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John T. Pawlikowski, O.S.M., Ph.D., Editor

Worship: Its Public Face

Clearly ritual has not lost its force in contemporary public life. But just as clearly many, especially in Western societies, are turning away from formal religious rituals. The process is more advanced in many parts of Europe than in North America, but that is little reason for comfort. Many recent statistics suggest that commitment to established religious rituals, even in more modern guise, is on a significant downturn here as well. The challenge facing pastoral leaders is how to respond to this reality. One choice would be to move in the direction of a "remnant" Church, whether of a more conservative or more liberal bent. In such a model the celebration of the established religious ritual will be done only by a select few as a harbinger of the Messianic age to come. The remnant Church cares little for outreach, preferring purity to efforts at enhanced participation.

The mainstream Catholic perspective, however, has never been that of the remnant Church. It should not assume dominance in Catholicism today, whether out of principle or out of frustration with the challenges of contemporary society. The good news is that people still want to, and know how to, celebrate. Experience has underscored what the late theological ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr always emphasized, namely, that an adequate anthropology requires a balance between human rationality and human vitality. Society today remains highly appreciative of human vitality. If anything, it may be in danger of losing respect for the rational aspects of the human person. But for most that appreciation remains underdeveloped, rooted primarily or even exclusively in the world of popular culture. The challenge before us is whether a reconnection can be made between a renewed Christian ritual tradition and the present reality. The task is daunting, but not impossible.

The theme articles in this issue on public worship look at several important dimensions of the challenge before us. Professor Frederic Roberts of Michigan State University shares some insight he has

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gained as a professional anthropologist working on a concrete parish-based project dealing with liturgical renewal in the Archdiocese of Detroit. His article, based in part on the research conducted for this project, raises some serious questions about the approaches used by some liturgists in pursuing liturgical renewal.

In our second essay, NTR Associate Editor James Wallace explores possibilities for preaching to “divided” congregations, which may in fact be the predominant situation in contemporary Catholicism. He remains convinced that effective preaching—preaching that touches the vitalistic dimensions of people—can in fact help bridge the current divisions. It will not be easy, but Wallace believes we should give it a determined try. And to assist the reader he presents a sample homily he believes will help us toward this goal.

Patricia Ann Lamoureux of St. Mary’s Seminary and University in Baltimore, and Jean Flannelly, S.C., of the Washington Theological Union focus their attention on two dimensions of our Catholic ritual tradition: the Liturgy of the Hours and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Lamoureux is convinced that the Liturgy of the Hours can be developed more extensively as a ritual action for the entire Church, which would help in the development of virtue in the life of the participants. And Flannelly suggests ways in which people whom she feels have a sense of community can begin to better connect that perception with the celebration of the Eucharist.

In our non-thematic contribution Paul J. Philibert, O.P., examines ways in which the distinct charisms of religious orders might contribute to the overall work of pastoral renewal. While he does not focus specifically on liturgy, his suggestion that the “prayer” dimensions of these charisms may prove to have some of the greatest potential certainly ties in with the suggestions put forth by Flannelly and Lamoureux.

Two of our columns also focus on our stated theme. Carole D. Goodwin of the Archdiocese of Louisville looks at ways in which young people can be better integrated into liturgical celebration. And in my essay I take up the specific issue of making the vision of Vatican II’s *Nostra aetate* come alive in the liturgy of Holy Week/Easter, convinced that the reception of this Vatican II document (or any such document) will remain incomplete until it is ritualized.

Finally, this issue marks the beginning of our tenth year of publishing. The editorial board would like to express its thanks to our loyal readers over the past decade. We certainly enjoy hearing from you. We are also grateful to the administrations of the Washington Theological Union and the Catholic Theological Union, Mr. Michael Glazier, The

Liturgical Press, and the Lilly Endowment, all of whom have been instrumental in keeping our voice alive in the Church and beyond. We look forward to a second decade of bridging sound theology and pastoral practice.

Frederic M. Roberts

American Catholic Worship: An Anthropological View from the Sidelines

From November 1993 to July 1995—when I was not teaching courses at Michigan State University—I immersed myself in my anthropological research project on liturgical renewal, which I called “American Catholic Ritual Life in the Post-Vatican II Era.” I had begun that research intending to focus on the rituals themselves. I was inspired by a comment made to me by Nathan Mitchell, associate director of the Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy, at the end of our first conversation:

“We have thick descriptions of a cockfight in Bali but not of a Mass in the United States.” What he meant was that anthropologists routinely have provided detailed studies of a vast variety of complex ritual and ritual-like events from societies throughout the world (e.g., Geertz’s [1973] study of the cockfight in Bali). Yet, despite the now long-standing interest by American liturgists in anthropological concepts, there are still no in-depth ethnographic descriptions, analyses, or interpretations of what liturgists would consider the summit of the worship life for tens of millions of American Catholics (Roberts 1995, 61).

As my research progressed I found myself focusing, instead, on the ritual experts as much as the rituals and was soon deeply involved in the worlds of Catholic liturgists. The story of how and why that change of research directions took place can be found elsewhere (Roberts 1995; 1996). Here I just need to mention that I spent many days at liturgical workshops and meetings on the parish, diocesan, and national levels. In addition to these participant observation activities, I read voraciously from works written by liturgists for a variety of audiences (scholarly, pastoral, popular) in order to understand the

context of the events I was viewing. This time period was particularly controversial for Catholic liturgy in the United States. Mother Angelica had compared liturgists unfavorably with terrorists, and a variety of groups were actively attacking the proposed International Commission on English in the Liturgy translations of the sacramentary. Debates on these issues were headline items not only for liturgical publications, but for the more general Catholic press. To keep track of the fast-moving events, I read newspapers and magazines representing a broad spectrum of views—*National Catholic Reporter*, *National Catholic Register*, *Commonweal*, *New Oxford Review*, *Catholic World Report*, *Fidelity*.

Beginning mid-July 1995, however, I had little time for the liturgical workshops and meetings that had become so much a part of my life, and copies of my “church-related” magazines and newspapers grew into large, unread piles. At that time I began a year-long term as acting chair of the department of anthropology at Michigan State University. I was plunged into the university’s administrative whirlpool, having to respond on behalf of my department to the barrage of memos and directives from the university’s upper administration. I also found myself immersed in the wider world of anthropology. As head of the department, I felt compelled to look beyond my own narrow research interests and spend time attending all the talks and colloquia we sponsored, acquainting myself with the current work of twenty-plus colleagues and nearly ninety graduate students, scanning the *Anthropology Newsletter* for trends in the profession that might affect our program, and listening to speeches on the present state and possible future of anthropology at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association.

In this article I hope to provide some of my reflections on the worship life of American Catholics that have resulted from my having spent so much of this past year on the sidelines of liturgical debates and inside the world of academic anthropology, specifically, and secular academia in general.¹

In light of this change of standpoint, it is not surprising that here I will approach American Catholic worship from a different perspective than I did while still immersed in the worlds of liturgists. At that time,

¹Obviously my focus is on the social sciences, which I know best, and secondarily the humanities. These are also the fields liturgists most frequently look to for assistance or insight. Witvliet (1995) has provided a very thoughtful review of major issues liturgists must keep in mind when considering the incorporation of the methodological approaches of the social sciences. While some of my concerns parallel those he has raised, his standpoint is primarily theological in nature.

I emphasized what to me was a very striking and surprising phenomenon: the extraordinary degree to which academic liturgists had extensively employed a variety of anthropological concepts in their own work

This was clear in many ways, but I came upon the most amusing evidence of it at the 1995 Pastoral Liturgy Conference. One of the themes of the conference was the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy. At a general session, more than three hundred liturgists robustly sang a parody (written by Gabe Huck of Liturgy Training Publications) of the Notre Dame fight song, poking fun at some of the center's seminal figures and including the line: "Liminality, my dears, Gallen had thresholds up to his ears."² "Liminality" and "thresholds" are not theological terms, but concepts associated with a crosscultural theory of rites of passage elaborated and popularized by the eminent anthropologist Victor Turner. As the song suggests, this anthropological theory has become a keystone of liturgical thinking (i.e., heavily influencing liturgical thinking on key issues like baptism and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults).

In earlier works (Roberts 1995; 1996) I have suggested that a major reason many liturgical professionals may have been so ready to incorporate anthropological concepts like liminality into their own thinking was a fundamental *similarity* between those who become professional liturgists and those who become anthropologists. In particular, many in both professions share a strong sense of alienation from major sectors of mainstream Western society and a fascination with exotic others. On the basis of this similarity and the reliance of liturgists on anthropological ideas and data, I went on to argue that it was crucial that liturgists who wished to make use of anthropological insights in their own theory and practice be aware of some of the recent crises in anthropology and the self-criticisms that had emerged from those crises. For these crises and self-criticisms have led, in my view, to vast improvements in anthropological theory and practice—an emphasis on reflexivity (self-knowledge) and a sensitivity to issues of representation of the other—that desperately needed to be adopted by liturgical professionals.

After a year of almost total immersion in secular academia and anthropology, I wish to emphasize, instead, what I see as some of the significant, but sometimes overlooked, *differences* or *contrasts* between the concerns that pervade secular academia and those that should be of

²John Gallen is a former director of the Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy.

greatest significance to academically trained liturgists and others seriously concerned with American Catholic worship. Indeed, instead of emphasizing the pervasive self-criticisms that anthropologists and secular academics have leveled at themselves, I will offer some critical observations that are strikingly absent from their typical self-critique.

While I have great interest in the exciting intellectual issues raised in secular academia today, I believe it is essential that those of us concerned about American Catholic worship be very careful, critical, and, above all, skeptical before proposing and fostering changes in our worship life based on the present approaches to academic knowledge in areas like ritual and religion. By emphasizing that the forms of knowledge and academic theories that dominate the social sciences and humanities must be critically and skeptically evaluated by those committed to the Church, I also hope to draw attention to an overlooked issue that may be responsible for much of the mutual antagonism that has often accompanied efforts at liturgical renewal. Contrary to the accepted truths constantly repeated by many Catholic liturgists, one of the great issues facing the Church's worship life is *not* the "faithful's" lack of knowledge about religion and worship. Rather, it is a lack of recognition of the extraordinarily large number of competing forms and sources of knowledge on which the faithful may draw to develop their approaches to worship and religion. People's rejection of attempts at liturgical renewal may often be rooted in their as yet unstudied knowledge encounters during which they evaluate the legitimacy and relevance of knowledge coming from liturgical sources in comparison with the many other sources of knowledge available to them.

THE VIEW FROM INSIDE SECULAR ACADEMIA

My administrative interlude was frustrating, as it necessarily meant losing momentum on my research and losing contact with some good friends from the liturgical world. But there were some advantages to this interruption. Anthropological participant observation requires a creative and sometimes painful tension deriving from the attempt to be both a participant—actively involved (an insider)—and an observer—a somewhat detached analyst (an outsider). In the very controversial world of liturgy, when the researcher is a practicing Catholic, it is all too easy to slip into becoming a partisan participant or, at least, to be seen that way. I became acutely aware of the tensions inherent in being a participant-observer of American Catholic worship when I expanded my field for participant observation beyond the network of liturgists directly or indirectly associated with the

Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy and began work with the newly formed Society for Catholic Liturgy, whose members often are critical of some approaches taken at Notre Dame. Among the “attitudes and convictions” included in the Society for Catholic Liturgy’s statement of general philosophy is: “A respect for the complete historical tradition of Catholic liturgy, including that of the biblical, patristic, medieval and post-Tridentine eras, as well as an acknowledgment of strengths and values in the liturgical life of the church before the Second Vatican Council.” Considering some of the positions on liturgical issues taken by groups on the extreme liberal and conservative wings of the Catholic church, both the Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy and the Society for Catholic Liturgy should be characterized as moderates; certainly, that is how I believe both groups would honestly describe themselves. It was thus painful to hear some people associated with these two groups at times scornfully disparage each other’s character and work. It was also discouraging to know that because of this mindset there were first-rate liturgical scholars who, on the principle of not giving aid and comfort to the “enemy,” would consciously avoid publicly praising what they privately considered to be achievements of “opponents” and would purposely refrain from publicly criticizing what they privately considered flaws in the work of their allies.

As an anthropologist, I am aware that one of the most powerful political and cultural dynamics at work in the modern world is the construction of boundaries between groups—ethnic, religious, racial. I also know that the solidity or impermeability of the boundaries between groups does not necessarily reflect the size of the gap between them in terms of beliefs, values, backgrounds, behaviors, or histories. But to intellectually understand or analyze such a phenomenon does not make it easy to deal with it emotionally when it is seen at work among friends and colleagues.

As an academic administrator at a secular university watching the conflict-ridden liturgical world from a distance for a year, I was even more struck by the tragedy of this liturgical civil war. Fine people on all sides of the disputes within the Church were expending vast resources of energy, intelligence, and passion fighting each other while, from my vantage point in the university, it was increasingly clear that there were far more serious and powerful threats to widely shared values, beliefs, and commitments.

In the secular university, to which academically trained liturgists often looked for sources of non-liturgical knowledge, very fundamental institutional changes were occurring. These were taking place with

little serious discussion or significant resistance. There was a time when some of us believed that a major role of secular academia should be to provide a knowledgeable critique of society. Today, that seems a foolishly naive expectation. I have found, to my horror, that large corporations now provide the virtually unquestioned models that the university eagerly seeks to emulate. What is good for Ford is good for MSU, especially if it leads to major grants and contracts from the former to the latter. The old adage “publish or perish” has been replaced by publish *and* bring in more overhead to the university through grants and contracts or perish. Indeed, many meetings of the College of Social Science’s chairs and directors at Michigan State would have seemed familiar to mid-level corporate executives, as they focused on the never-ending and relentless search for new markets and clients for the research and consulting services of faculty. It was not surprising that the guest speaker at the undergraduate commencement ceremony for Michigan State’s College of Social Science in spring 1996 was an alumnus who was the head of a think tank with very significant financial resources. One reason he had been invited was clearly in the hope that he might provide some support for the college’s effort at marketing its faculty’s expertise. It was perfectly in line with these priorities when the guest speaker’s main point was that the graduating students should look upon their education as a form of capital to be carefully invested for maximum profit.

Indeed, university issues increasingly are framed almost exclusively in terms of pragmatic adjustments to assumed economic realities—for which no “realistic” alternatives are presumed to exist. Debates on basic moral issues that relate directly to how the university operates, much less effective acts of resistance that go beyond complaining among colleagues and friends, are virtually nonexistent or highly marginalized.

This was in striking contrast to what I had witnessed as an anthropological observer of American Catholic worship. When the Church made a decision or announcement on worship, the moral, theological, ethical, and faith implications were widely debated. Whether one agreed with the decision or with any of its major critics, conservative or liberal, it was impressive to see *the fervent concern for the institution of the Church that was expressed on all sides*. This concern was not necessarily for the preservation of the status quo of the Church. There is a great deal of research confirming the observation that a high percentage of American Catholics have remained in the Church despite fundamental and clearly stated disagreements with some of its official positions.

Sociologist Andrew Greeley (1990), for example, has reported on studies that suggest the 1975 halt to the striking decline in Catholic Sunday Mass attendance, which began in 1968 as a response to the papal birth control encyclical, did not occur because all who disagreed strongly with the encyclical had left the Church (see also Greeley 1996, 378). Clearly, they had not. Rather, Greeley and his colleague Hout speculated that many of those who remained generally were:

at the high end of the "loyalty" continuum . . . [and had] a disposition to stay with an institution even in the face of opposition from the leaders of the institution. At the low end is a disposition to disassociate oneself from the institution whose leadership endorses moral and political stands contrary to one's own convictions. People differ in their predisposition to make a choice to stay with an institution or to leave it when they disagree with the official position of that institution. . . . [Greeley and Hout thus speculated that] the decline in church attendance stopped precisely when all those whose "loyalty" was not strong enough to resist this pressure ["the disorganizing pressure of dissension within the Church"] had already cut down on their church going (and contributions and other forms of religious behavior) (Greeley 1990, 24–25).

It is worth adding that in his best-selling novels Greeley often graphically portrays this style of loyal opposition and resistance from the liberal wing of the Church, not only by the laity but by religious and priests (including two of his favorite fictional characters, Bishop "Blackie" Ryan and Sean Cardinal Cronin of Chicago). Greeley's novels also often feature central protagonists who have left the Church before or soon after Vatican II. In the course of the stories, they find themselves pleasantly surprised to discover how much the Church has changed (particularly with regard to respect for authority), but also dismayed at how much more change is needed.

In summarizing the lessons of their very recent national study *Laity, American and Catholic: Transforming the Church*, D'Antonio, Davidson, Hoge, and Wallace (1996) observed that:

a majority of the American Catholic laity is slowly moving in the direction of wanting a more democratic Church in which laypersons can participate at all levels. . . . Growing numbers of the laity have been abandoning the traditional positions demanded by the magisterium.

Even as they urge more democratic decision-making at all levels of Church structure, the ordination of women, the reactivation of married priests, and a more nuanced sexual morality, only a small

minority of all Catholics (less than 20 percent) said they were thinking of leaving the Church. They insist they are a part of the people of God, that this is their church too, and that it can and must be reformed (160).

However, in reviewing *Laity, American and Catholic: Transforming the Church for Commonweal*, Steinfels (1996), senior religion correspondent for the *New York Times*, argued that, for him, a major flaw in the book is that, with a few exceptions, it follows the typical trend of surveys of Catholic opinion by focusing almost exclusively on “‘practical’ questions of sex, ordination of married men and of women, approval of the pope, and politics” (17). While these are clearly tied to important theological issues, Steinfels observed that “the authors have shied away from probing” other absolutely core issues. He noted that the authors asked those being surveyed whether they thought a person can be a good Catholic without going to Church every Sunday, obeying Church teaching on birth control, divorce and remarriage, abortion, etc. Steinfels wondered, however, what would have happened “if they had added a few items like ‘without believing that Jesus rose bodily from the dead’ or ‘without believing that Jesus is truly present in Eucharist under the appearances of bread and wine?’” (1996, 17).

This was clearly a rhetorical question for Steinfels. He concluded his review by focusing on the chapters of the book that he considered most valuable. Those were written by James D. Davidson, a sociologist, and include material from that co-author’s own research. Steinfels emphasized Davidson’s findings on the beliefs and knowledge of Catholics of the post-Vatican II generation. Steinfels observed that Davidson found that this generation had only a “meager knowledge of Catholicism.” According to Steinfels:

Davidson reports that post-Vats simply “lack a vocabulary to help them form a Catholic identity and interpret their Catholic experiences.” He contrasts this with an older generation’s fund of terms, from mortal and venial sin to holy days of obligation, confession, and Stations of the Cross—“a common language with which to communicate with one another about their Catholic experiences” (19).

RESISTANCE AND KNOWLEDGE: THE AMERICAN SECULAR ACADEMY AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Although they may appear to be an odd couple, these issues of resistance and knowledge together capture two of my major observations

about American Catholic worship as observed from the secular academy. In particular, the contrast between the extraordinarily high level of *resistance* to the authority of the Church and the general passive acquiescence to institutional authority within the university is painfully ironic. Resistance to the power of authority and an associated emphasis on individual agency are among the most trendy and fashionable of current areas for the production of knowledge (i.e., topics for theory and research) by anthropologists and social scientists in general. Indeed, scholars now seem to be able to find resistance and individual agency everywhere.

While I could explore the reasons for this extraordinary contrast, my primary concern here is not with the gap between the theory and practice of secular academics or even with the whole subject of resistance and individual agency. Rather, I believe it is essential to begin considering some of the ramifications of the very trendiness of knowledge production in the secular academy for those in the liturgical community who regularly call upon the authority of anthropology or the social sciences to support their approaches to issues that touch upon the worship life of the Church. It is important to recall that it was not many years ago that the academic knowledge factory was generally ignoring resistance and individual agency and, instead, churning out articles and books emphasizing exactly the opposite perspective on the individual's relationship to society or culture, e.g., aggressively retailing various brands and styles of structuralism, functionalism, Marxism, Freudianism, behaviorism, which now seem as quaint and out-of-date as platform shoes and Nehru jackets. I am not suggesting that we turn our backs on the current intellectual fashions of secular academia as we struggle with the many vital issues that challenge the Church's worship life. Obviously, in my own work I have tried to bring some of those recent ideas from anthropology to the attention of the liturgical community. Also, I am certainly not suggesting that we try to protect the "simple faithful" from these "pernicious influences," even if that were possible. Rather, I am suggesting that those who need to be most skeptical about these fashions in knowledge are those who are naturally most tempted to adopt abstract and complex theories and concepts that are undoubtedly exciting and stimulating in and of themselves—intellectuals within the Church. It is essential to continually remind ourselves why the shelf-life of those exciting ideas often is so short.

They emerge out of institutions and disciplines that have a very different purpose and very different things at stake than the Church, which is ultimately concerned with eternal verities and salvation.

These institutions and disciplines reserve their highest rewards for those *individuals* who are most theoretically innovative and daring, scholars on the cutting edge, who produce novel and attractive products in a highly competitive knowledge market. Where rapid change, often for its own sake, is highly valued and a style of individual intellectual entrepreneurship is far more fashionable than long-term commitment to an institution, it is not surprising that intense initial enthusiasm for ideas is so often soon followed by militant and scornful rejection of them and a conversion to a newer intellectual “white hope.”

Although these ideas had been percolating through my mind throughout the last year, I had hesitated to present them, as they are certainly heretical within the secular academy and likely to be misunderstood as anti-intellectual by some within the Church. I was emboldened, however, when a reference in Giles’ *American Catholic Arts and Fictions* (1992, 507) recently led me to a letter with a similar message written by Flannery O’Connor, an author often quoted with approval by those on both the liberal and conservative wings of the Catholic Church. Responding to a young poet who, as a freshman in college, found that he was losing his faith, O’Connor (1979) appropriately told a story about two other poets:

[Robert] Bridges once wrote Gerard Manley Hopkins and asked him to tell him how he, Bridges, could believe. He must have expected from Hopkins a long philosophical answer. Hopkins wrote back, “Give alms.” He was trying to say to Bridges that God is to be experienced in Charity (in the sense of love for the divine image in human beings). Don’t get so entangled with intellectual difficulties that you fail to look for God in this way (476–7).

But O’Connor went on to emphasize that:

The intellectual difficulties have to be met. . . . [O’Connor referred to her own] sense of the immense sweep of creation, of the evolutionary process in everything, or how incomprehensible God must necessarily be to be the God of heaven and earth. You can’t fit the Almighty into your intellectual categories.

O’Connor recommended a

stretching of the imagination that you need to make you a sceptic in the face of much that you are learning, much of which is new and shocking but which when boiled down becomes less so and

takes its place in the general scheme of things. What kept me a sceptic in college was precisely my Christian faith. It always said: wait, don't bite on this, get a wider picture, continue to read. . . . Much of the criticism of belief that you find today comes from people who are judging it from the standpoint of another and narrower discipline. . . . Learn what you can, but cultivate Christian scepticism. It will keep you free—not free to do anything you please, but free to be formed by something larger than your own intellect or the intellects of those around you (477–8).

WHOSE MEAGER KNOWLEDGE?:
KNOWLEDGE ENCOUNTERS AND LITURGICAL RENEWAL

To this point, I have been advocating a cautious and skeptical appraisal by liturgists and others interested in the Church's worship life of knowledge emerging from anthropology and the social sciences. I want to conclude, however, by emphasizing the need for those same groups to also look carefully at other forms of knowledge, in particular the laity's knowledge about religion and worship. My suggestions here are ones developed jointly over the last year with Michael McCallion, director of the Office of Worship of the Archdiocese of Detroit. McCallion, a sociologist and a liturgist, recently completed a Ph.D. dissertation (1996) in which he analyzed the strikingly different ways in which suburban and inner city parishes in Detroit have approached the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

In our previous research, we both had found that liturgical professionals were frequently preoccupied with how to respond to a variety of serious objections to their versions of liturgical renewal (whether it be issues of inclusive language or interpretations of the mandate for full, conscious, active participation of the assembly). We were particularly struck by how consistently liturgists continued to propose the same solutions to the opposition they faced. How do you get people to move from point A to point B liturgically, spiritually, and ecclesially? The liturgists' answer was all too often clear and straightforward: more education. If people only knew more, most of their objections would disappear. If they object to learning more—at least more of what the liturgists wish to teach them—it is because they are afraid of change, and the objections of such fearful people must not be allowed to interfere with the progress of liturgical renewal.

