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Editorial

by Dawn M. Nothwehr, OSF

A Call to Solidarity—“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

A Call to Hope-Filled Action—“Repent and believe in the Gospel.”

As this issue goes to press, we begin the Season of Lent 2017. The past several months have been quite tumultuous. Many would argue that we are living in a “Dark Moment in History”—a world that is more divided than ever. We live in times far from ordinary!

This Spring Semester I am teaching two courses for graduate students who are seeking to serve as ministers in the Church. Both courses—Catholic Social Teaching and Mission, and The Ethics of Power and Racial Justice—require students to face the multiple divides of our world headlong, and in light of the Gospel. The daily headlines come careening into the classroom, after having, often surprisingly, cut deeply into the student’s sense of morality and justice:

- What must we do with this discriminatory travel ban?
- Are First Amendment rights being removed as Muslims are interrogated about their religious beliefs upon arriving at U.S. airports?
- Can ICE Agents arrest the immigrants that are housed near our school by Catholic Charities?
- It seems what President Trump and Steve Bannon are doing fits the very patterns we’ve read about that history shows were the first steps toward an autocracy – is this right?
- When a group of reporters of a similar political persuasion were banned from a White House press conference, was this the start of the loss of the Freedom of the Press?
- As we read about the situations that preceded the Armenian Genocide, the rise of Hitler, or, more recently, the diminishment of Hungarian democracy, the similarities to current events are shocking!

These events are indeed stunningly distressing and raise new awarenesses that U.S. citizens have to now grapple with. In the comforts of a “stable democracy” many of us have been lulled into a comfort zone that permitted an often unchallenged understanding of our faith.

The good news is that the future ministers in my classroom, and elsewhere, are asking the right questions. Numerous sources reveal data indicating that the millennial generation is less partisan and far more ready to support politicians who address real needs and values that sing in harmony with the tenets of Catholic Social Teaching and

the values and vision of the Gospels—health care, poverty, racism, job training, renewable energy infrastructure, and other investments in people who have lived far too long at the margins of U.S. society.

Common wisdom suggests that “It takes two to tango!” So the point here is not to cast blame, but rather to reflect on what it means to hear the words that accompany our being signed with ashes on Ash Wednesday. What does it mean in a deeply divided country and world to “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”? What difference will it make in my life and yours if you and I “Repent and believe in the Gospel”?

The Ash Wednesday Lectionary Readings are quite provocative and deserve our discerning attention at this moment in history. The prophet Joel cautions us that sin and division is a communal affair. No human being can thrive in isolation. From conception to our natural death, we—indeed, the very elements that compose our bodies—are interdependent with other people and the entire created world. Who we are and what we learn to be good and true, and how we act, are heavily influenced by family, friends, where we go, and what media we expose ourselves to—and more. It is through all of this that our values and vision of the world and other people is shaped and solidified. Thus, Joel reminds Israel, and us, that each person in their own way is in need of repentance; God is not pleased with divided hearts and sinfulness.

What is it that is dividing us? What is going on within each of us that keeps us from living and loving as God requires? Where is our capacity for mercy, justice, hope, solidarity with others... especially those “Others” of a different race, gender, sexual orientation, political party, economic status or? Indeed, we are ALL brothers and sisters, and if we are to ever become reconciled, as St. Paul pleads we must, each one of us needs to get serious and **very practical** about finding ways to come together around the kind of grace, mercy, and peace that our God extends to us. The model is none other than Jesus Christ.

In the Gospel of Matthew we see one who calls us to humility and generosity—to remember who we are as Christians who put **trust in knowing whose we are**. Our generosity needs to be extended to not only the economically poor and oppressed, but, more importantly in these divided times, to the poor one deep inside of us—in our fearful hearts. Standing in fearful isolation in our communities and in the world **is not our calling**. Rather, we are to be witnesses and ambassadors for Christ, sacrificially giving of ourselves to unite, support, include, communicate, care—and more. Yes—there are **some practical things** each one of us can learn to **do differently**.¹

Working together, then,
we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.
For he says:
*In an acceptable time I heard you,
and on the day of salvation I helped you.*
Behold, now is a very acceptable time;
behold, now is the day of salvation. 2 Cor 6:1-2

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” We are called to solidarity. “Repent and believe in the Gospel.” We are called to hope-filled action. “**If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts.**”

¹ I recommend the resources developed by Chicago’s 8th Day Center for Justice, *Centerings* (Winter 2017) available at <http://8thdaycenter.org/centerings/>.

Cover Image:



“Sea of Galilee,” our evocative, painterly cover image, is the work of Manila-based photographer Pia Sison. Pia teaches Scripture courses at the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies (IFRS), and De La Salle University, where she is a Ph.D. candidate in Applied Theology specializing in Biblical Studies. She obtained her M.A. in Religious Studies with an emphasis in Scripture, at Maryhill School of Theology, also in Manila. An alumna of Bat Kol Institute’s Scripture programs in Jerusalem where she immersed in the study of Exodus (2012), Teshuva (2015), and Genesis (2016), Pia complemented her training in Scripture with the practice of her art, producing beautiful photo essays from each trip.

Monasticism and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement

by Reginald Alva

The Holy Spirit is the principal agent of all genuine renewal activities within the Church. After the firm establishment of Christendom in Europe, women and men chose monasticism as a way to seek sanctity and grow in love of Jesus Christ. It would not be an exaggeration to note that nuns and monks pioneered the work of renewal and reformation within the Church.¹ The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement (CCRM) was born much later, in 1967. It too seeks spiritual renewal through its distinct Charismatic spirituality.² As both Christian monasticism and the CCRM aim at spiritual renewal, this article seeks to examine their features to understand their contribution in enriching the spiritual tradition of the Catholic Church. Further, this article will also examine the contributions of these movements in enriching the spiritual lives of contemporary people. The primary sources of our study are Church documents, literature on monasticism, documents on the CCRM, and opinions of experts in these fields.

Brief History of the Beginnings of Monasticism and the CCRM

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It is not an easy task to trace the beginnings of monasticism. There are various opinions among scholars, which suggests that there could be more than a single reason for the birth of Christian monasticism.³ One of the reasons proposed by scholars is the decline of spiritual fervor among Christians after the establishment of Christendom in Europe. The early Christians faced many persecutions. However, as Christians grew in temporal power, they faced fewer difficulties and lesser challenges in following their faith. The absence of persecutions led to the loss of interest in spiritual matters. Therefore, as a response to this situation, some Christians opted for a solitary life of prayer and meditation.⁴ Other scholars suggest that as persecutions and martyrdom declined, some Christians longed to embrace the value of martyrdom by renouncing all the pleasures of the world and accepting an ascetic

life. This form of martyrdom is also known as *white martyrdom*.⁵ Further, some scholars maintain that the prevailing monasticism in other faiths influenced Christians to embrace a Christianized form of monasticism. Prominent

1 James Ponzetti, "Renewal in Catholic Community Life and New Monasticism: The Way of a Contemporary Religious Communal Movement," *The Journal for the Sociological Integration of Religion and Society*, 4, no. 2 (2014): 35-50.

2 Hereafter I will refer to Christian monasticism as monasticism.

3 Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 1-2.

4 Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 1-2.

5 Kallistos Ware, *The Inner Kingdom*, vol. 1 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 122-123.

theologian Gregory Smith noted, “[T]he origin of the monastic life is to be found partly in the traditions of the East, partly in the teaching of the schools of Alexandria, partly in the social state of the world external to Christianity.”⁶ Thus, as noted above, there could be multiple reasons for the beginning of monasticism among Christians.

Monasticism began as eremitic monasticism, in which an individual goes to the desert to separate herself/himself from worldly affairs to concentrate on spiritual matters.⁷ Cenobitic monasticism evolved when monks and nuns formed communities to live a communal life with like-minded people.⁸ As time passed, monastic communities underwent reform according to the needs of the times. They continue to undergo renewal and reform to adapt to contemporary conditions.

In contrast to monasticism, the CCRM is a comparatively new movement within the Catholic Church. In 1967, a few students and faculty members of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh gathered for a weekend of prayer. During the course of the prayer meeting, they experienced the phenomenon of baptism in the Holy Spirit.⁹ This was the beginning of the CCRM in the Church. Even though only a few people had this experience, they shared their newfound spiritual joy with others. Their life-transforming testimonies had a great impact on other Catholics in the U.S.¹⁰ Youth in particular became involved in the various programs of the movement. Due to their efforts, the CCRM spread rapidly to all continents of the world and experienced phenomenal growth.¹¹ Statistics on the global expansion of Pentecostals and Charismatics show that around 120 million Catholics in over 236 countries claim to have some association with the CCRM.¹² Thus, both monasticism and the CCRM have their unique histories of origin.

Main Features of Monasticism and the CCRM

Monasticism originally started as a lay movement.¹³ Later, priests also became monks. Similarly, the CCRM is also a lay-centered movement. The Second Vatican Council Fathers encouraged the laity to take a proactive role in the various activities and programs of the Church.¹⁴ The CCRM, which was born two years after the end of the Second Vatican Council, implemented the vision of the Council Fathers. Both monasticism and the CCRM seek Spirit-driven renewal and active participation of all Christians in the mission of the Church. In the following sections, we shall examine these features and their contributions in helping contemporary people enrich their spiritual lives and rediscover the beauty of the Christian faith.

1. Spirit- Driven Renewal & Change of Heart

On the day of Pentecost, the disciples of Jesus gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem had a tremendous experience of the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). Peter, who had this experience, stood up before the people and with the power of the Holy Spirit boldly proclaimed the Lord’s message. Those who listened to him “were cut to the heart” and asked Peter, “Brothers, what should we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter replied, “Repent, and be baptized

6 Gregory Smith, *Christian Monasticism* (London: Aeterna Press, 2015), 2. Originally published by A. D. Innes & Co, London, 1892.

7 Ralph Keen, *The Christian Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 103-115. Eremitic is a derivative of the Greek word *eremos*, which means desert.

8 Keen, *The Christian Tradition*, 103-115. Cenobitic is a derivative of the Greek word *koinos bios*, meaning communal life.

9 Susan Maurer, *The Spirit of Enthusiasm: A History of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, 1967-2000* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 1-2.

10 Reginald Alva, *The Spirituality of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement* (New Delhi: Christian World Imprint, 2014), 1-3.

11 David Barrett and Todd Johnson, “The Catholic Charismatic Renewal, 1959-2025,” in *Then Peter Stood Up* (Rome: ICCRS, 2000), 122-123.

12 David Barrett, George Kurian, and Todd Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 20.

13 Robert Baker and John Landers, *A Summary of Christian History*, 3rd ed. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 88. See Natalia Teteriatnikov, “Architecture: Eastern Christian Monasteries,” in *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, ed. William Johnston, vol.1 (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), 66.

14 Reginald Alva, “The Catholic Charismatic Movement & the Laity,” *New Theology Review* 28, no. 1 (2015): 39-45.

every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). This event shows that an individual undergoes a radical change of heart with the infilling of the Holy Spirit. After the death of Jesus, Peter and his companions feared for their lives and locked themselves up. However, after the coming of the Holy Spirit they boldly came out and proclaimed Jesus as Lord. The coming of the Holy Spirit changed them. Similarly, the Holy Spirit led the three thousand Jews in Jerusalem to repent and accept the lordship of Jesus (Acts 2: 41).

Both monasticism and the CCRM started with individuals who opened themselves to the Holy Spirit to seek genuine conversion of heart. The early nuns and monks longed to have a close relationship with the person of Jesus. This led them to go out to deserts and solitary places to detach themselves from worldly pursuits and dedicate themselves to a life of prayer and renunciation. Their life experiences show that conversion is a life-long process and not a one-time achievement. Nuns and monks faced the continuous onslaught of temptations. The desert experiences gave them ample time to wrestle with their internal weaknesses such as pride and ego and face external troubles like extreme temperatures, lack of food, and the danger of robbers and beatings. It was through these struggles that they purged themselves from the evil that had blocked their spiritual growth. In his book *Demons and the Making of the Monk*, Brakke notes:

The monk was not simply a man at prayer and not simply someone who through ascetic performances constructed a virtuous self as an alternative to the deadening conventions of society. At the heart of his identity was struggle, resistance, and combat with the forces of evil that surrounded the ancient person.¹⁵

Charismatics also stress the need for internal transformation and change of heart. Even though there is a difference between monks and Charismatics in their approach to seeking a change of heart, both consider it to be a very important factor to growth in the spiritual life. Charismatics emphasize the phenomenon of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Sullivan notes that baptism in the Holy Spirit is “a religious experience which initiates a decisively new sense of the powerful presence and working of God in one’s life, which working usually involves one or more charismatic gifts.”¹⁶ There is no fixed format to experience baptism in the Holy Spirit. Charismatic prayer groups and communities usually organize programs to preach about baptism in the Holy Spirit. Generally, even though it is not a norm, Charismatics focus on the topic of repentance before preaching about baptism in the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ They encourage people to seek the sacrament of reconciliation to experience God’s forgiving love in their lives. Some Charismatics also organize inner healing (healing of memories and relationships) sessions to give people an opportunity to pray for healing in the conscious, subconscious, and unconscious realms of their lives.¹⁸ Charismatics urge people to go through the process of seeking forgiveness and forgiving others in order to remove the spiritual blocks that hinder their growth in Jesus. After praying for healing and forgiveness, Charismatics lay their hands on the person and pray for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. As noted above, there are no fixed formats or rules to receive baptism in the Holy Spirit. An individual may receive baptism in the Holy Spirit in an unexpected time or form. Repentance is indispensable to prepare a person to seek the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Thus, both monasticism and Charismatics preach repentance and change of heart as an essential prerequisite to progress in the spiritual life.

15 David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in the Early Christianity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 240-241.

16 Francis Sullivan, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Catholic Interpretation of the Pentecostal Experience,” *Gregorianum* 55, no. 1 (1974): 49-68.

17 “The Word of God,” in *The Life in the Spirit Seminars Team Manual* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1979), 129-137.

18 See Thomas Csordas, *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 40-45.

In his 1946 radio message to the United States National Catechetical Congress, Pope Pius XII noted that, “Perhaps the greatest sin in the world today is that men have begun to lose the sense of sin.”¹⁹ Pope Francis echoed the words of Pope Pius XII in a homily referring to David’s sins of adultery with Bathsheba and consequently Uriah’s murder (2 Sam 11:1-17). Pope Francis noted, “The most serious problem in this passage is not the temptation or sin against the ninth commandment but rather the way David acts.”²⁰ According to Pope Francis, David does not recognize his sins but tries to deal with his sins as one would resolve a problem. Pope Francis noted, “The same thing can happen to us when we lose the sense of the kingdom of God and as a consequence also lose the sense of sin ... we can do anything, we will resolve everything. The power of man substituted for the glory of God.”²¹ There is a growing trend in the contemporary world that seeks independence from God and absolute relativism. Some contemporary people consider sin, repentance, and forgiveness as irrelevant. Some regard religion as burdensome as it curtails their freedom. Hedonism, consumerism, and utilitarianism are becoming the norm of the present culture. This not only affects human interpersonal relationships, it also affects human relationships with the environment.²² Thus, there is a great need for people today to recognize the harmful consequences of their personal sins as well as the corporate sins present in society. However, it is a great challenge for people to go against popular culture, which promotes unrestrained relativism under the garb of freedom. Hence, there is an immense need of role models to teach people the importance of seeking genuine conversion. Nuns, monks, and Charismatics can serve as these role models because their spirituality emphasizes the need for internal transformation and repentance of sins. They can greatly contribute to the awakening of conscience in people today to accept the seriousness of sin and seek genuine conversion of heart.

2. Discipleship

To grow as a disciple of Jesus is at the heart of both monasticism and the CCRM. Women and men embraced the monastic way of life to follow closely the life of Jesus Christ and imitate him. Nuns and monks aim to grow in sanctity by living an authentic Christian life. They do not consider themselves superhuman but instead strive to grow as matured disciples of Jesus Christ. To become a disciple of Jesus, one needs to follow a path that is less trodden and full of struggles. To imitate Christ, nuns and monks renounce everything that could block their growth in spiritual lives. They opt to live a simple life and devote themselves to prayer and work (*ora et labora*).

Nuns and monks usually spend long hours in prayer and meditation. Apart from reciting prayers from the Daily Office, some also keep all night prayer vigils on special occasions.²³ As nuns and monks seek to follow St. Paul’s dictum to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17), they practice a form of prayer in which a person repeats continuously the name of Jesus or a short scripture verse. This form of repetitive prayer helps a person to focus on Jesus and ward off distractions.²⁴ Initially, a person needs to repeat consciously the set phrase for a number of times. Gradually, as time passes, a person begins to pray by repeating the set phrase, even without being aware of it. Thus, this repetition of the set phrase helps a person to be in constant prayer, even if the person is engaged in other work.

19 Pius XII, “Radio Message to the Participants of the National Catechetical Congress of the United States, 1946,” https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/speeches/1946/documents/hf_p-xii_spe_19461026_congresso-catechistico-naz.html.

20 Francis, “Morning Meditation in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, 31 January 2014,” http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2014/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20140131_martyrs-sins.html (accessed on 2 June 2016).

21 Francis, “Morning Meditation in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, 31 January 2014.”

22 Benedict XVI, *Cartias in Veritate*, no. 51, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 101 (2009): 687-688. http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html#dnref122.

23 Frank Flinn, ed. *Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (New York: Facts on File, 2007), 524-525.

24 James Payton, *Light from the Christian East: An Introduction to the Orthodox Tradition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 206-215.

Nuns and monks also give importance to the reading, memorizing, and meditation of biblical verses. The practice of Christian *lectio divina* (divine reading) has its roots in monasticism.²⁵ Nuns and monks used the practice of *lectio divina* as a means to read the word of God and assimilate it in their inner being.²⁶ They meditate on scripture verses to seek God's presence continually, which is the center of their lives.

Silence has an indispensable role in a nun's or monk's spiritual life. Interior silence helps a person to be introspective and face one's inner self.²⁷ This experience can be both joyful and terrifying. Silence may be joyful because it allows a person to seek God's presence in one's life. Silence may be terrifying because solitude brings a person face to face with one's real self. Inner silence plays an important role in the spiritual formation of a person. It is for this reason that nuns and monks spend quality time in silence, to grow in their spiritual lives, and encounter their real selves.

The Charismatic tradition also emphasizes discipleship. The purpose of seeking spiritual renewal is not self-edification but to be a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ. Like monasticism, the CCRM links obedience to the teachings of Jesus with discipleship. The CCRM emphasizes receiving baptism in the Holy Spirit in order to grow in a personal relationship with the person of Jesus. Jesus promised His disciples, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you" (Jn 14:26). Raymond Brown, an expert in Johannine theology, noted the Holy Spirit (*Paraclete*) is the alter ego of Jesus.²⁸ He maintains that the Holy Spirit served as the spiritual presence of Jesus in the community of disciples.

