodox Church. However beautiful this metaphor of “bridge” may sound, it remains rather specious. Many Orthodox Christians look to Eastern Catholics and see how they have been treated as orphans and how they have been deprived of their true spiritual inheritance. Many Orthodox Christians look to Eastern Catholic churches as mirrors in which they see themselves if they were to enter into the Roman communion. Based on what they see, they remain discouraged. Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., testifies to this hard reality:

A senior Eastern-rite bishop from Syria says he does not know a single Orthodox hierarch who is interested in reunion with Rome. The Orthodox are only too aware of the grudging way that Rome treats the Eastern rite Catholics, who have an Oriental liturgy, spirituality and church structure—they have married priests, for example—but are united with the pope. Vatican II's *Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches* says they have “the right and the duty to govern themselves,” but the Orthodox see too little evidence of this in practice (McDonnell, 1261).

Before the Eastern Catholic churches can be a bridge between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, there has to be a bridge built between the Eastern Catholic churches and the Latin church. Reading an article such as this one may help to broaden our scope to include these churches in our awareness of what constitutes the Catholic communion.

### ***Liturgical Inculturation***

Great quantities of ink have been spilt on the topic of liturgical inculturation since the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in 1963. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued an instruction in 1994 titled “Inculturation and the Roman Liturgy.” Evident in these two documents is the principle of unity of theological content and diversity in liturgical form which has governed ongoing discussions. Yet, more recently, the Latin church appears to be stressing the unity of theological content and discouraging the diversity of liturgical form. The latter, manifested mainly in processions and the music accompanying them, is eclipsed by particularly Roman forms. Sensitivities to tinkering with the language of prayer and proper translations of biblical texts are heightened with even more directives on what constitutes playing inside the lines of liturgical translations. Moreover, the current revision of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal includes more directives than its predecessor, thus demonstrating a more heightened sense of control. The Eastern churches are also sensitive to preserving unity of theological content and enabling diversity of liturgical form, but they do not obsess on this liturgical principle.

The current collusion of cultural expressions, not only in the United States but throughout the entire world, is unprecedented in recent history, and still there is a cautious reluctance on the part of Roman leadership to allow liturgical forms to flow freely within the proper limits of the Roman rite. Of course, liturgical boundaries ought to be maintained so that familiar structures and progressions are recognized, its sobriety and noble simplicity retained. Surely, liturgical abuses are to be ferreted out. Yet all liturgical rites, even the Latin rite, grew organically with more pliancy and suppleness than heretofore acknowledged, and despite attempts to restrain such growth, it continues even today before our eyes.

Similarly in the rites of the Eastern churches, whether one visits a Ukrainian or Coptic, a Ruthenian or Romanian, a Syro-Malabar or Melkite church, the main frame of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is readily recognizable, yet the forms vary, thus giving each church's liturgy its distinctive quality. Episcopal oversight determines local practice. The Metropolitan and his eparchial bishops celebrate a certain autonomy of oversight, always reverencing the traditions yet adjusting practice to pastoral realities. The inclusion or exclusion of litanies, the possibility of spontaneous additions into the litanies, the composition of new music to enhance classic texts, the reappropriation of traditional Byzantine liturgical customs serve to catechize the faithful. Cycles of the liturgical year create points of interest which challenge the routine which potentially creeps into liturgical rites. The Latin rite, "unencumbered by useless repetitions" (SC, art. 34), stands in sharp contrast to what Latin Catholics experience as an excessive repetition of texts and forms in the Byzantine rite, i.e., litanies, incensations, bowing, making the sign of the cross, etc. Yet it is precisely in these repetitions where pastoral realities may be addressed. For example, the frequent repetition of three-fold forms (Lord, have mercy . . . , Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us . . . , All you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ . . . ) may use three participating language groups. In the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada, the Divine Liturgy easily includes Ukrainian, English, and French in their prayer texts.

The current liturgical neuralgia in the Latin church, straining to restore order and discipline, only stunts the necessary evolution of forms which must occur so that the desired theological content might be made visible. The policing of acts of worship based on liturgical law is foreign to the Eastern churches. Where the few negative encounters with liturgical minimalists have occurred in the Ruthenian church, more often than not, the policing has been done by disgruntled Latin Catholics seeking a safe haven in the Eastern churches, shielding them from the inevitable evolution of liturgical forms. The Latin church would do well to learn from the Eastern churches, i.e., to entrust the local bishops with the authority to determine liturgical practice, and then trust them in that task. All the Roman documents

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churches and the  
Latin church.*

delegate the local bishop as the premier liturgist, though he is often under the watch of outside scrutinizers. Faced with these contrasting realities, the question could then be raised: Why is it that the Roman leadership is accepting of extensive liturgical variations in the traditions of the Catholic East yet so restrained and cautious about the evolution of liturgical forms in the Catholic West?

***The Celibacy Question Revisited:  
Reclaiming Our Eastern Tradition***

Recently I visited several parishes in the Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi, and was profoundly impressed with the ministry of many lay people and very few priests collaboratively crafting a new expression of Roman Catholicism in America. Thirty years from now, when my generation is in our final years, the great northeastern U.S.A. will be learning from the southern churches, unless there is a huge resurgence in vocations to the priesthood, which I think is highly unlikely. Over the years I have encountered several impressive young married men who would be eager to be ordained priests. I make it my regular practice to ask them explicitly, and they have all said yes. I also know many ex-seminarians and former priests who have married who would still love to minister as priests. The current Roman discipline of celibacy blocks them and stunts so many gifts from our churches, and we are the less for it. Yet our leadership continues to deny the hard realities about which trustworthy actuarial studies warn us. Although ordination for married men would not cure all our ills, it would certainly open up the flow of charisms otherwise stifled.

Last year I watched the Super Bowl with a married Eastern Catholic priest and his family. Six years younger than I and born in the U.S.A. of immigrant parents, he sat on the floor with his teenage son while his wife and two daughters talked and laughed. All the while I was thinking how different my life could have been. More than once have I heard the story of a young married man whisked off to Ukraine or some other eastern country, driven from the airport to a small country church where a bishop greets him, ordains him, and sends him back to North America as a missionary. Then, the Eastern bishop back home simply looks the other way, and the people welcome this married priest and his wife with open arms.