Our previous research suggests that, from an anthropological and sociological perspective, such a formulation radically simplifies a very complex sociocultural reality. Indeed, by habitually equating opposition to their efforts with ignorance and/or fear of change, this ap-

proach may well have contributed to the rancor that all too often has accompanied efforts at implementing liturgical renewal. We suggest a radically different approach. We conceptualize the process of liturgical implementation as knowledge encounters in which professional ministers and ordinary pew dwellers alike evaluate and respond to the theological, spiritual, sociological, political, and aesthetic assumptions that underlie many liturgical proposals on the basis of a variety of alternative, indeed competing, sources and forms of knowledge.³ From an anthropological and sociological perspective, in fact, one of the most formidable challenges to understanding the responses of American Catholics to particular proposals for liturgical renewal is evaluating the role of the vast number of alternative sources of knowledge potentially available to them.

It is a commonplace observation that the United States has become a learning society, with knowledge expanding and/or being revised so continually and rapidly that a major goal of formal schooling has to be learning how to learn, preparing for a life-long process of “continuing” education. While this trend is usually discussed in terms of technological change or general job-related skills, it is also a powerful force influencing how people think and feel about their religious beliefs and commitments.

American Catholics who want to keep up with “Church issues” can choose from a vast selection of publications produced by an extraordinarily diverse official and unofficial Catholic press. Current debates over liturgical issues are a frequent subject of articles and books in genres ranging from the devotional to the scholarly (see Haas 1995, 337–44 for an annotated listing limited to only “Conservative Catholic Periodicals”). Liturgical issues are also addressed in the myriad of workshops, courses, and retreats regularly offered by a wide variety of Catholic institutions (e.g., parishes, dioceses, colleges and universities). Normally, Johnson (1996) may be correct in claiming that “there is not much in the liturgical year to raise eyebrows or sell papers. Religion does not lend itself to front-page or top-of-broadcast coverage” (9). However, even those who seldom if ever read Catholic publications or rarely participate in Church activities find Catholic liturgical issues featured in articles under banner headlines in the mainline

³The phrase “knowledge encounters” was used in an invitation from Pauline Peters to Ann Ferguson to present a paper at a workshop on “Knowledge Encounters: Ideas and Practices in Development Sites” at the Harvard Institute for International Development. Dr. Ferguson, a colleague in the department of anthropology at Michigan State University, suggested that the phrase “knowledge encounters” nicely captured the central dynamics that McCallion and I proposed to study.

secular media whenever the Vatican issues a controversial statement (e.g., on ordination of women, female altar servers, or inclusive language). As more and more American Catholics have obtained a college education, frequently attending secular institutions, they have taken courses or even specialized in fields like anthropology, sociology, psychology, or comparative religion that offer their own disciplinary analyses of issues that directly or indirectly touch on liturgical concerns: the nature of religion, myth, and ritual. These are also the subjects of widely read books (even best-sellers) and popular television series that focus on a variety of forms of spirituality associated, for example, with the women's and the men's movements, as well as with New Age approaches. In addition to Greeley, whose romances and mysteries were mentioned above, there are many popular Catholic novelists who use their fiction as an opportunity to comment on these issues. R. McNerny of the department of philosophy at Notre Dame University is an example of a scholar/mystery writer who is situated at a very different place on the spectrum of American Catholic opinion than Greeley. Strikingly, the long-distance romance at the heart of one of Jon Hassler's most recent novels, *Dear James* (1991), began when the two central protagonists both wrote letters to an international Catholic newspaper "to express their objection to liturgical reform" (302).

American Catholics are, of course, in frequent and intimate contact with sources of liturgical or ritual knowledge that are much closer to home and emerge out of daily experiences powerfully influenced by ethnicity, social class, generation, and gender: their families, networks of friends, and neighborhoods. These sources provide liturgical theologies of the streets or domus (Orsi 1985, xxii) that may differ radically not only in content but in form from the more precisely articulated, abstract, and logically ordered systems of knowledge liturgists generally present in their written materials.

The above is just a very preliminary and limited listing of widely available and frequently competing sources and forms of knowledge on liturgical issues. Yet, even this superficial examination makes very evident how truly complex and problematic the knowledge encounters routinely occurring during the last twenty-five years of liturgical renewal in the Post-Vatican II American Catholic Church have been.

Two key questions concerning these encounters need to be carefully addressed: (1) In the light of this abundance of competing forms and sources of knowledge, *what* sort of sense have American Catholics made of the crucial issues of worship? (2) *How* have American Catholics gone about making sense out of this myriad of sources and forms of knowledge? We emphasize *sense making* because, on the basis of our

own research as well as much recent work in the social sciences, we understand knowledge encounters as processes in which all parties involved are thinking, feeling, and, above all, active participants or agents, not simply donors or recipients of knowledge. We pose two primary questions (What? and How?) because, viewed as processes, the study of knowledge encounters requires not only an understanding of the content of knowledge per se, but also an analysis of “the ways in which . . . [knowledge’s] presence is socially attested . . . who claims to know what, how such claims are evaluated, legitimated, and accepted, and their consequences for social relations, especially for power, morality, and . . . social accountability” (Lambek 1993, 10). Clearly, the above questions are particularly crucial when on matters of worship an ever-increasing proportion of American Catholics apparently view themselves to be what Schutz has called “the well-informed citizen who considers himself [or herself] perfectly qualified to decide who *is* a competent expert and even to make up his [or her] mind after having listened to opposing expert opinions” (1971, 123).

We intend to study these two key questions about knowledge encounters and liturgical renewal primarily through long-term, intensive participant observation in a small number of parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit. Such an approach can foster the solid trust between researchers and a community that is indispensable when dealing with the highly personal, intimate, and sometimes controversial issues that liturgical knowledge encounters have involved.

For the vast majority of American Catholics, their most significant knowledge encounters with liturgists’ expertise have occurred when some new proposal for liturgical renewal is about to become their own local reality, and what the liturgists have so carefully worked out and imagined on paper is to be embodied and incorporated into the complex reality of the worship life of a particular parish and its parishioners. In-depth knowledge of a parish and individual parishioners is necessary if we are to begin to understand *how* parishioners actually interpret and respond to the variety of liturgical concepts, perspectives, and practices they have been exposed to over the last several decades. While this research will focus on contemporary parish knowledge encounters, it will also examine them in their historical contexts. Our previous research strongly suggests that parishes’ and parishioners’ responses to current liturgical proposals are very much influenced by their previous experiences with competing forms and sources of knowledge, as well as by their personal experiences of the ways in which liturgical renewal has been implemented. Thus, our research on knowledge encounters will include social histories of the

parishes and life histories of parishioners as they relate to liturgical renewal.

CONCLUSION

The particular research I have just described will only begin to deal with our current meager knowledge about the American Catholic laity's knowledge and beliefs about worship. Clearly, the particular concepts and theories on which this and similar projects are to be based must be subjected to the same skeptical analysis that I have proposed above. I hope that our skepticism about our own efforts will be fueled by our recognition of the ultimate issues that are at stake for those we study and for ourselves.

Whether evaluating the knowledge emerging from anthropology and the social sciences or data about the laity's knowledge, in the final analysis, it is essential to keep in mind an often-overlooked distinction between two forms of relativism—cultural relativism and ethical relativism. Cultural relativism is about *understanding*. Particular beliefs, values, forms of behavior, and knowledge must be understood within their wider cultural/societal context. When placed in that context, what appeared bizarre or irrational when viewed in isolation may seem quite logical. Ethical relativism is about *judgment*. If particular beliefs, values, forms of behavior, and knowledge are considered acceptable or even exemplary by a particular group, outsiders must honor that judgment. A fundamental commitment to cultural relativism as a means of dealing with differences (e.g., in knowledge and beliefs about Catholic worship) does *not* necessitate, however, a commitment to ethical relativism. Indeed, an acceptance of ethical relativism would seem antithetical to the core values of those of us who try to live, work, and worship within the Roman Catholic tradition.

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Preaching to a House Divided

INTRODUCTION

A short time ago a good friend, one of the most dedicated laywomen I know, said during a group discussion, "To be quite honest, I'm not sure where I will be ten years from now, as far as the church goes. I really don't know if I'll still be part of it." It was one of those moments when I felt a great sadness. This person's work for the Church touches many lives, both in the parish setting and beyond. Yet she is "battle weary," tired of being caught in the crossfire of individuals and groups.

Shortly after this incident, I was with another friend who had just finished two terms as pastor in a city parish. I asked him whether the divisions in the community present six years ago had healed to any degree. Like many inner city parishes, this one was composed of a group of parishioners whose families had been there for generations, and a growing, energetic group of Spanish-speaking parishioners. He replied, "To be quite honest, I really don't think so. Apart from Christmas and the Triduum, it's very hard to get them to come together."

All who work in ministry today realize that the average parish is often made up of individuals with opposing views, conflicting ideologies, and marked differences in operational theologies that, consciously and unconsciously, influence speech and action. Forming any kind of true community can often seem beyond human possibility. The late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin's introduction of the Catholic Common Ground Project and the document *Called To Be Catholic: Church in a Time of Peril*, with its attempt to begin a process aimed at creating more "Catholic common ground" within the Church, "centered on faith in Jesus, marked by accountability to the living Catholic tradition, and ruled by a renewed spirit of civility, dialogue, generosity and broad

and serious consultation" (National Pastoral Life Center 1996, 1), has hardly met with universal approval. Our century seems to be ending on a note of discord on many levels.

This article will consider preaching's role in addressing conflict. After a brief overview of some of the conflict situations that affect those gathering for Sunday worship, I will note the rationale for the preacher's engaging these issues, then go on to ground this in the centrality of the word of God, taking into account the word's role in liturgy, in the process of preaching preparation, and in evoking the gifts of the preacher in the preaching event. Finally, I will consider the word that addresses conflict, proposing some ways a biblical text might intersect with a conflict situation and offer an example of a homily that attempts to do this.

A CONFLICTED COMMUNITY IN A CONFLICTED WORLD

When the Roman Catholic Christian community gathers for worship on Sunday, people bring more than their bodies into church, they bring their divisions and conflicts. Often the preacher is called to address a community characterized by many fault lines corresponding to divisions between the community and the world around it, between various segments of the community, and between and within individuals themselves. We are members of a Church that calls us to care for the least, and citizens of a republic that has accepted a welfare reform bill that will weigh heavily on the poorest among us, especially poor children. We are members of a Church that has strongly condemned abortion as an evil, and of a society whose president has vetoed a partial birth abortion ban that moves us into the sphere of infanticide. We are members of a Church that calls us to be attentive to the needs of the spirit, and of a culture whose consumerism frequently leads us to confuse desire with need, and whose entertainment industry continues to desensitize us by offering increasingly mindless, violent fare (the movies of the summer of '96 being the latest example). We are members of an ecclesial community that is called to live united in one faith and one spirit, yet whose official teaching on such matters as birth control, divorce and remarriage, abortion, and homosexuality finds varying degrees of acceptance among a significant number. We are part of a community whose restrictions on the role of women in official leadership positions is a cause of much pain and dissatisfaction for an ever growing number, and whose treatment of dissenting theologians has caused concern among many of those who value academic freedom and the reality of a pluralistic society open to multiple and divergent viewpoints.

Then there are the personal areas of conflict that people bring with them every Sunday, ranging from disagreements among family members, troubled marriages, difficulties at work, dissatisfaction with one's place in the world, inner battles with discouragement, despair, self-destruction, alcoholism, drug addiction, and other destructive forms of behavior. Even our children carry with them fears unique to our age, moving beyond fear of the dark and of monsters under the bed to fear of gangs, of drive-by shootings, and violence at school. In the face of conflicted individuals in a conflicted community of faith in a conflicted world, we continue to gather on Sunday to offer worship to God. We come together to realize a communion of mind, heart, and spirit. Is such a thing possible in our day? Or is this another dream that harkens back to a more innocent age. Is the Sunday gathering anything more than huddling against the darkness and the deadly winds that continue to blow over us as we come to the end of the second millennium? The life-giving potential of the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist has much to do with the nourishment provided by the two tables: the table of the word and the table of Christ's body. It is the goal of this article to focus on the table of the word, particularly the task of the preacher.

"THE PULPIT IS FOR THE GOSPEL"

On occasion people will say that they do not come to church to hear about the social, economic, or political issues of the day but to hear the gospel preached. But it is not a question of either/or. Almost twenty-five years ago George Higgins, then secretary for research of the U.S. Catholic Conference, addressed this viewpoint when he wrote that the pulpit is "not the proper forum in which to *pontificate* on complicated and highly controversial political and socio-economic issues" (Higgins 1972, 213, italics mine), nor is it a place for partisan politics that alienate and make worshipers of a different view feel unwanted, thereby splitting the community. However, Higgins went on to say that the preacher "has a serious duty to instruct the faithful on the moral implications of social and political issues" (213) and to provide a forum in which discussion can take place, allowing people to come to a deeper understanding of the views held on all sides.

During the same period, Charles E. Curran wrote about the "crisis in preaching the Word of God," calling on preachers to proclaim the "whole Word of God" (Curran 1972, 113ff.), not just its moral aspects, which Curran saw as secondary, but to pay primary attention to "the Word of God as gift. The gospel itself is literally and really the good news—the gift of God to us and our freedom and salvation in the new life in Christ Jesus" (115). After laying out a theology of the word that

saw it as gift, promise, and challenge, Curran carefully noted the limitations of looking to the Scriptures for concrete advice on the major issues of our day, but strongly affirmed that the word of God, which includes but does not exhaust the Scriptures, has something to say to us in all the truly human decisions of our lives. Curran warned about dividing the sphere of the human from the Christian, and separating the legal, political, and economic from the human and Christian. Preachers, however, must be careful of proposing a particular response as the *only* Christian response to a question.

In our own day, Walter Burghardt, S.J., who has been promoting the preaching of social justice in his workshops on “Preaching the Just Word,” has also addressed in a very astute and pastorally sensitive manner this question of raising controversial issues, noting both the limits and the resources needed to address such areas of conflict. I would summarize his insights in the following way. First, the pulpit is not the place to *resolve* complex issues in areas such as the economy, welfare, health-care insurance, capital punishment, or military intervention. But it is the place to *raise* these issues in order to bring them to the consciousness of the community, insofar as such issues relate to their identity as God’s people sent into the world to bring about God’s justice. Second, preaching that makes an effort to raise consciousness must be characterized by competency, compassion, and conviction. Competency involves knowing the issues, not as the ultimate authority but as one who has done some “homework” and as one who has drawn on the expertise of others. Compassion is at the heart of all preaching whose end is to touch the heart. The preacher’s care, concern, and abiding love for the people must be evident in word and deed. Finally, the preacher’s conviction is rooted in the preacher’s own conversion. People want to see in our lives the convictions we speak.

Aristotle wrote in his *Rhetoric* that the effective orator makes use of three appeals when speaking: the appeal to the head (logos) made by the cogency and logic of the argument, the appeal to the heart (pathos) brought about by stirring up the appropriate feelings of the listeners, and the appeal effected by the speaker’s own character (ethos) as it is embodied in the words of the speech. Burghardt’s requirements of competence, compassion, and conviction can be heard as homiletic updates of Aristotle’s rhetorical virtues, grounded in a speech-event placed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Higgins, Curran, and Burghardt provide a pastoral perspective on the appropriateness of preaching’s role in addressing conflict and the importance of the preacher’s preparation. Other voices that contribute to the conversation from various perspectives of the Protestant tradition include

William Willimon, David H. C. Read, Ronald Sider, Michael King, and the authors of *Preaching as a Social Act* (VanSeters 1988). A common link is found in the recognition of the centrality of the word of God in this endeavor

THE CENTRALITY OF THE WORD

The Word in Liturgy

When the people who have been baptized into Christ gather on Sundays, they first listen to the word of God, that two-edged sword that brings both death and life. The readings in the lectionary are meant to take us into the story of salvation whose focal point is the risen, crucified Jesus through whom we have entered into the new covenant in his blood. Kevin Irwin writes that the liturgical proclamation of the Scriptures is “intrinsically soteriological and ecclesiological,” that is, it invites contemporary communities into the same saving relationship that formed Israel into the holy people of God and the followers of Christ into an *ecclesia* (Irwin 1994, 87). This action is “a rehearsal of salvation.” In hearing and responding to the word of God week in and week out, we undergo an ongoing process of appropriating the salvation won by Christ and entered into through baptism. The liturgy “is the ritualization of the story of the relationship of the faithful to their risen Lord, who is at work shaping and molding them into the pattern of his death and resurrection” (Bonneau 1996, 52). However, this action, when fully engaged, can place us ever more deeply in conflict with the values of our society and culture, which also have been appropriated over time into our lives. Thus, liturgy can give rise to and deepen conflict at the same time it serves to unite us in Christ.

The Liturgy of the Word is inherently dialogical, renewing the ongoing conversation between God and God’s pilgrim people. It involves a process of listening and responding that calls for and effects an ongoing conversion, provided the hearers are willingly engaged. The word addresses us, allowing foundational events to occur anew, then, through an “obedient listening” (Irwin 1994, 116–8), the assembly as a community of disciples are re-created and shaped into the image of God, which as Christ’s body is ready to give praise and thanksgiving in the act of Eucharist, and empowered by the Spirit to continue the ongoing saving work of Christ in the world. While at the beginning of any liturgy the condition of the community is more likely to be characterized by a sense of separateness and isolation, even on occasion by discord, by the conclusion of the Liturgy of the Word there should be a readiness and awakened desire to celebrate the mystery of

Christ ever made present in this very assembly. Such is the work of the proclamation of the Scriptures and the preaching that flows from it.

Fulfilled In Your Hearing, the 1982 USCC-NCCB document on the Sunday homily, calls on preachers to take seriously the diversity that cuts across racial, ethnic, economic, and social lines, yet reminds us that “this diversity should not blind us to another, even greater reality: the unity of the congregation,” rooted in baptism and the common faith that binds all together (Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry 1982, 5). But in our own time there is more to it than diversity: there are fundamental differences and disagreements among those who come together. And in order for these to be transformed in the act of worship, those responsible for liturgical ministry must take certain steps. For unity to be realized beyond a superficial level, liturgical ministers must help the assembly be attentive listeners to the texts presented in the Liturgy of the Word. To effect this depends a great deal on an effective performance both of the introductory rites that move a group from a gathering of discrete individuals, each subject to the many inner voices competing for attention, to a group enabled to give a focused listening to the voices of the selected biblical texts and to the homily that follows.

In her most recent work, *The Cloister Walk*, Kathleen Norris witnesses to Scripture’s power to disturb and provoke us. During a prolonged stay at a Benedictine monastery her attendance at morning prayer brought her into the world of the prophet Jeremiah. Over a period of two months his words were read each morning, causing one monk to say that this was “one hell of a way to get your blood going in the morning; it puts caffeine to shame.” Norris notes how phrases of the prophet such as “break up your fallow ground” or “know what you have done” served to dig deep into her soul throughout the day. In the course of this prolonged exposure, another monk said he was glad Jeremiah was being read in the morning and not at evening when visitors were more likely to be present, because “the monks can take it but most people have no idea what’s in the Bible and they come unglued” (Norris 1996, 34). The word’s power to unglue us is one of its gifts. The Liturgy of the Word often provides an opportunity to be disturbed. But for this to happen, attention must be paid. This takes us to the work of preparation prior to liturgy.

The Word in Preaching Preparation

One of the first steps in preparing to publicly read or preach is to allow the word of God to set up conflict in our own hearts as part of the process of preparation. This begins by attentively listening to it

prior to the liturgical celebration. During preaching workshops, I ask participants to take one of the texts of the coming Sunday and to read it aloud in the following way. I ask them to put a finger in each ear, not only to block out distracting sounds, but so one's voice can be heard and experienced as coming from within one's body. There is an intimacy, an interiority to the embodied voice that moves words softly spoken from the center of one's very being to the center of one's consciousness. Read the biblical text, and hear it addressed to you. Attend to both the thought and the feeling of the text. Repeat any phrase that eludes or attracts you. If you want to, pause after a phrase. Savor it, taste it. I allow about five minutes for this. Sometimes I ask participants to read the passage again. Then, people are invited to share what particular word or phrase spoke to them most forcefully. Finally, participants are invited to share their reaction to this word or phrase; perhaps it evoked an experience, an image, a memory. The result for many is a new experience of God's word. The text is no longer an *it*, perceived as print on the page, an object to be decoded; rather, the text has been restored to life by bringing it to sound, and in the process of being embodied, enfolded, it has become a *Thou*. One can enter into an ongoing relationship with a *Thou* and this relationship can change one's life.

Novelist Eudora Welty has recorded her earliest experience of words in her autobiography, *One Writer's Beginnings*. She writes:

Every time I was first read to, then started reading to myself, there has never been a line read that I didn't *hear*. As my eye followed the sentence, a voice was saying it silently to me. It isn't my mother's voice, or the voice of any person I can identify, certainly not my own. It is to me the voice of the story, of the poem itself (Welty 1984, 11).

A lectionary text makes a variety of voices available to the community, each arising out of the conflict of a particular time and place, inviting us to enter the world of the text and bring it into dialogue with our own experience and our own conflicts.

A difficulty many preachers have is being overly familiar with a text. And so we merely glance at it and look elsewhere for material to make our preaching fresh. It is true we might know the story line of the gospel narratives, or the flow of words from a Pauline excerpt, but texts retain a power to speak in new ways. Meaning arises out of a meeting of this text and this listener in this situation. Like old friends, the biblical texts can surprise us by what they suddenly say on a par-

ticular occasion. Listening to the Scriptures as if hearing them for the first time, or listening through the ears of some of the different people who sit out in our congregation, can subvert our familiarity and present us with a new way of hearing familiar words.

The Word in the Preaching Event

Only after hearing the word does the work of preaching begin. Preaching's task is to address the word of God to the lives of a particular group of listeners, lives that know doubts and demons, questions and conflicts. Preaching continues the proclamation of the word, with the potential to focus the biblical texts on the lives of listeners in a number of ways. Sometimes the preacher may need to take on the role of the teacher, or the herald, at other times the witness, or the interpreter of the life of the community, to name a few of the preaching tasks assigned by Church documents (Wallace 1995, 10–15; for a different delineation of the preacher's roles in addressing conflict, see Willimon 1987, 70–86). Deciding which role is primary on any given Sunday is the responsibility of the presider, ideally assisted by those who help prepare the liturgy, drawing on the pastoral insight of the group into the needs of the community. If catechesis is needed to shed light on a conflict, the voice of the teacher is called for; if a clear proclamation of some aspect of the good news is needed to support, encourage, and strengthen the assembly, specifically as a community of faith, the voice of the herald may be most helpful; if a conflict is particularly difficult and allows for various ways of responding, preachers may offer themselves or provide another to speak to an issue as a witness, testifying to what the texts have enabled them to know of the gospel's power and how God's word may be calling this community to respond at this time. But for our own day, it is the voice of the interpreter that may be most helpful for approaching conflict.

FIYH calls on the preacher at the Sunday Eucharist to offer "a scriptural interpretation of human existence" to the gathered assembly (27). The interpreter is exhorted first of all to be a listener, both to the biblical and liturgical texts and to the community. It is the task of the interpreter-preacher to bring together text and communal experience, so that in the interaction of these two God's word might be heard and a communal response evoked. The meaning of the text arises out of the intersection of the text and the situation of a particular community. Of course, the goal of the interpretive homily is to enable the community to enter more fully into the reality of the paschal mystery of Christ, both by liturgical action and through action in the world. The

interpreter-preacher is envisioned as offering certain gifts beneficial to a community in conflict. Four gifts can be noted.