The CCRM emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in helping Christians to become matured disciples of Jesus Christ. Charismatics urge people to spend time both in personal and communitarian prayer. They give importance to praise, which forms the backbone of Christian prayer. Even though there is no fixed format for Charismatic prayer meetings, Charismatics usually spend a considerable time in praise and thanksgiving. Sometimes they use scripture verses or extemporary words of praise. In addition, they make use of lively music and hymns as a form of praise and worship.

The liturgical celebrations of the Catholic Church do not have the flexibility of Charismatic prayer sessions as they have a fixed structure. However, Charismatics consider liturgical celebrations and the celebration of sacraments as indispensable for spiritual growth. Even though it is not possible for parishes to incorporate all the features of Charismatic praise and worship in liturgical celebrations, Charismatics participate actively in the various celebrations and bear witness to their faith in Jesus Christ.²⁹

Charismatic prayer groups and communities give importance to study of the Bible. Some prayer groups and communities make an effort to organize programs to give an opportunity to lay people to study the Bible. Prior to the Second Vatican Council, lay Catholics generally did not take a keen interest in reading or studying the scriptures.³⁰ However, at the Second Vatican Council, the Council Fathers urged all Catholics to read the Bible and use it for their prayers. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* noted, "The sacred synod also ear

25 Christine Valters Paintner, *Lectio Divina-The Sacred Art: Transforming Words and Images into Heart-Centered Prayer* (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 2011), 4-5. See also Augustine Roberts, *Centered on Christ: A Guide to Monastic Reflection* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2005), 265-267.

26 Alessandro Barban, "Lectio Divina and Monastic Theology in Camaldolese Life," in *The Privilege of Love: Camaldolese Benedictine Spirituality*, ed. Peter-Damian Belisle (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 47-60.

27 Peter-Damian Belisle, *The Language of Silence: The Changing Face of Monastic Solitude* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 15-20. See also David Keller, *Oasis of Wisdom: The Worlds of the Desert Fathers and Mothers* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 78-90.

28 Raymond E. Brown, "The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel," *New Testament Studies* 13 (1967): 113-32.

29 See International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services Doctrinal Commission, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Vatican: ICCRS, 2012), 19-21.

30 Frederick Bliss, *Catholic & Ecumenical: History & Hope: Why the Catholic Church is Ecumenical & What She is Doing About It* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 39-40.

nestly and especially urges all the Christian faithful, especially Religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the 'excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ' (Phil. 3:8)."³¹ Charismatics have greatly contributed to making the scriptures alive among Catholics, according to the vision of the Second Vatican Council.³² The CCRM has also employed widely the age-old tradition of *lectio divina* to have a deeper understanding of the Word of God.³³

Silence is golden in monasticism. However, there is a perception that Charismatic prayer meetings have less space for silent worship. It may be true to a certain extent that some Charismatics place greater emphasis on loud praise and lively music. Nevertheless, this is not a norm. Charismatics do recognize the importance of silence for contemplative worship. They do keep time for silent worship during the prayer sessions. However, the time they spend in silence is considerably less as compared to nuns and monks. For this reason, they need to learn from the monastic tradition about the richness of contemplation in silence.³⁴

Even though Charismatics usually do not keep silence for long periods, they have introduced creativity in the way a person worships.³⁵ They encourage the use of bodily gestures like clapping, raising hands, and dancing, which appeal to the affective realm of a person. Thus, they have brought freshness in the way of worship, which is enriching the spiritual lives of people.

Contemporary people often are in the constant pursuit of happiness, which seems to be like a mirage. Wealth, scientific gadgets, positions, etc., cannot satisfy the inner needs of a person. The ancient wisdom of monastic practices and the modern spirituality of Charismatic worship can help people to rediscover the richness and depth of Christian faith and spirituality.

3. Community Life

Faith in the Trinity is the foundation of Christian spirituality. Trinitarian spirituality implies fellowship between the three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) of the Trinity. The communion and fellowship that the three persons of the Trinity share serve as an exemplary model to all faith-seeking people to engage in fellowship with others. Monasticism in its early form consisted of individuals living in isolation to dedicate themselves to prayer and sacrifice. However, as time passed, nuns and monks realized the need for fellowship. Hence, they came together to form communities of like-minded people.³⁶

Some contemporary people may consider monasticism as a way to escape from the humdrum routine of life. However, monasticism's goal is diametrically opposed to any escapism. It aims to embrace life in its fullness, which Jesus promised to His disciples (Jn 10:10). This fullness of life is not for self-satisfaction but for sharing with others the joy that comes from God. Thus, for nuns and monks, community life is a place to love and be loved.³⁷ Further, the community life that nuns and monks live is not restricted to the members of their community.³⁸ It encompasses the whole of humanity. As members of the same human family, nuns and monks extend their love and care to all. Thus, monasteries have greatly promoted the cause of building a just and harmonious world.

31 Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, no. 25, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html.

32 Peter Hocken, *Pentecost & Parousia: Charismatic Renewal, Christian Unity & the Coming Glory* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 4-5.

33 Carl Arico, *A Taste of Silence: Centering Prayer & the Contemplative Journey* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 103-121.

34 Andy Lord, *Transforming Renewal: Charismatic Renewal Meets Thomas Merton* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 137-138.

35 Reginald Alva, "The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement: Tradition versus Creativity," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 78, no. 12 (2014): 885-897.

36 Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, 25-41.

37 Mayeul de Dreuille, *Seeking Absolute Love: The Founders of Christian Monasticism* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1999), 31-32. Here de Dreuille refers to the life and teachings of Pachomius, a prominent monk belonging to the period of early monasticism.

38 Laurence Freeman, ed. *Monastery Without Walls: The Spiritual Letters of John Main, O.S.B.* (Norwich, U.K.: Canterbury Press, 2006), 3-31.

Nuns and monks profess religious vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. These vows are a means to follow Christ faithfully and serve all people more generously. Even though nuns and monks pronounce these solemn vows, this does not mean that they have already attained perfection and are eligible to live a consecrated life. The declaration of vows rather means that they are imploring divine grace to live a life completely dedicated to God. Thus, the profession of vows is not a completion of a process (perfection) but the beginning of a process (seeking to grow in holiness) in life.³⁹ Nuns and monks accept that they are imperfect humans, who are seekers of the path of holiness, which comes from God. The contemporary world sometimes looks down on religious values. Popular culture often considers people who seek to grow in holiness to be naive. However, the decadence of moral values is taking its toll in human society, and contemporary society is in great need of role models who can awaken the conscience of the people. Pope Francis noted in his apostolic letter to all consecrated people, “I am counting on you ‘to wake up the world.’”⁴⁰ Nuns and monks need to be witnesses of the presence of God’s reign in this world.

The CCRM also emphasizes fellowship, and its prayer groups and communities welcome people to join them in fellowship.⁴¹ Usually, Charismatics are very supportive to all those who join their prayer services. The members of prayer groups and communities reach out to those who are weak or in need of help. The practice of praying for healing and sharing resources bonds the members to the group. Each member feels she or he belongs to the group. This strong feeling of belonging and acceptance motivates the members to share their talents and resources with others for the good of the group or community.⁴² Further, the members share this joy with people who may not be members of the group.

In the contemporary world, despite the advances in communication technologies, some people find it difficult to relate to or communicate with others. Excessive individualism and self-centeredness is antagonizing people. The breakdown of healthy interpersonal relationships in families, at workplaces, and in society at large is creating a void in people’s inner being. The atmosphere of unhealthy and cutthroat competition at all levels of education is breeding anxiety and stress in children and youth. To release stress, some people take recourse Internet-based chat and conversation. Sometimes they get addicted to cyber relationships, which do not demand real interpersonal interaction.⁴³ Pope Francis emphasizes building real relationships among people rather than taking shelter in cyber relationships. He noted the dangers of cyber relationship as follows:

[W]hen media and the digital world become omnipresent, their influence can stop people from learning how to live wisely, to think deeply and to love generously. In this context, the great sages of the past run the risk of going unheard amid the noise and distractions of an information overload. Efforts need to be made to help these media become sources of new cultural progress for humanity and not a threat to our deepest riches. True wisdom, as the fruit of self-examination, dialogue and generous encounter between persons, is not acquired by a mere accumulation of data which eventually leads to overload and confusion, a sort of mental pollution. Real relationships with others, with all the challenges they entail, now tend to be replaced by a type of internet communication which enables us to choose or eliminate relationships at whim, thus giving rise to a new type of contrived emotion which has more to do with devices and displays than with other people and with nature. Today’s media do enable us to

39 Jose Parappully, “Journeying Together, Seeking God, ‘Waking Up the World!’” *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 79, no. 8 (2015): 614-638.

40 Francis, Apostolic Letter to All Consecrated People, no. 2, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20141121_lettera-consacraati.html.

41 CCRM prayer groups usually function under the jurisdiction of a local parish. Group members come together for prayer sessions or group activities. On the other hand, covenant communities, which are sometimes ecumenical, consist of people who agree to live together and follow certain programs to work for Christian unity and renewal.

42 Reginald Alva, “The Role of the Charismatic Renewal Movement in Reigniting the Flame of Spirituality in Contemporary Christians,” *Pneuma* 38, no. 1-2 (2016): 77-92.

43 Danah Boyd, *It’s Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), 77-99.

communicate and to share our knowledge and affections. Yet at times they also shield us from direct contact with the pain, the fears and the joys of others and the complexity of their personal experiences. For this reason, we should be concerned that, alongside the exciting possibilities offered by these media, a deep and melancholic dissatisfaction with interpersonal relations, or a harmful sense of isolation, can also arise.⁴⁴

Thus, there is great need to foster true fellowship in society. Contemporary people are longing to be part of a group or community that is caring and supportive. Nuns, monks, and Charismatics can welcome these people to their groups to experience true Christian fellowship. CCRM prayer groups, communities, and monasteries can serve as places for promoting healthy interpersonal relationships, which is an essential element for enriching one's spiritual life.

Contemporary people are seeking spirituality, which can give meaning to their lives.⁴⁵ Nuns, monks, and Charismatics have a rich spirituality, which can serve as a role model to all people who are seeking genuine spirituality. In order to attract people to Christian spirituality, their life needs to bear witness to Christ. Contemporary people use monasticism as a symbol of a spiritual and ethical life. The simple and serene life of nuns and monks attracts people, who are tired with the consumerist culture of the modern world.⁴⁶ Similarly, Charismatics, too, also attract people because of their spiritual zeal and selfless service to the community. Nuns, monks, and Charismatics need to radiate the joy of the Holy Spirit in the society. They need to be the *ambassadors* of Christ, spreading His *aroma* to attract people to seek true peace in the Lord (see 2 Cor 2:15; 5:20).

Conclusion

Monasticism and the CCRM are two different spiritual streams within the Catholic Church. Both have distinct, characteristic features that make them unique schools of spirituality. These schools of spirituality share the common purpose of their existence, which is spiritual renewal. Both of these schools spirituality emphasize the importance of a change of heart in becoming mature disciples of Jesus and sharing fellowship with others. Despite all the developments in science and technology, contemporary people are seeking true joy and peace. There is no gadget in the world that can automatically create happiness. Thus, people need role models to cultivate and nurture virtues of joy, peace, happiness, and love. Monasticism and the CCRM have great potential to help people nurture a genuine experience of God in their lives and grow as mature disciples of Jesus Christ.

44 Francis, *Laudato Si' – On the Care for Our Common Home*, no. 47, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

45 John Coates, "Introduction," in *Spirituality & Social Work: Selected Canadian Readings*, eds. John Coates et. al. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2007), 1-15.

46 Anthony Grimley & Jonathan Wooding, *Living the Hours* (Norwich, U.K.: Canterbury Press, 2010), 1-26.

Witnessing in the Field Hospital of the Church

by Deborah Ann Organ

It was August 3, 2016. An ordinary day in St Paul, Minnesota.

Angela Martin, mother of two and grandmother of six, was driving east on I-94 when she saw a young woman climbing the fence on the Dale Street overpass, with the clear intention of hurling herself into the heavy traffic below.

Martin raced up the exit and ran across the overpass to where the young woman was. “Lord, help me,” she said in that moment, “I look at her as one of my own.”

“No, honey, don’t do this!” Martin pleaded. And the young woman just kept saying, “My Mom don’t love me. My Mom don’t care for me.” “No, we love you!” Martin cried.

Martin was not the only one who felt that way. Other motorists stopped on the bridge, and approached the fence. The young woman turned toward the traffic, and let go of the fence. Just seconds before, Martin had reached through the fence and grabbed the young woman’s t shirt and belt. She hung onto her desperately, and soon others put their arms through the fence and grabbed onto the young woman in any way they could.

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Martin yelled to a passerby to go down and stop the traffic. The passerby “started to run like she was in track.” She was a tiny woman, but she grabbed a huge construction drum and rolled it out onto the highway, yelling at cars to stop. It worked. Traffic halted. A truck driver backed his truck up under the bridge to break the young woman’s fall, if it came to that.

Meanwhile, police officer Vlad Krungant was heading with his partner west on the highway, and saw a woman dangling from the overpass, “held up by a giant mass of people.” He called for backup and raced to the overpass, where he joined

the people holding the young woman up.

Lucky Rosenbloom was half a block away, and from a distance saw what looked like a lone police officer surrounded by a chaotic crowd. He was thinking the worst . . . and thinking that he had to help this cop. When he got there and realized what was happening, he moved in to relieve those tired of holding on. He grabbed the woman under her arm-pit. “She was sweaty and slippery,” he said. “Everyone was determined they weren’t going to let go of that lady for any reason.”

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Another police officer arrived and got a bolt cutter from his car, and began to snip a hole in the fence. Then, said Officer Krumgant, "We collectively pulled the woman back through."

When I read this story, adapted from the one elegantly reported by Mary Lynn Smith¹ of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, my intuition told me that the scene on the bridge had something to say, in a metaphoric and perhaps allegorical way, about how suffering and trauma speak to preaching. In this paper I will sketch out the implications of this story as a metaphor for witnessing to the intersections of trauma, Church, and preaching. In our times, it is crucial that ministers of the Church preach in ways that strengthen and recover durable hope, even and especially in situations that appear to be hopeless.

Method

The decision to use the events on the bridge as a metaphor in this paper was intentional and reflects the methodology that I will use. I will adapt David Tracy's method of analogy² to bring into conversation the trauma likely experienced by the woman in the story, the experience of the community on the bridge, and the Christian "classic" of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in order to identify concrete implications for Catholic preaching. While acknowledging the important role of fundamental theology in his method,³ Tracy points to the importance of reflecting on the diverse experiences of an event and highlights the importance of dialogue not only between the event and its interpretation in light of Christian beliefs, but also between different perspectives on the event itself. Thus, here I will proceed by reflecting on one possible interpretation of the experience of the woman on the bridge, and then do this in dialogue with both the experiences of the people who assist her and with the experiences of the readers, and I will correlate these with insights from contemporary trauma theory. I will then articulate insights into the preaching ministry that follow from these experiences and that respond to the call to dialogue and praxis that emerge from the Tradition as well as from contemporary contexts in the United States.

I will show that the bridge in this story is the metaphorical locus for preaching in the Church today. In order to do this, I will employ the theological insights of Johann Baptist Metz and that of Shelly Rambo, and I will also introduce contemporary trauma theory as a dialogue partner.

The Young Woman

As a mental health clinician, I try not to diagnose anyone whom I have not met in a professional capacity. Therefore, I can't say with certainty that this young woman, let's call her Elizabeth, was brought to that bridge by the trauma in her life. In fact, it is important to acknowledge that Elizabeth does not speak for herself in this paper, and that what I offer is one possible interpretation of her experience. Sometimes suicide attempts are the result of severe depression that is not related to circumstance but to a chemical imbalance that causes simply unbearable distress and grief. However, the fact that Elizabeth kept telling Angela and the others that she wanted to die because her "mother doesn't love her" suggests that she may be living and acting out of a very old narrative, and, for the sake of this presentation, I am going to assume that trauma plays a part in why Elizabeth wanted to end her life. In this presentation, I'm defining trauma as a reaction to overwhelming life events that negatively impact the present, events that, post-trauma, are often not accessible to the conscious mind but are experienced in bodily sensations and intrusive memory.

1 The narrative I presented as the introduction is an adaptation of Mary Lynn Smith's story "Shoulder to Shoulder: Strangers Came to the Rescue of a Suicidal Woman in St. Paul," *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (August 3, 2016).

2 David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 408.

3 Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "Foundational Theology," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, as well as David Tracy, "The Uneasy Alliance Reconceived: Catholic Theological Method, Modernity, and Postmodernity," *Theological Studies* 50 (1989): 548-570.

At a minimum, Elizabeth is living out of experiences that disrupted her life when they happened, and which continue to disrupt her life in the present through intrusive memories and thought patterns. She is, in a concrete way, living the past in the present. One thing that trauma does is completely turn upside down any concept of linear memory. The past intrudes in the present in such a way that the person is robbed of the present because she is living the past. Clinicians in the area of trauma know that traumatic experience is not only held in head and memory, but also is held in the body which also remembers.⁴

This becomes even more complicated if the abuse or other trauma is ongoing. Elizabeth would likely be more sensitive to current abuse due to the abuse in the past. In fact, living out of the experience of abuse, that abuse itself would be a lens through which she would see the people and circumstances in her life. She would think it is impossible for Angela to love her, not only because she is a “stranger” but because her core experience—both past-in-present and present—is one of rejection and fear. And these experiences are not just “in her head.” Elizabeth carries the trauma of rejection, pain, and abuse in her body—in her very bones. And this carrying is largely done outside of narrative because it may well not be conscious.

Bessel Van der Kolk discusses the way memory works with regard to trauma. Non-traumatic memory is often not very accurate or consistent—think of how your accounts of what happened as a child differ from accounts from family members! Traumatic memory, however, often works differently. There was a study done of over 200 Harvard men from their sophomore year in 1939 to 1944 to the present. Those who did not have traumatic reactions to WWII had modified their accounts of those years, robbing them of some of the horror, over time. Those who were traumatized, if they had memories, tended to recall events from the war in exactly the same way in the present as they reported them soon after the events transpired. In addition, and perhaps most importantly for our consideration here, van der Kolk discusses what happens when the events are so horrifying that the system becomes overloaded. It breaks down and the result of that is the disconnection between the rational and emotional memory systems. The events, then, are not organized into word narrative and image, they are imprinted in fragmented sensory and emotional trances.⁵ Sometimes there is not any recall, as the person dissociates from the trauma initially in order to protect herself or himself from its impact. Part of what this means is that memories are not accessible to the intellect and formed into narrative when the trauma overwhelms the system. But they nonetheless intrude in the present in bodily sensations and unconscious reenactments. Traumatic memory remains frozen in time, often not accessible, and far from narrative.