Canon 373 of the Eastern Code of Canon Law (1990) states that marriage is no longer an impediment to ordination and that “the state of married clerics . . . is to be held in honor.” Thus, *Cum data fuerit* (1929) is abrogated, and seminarians are free to marry before diaconal ordination, even in the United States. Although one American Eastern Catholic bishop has recently ordained a married man in America without reprimand from the Vatican, most Eastern bishops simply lack the courage to act on what the law clearly permits. Perhaps their apprehension comes from a lingering inferiority complex which has not yet matured beyond its second-class status. Clandestine ordinations of married men will continue until

our Eastern Catholic bishops decide to act. Perhaps a hundred years from now, the Latin church will consider their act prophetic. “Roman” is *not* the only way to be “Catholic.” The dynamism of Eastern Catholic theology, spirituality, and practice needs to be unleashed so that our Catholic Church might once again “breathe with both lungs.”

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# NTR

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

*Daniel McLellan, O.F.M., and Donald Senior, C.P.*

## **Preparing the Next Generation for Pastoral Leadership— Two Theology School Presidents Speak Out**

“Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet 3:15). This beautiful admonition of the First Letter of Peter is as timely today as it was when first written to an early Christian community struggling through a time of great difficulty. It also inspired the title of a major study of American Catholic seminaries by Sr. Katarina Schuth, O.S.F. (*The Reason for the Hope*, 1989). The Catholic Church in the United States continues to live through a serious and heartbreaking crisis. The sexual abuse of minors by trusted pastors has dismayed, discouraged, and angered great numbers of people. The handling of these crimes and misbehaviors has led many to experience a crisis of confidence in the leaders and institutions of the Church.

Are there reasons for hope for the next generation of priests and lay ecclesial ministers? As presidents of two schools of theology and ministry that educate men and women for the ministries of the Church, we are well aware of the attention focused on us and the work that we do. People are anxious that the new generation of priests and lay ministers we are preparing will be healthy and trustworthy. In fact we do have great hope in the work of our schools and in the men and women we are educating. The editors of *New Theology Review*

have asked us to reflect on the reasons for this confidence, and to share with you our “reasons for the hope” that continues to inspire our work in these difficult days.

### **The Founding Impulses of Our Two Schools**

Both Union schools began in the late sixties, inspired by the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and the winds of change that were blowing strongly through our country and our Church. The Washington Theological Union began in 1967 when several religious order seminaries clustered around The Catholic University of America established the Interseminary Cooperative Organization (ICO) to foster communication with one another as they addressed the implications of Vatican II. These schools soon realized that any serious engagement of the council needed to have an ecumenical component. The ICO became the Washington Theological Consortium as Protestant schools joined the conversation. It soon became clear to the religious communities that, individually, their schools lacked the resources needed for the kind of quality theological education needed by priests in the post-conciliar Church. In 1969, six of these schools came together as the Washington Theological Coalition and so began a deliberate process of forming a new and independent school. By 1977 the

“temporary alliance of distinct parties” had evolved into a stable educational institution that henceforth would be known as the Washington Theological Union. Today, seven religious institutes make up the Union’s corporate membership.

The inspiration that led to the formation of Catholic Theological Union was first sparked by a speech of Cardinal Leo Joseph Suenens of Belgium, one of the leading voices of Vatican II. He gave a speech at the University of Chicago Divinity School in 1964 in which he called for a new vision for seminaries in the wake of the council. Moved by his speech, the dean of the Divinity School, Gerald Brouwer, himself a Lutheran, invited several Catholic friends to come to Chicago and join with already existing Protestant divinity schools in the university setting of Hyde Park. Eventually three orders—the Franciscans, Passionists, and Servites—responded to the call and forged the new Catholic Theological Union, setting up shop in what was formerly a ten-storied hotel and beginning classes in the fall of 1968. Today twenty-five religious communities are the official sponsors of CTU.

While both CTU and WTU have always maintained their primary mission of providing excellent theological education for the religious order candidates of their members’ communities, the schools recognized early on the ever-growing importance of theological education for other ministries in the Church, as well as for the personal and professional enrichment of those seeking to deepen their life of discipleship. Today lay men and women make up half of the enrollment at both schools.

### **Elements of Our Experience**

In 1992 John Paul II published the apostolic exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* in which he synthesized the work of the 1990

Synod of Bishops dealing with priestly formation. The exhortation highlights the important values that should inform the education and formation of priests. As we look at our respective schools through the lens of *Pastores dabo vobis*, we see programs that meet the high standards set by the Pope.

The overarching theme of the synod and the Pope’s exhortation is the need to pay careful attention to the context of education and formation. The synod considered questions of priestly formation “in terms of today’s society and today’s Church in preparation for the third millennium” (PDV, 5). The Pope noted that candidates for ministry come from particular human and ecclesial contexts which shape and form them, and it is to these contexts that the minister returns. It was this same conviction that motivated the founders of both our schools. The new educational ventures were designed to prepare religious priests to be effective pastoral leaders in the context of a postmodern world and a postconciliar Church.

Our founders were clear that formation for religious priesthood would be accomplished best in an environment where the full richness of religious life in all its diversity could be appreciated. Traditionally, formation was often kept parochial for fear that candidates would not develop sufficient loyalty and devotion to their own community and charism if mixed with those from different traditions. Our experience has validated the conviction of our founders. Rather than resulting in a confused mix, our schools have become opportunities for the specific identities of our religious communities to stand out. Rarely in our thirty-five year history have candidates from one religious community decided to join another. More importantly, the collaborative nature of our institutions gives individual religious communities a

chance to highlight the particular charism of their institutes for the benefit of all. At the Washington Theological Union, for example, there is a specially funded lecture series in Augustinian studies, an endowed Franciscan Center for Theology and Spirituality, and an articulation agreement with the Carmelite Institute of America. At Catholic Theological Union, the Society of the Divine Word and the Maryknoll Missionaries have each established chairs and accompanying lecture series that focus on world mission—a special emphasis of the school's curriculum—while the Franciscan community has established a chair and a special institute for Franciscan spirituality.

The Pope's exhortation gives new emphasis to human formation. Referring to the priest as a "bridge" for others in their meeting with Christ, the Pope highlights the human qualities to be nurtured in the work of education and formation. Priests should be "balanced, strong and free, educated to love the truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their word, to be genuinely compassionate, to be men of integrity, and, especially to be balanced in judgment and behavior." Cultivating the priest's "capacity to relate to others" is at the heart of the process of human development. To relate to others requires that the priest "not be arrogant, or quarrelsome, but affable, hospitable, sincere in his words and heart, prudent and discreet, generous and ready to serve, capable of opening himself to clear and brotherly relationships and of encouraging the same in others, and quick to understand, forgive and console" (PDV, 43).