The Gift of Language. *FIYH* calls us to remember the importance of words. Conflict often arises because of the difficulty of finding the right words to name what is happening—between individuals, between groups, between different institutions. Eva Hoffman has eloquently written of “linguistic dispossession,” seeing this condition of not having words to express one’s state of being as a motive for violence because

it is close to the dispossession of one’s self. Blind rage, helpless rage, is rage that has no words—rage that overwhelms one with darkness. And if one is perpetually without words, if one exists in the entropy of inarticulateness, that condition itself is bound to be an enraging frustration (Hoffman 1993, 124).

Not to have the words to adequately express the conflicts that erupt leaves a community in the dark; being linguistically dispossessed will eventually leave a community in despair.

FIYH states that one of the principal tasks of the preacher “is to provide the congregation with words to express their faith, and with words to express the human realities to which this faith responds” (6). The preacher turns to the Scriptures, to the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and to the personal appropriation of these resources by study and prayer, to provide words that can help to name the conflict and provide a way of seeing, often an alternative to the way the world offers. The preacher offers words that unite the community in a common vision.

The Gift of Insight. The language offered in the homily is to be rooted in the biblical tradition. “The homily is not so much *on* the Scriptures as *from* and *through* them” (20). By listening to both the text and the experience of the community, the preacher prays to be guided by the Holy Spirit to bring the two together in a way that moves the community forward, sometimes in resolution, but sometimes to a position in which a struggle is more bearable, where one can humanly deal with unsatisfying ambiguity. Scripture does not always serve up a simple answer, but it provides encounters with the God who can speak to the heart of the community and offers stories of other struggling situations that encourage today’s pilgrim people to continue on the journey. Entering into the world of the text and looking out on the present situation can provide a fresh perspective, not possible until one has passed over and entered into the experience of seeing *from* and

through the imagery of the text. Insight comes from investigating the metaphorical possibilities of the imaginal text.

The Gift of Motivation. The interpreter's ability to relate the world of the text to the world of the people is always done with a mind toward communal response, immediately moving the community to a renewed sense of God's activity in their lives, their unity in Christ, their Spirit-blessed existence in the world, and the appropriate response of gratitude to be given expression at the table of the Eucharist. The language of the Scriptures and tradition is to provide a faith vision that motivates action in the world. The community is sent forth at the end of Eucharist to witness and to work to bring about the kingdom of God. They are empowered to address areas of conflict for the sake of the common good.

The Gift of Artistry. *FIYH* observes that since the homily's immediate function is to enable people to lift up their hearts in praise and thanksgiving, it will do this if the language of the homily is "specific, graphic, and imaginative" (25). Therefore the interpreter-homilist will turn to the language of the artist, particularly the poet and the storyteller, for evoking a response from the heart as well as the mind. The language of metaphor and imagery is the language of the heart, addressing at the same time the senses, the mind, the will, and the imagination. It is this language that also has the greatest potential to energize God's people to give their lives over to the work of stewardship of our world and involvement in our society.

These four gifts, then, call on the homilist to make use of the skills of three great artists of language—the poet, the storyteller, and the orator. Each of these is important in bringing the word to bear on a community that is divided, because each offers language in a way that has the ability to be transformative. Since Chrysostom and Augustine, the preacher has been called on to learn the lessons of rhetoric and employ its power to persuade, to engage by "sacred eloquence," and to continue to make use of the seminal insights of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and other practitioners of this ancient art, who took seriously the capacity of language to move a community toward the common good. In more recent years, the figures of the storyteller and the poet have been added as models for the preacher. All are helpful. We will now consider some of the possibilities for interplay between the biblical text and conflict.

THE WORD THAT ADDRESSES CONFLICT

Walter Brueggemann writes that "there are no 'textless' worlds. . . . People come to the preaching moment with texts already in hand that

describe the world" (1995, 316). The dominant text of the people of the United States has been a variation on what he calls the "Enlightenment script" with its emphasis on the autonomy of the individual, the primacy of reason, a vision of reality that has the self and human initiative at its core, and an agenda that concentrates on personal achievement, accumulation, and advantage. It is this script that many people live out of during the week and come clutching when they gather for worship on Sunday. The biblical text offers an alternative script with emphasis on hearing God's call to holiness and entering into the new covenant founded in the saving life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this script, individuals are invited to be disciples and the holiness of the community is central, with love of neighbor as the primary agenda.

Preachers have to realize where different scripts are in conflict. Only then can they help integrate more fully the script of the gospel into the community's life. This necessitates engaging the imagination. Brueggemann observes that "the preacher . . . does not describe a gospel-governed world but helps the congregation imagine it" (1995, 321). The world envisioned by the gospel, the reign of God, is not readily at hand, not real, until the text is appropriated by people. The preacher proposes that the world and our lives be seen *as* under the aegis of the gospel. This *as* is an invitation that can liberate us from the old script and allows us to see life through a different lens. Garrett Green calls *as* "the cupola of the imagination" (see Brueggemann, 321). The community is called to perceive metaphorically, seeing life as some aspect of God's rule. Such a major shift is best done in small pieces. Each sermon can be envisioned as "providing yet another detail to the very odd and very different description of reality being enacted over time in the congregation" (323).

Preaching addresses first of all the imagination, building patiently and faithfully an alternative vision of this world in the light of Christ, and then calling those who can see it to use their minds, wills, and bodies to bring it about. The task of preaching "is an act of imagination, an offer of an image through which perception, experience, and finally faith can be reorganized by alternative ways" (323). An image is capable of doing different things, depending on its function in the text, its capacity of relating to the life situation of this community, and the particular context of the liturgy in which the community is presently participating. On being asked whether art can effect any dramatic change, South African playwright Athol Fugard responded, "Of course, yes. A play can get into the dreams of a human being, can get into their soul and stir things." I believe that biblical imagery can also

function in the consciousness of the community of believers, getting into their hearts and heads, into their dreams and hopes, stirring up things and resulting in an increasing realization in the world of the community's self-identity as being in Christ and commitment to his mission.

There are different ways that we can consider bringing a text and community together, depending on the end to be achieved.

The Text that Names

During the summer of 1996, Americans witnessed some horrendous events. There was the explosion of TWA 800 with the deaths of 230 people. And there was the bomb explosion in Centennial Park during the Olympics in Atlanta. In the face of these events, texts like the parable of the weeds and the wheat (Matt 13:24-30) provide a biblical way to name our experience. In a world often marked by goodness, there are also such instances of evil. Ours is a world in which the weeds and the wheat continue to grow alongside each other.

Other texts from last summer's readings also help name our condition. The story of Peter's attempt to walk on water (Matt 14:22-33) can serve to name the experience of faith giving way to fear, uncertainty, or a deep and sudden loss of confidence in the call of Christ to attempt what seems impossible. Matt 14:13-21 reminded us that following Christ does not take away hunger or the responsibility to respond to it, even if few resources are available. Here, then, the text serves first of all as a metaphorical way of naming what we are presently experiencing, offering a starting point for further reflection.

The Text that Subverts

A biblical text also allows the preacher to subvert a common cultural and human attitude. For instance, we are a people who take satisfaction in action. If there is something that does not belong, then pull it up, tear it out. One can see this in the present move to crack down on illegal immigrants and perhaps also in the return to capital punishment. There is great satisfaction in being a "weed-puller." It is quick and effective. Otherwise one is tempted either to a despairing inactivity or a cynical indifference to the situation. The parable of the weeds and the wheat mentioned above calls our attention first to the servants who thought they knew the will of their master: "Let us pull up the weeds." But they encounter a master who was more pro-wheat than anti-weeds, a master who was less interested in immediate action than in long-term growth. Athol Fugard recently commented that our society is one

that has totally lost faith in the concept of growth . . . a society in which it has to be instant. It has to be there tomorrow. Whether it's sex or religion. And not tomorrow, today! Now! I want to put my coin in the slot and get it. I want to buy my ticket and be a millionaire. It is a society where the concept of growth, of just waiting, is no longer (Fugard and Baitz, 1994, 4).

Matthew's parable subverts this attitude, first naming the situation of good and evil and then calling us to wait on growth, to trust that in the end God will make the necessary corrections. It is subversive of a dominant mode of action held up for admiration: act now, act decisively, act forcefully. On the other hand, the parables about the man who stumbled over a treasure in a field and a merchant who suddenly came upon a pearl of great price and their identical response of selling all to possess it subverts our tendency to play it safe (Matt 14:44-46). Here we have the call to act immediately when we either find or stumble upon the treasure. Last summer's movie *Tin Cup* offered a hero who rejected what he called "laying up," playing it safe rather than risking all to achieve his dream.

The Text that Transforms

The gospels contain many stories that witness to the transforming power that comes through Jesus. Again remember Peter's invitation to walk on water. This story not only names the experience of sinking but invites us to entertain the possibility of walking on water, of striding over the waves that threaten to swamp us as individuals, as a faith community, as a society. What is crucial in the story is where Peter is looking at the moment. Peter's request came after seeing Jesus walking toward him; only when he switched his focus to the wind, noticing how strong it was, did he begin to sink. Fear pulled him down into the sea.

The incident of feeding the five thousand, a story found in all four gospels, also offers a transformative image for reflection and invites us to transcend our self-imposed limits. "There's no need for them to disperse," Jesus says. "Feed them yourselves." And with Jesus with them they gave out what was available, and "all present ate their fill" (Matt 14:20). The gospel parables and stories, the imagery from the words of the prophets, and the letters of the first disciples of Jesus, can name our situation, subvert the attitudes and values absorbed from our culture, and transform our vision of ourselves as individuals and as a community from one that emphasizes our fears, failures, and shortcomings to one that reminds us of the God "whose power now at work in us can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine" (Eph 3:20).

AN EXAMPLE

I would like to conclude with an example of a homily preached last summer to a group attending a preaching workshop. The homily attempts to name one way that the God we desire can be in conflict with the God that is revealed. It invites a community to consider how our response to conflict in our everyday lives can be linked to how we relate to and what we expect from God.

Hound of Heaven or Domesticated Deity?
(11th Week of Ordinary Time/Year II)
1 Kings 21:17-29; Matt 5:43-48

I find myself disappointed by this story of Ahab and Elijah.
We are set up for such a wonderful tale of crime and punishment.
Yesterday the story began with the machinations of that couple you
love to hate—King Ahab and his consort Jezebel.
The Lord and Lady Macbeth of the Old Testament.
Ahab wants a little vegetable garden, the only problem being the land
already belongs to Naboth the Jezreelite, who has a vineyard
there.
Ahab first offers a better vineyard, then a generous sum of money.
But Naboth, out of reverence for the law which binds him to his an-
cestral land, says, “No! God forbid that I should give up the land
of my ancestors.”
And Ahab goes into a pout.
He goes to his room, lies down on his bed, and won’t eat.
In comes Jezebel—a take-charge woman if there ever was one—and
says, “Leave it to me.”
And she enlists the villagers as accomplices to set up poor Naboth,
falsely accusing him of cursing both God and king.
And so, Naboth is stoned and the dogs lick up his blood.
A telling image.
Naboth, a just man, is gone before you know it, but he is never far from
our minds.
Yesterday his name was mentioned in just about every line of the story,
And today, even God sends the prophet to meet Ahab “in the vineyard
of Naboth.”
It is his blood that cries out for justice.
When Ahab sees Elijah enter the vineyard, there is no diplomacy or
pretense of friendship.
“Have you found me out, my enemy?” Ahab asks.
Now we know that Elijah was not a man to be tampered with.

He declared the drought that dried up Israel to a husk.
And he announced when it would end.
He promised a widow that neither flour nor oil would run out if she
baked him a cake.
He successfully went up against the 450 prophets of Baal and then,
after he bested them, had their throats slit.
He called down fire from heaven, not once but twice, when a captain
and his company of soldiers tried to take him by force to the king,
each time burning them to cinders.
A third captain wisely took a more supplicating approach and lived to
tell about it.
Elijah wasn't as crabby as Elisha, who set bears on some children when
they called him "Baldy," but you would not want him against
you.

So when Elijah enters the scene and proclaims that God is very angry,
we wait once again for lightning to strike.
Elijah proclaims God as the God of the devouring dogs.
"The dogs will devour the blood of Ahab and Jezebel."
Furthermore, "when one of Ahab's line dies in the city, the dogs will
devour him."
(When there's a death in the country, it's up to the birds.)
There is no mistaking God's wrath at the king and queen.
Power has been abused, not used for the good of others.
Retribution must be made, vengeance is appropriate.
But, then, Ahab once again goes into a pout, throws in some fasting
and rips up a few of his party clothes.
And rather than the God of the devouring dogs, we get a God who
rolls over.
"Have you noticed that Ahab has humbled himself before me?" God
asks Elijah. "I won't bring evil in his time. Maybe later."
Very disappointing.
I wonder what Elijah thought of it all.

Well, I would have preferred to see the God of the devouring dogs go
into action.
As a matter of fact, I would like to see the God of the devouring dogs
in our own day.
When thirty churches of the African-American community were being
burnt down this spring, I wanted to see the God of the devour-
ing dogs come on the scene.

When I read of more than five thousand cases of child abuse being reported in New York City alone last month, I wanted to see the God of the devouring dogs prowl the land.

When a young medical student just in from Germany on Holy Saturday evening, and staying with our community in D.C., was mugged on Easter Sunday morning walking up 7th street, I wanted to unleash the God of the devouring dogs. Instead of the hound of heaven we get a domesticated deity.

Unfortunately for my desire, you can see the link between Elijah's God and the God Jesus revealed.

"Love your enemies, pray for your persecutors," Jesus tells us.

"The sun shines on the just and unjust, the rain falls on the good and evil.

As for you, be perfect like your heavenly Father."

That turns out to be the language of the rule of God.

It features words like "shalom" spoken to the very ones who ran off and abandoned Jesus.

Sayings about carrying your cross, and images of seeds having to fall into the ground and die.

Questions like, "Do you love me?"

Commands like, "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep."

The crucified, risen Christ introduces us to a new vocabulary of resurrection life.

Still, it's hard to swallow.

Perhaps that's why we receive the Eucharist in such small portions—a sip from the cup, a fragment of bread.

It's not a meal to devour, but to eat with great care and deliberation.

It binds us not to a God of devouring dogs but to a God imaged as flesh impaled on wood.

A God of resurrection life who wishes to shine on all, rain down mercy and justice on all.

A God who calls on us to do the same.

CONCLUSION

In writing about *Theology Today's* custom of publishing poetry along with the expected theological essays and book reviews, editor Patrick Miller stated, "The images of poetry speak to startle and puzzle us, to provoke us and cause us to think. They set the imagination free, opening the reader to theological possibilities that might be less acceptable or even unthinkable in the essay mode" (1995, 311). I propose that the

biblical images contained in our liturgical texts, so many of which are unknown to our people, particularly those of the Hebrew Scriptures, can "startle, puzzle, provoke and cause us to think." This is not a time to shrink our religious imaginations either by retreating to a canonized posture of only male imagery for God or by excising any hint of male imagery and replacing it with neutral images drained of emotional resonance and persuasive power. This is not a time to neglect imagery that captures the reality of the struggle for the soul, calling it from slumber and passive inaction to its full humanity. It is a time to take seriously the conflicts that we carry within our physical and political bodies, and to offer them the curative powers of words, old and new, brought forth from our storerooms, to catch and captivate the conscience of a wandering people on the way to renewal and restoration.

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Patricia Ann Lamoureux

Liturgy of the Hours and the Moral Life

INTRODUCTION

The philosopher Schopenhauer has an oft-quoted story about the way porcupines get through a cold winter. To keep warm they huddle together. Then they pull away because their sharp quills prick each other. But then they get cold so they keep adjusting their closeness and distance to keep from freezing and from getting pricked by the other porcupines, the source of both comfort and pain.

The porcupine metaphor is an apt one for the way we live as American Catholics in a pluralistic society. We cherish values of tolerance, diversity, independence, and liberty, as well as community and justice. In affirming the value of pluralism the Second Vatican Council opted for a dialogical presence of the Church in the world, offering to engage in conversation about the problems afflicting humanity. There is a very clear acknowledgment that the Church has something to learn as well as something to teach, and that other institutions and other fields of study have something to contribute to the well-being of society. A dialogical presence in the world implies the ability to engage in conversation, which suggests an open-minded and open-ended discourse together—"open-minded in the sense of grappling with each others' meanings, and open-ended in the sense of encouraging an ongoing exploration of new possibilities" (Magill and Hoff 1995, 1).

Once we become engaged in the world with others, however, we are often pricked by the different values and opinions that may threaten our own deeply held beliefs. Unity with diversity does not always appear to be something to celebrate. Consider the experience of Benedict Ashley, O.P., one of the participants in a conversation on conservative Catholics in America organized by R. Scott Appleby and Mary Jo Weaver. For Ashley, pluralism is a threat to truth and unity: "The notion that there are many valid perspectives on religious truth implies that these perspectives cannot be reduced to a single, objectively true theology and seems to contradict the biblical 'one Lord, one faith, one

baptism' (Eph 4:5)" (Ashley 1995, 63). Weaver reports that some of the "religious right" refused to join in the dialogue, insisting there would have to be agreement on the existence of absolute truth attainable through the Church. Others felt that there was no need to participate in conversation because there is no resolution to controversy. In essence "we have nothing in common" (Weaver, Appleby 1995, 8). One could imagine a similar rejection to an offer of dialogue emerging from left-wing Catholics who perceive nothing in common with those on the right. Yet, as a communal people we recognize the need for each other, however we differ, and so we keep adjusting our closeness and distance to keep from being isolated and in order to preserve the truth as we perceive it.

What does all this talk about porcupines and prickliness and pluralism have to do with the moral life and the Liturgy of the Hours? In this essay I will consider this question in relation to the Christian moral life as a call-response dynamic. I aim to show how the Liturgy of the Hours keeps the dialogical nature of morality before our eyes and has the potential to shape a worldview and form dispositions as a response of praise to God as Creator and Lord. Undergirding this thesis is a fundamental conviction that we can not dissociate liturgy and the moral life, that how we live our daily lives is integrally connected with the way we worship. While acknowledging that we cannot place too many burdens on the liturgy, the focus here will be on the ways that the Liturgy of the Hours impacts the moral life.

THE MORAL LIFE AS A CALL-RESPONSE DYNAMIC

As "beings-in-the-world-with-others," as Heidegger put it, a response to the other is necessary and unavoidable. We are confronted with an "ethical demand" by reason of the very nature of our life together, a life that places us in the midst of others whose very presence demands a response. Thus, the call is unavoidable even if the response remains undetermined. For the ethical demand arising from recognition of the other does not take away one's freedom to respond appropriately (other-directed) or inappropriately (self-centered). In this regard, as Enda McDonagh describes it in *Gift and Call*, the moral life can be understood as a call-response dynamic. The other who is the source of the moral call is a different fountain of knowledge, understanding, freedom, initiative, activity, and love—an other than oneself.

For the Christian believer the moral call arising from the encounter with the other is always also a beckoning from God (Matthew 25). The Christian moral life is first and foremost a response to the experience of value of the other who is a medium of God's revelation in history

(*imago Dei*). It is a call to discipleship, an invitation to respond to the graciousness of life, the gift of persons who are, in the eyes of faith, incarnations of grace. Discipleship is not primarily a matter of human achievement but is a response to the in-breaking presence of God realized most fully in Jesus Christ. Discipleship requires a creative and total response, but the gift is primary. McDonagh refers to this way of understanding the moral life as a matter of “creative receptivity” or a “receptive creativity” (McDonagh 1982, 37, 43). That is, morality is first and foremost a response to the empowering and transforming gift of the Spirit. It is “not something we create but something by which we are claimed” (Wadell 1989, 15). In essence, what is called for is thanksgiving for the gift and celebration of its presence.

There is an ambiguous character to the call-response dynamic. The source of the moral call can be experienced as gift or threat. The other is a gift-presence embodying a call because the person is freely given, not a product of one’s own creation or achievement. In its gift-character, the other draws us out of ourselves, enables self-transcendence, and sets us free to respond. The gift of the other implies an invitation to enter his or her worldview. It involves a call to move out of and beyond the narrow confinement of the self, beyond one’s limited perceptions or biases in recognition and exploration of diverse points of view. Thus, as gift, the encounter with the world of another has the potential for transformation.

Experience is quick to reveal that the other, as different, may be perceived as “threat provoking fear” rather than complementary gift inviting acceptance and respect (McDonagh 1979, 72). This may be due to a fear of the other as taking over or upsetting one’s controlled and controllable world. Or, a person or group may be seen as threat because one cannot tolerate the existence of those who challenge or call into question one’s own viewpoint or values. The temptation to turn gifts into threats is the heritage of sin. As the heirs of countless generations of fear, suspicion, distrust, and mistreatment within the human race we find it difficult to assume attitudes of openness and trust and to reestablish community. Nevertheless, as McDonagh insists, the moral challenge of the call to discipleship is to enable the gift to triumph over the threat and toward genuine communion and mutual enrichment:

The concept of otherness for all its importance must not obscure community as the context in which it exists; communication as the method of recognising, respecting and responding to it; communion or deeper community as the crowning achievement of

response. Without the “commun-” dimension, human otherness could provide no insight into the experience of morality. And the “commun-” dimension seems necessarily reciprocal. To be in community, to communicate, to achieve communion—all involve mutual recognition, respect and response (McDonagh 1975, 32).

There is a clear reciprocity and common bondedness, however elementary, implied in the call-response dynamic, for each is called to recognize, respect, and respond to the other as a member of the human community. Otherness and response to it are complemented by communion and solidarity in the context of which difference may be engaged and celebrated (McDonagh 1982, 93).

What might this understanding of the moral life have to do with the Liturgy of the Hours? We shall consider how each of the three essential elements of the ethic—the communal context, the method of communication, and the celebration of otherness in communion and solidarity—are integral to the liturgy.

COMMUNITY AS CONTEXT

Worship is something Christians do together, not just from religious duty, but because it is the primary communal mode of remembering and expressing Christian faith and the Christian story. It is the means whereby the community confirms its life as derived from Christ and shared with each other. As such, the Liturgy of the Hours is a communal response to God; it is prayer in common.¹ In his introduction to the *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours (GILH)*, Cardinal Annibale Bugnini emphasized this point:

The awareness of the Liturgy of the Hours as something belonging essentially to the whole Church, has, regrettably, hardly been in evidence for many centuries. It had come to be considered as the preserve of religious and clergy. Liturgical services however are not private functions, or reserved to groups of elites, they are celebrations of the Church, which is the “sacrament of unity” (Bugnini 1971, 11).

In fact, the tradition reveals that prayer together and at certain hours of the day was common practice for the early church (Acts 1:14;

¹The Liturgy of the Hours is referred to as the Divine Office and also as Common Prayer. Since the whole of the Liturgy of the Hours or Divine Office is prayer and within the liturgy there are prayers, in order to avoid confusion I shall capitalize “prayer” when it is used to indicate the Liturgy of the Hours and use the lower case when speaking of the various prayers within the liturgy.

2:42; 4:24; 12:5; Eph 5:19-21). About the second century there begins to appear a pattern of daily prayer during various hours of the day and night, with the morning and evening designated as the principal times for the people to gather for prayer. It is recorded that in the description of her visit to Jerusalem, the fourth-century pilgrim Egeria witnessed that as an ordinary practice, large numbers of lay people gathered for daily prayer. A.-M. Roguet, O.P., notes that in Western Christian antiquity, while celebration of the Mass was not everywhere a daily occurrence, daily worship was the norm (Roguet 1977, 93). These prayers in common gradually took on a more definite shape in the Liturgy of the Hours and came to be referred to as the cathedral or public office to distinguish it from its monastic counterpart. Briefly stated, the purpose of the cathedral office was to sanctify the beginning and the end of the day for ordinary people and it was to be celebrated in common. The early monastic office tended to aim more at continuous prayer throughout the day and night and was more of a quiet meditation on Scripture than a public liturgical ceremony of the cathedral type.