Added to this, and likely crucial to understand Elizabeth, we need to consider what is known as developmental trauma. Van der Kolk and others continue to study this phenomenon that asserts that the earliest experiences human beings have greatly impact their biological make-up and to an extent lay frameworks for how persons will engage in relationships and other tasks in their lives. It is well established that children who have not been given security and physical expression of love early on in their lives often have significant mental health issues by mid-childhood or early adolescence. Also, the child often fails to develop a healthy self-image as a person able to manage the circumstance of her or his life. Elizabeth might have been set up for failure from the very beginning by having been hard wired by the memory of abuse and neglect.

Memory, hardwired, lived, sometimes suppressed, present in the bones is clearly at the heart of trauma, and many times these are dangerous memories.

⁴ Bessel Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score* (New York: Viking Press, 2014), 236.

⁵ Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*, 175-176.

Just as trauma erupts and causes disorientation and immense grief, and disconnects the sufferer from her or his own body, from their agency and from other people, recovery is, in broad strokes, often a complex and non-linear movement toward narrative, agency and connection. Healing is to re-script one's life, bit by bit creating a narrative that holds, and usually this happens in a space that holds the person.

Angela and the Crowd Holding Elizabeth Up

And now we will look at the people gathered at the fence, holding Elizabeth up—the people on the bridge. These people voluntarily came together, each from her or his own context, and worked together to support Elizabeth. I propose that this image reveals something about the Church at worship and in its work in the world. Angela, in her prayer as she raced toward Elizabeth, revealed that she saw Elizabeth as connected and related to her, and that she acted out of that deep sense. The stance of Angela and the people who showed up subsequently unified them into what looked to Lucky to be one, although initially he feared that it was one riot! Each reached beyond the fence to hold onto Elizabeth, and many cried out spontaneously to God to help them, knowing that by their own strength they would not be able to hold onto her for very long. No one of them singly could have accomplished what they did as a body. Their actions were very physical—their grip was personal, and I imagine, pretty gritty at times. Elizabeth was slippery and sweaty, as I would guess the people holding her were as well. August in St. Paul is hot! Each of them made a choice to come together. It was as if they were remembering and acting out of something that had been hardwired into them.

Johann Baptist Metz talked about memory in a way both quite different and quite similar to the way contemporary trauma theory talks about memory. He based much of his work on the contention that

The Church must understand itself and prove itself as the public witness and bearer of a dangerous memory of freedom ... It is in faith that Christians actualize the *memoria passionis, mortis, et resurrectionis Jesu Christi*. They faithfully remember the testament of his love, in which God's dominion among men and women appeared precisely in the fact that the dominion that human beings exercise over one another began to be pulled down, that Jesus declared himself to be on the side of the invisible ones, those who are rejected and oppressed, and in so doing announced to them God's coming dominion as the liberating power of an unconditional love. . . It is in this way a dangerous and liberating memory, which badgers the present and calls it into question.”⁶

Metz challenges the ways that the Church has apparently “forgotten” the foundation upon which our faith stands—that God accompanied Jesus, and accompanies us, through death and promises life.

Metz developed his theology of dangerous memories primarily in order to articulate hope in situations that human beings experience as hopeless. Deeply influenced by the Holocaust, he searched for a way to wake people up from (he borrowed this phrase from Jon Sobrino) the “sleep of inhumanity.”⁷ For Metz, faith was praxis, or reflective action. Retrieving the dangerous memory of Jesus Christ's irruption into the world and his saving life, death, and resurrection provide hope in God's promises for not only the living, but also for those who have died in situations of intolerable suffering and injustice.⁸ Further, Metz's structure for retrieving dangerous memories for hope

6 Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, trans. J. Matthew Ashley (New York: Crossroad, 2007), 88-89.

7 James Matthew Ashley, *Interruptions: Mysticism, Politics and Theology in the Work of Johann Baptist Metz* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 131.

8 Ashley, *Interruptions*, 124.

seemed to enable him to retrieve the German memory of the Holocaust as well as his own traumatic memory of the battlefields of WWII, in a way that allowed him to live in hope.⁹

On the bridge, we have the encounter between the dangerous memories that Elizabeth has that are erupting into her present, the memories of abuse, rejection, and abandonment that have become the messages settled into her bones and bodily experience that she replays constantly—and the hope coming from the dangerous memory of the Church. Both kinds of dangerous memories challenge our sense of time. As mentioned earlier, traumatic memory tends to not stay in the past, but to erupt into the present in an intrusive way. Dangerous memories of faith, according to Metz, erupt the future into the present by rooting our future life of salvation right in the present. The praxis of the people on the bridge, in their holding of Elizabeth, represent by their actions praxis that truly makes a difference in the world. On the bridge we also encounter Metz's three categories of memory, solidarity, and narrative.

Elizabeth needs flesh and blood praxis of the Kingdom that speaks of a God who erupted into history and promises salvation, rather than hearing about some domesticated Hallmark Card Jesus who in some distant past was a really nice guy, or, worse, hearing a message of judgment that further reinforces her sense of self as entirely wrong or bad. The narrative that the people on the bridge embody is one that speaks against the painful narrative that Elizabeth has been given. She needs the Church to be a place and a people who give her kind of a holding space as she struggles to create a new narrative of her own life, a narrative that can lead her through the twists and turns of Holy Saturday to widening glimpses of Easter. Not a Hallmark Easter. It is here that healing from trauma and Christian praxis come together—narrative of hope is essential for both.

Good preaching helps a community to form narrative. Preaching needs to be the coming to narrative of the dangerous memory of the Church. Both word and bodily presence are necessary. We might not like to look at Elizabeth's anguish—we may feel uncomfortable, and she may trigger feelings that we might not want to remember. Sometimes it is inconvenient to remember the Paschal Mystery. Metz's dangerous memory "seem to subvert our structures of plausibility. Such memories are like dangerous and incalculable visitants from the past. They are memories we have to take into account; memories, as it were, with future content."¹⁰ The memory of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is a message that we as preachers, in a certain sense, show into speech together with, and for, the Elizabeths in our world, in order to create space for a durable hope, even in the midst of hopelessness.

Pauline images of the Church as body are among the oldest and most foundational images that we have. The gifts of the Spirit and the power of witness and memory connect deeply to the Pauline Body. The image of the Church as Body of Christ was deepened and articulated anew in the Second Vatican Council. Our theological tradition affirms a connection between the wholeness and healing of one member of the body, and the well-being of the whole. Mary Catherine Hilkert points out, using the work of Edward Schillebeeckx, that "Precisely because the Christian message is a living tradition of grace—the mystery of God among us—it must be handed on through the lived experience of the community as well as through word."¹¹

Schillebeeckx connects this healing to redemption and salvation. Julia Feder, in her doctoral dissertation, articulates his position well:

9 Metz discusses his memory of the Holocaust and alludes to his personal experience of the war in Ekkehard Schuster and Reinhold Boschert-Kimmig, *Hope Against Hope: Johann Baptist Metz and Elie Wiesel Speak out on the Holocaust* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 14-19.

10 See Johannes Baptist Metz, "The Future of the Memory of Suffering," *Concilium* 76 (January 1, 1972): 9-25.

11 Mary Catherine Hilkert, *Naming Grace: Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination* (New York: Continuum, 1997), 37. It is important to note that Metz and Schillebeeckx, while both stressing the importance of narrative, memory, and praxis in their work, differed and offered mutual critique, the substance of which is well developed by Steven M. Rodenborn in *Hope in Action: Subversive Eschatology in the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx and Johann Baptist Metz* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2014), especially in the conclusion on 309.

Christian salvation involves the healing of the whole human person. As Schillebeeckx puts it, Christian salvation cannot be simply the “salvation of souls”; it must be healing, the making whole of the whole man and woman, the person in all his or her aspects and the society in which the person lives. Thus Christian salvation includes ecological, social, and political aspects, though it is not exhausted by them. Although Christian salvation is more than that, it is at least that. As he explains in another text, the comprehensive meaning of salvation can be garnered etymologically: “the root of the word *salus* or salvation is connected with *sanitas*, health; with being whole or with integrity.” Therefore, Christian salvation concerns the broad health of the individual person in her social context. The trauma victim is in need of salvific healing not only spiritually, but also physically, relationally, and politically.¹²

The lived witness of the Church, then, is not only concerned with the well-being of individuals and of the whole, but is also somehow connected to the working out of the salvation that is our “memory of the future.” As we love one another into wholeness, narrative witness, proclamation, and praxis are all crucial.

Trauma healing, for a victim/survivor, is a mixture of her or his own agency (as it comes back, usually gradually) and of relationship with other people. It is rare for a trauma sufferer to be able to heal in isolation, and yet it is also true that some approaches to healing trauma seem aimed at “fixing” the person. These can, in fact, validate the trauma survivor’s lack of agency in the wake of traumatic events. The people on the bridge could not fix Elizabeth. They held her, though, until a future possibility presented itself. Her agency, at least in deciding not to struggle to jump, likely came into play sometime as they hung there together.

That said, most of the trauma literature agrees that there is no stronger element in healing from trauma than relationship. Healthy, mutual, and compassionate relationships serve as a corrective to the violence and dislocation caused by the trauma, and can create a space where a trauma survivor can more often inhabit the present rather than the traumatic past. Frequently, as a mental health professional I get referrals from pastoral agents in parishes, and once in a while one of them expresses relief at “getting the person the help they need.” It can feel like, yep, I’ve now done all I can and she or he is out of my hands. Therapy can be very important—even crucial—as a space for healing, but that doesn’t mean that the faith community is of less importance. Relationships help trauma survivors to come back to life, to engage in the non-linear, difficult path of healing and to gradually re-script the narrative of their lives.

The people on the bridge reveal something about the Church, and they reveal “something more” that is present after trauma, even as the pain lingers. In a certain sense, they may have come to recognize themselves through the lens of Elizabeth’s pain. The comments of the ones holding her after she was taken to the hospital included “We are actually one human family. We can do something different from the violence and division to which we have become accustomed.” One might see that they acted out of the power of their dangerous Christian memory, and out of a durable hope.

There is another part of this story that is important. Three weeks to the day before Elizabeth climbed that fence, in that exact physical location, there was a major confrontation between the St. Paul Police force and demonstrators demanding justice for the shooting of a black man by a white police officer. Twelve police officers were wounded in the confrontation. The contrast between the two scenes is enormous. The image of the Church in the space of threatened violence, witnessing to the possibility of community where it appears that the fragmentation of violence has made that impossible, is compelling. The very nature of the Church demands that witness. The embodied

¹² Julia Feder, “A Mystical-Political Theology of Post-Traumatic Healing: Teresa of Avila, Edward Schillebeeckx and Contemporary Trauma Theory” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2014), 110.

witness of the people on the bridge emerged out of the polarization that the neighborhood and community had been living in, and provided another way of being.

The Pulling of Elizabeth through the Fence

There is more to the story of this community. The more defies easy expression, and yet, I believe, forms the basis for our preaching and proclamation. Theologian Shelly Rambo argues that, rather than being a “problem” for Christian theology to contend with, traumatic suffering is a lens through which the Church can see our selves¹³ and re-evaluate our theological commitments. This insight is similar to Metz’s thinking, but Rambo takes it in another direction by opening up the essentially wordless space of what she refers to as the middle ground—the, as she expresses it, “what remains” after trauma, and she concludes that the “what remains” in the Church’s story is love. She uses “remains” primarily out of John’s frequent use of *menein* (to remain) throughout the Gospel to refer to both the disciples remaining after his death, and to the Paraclete who will remain in and with them, making them witnesses.¹⁴

Hans Urs von Balthasar is a primary source for Rambo, as he developed a well-known theology of Holy Saturday that, in many respects, mirrors aspects of healing from trauma. His observation of the problematic nature of the Christian tendency to move seamlessly (in liturgy and preaching) from the passion to the resurrection focuses attention on what happened in between Jesus’s death and resurrection, when he descended into the abyss. Really dead, there was no obvious path to life for Jesus. In his Holy Saturday sermon,¹⁵ von Balthasar speaks of a bridge over the abyss that allows Jesus (and us) to walk to life, and then he notes that awareness comes that we walk alongside the bridge, unknowingly having been transformed by God into resurrected people. People healing from trauma may well recognize this trajectory. There is a space between the violence of trauma and healing; it is a space without form, and without immediately discernable exit. And yet, when healing comes, a way appears.

Rambo and von Balthasar speak of the power of witness in the in-between spaces of death. The Church can and must construct narrative and witness to the unspeakable suffering of human beings. We preach from the bridge, from the place where death and life are inseparable and sometimes indistinguishable. We speak, quietly, perhaps gently, and not always triumphantly, a message of the love that remains, the Spirit who hands us a rope that constitutes a bridge when there is in fact no way across.

And we do this simultaneously from within our in-between spaces in life, and from within the narrative structure of our faith and story of salvation, magnificently expressed in the Eucharistic liturgy. As I have said, preaching creates narrative that does not deny trauma and violence, but that offers the memory of our God who erupted into history with the promise of salvation and who remains with humanity, even into death.

Metz points to the necessity of narrative, based on the very premise that our whole story of salvation has a narrative structure, beginning with creation.¹⁶ He reflects on the way that stories need to be told in order to bring out the power of memory. To illustrate that, he recounts a story told by Martin Buber. There was once an old and crippled rabbi who told the story of another rabbi who danced and jumped when he preached. The narrative so caught up the crippled man that he danced and jumped in the telling. Memory, told in story, can make the impossible real.¹⁷

13 Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010).

14 Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 103-105.

15 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *You Crown the Year with Your Goodness: Sermons through the Liturgical Year* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 87-92.

16 Metz, “The Future of the Memory of Suffering,” 188.

17 Candace Kristina McLean, “Do This in Memory of Me: The Genealogy and Theological Appropriations of Memory in the Work of Johann Baptist Metz” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2012), 57.

The implications of allowing ourselves as preachers to be caught up and transformed by the narratives of our faith are many and far-reaching.

But what happens when the Church itself is traumatized and is living out of a trauma response? Trauma disrupts the life of the survivor; trauma may, in an ultimately life-giving way, also disrupt the life of the Church. We certainly have ample historical evidence of this, beginning with the very first Christians gathering in community in the wake of the crucifixion. We have seen some of that disruption in our time in the collective pain that we are living in the clergy sexual abuse crisis. In my archdiocese, we are discerning our future in the wake of bankruptcy, and the discouragement, grief, and anger have had a huge impact on our life as Church. In a certain sense, we will never be the same again. We need to remember and tell our core narratives now more than ever. Rambo argues that the middle space, and the Spirit, who remains, can offer new possibilities right in the midst of the pain of trauma, whether that be individual or collective.

Concrete Implications for Preaching

It is important to look at homiletic preaching in its liturgical context. There is a growing body of research on the connection of liturgy to trauma. Much of it focuses on the role in healing of relationship and ritual. Because trauma itself resides in our bodies, ritual can be a place for healing, as the ritual movements engage our bodies in mystery and communion with one another and with God. Marcia Mount Shoop and Mary McClintock-Fulkerson, when discussing the trauma of racism, note that Eucharistic celebration is the occasion of the re-membering of Christ's body; that through ritual action God enacts in and with us the coming together of our body broken by so many things. They ask "How can we re-member the Body of Christ if we deny the wounds of the Body itself? Truly tending to the wounds of the body, the memories that continue to diminish and distort the integrity of our narratives will mean opening our memory and our deep connections up to transformative possibilities." And they continue, "Re-membering is not simply a cognitive activity, it is an embodied dynamic. We come to Eucharist to remember, to re-live our story and to re-member the Body of Christ... liturgy embodies the already and not yet of Christian identity and community. Trauma reveals and conceals the unavoidable disruption, aspirational integration, and strange conflation of past, present and future."¹⁸

The homily is part of the liturgy itself.¹⁹ It is part of the embodiment of the mysteries of our faith, celebrated in and from our middle spaces, and forms the community to witness. Here are four specific implications for preaching through the lens of trauma.

First, preaching witnesses and speaks from the middle spaces, where death and life exist together. Hence, it goes deep and does not race to resurrection. Binary presentations of death and life do not do justice to our Tradition or to the biblical witness. We may rush to resurrection out of the sincere desire to preach a message of hope, but authentic hope, real hope, cannot emerge without adequate attention to pain. Preaching that denies or simply glosses over the abandoned wastelands, terror, and ambiguity inherent in life in our Body and bones cannot offer a full account of the Gospel. As Rambo remarks, "Suffering itself is not the source of redemption." Instead, she writes, it is 'the persistence of love in the midst of suffering.'²⁰ An example of how present and current and past pain in a community and the dangerous memory of the Paschal Mystery can intersect in powerful ways took place in Triduum of 1988. I was in one of the remote farming communities that I was serving as pastoral minister in the parish of Guadalupe, diocese of Matamoros, Mexico. On Good Friday, we placed a large crucifix that belonged to

18 Marcia Mount Shoop and Mary McClintock-Fulkerson, "Transforming Memory: Re-Membering Eucharist," *Theology Today* 70 (July 2013): 152.

19 Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963), no. 52, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html.

20 Rambo quotes Jones from "Hope Deferred: Trinitarian Reflections on Infertility, Stillbirth and Miscarriage," *Modern Theology* 17 (April 2001): 159.

one of the families in the village propped up on a chair before the community. It was the bloodiest one I had ever seen—not just a *divino rostro*, but the whole bruised and bloody body of Jesus. The crucifix was positioned with a small blackboard on either side. We listened to the passion proclaimed, and then people spoke in groups, and in tears, about the sufferings of Jesus. Then we spoke about the sufferings in the community—the kidnappings, the rising interest rates, the emigration of young people, the low prices for crops, the family problems. People wrote them all down on the blackboards, the sufferings of Jesus two thousand years ago and the sufferings of Jesus then. There was an energy, a something of life, in that space.

I will never forget the way the light reflected in the faces of those people as they built the Easter fire.

Preaching is a living into the power of the text and of life, and can be rendered as what Rambo calls an embodied practice of imagination.²¹ She asserts that imagining is kind of a process of connection—to exercise imagination is paradoxically to conceive of what is unimaginable. And that leads to my second implication about preaching.

Preachers who are sensitive to trauma are in a continual process of learning to be witness to the trauma they carry in their own bones, as well as to that of people in their parish and society. In other words, a preacher must dare to remember in an embodied way not only the dangerous memories of our faith, but also to engage the concrete trauma history that most personally touches the preacher's life. A preacher does not have to be "completely integrated or healed" herself/himself in order to be aware of the effects of trauma. In a very important sense, preaching dares to stand in the midst of the impossible and find a way to proclaim possibility. We are formed by engaging our own narratives as well as those of our communities, and we proclaim hope principally from what we have seen.