The Union schools provide a highly suitable context for the manifestation of these interpersonal skills and the development of a student's capacity to relate with various types of people. The teaching and learning communities of our schools are a genu-

ine cross-section of the Church. Drawn from at home and abroad and rich in diversity of race, gender, and ethnic background, students are challenged each day to manifest the virtues and habits necessary to live and learn and serve in a global environment.

The unique make-up of our faculties, staff, and student body helps us meet a further challenge to educating pastors with the charity of Christ. Citing his predecessor Paul VI, the Pope reminds us that "Christ became the contemporary of some men and spoke their language. Our faithfulness to him demands that this contemporaneity should be maintained" [PDV, 52; Paul VI, Address to the participants in the 21st Italian Biblical Week (September 25, 1970): AAS 62, (1970), 618]. Our schools are designed in a way that the educational environment fosters this contemporaneity by keeping a diverse student body in constant contact with each other. Students come to us from all walks of life, age groups, and regions of the world. Academic programs are open to any eligible applicant. Classes normally include a diverse mix of students enrolled as priesthood candidates, lay, religious, sabbatical students, as well as priests and others who minister locally. Common prayer and ministry as well as study and research are contact points that allow students to enrich each other.

The priest needs to relate not only to those he serves, but also with his partners in ministry. Over thirty thousand lay men and women are currently serving effectively in positions of pastoral responsibility through the U.S. Many are graduates of our schools. We have learned that they serve not out of a need to accommodate a scarcity of priests. They serve out of a sense of vocation, a call from God rooted in their baptism. As the face of ministry changes, it is critical that those called to

ministry, presbyteral and lay, develop a deep appreciation of one another's vocation. Future pastoral leaders need to develop an appreciation for the particular gifts God gives to the Church through their service and be able to relate and work collaboratively with each other for the common good. Far better that a capacity for mature collaboration be tested and developed during one's years of preparation for ministry and ordination than to discover its absence when it is too late and can do grave harm to the Church.

Our schools share the vision that a learned ministry goes hand-in-hand with a Church engaged in the critical issues affecting peoples' lives. Thus, we wholeheartedly agree with the Church's emphasis that study is not a secondary or external part of priestly and ministerial formation (PDV, 51). Theological study, a work that leads from faith to faith, is complex and demanding. The quality of our intellectual formation is a point of particular pride for us as schools sponsored by religious communities. Each member of our respective faculties holds an earned doctorate in his or her field. In addition to their high quality of teaching, both faculties have reputations for scholarly research and publication. We take particular pride in the thoroughness and rigor of programs that not only provide our students with a synthesis of our Catholic tradition but with methodologies that help them, as men and women of faith, to continue to ask critical questions of that faith (PDV, 53). Because the religious communities have collaborated and pooled their individual resources, we are able to maintain quality faculties that would be beyond the capacity of any single religious community to provide.

In helping our students develop the capacity to stay in touch with the minds and hearts of those they will serve, we take seriously Pope John Paul's admonition

that pastoral formation is not mere apprenticeship, becoming familiar with this or that skill or technique (PDV, 58). Pastoral formation aims to fine-tune the sensitivities of the student to the sensitivities of Christ. It is a matter of developing in the student capacities of service and leadership that are motivated by faith and reflect the application of the Church's theological tradition. Such an education takes place through practical pastoral experience and serious reflection on that experience. The wide and varied works of our religious communities make it possible for our schools to provide opportunities for carefully supervised ministerial experiences in a variety of pastoral settings worldwide. At the heart of the practical experience is theological reflection, faculty-led exercises of "mature reflection" (PDV, 57) which lead the student to put on the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5).

While our schools take special responsibility for the intellectual and pastoral education of our students, we recognize that the Church expects those who minister in its name to be well prepared personally and spiritually as well as professionally. Each of our schools fosters a close working relationship with those responsible for the spiritual formation of our students who are members of religious institutes. We are careful to coordinate our academic activities in a way that complements the work of the formation directors. At CTU, for example, a formation council composed of each of the formation directors of the religious communities meets monthly with representatives from the school, and representatives of the communities have a seat on all faculty committees. We have also developed programs of spiritual formation especially designed to meet the needs of our lay students. These programs are intended to help students deepen their personal relationship with Christ and to grow

in their vocational commitment to service in the Church. While human and spiritual formation of religious candidates for ministry is the proper responsibility of the candidate's institute, several religious formation programs have begun to collaborate with the WTU lay formation program sharing in monthly prayer, fellowship, and discussion. CTU collaborates with the Archdiocese of Chicago in preparing Hispanic and African American lay ecclesial ministers for the local church, and all of the school's lay students participate in a newly established archdiocesan formation program as well as in the school's own more extensive program.

The future context for ministry in the U.S. will be ecumenical and interreligious. Our schools are members of ecumenical consortia in our respective cities. Consequently, faculty participate in structured conversations with colleagues according to academic discipline, inter-library use is permitted and students may cross-register for courses in any member school. In addition, Catholic Theological Union has programs specializing in Catholic-Jewish and Catholic-Muslim Studies. Additionally, CTU is part of the Chicago Center for Global

Ministry that coordinates its mission and urban ministry programs with the nearby Lutheran and Presbyterian seminaries.

### **Conclusion**

What began as exciting experiments in ministerial formation have now become proven examples of quality pastoral education. Catholic Theological Union of Chicago and Washington Theological Union are integrated and collaborative educational experiences that now prepare a substantial portion of the religious order priests ordained in the United States and a growing number of the Church's future lay ecclesial ministers. For thirty-five years we believe we have provided our students with the excellent instruction and sound pastoral formation that is so necessary for effective ministry. In the midst of our present difficulties, extraordinarily generous men and women continue to come to us hungry for the learning, skill, and deep spirituality that will make them pastors after the manner of Christ. From our vantage point, at the heart of educating the next generation of pastoral leaders, the future of our Church and its ministry looks very hopeful indeed.