The interrelationship of these two forms of prayer and the ultimate dominance of the monastic influence is a long and complex story beyond the scope or purpose of this essay to recount. It is sufficient to note, however, that the Liturgy of the Hours is traditionally the public prayer of the people. Robert Taft, S.J., states this point clearly:

The privatization of the office into a breviary-become-clerical-prayer book is certainly not traditional, for traditionally the Liturgy of the Hours is something a group celebrates, not something an individual reads. . . . As with so much else in the history of the Church, what was once the property of the entire People of God has degenerated into a clerical residue, only reminiscent of what it was meant to be (Taft 1986, 362).

Thus, the *GILH* recommends the common celebration of the Divine Office:

The example and command of the Lord and his apostles to persevere in continuous prayer are not to be considered a mere legal rule. Prayer expresses the very essence of the Church as a community. . . . Community prayer, therefore, has a special dignity since Christ himself said: "Where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them" (Mt 18:20). . . . The Liturgy of the Hours, like the other liturgical services is not a private function, but pertains to the whole body of the Church. It manifests the Church and has an effect upon it. . . . As often as the communal

celebration may take place with the presence and active participation of the faithful, it is to be preferred to individual and quasi-private celebration (nos. 9, 20, 33).

Furthermore, the *GILH* does not limit the context of communal celebration of the liturgy to the parish, but it may take place “wherever groups of the laity are gathered and whatever the reason which has brought them together” (no. 27).

COMMUNICATION AS THE METHOD

As “liturgy” the Liturgy of the Hours recalls and re-presents the story of God’s self-communication to humankind and humankind’s response to God. It is not monologic in form but dialogic, our response to God’s initiative (*GILH*, no. 14). The gift that summons and empowers belongs no less to the structure of the liturgy than it does to the structure of moral living. Liturgy is first and foremost an activity of God in Christ. It is one of the ways the Church responds in praise, surrender, and thanksgiving to God’s call to conversion, to reconciliation, and to union with one another. Through the liturgy Christians are enabled to recognize, give thanks for, and cooperate with this basic structure of human existence as it derives from and tends toward God. This “eternal doxology” is integral to the liturgy and is not just our response, but also the eternally repeated call. It is both God’s unending saving activity and our prayerful response in faith and commitment (Taft 1986, 343). Further, as Mark O’Keefe notes:

In the liturgy, Christians acknowledge and celebrate one another as sons and daughters of God and thus as brothers and sisters to one another. People who participate in the celebration of the liturgy, then, are empowered to see other persons as gift with a greater clarity and to respond to their needs with a greater urgency. . . . Liturgy, therefore, lends new power to the foundational response to other persons that is the heart of all good moral action (O’Keefe 1995, 99).

The relationship with God at the heart of all liturgy is analogous to an ongoing conversation with a friend. Just as words and gestures are the language of human communication, so to with divine self-communication in liturgy and sacraments. While not diminishing the importance of informal, spontaneous prayer, Nathan Mitchell observes that the Liturgy of the Hours is structured in order to ensure optimum conditions for both communication and participation with a

minimum of distortion. He writes: "Like other forms of worship the Liturgy of the Hours is a multi-leveled act of communication. Its levels include the *verbal* (short readings, psalms, songs, etc), the *non-verbal* (gesture, movement, silence), the *overt* (varieties of external expression) and the *covert* (internal moods and dispositions), the *interpersonal* and the *transcendent*" (Mitchell 1977, 22). To exemplify this multileveled form of communication, consider the rhythm and structure of morning (Lauds) and evening (Vespers) prayer, which are designated in the *GILH* as the "chief hours" of the Office (nos. 29, 37, 40). In placing the emphasis on these "two hinges" of the Liturgy of the Hours, the *GILH* seems to have revived the emphasis on the cathedral or public office.

Morning prayer is designed and structured to sanctify the day; the evening is celebrated as a prayer of thanksgiving. Although they have a different character, these two prayers have a similar dialogical structure and elements (*GILH*, nos. 37–54). With the opening prayer we are initiated into the conversation and given the grounding of good dialogue as we ask that our lips, ears, minds, and hearts be opened. It is an invitation to sing the praises of God and to hear God's voice. The opening prayer begins the style of communication that marks the Liturgy of the Hours. That is, the conversation is structured in a responsorial fashion, with time for speaking, listening, and responding as we move from the opening prayer to pray the psalms and canticles, to listen to the reading, to reflect, to offer intercessions, and to join in the Lord's Prayer and concluding prayer.

To prevent the liturgy from becoming overly wordy, a prudent use of silence is recommended, particularly after the psalms and reading. As the *GILH* makes clear, it is not sufficient to listen to the word of God; we must understand it and assimilate it in order to engage in a conversation between the people and God (nos. 56, 201). Silence is also needed to promote active and "conscious" participation. To participate means that each one should play his or her part as members of an organic community. Like the different parts of a symphony, each person has his or her role in contributing to the harmony of the whole. As Roguet notes, "We do not participate merely by acting, speaking or singing: we also participate by keeping quiet, by waiting, or by listening when it is the time for someone else to act or to speak" (Roguet 1971, 128). Conscious participation means one is not passive and resigned as if going through the ordeal of some unpleasant duty. Rather, it is an activity that is in some way creative. Like good conversation in general, there needs to be a rhythmic balance of speaking and listening. Just as a person who talks incessantly can stunt dialogue, so too,

may conversation be blocked by one who listens but offers little or nothing to further the communication.

While no moments of silence are specified in the liturgy, there is a considerable degree of flexibility and freedom of choice, particularly on weekdays, in arranging the Prayer (*GILH*, nos. 28, 189, 245–53). This liberty, however, is given within the stable framework noted above. In the *GILH* the importance of flexibility is made clear:

The Liturgy of the Hours should not be looked on as a beautiful moment of a past age, to be preserved almost unchanged in order to excite our admiration. On the contrary, it should come to life again with new meaning and grow to become once more the sign of a living community (no. 273).

Along with this rhythmic balance of word, reflection, silence, gesture, and symbol there is an experience of variety in the liturgical roles, as well as opportunities for leadership of the laity that sets up a mutual and respectful dialogue among the participants.

Before concluding this section, some comment on the dialogical style of the psalms will highlight the method of communication. The psalms speak of how one ought to converse with God and others. They are sung or said alternately between choirs or as a response to a leader(s). There is a rhythm to the psalms that expresses both sides of the conversation of faith between God and Israel. As Walter Brueggemann explains this is seen most clearly in the lament psalms, which make the important point that “everything must be brought to speech and everything brought to speech must be addressed to God” (Brueggemann 1984, 52). These psalms speak of the disarray of the relationship, a disorientation that concerns both partners in various ways. Conversation is integral to righting a relationship that has gone amiss. This is so because in Israel life is always understood covenantally and dialogically. Thus, one party cannot do all the talking because a monologue does not evoke a response.

CELEBRATION OF OTHERNESS IN COMMUNITY AND SOLIDARITY

In examining this third element of a call-response dynamic and its relationship to the Liturgy of the Hours I will first introduce an explanation of solidarity and then comment on the interaction of a communal vision and the virtue of solidarity.

The most comprehensive understanding of solidarity is given to us by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis: On Social*

Concern. While he has drawn on a century of Catholic social thought for which solidarity is integral, this pope first names it as a virtue. As a Christian virtue solidarity is a “firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good . . . because we are all responsible for all” (no. 38). Further, solidarity is integrally related to charity:

It seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimension of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation. . . . It is clearly linked to the Christian ideal of unity or communion. This unity reflects the intimate life of the Trinity and discloses a new model of the human race, which must ultimately inspire our solidarity (no. 40).

In other writings, John Paul explains that the virtue of solidarity unites mercy, love, and justice. It binds us to those who are close to us, to society as a whole, and to the world community. This is not a “solidarity-against” but a constructive “solidarity-for,” which requires collaboration. As Marie Vianney Bilgrien points out, for John Paul collaboration is constitutive of solidarity because to achieve it necessarily involves some conflict, opposition, and efforts toward consensus in decision-making. Among the various components of collaboration, dialogue is one of the most important aspects. For “as long as the dialogue continues there is an opportunity to work together and find solutions. If the dialogue does not continue because of differences and divisions, the whole collaborative effort ceases. Then there is no possibility for solidarity or unity, and the result is separation, division, alienation” (Bilgrien 1995, 101).

We see in this explanation that the virtue of solidarity is linked with the vision of unity or communion. How can the Liturgy of the Hours foster both this vision and virtue?

A COMMUNAL VISION

An important part of the moral task is to learn to see rightly, to develop a keen sense of perception, to be aware of the newness and transformation that is possible despite the tragedy and conflict that too often permeate reality. To fail to see correctly leaves us with a perspective that admits of only limited community (with “our own”), with restricted possibilities of change in ourselves or others, and with little hope that human life together can be experienced as gift and not threat. As Philip Keane maintains, the discipline of vision is an exercise of imagination, for it often involves a “letting go” of preconceived notions in order to look deeply at reality to see it as it really is. Imagination is that creative,

poetic faculty that provides us with the capacity to relate diverse experiences so as to make sense of our world. With imagination

we suspend judgment about how to unite the concrete and the abstract. We let the two sides of our knowing play with one another. By allowing this interplay between the two aspects of our knowing, we get a much deeper chance to look at what we know, to form a vision of it (Keane 1984, 81).

The psalms, which assume a dominant place in the Liturgy of the Hours, are formative of an imaginative vision. As poetry the psalms embody evocative, metaphorical, and symbolic language that delights in ambiguity. This impressionistic and creative kind of speech holds surprise and may create new and diverse ways of perceiving the world. As Walter Brueggemann writes: "The language of the psalms permits us to be boldly anticipatory about what may be, as well as discerning about what has been" (Brueggemann 1982, 29). He further points out that to engage in the dialogue of the psalms requires effort, as does all good communication between people. For the psalms are filled with metaphors that are rooted in concrete reality. Yet the words are not descriptive but elastic, requiring the stretch of imagination to extend beyond the concrete to the universal. For example, consider the metaphor of "the protective wings of God," derived from the concrete observation of how little birds are safe under the protective wing of the mother hen:

Keep me as the apple of your eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings (17:8).
Be merciful to me, O God . . . for in you I take refuge,
in the shadow of your wings I take refuge (57:2).

There is a yearning for safety, well-being, and communion with God. This image may be discerned as acknowledging that the resources for life are not found in ourselves but in God. It embodies an openness to a new purpose and a reliance upon the protective concern of another.

In Psalm 27 the metaphor of "an army encamped" refers to the concrete experience of being threatened by war and enemies yet trusting in God. Whatever the threats may be in our lives, we need not fear or resist engagement with those who seem to be "in the enemy camp" because of trust in God's protection.

Though an army encamp against me
my heart would not fear.
Though war break out against me
even then would I trust (27:3).

And in the metaphorical stanza, “like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you my God” (42:1), we are asked to reflect upon how we take God for granted. It is filled with yearning for God, the source of sustenance and life.

Praying the psalms requires an attentiveness to language, a cultivation of the imagination in order to bring our own experience to the psalms while permitting it to be disciplined by the speech of the psalms. Conversely, we need to allow the poetry to reshape our sensitivities and to fill our minds with new pictures and images that may redirect our lives. Thus, regular and repeated engagement with the psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours can bring about a more open and flexible approach to life and to others because, as Mary Collins maintains, “with such words regularly placed on our lips, corresponding sentiments form gradually in our hearts. In this way the psalm excerpts become primer and tutor, expanding and guiding our religious sensibilities” (Collins 1992, 291).

The metaphor of light over darkness is central to and permeates the psalms as well as other prayers in the Liturgy of the Hours (*GILH*, no. 16). For example, in the book of *Christian Prayer* we find in morning prayer a renewal of our commitment to Christ by consecrating the day through thanks and praise with the symbol of light. In the evening we begin with the reminder that “Christ is the light of the world.” With the psalms we are called to “cast off darkness, put on light” (Psalm 36); and we pray to the Lord who “is my light and my help” (Psalm 27). As Taft notes, anyone who “walks in the light” and claims to live in communion with God must live as Jesus did in accord with God’s command to love one another, in loving communion with one another (1 John 2:5-6). “And since we celebrate what we are, and our core reality is that we have been saved by the saving death and resurrection of Jesus, the rising sun calls to mind that true Sun of Justice in whose rising we receive the light of salvation” (Taft 1986, 353).

Being in communion with God means that we live no longer in darkness but in the light, that we share a common life, bonded to one another. The illumination of light, then, has moral and communitarian dimensions, for living in light implies loving our brothers and sisters; not to do so is to remain in darkness (1 John 3:11). To love darkness over light is what Bernard Lonergan describes as “scotosis,” which produces a blind spot or “scotoma.” It has to do with the repression or rejection of an unwanted insight that might provoke further questions and complementary insights which would challenge a person’s current viewpoints and behavior and therefore call for change. When an insight is unwanted, censorship is operative at the pre-conscious level

to exclude from consciousness those unwanted images (Kelleher 1992, 131). The question the Christian story poses is: What moral vision is really moral blindness in my life?

Shared life in union with God is the source of holiness. To become holy—an aim of the Prayer—has to do with a growing awareness that all creation is graced because of the incarnation and there is oneness of Christian life expressed as the body of Christ. The Liturgy of the Hours is profoundly Eucharistic in that it brings us into communion with the Church and with Christ, which is exemplified in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup (*GILH*, no. 12). Thus, it can be said that the daily Office is a “kind of spinning-out of the Eucharist through the day” (Guiver 1988, 191). This means that interaction with others “is one of mutual acceptance, hospitality and dialogue, and that it extends beyond the members of the assembly to all humanity” (Dallen 1991, 301).

VIRTUE OF SOLIDARITY

To become a person of virtue requires formative training and habitual practice. Thomas Aquinas notes that all virtue is a habit or disposition acquired through repeated acts over time, which inclines a person to act in one characteristic way rather than another (*ST I-II*, q. 55, a. 1; *ST I-II*, q. 49, a. 4). After sufficient regular practice, we are able to more spontaneously and skillfully act in accord with the virtue. It is like learning to play the piano or any other musical instrument. What was difficult to play becomes easy with practice, and then we move to the next level and the process is repeated. As habitual and patterned prayer the Liturgy of the Hours is a “characterizing activity,” engaging people in the stories and ritual that shape how they are to be disposed toward and view the world. Through a complex symbolic pattern of prayer and gestures in its ritual actions, Christian worship both forms vision and expresses dispositions belonging to the life of faith in God. For “to pray is to become a living text before God. In this sense . . . meaning what we pray involves sharing a form of life in which the affections and dispositions are oriented toward God” (Saliers 1989, 181).

There are at least three ways that regular participation in the Liturgy of the Hours can form us as a people disposed to solidarity. First, as a response of praise and thanksgiving to the Trinitarian God the Prayer is an invitation to share in God’s inner life of self-giving love. As Augustine argued again and again, God loves because that is the divine nature, not because creation deserves it. For Augustine love is the bond between the lover and beloved, with God as the other who is loved. God’s own life is an ever-living communication

in love, an unending exchange, always in movement, because the divine life of love is constituted through such interchange and activity. Thus, solidarity is grounded in the very foundational claim about the nature of God and the nature of being, that we are to give ourselves away in relationships of love for we are created in the image of God, who is a community of love. The trinitarian metaphor of relationship has its correlative at the level of human interpersonal relationships as a response to otherness. Modeled on the Trinitarian image, relationships of mutuality require justice and love as their precondition. Justice cares for the establishment of right relationships, and worship is the celebration and concrete expression of right relationships (Hughes 1991, 41). As worship of the trinitarian God, the Liturgy of the Hours helps us recognize our bondedness as a people of justice who not only tolerate, but try to incorporate dissonant points of view. For “when the Church gathers it does so in order to imagine what the world would be like if we believed that the justice of God has become flesh; to rehearse the Justice of God until we get it right” (Koernke 1992, 37).

Second, the intercessory prayer brings us into solidarity with all peoples of the world. As the liturgy is concerned with the unity of the Church’s prayer, intercession is not simply a “praying-for but also a praying-with” (Guiver 1988, 172). In the morning, prayers are invoked to consecrate or commend the day to God; at evening time intercessions are for the various needs of the Church and the world. Christ is in the midst of the people praying with and for them and, just as Christ identifies with all humanity, especially with the suffering and forsaken, so too are the intercessory prayers focused on our solidarity with the world. Consider a few examples from the book of *Christian Prayer*:

May we seek those things which are beneficial to our brothers and sisters, without counting the cost. . . . Grant that we may progress today in your love, and that all things may work together for our good and the good of all. . . . Lord, be the refuge of the poor, their help in distress. . . . Enlighten all legislators to enact laws in the spirit of wisdom and justice. . . . Merciful God, hear the cries of the dying, comfort them with your presence.

Donald Saliers highlights four aspects of intercessory prayer that constitute its “grammar.” (1) In praying with and for others we encounter dimensions of ourselves. It requires an integrity about who we are in relation to others, people of empathy and compassion. (2) It is

only in and through solidarity with those in need that we can mean what we pray in intercession. (3) We gain a “moral intentionality” in asking God to remember those for and with whom we pray. Commending others to the grace and mercy of God requires the development of a capacity learned over time and circumstances to trust God and to be attentive to God’s hidden ways with the world. (4) There needs to be some experience of the reality of others and their needs included in the intercessory prayer. In other words, a connection between prayer and life, not seen in opposition but understanding one’s whole life as a prayer, a continual self-offering in love to God with others (Saliers 1989, 184).

Finally, the Prayer brings us into communion with the saints, which expresses the reality of communion with God and all others, that race, nationality, class, gender, even space and time pose no limitations within the shared life of people. As a metaphor for the mystical body of Christ, the communion of saints entails a relationship with Christ and all others, living or dead. The “supernatural” sharing of the communion of saints offers an analogy for the way earthly society should be structured, as a community of solidarity. As Michael and Kenneth Himes write:

Being attuned to the communion of saints promotes attention to the identity of being a fellow believer with others past, present, future. . . . One of the potential benefits of such an identity is that it fosters a sense of solidarity with those whom we do not know personally; it suggests that solidarity should not be limited to the immediate group near at hand (Himes and Himes 1993, 167).

In addition, the saints are important for the moral life as examples or exemplars: as examples of charity, justice, honesty, and as persons who show a pattern of living that cannot be captured in one virtue. Saints also remind us that we share with others a tradition, a cause by which we are linked with millions of others who have gone before us. The community of saints implies a bond between those now living and those who are dead, thus infusing the present with importance, for we see ourselves as part of something much larger, part of a drama that is more than our own story.

Since the celebration of the saints as solemnities, feasts, or memorials is an integral component of the Prayer (*GILH*, nos. 218–9), this bondage occurs in several ways. For example, while it offers a good deal of flexibility, the Prayer does require that the final intention of the intercessions is always for the dead (*GILH*, no. 186). And the morning

and evening canticles of Zachariah and Mary's Magnificat are prayers of remembering and memorial. They bridge the past, present, and future as well as offer a shared perspective and common outlook on reality. Furthermore, the psalms are prayers of praise in the name of the whole body of Christ (*GILH*, no. 108). They incorporate the voice of the apostles and the communion of saints joined with the Church on earth (Baxendale 1993, 387).

CONCLUSION

In his commentary on the renewed Liturgy of the Hours Roguet asked: "Why would anyone want to reanimate this corpse?" (Roguet 1971, 77). His response was quite simply that the Divine Office is not a clerical or monastic preserve, but rather it belongs to all the Christian people. Roguet's desire to revive the liturgy as the people's prayer remains valid today, for little has changed in twenty-five years. Not only has the Office remained primarily the preserve of the clergy, but this form of prayer remains the "best kept secret" from most of the Catholic laity. An unfortunate consequence of this state of affairs is not only that we are functioning in a way that is not traditional, but we are losing out on a valuable resource for living the moral life in a pluralistic society.

The dynamic of gift and response that is the nature of the Prayer is analogous to the ethical demand of the moral life. As an experience of value and a beckoning from God, the encounter with another who is different from one's self calls minimally for a response of acceptance and respect. We are more apt to see the other as gift with greater clarity through participation in the Liturgy of the Hours as we celebrate our unity amidst diversity and through repeated prayers of praise and thanksgiving. The linkage between the Prayer and the moral life is evidenced in the three essential elements of the ethic. The call is experienced and the response is made in the context of community. As common prayer, the liturgy traditionally is a communal celebration and calls for a response of engagement and participation. The ritual of conversation—word, gesture, symbol, and silence—is analogous to good communication with others. We are invited to enter the dialogue with open eyes, ears, heart, and mind; to proceed in a rhythmic "back and forth" of listening, speaking, seeking to understand and grasp the meaning of the speech. One participates in the conversation in a creative, imaginative way with attentiveness, aware of the effort required to grasp the multi-layered meanings of language. The response is made with flexibility and freedom, yet within a structured dialogical framework. Moreover, otherness and response are complemented by a communal vision and the virtue of solidarity. The Prayer fosters an

imaginative and communal vision through the poetry of the psalms and metaphors such as light over darkness, the body of Christ, and trinitarian God. As a habitual and patterned prayer the Liturgy of the Hours also shapes the virtue of solidarity through the prayers of intercessions and life within the communion of saints.

The dialogical mindset and appropriate respect for the other, which is fostered, shaped, and refined through regular participation in the Liturgy of the Hours, can lead to sharpened abilities to practice civility in our public discourse. Learning the art of public conversation and the disciplines necessary for civil discourse are not direct aims of praying the liturgy, but such skills, so badly needed in our acrimonious society, may be valuable secondary benefits acquired through a practice of dialogue and regular communal prayer.

To return to the porcupine metaphor, we come together to celebrate our common bondedness in the midst of difficulties and struggles. To appropriately respond to others we keep adjusting our closeness and distance to establish right relationships and to keep from getting pricked by those who are different, who may challenge and call into question our deeply held beliefs and perceptions of the truth. Unlike the spinous hogs, however, the imagination enables us to experience alternative images previously unknown and helps us to recognize the ambiguity of life, that what may appear to be a threat may, in effect, be gift.

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Eucharist as Worship: Journey to Identity

The renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant
between the Lord and his people
draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ
and sets them on fire.

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, no. 10

Paragraph 10 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy is a doctrinal summation of the place and power of the celebration of the Eucharist as an act of public worship. Intimately flowing from initiation, the celebration of the Eucharist is the radically necessary element in the process of personal identity formation for the sake of participation in the mission of Christ. And yet, years of experience as counselor and spiritual director have led me to realize that there is a vast gap between this noble truth and the conceptual knowledge and affective experience of many Catholic Christians.

The following reflection is a modest attempt to bridge that distance through an exploration of worship and its indispensable role in identity formation. To that end, the first part of this work points out significant aspects of our social order and culture, which highlight the need for worship in finding our true selves and fulfilling our vocations in life. The second part explores the claim that the doing of Eucharist is worship. In other words, the celebration of the Eucharist is “the worship without fear all the days of our lives,” as Zachariah announced at the name-giving of John; the worship in “Spirit and truth” that Jesus foretold to the unnamed Samaritan woman met at Jacob’s well and that is underscored by the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council. The third part describes the indispensable place of public worship in—and the contribution it makes to—human growth in general and to “Christian identity formation” in particular. The final part of this essay offers a pastoral vignette that yields some insight into

the power of former catechetical images to inhibit authentic Catholic worship and concludes with some suggestions for the healing of the Christian imagination.

THE SOCIAL ORDER AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

At a time in history when interest in spirituality is soaring, 90 percent of the population profess belief in God, and two-thirds of the population claim membership in a religious organization, investigation of the place of and contribution of public worship to the spiritual life of the individual and the community could seem unnecessary and uninteresting. Certainly, the above data suggest that religious sensibilities are doing well. But on closer examination, several significant phenomena recommend concerned attention.