Third, preaching that strives to ground communities in durable hope demonstrates awareness of what is happening to us collectively, both locally and globally. For instance, in the parish I serve now as Pastoral Associate and where I also have my clinical practice, more than half of the parishioners are undocumented immigrants. We have become aware of the many ways of the heightened fear that our current public rhetoric is sowing in the hearts, minds, and bodies of so many in our community. That collective trauma does not only affect undocumented immigrants, it affects all of us as the Body of Christ. Implicitly and explicitly, our preaching must account for this. Preaching has the potential to ground us in who we are as Christ's body, even as we live in uncertainty and fear. Imagination and memory in the midst of troubling times is essential in preaching.

Related to this, and fourth, we are not only the Body of Christ when we are together at Eucharist, as Elizabeth and the others on the bridge attest. We remain so everywhere we are in the world. Preaching that is attentive to what is happening to the both completely concrete and timeless struggles in the present and in history constitute a crucial aspect of preaching. We do not preach in a bubble, only relating to the parish. Solidarity, not only with our own parishioners but with the world, is key. Also, we preach in the midst of the communion of saints and of all who have gone before us. The promise of salvation, as Metz so eloquently stated, is not only for us, but also for them.

In a 2013 interview, Pope Francis said, "I see clearly that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds.... And you have to start from the ground up."²²

21 Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 162.

22 Pope Francis, interview with Antonio Spadaro, SJ, *America* (September 30, 2013).

Our willingness as Church to be with one another on the bridges of the world creates space for hope and healing. In fact, much of what I have said here about Elizabeth and the people who surrounded her is summed up in the pope's message.

We stand with Elizabeth and the people on the bridge. As preachers and in the Spirit, we have the privilege to speak the unspeakable, to witness to the apparently impossible, and to put into narrative the memories of our faith that open space for hope. Death persists. Love remains. Can we witness to it?

Christian Faith in a Secular Age

by Scott Ronald Paeth

The question of how to define the nature of secular society in the twenty-first century, and how as Christians we should relate to the secular context in which we dwell, has been a subject of intensive discussion since the publication of Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* in 2007.¹ This volume offers Taylor's analysis of the historical process by which we moved from a world deeply suffused with a sense of religious reality to one that views such conceptions as at best optional. Along with that shift came myriad other cultural shifts, rooted in the transformation from a world of "porous selves"—radically open to supernatural connection—to a world of "buffered selves"—shielded from the transcendent by a materialistic worldview.² This transformation led to a wholesale reconceptualization of how we as persons relate to our world, one another, and ourselves. Yet, Taylor emphasizes, this transformation was not the result of any decision made by any person or group at any particular point in time. Rather, it was the result of incremental shifts in our conception of the world over a period of hundreds of years, leading, inexorably and involuntarily, to the world we now inhabit.

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Taylor's description of these transformations was so powerfully drawn that it has defined the debate about religion and secularization for the past ten years. Yet it was only one description among many that have been offered since the end of World War II, when the idea of "secularization"—the inevitable decline of religion in the modern era—became a subject of fascination for sociologists, political scientists, demographers, and theologians, who struggled to understand the causes of these shifts and their implications for the future of religion and the possibility of social cohesion.

For Christians in Western society, the reality of secularization poses particular problems, as Christianity increasingly shifts from a role as hegemonic cultural leader and enforcer to being one voice in the midst of a cacophonous and multivalent discussion of what society is and ought to be. Such a decentering of Christian ideas and symbols in the larger public discourse has created a disorienting sense of ideological vertigo among many Christians. And while this process of decentering has taken place over a period of centuries, it is only really in the last fifty years that the reality of the situation has become so clear as to require a direct response from within the church. But given the state of the debate, the question becomes: What response should be offered?

¹ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

² Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 27.

In this article I will offer an analysis of secularization from within the Christian tradition, with an emphasis on the challenge that the moral and metaphysical dissensus created by secularization causes, not only for a Christian conception of the world, but even for the very possibility of establishing a persuasive case for Christianity in the midst of the social and ideological fragmentation of contemporary society. If, as Taylor argues, there is no going back to an earlier era of Christian ideological hegemony, the intellectual task for Christianity going forward will be to create a case for a Christian option in the midst of the sea of options confronting us, and to recognize that only through the persuasiveness and attractiveness of its self-description will Christianity be able to remain a viable and vibrant voice in the public discourse of the secular world.

The Problem of Secularism and Post-Secularism

The theory of secularization did not begin with Charles Taylor, but has been a feature of Western sociological analysis for more than half a century. The roots of the theory extend back to the work of Durkheim and Parsons, who identified differentiation and lack of group cohesion as creating the risk of fragmentation within society. This fragmentation manifests itself in the decline of institutional forms that provide a symbolic sense of social unity, among which religion is a primary example.

In the post-war world, particularly in Europe, this reality seemed to begin manifesting itself in the decline of religious observance throughout the continent. Reduced adherence to institutional religion was connected to an explicit rejection of religious belief and the vocal advocacy of atheism within the intellectual sphere of society, while other cultural forms—such as art and literature—became much more central to people’s symbolic world views. This was in turn connected, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, to revolutionary and counter-cultural political movements, often rooted in Marxist theory, that took religion to be a manifestation of bourgeois conservative ideology.

In many ways, of course, this was nothing new. Contrary to the image of Christianity as representing an unquestioned form of culturally dominant authority, religious adherence in the Western world has frequently experienced periodic fluctuations. As David Martin argues:

Instead of regarding secularization as a once-for-all unilateral process, one might think in terms of successive Christianizations followed or accompanied by recoils. Each Christianization is a salient of faith driven into the secular from a different angle, each pays a characteristic cost which affects the character of the recoil, and each undergoes a partial collapse into some version of “nature.”³

Martin identifies four “Christendoms” emerging through the history of Christianity that each gave rise to an accompanying form of “secularization.” The reversion to nature in opposition to the institutional expressions of Christianization are, from Martin’s perspective, the foreseeable costs that accompany the rise of new forms of culturally predominant Christianity.

While Martin identifies the latest shifts toward secularism with the spread of evangelicalism, this analysis neglects the rise of a specifically anti-religious discourse within modernity—and certainly since the eighteenth century—that does not have prior precedent in Western culture. Prior reactions against Christendom were often religious reactions against the perceived corruption of institutional forms of Christian faith. Or else, as in the early Christian period when it was at odds with the paganism of the Hellenistic world, it was a clash between rival forms of religion. However, modernity gave rise to a particular form of irreligion, rooted in a naturalistic and materialist metaphysic, which found its justification in the successful methodologies of modern scientific inquiry.

3 David Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 3.

Coupled with democratic, anti-monarchist movements, which, particularly during the French Revolution, equated religious adherence with the forces of reaction, this scientific spirit began to steadily displace the standard religious narrative of humanity's place in the world. This represented a definitive break with early instances of Martin's proposed dialectic between religion and nature.

However, Martin's analysis is at odds with the narrative sketched by Taylor, who views the process of secularization over the past half-millennium not as a manifestation of the ordinary ups and downs of religious observance in Western society but as a stable and ongoing shift of the relationship between religion and other forms of cultural expression. Rather than an elastic form of give and take, Taylor views religion generally as having been definitively displaced at the center of cultural influence as a result of an incremental process by which religious authority dissolved in the presence of other, more powerful, cultural motivators. Thus the emergence of the current "secular age" represents a fundamental shift in the social imaginary of Western society. As he describes it: "A secular age is one in which the eclipse of all goals beyond human flourishing becomes conceivable; or better, it falls within the range of imaginable life for masses of people."⁴

Taylor is particularly interested in religion broadly construed, understood largely in terms of connection with a transcendent form of reality, rather than the particular symbols, institutional forms, and authority structures of particular religions, though those are clearly implicated in the process by which the "transcendent frame" of religious life has been replaced by the "immanent frame" of modernity. However, from Taylor's point of view, what it *means* to dwell within a secular age is to lose site of that transcendent referent as a meaningful aspect of human life. Thus, when he argues that secularization entails the idea that human flourishing becomes the sole objective of human activity, he means that human life, in a secular framework, exists solely for the sake of achieving only those forms of happiness that can be understood and experienced in the context of individual human life. There is no "beyond" toward which we can orient our aspirations. Everything that is capable of fulfilling us as human beings is available here, and only here. The search for any form of happiness "beyond" is by definition bound to fail. Taylor continues:

In order to understand better the phenomena we want to explain, we should see religion's relation to a "beyond" in three dimensions. And the crucial one, that which makes its impact on our lives understandable, is the one I have just been exploring: the sense that there is some good higher than, beyond human flourishing. In the Christian sense, we could think of this as agape, the love which God has for us, and which we can partake of through his power. In other words, a possibility of transformation is offered, which takes us beyond merely human perfection. But of course, this notion of a higher good as attainable by us could only make sense in the context of belief in a higher power, the transcendent God of faith which appears in most definitions of religion. But then thirdly, the Christian story of our potential transformation by agape requires that we see our life as going beyond the bounds of its "natural" scope between birth and death; our lives extend beyond "this life."⁵

This displacement of religious life-forms in the modern context represents a definitive and irreversible shift in the way religion generally—and for our purposes Christianity in particular—relates to its social context and setting. The rubber band is not likely to "snap back" in Christendom's direction at any future point, and thus the way in which Christians navigate the cultural waters within which we dwell must necessarily undergo a transformation.

⁴ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 19-20.

⁵ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 20.

The connection between secularization and modernity has been described by theorists such as Talal Asad, who has noted that both ideas are multifaceted and contested within modern society, but that nevertheless the two remain intertwined with one another among the congeries of different principles that bind them together:

It is right to say that “modernity” is neither a totally coherent object nor a clearly bounded one, and that many of its elements originate in relations with the histories of peoples outside Europe. Modernity is a *project*—or rather, a series of interlinked projects—that certain people in power seek to achieve. The project aims at institutionalizing a number of (sometimes conflicting, often evolving) principles: constitutionalism, moral autonomy, democracy, human rights, civil equality, industry, consumerism, freedom of the market—and secularism. It employs proliferating technologies (of production, warfare, travel, entertainment, medicine) that generate new experiences of space and time, of cruelty and health, of consumption and knowledge. The notion that these experiences constitute “disenchantment”—implying a direct access to reality, a stripping away of myth, magic, and the sacred—is the salient feature of the modern epoch.⁶

Earlier forms of secularization theory, such as that proposed by Peter Berger, assumed that this march of disenchantment would continue without interruption in the decades to come. Religion would not, under this theory, totally disappear, but would rather simply become increasingly marginal and irrelevant to public life, as adherents shrank to an insignificant proportion of the population.⁷ The disenchanting power of modern life, according to this theory, strips religion of its public power and social authority.

While Europe seems (in some ways) to have provided a paradigm case of this form of secularization in action, throughout much of the rest of the world secularization seems to have run aground in the face of resurgences in religious commitment. In the Middle East, earlier movements toward secular forms of Pan-Arab nationalism collapsed in the face of resurgent forms of Islam. At the same time Israel, founded as a secular democracy, has had to confront the growing political power of its own religiously motivated citizenry. In the United States, the secularization thesis crashed against the resurgent political awareness of evangelical Christians, while in India Hindu nationalism has come to dominate national politics. In many places around the world, rather than seeing the marginalization of religion, we have seen its reassertion of its place at the center of public discourse.

However, the waters are murkier than they at first appear. Resurgent evangelicalism in the United States takes place alongside the “rise of the nones”: Citizens who explicitly reject adherence to religious institutions, regardless of what they may or may not believe about the presence of a transcendent reality.⁸ India continues to cling to its identity as a multireligious, secular democracy, even with a *Hindutva* Prime Minister. Israelis in Tel Aviv live a wholly secular life even as religiously motivated West Bank settlers insist on reclaiming *Ha'aretz Israel* for the Jews alone. Far from displacing religion, secularism seems to have grown up in its midst, producing a polysemous public discourse in which religious and secular frames contend for dominance, where there is not an external political authority in place to impose a single—religious or secular—frame. In those cases, conflict between religious and secular frames is artificially suppressed by an externally imposed uniformity, whether through explicitly authoritarian means in places like Iran and Saudi Arabia or through more subtly repressive means in places like France.

6 Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 13.

7 Peter Berger, *The Heretical Imperative* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1979).

8 Michael Lipka, “Religious ‘Nones’ Not Only Growing, They’re Becoming More Secular,” *Pew Research Center* (<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/11/religious-nones-are-not-only-growing-theyre-becoming-more-secular/>). And indeed, one can see the paradoxical intertwining of these trends in the most recent American election, where a candidate who was clearly completely religiously illiterate was nonetheless forced by political expediency to embrace a form of religious identity that was totally alien to him.

The continuing reality of religion in the midst of secularism's growing influence has produced a new iteration within the literature of secularism: post-secularism. As a term, post-secularism does double duty, as it denotes on the one hand the perplexing continuation of religion's power in spite of the emergence of secularity in the modern era, and, on the other hand, the need to move beyond secularization theory as a means of describing the role of religion in the modern world. Thus it is both a "post-secularization" theory and post "secularization theory," as the limitations of that earlier theory have become increasingly apparent even to its most prominent proponents (such as Berger).⁹

Jürgen Habermas has spoken of the emergence of the post-secular as a result of an "awareness of what is missing" in a purely immanent account of human flourishing.¹⁰ Among the contributions that religion makes to society, and which are lacking in its absence, Habermas identifies rites and rituals of passage and transformation, solidarity and the motivation to solidarity which are embedded in religious teachings, a sense of the foundations for moral action, and the ability to provide public justification for one's political stances. As dimensions of human community, these factors are important for providing the ground and motivation for social action; prior to the modern era (and particularly the post-World War II era), the binding agent that held these various dimensions together in a single worldview was religion. Elsewhere, Habermas argues that "it remains doubtful, when we consider the element of human motivation, whether a society with a plurality of world views can achieve a normative stabilization—that is, something that goes beyond a mere *modus vivendi*—through the assumption of a background understanding that will at best remain on the formal level, limited to questions of procedures and principles."¹¹

If Taylor is right, and we have entered an irreversible period of secular hegemony, and yet Habermas is also correct that this means we have lost something of crucial social significance, then the eclipse of religion in the modern era has created a void of meaning and justification in the cultural landscape in which we dwell.¹² On the one hand, we stand at risk of a collapse into *anomie* and meaninglessness in the absence of a substantive and unifying ideology, which both provides a basis for action in the present and places our actions against the horizon of a larger historical meaning. On the other hand, the reassertion of religious hegemony in the face of that risk creates the possibility—indeed, I'd say the likelihood—of a religiously rooted form of authoritarianism, which has the potential to victimize religious minorities, marginalize dissenters, and justify religiously motivated violence in the name of ideological cohesion.

The challenge of Christian faith in a secular age is that of avoiding the Scylla and Charybdis of these alternatives, if at all possible, and to do so in a way that can allow us to continue both to contribute meaningfully to the public discourse in which we are participants and preserve an intellectual and moral integrity in the face of the plurality of dissensus with which we are surrounded.

The Irreducible Pluralism of Modern Society

One of the key elements of modernity that leads to the rise of secularism is the breakdown in centralized and unitary authority structures in both political and religious dimensions of life. It is no accident that Taylor begins his narrative of social transformation in the year 1500, a year that stands at the pivot point between the discovery of

9 Berger acknowledged the failure of secularization theory to account for the resurgence of religion. See Peter Berger, "Secularism in Retreat," *The National Interest* 46 (Winter 1996), as well as *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999).

10 Jürgen Habermas, *An Awareness of What Is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-Secular Age* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2010).

11 Jürgen Habermas and Josef Ratzinger, *Dialectics of Secularization* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 22.

12 As Habermas notes elsewhere, the connection between religion, and specifically Christianity, and modernity is of particular importance for providing the normative foundation for modernity itself. See, for example, *Religion and Rationality: Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity*, ed. Eduardo Mendieta (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 149.

the “new world” (and eventually the establishment of a free republic unbound by central monarchical authority) and the advent of the Protestant Reformation.

Within a Europe ruled (in principle) by a single Holy Roman Emperor, and under the authority of a single Pope, the prospect of a wide-open plurality of world views was dim. State violence and spiritual coercion were standard means by which a singular political and religious consensus were preserved. While heretical sects regularly arose throughout the Middle Ages, they were just as regularly crushed, if they could not be absorbed within the existing structure of the church. Waldensians, Hussites, Albigensians, Fraticelli, and many others were brutally murdered in the name of the central spiritual authority of the church, while political intrigue and war preserved at least the structure of the Medieval monarchy, even as the nobility began to fracture and a sense of national identity arose among peoples sharing common ethnic and linguistic bonds. Only some religious minorities, particularly Jews, were (barely) tolerated, and had no meaningful role in the formation of religious consciousness.

However, the combination of the rise of national identity and the establishment of safe havens for reformers such as Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli in Germany and Switzerland began to make it possible for a genuine religious debate to begin to take place in Europe. For the first time in a thousand years, religious and political unity were under threat. This began the process by which what we now think of as modernity began to establish itself. The move from objective authority within the structure of the church to the subjective authority of believers over their own spiritual lives, and from a central political governing authority to distinct national authorities, eroded the capacity to enforce a singular way of being in the world. Taylor illustrates this process specifically with respect to Calvin’s theology, writing:

This now changes the centre of gravity of the religious life. The power of God doesn’t operate through various “sacramentals,” or locations of sacred power which we can draw on. These are seen to be something which we can control, and hence blasphemous. In one way, we can say that the sacred/profane distinction breaks down, insofar as it can be placed in person, time, space, gesture. This means that the sacred is suddenly broadened: For the saved, God is sanctifying us everywhere, hence also in ordinary life, our work, our marriage, and so on.¹³

By rendering religious devotion a primarily personal act, and encouraging what Weber calls a “worldly asceticism,” absent any institutional forms by which persons could connect with a larger source of spiritual significance, Protestantism, and Calvinism in particular (at least, according to the narrative Taylor borrows from Weber), jump start the process by which the “rationalization” of economic life begins to take place. It is this process that, on the Weberian account, ultimately leads us to be imprisoned in the “iron cage” of a disenchanted modernity.¹⁴ This erosion of the “bulwarks of belief” creates conditions for a new set of social presuppositions, rooted in individual autonomy, perhaps most fully realized in the philosophy of Kant.