# NTR

KEEPING CURRENT

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

*Vincent Cushing, O.F.M.*

## Current Developments on the Ecumenical Scene

Given the current world climate, besieged as we are with wars and rumors of war, it is a tonic for the spirit to turn to a Christian ministry of peace-making and reconciliation—the ministry of fostering unity among the Christian families. It was not always a pacific endeavor. Formerly, we Roman Catholics enthusiastically voiced our differences with Protestantism with an edge that would leave our fellow Christians reeling. Of course, they did (and some still do) the same to us. Fortunately, bellicose tactics and polemical diatribes are mostly a thing of the past. Unfortunately, however, for many Christian churches this ministry of forging ecumenical unity is also a thing of the past.

All is not lost, however. Even today we experience noteworthy breakthroughs, although they have not caught the eye of the popular press nor achieved high visibility among Christians. In a remarkable address in 2001, Cardinal Walter Kasper, prefect of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, sketched a popular overview of the ecumenical movement in contemporary Catholicism. His talk, “Present Situ-

ation and the Future of the Ecumenical Movement,” given at a plenary session of the council in late 2001, paints a picture with more light than shadow, one showing energy and achievement towards unity in the Roman Catholic Church. The first part of his speech bears directly on our topic and salient points merit comment. My summary follows.

Currently, the Roman Catholic Church is actively engaged internationally in thirteen ecumenical dialogues about Christian unity with churches or ecclesial communities. This abiding interest in the ecumenical quest employs dialogue as the prime ecumenical tool for advancing the cause of unity. This effort has produced two major documents, “The Joint Declaration on Justification,” agreed upon with the Lutheran World Federation, and “The Gift of Authority,” an agreed statement by the Second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. Both documents are benchmarks in ecumenical advance, describing growth and development on the part of each participating church. Yet, their very achievement brings with it

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further issues. Lutherans have asked, correctly I think, “What next—intercommunion, mutual recognition of ministries, common celebration—what?” Roman Catholics have not yet come up with a response. When it comes to the Anglican-Roman Catholic relationship, both sides seem to have received the statement on authority with appreciation, but as if it were an exotic bird—interesting, perhaps even beautiful, but certainly not a creature to find a home in our respective churches. The neuralgic question remains for the interested observer: Where to, now? Answers are slow in coming.

Pope John Paul II has been an ecumenical pilgrim in significant papal visits to centers of Orthodox life and worship. His respectful, fraternal visits to Romania, Greece, and Armenia graphically evidence his belief that “the Church breathes with two lungs.” His passion for organic unity with Orthodoxy has been steadfast in the face of insults and rebuffs. Nevertheless, he presses on and in some quarters of Orthodoxy he has made progress. It is clear that Roman Catholicism actively seeks eucharistic unity with Orthodoxy, but Orthodoxy is chary indeed. The problem of “uniatism”—the relation of formerly Orthodox churches united with Rome for more than four-hundred years and their present relationship with Orthodoxy locally—appears to be unresolvable, at least for now. Cardinal Kasper describes the distant and suspicious relationship between Moscow’s Orthodoxy and Rome’s western Catholicism as a cultural barrier not easily crossed. Lastly, Cardinal Kasper’s frank remark in this address asserting “the increasing awareness . . . that the Orthodox Church does not really exist”—given that autocephalous Orthodox churches so jealously guard their independence from other Orthodox churches that no such general grouping is applicable—touched a very sensitive nerve

indeed. It has occasioned heated reaction from segments of Orthodoxy. Clearly, both truth *and* diplomacy are at play here, and striking the right balance is no easy feat.

The 1995 papal encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* reflects a vigorous retrieval of Vatican II’s ecumenical Magna Carta, *Unitatis Redintegratio*. The famous paragraphs 95 and 96 have sparked rich ecumenical research. John Paul II solicits help from the entire ecumenical community when he asks:

Could not the real but imperfect communion existing between us persuade church leaders and their theologians to engage with me in a patient and fraternal dialogue on this subject, a dialogue in which, leaving useless controversies behind, we could listen to one another, keeping before us only the will of Christ for his Church and allowing ourselves to be deeply moved by his plea “that they may all be one . . . so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21)?

A number of scholars, Catholic and Protestant, are now engaged in crafting a response to the Pope’s request.

Two basic issues stand out on the ecumenical landscape: first, the time of “first fervor” in the ecumenical movement in the Roman Catholic Church is over. Those present at the creation of the Catholic entry into the ecumenical movement are either retired or deceased. The great Dominican ecumenists Pères Congar and Tillard, both now deceased, are missed for the range of their vision and the depth of their scholarship. Ecumenical efforts do not carry the same cachet for this generation of practicing Catholics; in fact, some are quite suspicious of it. Most Catholics now know a Church open to ecumenism, even if not enthusiastic about it. Efforts

towards unity are viewed as the daily unexciting agenda of church life. Second, the ecumenical movement is partly a victim of its own success in that as churches grew closer to each other and saw each other's shortcomings, a noticeable dampening of enthusiasm ensued. This is exemplified in the sensitive areas of Christian ethics and the methodology for solving ethical and doctrinal issues. Debates about abortion, in-vitro fertilization, homosexuality, divorce and re-marriage, and the ever-volatile ordination of women stir up passions both across and within Christian confessional families. Opinions on these issues are so explosive that it is difficult to achieve sound scholarly discussion.

I believe developments in three areas could affect significant advance in the ecumenical movement: apostolicity and apostolic succession, the future role of the papacy, and strategies for unity. Apostolicity and apostolic succession—or the presumed lack thereof—prevent the reconciliation of ministries by Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy in relationship to Protestantism. This is a threshold difficulty, and a resolution of it could open a door to a unified Church. Current research presents possible resolutions of this issue, but official Roman Catholic pronouncements reflect little of that research and, indeed, there appears to be little appetite for resolution.

Secondly, as presently configured, the papacy presents a barrier between Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and Anglicanism. Disagreement centers on papal infallibility, on the immediate jurisdiction of the pope in every local Catholic diocese, and how the papacy and the Roman Curia function in the Church. Reputable scholars of international stature are presently taking up the theological question with the blessing of the papacy. Functional issues about the reform of the Curia, however, do not appear to be part of

the agenda. Without attention to the latter, advances in regard to the papacy will remain theoretical.