Proliferation of Small Groups and Communities

The proliferation of small groups for the purposes of prayer, spirituality, support, or self-help is modifying, and in turn impacting, understandings of community and God (Wuthnow 1994). That is, the attitudes, expectations, and perceptions necessary to enter into corporate worship as Roman Catholic Christians are, in many cases, seriously undermined by the escape to “small groups” alone. For example, some new understandings of community include a stress on affective knowing, emotional intimacy, and intentional membership.

These sensibilities are manifest in a widespread conviction that “norms” for membership are un-Christian, resulting in the thought that anyone may be included, without regard for their personal convictions, likes, or dislikes. Similarly, most (but not all) groups tend to over-emphasize the approachability, availability, and unconditional acceptance of God without, at the same time, acknowledging the authority, power, and transcendence of God. To be sure, the community that the Roman Catholic Church is—and desires to more fully become—does presume some affective knowing and might, on occasion, be marked by emotional intimacy. Intimacy is clearly necessary for worship. But, as will be shown later, intimacy is an ability of the person that may or may not be accompanied by warm feelings about God or other members of the assembly.

In short, the overstresses on boundary-less membership and a notion of God as solely accepting render genuine community and authentic worship impossible, because the otherness of both persons and God has been tamed. The dynamic of taming otherness is a preferred strategy of persons who are unable or unwilling to be genuinely intimate (Erikson 1959). Further comment follows in greater detail below.

Church Attendance

A second problematic phenomenon is that, on average, only 20 percent of a parish gathers on a weekly or regular basis. Concretely this means that while people are searching for the spiritual and consider themselves believers and somewhat religious, at least for Catholics, they are cut off from a worshiping community that shapes and directs the spiritual journey. It might be remarked that since 80 percent are not regularly present for worship, energies might be better directed to exploring the reasons for their absence and strategies for outreach. The focus on worship, however, does not obviate concern for these and the untold number of people who have never heard the gospel and are, thus, deprived of coming to know Jesus Christ and his revelation of Abba. Indeed, public worship is inextricably related to the task of ongoing evangelization, which is the nature of the ministry to and with these groups.

Individualism

I join my voice with the chorus of other voices who recognize some of the many negative contributions of individualism. From my perspective as a clinical psychologist, I am particularly concerned about its impact on growth into Christian adulthood. As Christians we are called to become responsible selves (Niebuhr 1963) before God within the community. But with a Kantian understanding of and emphasis on a kind of crass autonomy, we have made and continue to make ourselves into gods. This "self-deification" forgets the basic experiential insight (Macmurray 1961) that we always exist in relationship, and thus need conversation or dialogue partners who call us out of isolation and shape who we are. These partners are our fellow human beings and the God who loves us into and sustains us in existence.

Self-absorption and the Culture

Narcissism, self-absorption, and/or egocentrism are further frequent indictments of modern Western culture. Unfortunately, in general conversation, these three very different psychological states are conflated into a single category to which a psychodynamic explanation is attributed. That is, narcissistic/self-absorbed/egocentric people are understood to have been so traumatized or wounded that they are preoccupied with their own pain and, therefore, cannot look outward toward others. To be sure, remediation of this condition requires some type of therapeutic intervention. However, when distinctions are made among the three terms, it is evident that only narcissism is the psychological condition requiring therapeutic intervention. Egocen-

trism is an age-related phenomenon; that is, infants are born egocentric and only with the physical and emotional maturation that accompanies the growth into adolescence are we capable of moving beyond an egocentric stance toward others and life. Self-absorption, on the other hand, is a description of the condition of narcissism and the stage of egocentrism.

Each culture provides interpretive frameworks for experience. That is, the culture presents messages and images to the psyche that open up and give direction to the inner experience. Largely absent from our cultural scene are images that suggest self-transcendence and/or self-forgetfulness. Thus, our Western culture, rather than assisting people to transcend the egocentrism of childhood and adolescence, presents messages through its media, advertising images, and therapeutic worldview that reward and reinforce self-absorption and self-indulgence. Christian worship, by its very nature in the telling and the doing of the Christian story, offers images that not only confirm, but also critically challenge our experiences of ourselves. This particular contribution of worship to self-understanding will be picked up later in the section on identity.

Consumerism and Advertising

Like individualism, consumerism characterizes our social order. In effect, consumerism can dull us to the point that it is difficult to hear the message of the gospel; it has the potential to recast the American psyche and self-understanding. The advertising that fuels the engine of consumerism preys upon and exploits the fears, anxieties, dreams, and hopes of people. Exploitation occurs precisely when basic, existential anxieties, desires, and aspirations are aroused, and then, a specific car, bank, diet program, etc., is suggested to assuage the anxiety or quench the longing. Thus, the constantly repeated message is that who you are and what you desire are resolvable in the tangible object, the here-and-now, and immediately. The removal of all traces of existential fears or hopes and transcendent yearnings from the public discourse spawns one-dimensional existence and persons, obscures the need for worship, and is responsible for the significant increase in depressive disorders that characterize our times.

EUCHARIST: PRAYER OF THE WORSHIP OF GOD

Worship and the Average Catholic

Conversations with Catholics from all walks of life and levels of education revealed the fact that even though the Church sees the

celebration of the Eucharist as the central act of worship, and indeed of the whole of Christian life, most Catholics talk about going to Mass or to church. Even in places that describe themselves in language that has been shaped by a reclaimed understanding of who we are as God's people, there is the same tendency to describe doing Eucharist as going to Mass or perhaps going to liturgy. Further, most Catholics consider worship to be a Protestant word. It would seem, then, that most Catholic Christians do not see or make the internal connection between the celebration of Eucharist and public worship. One reason for not linking Eucharist and worship is the underdeveloped ability to see the "we" in worship. Over thirty years have passed since the Second Vatican Council, and even though Catholics understand that the Eucharist should nourish and sustain them in living their faith in the world, many continue to deeply value the Eucharist as an object of private devotion in a communal setting. I find that this personal-in-the-communal behavioral pattern is similar, in many respects, to the parallel play that one observes among toddlers. Small children have not yet developed a sense of a "we" that is made up of different players; they are incapable of acting as one in the pursuit of a common goal. But I have more interest in another reason: untrained sensitivities and expectations and, therefore, lack of ways to enter into this type of prayer.

Yet another element needing to be addressed is the "why" of worship. In the past, Catholics' motivation for Sunday Mass was almost solely influenced by the extrinsic motivator of external law. Now this sense of duty has lost its power to motivate, and I submit that the real intrinsic reasons have to be awakened. The search for subjective meaning in what one does is exemplified in the comments of Catholics who do not celebrate Sunday Eucharist. Two very frequent responses are, "I don't get anything out of it" and "I find more support and meaning in my community." In response, I would follow Evelyn Underhill's (1936) lead and respond that true worship is essentially disinterested. It does not exist for what the worshiper can get out of it. Rather, one's attention is focused on God. This other-directed gaze, in return, benefits the worshipers in ways that exceed their most extravagant dreams and hopes: the transformation and fulfillment of one's deepest desires are accomplished.

Eucharist and Worship in the Past

Two recent events brought home to me the inspired genius of the Roman Catholic Church for safeguarding the faith of the Christian community. Both centered on worship and our Eucharistic faith. In the

first, the presidential manner of the priest clearly manifested his theology of Eucharist. His over-attention to saying the words of institution, rather than to the entire Eucharistic Prayer, communicated that the body and blood of Christ were being made present as a reality simply outside of us and for our worship. The second event, the manner of exposition and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, developed this emphasis on the Christ solely outside of us. Clearly, these practices preserved the connection between Eucharist and worship, but the surrounding behaviors expressed a truncated understanding of our worship, which derived its inspiration from a medieval piety and a defensive posture of the Church following the Reformation. In short, the celebration of the Eucharist is a corporate act of worship in which the word of God interprets our lives, we respond in praise and thanksgiving, consume the Christ and his members, and reaffirm the new covenant made with us by drinking from a common cup. Ministers have this as the norm for their verbal and gestural language.

Worship and Eucharist in the Present

The post-Tridentine defensive posture, which facilitates neither growth into healthy adult identity nor genuine communication, was abandoned at the Second Vatican Council. Moved by the Spirit, the Church reclaimed its rich past and proclaimed the Eucharist to be the central act of worship of the whole Christian life (*Eucharisticum mysterium*, 1967). The council declared that in the celebration of the Eucharist the assembled Church brings to expression Christ's own stance before Abba (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 2, 1963), and that there must be a congruence between interior attitudes and external expression. As Peter Fink (1990b) has observed, the celebration of the Eucharist is true worship only when those who enact it express in ritual form the heartfelt movements of reverence, honor, willingness, and obedient giving over of one's life to God. To understand these claims a closer examination of worship, the human journey, and their connection is required.

WORSHIP AND IDENTITY FORMATION

As a universal phenomenon, the sentiment of worship is most often described as a response of awe, reverence, and surrender as one encounters the mysterious presence of God. It can be accompanied by fear and/or unselfconscious love, depending upon how God is imaged. As understood and used in this article, sentiment is to be understood primarily as an attitude rather than a feeling state. The attitude of worship and its accompanying affective tones will be

considered only in the context of ritual, but is not intended to exclude or minimize the many other situations in which human persons encounter the living God. Further, the focus is not the ritual per se, but the interactions between God and the community, and God and the individual that are taking place through the ritual. As Christians we recognize that our religious worship is shaped and motivated by love. We believe this because Jesus Christ, who is both God's self-communication and the pattern of our worship, is the basis for our worship. Because of its ecstatic movement, worship functions to lead us out of our chronic self-preoccupation and our narrow self-definitions. Our belief is that God draws near and speaks the divine word. This encounter, if we are open to it, purifies, enlightens, and transforms us and the community.

Images in Worship and Identity

The address of and encounter with God occur through the entire ritual celebration of the Eucharist—including the proclamation of the Scripture, the homily, the collects, and the entire Eucharistic Prayer. These constitute privileged times to hear and be touched by God's view of who we are, of creation, and of our purpose in life. God's word can pierce through our cultural blindness and psychological defenses to address our hearts with God's images. In this juxtaposition of God's views as revealed through Jesus Christ and us, we are confirmed in who we are, "loved sinner," and at the same time, opened, invited to embrace God's view, "disciple in the community of disciples." A vibrant dissonance is created in us by these two views, and conversion is possible. And yet, for the dissonance to be present, one has to be able to be intimate with God.

Human Journey

Although their departure points into the mystery may differ, both psychology and theology use the metaphor of *journey* to explore and describe the unfolding of human persons from infancy to death. Whereas psychology frequently starts with the identity of the person as it takes and is given shape through significant relationships and events, theology more often begins reflection upon identity by considering the vocation of the person. Regardless of which window is used initially, in the end the notions of both identity and vocation are needed to understand human persons in their "profound human journey into the mystery of God which is at the same time the mystery of God made human and the mystery of human life transformed into the divine" (Fink 1990a, p. 65).

The works of Roger Gould and Erik Erikson can be especially helpful for understanding the process of identity formation, as well as for seeing the intrinsic relationship between it and worship. For Gould (1978), identity functions much like a license, giving permission to choose and act in certain areas and denying it in others. In the course of negotiating transitions at different life stages, cherished illusions about “who one is” have the possibility of being discarded and a larger identity embraced. Movement occurs through the presence of some reality factor that contradicts one’s illusions. A corollary of this larger identity is a wider arena for choices and actions. For Erikson (1959), identity silently integrates the disparate dimensions of one’s experiences and is marked by seeming opposites. That is, identity is at one and the same time conscious and unconscious, stable and fluid, individual and communal. And at this point in our reflection on identity, Erikson’s description of intimacy is pertinent to asserting the role of public worship. Contrary to the popular use of the term, intimacy is an *ability* of the person to be up-close to another and not be threatened by the otherness of the person or thing. The development of this ability is dependent upon having successfully resolved the fundamental questions as to “who one is” and of making a commitment to integrity.

Walter Brueggemann (1991) rightly observes that a dynamic conspicuously absent in contemporary lives and journeys is a sense of vocation, that is, a sense of being called to praise, obedience, and mission. I am in agreement with this observation, but I want to suggest an even more fundamental deficiency. Largely absent from contemporary cognitive and affective consciousness is the awareness of having been invited into a love relationship with the mysterious other whose Word has become flesh and opens new life to us. Before persons are able to respond to a call, they need to know who they are. Psychotherapeutic experience and Christian faith corroborate this position.

In clinical work one sees, time and time again, that self-acceptance, a *sine qua non* for identity, is possible only in the climate of other-acceptance (acceptance by an other). And in the *Spiritual Exercises* (Fleming 1978), the theologically and psychologically astute St. Ignatius recommends that persons in “Week One” do not move on to “Week Two” until they have prayed through and found themselves in week one. That is, persons must come to know, both cognitively and affectively, that they are, indeed, loved sinners before they can fruitfully contemplate the life of Christ and hear the call to discipleship.

A PASTORAL VIGNETTE

In a class on adult faith formation for ministerial students, I developed an exercise using pictures from the *Baltimore Catechism*. Working in groups, the class was asked to describe the underlying image or images that were being used to express the faith. The second step required their asking the question, "Do these images speak to my present understanding of my faith?" In the last step they searched for images that would better express their faith. A not altogether unexpected finding was that the earliest images in our faith formation have a hold on our imaginations that are resistive to change. Only with intentional catechesis can these images be relinquished and newer, more adequate ones found to take their place. Pertinent to these reflections is the picture that introduced the section on the "Sacrifice of the Mass." It depicts a priest, with arms outstretched to the appropriate width, standing at the altar with his back to the two altar servers. Above his head is Christ on the cross, above him a dove (Holy Spirit), and above the dove, an elderly man (God the Father). Before considering this drawing, we must make the role and contribution of images or imaginative templates to identity formation more explicit.

Although we frequently are not conscious of it, the imagination supplies us with schema or templates that assist in organizing the data in our field of experience. These templates give shape and direction to experience and give access to meaning. For example, without the template of "tennis is a game," the activity might simply be understood to be persons shooting yellow balls at each other over a net for the purpose of seeing who would tire or get angry more quickly. But with the template, the contest is recognized, the importance of silence on the court is understood, the skill of the players appreciated, and the proper time for applause is known. In short, I am suggesting that templates play an important role in one's being able to enter into and fruitfully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist.

The pictorial image in the *Catechism* and a Eucharistic theology that correlated and emphasized an understanding of the sacrifice of the cross as merely in the past, and of the sacrifice of the Mass as the unbloody representation of the sacrifice of the cross by the priest, conspired to produce an imaginative template for understanding what one was doing when going to Mass. With some minor variations, that template suggested to people that they could imagine themselves standing at the foot of the cross while Christ, in the person of the priest, offered his sacrifice to the Father through the Holy Spirit. In this theology and associated pastoral practice, the action of the Mass is

observed, the graces are passively received, and the entire experience offers no ready encouragement to see one's entire life involved in the action. Another template and a more expansive Eucharistic theology are needed if the connection between Eucharist and worship are to be grasped in a manner that speaks to the hearts of people and connects with their experience.

Our Eucharistic theology has, for too long a time, been focused on trying to pin down the mystery of Eucharist to "the words of consecration." That is, we have looked at the mystery of our God, the Abba of Jesus Christ, who graciously draws near, inviting responses that will transform us and make of us a new creation, and have asked the questions "how" and in "what specific moments" do these interchanges occur. It is my belief that they are troublesome, divisive, and simply the wrong questions. As Fink (1985) insists, the focus on the "how" and "what" or on things removes consecration from the realm of the personal, where God acts and transforms with faithful love everything that is placed with Jesus Christ. Thus, taking the view popularized by Odo Casel that the whole Eucharistic Prayer is consecratory rather than arguing over the *epiclesis* or the words of institution (Senn 1990), and Fink's (1985) insight that the true consecration of the Eucharist is a "meeting place," we have a new a template, if you will, for understanding what it is that is happening when we are doing Eucharist. Understanding the entire Eucharistic Prayer to be consecratory expands or enlarges our sacred space and time. In this view, we are no longer idle by-standers at the foot of the cross. Rather, the Eucharistic Prayer, voiced in the hearing of the assembly, becomes the account to God, in praise and thanksgiving, of those saving deeds God has wrought from the beginning of creation. And in this doing, the gifts of bread and wine that we offer—images of the ages-long people to whom we belong and of the new covenant in Christ—become for us the source of transformation of identity: of Christ, together, by the fire of the Spirit to the glory of God.

PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS

If individual persons and the Christian community are going to become who God has called them to be in Jesus Christ, authentic public worship must be a weekly or regular commitment. If there is to be growth into mature identity as Christians who are sent as Jesus was sent by his Father, in a number of instances, the content of preaching will need to be addressed. In many Catholic churches, though the preaching has become more scripturally based, thereby making our story more available, the lens that is used for the understanding of

Scripture is moralistic. Certainly, I am not suggesting that the encouragement to right behavior be omitted. Rather, the preeminent word that needs to be proclaimed is the one that speaks of God's love, compassion, and desires for creation. Thus, rooted in our true identity as "loved sinners," we are able to respond to the transformative invitations of God who calls us to be sister or brother to Jesus Christ for the world.

For a complex of reasons, there exists a distance between the teaching on the Eucharist set in motion by the Second Vatican Council and vast numbers of our people; indeed, such a distance seems to be the case between the orientation of the conciliar liturgical reforms and the current magisterial ethos. This situation constitutes a profound challenge for religious educators and catechists. However, as therapist and educator, I would suggest that our regularly over-burdened clergy are in need of transforming catechesis. For, even though much of the language of newer theology is used, the force of the template from former experience and theology of the Eucharist continues to be manifest in the manner of presiding. Indeed, the communication of the operative theology of the presider always occurs on conscious and unconscious levels; that is, the presider on both conscious and unconscious levels is communicating to both the conscious and unconscious of the assembly. If presiders do not perceive what they are doing as worship in the reclaimed sense, then they communicate this to the people.

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of these observations, it seems clear that catechesis of both clergy and laity needs to address three especially important issues. First, my personal experience and psychoanalytic training conspire to put images from formative years at the top of the list. Unless time is taken to bring these images to conscious reflection and appreciative critique, they constitute an inhibition to richer catechesis and further education. Second, perceptions and attitudes appropriate to worship must include a sense of the communal subject acting in praise and thanksgiving of the mysterious other. As Richard Gaillardetz has aptly demonstrated (1994), skewed expectations have developed to the effect that a dichotomy has been drawn in much of our culture between a sense of transcendence and a sense of community. Indeed, many Catholic communities have a deeply developed appreciation of the fact that they are community, but their celebration of the Eucharist lacks an appreciation of the fact that we are involved in the worship of the mystery whom we name Abba. And finally, the new template for imagining what we are doing in the celebration of the Eucharist needs

to be consistent with that set in motion by the Second Vatican Council. This template accomplishes a number of things that need to be done if we going to be true to the fullness of our Eucharistic faith. The template recognizes that God draws near to us with invitations the responses that are transformative, and possibilities of a magical mentality are diminished. From personal experience I find this template helpful for yielding myself over to God's word and activity when we do Eucharist, but others will need to be explored.

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Reviving the Gifts of Our Founders: The Charisms of Religious in the Pastoral Life of the Church

The Roman Synod of bishops, in addressing the “consecrated life,” provided important opportunities for the bishops to deepen their understanding of religious life. The 224 bishops who were members of this synod were accompanied by 59 women religious and 56 men religious (with 9 religious from other churches) participating as “auditores” or “adiutores.” Of the bishops, 94 were also religious. The speeches often called religious to live according to their charism. Cardinal Eyt of Bordeaux warned against seeing either male or female religious as a substitute workforce for the presbyterate of the local church. “What must come first,” said the cardinal, “is the charism of consecrated life itself in each congregation and each community” (Sweeny 1995, 8).

In the United States during the past thirty years since Vatican II, religious have been responsible for some of the most important initiatives for the revitalization of the Church’s pastoral life. But religious, like every other element in our extremely volatile culture, have also been shaped by the popular culture, the media, and the general drift of society in this same period of time. We need to be called again to attend to the primacy of our religious charisms.

Many institutes of men and women are facing crises in personnel and are recruiting fewer members each year than they lose by death or departures. This fact is also a notable dimension of our conversation. Like good stewards, religious superiors (along with their membership) have been reflecting about how to assure that the apostolic work, the spirituality, and the spiritual gifts of our religious societies may continue to bless the local church even as our numbers appear to diminish in a continuous decline.

The gifts of spiritual wisdom and apostolic orientation that religious received from their founders and foundresses are often referred to as *charisms*: a word coming from the Greek related to grace, graciousness, and the graced responsibilities given to individuals and to communities (Brennan 1994). The community or religious institute is the custodian of the charism. Individual members of our institutes embody the traditions and values of this charism. They make it possible for the charism to be known, appreciated, and received by the local church. What is it then, that makes the spirit, labor, and impact of a religious order or congregation to be distinctive and particular?

My argument, in general, goes as follows. The charisms of religious institutes are the continuation of the inspiration received by our founders and foundresses. They were religious geniuses whose faith interlocked with the culture of their time. They found ways to understand and address the spiritual and pastoral emergencies of their day, and in doing so to invest the wider Church with a sense of efficacy and hope. In almost every case, the charism of a religious institute not only shapes the mission and spirituality of its own members, but also inspires the apostolic and spiritual life of the surrounding Church.

Religious families are shaped by these charisms. By this, I mean that they are shaped by an *esprit de corps* that is based on spiritual imagery, the tradition of the order or congregation, the apostolic focus of the institute, and the religious passion of the founder. This spirit, when it functions well, stimulates pride, identification, and zealous personal investment by the members in something bigger than themselves.

Later on I will try to address the conflict between the frequently seen diocesan tendency to immortalize the pastoral status quo, on the one hand, and the new awareness by religious of our need for a rebirth in our charism. There are implications here for pastoral imagination and pastoral renewal within the local churches or dioceses. First, however, I will describe some features of Catholic pastoral life in this country and the role of apostolic religious within that pastoral reality.

THE STATE OF THE QUESTION

I believe we have lost ground in the last fifteen years in certain areas of American theological, pastoral, and religious life. I do not attribute this to Vatican II. Rather we religious, like the rest of the culture, have found ourselves caught up in agendas that have little to do with the vision of the Church as the coming kingdom of God and with our call to be corporate signs of grace within social and cultural life. Where, then, have we regressed?

The reform vision of liturgical renewal has fizzled. In the late sixties and early seventies we were much more deeply involved in the tough work of basic catechesis about the realities of the Christian sacramental life. There was much greater effort then to involve people in biblical catechesis, the renewal of the arts, and the development of non-Eucharist forms of liturgies of the word that gathered the assembly in the sacred space of the parish church.

Further, we have lost ground in the liturgical arts. The loss of *Jubilee* magazine, *Liturgical Arts Quarterly*, and the national Liturgical Week of the decades immediately before and following Vatican II have created a liturgical famine for Catholics. Even in publishing, there are fewer major studies being produced that deal with the depth dimension of our worship life (see, for example, Martos 1993). The most lively theme in liturgy today is not foundational catechesis, but inculturation. This is understandable in a Church with such great cultural diversity; but frequently such studies do not challenge local parishes to continuously examine their consciences about the integrity of their ritual life.

In addition, I believe that pastoral theology has lost its common touch with the family. In part this is because of the painful and seemingly insoluble divisiveness of issues surrounding reproduction ethics: contraception, abortion, in vitro fertilization, and similar themes. In any case, pastoral theology needs to address a substantive, nourishing, and hopeful vision of Christian life dealing with the single life, divorce, and families dealing with addiction, drugs, and alienation. The real concern is not that such theology is not being produced at all, but that so little of what is available finds its way into the pulpit. Our avoidance of social reality in pastoral education or in the pulpit and our failure to elaborate a vision of ordinary holiness in pastoral preaching is largely responsible for the indifference so many Catholics feel about their Christian life.