What this ultimately means for contemporary society is that the social and political institutions in which we dwell lack the kind of apparatus for the imposition of unity that existed in the premodern context. One can hardly mourn the passing of the rack and the stake as means of ensuring spiritual conformity, but the resulting freedom of individual conscience, in the absence of institutional forms capable of managing dissent, makes it impossible to insist, in the context of democratic and religiously pluralistic society such as those in the West, on the primacy of any one religious worldview over moral and political discourse. On the one hand, this liberty can be seen and

¹³ Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 79.

¹⁴ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958).

welcomed as the end result of the process of human liberation from tyranny; on the other hand, it can be seen as an invitation to chaos.

Regardless of how one views it, this pluralism has become the irreducible fact of modern society. In the absence of central authority structures, democratic societies become the setting in which the radical autonomy of the modern self seeks to negotiate disputes over potentially incommensurable moral and political positions. This is a point Alasdair MacIntyre notes in *After Virtue*:

Protest is now almost entirely that negative phenomenon which characteristically occurs as a reaction to the alleged invasion of someone's *rights* in the name of someone else's *utility*. The self-assertive shrillness of protest arises because the facts of incommensurability ensure that protestors can never win an *argument*, the indignant self-righteousness of protest arises because the facts of incommensurability ensure equally that the protestors can never lose an argument either. Hence the *utterance* of protest is characteristically addressed to those who already *share* the protestors' premises. The effects of incommensurability ensure that protestors rarely have anyone else to talk to but themselves. This is not to say that protest cannot be effective; it is to say that it cannot be *rationally* effective and that its dominant modes of expression give evidence of a certain perhaps unconscious awareness of this.¹⁵

In other words, the kind of disputation that takes place around issues of major controversy in democratic societies cannot be resolved through rational deliberation precisely because we no longer have any agreement about the nature of rationality itself. While Kant's faith in human autonomy was rooted in a conception of universal reason (one shared by Habermas), MacIntyre's analysis of the fragmented character of modern moral discourse asserts that reason itself has become the territory of controversy. *De gustibus non est disputandum*. Just as there can be no dispute in matters of taste, so there can be no dispute in matters of morality, as taste and morality are each questions of subjective preference.

Of course, in actual fact there is ample dispute over matters of morality, precisely because our behavior determines how we live together as a community. So some forms of social consensus over matters of behavior are necessary for the proper functioning of society. But that consensus hangs by a thread, and all that it takes to sever the thread is to call it into question. Once the validity of any moral norm is challenged, the rational basis on which it lies crumbles, precisely because there is always an alternative rational account to undermine its validity.

Earlier Habermas, along with John Rawls and other liberal theorists, believed that such minimal consensus was adequate for the management of democratic societies. Agreement on substantive matters of morality or underlying justifications for the ordering of society itself were unnecessary as long as social discourse was rooted in a form of what Rawls refers to as "reasonable pluralism."¹⁶ However, this precondition for social order depends upon our capacity to recognize a common framework for moral action that is itself subject to question. It would appear then that the reality of inescapable pluralism in modern societies has created a rather rickety social structure which is only capable of remaining upright to the degree that no individual or group decides that it is in their best interest to topple it.

But, throughout the democratic world, this appears to be precisely the situation in which we find ourselves. Nascent authoritarian movements, ethnic nationalism, and reactionary religious groups have found common cause in seeking to overcome democratic pluralism through a reassertion of authoritarian dogmatism. But can this be a viable path for Christians to pursue?

¹⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 85.

¹⁶ See John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

The Nostalgia for Authority

What I am calling here the nostalgia for authority emerges in numerous ways in contemporary society.¹⁷ As noted at the end of the previous section, the rise of political authoritarianism, racial demagoguery, and reactionary forms of religious expression have found common cause around the world. These movements are more or less explicit in their embrace of anti-democratic and racist rhetoric, but all make at least some appeal to the renewal of traditional religious forms of authority as critical for the creation of social cohesion. As a result, these movements have also attracted adherents from various more traditional religious movements.

Of course, this nostalgia for authority is nothing new. Just as forms of conservative Protestantism threw their weight behind fascism in Germany, while conservative Catholics backed it in Italy and Spain, religious conservatives today are renewing their acquaintance with contemporary forms of anti-democracy. The idea that democracy, in itself, possesses a virtue that should be recognized even by those who are marginalized by democratic processes rings hollow when one is fundamentally motivated by a fear of the ultimate loss of values, and a desire to reassert cultural norms that can't be enforced in the absence of a central authority structure. What good is democracy, one might ask, if democracy leads to destruction?

To those who have been advantaged by democratic processes, particularly those marginalized by earlier, traditional forms of life, democracy, at least insofar as it is motivated by values of equality and human dignity, holds an enormous amount of good. But the preservation of social gains by marginalized groups depends on the preservation of those fundamental values. And, paradoxically, it is precisely the pluralistic character of democratic society that allows authoritarian traditionalists — who wholly reject that pluralism — to utilize it as a means of undermining those very commitments. By the same token, to the degree that democratic forms of life depend on a conception of reason that transcends the boundaries of group interest or preference, this authoritarian approach to politics involves a rejection of rationality *per se*. The problem isn't even one of an inability to achieve consensus about the rational ends of society. Rather, it is the rejection of rationality as the proper means of organizing public life.

Though here again, this is nothing new. Fascism in the 1930s was explicitly rooted in a rejection of rationality as a resource in public debate, while the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution was a repudiation of the promised “religion of reason” with which the revolution began. One could also point to the Chinese Cultural Revolution or the Killing Fields of Cambodia for further examples. While Habermas, Rawls, and others recognize that minimal forms of overlapping social consensus are necessary to prevent violence, nostalgic authoritarianism embraces violence, or the threat of violence, as a primary means of asserting and maintaining power. In the words of Max Horkheimer: “When even the dictators of today appeal to reason, they mean that they possess the most tanks.”¹⁸

In one sense, this embrace of irrationalism is a rejection of the Weberian idea of the rationalization of social life—a means by which to *escape* modernity's iron cage and reassert some enchanted dimension of human life. However, the transcendent vantage point sought by authoritarianism is not in a God who cannot be bound within the framework of immanent human experience, but rather that of racial, national, or religious identity. But these are false forms of transcendence, bound as they themselves are to the immanent experience of particular social or ethnic groups. But in any event the implication of this is that secular reason cannot constrain the desire for human transcendence, and, in the absence of a means by which the transcendent can be made symbolically real in the midst of our imminent frame, people will rebel against precisely those structures that maintain that frame in place, even at the cost of any authentic form of transcendence.

¹⁷ See Max Horkheimer's treatment of the issue in his essay “The Authoritarian State” in *Telos* 15 (1973): 3-20.

¹⁸ Max Horkheimer, “The End of Reason,” *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 9 (1941): 368.

If the inescapability of pluralism, and the fact of its own precarious justification on the shaky ground of universal rationality, coupled with the “rationalization” of social and economic life, creates this nostalgia for authority, the question that Christianity needs to confront is whether there are resources within its own, admittedly particular, tradition that may provide grounds for the recovery of a justification of common life that does not at the same time succumb to the temptation to nostalgic authoritarianism.

Here we might turn to natural law theory as just such a resource, but, as I want to show, natural law gets us no closer to overcoming the incommensurability of exclusive modes of discourse than any other method does, though it may offer resources for preserving the internal coherence of a Christian conception of the relationship between morality and reason.

Natural Law, Universal Reason, and the failure of Cultural Consensus

At first glance, theories of natural law or common grace appear to offer precisely the kind of bridge I am proposing in seeking to overcome the impasse of secular reason and subjectivism into which the secular age risks falling. Particularly as expressed in the context of Roman Catholicism, reliance on natural law seems to offer intellectual resources that may serve to combat the slide to relativism that is frequently evoked by the pluralism of modern society. If so, a sufficiently robust explication of the concept could pacify the authoritarian temptation in contemporary politics.

However, I am not terribly sanguine that natural law theory per se can provide any such resources. On the one hand, its claims to universality are justifiably called into question within the context of pluralistic discourse, and, on the other, its mode of expression often plays right into the rhetoric of authoritarianism itself, albeit unintentionally.

For my purposes, I want to consider two relatively recent expressions of Catholic natural law theory: the first, written by Pope John Paul II in *Fides et Ratio*, and the second by Pope Benedict XVI in his Regensburg Address. Each of these expressions is rooted in the classical Catholic understanding of natural law but at the same time is responding to the circumstances of the contemporary world, and so each has something to say to the question of Christian faith in a secular age that earlier iterations of the concept might not.

In the case of *Fides et Ratio*, John Paul II asserts that faith and reason “are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth.”¹⁹ The innate connection between faith and reason that John Paul here sketches is in stark contrast to the division that is drawn between them in the context of secular thought. He recognizes this, though at the same time identifies this as the *problem* that reliance on the unity of faith and reason is intended to solve:

At the present time in particular, the search for ultimate truth seems often to be neglected. Modern philosophy clearly has the great merit of focusing attention upon man. From this starting-point, human reason with its many questions has developed further its yearning to know more and to know it ever more deeply. Complex systems of thought have thus been built, yielding results in the different fields of knowledge and fostering the development of culture and history. Anthropology, logic, the natural sciences, history, linguistics and so forth—the whole universe of knowledge has been involved in one way or another. Yet the positive results achieved must not obscure the fact that reason, in its one-sided concern to investigate human subjectivity, seems to have forgotten that men and women are

¹⁹ John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, Blessing, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html.

always called to direct their steps towards a truth which transcends them. Sundered from that truth, individuals are at the mercy of caprice, and their state as person ends up being judged by pragmatic criteria based essentially upon experimental data, in the mistaken belief that technology must dominate all.²⁰

This tendency, he argues, leads to precisely the kind of subjectivism and relativism described above, stating: “A legitimate plurality of positions has yielded to an undifferentiated pluralism, based upon the assumption that all positions are equally valid, which is one of today’s most widespread symptoms of the lack of confidence in truth.”²¹ He concludes that “the hope that philosophy might be able to provide definitive answers to these questions has dwindled.”²²

Pope Benedict XVI strikes a similar note in his Regensburg address, when he writes, with reference to the narrowing of the concept of reason in the modern age to the realm of the quantitative, “A reason which is deaf to the divine and which relegates religion into the realm of subcultures is incapable of entering into the dialogue of cultures” and asserting that it is the domain of philosophy and theology to examine the metaphysical grounds on which scientific methodology is based.²³

Elsewhere, Benedict addresses the connection between natural law and the establishment of justice in the realm of positive law, particularly with respect to human rights:

One final element of the natural law that claimed (at least in the modern period) that it was ultimately a rational law has remained, namely, *human rights*. These are incomprehensible without the presupposition that man *qua* man thanks simply to his membership in the species “man,” is the subject of rights and that his being bears within itself values and norms that must be discovered — not invented. Today we ought perhaps amplify the doctrine of human rights with a doctrine of human obligations and of human limitations. This could help us to grasp anew the relevance of the question of whether there might exist a rationality of nature and, hence, a rational law for man and for his existence in the world.²⁴

John Paul II similarly emphasizes the necessary connection between faith and reason for the sake of ensuring the foundations of morality and human dignity in *Fides et Ratio*, writing, “Insisting on the importance and true range of philosophical thought, the Church promotes both the defence of human dignity and the proclamation of the Gospel message. There is today no more urgent preparation for the performance of these tasks than this: to lead people to discover both their capacity to know the truth and their yearning for the ultimate and definitive meaning of life.”²⁵

What both popes emphasize in their appeal to the connection between faith and reason is the degree to which this connection is necessary for preserving the metaphysical and moral foundations of human knowledge. The fear of relativism, and the possibility of a slide into barbarism that potentially entails, is central to their concerns. Reason is only truly rational to the degree that it directs us to the objective truth found in God and attested by the Church.

20 John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, no. 5

21 John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, no. 5.

22 John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, no. 5.

23 Benedict XVI, “Faith, Reason, and the University: Memories and Reflections,” para. 7, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html, .

24 Habermas and Ratzinger, *Dialectics of Secularization*, 71-2.

25 John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, no. 102.

Yet Benedict is aware in his dialogue with Habermas that the status of objective reason isn't nearly as secure as he would like it to be. His plea to "grasp anew the relevance of the question whether there might exist a rationality of nature and hence, a rational law for man and for his existence in the world" is grounded in his prior recognition that the foundations for that kind of natural rationality have been eroded by the theory of evolution, writing "The idea of the natural law presupposed a concept of nature in which nature and reason overlap, since nature itself is rational. With the victory of the theory of evolution, this view of nature has capsized."²⁶ Thus his appeal for a renewal of the inquiry into the relationship between morality, reason, and nature is based on the awareness that this relationship has already been severed in the context of the modern world.

Similarly, the "legitimate plurality of opinions" that John Paul II endorses, which he decries being replaced by "undifferentiated pluralism," can't be easily distinguished from the entire history of modern philosophy. To the degree that *any* plurality of opinions was available free from the power of coercive authority, it was only a prior agreement on the boundaries of discourse that prevented precisely the slide he seeks to reverse. Yet, if such a plurality is permitted at all, it must be permitted with regard to the boundaries themselves. And if the boundaries are off limits, in a realm of free inquiry, who is going to prevent it? Once again we see that in the absence of a central authority structure and the capacity to police those boundaries, democratic societies are *in principle* bound to call them into question.

And this is not only the case with respect to morality and social organization. Science, it should be noted, is not immune from this phenomenon. While the methodologies of science have been strikingly effective at producing concrete and replicable results, and thus at creating a self-justifying model of rational inquiry, the reality is that in an open democratic social discourse there is no innate preference for "good" versus "bad" science. Rather, evidence of climate change is derided as "junk science" while evidence of the effectiveness of vaccination is ignored in deference to the authority of a widely debunked study suggesting its ineffectiveness. And one could multiply such examples with ease. No realm of reason is free from the universal solvent of an untethered skepticism.

But if this is the case, then on what basis do John Paul II and Benedict XVI believe that a universal conception of the unity of faith and reason can be restored? Ultimately, each of them is forced to revert to the authority of the church as a first principle. It is a premise of their arguments, not a conclusion. And far from establishing a basis from which the restoration of a foundation for human inquiry in natural law can be discovered, this approach must either become one subjective (and thus relativistic) position among others, or it must make common cause with the forces of authoritarian coercion in order to reestablish its centrality by force.

Christian Faith and Moral Meaning in a Fragmented Society

If this is the case, then it may seem as if there is no recourse for Christianity in the midst of a secular age. The fragmentation and social dissensus within which we dwell is simply an unalterable feature of the ideological landscape. In that case, one could hardly blame MacIntyre for his somewhat defeatist stance. After all, if he is correct that "the barbarians are not waiting beyond the frontiers; they have already been governing us for quite some time" then it makes a large degree of sense to simply hunker down and await "another—doubtless very different—St. Benedict."²⁷ One puzzles over what would be precisely "different" about the St. Benedict that MacIntyre has in mind. By evoking the monastic tradition, he gives the sense of advocating for a retreat from the corruption of the

²⁶ Habermas and Ratzinger, *Dialectics of Secularization*, 69.

²⁷ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 245.

world into communities where the virtues could be practiced unhindered. But what would that look like in the context of the modern world, if not like an *actual* Benedictine monastery?²⁸

This separation from society is of course one option, though it hardly contributes to overcoming the existing fragmentation of society. To extend the metaphor that MacIntyre utilizes at the beginning of *After Virtue*: If modernity represents a catastrophe on the scale of an apocalyptic disaster, then the “Benedict option” is to find the nearest mine shaft and start digging south. But for those who recognize the pluralism and dissensus within society as a problem, maybe even a crisis, but hardly an *apocalypse*, the right question to ask is not “where can I hide?” but “how can I help?”

But if this is the case, where should Christians be in the midst of the ideological fragmentation of the secular age in which we live? What’s more, if our task is to engage as one voice among many in the midst of the cacophony of differing points of view, what resources are available to us in making a persuasive case that Christianity still has something to say in the modern world that’s worth listening to?

In the first place, we need to rethink the model of rationality that we bring to the discourse. The approach to faith and reason advocated by John Paul and Benedict assumes a unitary conception of rationality, which devolves from God to nature to human consciousness. Thus while reason is seen as existing and functioning apart from faith, it is ultimately subsumed into the stance of faith, and, what is more, into the authority structure of the church as the guarantor and steward of the Gospel. But if rationality is not unitary but multifaceted, and emergent within the context of human inquiry, then the plurality and dissensus within modern society is not a hindrance to the development of reason but a benefit, as it allows for variegated perspectives on beauty, goodness, and truth to non-coercively contend within the field of democratic discourse.

If the challenge of living as a Christian in a secular age is finding a way to meaningfully engage one’s culture while living with integrity as a Christian, then rejecting recourse to authoritarian alternatives is a central value to uphold. There are undoubtedly many facets of social life amid a pluralism of worldviews that will not sit well with Christians. However, the resources of rationality that we have available to us allow us to engage without recourse to violence.

The key question at the heart of Christian life in a secular age is this: What is it that the Gospel requires of us? It does not require that we always get our way. It does not require that we enforce agreement among all sectors of society. It does not require that we impose conformity with force. And it does not require us to maintain a singular and unchangeable conception of the place of Christianity as the hegemonic source of social values within Western society.

It is worth contemplating the position of Christians in societies that have not heretofore been predominantly Christian. In other cultural contexts Christian minorities neither retreat from engagement in social life nor attempt to take over. Rather, they seek those places where they are called by God to be in the midst of the world, where they can be useful—practically, intellectually, spiritually, politically, or otherwise.

It is difficult for Christians in the West to accept the fact that we are not *the* normative voice in the twenty-first century, but only a voice among voices. However, it should be noted that we are *still* the single loudest voice. We

²⁸ Indeed such “Benedict option” communities do exist, defining themselves as part of “a historically conscious, antimodernist return to roots, an undertaking that occurs with the awareness that Christians have to cultivate a sense of separation, of living as what Stanley Hauerwas and Will Willimon call ‘resident aliens’ in a ‘Christian colony,’ in order to be faithful to our calling.” <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/benedict-option-faq/>

can use that power to attempt to close down the discourse, or we can find ways to contribute to the discourse that are constructive for the whole of society.

What does the Gospel require of us? Ultimately the rule and norm of Christian public action should be precisely what Jesus proclaimed: That we should strive always to love God above all things, and our neighbors as ourselves. If we strive to do that we might find, as James K. A. Smith suggests in commenting on Taylor, that rather than waiting for St. Benedict, we've in fact been waiting on St. Francis instead.²⁹

²⁹ James K. A. Smith, *How (Not) To Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 139.

Bridging the Gap between Teaching and Formation in Adolescent Catechesis with Executive Functions

by Thomas Howard

What creative strategies might assist confirmation catechists in presenting the Catholic faith in compelling and relevant ways with today's *confirmandi*? This column highlights one such strategy, applying key learnings from the discipline of neuroscience. I believe that considering important findings and educational applications from that discipline is essential to an ongoing conversation about catechetical methodology.