The strategic question is partly how to lay aside the papacy's medieval trappings and attendant curial administration, while simultaneously developing and retrieving elements essential for a vital Petrine ministry of bearing witness to the Gospel in the Church and world. Vatican II provided Roman Catholicism with an inchoate doctrinal renewal, but the structures of the Church universal remain for the most part unreformed. Truth be told, current Roman Catholic church structures increasingly resemble pre-Vatican II models and procedures. The Church thereby risks becoming dysfunctional and muting effectively its clear voice for ecumenical unity.

The last issue asks what the strategy of ecumenical reconciliation will be. We know that the resolution of doctrinal issues, while a condition for unity, does not yield unity. Two issues present themselves for consideration: the so-called "hierarchy of truths" which, while affirming doctrinal veracity, points out that some doctrines are more central to the Church's faith. Roman Catholicism needs to propose what it believes to be "ecumenically" central to faith as the basis for a unified confession of faith. The second factor in strategies for unity is the culture of separated churches and ecclesial families. No church that has lived its particular tradition for a thousand or five hundred years can reject its heritage and polity. Unity is neither achievable nor desirable by a return to Rome or by uniformity imposed from without. So, strategies for unity need to be designed. Will the Catholic Church, seldom a center for creative administrative solutions, participate in such efforts?

The Catholic Church has actively participated in the ecumenical movement for almost forty years. Significant practical

action that carries symbolic import leading to a goal of effective unity and showing that ecumenical dialogues are not merely tea-time theological chatter will bring life to the ecumenical endeavor. Thoughtful efforts tried on an experimental basis can give credibility to ecumenical seriousness.

Just as it was through mutual human failure that we separated, so it will be through cooperative human effort under God's grace that we will unite. Ecclesiastical polity and well-researched theology must be tested in the crucible of practical human effort towards unity.

# NTR

WORD AND WORSHIP

*Theresa F. Koernke, I.H.M.*

## **Eucharistic Praying and Common-Union**

The *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani* (2000), a revision of *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), as well as the *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America*, provide us with occasion to recommit ourselves to the theological and pastoral reforms promulgated by the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), as well as to the subsequent Catholic scholarship on the origin and meaning of the Eucharistic Prayer and our Common-Union, that is, participation in the Bread of Life and the Cup of Eternal Salvation. To situate our current pastoral reality and in order to facilitate judgments regarding pastoral practice, the following is a reflection on our corporate history, the contributions of Catholic biblical and liturgical scholarship, and some encouragement.

### **Remembering**

These forty years of liturgical life since the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy demonstrate ample proof that we read and hear anything from out of the knowledge that we have at the time. For most of us at the time of Vatican II, that knowledge was permeated by a set of

assumptions that affected every corner of our Catholic minds and hearts. For example, while we believed that grace, the Holy Spirit, was always present to us, we presumed that the sure sources of grace were the sacraments, especially the reception (note the passive) of the Blessed Sacrament, or prayer before the exposed or reserved sacrament. In the chapters treating “The Holy Eucharist,” “The Sacrifice of the Mass,” and “Holy Communion,” the pre-Vatican II *Baltimore Catechism* literally made no reference to the gathering of the Baptized Assembly, to the Liturgy of the Word, or to the Eucharistic Prayer, but did indicate that the faithful should be properly disposed for the reception of Communion. We presumed that “the most important parts” of the Mass were the “offertory by the priest,” the “words of consecration by the priest” (not the entire Eucharistic Prayer), and the “communion of the priest.” Given these emphases, some of us asked how late we could be and still fulfill our Sunday obligation to “hear Mass.”

Pre-Vatican II assumptions bolstered notions that what preceded and followed “the words of consecration” was ceremonial, that the priest was playing the role of Jesus at the Last Supper, that the priest

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offered the Sacrifice, and that we “received the fruits of the Sacrifice.” It was that powerful set of assumptions that the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy addressed.

### **Where Is the Risen and Ascended Christ?**

As I have come to appreciate these dispositions, it seems clear that our assumption about the relation of the Risen Christ to the Church made all the difference in this world regarding our eucharistic sensibilities, indeed upon our very reading of the Scriptures and any other ecclesial documents. With the death of Augustine and the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West (476 C.E.), the influence of Neoplatonic philosophy washed over the Catholic imagination. The presumption inherent in that philosophy, that there existed some pure spiritual realm of being, would lead us to imagine, contrary to the Scriptures, that the resurrection and ascension of the Risen Lord implied that he had left history, now dwelling in that spiritual realm with his risen body. If that were the case, then we needed to give our theological efforts to articulating how it is that we encountered him, now seated (understood in a rather physicalist way) alone at the right hand of the Father, in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

During the ninth- and tenth-century eucharistic controversies, it was clear that Christian thinkers had rather uncritically absorbed the “spiritual realm (real)/history (shadow)” dualism of Neo-platonic philosophy. Theological treatises on the Eucharist showed the consequences of this conceptual severing of Christ from his Body, the Church, by way of questions such as these: How can Christ alone in heaven become present alone on our altars under the forms of bread and wine? What do we receive? Can the one Christ be present on many altars at the same time? At

what moment does Christ alone become present? Is the whole Christ “contained” in the bread alone and the wine alone?

In short and contrary to biblical and patristic witness, the theology of “the Eucharist” during the second millennium until the modern biblical and liturgical movements concerned itself with the “real presence of Christ alone, body, blood, soul and divinity, under the forms of bread and wine.” The further absorption of Aristotelian philosophical categories such as substance and accidents only served to reinforce theological attention to the “moment of consecration,” with its corollary attention to the role of the priest. In their time St. Paul and St. Augustine would have thought these questions and issues absurd, un-hearable, because they did not account for the active faith of all present.

It is not that theologians were necessarily wrong in using the language of philosophy(ies) to articulate the faith of the Church, but that these philosophical systems became the lens by which to interpret the Scriptures. As well, and as is clear from the contents of the GIRM and Norms for Communion, these language categories are presumed to be the best ones to articulate the faith in a postmodern world. Yet, since Descartes in the seventeenth century, persons decreasingly operate according to these concepts.

### **Catholic Scholarship**

Since the issuance of *Divino Afflante Spiritu* by Pope Pius XII in 1943, we note increasing tension between the contents of official ecclesial documents and the fruits of the biblical and liturgical scholarship encouraged by that encyclical. The Constitution on the Liturgy revealed the impact of liturgical textual studies and related biblically rooted theological reflection on the entire celebration of the Eucharist by stating that “Christ is always present in

His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations" (art. 7). If the Christ is always present, then theological reflection is free to explore the meaning of the *action* of Christ and his members in the entire gathering for Eucharist.