Another concern is the corporate dimension of Roman Catholicism. We have lost something of a sense of social affiliation and human solidarity with one another as believers and fellow worshipers in a pluralistic community. Since the 1950s, many of the elements that provide motivation for such affiliation and solidarity have disappeared. The majority of Catholics are no longer European immigrants. The majority are no longer blue collar workers struggling to make a living in an affluent WASP world surrounding them. In fact, Catholics are now the most successful single religious group in the upward-bound meritocracy of American commercial, economic, and cultural life. Andrew Greeley claims that there are more Catholics graduating from universities, continuing into graduate programs, and succeeding in this

country with higher salary compensations than any other denominational group (Greeley 1990, ch. 4). In any case, Catholics are no longer a cultural and religious minority and our sense of distinctiveness has been diminished, if not lost in the process.

This is not exclusively a loss. American Catholics have learned better about how to enter public debate, how to appreciate the positive role of other faith communities, and how to cooperate effectively with those who were culturally hostile at the turn of the century. Yet our own denominational solidarity and the loyalty that it used to generate have greatly diminished.

Perhaps one final example: clearly we have lost ground in the area of ecumenism. There was something hopeful and stimulating about the efforts at ecumenical relations in the sixties and seventies. Ecumenical theology and ecumenical pastoral collaboration reminded us in very tangible ways that the kingdom of God is larger than our ecclesiastical structures. The subtle quasi-idolatrous tendency of any bureaucracy, including the bureaus of our churches, to pump themselves up into institutional entities of divine stature seems to be rampant once again. Healthy ecumenism is an antidote to triumphalism, and we have witnessed a decline in practical ecumenism and a growth in triumphalism in the Catholic Church in the last decade.

What does this say to us about the status of the Church in which religious live and work? One possible response is that we have lost focus to some degree. The fundamental duty of the Church is to proclaim the gospel. Culturally, proclaiming the gospel means holding out a vision of all things being brought by grace into unity under the headship of Jesus Christ as our risen Lord and redeemer. We seem to have lost our ability to articulate the overarching vision of the grace of Christ as bringing many diversities into one graced unity. Many diverse communities form the one ecclesial body of faith, common baptism, and spirit life.

THE RELIGIOUS OF THE POST-VATICAN II PERIOD

Along with the question of our possibly having lost ground relative to the Church's pastoral life, there are the difficulties that have afflicted the culture of religious life for the last few decades. Some religious live their cultural and spiritual life in reaction to the formation that they received in the days before Vatican II, or, in the case of those who entered later, in reaction to stories of that earlier process of formation. Parallel to the media's occasional treatment of religious figures as pious ninnyes, some of the post-Vatican II generation of religious have come to view classical formation as unrelievedly dehumanizing and repressive.

Young religious have learned to say things like: “We are not nuns or monks; our formation is not monastic, we do not live in a Gestapo-like organization, obedience does not mean someone telling us what to do.”

It would be difficult to work out this theme with balance. But my point here is simple: many of the values of classical religious formation have either not been adequately experienced by a generation of religious or have been dismissed as negative values. As a consequence, some of the following qualities have not been maintained as substantial parts of our spiritual identity: silence as a divine language; sacred Scripture as a wellspring of faith and self-understanding; a rhythm of praise and work and contemplation as a kind of spiritual mechanism, larger than ourselves, that carries us through our days; and solidarity in a corporate identity larger than our individual interests. Clearly this topic could be the subject matter for extensive conversation and debate. I do not raise it principally to point out failure or to attribute fault, but rather to alert us to one role that religious life might and ought to play in this volatile moment of cultural transformation within the larger popular culture.

I acknowledge that the values of contemplation and prayerfulness have indeed been promoted by many recent books, workshops, retreats, and spiritual conferences. Yet some spiritual currents within American Catholic religious life today have too much in common with the New Age movement that focuses on spiritual experience as an individual interest, rather than an expression of corporate life. The foundational question is, who is the subject of the charism: the individual or the institute? If we are to reclaim our sense of the institute as the custodian of religious charism—with all the implications that may have for guiding the imagination, mission, and behavior of individuals within the institute—we will have to confront some of the problems of the spirit that I have tried to evoke in this section.

RELIGIOUS AND MINISTRIES

Others have observed that we have experienced in the last few decades a “Protestantizing” of our ministries.¹ The point is that there is a growing contrast between the kind of large institutional ministerial work that was characteristic of Roman Catholic religious four or five decades ago and the increasingly personal face-to-face focus in

¹The point of this remark is not intended to discredit the emphasis described as characteristic of Protestant pastoral life in the United States, but rather to point out the distinction between two different approaches to doing pastoral work.

ministry that is more common today. Like all other citizens of our republic, religious, too, felt the same forces of conflict in the sixties and seventies that led to a loss of their confidence in both government and ecclesiastical institutions. At the same time that this loss of credibility diminished institutions' claims upon the loyalties of individuals, the popular culture presented us with heightened ideals of personal growth and fulfillment.

The psychologizing of maturity and the narcissistic focus of personal fulfillment came to us in the pages of our major popular magazines and weekly journals as well as by way of the television screen. Elsewhere I have argued that the overwhelming theme for pastoral and institutional renewal in the first fifteen years after the council was *relevance*: bringing our institutions into conversation and sympathy with the goals of the popular culture (Philibert 1994).

In the sixties and seventies, many religious needed the challenge to become more professional. The period after the council saw a remarkable outpouring of energies directed to the professional education of religious men and women. This same period led to our religious professionals becoming not only members of, but also leaders in professional, academic, educational, and even civic organizations. In 1950, it might have been exceptional for a religious to speak of a career. Now, however, the idea of career has taken on an almost normative quality for most apostolic religious. Consequently the career often gets in the way of the mission.

The days when a superior general in Rome would reach into the ranks of a province of religious in the United States to choose and assign someone to specialized missionary work on another continent seem to have shriveled away. Major superiors on a talent search know that when they receive the response, "Let me pray about this," the game is up. We have reduced the ministry of administration in our institutes to such a degree that obedience is more likely to be realized as polite conversation proposing possible options rather than a call, in the name of the gospel and of the institute, to give one's life in service for the good of the Church through the institute's symbols of mission and commitment.

On a more positive note, we have correctly come to understand obedience to be, more than anything, the listening in solidarity of the entire community to the word of God as refracted through the spirit of our institute's charism. Yet if that is to have formative impact upon the spiritual and ministerial life of individual religious, it must be more than a pious idea. We must grapple in honest conversation with the authoritative leadership that the statutes and constitutions of our institutes have given to those who hold office in the community.

Note that the authority mechanisms of religious institutes differ from foundation to foundation. Each institute must be true to its traditions, traditions that vary considerably from monastery to apostolic modern institutes. In all cases, however, listening and accountability are two-way streets. Superiors are obliged to be good listeners, as St. Benedict notes firmly in his Rule. Further, religious (and superiors especially) must be listening to the needs of the local church and the voice of the bishop, as well as to the gospel and the constitutions of the institute (see Seasoltz 1994, 73–93). The whole structure of ecclesial authority and obedience is frustrated when any one entity refuses to participate in serious and accountable dialogue with Christian partners in the responsible building of the local church.

REVIVING THE CHARISM

Why, you might ask, raise these embarrassing and debatable issues about the Church's pastoral life, the reactive spirituality of some post-Vatican II religious, and the individualization of religious ministries? Well, not to indulge in Jansenistic guilt or even in remorse. The real point is that we religious, like our lay colleagues in the Church, find ourselves influenced very deeply by the cultural changes around us. The main difference, however, is that we have resources within our traditions that can respond creatively to these cultural challenges. Let me point this out by arguing that we need to rehabilitate the vitality of our institutes on the basis of reviving their charism and their pastoral outreach to serve local churches. What is religious charism in pragmatic detail?

THE POWER OF CHARISM

Earlier I commented that religious families are shaped by the spiritual imagery of the institute. As an example, for Dominicans, this would allude to the fact that we came into being out of the need to address a particular moment of Church life where preaching had fallen into disuse or ineffectiveness. For St. Dominic, as for the sons and daughters of the Order of Preachers, therefore, a theology of the word of God is at the very heart of our self-understanding. Our life is one that should substantially integrate study and prayer, even as we are actively engaged in apostolic ministry (Tugwell 1979).

Dominican spiritual imagery of our order promotes vulnerability to the anointing of the Holy Spirit and awareness that this anointing usually takes place in silence, waiting, and theological conversation. In a Dominican understanding of pastoral service, the sacramental life of the Church flows from the word of God. Thus study of the word,

celebration of the word with special solemnity, and eagerness to share the multiple ways of breaking the bread of the word in preaching form part of the very structure of Dominican identity. If Dominicans lose this infatuation with the word of God, they have lost something essential to their *raison d'être*.

This charism is communicated through the tradition and lore of the Dominican tribe. Today that means a special concern for the complementary and solidarity of Dominican men and women along with Dominican laity in the apostolic life of the Church. The friars remember that it was a group of sisters that Dominic called together at the village of Prouille as the first Dominican community. Dominic's style was one of holy competition with heretical ascetics in what he called "apostolic life"—going about with no extra clothing, no extra baggage, just as Jesus described to the seventy-two disciples, bringing the word of God and the experience of faith to those to whom they preached (see Rausch 1992, 82–83; O'Malley 1988, 223–4). For Dominicans this means being constantly prodded by the radicalism of the commitment of Dominic and his early companions. In the same way the apostolic focus and passion of the founder, St. Dominic, remains normative even for our time. There have been recent movements within the order, such as the Dominican Leadership Conference and the Parable Conference for Dominican Life and Mission, that for fifteen years have tried to illuminate the centrality of preaching for all Dominican men and women. Happily, similar organizations exist for Jesuits, Benedictines, Franciscans, indeed, for almost all larger religious families in the American church. Such corporate collaboration is vital to our renewal and a powerful ecclesial sign of how the Holy Spirit is guiding our institutes to become a leaven in the local churches where we work.

Part of the charm and attractiveness of the way in which religious communicate with the local church arises from the way in which individual religious minister with loyalty, pride, and identification with the spirit of their founder and with the great figures of their tradition. Qualities like good preaching, hospitality, powerful active listening, sympathetic pastoral counseling, empowerment of groups tend to be associated with the pastoral effectiveness of religious in ministries in the local churches.

Perhaps this is due to the fact that religious generally live in common and become accustomed to listening more sympathetically than those who live alone. Perhaps it is due to the impact of common prayer and the beauty of the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, if not common Eucharist, by the members of our houses. It may be due to a long-term concentration upon the spiritual tradition of a particular

religious family and its theology and spirituality. Here again is another topic worthy of extended consideration. Nonetheless, religious very often are able to impact upon the local church in such fashion as to invite people into a spiritual solidarity with the interests and challenges of their charism. This is one of the ways in which religious bring to the local church the power of their gospel witness.

PRAGMATIC CONFLICTS BETWEEN MINISTRY AND APOSTOLIC CHARISM

The LCWR and CMSM responses to the *Lineamenta* for the 1994 synod remarked upon the potential conflicts between diocesan bishops and our superiors and members relative to the utilization of our pastoral powers in the local church (*Origins* 1993, 724-7). It is impossible to generalize about American bishops and dioceses today. Some bishops have been extremely realistic about the pastoral crisis of the Church, while other bishops simply refuse to admit either that there is a personnel crisis or that there could ever be any alternatives to the Church's present discipline for ordination and pastoral administration. Just as there are some dioceses where the dialogues between the diocesan ordinary and major superiors are a pleasure and very substantive, so there are also other dioceses where such meetings are an embarrassment and a trivialization of the invitation extended in *Mutuae Relationes* to establish substantive conversation between religious and bishops about the future of religious life and religious apostolic ministries. So I cannot generalize. However, the problem is general enough that we must raise the question of the conflict with bishops whose vision of diocesan pastoral life is the immortalizing of the status quo.

In some places the local parish does little more than provide sacramental services to people who are over-Eucharistized and under-catechized. We continue to invite people to Sunday Mass or, if no priest is available, to a communion service in its place. We too frequently suppose that by osmosis they receive an initiation into the word of God, deep prayer, and a substantial understanding of the Church's theology, while we continue to reinforce an approach to ritual life that is nonreflective and superstitious.

A note must be added about the RCIA. In the American church, we have been able to incarnate and embody the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in such fashion as to be a genuine transformation of the whole parish community in many cases. The North American Forum on the Catechumenate has become an extraordinary force for renewal, and the journal *Catechumenate* is just one example among others of

extraordinarily fine teaching and commentary on the rite and on the process of initiation. But the phenomenon of the parish revived through the RCIA is an exception within the mass experience of Roman Catholicism in the United States today. Even in parishes where the RCIA is vital and functioning, frequently the priest of the community may be either unsympathetic or unskilled at detonating the spiritual potential built up through community and catechesis.

Where does this leave us? We cannot simply endorse the status quo. We have to be advocates of a rethinking of the title to ministry in the Roman Catholic Church.² The continuation of business as usual, intensified by the pressure of concern about ordained personnel, has become a distraction from deeper issues: What is spiritual maturity? What is authentic catechesis? How can those who are not alive in the word of God come to the Eucharistic table? How dare we ignore the survival of a culture of totem and superstition in a Church whose very life is the anointing of the spirit and obedience to the word of God? If these questions are overdrawn (and certainly they are overdrawn for some fine parishes), nonetheless the values they point to are of such significance that I feel justified in raising them.

RELIGIOUS CHARISMS AT THE SERVICE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

In response to the *Lineamenta* for the synod of 1994, the major superiors of CMSM replied that they thought it would be unwise for the synod to proceed with an analysis of religious life under a genus and species distinction, suggesting that there is one generic reality that is religious life and that different institutes vary simply as different species of the one genus. So it would be unwise to imagine that the revitalization and elaboration of a new rebirth of charism for different institutes could be uniform. It could not be exactly parallel in all institutes. Rather, using the suggestive comments that I have developed so far, I would say that we need to be challenged in reviving the gifts of our founders by the following argument.

The Church is undernourished in its understanding of the core mystery of the body of Christ. Because of pressures from the popular culture and because of pressures in personnel or administration, much of our attention in recent decades has gone into the business and man-

²The lingering influence of what Thomas O'Meara calls a monofarm understanding of priesthood as the only ministry creates pastoral dysfunction in many places. Like many other theologians today, O'Meara sees the fundamental role of the presbyter to be the resourcing and enabling of the ministries of the baptized. See his *Theology of Ministry* (Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1983).

agement side of our churches and our schools. Our people have known a kind of symbolic and ritual malnutrition. The popular culture has tilted us in the direction of emphasizing fanfare and chatty folksiness in the structure of our liturgical practice, allowing the sense of the sacred and the discipline of encounter with a transcendent God in anointed silence to fall either into the background or out of the picture altogether. As a consequence, the experience of coming to church on Sunday is a bit like the experience of going to the mall on Saturday. Individuals are likely to come as isolated consumers, looking for something that is interesting, buying what appeals, and walking away from the rest. The sense that Christians have a responsibility to be there to make a corporate sign of the coming kingdom of God both before God and before the world has been lost.

For our own survival as religious institutes, we must rediscover our roots in mysticism, contemplation, and corporate solidarity in obedience to the gospel. Clearly this is not just a matter of institutional narcissism. It is not just so that we may survive. We believe that God raised up our founders to bring into the Church the riches of our traditions. This present age of the Church particularly needs the witness of our corporate solidarity, our modeling of the rhythm of a life shaped by the proclamation of the word of God, the response of praise, and the overflow of apostolic compassion. What has already become distinctive for many institutes—particularly those with associate memberships—is that we have learned to exercise a particularly gracious form of hospitality that brings inside our communities those who have not made vows with us, but who share with us our spiritual and apostolic goals.

TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

What are some possible conclusions from this reflection?

(1) In the ongoing renewal of our institutes, we need to be guided by the spiritual needs of the people of God in the local church as well as by our received understanding of our own charism. When one is in dialogue with another, the other can often illuminate through conversation the stream of reflection that we have already begun by ourselves. In this case, our dialogue with the local church will illuminate for us the particular ways in which our traditions are able to bring nourishment to the great opportunities for the gospel that are already budding on the ecclesial vine. Though I have not developed it explicitly, the theme of our solidarity with all the baptized is obviously of great importance in our understanding the way in which our charism will flow into the future ages of the Church's life.

(2) Religious will be alert to and sympathetic to the outcome of the Roman synod on religious life and to the Pope's apostolic exhortation, which summarizes the synod's deliberations.³ This collegial act of the bishops of the world relative to our future was an important moment in the life within the Church influenced by the action of the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, it is likewise vital for religious to acknowledge that we have a perspective on the Church's ecclesial reality and its apostolic needs that is very distinctive because of our traditions and our roles as religious.

It is important for us to become increasingly articulate with one another about our apostolic hopes and our analysis of the pastoral conflicts that we see in the dialectic between the retrieval of our traditions as religious institutes and our service of the diocesan bishops. Concretely, this will mean planning among ourselves about pastoral collaboration that is coherent with our charisms and that will allow us to take initiatives as religious among our various institutes to serve the local churches. We must have as much interest in and compassion for the pastoral needs of the local dioceses as the diocesan bishops themselves do.

(3) We must strive to become the midwives of the new ecclesial reality of the ministry of the non-ordained. While many diocesan clergy and diocesan programs have done courageous and excellent work in this regard, the bulk of initiatives has fallen to religious and probably will continue to do so. We must not only invite people to help us out because of a crisis of personnel. We must become architects of thoughtful pastoral and theological planning for the future of a Church that will be very different. We probably will have to allocate our own resources—or use our influence to find resources—to properly educate and compensate those who enter into sharing, in the spirit of our charisms, the continuing apostolic work of our societies.

(4) We need to assist one another, especially through LCWR and CMSM in their regional meetings, in reexamining the spiritual treasures of our religious traditions. In 1989 the joint assembly of LCWR and CMSM produced a statement on the "Transformative Elements of Religious Life" for the year 2010. It is fascinating how much the themes of contemplation and sharing of charism entered into that statement,

³Sweeney comments: "During the Synod proper a positive approach won the day over some attempts to push a disciplinary agenda. So, if the final phase maintains this momentum, and the Pope has said he intends to involve religious men and women directly in preparing the Exhortation, the Synod should finally turn out as an event full of hope." See Sweeney, *Religious Life Review*, 3.

which was the relatively spontaneous eruption of conversation among major superiors of men and women.⁴

That statement was prophetic and right, in many regards. It demands from us serious work and action to retrieve elements integral to our spiritual discipline. This will not mean going back to repeat just what we did before Vatican II. It will mean, however, re-addressing the themes of corporate solidarity, the disciplines of silence, *lectio divina*, contemplative study, and the beautiful embodiment of our liturgical life. It is often true in our apostolic life that we grow in spiritual, theological, and pastoral disciplines precisely when that growth is required for our successful ministry. The Church now needs the witness of religious in these very areas.

The importance of the role of religious in promoting social justice reflects the truth that compassion is a constitutive aspect of mature Christian faith. In many dioceses, work for justice and advocacy for and ministry to the poor, migrants, and marginalized people characteristically falls to religious. This is in part because so many religious institutes were brought into being precisely in order to address urgent social needs and in part because diocesan personnel are preoccupied with parish structures. It seems obvious that the future will emphasize even more this division of labor between religious and diocesan clergy. Our awareness of this fact and our responsiveness to the needs of the poor and the outcast will be integral to our success at reviving the gifts of our founders and reappropriating our ecclesial role in a graphically transformed Church.

We will find ourselves retrieving the integrity of our apostolic, spiritual, and contemplative traditions precisely because the culture needs a witness from us to a Christian life deeply rooted in the gospel. Pope John Paul II has frequently exhorted the Church to become more sensitive to the role of Christian witness in society. In *Christifideles Laici*, he indicated the special role of the laity in the “evangelization of the culture” (John Paul II 1989). The implementation of this positive vision of evangelizing action by the laity in the context of all that is ordinary points up a major role that religious will have to play in the decades that lie ahead of us. Here we have an image both of the critical frontier for apostolic energies of both religious and laity and of the sympathetic

⁴“Transformative Elements for Religious Life in the Future,” developed by the 1989 Joint CMSM/LCWR Assembly in Louisville, Ky. (private publication). The first five elements are: prophetic witness, contemplative attitudes toward life, poor and marginalized persons as the focus of ministry, spirituality of wholeness and global interconnectedness, and charisms and mission as sources of identity.

solidarity that is needed of us as religious to foster lay effectiveness in realizing this apostolic objective.

For eons, religious have understood their role in the Church as a present investment of living life energies in a witness to the enduring mystery of eternal life; this is our eschatological horizon. The spirituality of this eschatological witness is that of the paschal mystery: entering death in trust that God will transform the shards of our temporally conceived projects into vessels of divine life. It is with such a spirit that North American religious today face the challenges of inadequate recruitment, institutional crises, and conflict with Church administrators and laity who are attuned to expectations of us that are neither possible nor any longer desirable. Like prudent stewards, we ask what is likely to be the shape of our shared future. Like chosen servants of the gospel, we ask how we may best foster the life that rises out of all the dying around us. This is how we will revive the gifts of our founders and foundresses.

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Preaching the Cross of Christ During Lent

There is an important parallel in the way the passion of Christ is presented in the liturgical calendar and in the New Testament. This is not just an interesting coincidence. The content and inner dynamic of the worship celebrations of the Christian Church should be a conscious extension of the faith posture of the apostolic era, continuously flowing, as from a living fountain, through the inspired pages of the Scriptures. The way this is incorporated into the rituals of the lenten season, especially in the climax of the sacred Triduum, is a fitting topic for our preaching at this time of the year. This is part of the rich heritage that the people of God deserve to learn more deeply as a source of spiritual nourishment.

Scholars who have tried to trace the way the memories of the earliest Christian eyewitnesses were passed on to posterity have long shared a consensus that the accounts of the suffering and death of the Son of Man constitute the oldest literary element in all four gospels. There is no section in these canonical records of the words and deeds of the master that has more striking similarities among the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel than the narratives of what happened between the Last Supper and Jesus' death and burial. This careful and unified preservation is a reflection of the conviction that what seemed to outsiders to be an ignominious defeat was actually a precious treasure.

The other books of the New Testament place a comparable emphasis on the events involved in the crucifixion, not by recounting the historical details in chronological sequence the way the evangelists do, but by focusing on the undeniable truth of Jesus' passion and its profound theological significance. In the Acts of the Apostles this comes out in the way the preaching of Peter and Paul highlights the assassination of the Messiah. By underscoring his role as the sacrificial Lamb, the letter to the Hebrews and the book of Revelation keep the reader's attention focused on the suffering Jesus endured. The Pauline correspondence and the Catholic epistles return repeatedly to reflections on

the passion of Christ in order to point out what his pain and patience have won for us in our struggle against sin and guilt, and in our striving for holiness.

Christian art and popular devotion have joined with Scripture and liturgy in making the graphic depiction of the crucified Christ one of the most well-known religious images in Western culture. Yet our familiarity with this picture can be misleading if we fail to realize how exceptional this tradition of remembrance is. The care with which Jesus' followers handed on the details of his trials, torture, and public execution might be considered a natural reaction in the time period immediately after they took place. However, our constant rehearsal of this mystery through the ages is unusual and actually countercultural when we compare it to what happens in the case of others who have been martyred at the hands of the unjust. After an initial intense interest in the tragic circumstances surrounding their heroic end, there tends to be a steady abbreviation of the story as years pass by. Perhaps this is a natural reaction, a shying away from the pain of rethinking the unchangeable past.