Before highlighting this pastoral strategy, it is first necessary to backtrack a bit, clarifying the model of theological reflection undergirding my curious interest in neuroscience for adolescent catechesis. Thus, I first explore a foundational question: How do I engage scripture/tradition, personal experience, and cultural information to answer the question of identity in adolescent catechesis?¹

It is my hope not to simply highlight an exciting strategy for adolescent catechesis, but frame it through the lens of contextual theology.² Pastoral strategies in adolescent catechesis are most effective, in my estimation, when contextual questions concerning those involved, such as educational background and social, cultural, and biological differences, are considered.

Twofold Role of Catechesis

The General Directory for Catechesis (GDC) describes a twofold role of catechesis: (1) teaching and (2) formational. "As it is formation for the Christian life it comprises but surpasses mere instruction."³ Two concerns often surface when catechists are challenged by church leadership to meet both of the Bishop's criteria in their catechesis. First,

1 James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1995), 14.

2 See contextual theologian Orlando O. Espin, *Grace and Humanness: Theological Reflections Because of Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), at ix: "Is there a theology that is not contextual? Has there ever been a theologian who is not contextualized? All theologies and theologians are culturally bound and therefore there can be no exceptions."

3 Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, 1st ed. (Washington, DC: USCCB Publishing, 1998), no. 68. Hereafter, the *General Directory for Catechesis* will be abbreviated as GDC.

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the window of time we are afforded to make inroads on bridging the gap between formation and education is insufficient. The best we often can do is simply pass information on to the *confirmandi*. Second, current cultural trends in our society make catechesis less and less of a priority.⁴

The following three questions help me keep the bishop's two guidelines in balance:

1. What practical difference does celebrating a sacrament make in the daily lives of teens today?
2. How does God work through his church and his ministers to offer human beings salvation through sacraments?
3. How does my personal identity as a catechist shape and form my catechesis?

I believe the Holy Spirit invites each catechist to hold such questions in creative tension before drawing up lesson plans. God's grace organically weaves itself into pastoral praxis, I have come to realize, when a disciplined effort is made to systematically reflect before acting in catechesis.

Open-Ended Questions

Each time I ready myself to engage in adolescent catechesis, the three aforementioned questions serve as vivid reminders that achieving a perfect balance between teaching and spiritual formation will never be fully realized. As youth culture changes, so too should one's method. Methodology in adolescent catechesis, therefore, will always be a work in progress.⁵ Open-ended questions, particularly those that avoid putting teens on the spot or causing any potential embarrassment, have assisted me in addressing both practical and theological concerns in adolescent catechesis for a great many years.⁶ The genius of open-ended questions is that they first encourage ministers to listen; second, they follow up with the *confirmandi* for clarification; and, finally, they make possible real life connections to be made between the content of the faith and the context of lived experience. This last step, providing currency for sacramental and church life, is my favorite, for it gifts me with a graced moment to witness to my faith.⁷ Having demonstrated how open-ended questions can address both sacramental and practical concerns in adolescent catechesis, I now turn to the question of identity.

Catechesis as a Field Hospital after Battle

More often than not, it is parish and school catechists who serve the confirmation students like the stretcher-bearers in Mark's Gospel, first picking up those paralyzed by sin and then slowly carrying them to Jesus where they can find healing. The effort it takes to view tangible results in adolescent catechesis is much like that of the stretcher-bearers, who were forced to make an extraordinary decision and cut a hole in the roof so as to lower the paralytic down to the feet of Jesus for healing. Our ministry is not for the faint of heart.

"Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, pick up your mat and walk?'" (Mk 2:9). Adolescent catechists know firsthand that what Jesus tried to communicate to the scribes during the first century still applies to us today. Spiritual paralysis is far more debilitating than physical paralysis.

4 One such cultural and social trend that currently challenges catechesis in Chicago is the fact that family life is becoming increasingly overextended. With a greater emphasis on test scores, organized (as opposed to spontaneous neighborhood-based) sports, and individualism, quality time at church and catechesis is shrinking. Swimming meets and football games, even between Catholic schools, is now commonplace during weekends in Chicago.

5 GDC, no. 148.

6 GDC, no. 150.

7 The GDC tells us that "The charism given to the catechist by the Spirit, a solid spirituality and transparent witness of life, constitutes the soul of every method. Only the catechist's own human and Christian qualities guarantee a good use of texts and other work instruments." GDC, no.156

Jesus seeks to heal even our deepest hurts, but many who suffer from spiritual paralysis, unfortunately, lack a companion, one who is capable of accompanying them along the rocky road of being healed. In the hyper-busy culture that envelopes many Catholic teens in Chicago today, it is the confirmation catechist who unwittingly falls into the role of accompanying young people who are burdened with unhealed hurts.

The model for my catechesis, therefore, can be more likened to a field hospital after battle than a classroom.⁸ Catechesis can be not only an exciting place where young people actively participate in the learning about the Catholic faith and prepare for sacramental celebrations, but perhaps, more importantly, it can be a sacred place where *confirmandi* make conscious decisions to want to become whole again. Just as it took great courage for the paralytic to ask for help to be healed, so too it takes great faith on the part of confirmation catechists to embrace a catechetical model where they are called to accompany the *confirmandi* to Christ's healing.

I now turn attention to sharing an approach informed by a growing body of neuroscience research, which has provoked a paradigm shift for me as a religious educator. The following example is culled from my experience in adolescent catechesis but the method employed in this example is more universal and can easily be exported to other age groups.

New Tactic for Adolescent Catechesis: Executive Functions

The social sciences have served as my principal conversation partner in catechesis for many years. Sociology, for example, not only equips me with scientific tools to collect critical data from those with whom I engage, but it also assists me with a sociocultural perspective of sacred scripture.⁹

At a recent Catholic educator professional development workshop, the discipline of neuroscience, to my surprise, joined the social sciences as a conversation partner in the laboratory where I experimented with catechetical models and strategies. An executive functions teacher workshop, sponsored by the Rush NeuroBehavioral Center in Chicago, helped me learn everyday teaching practices designed to develop student executive function skills.¹⁰ Executive functions are an excellent predictor of success in contemporary education, especially due to the fact that screens are changing the way the young brain develops. Here are just a few ways screens affect the development of the twenty-first century brain, according to the Rush Neurobehavioral Center: shorter attention spans, an emphasis on immediate rewards, breadth over depth, staccato communication, reduced efficiency, neural pathway brownout, and possible long-term memory deficits. These behaviors, unfortunately, are becoming more and more prevalent in the lives of students participating in our catechetical programs.

Executive functions serve as an antidote to these counterproductive factors by teaching goal-directed behaviors, organizational processes, strategic preparation, critical purposeful analysis, self-regulation, and self-awareness.

8 Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium: Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html, no.76.

9 Theologian David Horrell is skilled in applying the social sciences in scripture interpretation. See David G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement*, 1st ed. (Edinburgh: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2000).

10 A few years ago the Office for Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Chicago approved Rush NeuroBehavioral Center as a vendor for professional development workshops. Thanks to their valuable contribution of creatively adapting executive functions for middle school children, Dr. Georgia Bozeday and her team have resourced hundreds of Catholic school educators with invaluable tools. For more information see Georgia Bozeday and Julie Gisdapow, *The Middle School Executive Functions Curriculum Notebook* (Chicago: Rush NeuroBehavioral Center, 2014).

Letters to the Bishop

With this new understanding of executive functions in mind, I quickly applied them to a letter-writing project which is organized each year in our program. Every year, prior to their confirmation, the *confirmandi* are required to write a letter to the bishop, introducing themselves and providing a reflection on their sponsor, saint, and community service activities. I wondered what would happen if the letter-writing process slowed down, approaching this yearly event not just as a task to check off, but rather as a good opportunity for catechists to bridge the gap between education and formation. Could a more incremental approach to the letter-writing project encourage young people to want to be healed?

In the past years a great majority of letters to the bishop read more like confessions than a conversation sharing the fruits of research on a particular saint, the choice for an adult sponsor, or how they accomplished the community service requirement in the program. Unhealed hurts, I realized, had sustained the ugliness of sin within a great majority of their relationships.

Consideration of executive functions shifted the paradigm in this letter-writing project while reevaluating our yearly benchmarks. A more deliberate and incremental approach to catechesis, we realized, could foster grace-filled moments for our program participants. By first attending to the difficult task of dealing with unhealed hurts, our classrooms could begin to resemble the field hospital after battle which Pope Francis had highlighted in so many of his talks to pastoral leaders. Rather than stressing out about the percentage of completed letters to the bishop, renewed energy could be discovered in teaching the sacrament of reconciliation and inviting young people to go on retreats.

Thanks to applying an important tactic from executive functions of dealing with the most difficult task first, our students not only started asking their catechists how to make good confessions but actually made inquiries on the parish website on when and where they could actually make their confessions. Instead of curtailing or even circumventing core learning objectives from our curriculum, this tactic, in fact, paved a way for catechesis to organically integrate into parish life. This simple tactic, in short, built a strong bridge between formation and information in adolescent catechesis.

Summary

Three moments undergird arguments for improving the field of adolescent catechesis. First, open-ended questions not only surface the common need for humans to heal hurts through Jesus Christ in culturally sensitive ways, they also connect young people with the rich cultural vocabulary of Catholic faith in a practical fashion. Second, the question of catechetical identity can be explored by paying careful and prayerful attention to how scripture/ tradition, personal experience, and cultural sources intersect in one's ministry. Finally, the strategy of incorporating executive functions with the project of writing letters to the bishop creates an effective, efficient, and efficacious opportunity for young people to integrate heads, hearts, and hands in adolescent catechesis.

Experiencing “Common Ground” at the Thrift Store

by Gary Umhoefer

The devout Christian of the future will either be a “mystic,” one who has “experienced” something, or he will cease to be anything at all.¹

Early in my life, I became interested in hands-on history. There is something visceral about holding an artifact, feeling it, maybe smelling it, that connects me to its past and its people. I am inspired by that sense of human continuity. After I got my driver’s license in the early 1970s, this interest was fueled by my Grandma’s love of visiting antique stores and attending local estate auctions. Grandma Erna was widowed and couldn’t drive—she flunked the road test a couple of times due to her immobile left elbow—so I was her chauffeur. We would squeeze through narrow, dusty shop aisles or among the auction sawhorse tables, “kramming”² through boxes filled with remnants of people’s lives. “My mother had one of these when I was a kid,” I recall her often saying as she held something up, before commenting on how she wished she had saved that item, especially when she saw its price tag. But I also saw, in her pale blue eyes behind her large-framed glasses, a quiet human connection being sparked, a personal leap across time and space, a personal community both memorial and immediate. She was experiencing something a little mystical.

What could this possibly have to do with theology? As I hover near the age my Grandma was when we started our kramming expeditions, I have refocused my attention from antique stores to thrift stores, those ubiquitous and willing depositories of our own, personal, no-longer-useful items, or of what’s left after the family has gone through the ephemera of our beloved, departed grandparents’ lives. But I have found more than some great deals on vintage neckties and dress shirts on my expeditions to the local St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Stores.³ I have encountered table crucifixes and well-rubbed rosaries, devotionals, and religious books. Within these stores, I have surprisingly experienced religious connections across time and space, and a personal spiritual community both immediate and memorial. In some ways, I have had a visceral, perhaps mystical, experience of Catholic “common

¹ Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations Volume VII* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 15.

² *Kramen* is the German verb meaning “to rummage.” It rhymes with the first name of Chicago’s current mayor.

³ Any locally operated, church-affiliated resale shop would probably do, but I have found the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Stores most conducive to my personal theological experience. www.svdpusa.net/find/find.thriftstoretd.php

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ground,” a concept that Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, proposed shortly before his death twenty years ago.

On many levels, we live in an increasingly dichotomous, polarized, mutually exclusive world. People seem to run to their corners and then either ignore or attribute motives and cast aspersions on each other. Our media and political processes seem to thrive on and feed this cacophonous, sometimes vitriolic, disunity. Cardinal Bernardin, recognizing the threads of these behaviors in the Roman Catholic Church, laid the foundation for the Catholic Common Ground Initiative (CCGI), a basic tenet of which is “no single group or viewpoint in the church has a complete monopoly on the truth.”⁴ In this initiative, “A revitalized Catholic common ground should not be limited to those who agree in every respect on an orientation for the church, but encompass all—whether centrists, moderates, liberals, radicals, conservatives, or neoconservatives—who are willing to reaffirm basic truths and to pursue their disagreements in a renewed spirit of dialogue.”⁵

I am one of those Midwestern American baby boomers who straddle the Second Vatican Council. As an altar boy, I initially learned and phonetically mouthed Latin responses, then later learned and actively recited the English responses. I gladly packed away my rarely used rosary, along with my Baltimore Catechism. After a period of abstinence from the pews and some wandering in the desert of my young adulthood, I reemerged as a thoroughly liberal Catholic. But as I have lately wandered “St. Vinnie’s,” I have actually purchased table crucifixes, rosaries, and various religious books, and have perhaps experienced an unanticipated spiritual “common ground” amid the store’s well-trod Linoleum aisles and across its well-worn Formica checkout counters.



Photo: Gary Umhoefer, 2016.

I now own about a dozen-and-a-half table crucifixes of various sizes, made of various materials—wood, cast metal, glass, Lucite—that probably span a century of Catholic devotion starting in the late nineteenth century. Only two of these crucifixes portray the risen Christ, the image I personally find more spiritually engaging. But as I pray before these images of the suffering Jesus, I feel a connection to the faithful who sought and perhaps found spiritual direction and comfort before these same images. Individual sisters and brothers in Christ, real humans with real lives, connected to God and the extended Christian community as they prayed in view of these representa-

tions of Jesus’s death. I stand on common ground with each of them, regardless of any individual positions they may have had on issues of Church doctrine.

It is a poignant testament to the devotional prayer lives of our Catholic community to see the number of rosaries that routinely appear in little plastic bags in larger plastic bins on the store’s counter. Chaplets,⁶ beaded prayer aids with which I was not familiar, also appear. For years, the only rosary I owned was the one I had packed away long ago from my First Holy Communion. But at the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store, I have found multiple rosaries; I imagine each one was an aid for someone’s spiritual journey. Some are simple knots, but some beads are crystal, metal, plastic, or wood. Paul VI is on the centerpiece of one and a miniscule vial of Lourdes water is embedded

⁴ “Called to be Catholic: Catholic Common Ground Initiative’s Founding Statement,” <http://www.catholiccommonground.org/called-be-catholic>.

⁵ “Called to be Catholic.”

⁶ According to the Sisters of Carmel, “Like the rosary, a chaplet is a sacramental. It consists of prayer beads, and on each bead one says certain designated prayers. There are many different types of chaplets. Often they honor Our Lord or the Blessed Mother under a particular title . . . Some chaplets honor and ask the intercession of particular Saints.” <http://www.sistersofcarmel.com/chaplets.php>.

into another. The rosary, however, had never been a significant part of my prayer life. I honestly needed a refresher course. And while I rediscovered the “glorious mysteries” as the most personally compelling, I have felt that simply praying a rosary that belonged to someone else actually connects me spiritually with a sister or brother in Christ. To feel those beads as I pray connects me with the fingers of an ancestor in the faith, almost like mystically holding their hand. I do not know their personal theology, nor do they know mine, but we stand on Catholic common ground.⁷

Books have also provided a connection. Ranging from the U.S. Army’s *New Testament – Roman Catholic Version* (with Franklin D. Roosevelt’s facsimile signature, 1941) and *Great Modern Catholic Short Stories* (1942), to *My Mass: Explained and Illustrated* (1958) and *Our Parish Prays and Sings* (1965), the well-thumbed pages of these books have provided me with a personal link to twentieth-century Catholics who kept the faith and carried on through war and prosperity and change. Of particular interest, however, are two volumes that actually speak to me. The first is *Pray Always* (1936), a small child’s devotional. Inscribed on the first page, below a prayer to St. Anthony, in precise block printing, a Catholic child speaks his name, “Merlin Sisel.” In carefully writing his name in what was likely his First Holy Communion missal, this boy speaks to me of reverence and honor, ever ancient. The other book is more recent. *A People Adrift* (2004), an extended reflection on the Roman Catholic faithful in the United States since Vatican II, is not inscribed but is liberally inked with underlining, personal observations, and exclamatory punctuation. This seeker, whom I assume is Catholic, speaks to me of vibrancy and search, ever new. I find the three of us mystically speaking with each other while comfortably standing on Catholic common ground.

Cardinal Bernardin believed that more unites us than separates us. Honestly, I have at times figuratively wagged my finger from my liberal Catholic corner. But as I have walked the aisles of the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Shop, picked up a child’s missal or a rosary, and Beulah, the 90-year-old volunteer cashier, has rung up my purchase, I have been mystically graced with an experience of Catholic common ground. For me, this has served to “reaffirm basic truths” and prompts me to pursue disagreements today in a “renewed spirit of dialogue.” These are calls for me to welcome, discuss, and seek understanding.

Henri Nouwen honored the mystical connection between those who had seen the face of Christ in each other. He wrote, “From now on, wherever you go, or wherever I go, all the ground between us will be holy ground.”⁸ I have sensed that holy Catholic common ground. And when my “Catholic ephemera” eventually finds its way to the shelves of St. Vinnie’s, my hope is that some eyes (perhaps behind large-framed glasses) will mystically experience a personal leap across time and space and sense the holy Catholic common ground on which we all stand, ever ancient, ever new.

⁷ Once prayed, I have taken to passing these rosaries on to others to continue building the community. I think of this as “rosary rescue.” Once when I splurged and bought a rosary in an antique store in Milwaukee, I mentioned my rosary rescue to the clerk, who said that made him happy. In his experience, he said, many people buy rosaries to take them apart and use the beads for craft projects.

⁸ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Image Books, 1986), 45.

Violence, Terrorism, and the Problem of Hu-Han

by Kevin Considine

Like many countries, the United States has a long history of violence. In 1999, however, a different kind of violence was projected into every television and computer not only in the United States, but globally. This was when two teenage boys in Colorado entered their high school and carried out their plan to murder as many of their classmates as possible. Thirteen people died, and many more were wounded, before the pair of shooters committed suicide. This was neither the first nor the last of its kind. But it did signify a shift in media coverage of such actions and also a renewed focus upon the underlying culture that enabled two teenage boys to plan and carry out the murders. Paired with later terrorist attacks such as 9/11, what had once been “safe spaces” to a majority of U.S. residents had now become ambiguous, fearful spaces. Elementary schools, cultural events, marches for justice, and the social spaces, and worship spaces of marginalized populations were only some of the safe spaces that young men attempted to transform into spaces of fear. And, in doing so, they willed their own deaths as supposed martyrs to some grievance or cause. Such public violence was nothing new but the technology was new: the saturation of media communications now enhanced through the internet and the wide availability of military-style weapons to the civilian population.