Of particular import is the scholarship of Enrico Mazza on the origin of the Eucharistic Prayer. Within Jewish practice, the blessing of God over bread and partaking of it implied participation in the corporate "body" of the people, sharing in their destiny, reaffirming corporate identity. The blessing of God over the cup and partaking of it implied participation in the blood of the lamb whose sacrifice at Sinai brought the people into existence. For Jesus to have reinterpreted that eating and drinking in terms of his own life and death is of profound import for the meaning of what we do in addressing God in the Eucharistic Prayer and in partaking of Bread and Cup.

Clearly, the early Church combined the two blessings within the context of one prayer of praise and thanksgiving, the Eucharistic Prayer. Therein, we recall to God the acts by which we have been saved throughout history, especially the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, who, at the Last Supper, transformed our prayer and the meaning of eating and drinking.

This has profound implication for our action of Common-Union. Now, to partake of the Bread of Life is to participate in the sacrament of Christ and his members. Now, to partake of the Cup of Eternal Salvation is to participate in the sacrament of the Cross, the origin of the Church into which we have been baptized. St. Augustine had

retained this biblical meaning in his admonition to "Look upon this Bread and this Cup and see the mystery of yourselves, and become what you eat." To hear the Word speak to us, to proclaim the Eucharistic Prayer, to have *koinonia*, participation in the sacrament of the Body and the Blood, is to engage in corporate ethical action for the sake of the peace and salvation of all the world.

### **Encouragement**

As Dickens would say, "these are the best of times and the worst of times." They call us to active trust that the Spirit who has guided the Church to the New Pentecost of Vatican II is not sleeping. We might feel like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, matters not having turned out quite as we had hoped. Yet, the Christ continues to interpret our lives to us in the assembly through his Word, and a perfect offering continues to be made to the glory of God's name. We continue to say Amen to the Body of Christ onto which we have been grafted. We continue to drink from the Blood of the Cross, our origin and our hope. And so, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess 5:16-22).

### **Reference**

Enrico Mazza. *The Eucharistic Prayers of the Roman Rite*. New York: Paulist Press, 1986, esp. 1-29.

# NTR

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Ichabod Toward Home:  
The Journey of God's Glory.**

By Walter Brueggemann. Grand Rapids,  
Mich: William B. Eerdmans, 2002.  
Pages, iii + 150. Paper, \$15.00.

*Reviewed by Joan E. Cook, S.C.  
Washington Theological Union*

In this readable and insightful book Walter Brueggemann interfaces three topics of perennial concern to him and to all who endeavor to teach the meaning of the biblical Word in today's modern and postmodern world. Those topics are methods and questions of biblical theology, pastoral concerns, and a discussion of the Ark Narrative in 1 Samuel 4–6, which relates the account of the capture of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines, its power over its captors, and its eventual triumphal return to Israel.

The first three chapters of the book consider each of the three chapters in the biblical account: the humiliating loss of the Ark by the Israelites when it is captured by the Philistines in chapter 4, the hidden combat between the Ark and Dagon inside Dagon's shrine that results in the Lord's victory over Dagon in chapter 5, and finally the terrified release of the Ark by the Philistines and its triumphal return to the Israelites in chapter 6. Brueggemann then applies the three moments of the Ark Narrative to other biblical events: the Exodus, the Exile in Babylon, Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

In his fourth chapter Brueggemann uses the Ark Narrative to pose the question faced by all who attempt to relate the biblical message to today's believers: What does the Church do when it stands in front of the biblical text? Here he elaborates on his nonfoundational approach, introduced in his *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997). By this he means an interpretation that steps outside the framework of cultural, historical, and theological assumptions and looks for an alternative, fresh meaning found in the text and not bound by current presuppositions. Instead he offers three alternative assumptions: that the text not be expected to conform easily to questions of historicity, that historical criticism not overshadow our ability to wonder at the text, and that our theological presuppositions not be permitted to reduce our understanding of the text to complacent claims.

Drawing on the work of Amos Wilder, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and James C. Scott, Brueggemann considers the Ark Narrative as "guerilla theater" that negates denial, despair, and complacency in reading the text. The Ark, thus God, was indeed captured, some transformative event that took place inside Dagon's shrine changed everything, and the divine power that brought about that change remains beyond our grasp.

The final chapter of the book begins with the contemporary phenomenon of the three-day weekend and its effort to escape from

the realities of everyday life. In it Brueggemann proposes that, just as re-reading the Ark Narrative yields new faith-filled insights, so also re-thinking the three-day weekend in the light of faith can transform consumerism and self-indulgence into hopeful expectation of redemption.

The book offers scholars, pastors, and students a penetrating discussion of the biblical text, a probing consideration of the methodology of hermeneutics, and a creative perspective on the vital importance of redemption in today's Church.

**Recovering the Riches of Anointing: A Study of the Sacrament of the Sick.** Genevieve Glen, O.S.B., ed. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002. Pages, xviii + 137. Paper, \$12.95.

*Reviewed by Peter Lyons, T.O.R.  
St. Ann and St. Wenceslaus Churches,  
Baltimore, Maryland*

There is a fairly dramatic contrast between two passages, one at the beginning, the other near the end of this book. In the foreword, Joseph Driscoll of the National Association of Catholic Chaplains paints a glowing picture of the gathering of the first international symposium on the sacrament of the anointing of the sick in 2001. At an Evening Prayer service in Baltimore's Basilica of the Assumption, Cardinal William Keeler looked into the faces of more than seven-hundred Catholic health care chaplains and cited a reference from the book of Revelation: "You are the face of Christ to those 'wailing, crying out and in pain.'" Father Driscoll noted the warm and appreciative smiles of the chaplains at this blessing and affirmation of their ministry.

But a different note is sounded by Genevieve Glen toward the end of this col-

lection. In a section titled "Pastoral Rage," she states that "the Church's decision to abide by the Tridentine discipline that 'the priest is the only proper minister of the anointing of the sick' is perceived by both ordained and unordained ministers alike as a significant hindrance to effective action [on behalf of those committed to their care]. Consequently, it frequently evokes the sort of pastoral rage that we have heard in this gathering."