For most of us, the only death we ever revisit in this fashion is that of Jesus, as it is memorialized in the Scriptures. The Catholic community around the world gathers to do this, not out of a desire for self-punishment, as though reopening our sorrow were an end in itself, nor, much less, because of some spirituality based on distorted satisfaction sought in reflecting on the suffering of another. What draws us back to contemplate the events of the paschal sacrifice is contained in the revelation of Jesus himself: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die" (John 12:32-33). Although the wisdom of the world labels such an enterprise "unhealthy" or "foolishness," an inner movement of the Spirit leads the followers of Christ to find in their meditation on the passion a healing beyond human words, an experience of the saving power of God (1 Cor 1:17-18, 23).

The time when Catholics enter this mystical encounter most publicly and self-reflectively as a visible worshipping community is during the liturgical and paraliturgical gatherings of the lenten season. In its post-Vatican II Lectionary for Mass, the Latin Church has only two extended readings each year of the events immediately surrounding the crucifixion: one on Passion Sunday and one during the Easter Triduum. Many adults remember listening to the passion accounts from all four gospels during the

course of Holy Week in times gone by. The present arrangement calls for the use of John 18–19 every year during the “Celebration of the Passion” on Good Friday, and the reading of only one of the Synoptic narratives, in connection with the celebration of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. In 1997 we will use Mark 14–15.

In the officially printed lectionaries used in the United States, the “long form” of these passion accounts runs six or seven columns in length, approximately five or six times the size of the gospel pericope on a typical Sunday throughout the year. To the disappointment of many eager participants, it is not uncommon for presiders to omit the homily on these occasions. Some have cited as their reason the weariness of the faithful or the complicated nature of the passages, insisting that adequate explanation and exhortation are provided in the celebration of the rest of the ritual.

Of course one needs to be sensitive to particular pastoral needs, but these should be weighed in consideration of the rare possibility the homilist has on these two occasions to offer reflections that complement this unique and solemn proclamation of the word. If we can take advantage of these special liturgical situations, they offer an unmatched setting in which to explain how central these accounts are to our observance of the paschal mystery. In doing this effectively we can help our people with catechesis and the enthusiasm of our own faith to look at the special slant each evangelist brings to the climactic story of what Jesus was willing to suffer for our sakes. The goal of this preaching must be not only to enhance the community’s spiritual penetration into what has just been made present through the inspired text, but to plant seeds that can bear fruit when individuals take up these accounts in the privacy of their own prayer life.

In order to elicit a greater level of participation on the part of the laity, it is customary in many parishes to distribute printed texts of the passion narratives so that all can join in with the “populus” or other parts. Being careful not to slip from the prayerful atmosphere of the liturgy into an excessively pedantic mood, the homilist might use this as a golden chance to point out how and where Old Testament quotations are used to connect what happened at Calvary with the broader lines of salvation history.

The lenten period, traditionally understood as a special time for reflection on Jesus’ passion and death, is followed by the Easter-

tide celebration of his resurrection. There is a sense that these paired seasons should symbolize the balance in St. Paul's eloquent juxtaposition of the elements of the paschal mystery: "We believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification" (Rom 4:24-25). In reviewing the choices made in the lectionary some have regretted the fact that it does not provide more exposure for selections from the passion narratives. After all, they argue, we manage to find a place at Mass for reading all that the evangelists report about the post-resurrection appearances. Proposals have been made to subdivide the texts of one of the passion narratives into pericopes that might be distributed over a longer time period. This would allow for a more measured reflection on the individual scenes, which some fear get lost in the lengthy, unbroken flow of the present liturgical presentation.

Whatever the merits of such critique, one should keep in mind that there are already two other avenues in place with which the preacher may and should approach the mystery of the Cross. On the one hand, as paragraph 12 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy reminded us, the prayer life of the Church should not be restricted to its specifically liturgical celebrations. Other forms include paraliturgical services such as *Tenebrae*, the Stations of the Cross, processions focusing on artistic representations of Jesus in his suffering, sermons, Bible study sessions, and the recitation of the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary. All these practices and other devotional expressions that have been generated by the popular faith of the people are not only alternative ways of looking at the suffering and death of the Lord; they can also serve to prepare us to hear more perceptively and enter more deeply into the liturgical proclamations of the passion narratives.

A second element to keep in mind in any comprehensive consideration of our lenten use of the Scriptures is suggested by the different ways the New Testament approaches the topic of the paschal sacrifice in other passages read during the days and weeks leading up to Holy Week. Granted the obvious enrichment to be gained from meditating on the final mortal hours of Jesus at the climax of each of the Gospels, it is also important to remember that these accounts focus predominantly on the physical side of the passion. Aside from what is implied through the brief responses and prayers spoken by the unjustly condemned Protagonist, they betray relatively little about his inner psychological

state. Even less is expressed in any explicit way in these narratives about the theological significance of what Jesus endured for those who believe in him.

Here are some further texts that also appear in the lenten lectionary and which might be used in 1997 as occasions for looking more closely at other aspects of the mystery of the Cross:

Matt 20:17-18: The third of the Matthean passion predictions, coupled with the episode of the Zebedees' mother (no. 233, Wednesday of the second week of Lent).

1 Cor 1:22-25: We preach a crucified Christ, challenge to outsiders, but to us, the power and wisdom of God (no. 29, third Sunday of Lent B).

John 3:14-21: The comparison between the bronze serpent erected by Moses and the life-giving image of Christ "lifted up" (no. 32, fourth Sunday of Lent B).

Heb 5:7-9: Jesus learned obedience from what he suffered to become the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him (no. 35, fifth Sunday of Lent B).

Phil 2:6-11: What Jesus did for us is a model of humility and service for us and the motive for his exaltation by the Father (no. 38, Passion Sunday).

An important task for the lenten preacher is the communication of the twofold truth that must be understood and owned by anyone aspiring for maturity in faith. On the one hand, all of us are sinners and it is our disobedience that made it necessary for Jesus to suffer. On the other, the pain he willed to undergo on our behalf has become, in the mysterious plan of the Father, the means of our liberation from the destructive power of sin. By his stripes we are healed (1 Pet 2:24).

In the post-resurrection appearances recounted in John and Luke there is a detail mentioned that must be considered somewhat paradoxical. By this point Jesus had not simply been revived but transformed. One might have expected his resurrected body to appear completely changed and noticeably free from any defect. Yet he calls attention to the enduring marks of the wounds in his hands and feet and side (Luke 24:39; John 21:27). For those called to an ever deeper understanding of what the passion means, what was once considered ignominy, woundedness, and imperfection can now be seen as a badge of courage and love.

Hopefully our homiletic dialogue with the way Jesus' redemptive suffering is presented in the Scriptures will help to accomplish what the Catholic community requests in prayer on Good Friday: "Lord, send down your abundant blessing upon your people who devoutly recall the death of your Son in the sure hope of the resurrection. Grant them pardon; bring them comfort. May their faith grow stronger and their eternal salvation be assured."

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From Seminary to Parish

Daydreams took him to another time, another place. A year had already passed since his ordination to the ministerial priesthood. Ted Young found himself back in those last months at St.

Leo's Seminary. Fr. Joe DiVecchio, director of pastoral studies, walked into the room where the fourth-year students assembled for their weekly seminar on "Transition from Seminary to Parish." After the opening prayer the first words out of the professor's mouth made them all squirm: "Consistently we get reports from people and pastors that first-year priests are eager and enthusiastic but they can't deal with more than one thing at a time." He proceeded to discuss a case study demonstrating his claim. Most students felt that Father DiVecchio and the other professors tended to overstate the demands and expectations on parish priests. How close to reality was this evaluation of those who went before them? After the seminar Steve Dolski, one of Ted's classmates, tried to add some perspective: "Those case studies that DiVecchio gives us can't possibly be real; they're like bad soap opera scripts! Life can't possibly get so complex! Don't you think so? There's a method here. He always exaggerates just to make his point. It's one of those new teaching devices. He keeps on warning and admonishing us only because he cares so much about us! Relax! Take one thing at a time and everything will be fine!"

Steve's words of wisdom made sense to the others so eagerly awaiting their ordination day. But Ted stewed: "Already so many of my good friends have washed out only two or three years after ordination and placement in a parish! Such great guys, but what happened to them?" During the last weeks in the safe environment of St. Leo's, thoughts of the future overwhelmed him. The seminary culture was about to give way to something new and unfamiliar. Father DiVecchio's constant refrain echoed: "The real test is the long haul." For the rest of the year Ted's exterior radiated mature confidence while his insides flinched like a frightened boy's.

The other deacons were chomping at the bit to get out and "finally do something with all this education." During their monthly seminar on transitions Steve Dolski anticipated the future: "After all these years we're moving out into the mainstream! That's the reason we came here

in the first place. Our education and formation will be tested when we apply theories to practical situations that come to us every day in the parish."

Ted snapped out of his daydream. Six months had passed since he was ordained a priest and assigned to St. Boniface, a large multicultural urban parish. What a great mentor he had in Monsignor Denburger! All the parishioners loved and respected him. One of Ted's first responsibilities was to oversee preparations for the communal anointing of the sick. This rite was seasonally celebrated within the context of the 11:00 Sunday Mass. He negotiated with members of the youth group and their parents, as he had done three months ago, to manage the transport of house-bound seniors to the church. The collaboration of so many people provided an experience of strength in communal service for young and old alike. As usual the communal anointing was announced in the bulletin on several prior Sundays. At all the Masses on the preceding Sunday Monsignor Denburger himself extended an invitation to the entire parish. Ted felt confident. He anticipated another gathering of people praying for Christ's healing grace on the sick, but events unfolded differently this time around.

After Mass on Tuesday morning Marge Breslin told Ted the sad news that her teenage son just entered a particularly debilitating phase of cystic fibrosis: "Chip was diagnosed with CF as an infant and for the past thirteen years we've tried to keep it a family secret. Sure, I want prayers for him, especially now! But what will people think when he presents himself for the anointing even though he still looks healthy? It's not like he's going to die tomorrow. What should we do?" After a brief conversation with Marge, Ted reassured her that he would check out the matter and get back to her sometime before noon tomorrow.

When Ted returned to the rectory he found a note in his mailbox from Gino Panino, a forty-nine-year-old banker and member of the parish liturgy committee. Gino proposed that the communal anointing focus particularly on mid-life crisis. Ted felt himself cringe. The note continued:

Mid-Life is a time of upheaval touching the physical as well as every other facet of the human person. It's a first experience of diminishment, a time of disorientation when we come to terms with our own mortality and deeply need the healing of the One who has redeemed all cycles of human life. Since the sacrament of anointing is now about life and health rather than death, this seems the way to go.

Ted recalled that the parish liturgy committee planned to meet that evening at 7:30.

Later that morning Ted checked his voice mail. He had a message from Guadalupe O'Toole, the married daughter of Mrs. Marina Lopez, who just returned home from two weeks at Providence Hospital. Guadalupe sought his advice: "Is it too soon to bring my mother to church this Sunday? The hospital chaplain, Sister Patrice, visited her and brought her communion many times. She even anointed her before surgery." Ted was stunned and speechless. Father DiVecchio's voice echoed in his head: "The priest is the only proper minister of the anointing of the sick." But Sister Patrice has given all the pastoral care! She's such an important member of our parish staff—and I like her so much, Ted thought. The last thing I want to do is hurt her or alienate her! He snapped out of his trance and wrote a note to himself to call Guadalupe after lunch tomorrow.

The doorbell rang and a small group of angry and disturbed parishioners demanded a meeting with Ted. "Word's out, Father," the spokesman said. "Everyone knows you invited that guy with AIDS to be anointed next Sunday. We've already told the pastor. If you don't tell the kid and his family that we don't want them here, we'll make things real ugly. We'll raise such hell outside the church before and after Mass you'll wish you never knew us." Ted remained dispassionate and assured the group that he heard their message. As they left there was ice in the air—and Ted sighed, "What next?"

A phone call came in just before supper. Mrs. Nguyen Bong wanted to talk to a priest. Ted overheard the receptionist: "The pastor isn't home but I'm sure Father Ted would be happy to speak with you." He picked up the phone, said hello, and Mrs. Nguyen began to speak: "Father, I'm sure you remember me; I was just baptized at the Easter Vigil. My husband's mother has recently come to visit us from Viet Nam. After such a long trip she fell ill for several weeks. At first we were very concerned, but she seems to be improving each day, thank God! I was so happy to hear the pastor's invitation to come to this Sunday's anointing service. My mother-in-law is a Buddhist, a very devout one! Could she be anointed, Father?" Once again Ted felt stymied, said he would have to check, and promised an answer by phone before supper tomorrow.

At the beginning of supper that evening Monsignor Denburger said: "Ted, it looks like I'll have to leave for Pittsburgh right after the early Mass on Sunday. A family matter; I have no choice. So you'll take the 11:00 Mass, okay? Oh, yes, you'll have the sacrament of anointing after the homily. Ah! How I love to preach at anointing services! Don't you?" Ted's ears began to whistle. He couldn't find words to begin a response after all that had hit him the last few hours. Before he could get a word out of his mouth the pastor asked: "How 'bout those Orioles last

night? Some game, huh?" Ted felt that frightened boy flinch inside him once again. For the rest of the meal they talked sports.

Monsignor Denburger skipped dessert and ran off to a finance committee meeting. And there at the table sat Ted, anxious and confused: "If only I had more time! So many questions all at once, and so many phone calls to make. When will I find time to prepare Sunday's homily? What on earth will I say? And the liturgy committee meets in half an hour!" Ted had an itch to pick up the phone and call someone—anyone!—just to chatter and let off steam. He looked at his watch, reached for the phone and flipped through the Rolodex. "Should I phone Joe DiVecchio at the seminary or Steve Dolski at the neighboring parish?"

* * *

A case study can be used in different ways as a method of teaching and learning. Various points of entry into the dilemma access the complexity of the situation. The case provides a narrative that draws readers into its life and engages them vicariously with persons and issues. This case sketches out a day in the life of a young priest, one who recently bid farewell to the seminary and is now struggling to find his sea legs in parochial ministry. Ted had more than a few apprehensions about what would confront him in the everyday ebb and flow of parish life. The case catches him in a spin of external concerns and internal conflict. A bit of his mind, heart, and spirit are made available to the imaginations of all who engage him. The rushed sequence of events is meant to exasperate. It demonstrates the way questions "come at you" in rapid intervals and demand quick thinking.

Ted Young's story animates discussion on two theological questions that thread through the entire case: Who may anoint and who may be anointed? A multicultural context with real names and faces serves to stimulate the imagination; it also invites various points of entry. Real flesh is wrapped around what could otherwise turn into a classic classroom discussion steeped in the dry bones of pure theory and speculation. The case challenges the student to ask several questions: What do I know? What do I think? What do I feel? What would I do? Cognition, attitudes, and skills are tested, stretched, and expanded. The purpose here is not to respond to all the issues in the case. Nor is it to entertain its every discernable dimension. It is rather to suggest ways to use the case, possible doorways for teaching and learning. A flashback begins the case. The innovative seminary

system tries to build a bridge between seminary and parish by way of a weekly case study seminar. Anyone who has been about the business of seminary education knows the familiar apprehension embodied in the character of Steve Dolski: “These hypothetical situations are just too complex. Real life can’t possibly be like that!” A certain suspicion, even cynicism, permeates Steve’s last days in ministerial formation. In contrast, those involved in seminary work may have had the pleasant experience of a young priest visiting the seminary after a year or two. He smiles at anxious fourth-year students frenetically preparing for the final comprehensive exercise. His simple comment sparks a major insight: “Every day in ministry is a comprehensive exam!”

A good case study helps to accelerate that conviction; it is supple enough to stretch the imagination, to secure presbyterial identity, and to build the confidence necessary to function productively and effectively, especially when pressure builds and time is short. Ted ought to have quick access to data, but he fumbles because he lacks familiarity with basic information that a professional ought to have readily available. His self-confidence languishes while he further complicates his day by amassing several phone calls to almost every person who crossed his path.

The flashback section of the case suggests the initial tension. The very surnames—Young and DiVecchio (old)—counterpoint one another, subtly insinuating the struggle between youth’s apprehension and the wisdom of more mature years. Disclosed later in the case is a strained relationship with Monsignor Denburger, a good man, though blind to the needs of the young priest who lacks the assertiveness to raise pressing issues. These mutual restraints serve to exacerbate the situation, which is purposely set up to agitate the reader.

Not only is Ted’s responsibility to answer questions within a narrow time frame, but also to devise pastoral strategies for each situation in his day of intrigue. Marge Breslin needs to be reassured that it is most appropriate to bring Chip to Sunday’s celebration (canon 1004.2). Likewise Chip’s preparation for the sacrament may strengthen him and its grace enable him to deal more effectively with the approach of this new stage in his illness. The actual event of the Church praying the sacrament may embrace the Breslins and carry them through the rigors of the months ahead while the entire parish walks with them.

Remember how Gino Panino’s request made Ted wince. He knows that a prevalent attitude toward anointing is often ex-

pressed in the phrase: "Could do me some good; can't do me any harm!" He knows that the practice of indiscriminate anointing is to be challenged, but Gino takes the discussion in quite a different direction. Before the committee meets this evening Ted has to sort things out and take a stand. How can he exercise pastoral leadership and safeguard the integrity of the sacrament of anointing without losing Gino's positive energy? Ted is convinced that mid-life does not fall under the heading of "seriously ill." Perhaps Gino and his friends ought to celebrate not the sacrament of anointing but a communal rite of penance and reconciliation with focus on the sinful human condition experienced in the process of aging. What they seek is a ritual to reconcile them to the passage of time and their own physical diminishment. Appropriate catechesis would help to predispose these mid-lifers to ritual options without alienating them from Ted or the Church. It may even make them fellow evangelizers. [For another approach to a similar case, see Michael Himes, *NTR* 4:2 (Feb. 1991) 64–67.] Guadalupe O'Toole's innocent question about her mother's eligibility for the sacrament throws Ted into the thick of tensions between pastoral care of the sick and the proper minister of the sacrament. Current polity states that "every priest, but only a priest, can validly administer the anointing of the sick" (canon 1003.1). Ted may be well aware of the historical unfolding of this sacrament, which gives some precedent to anointing by ministers other than presbyters, yet he must face present realities. How will he answer Guadalupe's question in such a way that she and her mother properly understand the sacrament, as well as Sister Patrice's important hospital ministry? How will he handle Sister Patrice's frustration and that of other such pastoral care givers?

Recall the ornery crowd contesting the worthiness of the nameless man with AIDS. Ted is pressed against the wall and challenged by a harsh reality. How long has our country been struggling with this disease? Can there be anyone lacking compassion for those who suffer so terribly? Ted's dispassion toward this mean-spirited crowd defuses its negative energy. Yet, with little time left, how can he avoid an ugly scene on Sunday? Perhaps there are agencies in the area better equipped to challenge the profound and lingering ignorance among such reactive groups. Collaboration with these agencies may help him displace the fear that comes from ignorance; it may also ease the task of catechizing these cantankerous Catholics. Ted must encourage

“that guy with AIDS” and his family and friends to come on Sunday. Sacraments may not be denied to those who ask for them (canon 843.1). The Church must be large-hearted enough to pray with those who suffer from every kind of illness whatever its source or cause. Therein lies Ted’s task as peacemaker and evangelizer.

Mrs. Nguyen Bong’s mother-in-law is still a devout Buddhist. Bong herself has been recently baptized and is still reflecting on its meaning, but her intent on some form of healing prayer for her mother-in-law cannot be thwarted or dismissed. The pastor’s blanket invitation sent mixed signals to a multicultural community. The Vietnamese culture demands attention and respect for elders. Yet how can Ted use Bong’s baptismal enthusiasm to help her understand that this elder may participate in the praying but not in the anointing? Ted has to find a way to attend to Bong’s desire while at the same time clarifying the meaning of the sacrament. No doubt some priests facing a similar situation would sidestep tensions by simply anointing the woman. But Ted feels caught. He knows that a baptized person of another Christian Church may be anointed if there is danger of death or some other grave and pressing need (canon 844.4). He also knows that an unbaptized person cannot be admitted to the other sacraments (canon 842.1). Ted’s task is to clarify confusions and to find ways of providing ongoing pastoral care for the entire Nguyen family.

Ted Young’s story intends to build a ramp between seminary culture and the realities of parish ministry. Supple and pliant as the case is, it holds within itself several possible teaching and learning goals: (1) to assure learners that stories they hear about the flurry of demands that “come at you” in a brief period of time are not far from the truth; (2) to stretch one’s ability to deal with several important issues all at one time; (3) to alert participants to the human dimensions of chronic illness that challenge not only house-bound seniors but also young people who appear to be in good health; (4) to challenge those engaged by the case to make a choice about ways of dealing with various interest groups seeking to express themselves at transitional junctures along life’s way or during early stages of terminal illness; (5) to humanize the reader to feelings and affections that are operative within the narrative and to respond to them appropriately; (6) to penetrate communication systems between pastors and parochial vicars; (7) to address the strain that arises when a good pastor is not a good mentor; (8) to challenge students to make connections be-

tween liturgical law and pastoral praxis; (9) to inform students of the sacramental polity of the Roman Church; and (10) to assist them in appropriating a balanced ministerial identity even as normative practice sometimes frustrates pastoral realities and relationships. Of these several possible goals only a few can be achieved in one class session. By no means are these ten points an exhaustive listing of goals. They suggest areas that float to the top layer of interest and locate points of entry into the case. The richness of any case study is that “there is always more.”

So often students are sent out soaring at thirty thousand feet as they leave theologates and seminaries. Soon the responsibility of ministry is placed on them and they find themselves in a free fall, at least for a time. Often underdeveloped or not even tested before takeoff are the attitudes and skills that provide the necessary stamina to pilot the body of theological knowledge back to planet Earth by way of developing pastoral strategies. A case like this one helps to develop that stamina. It carves out a slice of parochial life where theological, pastoral, spiritual, and personal formation necessarily converge. Before pastoral strategies can be developed, questions need answers: What do I know? What do I think? What do I feel? What would I do? Knowledge, values, judgments, decisions, behaviors, and strategies for action are necessarily uncovered and connected. Cognitive skills and attitudinal dimensions coalesce to create an experience of insight and integration, although vicarious, which broadens the horizons of those who prepare to take on the full-time charge of pastoral care before it is thrust upon them.

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Christian-Jewish Bonding and the Liturgy of Holy Week

One of the most remarkable theological transformations introduced at Vatican II was the new theology of Christian-Jewish bonding. For centuries, literally since the early patristic era, Christian theology had marginalized and at times even totally displaced the Jewish people from a continuing covenantal relationship with the Creator God. In a few paragraphs, chapter four of Vatican II's Declaration on the Church's Relationship to Other Religions (*Nostra aetate*) dramatically reversed that classical theological posture. It strongly affirmed the continued covenantal link of the Jewish people and underlined the inherent bonding between Christians and Jews as a result. Subsequent Vatican documents have expanded this new theological vision of Christian-Jewish bonding, and Pope John Paul II has made it a centerpiece of his own theological outlook, referring to this bonding as integral to the identity of Christians.

No liturgical season presents a greater challenge to the implementation of this new theological vision than Holy Week.¹ For centuries this was the week of the year most feared by Jews as Christian preachers stirred up passions in the course of liturgies that on occasion resulted in mob violence against local Jewish communities. But even if the worst antisemitic excesses connected with Holy Week are now past history, we still face the challenge of ensuring that come Easter Monday the theology of Christian-Jewish bonding affirmed at Vatican II has made it through not merely intact, but even strengthened. After our celebration of Holy Week do our people feel a new sense of linkage to Judaism and the Jewish people, or have classical attitudes been once more reaffirmed? That is the ultimate barometer. And un-

¹For further reflections see Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *God's Mercy Endures Forever: Guidelines on the Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching* (Washington, D.C.: U.S.C.C. Publications, 1988); John Pawlikowski and James A. Wilde, *When Catholics Speak about Jews* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1987).

less we can truly answer in the affirmative to a deepened sense of bonding, our Holy Week liturgy has not met the test laid out by the council in *Nostra aetate*.