In my own work teaching at a small Catholic college, this kind of violence is very much on my students’ minds. And my own. Because most often it is perpetrated by young men and I, too, was once a troubled, frustrated young man. As are some of my students. This problem is not an exclusively male one, but I think it is not a coincidence that the vast majority of perpetrators are young men. In particular, they are disenchanted, troubled young men who are finding meaning through acts of violence against innocents in service of some larger cause. Their cultural, spiritual, and psychological wounds often go untreated and they then burrow more deeply into a context of fragmentation and isolation.

Recent violence in the United States and abroad show that a different variation of deep brokenness has become more visible. It is a spiritual sickness that many Korean theologians would refer to as *han*. Although I am not Korean, the majority of my work has focused upon *han* and in particular upon God’s salvation for creation from *han*.¹ In general, *han* is a “black hole in the soul,” a “wounded heart” and “frustrated hope”² that is the residue of being

1 Kevin P. Considine, *Salvation for the Sinned-Against: Han and Schillebeeckx in Intercultural Dialogue* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015).

2 Andrew Sung Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 15-20.

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sinned-against. It is like an infection in a wound that is carried not only by individuals but entire peoples and communities. As Chang-Hee Son writes:

...[*han*] is used to describe the heart of a person or people who has/have endured or is/are enduring an affliction but the pains, wounds, and scars are not always apparent and visible because they are the kind that occur deep within the essence, core being, or heart of a person...[*han*] connotes a mind's or a heart's affliction and struggle with a deep emotional or spiritual pain which either poisons the entire being or even ends up nourishing the person...³

Although difficult to translate, *han* refers to a thick description of human woundedness and may manifest in various ways: aggression and lashing out (*won-han*), bitterness and lashing in (*jeong-han*), and spiritual emptiness, collapse, and nihilism (*hu-han*).

The Context: Failure of Global Systems

It is the last of these, *hu-han*, that now is becoming more visible. This is because we are connected to one another as never before in a kind of virtual “global village.” The prevalence of communication platforms such as Twitter and Facebook allow strangers in different parts of the world to interact with one another. This can lead to good. For example, thousands were able to text-message donations to the tsunami-ravaged areas of South and Southeast Asia in 2012, thousands more claimed “je suis Charlie” after 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, and countless others continue to utilize the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter as consciousness is raised about the continuing brutality against African-Americans, and those of African descent in other nations. At the same time, these technologies are ambiguous. As a teacher I can attest that social media often circulates paranoia and rumors as “fact” that connects with the feelings of disenchantment among young people. Through this predatory communication, individuals encounter insidious messages and ideologies that seem to explain their frustration. Although they often cannot name the larger culprit—what Pope Francis calls a global economic system that kills and casts out instead of bringing life and inclusion⁴—they feel it in the core of their being. Failures of global systems are communicated through social media and easily can amplify brokenness, frustration, and disillusionment. As such, this is a breeding ground for *hu-han*.

The Danger of Hu-Han for Society

Jae Hoon Lee describes *hu-han* as a flight from external and internal realities of pain to a deep place within the self where one cannot be harmed. He argues that people of *hu-han* often withdraw so deeply into themselves in order to escape pain that they can lose touch with the external world.⁵ As they disintegrate from aggression, to bitterness, to emptiness, energy akin to a black hole emerges and takes control. They become the foundation for violence in the name of a larger cause. Lee thinks that due to its predominant feeling of emptiness, it is *hu-han* that poses the greatest social risk. To quote Lee at length, the people of *hu-han*,

suffer boredom, dullness, futility, and meaninglessness in their everyday lives. As a desperate attempt to escape from the psychological predicament they often find solution in devoting themselves to a great social cause or ideology and thus become members of a collective social force. The collective social force rooted in ‘hu-han’ expresses itself in violent and destructive activities, because ‘hu-han’ by

3 Chang-Hee Son, *Haan of Minjung Theology and the Han of Han Philosophy: In the Paradigm of Process Philosophy and Metaphysics of Relatedness* (New York: University Press of America, 2000), 14.

4 Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 52-75, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

5 Jae-Hoon Lee, *The Exploration of the Inner Wounds—Han* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1994), 51.

its very nature seeks out destruction. People of 'hu-han' are nihilists who value nothing in themselves and society, though they worship a great social cause or ideology expressed in their slogans and statements.⁶

Young men seem particularly susceptible to such manipulation as they search for meaning and purpose. Violent social and religious ideologies interconnect with *hu-han* and offer a perverse sense of meaning. For them, the world is irredeemable and the only hope is to submit to the cancer of *hu-han*. In pairing the murder of innocents with self annihilation they can become a temporary media sensation. Their actions can result in an investigation into their motives and their perverted ideology is then spread to connect with others consumed by *hu-han*.

A Christian Response of Salvation

This is a serious problem and it must be the Church and other religious communities that take the lead in addressing *hu-han*. This is because, at its core, *hu-han* is a disintegrating soul imbued with hopelessness and violence. It is a spiritual cancer that needs the healing touch of God. So, the Church needs to become the "field hospital" and "medical ward" envisioned by Pope Francis.⁷ For such emptiness can only be countered by the real presence of God's love, hope, justice, and healing. And this is found by putting "flesh in the game" through creating small Christian communities that show the hope of the Resurrection. That is, communities dedicated to sharing one another's burdens, invoking God's healing presence, and working for justice through love. This last part is of great importance, for people of *hu-han* have not been heard and through being marginalized have experienced neither justice nor transformative love. Such an experience within a loving community is a remedy to *hu-han*. As Rev. Martin Luther King observed, "...I want to tell you this evening that it is not enough for us to talk about love, love is one of the pivotal points of the Christian faith. There is another side called justice. And justice is really love in calculation. Justice is love correcting that which revolts against love."⁸

Globally, billions of people are yearning for change and something better. Globalization is a mixed bag and creates winners and losers which means that social justice, transformative love, and political engagement are necessary. And where it breaks down and *hu-han* appears, the Church must bring itself as the wounded, resurrected, Body of Christ, into an embrace and transformation of *hu-han* from that which breeds death to that which gives life. But what is the foundation for a burning thirst for change? Lee captures this conundrum well:

It is an illusion to build a humane, healthy society based on 'hu-han' type social activities, no matter how beautiful their slogans and statements. At the center of these 'hu-han' people exists an empty shell in which no value, beauty, authentic feeling, or hope can be contained. Therefore, a discernment is needed to distinguish between social activities that are based on genuine and healthy personal values, and those that are based upon false, sick, and nihilistic tendencies of destruction.⁹

The Church as "field hospital" must be characterized by mercy, justice, and healing to those wounded and cast out by church and society. Unlike any other force in global societies, religious communities, including the Catholic Church, can embody the hope, justice, and transformative love to recognize this cancer, grapple with it, and bring it into God's salvific presence. We can follow God's lead and address the cancer of *hu-han*.

6 Lee, *The Exploration of the Inner Wounds*, 160-161.

7 Pope Francis, "A Big Heart Open to God," Interview with Antonio Spadaro, SJ, *America* (September 30, 2013), <http://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2013/09/30/big-heart-open-god-interview-pope-francis>.

8 Martin Luther King, "Address to the First Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) Mass Meeting," in *A Call to Conscience: The Landmark Speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, eds. Clayborne Carson and Kris Shepard (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2001), 11.

9 Lee, *The Exploration of the Inner Wounds*, 160-161.

The Democratization of Scholarship and Theosis: The Short Version

by Melody Layton McMahon

Recently, upon making full professor, I was called on to give a fifteen-minute talk. As a theological librarian, one can make a decision—will I speak about some theological matter or will I talk about librarianship? But I couldn't decide and I realized I could practice what I preach by bringing together an idea from scholarship and one from theology. I teach the students in my research and writing course, the very first class meeting, that there is nothing you cannot theologize about. As these are usually new students, they often look at me like I'm crazy, but after further conversation they usually come to agree. So the idea from the area of scholarship I chose is the "democratization of scholarship," and the idea from theology is *theosis*. As my title states, this is quite obviously the short version—each idea could demand pages and pages. However, I'm unaware of anyone else who has ever brought these two ideas into play.

One area of librarianship that has come to consume more and more of my time is being aware of the many facets of scholarly communication and undertaking to keep my faculty colleagues abreast of these areas that require our attention. Copyright, author's rights, open access, Creative Commons licenses, ORCID numbers: these are all things that are becoming increasingly important to each of us in the world scholars inhabit today.

Democratization of scholarship is another area of scholarly communication, scholarly conversation that is emerging as significant, and a prime example of democratization of scholarship, and one with a high profile, is *Wikipedia*. I remember being asked after I gave my short public lecture here at CTU as part of the interview process whether I was in favor of *Wikipedia*. Wow, did I stun some people when I said enthusiastically, "Yes"—with a qualification that like any resource, print or online, you must evaluate the individual article you consider using. So there are some great *Wikipedia* articles as there are some wonderful encyclopedia articles. There are some bad *Wikipedia* articles as there are some wholly inaccurate encyclopedia articles, even ones published by what we consider to be highly reputable print publishers. Even in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* there are very bad articles. For a much longer discussion of this, I can refer you to my 2009 article in the open access journal *Theological Librarianship*, titled "Librarians, Publishers, and Theological Reference Resources: A Way Forward."¹ I'm afraid we have not come much further in the past eight years.

¹ Melody Layton McMahon, "Librarians, Publishers, and Theological Reference Resources: A Way Forward," *Theological Librarianship* 2, no. 1 (2009): 8-19.

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Wikipedia is probably the best-known example of the democratization of scholarship, and each year I give an assignment for my students to read a blog post titled “Wikipedia and the Death of the Expert,” having them write their own blog post in response to it. (I want to give credit to my current students who all wrote so expressively in this assignment that they decided my topic for this speech for me!) The article suggests that gathering lots of disparate ideas from different disciplines seems irreconcilable at first, yet if one considers them together they result in “a shifted perspective, and a cascade of new insights.”² But for democratization of scholarship to result, then more than just different disciplines have to come into play. The voices of all informed people must be conversation partners whether or not they have advanced degrees or even a high school education! Believe me, this is a somewhat difficult thing for me to say as I stand proud as punch to be promoted to full professor. Maybe, as one of my former students pointed out in his assignment, “‘charity’ in allowing other voices to be heard, [is one of] the great theological implications of *Wikipedia* and democratization of scholarship.”³ But, as the original blog post on *Wikipedia* goes on to declare, “So long as we believe that there is such a thing as an expert rather than a *fellow-investigator*, then that person’s views just by *magic* will be worth more than our own, no matter how much or how often actual events have shown this not to be the case.”⁴

I have another example that I use to illustrate what I mean by experts. I belong to a society for the promotion of a certain British woman middle-brow fiction writer who wrote over thirty works in a series beginning in the mid-1930s and ending in 1961. Most members of the organization have read the entire series several times, some six or seven times from beginning to end. (I don’t want to admit how many times I have read them!) Once an academic gave a presentation about the writer (AS IF she was an expert) and she had not even read all the books once. Who is the “expert”?

My students this year, in the *Wikipedia* assignment, had some wonderful observations which raise salient points about who has authority—or is an expert—within the church and in theology. Adriana Calzada eloquently remarked, “If the Kingdom of God was about knowledge, then this (*Wikipedia*) will be the perfect exercise of building it! *Wikipedia* seems to be the round table of scholarship where everybody is welcomed to have a sit and speak out their voice.”⁵ Javier Del Angel replied to her post,

I like your metaphor of “banquet” to describe the *Wikipedia* era. One of the questions that came to my mind is, as in any other banquet, who are those invited and those excluded, voluntarily or not. Regardless how much *Wikipedia* signifies a democratization of knowledge, we can also notice this is not a democratization for everyone because many people still have not access to this seemingly universal table of information.”⁶

And in his own post he voiced a discomfort, contrasting the *Wikipedia* paradigm with the way knowledge is produced, sanctioned, disseminated, and taught in the Catholic Church. He wrote, “*Wikipedia* and the whole democratization of scholarship challenge all this paradigm. Indeed, the ‘Wikipedia paradigm,’ collaborative, argumenta-

2 Maria Bustillos, “Wikipedia and the Death of the Expert,” *The Awl* (May 17, 2011), <https://theawl.com/wikipedia-and-the-death-of-the-expert-76631e5e9976#g7a065hgr>.

3 Nhien Minh Truong, “The Theological Implications of Wikipedia and the Democratization of Scholarship,” *The Spiritual World* (April 28, 2016), <https://truongminhnhien.blogspot.com/2016/04/the-theological-implications-of.html>.

4 Bustillos, “Wikipedia and the Death of the Expert.” (Emphasis mine.)

5 Adriana Calzada, “The Banquet of Scholarship,” blogging on “The Theological Implications of Wikipedia and the Democratization of Scholarship,” Course discussion post, September 30, 2016.

6 Javier Del Angel, “The Banquet of Scholarship,” blogging on “The Theological Implications of Wikipedia and the Democratization of Scholarship,” Course discussion comment, October 3, 2016.

tive, democratic, open, diverse, and in constant evolution and revision, drastically challenges the ‘magisterium paradigm.’”⁷

But we must now turn to *theosis* if we are to have space to say anything about it at all. A very important theological concept in Orthodox Christianity, it is also found in Catholicism and some Protestant denominations. Also called “divinization” or “deification,” it asserts that we are made in the image of God and are called as the baptized and worshipers to a process where we are to become more and more like God in *this* life, culminating in the resurrection. In Western Christianity it has been expressed by C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*,

The command “Be ye perfect” is not idealistic gas. Nor is it a command to do the impossible. He is going to make us into creatures that can obey that command. He said (in the Bible) that we were “gods” and He is going to make good His words. If we let Him—for we can prevent Him, if we choose—He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, dazzling, radiant, immortal creatures, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to Him perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness.”⁸

All of life is, to this way of seeing things, caught up in making choices to become more and more like God. “Being like God” is such a rich idea that it leaves room for all kinds of Christians to find ways and means to employ their special talents and gifts to mirror the image of God—creativity, healing, showing love, gaining knowledge and intelligence. Through the knowledge of God that is given to us, it is up to us to respond and to endeavor to achieve the goal of deification. It is in gaining knowledge and intelligence where there is—for me— an intersection with the democratization of scholarship. If we are to be becoming more like God, then gaining knowledge, producing knowledge, teaching knowledge, disseminating knowledge, are all ways to mirror God, to become like God. Every Christian is called to become like God, so for me it is implied that for many this knowledge-oriented way will be for them the way to respond and endeavor. Thus, it must be democratized to account for those who are NOT among the happy chosen few who are made full professors!

We see many areas of scholarship where scholars and non-scholars are working together to produce knowledge. In some cases, the non-scholars are instrumental in the gaining of knowledge. So—I think democratization of scholarship might not only lead to writing and editing for *Wikipedia* (although I think my fellow professors should think about incorporating these as a course assignment). But I also think of crowd-sourcing the research involved in gaining knowledge. In his book *Crowdsourcing*, Daren C. Brabham defines crowdsourcing as an

online, distributed problem-solving and production model that leverages the collective intelligence of online communities to serve specific organizational goals. Engaged volunteers are given the opportunity to respond to crowdsourcing activities promoted by the organization, and they are motivated to respond for a variety of reasons.⁹

I think of the huge crowd-sourced projects like the ornithology project at Cornell where they have made use of the data of the hordes of birders who happily gather and provide data that has led to major discoveries in the patterns of bird migration. Or of the hundreds of amateur astronomers who have “found” things in the sky that no scholar astronomer has ever seen. The Smithsonian has almost 7,000 volunteers transcribing various manuscripts, as do

7 Javier Del Angel, “The Battle for the Knowledge of God,” blogging on “The Theological Implications of Wikipedia and the Democratization of Scholarship,” Course discussion post, October 2, 2016.

8 C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (London: Macmillan, 1952), 174.

9 Daren C. Brabham, *Crowdsourcing* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), xix.

hundreds of other museums, newspapers, and even projects transcribing ancient Greek papyrus fragments. One undertaking that is sort of crowd-sourced, but not successfully in my opinion, is the wonderful resource Hymnary.org. If you are at all interested in hymns, I encourage you to visit the site. It's fabulous, but there are millions of missing points of data. Anyone can offer to work on it, but the barriers to be accepted are very high. I have been a musician my entire life with an undergrad degree with an emphasis in music and know hundreds of hymns from nearly every Christian denomination and I have failed the test twice. Might this be where "charity" could be extended?

So all this raises questions. Does any of this ring true? Is it possible we could develop a way to discover the *sensus fidelium* in crowd-sourcing? Will those of us who are full professors have "charity" and encourage non-scholars to endeavor with us in our work in some way? Currently my attorney husband is in the process of submitting articles on the Latin Mass in James Joyce's *Ulysses* to a non-scholarly theology journal and to a scholarly literary journal. Will that scholarly journal deign to accept the work of a person outside their guild? Should *New Theology Review*, our faculty journal, which employs double-blind peer-review, which means peer reviewers and authors do not know who the other is, also be degree-blind? Should we be stifling the voice of the true amateur theologian, or of the professional pastoral minister who doesn't have an advanced degree, but maybe has the most reign-of-god-making message of our time?

The *great* goal for all of us is to become like God, to become divinized, to bring the reign of God on earth. I'm willing to open up my room in the ivory tower to bring in others who want to study, to write, to research, to edit, to teach if this will make the reign of God a reality.

Dominican Preaching: An 800-year-old Gift Ever New

by Barbara E. Reid, OP

The Dominican Order has just concluded its Jubilee celebrations marking the 800th anniversary of its official approval by Pope Honorius III in 1216. Founded by Spaniard Domingo de Guzmán in response to a critical pastoral need for preaching truth at the time that the Albigensian heresy¹ raged, it was dubbed by the Pope the “Order of Preachers” (OP), a moniker that well captures the Order’s central charism.

While preaching is a charism not unique to Dominicans, there is a distinctive spirituality, based on “four pillars,” that undergirds the charism: 1) contemplation, 2) study, 3) common life, and 4) ministry.

Contemplation

Contemplation is both a gift and a practice that we Dominicans cultivate and teach to others. It hones our ability to listen, to hear with the heart of Holy Mystery what God is revealing in our day. In contemplative silence, we allow ourselves to be emptied of all that is not of God and to accept the overwhelming love and mercy of God, poured out on us by Christ, through the Spirit. For Dominicans, contemplation is not an escape from the world and its sufferings, but rather a practice that enables us to hear with the heart of Holy Mystery the cries of those who are most vulnerable, as we let ourselves be prompted by the Holy Spirit to discern how we are to pay forward the mercy we have received. Our practice of contemplative prayer is done both in solitude and communally, as both individually and together we learn to let our heart beat in rhythm with the heart of the Holy One. Without a personal and communal relationship with Christ, who is always the object of Dominican preaching, the word we proclaim would ring hollow.