Between the warm glow and the hot fury lies a broad theological, canonical, and liturgical landscape regarding the sacrament of the anointing of the sick. While the issue of "Who may anoint?" seems to have been the principal motive for the gathering, the presenters and the participants took the matter far beyond the initial question. The present collection, a good mix of theory and praxis, is a helpful compendium for pastoral caregivers, pastors, religious educators, and those involved in theological education and pastoral formation.

Kevin Irwin, Michael Drumm, and Susan Wood provide theological background to the development of doctrine with particular reference to the history of sacramental theology. John Huels provides excellent canonical and pastoral input, and Peter Fink and Glen draw out further liturgical and pastoral applications.

Wood provides a fresh context for examining the rite of anointing by linking it to baptism and Eucharist, rather than the sacrament of penance. Baptism and Eucharist celebrate the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection, and sickness is one of the ways the Christian concretely shares in this mystery. Hence, the rite of anointing exhorts the sick person "to offer his or her suffering in union with Christ and to join in prayer for the church and the world." The linkage of anointing to penance, on the other hand, had its origin in the early

medieval practice of postponing penance until the moment of death and then following it with an “extreme unction” as a preparation of the dying person for eternity.

No less than forty years ago the Second Vatican Council re-thought the “last rites” and clarified the role of anointing as the sacrament of the sick and Viaticum as the sacrament of the dying. Twenty years ago the current English language edition of the *Pastoral Care of the Sick* (PC) was issued. But as Huels notes, Catholic mythology runs deep and the notion that anointing is the final sacrament of the Christian life continues to hold sway in the Catholic imagination, even among pastors and pastoral caregivers. Huels relates this persistent myth to the belief that, if a person is anointed just before death, he or she will go straight to heaven, a belief that has no foundation in Catholic doctrine.

Although there is historical precedent for lay anointing of the sick, Huels believes the current discipline is unlikely to change in the near future. Shifting the focus from what is prohibited to what is permitted to non-ordained ministers, his proposals include:

- Helping the sick to make an act of perfect contrition when a priest is not available to celebrate the rite of reconciliation (he provides a helpful ritual for this)
- Rituals for visits to the sick and Communion services (drawing on *The Book of Blessings* as well as PC)
- “Sacramentals” which include blessings, holy water, and the application of blessed (non-sacramental) oil
- Drawing upon inactive priests for the rite of reconciliation for dying persons. All priests have the faculty and the obligation to provide this service, and many would be happy for this singular opportunity to exercise the priestly ministry

- Administration of the sacrament of Viaticum, the final sacrament in the Church’s treasury. The rite specifically provides for a lay minister to officiate.

The book concludes with a plea for all who engage in pastoral formation to help pastoral ministers and lay faithful to come to a better understanding of the rites of pastoral care for the sick and the dying. Using the metaphor of a dance, Glen argues for a collaborative relationship among all who engage in pastoral care. If the Church were to move the responsibility for anointing from one set of ministers to another, we would be merely changing partners in the dance. The Spirit of the living God, however, may be calling the Church beyond simple answers to a greater vision, “to choreograph the dance in the half light from a reality we can never fully see from here and now.”

The title of this collection is apt. It is a significant step forward in “recovering the riches” not only of the anointing of the sick but of the Church’s long tradition of pastoral care of the sick and the dying.

**Earth Revealing/Earth Healing:  
Ecology and Christian Theology.**

Denis Edwards, ed. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001. Pages, xx + 245. Paper, \$24.95.

*Reviewed by*

**John T. Pawlikowski, O.S.M.**

*Catholic Theological Union*

This volume is the work of a group of religious scholars at the Centre for Theology, Science and Culture at Flinders University’s Adelaide College of Divinity in Adelaide, Australia. The Australian context of the twelve essays comes out at points, though the overall perspective on

theological questions in light of the contemporary ecological challenge is drawn from a variety of theological sources throughout the globe.

While this volume exhibits some of the unevenness commonplace in edited works, it succeeds remarkably well in emphasizing the central tenets of any Christian theology framed in an ecological context. The volume revolves around several key points. These include: (1) no hard separation can be made between humanity and the rest of creation, (2) there is an intrinsic value in all of creation, (3) the Christian churches have contributed to the ecological problem because of a predominant anti-creational outlook in much of classical Christian theology, (4) central theological doctrines need to be rethought in light of our new perspectives on creation, and (5) classical Christian theology can be reclaimed in responding to the ecological challenge.

Points 4 and 5 constitute the heart of this volume. Denis Edwards continues his probe of the meaning of the doctrine of the Spirit in an ecological setting with four major propositions through which Edwards attempts to develop a special “ecological role” for the Spirit within the Trinity. In developing this notion he draws on the likes of Karl Rahner, Jürgen Moltmann, Yves Congar, the Greek Orthodox Fathers and the contemporary Orthodox theologian Jean Zizioulas, who also serves as an important resource for the essays by Patricia Fox and Anthony Lomes. Edwards’s contribution, following up on his previous writings on ecological theology, is among the richest in the book.

Duncan Reid and Patricia Fox each address other central aspects of classical theology. Reid’s focus is on Christology. He undertakes what he terms a theological retrieval of “Christ’s flesh,” particularly as expressed in the Alexandrian tradition, in order to reunite it with the greater empha-

sis in the Antiochene school on Christ’s humanity. In Reid’s essay, as well as in a later contribution by Anthony Lowes, there is a decisive argument that, as Lowes puts it, “matter matters” in theological reflection. Unless we take Christ’s human flesh seriously, we can never construct, according to Reid, a solid ecological theology.

Patricia Fox has contributed one of the best essays in this volume. Drawing upon both Jean Zizioulas and Elizabeth Johnson, Fox posits the view that behind Christian theology’s typical inability to acknowledge non-human creation as an “other” stands an ongoing effort to reduce “God’s shattering otherness.” She remains convinced that a proper understanding of the Trinity can contribute significantly to the development of a sense of creation as the “other” which in turn would generate an ethos and an ethic that can undergird a permanent commitment to seek justice for all of creation.

Other contributions include a provocative opening chapter by Stephen Downs on the meaning of “landscape” which he considers integral to an ecotheology, a reflection on feminism and its potential for aiding the healing of nature by Lucy Larkin, and a plea for the importance of place in ecotheology by Phillip Tolliday. The volume concludes with an essay on theological anthropology by James McEvoy in which he argues strongly for the significance of the Enlightenment worldview in ecotheology in contrast to many “romantic” ecotheologians who would dismiss outright any constructive contribution from the Enlightenment tradition to an ecotheology (a point with which I very much concur) as well as a very fine overview by Andrew Dutney of current biomedical issues.