Dominican contemplation involves the whole self, as demonstrated in the nine ways that St. Dominic prayed: bowing before the altar, prostrating himself, disciplining himself, gazing at the crucifix while repeatedly kneeling and rising, extending his arms forward, or to the side in cruciform, or upward to heaven, sitting in rapt attention with a book of the gospels, and walking. As mendicant preachers, Dominic and his followers are active contemplatives.

¹ Albigensians, also known as Cathars, flourished in southern France in the twelfth through thirteenth centuries. They espoused a dualistic worldview that regarded the spiritual as good and the material world as evil. Pope Innocent III launched a crusade against them (1209-1229), but they continued into the thirteenth through fourteenth centuries, when the Inquisition finally brought them to an end.

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Study

Hand in hand with contemplation is study, one of the hallmarks of Dominicans. Study, especially of the Scriptures, insures that Dominican preaching is rooted in the Word. Study is also crucial in the quest for Truth, *Veritas*, which is the motto of the Order. For Dominicans, truth is something to be sought humbly, with an openness to finding it in unexpected places, as we learn from other cultures, traditions, and religions. Thomas Aquinas said that “we are mendicants for the truth, happy to beg a little bit of illumination from everyone whom we meet on the road.”²

Another aspect of the Dominican quest for truth is the practice of *disputatio*, that is, entering into respectful dialogue with others who hold a differing position from our own in order to arrive together at truth. When Thomas Aquinas practiced this, he began with the assumption that his opponent is always, in some sense, right. Timothy Radcliffe, former Master General of the Order (1992-2001), observes, “It is easy to identify another person’s errors. Do we have the courage to hear what they may teach us?”³ To enter into *disputatio* requires assiduous study of the issues, and critical analysis of our social and cultural contexts. The aim is not to prove that my position is the true one – that stance leads to greater division. The aim, rather, is to come to greater unity, through deeper understanding of the multi-faceted diamond that is truth, and to come to a greater respect and understanding of one another, which brings possibilities for healing and reconciliation. The intent is not to erase all distinctions and come to uniformity, but to respect differences and engage them honestly and lovingly, recognizing that truth abides in many unexpected places. St. Catherine of Siena’s⁴ image of bridge building captures well the intent of *disputatio*. In her *Dialogue*, she speaks of how Christ is the Bridge that connects us to the divine after the way had been broken by sin.⁵ Just so, Dominican study and preaching aims to build bridges that enable healing and reconciliation in a broken world.

For Dominicans, there is a very fine line between prayer and study, the one easily blending into the other, especially since the object of Dominican study is primarily the Scriptures. Moreover, study in Dominican tradition is not solely an intellectual endeavor. Jordan of Saxony, Dominic’s first successor as leader of the Order, said that “Dominic understood all things through the humility of his heart.”⁶ Understanding is not an affair of the head alone, but of head and heart together.

While study of the Scriptures holds a prime place in Dominican tradition, it is not the only avenue that leads us to truth about God. Dominicans insist that the whole of creation reveals divinity. Thomas Aquinas warned that “a mistake in our understanding of creation will necessarily cause a mistake in our understanding of God.”⁷ Consequently, every arena of inquiry is important for Dominicans, since all of creation reveals the Creator. St. Albert the Great wrote, “The whole world is theology for us, because the heavens proclaim the glory of God (Ps 24:1).”⁸

Common Life

A third pillar of Dominican spirituality that undergirds our preaching is common life. Living together and holding all things in common, we foster a way of living that calls attention to the interconnectedness of all beings in the

2 Quoted by Timothy Radcliffe in his book *I Call You Friends* (New York: Continuum, 1999), 170-71.

3 Timothy Radcliffe, *Sing a New Song: The Christian Vocation* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1999), 249.

4 Catherine was a Third Order Dominican who was born in Siena in 1347 and died in Rome in 1380. Pope Paul VI named her Doctor of the Church in 1970.

5 Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena*, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/catherine/dialog.toc.html>.

6 Notes from Fr. Thomas O’Meara, OP.

7 Judy Cannato, *Radical Amazement. Contemplative Lessons from Black Holes, Supernovas, and Other Wonders of the Universe* (Notre Dame, IN: Sorin, 2006), 7, citing Thomas Gilby, *St. Thomas Aquinas: Theological Texts* (Durham, England: Labyrinth Press, 1982), 76.

8 Albertus Magnus, *In Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*, 13:35 in *Opera omnia*, XX (Paris, 1893), 571.

web of life and the reverence and care that is due to all creatures and Earth itself. For Dominicans, common life is not an end in itself, but is for the sake of the mission. One famous episode in Dominican history that underscores the communal nature of both our study and our preaching happened in Santo Domingo in 1511. The friars had arrived there from Spain in September of 1510. They came to devote themselves to the pastoral care of the other Spaniards and to evangelize the native peoples. Very soon, the friars became aware of the abusive treatment of the indigenous peoples as they were forced to become servants of the Spaniards. The Dominican community, disturbed by the oppression of the native people, devoted themselves to long hours in meetings to study the problem in depth, until they decided to make a public denunciation of the atrocities. The friars prepared the denouncement in the form of a sermon. Together, the whole community deliberated long and hard, writing the text together. Each member of the community signed it, and then they chose Antonio de Montesinos to preach the homily on the fourth Sunday of Advent, 1511. And all stood together to face the repercussions.

Ministry

The fourth pillar, ministry, is where the fruits of contemplation, study, and common life are manifest. Our motto is *contemplata aliis tradere*, “Contemplate and give to others the fruits of our contemplation.” The primary way in which Dominicans do this is through preaching. While many people think only of homilies delivered from a pulpit when they hear the word “preaching,” Dominican preaching takes a great many forms today. As friar Peter John Cameron describes, “Dominicans preach the Word of God in every possible way including liturgical preaching, parish missions, retreat preaching, occasional lectures, addresses at religious conferences, street preaching, teaching, writing (especially books), through art (especially film, television, and theatre), and by exploiting the advantages offered by the Internet and other advances of the digital age.”⁹ Moreover, it is not only the friars who preach. From the very beginning, the Dominican family has included nuns, friars (both priests and brothers), and lay Dominicans. Today there are also Dominican apostolic sisters, lay associates, and affiliates, as well as dynamic youth¹⁰ who claim and exercise the Dominican preaching charism. All share in the same mission, preaching in myriad ways. And so the holy preaching continues, God willing, into the next 800 years.

⁹ Peter John Cameron, “Dominican Preaching,” Order of Preachers, <http://www.op.org/en/content/dominican-preaching>. For preaching resources available electronically, see <http://www.op.org/en/list-cat-list-type/11>.

¹⁰ See more on the International Dominican Youth Movement at IDYM:International Dominican Youth Movement, <http://idymop.org/en/>.

Diarmuid O'Murchu. *Religious Life in the 21st Century: The Prospect of Refounding*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016. 251 pp. \$26.00 ISBN: 9781626982079.

Reviewed by Paul Thomas Michalenko, ST
Catholic Theological Union

This is O'Murchu's twenty-fifth book since 1981. His writing career began with a book on religious life and here he returns to the topic once again but thirty-five years later. He borrows on a theme from Gerald Arbuckle, "refounding," which first appeared on the scene in 1988. However, O'Murchu offers a historical context and a challenge to adjust our paradigm about religious life. In the historical context, he reminds us of the work of Lawrence Coda, whose research identified a "cyclic pattern of recurring timespans, approximately three hundred years each, during which a dominant model (of religious life) evolves, expands, stabilizes and declines" (64). In all, six cycles are identified beginning with 300 CE. He suggests that in the twenty-first century we will experience (and are experiencing) the decline of one of these cycles. There are all sorts of excuses we can give for this phenomenon, but in the long run it is a "theological process, with the Holy Spirit animating and supporting its unfolding, including the decline" (67).

O'Murchu describes these cycles from apotactic movements to monastic to mendicants to apostolic expressions. He gives special credit to women's founders and their religious movements given the difficult oppression of a male patriarchal church. In fact, he argues that the ongoing attempt at ecclesiastical control of religious life has contributed to its decline.

For the author, the way into the future is to retrieve the liminal (prophetic) role of religious. For him this means reclaiming the unique role of being set apart culturally and spiritually not just for themselves but to serve the wider community living out more deeply human values. This involves embracing the world on the margins for a new epoch. This refounding would include building bridges across false and violent divisions in our society, establishing multicultural and trans-religious relationships, co-creating a new heaven and a new earth, affirming our identity with and for the laity, and placing ourselves in marginal positions with the poor and defenseless, among others. This will require different skills, awareness, and experience than where religious have focused their attention and ministry. Educational and medical institutions that were created for a different time no longer need our same attention.

Another understanding of the future of religious life is a spiritual shift from a privileged understanding of salvation by escaping this world to a spirituality of engagement. Religious do not take vows to follow rules for their individualized salvation but rather embrace the vows by reclaiming key values in our world. The author renames the vows to make his point. Celibacy is the "vow for relatedness" (146), poverty that for "mutual sustainability" (159), and obedience that for "mutual collaboration" (159). His chapter on celibacy has some provocative notions. "Celibate calling is a highly sexualized one...the celibate may well be the most erotic of all humans" (155). He suggests that most religious are "androgynous" at heart, able to move into roles that the culture has not assigned them. Also,

since these days our understanding of sexual intimacy transcends biological reproduction, what are the implications for celibate intimacy?

To engage in the difficult refounding process, O'Murchu again returns to Cada, though he reorganizes the priorities as (1) a profound renewal in the life of prayer, faith, and centeredness in Christ, (2) a reappropriation of the founding charism, and (3) a transforming response to the signs of the times. This requires a contemplative waiting that sensitizes us to what the pregnant Spirit wants to bring to birth, only after intentionally grieving what needs to die. O'Murchu writes,

"Sometime in the latter half of the twenty-first century, probably toward its end, we can expect a new breakthrough for the vowed life. We can do nothing to bring it about at an earlier date; it is a divine initiative and not of our making" (229).

O'Murchu does not offer any new great insights for the dilemma we all feel with religious life these days. However, he does give hope to the possibility that the Spirit will "refound" religious life in her own time. We but need to be faithful. We also need to let go of religious life as we have known it.

Bishop Ricardo Ramírez, CSB. *Power from the Margins: The Emergence of the Latino in the Church and in Society*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016. 202 pp. \$24.00. Paperback. ISBN: 9781626981935.

Reviewed by Carmen M. Nanko-Fernández
Catholic Theological Union

In the age of Pope Francis, it is easy to forget that there were “Francis bishops” before Jorge Bergoglio became Bishop of Rome, and that the United States of America was home for some of these post-Vatican II pioneers. In *Power from the Margins*, Ricardo Ramírez, the first bishop of the diocese of Las Cruces, New Mexico, established in 1982, reaches back and looks forward to address “the foundation and legacy of Latino faith, the challenges we face, and to celebrate the next generation with hope” (xix). Toward this end, he focuses attention on a range of topics including the transitioning of family, social issues, pastoral concerns, catechesis, expressions of popular devotion, and worship. He frames them from the perspective of his lived experience as Mexican American and in light of the mercy and outreach to the peripheries that mark the papacy of Francis. He draws on his rich pastoral experience of accompanying people historically disenfranchised, particularly in the southwestern borderlands of the United States and México.

Each of the eleven chapters begins with a personal story that functions to situate Ramírez in relation to the topic at hand and positions his own life as part of the greater complexity of Latin@ life and identity in the U.S.A. Each narrative manifests the ethical responsibility to self-locate, a characteristic familiar in works of Latin@ theology. These stories are sometimes obvious in their demarcation via the use of italics while at other times they appear like hidden treasures within the text. These *cuentos* give the book a sense of an abuelo traditioning his grandchildren into their family and faith by sharing the wisdom learned from struggles, missteps, successes, and joys. They serve too as a powerful testimony reminding the comfortable of the obstacles of discrimination, poverty, and violence faced by those who struggle on the margins of church and society. These stories challenge stereotypes of Latin@s yet resonate with the complexities of *la vida latina* in the U.S.A., from his parents’ broken marriage, to the mocking of his native Tejano Spanglish during his time of seminary studies in Mexico, to his pastoral encounters accompanying marginalized communities.

Throughout his priestly ministry, first as a missionary in Mexico and later as a pastoral leader in the U.S.A., Ramírez has exercised a preferential option for the poor, for youth, and for the vulnerable. This commitment is evident in the topics he tackles, among them immigration, incarceration, and domestic violence. These are not new areas of concern for Ramírez, who, especially as a bishop, was long a vocal advocate for those disenfranchised by poverty, migration, xenophobia, and racism. In a certain sense this book may have been even more prophetic if Ramírez’s numerous public addresses, publications, pastoral letters, and testimonies had been collected and allowed to speak across the years as a reminder to the present that the tasks of justice are not new and that they take ongoing resolve and response in each generation. Instead of Ramírez updating the state of these concerns with new statistics, it might have been bolder to have structured the book as a conversation between the bishop’s prophetic

stances and those contemporary Latin@ pastoral leaders and theologians who continue communicating truth to power through their words and deeds.

Ramírez draws strength from what Latin@ theologian Orlando Espín has called “the faith of the people,” popular devotions and religious expressions practiced by ordinary people in the spaces of their daily lives. Several chapters address this form of traditioning and catechizing with profound respect for the insights of such domestic wisdom and spirituality. At the same time he calls for a spirit of fiesta to permeate worship in ways that are life giving and transformative. Ramírez avoids naïveté and romanticization, recognizing that “we have not yet begun to fill the enormous gaps that exist in the world of theological academia with regard to the enculturation of liturgy, and in particular of the enculturation of Latino liturgy into the life of the church” (169).

The book would have benefitted from a bibliography of Ramírez’s works, any number of which are still available on the Internet. At the very least, these sources should have been cited in footnotes to provide researchers and students with links to the original content in their respective contexts. These matters, as well as other inconsistent citation patterns with references, should have been handled at the editorial level.

The charge to church and society goes beyond an awareness of the complexity and giftedness of Latin@ communities. Ramírez asserts that until Latin@ teachers of theology are prevalent in the “great theological centers of North America and Europe, including the great universities in Rome....our efforts will be seen as unprofessional, and we will be seen as ethno-centrists....we will not be taken seriously” (169-170). The prophetic work of dragging the center to the edges and resituating relationships of power is a responsibility of those institutions that prepare people for ministry. The fact that this remains Ramírez’s “dream” after nearly five decades of active ministry indicates how far we have yet to go.

Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, ed. *The Church We Want: African Catholics Look to Vatican III*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016. 272 pp. \$35.00. ISBN: 9781626982031.

Reviewed by Robin Ryan, CP
Catholic Theological Union

The essays in this collection originated from the Theological Colloquium on Church, Religion, and Society in Africa, which took place between 2013 and 2015. The colloquium was a theological research project initiated to coincide with the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Vatican II. A.E. Orobator, the well-known African Jesuit and editor of the volume, observes that a primary objective of the colloquium was to “develop, model and sustain a new and innovative methodology and process of theological reflection, research, and study at the service of the African Church and the World Church” (xi). The project aimed at pan-African participation, and lay and religious women comprised nearly half of the participants. Sixty essays from the colloquium were published in three volumes. This anthology represents a selection of eighteen of those essays, along with an introduction by Orobator and a brief epilogue written by Mercy Amba Oduyoye

The volume is divided into three parts: “The Francis Effect and the Church in Africa”; “Critique of Theological Methodology and Ecclesial Practice”; and “A Church that Goes Forth with Boldness and Creativity.” As Orobator observes, “[t]hroughout this volume the personality and presence of Pope Francis looms large” (xxix).

Engagement with the ecclesial vision of Pope Francis is evident in the essay by Anne Arabome found in Part 1 and titled “When a Sleeping Woman Wakes: A Conversation with Pope Francis about the Feminization of Poverty.” Arabome points out that poverty in Africa has a woman’s face, and she underlines the prevalence of HIV infection among young women. Though appreciative of the contributions of the pope, she observes that there is little or no recognition in *Evangelii Gaudium* that women are forced into the role of subordinate human beings. Arabome argues that the non-recognition of women in the church contributes to their impoverishment and that Pope Francis “does not seem able to fully recognize the discrimination against women in the church” (59). She wonders why African women were largely absent from the preparations for the Synod on the Family, and she encourages the pope to initiate hearings on issues that matter whenever women’s voices can be heard without fear of reprisals. Arabome affirms the statements of Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* about the importance of listening in the church, and she concludes on a hopeful note: “It is fair to hope that the Francis effect will lead to change for African women” (62).

Laurenti Magesa addresses issues around inculturation in “Truly African, Fully Christian? In Search of a New African Christian Spirituality” (found in the second part of the volume). Magesa suggests that “there may be a basic and general reluctance of the church in Africa to become culturally both Christian and African” (81). He argues that a “new Christianity” – an inculturated Christianity – “emerges from an intricate process of synthesis between the centuries-old Christian understandings (or traditions) of the liberating work of Jesus Christ and the

African people's equally time-honored, God-given cultural ways of being" (82). Attending to the issue of theological language, Magesa points out that conceptual language is not the exclusive means of communicating theology. In African cultures, stories, testimonies, participatory dance, songs, and rituals play a vital role in expressing a people's relationship with God.

Emmanuel Katongole contributes an essay in the third part of this anthology – "The Church of the Future: Pressing Moral Issues from *Ecclesia in Africa*." Instead of reflecting on African responses to global moral issues, Katongole begins his discussion with the specific sociological reality of the African church. He delineates a number of salient issues that African bishops should discuss at "Vatican III": what it means to be a poor church in a continent where illiteracy and unemployment abound; the call to be a nonviolent community in the midst of the violence that has been a perpetual feature of social life in Africa; the challenge of incarnating the gospel as "a quiet revolution of righteousness, justice, and shalom" (168) in places inundated with noise pollution; the call to the churches to be rooted in African soil and thus ecologically responsible; the summons to be a community of servant leadership in societies where "big man" rule (171) has been predominant; the challenge of promoting the leadership of women in the African church; and the call to explore the possibility of married priests in a continent where "widespread compromise in clerical celibacy undermines the church's witness and voice on matters relating to the body and human sexuality" (173).

As with other such collections, this volume displays a variety of methodologies, and the quality of the essays is somewhat uneven. Nevertheless, it succeeds in offering readers a wide spectrum of views from African theologians, and it elucidates pressing issues faced by the African church. It will serve as a helpful resource for courses in ecclesiology and intercultural studies.