Denis Edwards has edited an exceptionally rich volume in terms of the development of an in-depth ecotheology. If there is

a slight criticism to be made, it would be that the contributors tend to overemphasize the retrieval angle. I would support efforts to mine classical theology in building an ecotheology, but I do not believe retrieval alone will do the job. A solid ecological theology will also require new theological construction as well as the “letting go” of certain classical theological perspectives. The contributors need to be in greater dialogue with the perspectives of people such as Thomas Berry and Sallie McFague.

**Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life.** Edited by Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2002. Pages, vi + 265. Paper, \$18.00.

*Reviewed by Robert L. Kinast*  
*Center for Theological Reflection*  
*Largo, Florida*

Making connections between theology and the real life experiences of believers has been the primary goal of pastoral theology for the past fifty years. It has given a theological dimension to supervised ministry programs; it has created the genre of theological reflection; and it has redefined the nature of practical theology. *Practicing Theology* contributes to this broad effort by examining the interplay of beliefs and practices within the Christian life. This study grew out of a previous volume edited by Dorothy Bass, *Practicing Our Faith*, which examined twelve Christian practices but did not elaborate their theological bases or implications.

As one might expect, the concept of practice is central to this whole enterprise. Dorothy Bass and Craig Dykstra offer a comprehensive working definition of prac-

tice in their opening essay which the other contributors refer to while nuancing it with their own points of view. In general, all the authors emphasize that practices address basic human needs and are interrelated, enduring, complex, and communal. Christian practices are distinguished by their reference to God’s revelation in Christ and the meaning of that revelation as a way of life articulated theologically over the centuries.

Amy Plantinga Pauw complements the opening essay with a down-to-earth account of the gaps between beliefs and practices accenting a theme shared by several of the authors: theology, especially in its academic form, is too unrelated to the real life practices of believers (an ironic criticism since all of the contributors are academic theologians). L. Gregory Jones moves beyond this criticism by proposing the fourth-century catechumenate as a model for the interaction of today’s congregations, seminaries, and societal settings.

The middle essays address the title of the book, practicing theology, by examining specific practices and offering theological reflections on the beliefs implied in those practices. The authors draw upon their own experiences in specific communities of faith which gives their reflection a welcome concreteness and reality. However, the range of experience and settings in the six essays is somewhat narrow. Two of them (Serene Jones and Nancy Bedford) deal with a congregation’s discernment of its mission; two of them (Christine Pohl and Gilbert Bond) focus on the ministry of hospitality (as do three other essays); Tammy Williams discusses healing in African American churches; and Sarah Coakley speaks in general about the interplay of beliefs and practices in the ascetical and mystical tradition. Given the overall intent of focusing “on the ordinary, concrete activities of actual people,” a

more diverse sampling of practices and settings might have been expected.

On the belief side of the equation the concluding essays draw out several valuable lessons. Beliefs and practices imply and require each other although practices usually come first while beliefs actually ground the Christian way of life (Miroslav Volf). Doctrine is an essential and normative guide to honoring the truth of God's hospitality in Christ (Reinhard Hütter). Christian practices demand critical theological reflection which can raise disturbing questions and preclude an artificial fit between belief and practice (Kathryn Tanner).

The twelve essays in this book, linked to one another by frequent cross references, add impressive voices to the chorus emphasizing the integration of theology and Christian practice. In doing so they adopt a realistic and willing acceptance of the ambiguous nature of practice, remain alert to the interconnection of Christian practices with one another and with non-Christian practices, and express a deep, spiritual sense of how this type of reflection participates in the ultimate mystery of God's relationship with us.

#### **Psychology for Christian Ministry.**

By Fraser Watts, Rebecca Nye, and Sara Savage. New York: Routledge, 2002. Pages, xv + 320. Paper, \$23.95.

*Reviewed by Lisa R. Jackson Cherry  
Marymount University, Virginia*

Ministers-in-training will benefit from this overview of the various psychological components that can be integrated into ministerial work. Well organized and comprehensive, this book offers an in-depth exploration into the understanding of various underlying psychological, social, reli-

gious, and spiritual factors affecting individuals who experience developmental, situational, or existential crises and other emotional problems. It is divided into five parts, each with sub-chapters and a consistent outline: "Questions for Ministry" (an overview), "Summary of Key Themes," "Questions to Consider," and a list for "Further Reading." Chapters also incorporate a variety of valuable exercises for self-reflection to supplement the readings.

Part I, "Personality and Religion," explores the development of personality as influenced by religion and/or spirituality, specifically, religious customs, rituals, worldviews, and practices. Part II, "Development and Teaching," offers an overview of the unique needs and concerns involved in the religious and spiritual development of children, adolescents, and adults, and how clergy can integrate meaningful homilies and lessons by understanding the different learning styles of individuals. Part III, "Counseling and Pastoral Care," examines various developmental and emotional issues clergy may encounter with individuals seeking their assistance. The difference between pastoral care and counseling are discussed thoroughly. Part IV, "Organization and the Church," integrates social psychology and group dynamics as they relate to conformity, identity, the formation of stereotypes and biases, effective leadership styles, and clergy burnout. Part V, "Psychology and Theology," explores the contrasting assumptions of human nature defined by psychology and theology, which have historically separated the two fields, and how clergy can benefit by utilizing psychology.

One of the book's strengths is the broad perspective offered by the authors. For example, not only have they explored the applications of psychology to the area of pastoral care and ministry, they have also investigated the role of psychology in

various church traditions, customs, rituals, and beliefs. The book also provides readers with a developmental-psychological approach to understanding the importance of how spirituality and/or religious beliefs affect the whole person. Another strength is the structure of the book as outlined previously. Its limitations may be found in the narrow scope of emotional issues mentioned in Part III. Although the authors differentiate between pastoral care and counseling, the book would be strengthened by integrating information on crisis

intervention since clergy are faced primarily with individuals in crisis.

The divisions of topics explored make this a unique book. It is also comprehensive as a resource for ministers to understand the psychology of individuals and to make connections with religious identity and spirituality. The authors attempt not only to bridge the fields of psychology and religion but also to connect them. They have made a valuable contribution to the fields of religion, pastoral counseling, and psychology.