Implementing Vatican II's vision of Christian-Jewish bonding during Holy Week requires a concerted effort that goes beyond a few changes in terminology and or a few positive prayers for the Jewish people. It involves helping the congregation understand the strong roots of events commemorated during Holy Week in the wholesale renewal of the Jewish religious tradition occurring during the time of Jesus' public ministry. Biblical scholars such as James Charlesworth and Daniel Harrington have stressed Jesus' profound roots in the Judaism of his day. But that Judaism was undergoing a major transformation. Jesus and the early Christian community were strongly impacted by that transformation.

Taking days of the Triduum individually we can underline their positive links with the renewal of Judaism under way in Jesus' day. Holy Thursday commemorates the so-called Last Supper of the Lord, where it is traditionally said that Jesus instituted the Eucharist. Unfortunately such language can leave the impression that the Eucharist was a totally new liturgical act. This is simply not the case. Certainly what Jesus said and did added a new theological dimension to the ritual, but it is crucial to recognize that the setting was a Jewish sacred meal. Scholars may disagree whether or not it was a Passover seder. To some degree that is a secondary discussion because the seder meal is in many ways only an amplification of a Shabbat meal. It is the meal setting that was important.

Meals formed an integral part of Jewish ritual for centuries. There are references to such meals throughout the Jewish biblical tradition. But in post-biblical Judaism the meal setting was taking on major importance in the process of Jewish religious renewal. A segment of Judaism I would call the Pharisaic movement—the movement that the 1985 Vatican *Notes on the Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis* emphasizes bore the closest affinity to the teachings of Jesus—was gradually moving away from the focus on Temple sacrifice and Temple priesthood in terms of worship. The Pharisees began to emphasize the “priesthood of all the faithful,” an echo of which we find in the New Testament. As a result, they put greater emphasis on the meal liturgies where the father of the family or the leader of a Pharisaic brotherhood presided.

The sacrificial liturgies of the Temple, still promoted in Jesus' day by the Sadducees, centered on a vision of a God who was distant and someone to fear. Only a select few were really capable of approaching this God (i.e., the Temple priests whose status was determined by bloodline). The Pharisees had come to the recognition of a much more personal God who interacted both with the community of Israel and with its individual members no matter what their social status. The Pharisees felt a need to ritualize this new perception of the God-humanity relationship. Hence they turned to the sacred meal for their ordinary liturgical act. Here the community assembled around the table of the Lord to break bread and to share wine. Bread and wine and the gathering of the community became in a sense a sign of the very presence of God to the people.

This "table fellowship" ritual with its emphasis on God's real presence among the people through the sharing of the meal became the all-important setting for Jesus' establishment of the Christian Eucharist. As we celebrate the festival of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, recognizing the Jewish sacred meal context and its underlying theological vision will not only enhance our sense of bonding as Church with the Jewish tradition, it will also help us better appreciate the original meaning of Eucharist. While there is certainly a memory of the Jewish Passover tradition in the Jewish meal setting that formed the context for the Last Supper, and that certainly included references to the sacrificial ritual practices of earlier forms of Judaism, the Eucharist emerged out of a process of Jewish liturgical renewal. Contact with the Creator God is now to be maintained not primarily through the old-style animal sacrifices, but through the creation of human bonding ("where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst") and through human service, profoundly symbolized on Holy Thursday by the ritual of washing feet.

Moving on to Good Friday, we come to the most challenging day of the entire liturgical year in terms of Vatican II's theology of Christian-Jewish bonding. Experiencing the liturgy in many churches on Good Friday can be a painful experience for anyone who has become committed to the vision of *Nostra aetate*. However, it need not be the case. In fact, it is possible to transform the liturgy of Good Friday into an experience that can unite Christians with Jews rather than deepen their separation. While that may sound preposterous at first, an enhanced understanding of

why Jesus was crucified can lead us to a sense of reconciliation with Jews instead of the traditional rejection.

The Jewish historian Ellis Rivkin has often said that the question “who crucified Jesus” should be replaced by “what crucified Jesus.” The change in emphasis is crucial, because what crucified Jesus were certain entrenched political forces that always want to rid society of those who present new ideas, question entrenched power that has gone awry, and denounce exploitation. The Jerusalem Temple at the time of Jesus was controlled by the Sadducees, who opposed the Pharisaic renewal of Judaism in which Jesus and his disciples were rooted. While the Temple was still regarded as the spiritual center of Jewish life, even by the reformers, it had also taken on a political dimension under Roman occupation. It became in fact the local administrative authority for the Jews with ultimate control in the hands of the Roman authorities. It appears evident through a number of sources, both Jewish and Christian, that at least some of the people connected with the Temple were variously engaged in exploiting the ordinary people. This was likely one of the reasons for Jesus’ invasion of the Temple.

The New Testament generally portrays Jesus as rather cautious in his approach. That is why the invasion of the Temple stands out so strikingly. When we understand how the Temple functioned at the time—as the seat of the local political administration—we can see that his bold act represented something beyond a protest against inadequate worship. In challenging the power of the Temple authorities Jesus was highlighting the exploitation that had become endemic in the Temple system. That is why he was quickly perceived as a threat to the Temple authorities and ultimately to Rome itself. His death on Calvary, which we commemorate on Good Friday, can never be understood merely as a theological statement about human salvation. Calvary was the historical and theological culmination of Jesus’ continuous stand for human integrity throughout his public ministry, which the invasion of the Temple highlighted in a particularly dramatic way.

What must be remembered on Good Friday is that Jesus did not stand alone in his affirmation of human dignity. While his invasion of the Temple may have moved him beyond the parameters of the Jewish reform movement of the day, he was by no means a loner in his challenge of the Temple system. Many other Jews of the time were also working to undermine the power of the

Temple system, albeit in more discrete ways. So often, when we depict the events of Good Friday, Jews appear as the opponents, and even executioners, of Jesus. In most passion plays virtually no Jews in the "crowds" show support for Jesus. The reality is, however, that almost all his support initially came from Jews. And even those who did not join his company often shared his basic commitment to human dignity.

And so it is wrong to present the events of Good Friday as involving wholesale Jewish opposition to Jesus. At best, Jesus' struggle was against the entrenched occupying powers that some Jewish leaders in the Temple aided and abetted for personal gain. So despite the history of Good Friday in terms of Christian-Jewish relations, I believe it is possible to understand it as a time for reconciliation between the two faith communities. For Jesus on Calvary symbolizes not only the sufferings of all humankind, but in particular the sufferings that his brother and sister Jews were experiencing in occupied Palestine. Jesus' death represents the suffering, the trials, the aspirations of many ordinary Jewish people of the time. Certainly there is a long history to overcome in transforming Good Friday into a period of Christian-Jewish reconciliation. But if we better understand the concrete political dynamics that brought Jesus to Calvary, we will be well under-way toward beginning that process of transformation.

Moving on to the Easter Vigil and Easter we come upon, first of all, the Vigil scriptural readings. In one sense these readings link Jesus with Judaism, but only in the classical sense that the Hebrew Scriptures "foreshadowed" the teachings of Jesus. To accentuate this in many places the readings from the Old Testament are read with the church in darkness. The lights come on with the reading of the New Testament texts. This action itself symbolizes a theological outlook on the Christian-Jewish relationship that *Nostra aetate* and subsequent Church documents have challenged.

Gestures such as reading the Hebrew Scripture texts in darkness are so ingrained in Christianity that we often fail to reflect on their theological significance. Yet this is part and parcel of a long legacy of ritual and architecture in Christian churches that embodied the pre-Vatican II "displacement" or "foreshadowing" theologies. There is the famous depiction of the church and synagogue at the cathedral in Strasbourg, France, where the synagogue is blindfolded and sad, depicting the condition of the Old Testament. And at a Princeton University chapel a series of

stained glass windows are arranged so that the sun shines through the windows depicting New Testament scenes, but not through the Old Testament scenes. Clearly this legacy of viewing the Old Testament in terms of darkness must be overcome if the liturgy of Holy Week is to serve the enhancement of Christian-Jewish bonding.

The core of the Easter celebration is, of course, the resurrection. In one sense, this certainly will remain a central theological barrier. We should not think otherwise. But we can enhance a sense of Christian-Jewish bonding in our celebration of Easter if two things occur. First, if excessive triumphalism is removed. Most biblical and theological scholars today emphasize both the inauguration and the *incompleteness* of God's reign. Second, we need to understand that the notion of resurrection was not a totally unique idea in Christianity. It grew up as a central belief within the Pharisaic renewal movement with which Jesus and his disciples had such close association. It is interesting that Matthew, the most Jewish of the gospels, argues strongly for the messiahship of Jesus based on the notion of the resurrection precisely because that notion would carry considerable meaning for Pharisaic Jews. It would have carried negative significance for the Sadducees.

The notion of resurrection as it emerged in Pharisaic Judaism involved far more than a miraculous one-time event. It marked the final step in the growing appreciation of God's intimate relationship with each individual person. For Pharisaic Jews human persons were held in such high esteem that they were now believed to participate personally and directly in the Messianic age. So there is some basis for affirming a connection between Judaism and Christianity in terms of resurrection despite the major differences that continue to exist. We can celebrate the resurrection of the Jewish people, as individuals and as a community, to whom, as Pope John Paul II has reminded us, we remain inextricably bonded.

In concluding this brief overview of the new theology of Christian-Jewish bonding and the liturgy of Holy Week we need to extend the discussion into Eastertime. The readings for the weeks following Easter can prove especially troublesome. For one, nothing is included from the Hebrew Scriptures. This tends to reinforce the notion that the Hebrew Scriptures play no constructive role in the self-identity of the Christian community whose origins are being retold during this period. Second, some

of the texts from Acts and Peter appear more harsh toward Jews and Judaism than anything in the Gospels themselves.

It is necessary to put the readings of Eastertime in their context. Most come from the late first century when there was an apparent struggle between the Jewish community and the Christian movement. Harsh words were spoken by both sides. These should not be canonized. We should also remember that the Church and synagogue were in competition for converts at this period, which added to the hostility at times. All these texts must be measured against the affirmation of Judaism's continued validity in Romans, which Vatican II used as the biblical basis for its affirmation of Christian-Jewish bonding.

Therefore, the pastoral challenge of Holy Week comes down to a question of whether we can begin to make this most sacred period of the liturgical year a time of genuine reconciliation between Christians and Jews. It will be a long uphill battle because the theology of displacement and fulfillment has been deeply intertwined with the celebration of Holy Week, causing much pain for Jews over the years. But stressing the connections I have highlighted above can begin to move us in the right direction.

Cardinal Carlo Martini of Milan has emphasized that Jesus was born, lived, and died as a believing Jew. Somehow the liturgy of Holy Week and Eastertime must reflect this basic reality far better than it has in light of the mandate of *Nostra aetate*. Ultimately the theology of Christian-Jewish bonding will become firmly rooted when it moves from theological vision to ritual experience. And that, I might add in closing, applies to Jews as well. Can the day come when Jews, during Passover for example, recall Jesus as a person who was born, worked, and died a believing Jew? If we can ever get to that point where we not only admit intellectually but somewhat ritualize Cardinal Martini's perspective in our own ways, then we will have broken through two thousand years of hostility, bitterness, resentment, and even physical suffering and death.

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Carole D. Goodwin

KEEPING
CURRENT

Young People and Liturgy: Catechesis for Involvement

THE PROBLEM

They sit in the back pew, slouched down, eyes glazed over with the look of people totally out of step with what is happening around them. I often wonder why they come at all. Their plaintive cries never change. "Mass is boring." "I get nothing out of it." "It's always the same." Our parish teenagers present us with a particular challenge when it comes to liturgical practice. Youth ministers share wonderful stories of the deep spirituality of the young. Religious educators also share stories of teenagers who express their hunger for a clearer understanding of our faith ways. Yet, liturgists, pastors, and parents describe teens' liturgical practice as uninvolved. Why? What do we need to do? The Church offers a rich liturgical life. Youth ministry and liturgical ministry must join in encouraging genuine involvement that is rooted in sound liturgical practice as well as sound catechetical values. Recently the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) surveyed fifty parishes identified by diocesan staffs as ones that had reputations for enthusiastic and widespread involvement of youth in liturgy. The NFCYM reported some noticeable trends in those parishes: First, eager openness obtains when youth participate in preparation for liturgy or are involved as liturgical ministers. Second, youths return to worship that is engaging and respectful of diverse cultures. The key notion is involvement. Most young people appreciate diversity and have an innate fascination with variants based on the norm. Liturgy that includes ethnic music, a careful and powerful proclamation of the Scriptures, and ritual practices from diverse cultures (such as the African-centric custom of calling people to worship with drum beats) are well-received. Third, worship in which the assembly is actively involved in responses and music commands the attention of youths. Fourth, youth involvement is secured through consistent and nurturing support of parish staff. And finally, when the entire parish regards young people with acceptance and welcome, teens request involvement not only in liturgy but in other arenas of parish life as well.

WHAT IS “GOOD” LITURGY?

The celebration of the liturgy should correspond to the genius and culture of different peoples. In order that the mystery of Christ be made known to all the nations, it must be proclaimed, celebrated and lived in all cultures in such a way that they themselves are not abolished by it, but redeemed and fulfilled. It is with and through their own human culture, assumed and transfigured by Christ, that the multitude of God’s children have access to the Father (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1204).

The NFCYM Committee on Youth and Worship, in consultation with other organizations that deal with liturgy, such as the National Pastoral Musicians, identified some key components for liturgical worship that engages youth. They found that the following things are necessary: (1) good preaching that enables the perception of relevance of worship to daily life; (2) physical and oral engagement by the assembly; (3) catechesis of the rich symbols of the liturgy; (4) the worshipping community must present an aura of welcome and specifically engage youth; (5) preparation for liturgy must intentionally involve youth in planning and ministries. These findings are reminiscent of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, paragraph 14, which encourages the full, conscious, and active participation that is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, to which the people have a right and for which they have an obligation because they are baptized into the self-offering of Christ.

THE VOICE OF THE YOUNG

Brian, age 17: “I go to Mass to worship God, to pray for the needs of the poor and to share communion with my parish family. Sometimes I do find the Mass boring. I have to work harder during these times to remember why I am there . . . not just for what I get out of it, but to join others in prayer. The best Masses for me are those with upbeat, lively music, creative ways to celebrate, and good, powerful lectors. I know everyone might not like that style, but my friends and I do. I participate better when I understand the homily and relate it to my life. But don’t get me wrong. I don’t mind going to Mass, especially if I am lectoring or serving. I think my week would have a void without it.”

Jackie, age 16: “I love attending Mass with my family. It’s an important part of our week. I feel really close to God when the whole church sings and sways to the music. One of the best

Masses was at a National Youth Conference. There were over 7,000 kids and the priest had us shout out our 'Amens' and 'Alleluias' and 'Praise Jesus!' It made me proud of my African-American roots and it made me feel real close to the Church. Singing is a big part of liturgy in my parish!"

Indeed, teenagers are aware and serious members of the assembly, and often the young themselves are the best advocates for engaging other youths in parish activities. Their voices may well be the most powerful way for other youth to identify the baptismal connection between liturgical worship and every moment of their lives.

CHALLENGES

One of the central psychosocial tasks of adolescence is to become independent. As young people explore how to become more autonomous in relation to authority, they often call accepted values into question, especially institutional religion. On one hand, the last few generations of teenagers and young adults have often rejected much of what society has held dear, especially in the realm of organized religion. But on the other hand, there is a heightened interest and involvement in spirituality and an expressed hunger for experiences that convey a variety of modes of the experience of God.

Because of their youth and because they have not been party to shaping the traditions of the past, young people feel little responsibility to adhere to these traditions, even though these religious roots have provided their elders with a rich prayer life steeped in liturgical celebrations. Consequently, the young need intentional catechesis on the history and richness of liturgical life, as well as opportunities for liturgical celebrations of the faith as essential to genuine spirituality. Such experiences have the potential to provide the social bonding with the community of faith that precisely empowers mature growth toward independence.

In an entertainment-centered youth culture, it is incumbent upon youth ministers to do their homework on liturgical norms, especially for the Liturgy of the Word. They likewise need to encourage excellent preaching, lest we fall into the trap of trying to entertain rather than to help the young recognize the liturgical encounter with Christ. We have a marvelous opportunity to create an atmosphere of discernment regarding competence among the young (and all others in the parish!) to proclaim the Scriptures. The readings have their own power and will engage the

young if they are read well. For example, the letters of Paul would be well read precisely as letters, and the gospel with a transparency that enables the voice of Christ to interpret lives. If each reading were proclaimed as if it had never been heard before, conveying a word of interpretation for the assembly, all members of the congregation would be well served in hearing the Good News.

What resources do we have? How do we educate and catechize so that the public worship of the Church might become the rich source of interpretation of the lives of those who follow after us in the faith? Thomas Groome names catechesis as the activity of reechoing or retelling the story of Christian faith handed down from past generations. For young people today, the liturgy, as essential to the transmission of the story, has been seriously jeopardized. Perhaps because of a loss of the sense of the holiness of the activity, youths do not readily sense the power and importance of the liturgy because, for the most part, they have not been well catechized about the manner in which the Catholic Christian tradition employs symbols. They know that the raiders of the lost ark were searching for something sacred, but their own search is blinded by their perception that liturgy is nothing more than a mundane ritual to be endured at their parents' insistence. The current situation cries out for a catechesis for involvement that stands upon sound liturgical theology and practice.

The Catholic Christian Tradition is filled with assertions that we cannot endure for long without the full celebration of the Eucharist. Our young need to hear of the earliest disciples, gathered to hear the interpretation of their lives through the proclamation of the Scriptures, the address of God in praise and thanksgiving, and in partaking of the Body of Christ, which is Christ and his members. They need to hear of those witnesses to the faith whose strength of character has the potential to capture their imaginations and by which they, too, might carry the gospel in their very bodies to a hungry world. The heroes of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* cannot compare to the Spirit-filled disciples of the Christ announced in the celebration of the Eucharist. Our young have a baptismal right to be drawn into the public, social activity by which all the generations have come to know who they are: bound together in Christ by the power of the Spirit to the glory of God for the peace and salvation of all the world. It is our challenge to share such treasures so their hearts will burn within them (Luke 24:22), so they might know they are part of a com-

munity of disciples that extends throughout the centuries, and so they might know the reign of God continues to come through the giving of their lives.

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BOOKS REVIEWED

A.K.M. Adam, *What Is Postmodern Biblical Criticism?*

Barnabas Lindars, S.S.F., *Judges 1–5: A New Translation and Commentary.*

Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Language of Faith: Essays on Jesus, Theology and the Church.*

Ann O'Hara Graff (ed.), *In the Embrace of God: Feminist Approaches to Theological Anthropology.*

Joseph A. Bracken, S.J., *The Divine Matrix: Creativity as Link between East and West.*

Gary Dorrien, *Soul in Society: The Making and Renewal of Social Christianity.*

Regis Duffy, *An American Emmaus: Faith and Sacrament in the American Culture.*

Raimon Panikkar, *Invisible Harmony: Essays on Contemplation and Responsibility.*

BOOK REVIEWS

What Is Postmodern Biblical Criticism? By A.K.M. Adam. New Testament Series. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995. xiv + 81 pp.

This is a good and very useful book. One would be well advised to take up the author's offering of himself as a friendly guide to what is rightly regarded as a formidable collection of literature. In a short work that is determinedly modest in its self presentation, Adam makes good on his promise to "blithely simplify" (xi). Yet his tone is never patronizing: he writes like the most courteous of colleagues from another department who, while being an expert, is still full of enthusiasm for what he knows, and is only too willing to introduce his peers to its delights. The sense that predominates is: There is much more to this than I shall be telling you, but with this overview you really will understand many things a good deal better. I see no reason for distrusting him, especially as he offers plenty of suggestions about where to go for more detailed treatments.

The first chapter, "Textures of Postmodernism," summarizes clearly modernity's initial rebellion against the ancients, its reliance on method as a guarantee of truth, and the subsequent fragmentation into disciplines, with its high degree of control of who may speak with authority on a given issue. He then relativizes this viewpoint by explaining Cornel West's threefold critique of modernity's foundationalism, search for totalities, and assumption of "scientific" disinterest. The second part of the chapter amplifies this picture, showing how ill-advised it is to understand as solid entities such elements as the reader, the text, the author, and chronological and disciplinary boundaries. Each of the remaining three chapters develops one of West's three concerns.

Chapter 2, entitled "Deconstruction: On Making a Difference," opens by limning identity as defined by distinction, continues by conveying in some detail the kinds of gains that deconstructive readings of biblical texts can yield (including dethroning and relativizing historical interpretation), and concludes with two illustrations: the signature (from Derrida) and the authenticity question as applied to Pauline letters, especially 2 Thessalonians.

In the third chapter, "Political Criticism: Ideologies and Their Discourses," Adam's points of departure here are Foucault and New

Historicism. He includes a simple but helpful taxonomy of ideology that allows him to situate criticisms based on feminist, economic, and racial criteria. Although this chapter covers much wider ground than the preceding ones, Adam never loses sight of his overarching commitment to explaining postmodernism. Thus, he equips the reader to distinguish postmodern political criticism from that which is merely modern.

“Crossing Up the Discourses” is the title of chapter four, the last full chapter. Here, Adam discusses the possibilities (and some consequences) of transgressing various borderlines, notably those of discipline and genre. A final section, “Prelude: Interpretation as a Kind of Wri[gh]ting,” constitutes a gentle, reasoned encouragement (incitement?) to go and “think the opposite” in biblical interpretation, using whatever materials one has, regardless of the kind of precedents that might limit the possibilities. The aim? To construct something analogous to the vehicles of a cartwright or the wheels of a wheelwright (73).

What do I like about this book? It has a pleasing simplicity that really does make clear what is at stake in postmodernism, shows clearly its primary concerns and possibilities, gently warns about life outside the usual boundaries, gives some attractive samples of the materials available in this world-long, world-wide junkyard/toyshop, and, finally, pushes the reader out to play in it.

More specifically, Adam draws the reader’s attention to the connections between postmodern practices and those of premodern ancients, such as the Fathers of the Church and those who produced the Talmud. He makes available to the reader many “rediscoveries” that the Catholic tradition of biblical interpretation (at its best) has never quite lost sight of: the fourfold sense of Scripture, the acknowledgment that scholarly erudition is not required for authentic interpretation, and the communal situation of biblical interpretation.

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Judges 1–5: A New Translation and Commentary. By Barnabas Lindars, S.S.F. Edited by A.D.H. Mayes. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995. xxxiii + 302 pp.

When Barnabas Lindars died in 1991 he was working on a new edition of the commentary on Judges for the International Critical Commentary series. The editors of the series chose Lindars because he was an important authority on Judges, a book that occupied his interest throughout his scholarly career. Also, Lindars was a leading expert on the text of Judges and the ICC places a strong emphasis on textual matters. Unfortunately, the work had progressed only to Judges 5. Since Lindars' manuscript was in very good condition, Professor A.D.H. Mayes, himself an important authority on the Deuteronomistic history of which Judges is a part, was asked to edit the manuscript for publication. Lindars' work was judged so valuable that it should not be lost, even though it was not a complete commentary on the book of Judges.

Those who will profit the most from this book are scholars concerned with the Septuagint version of Judges. Lindars provides them with a primer of how to use this ancient version in reconstructing the original text of Judges. Mayes considers Lindars' textual notes on the first five chapters of Judges his "most strikingly original contribution" (ix).

Still, one does not have to be a textual critic to appreciate this book. It is a commentary that is carefully crafted, lucidly written, and exegetically sound. Lindars offers no idiosyncratic interpretations, nor does he lose his readers in a maze of literary-critical jargon. This commentary reflects what a master of the historical-critical method can offer.

An important question that has to be faced in any treatment of Judges is whether and to what extent this book can be used to reconstruct the history of pre-state Israel. Again, Lindars avoids the extremes. He characterizes the stories in Judges as literary constructions. Still, he asserts that they can shed some light on the period before the emergence of the Israelite state, though they are by no means historical sources. His discussion of the battle of Kishon (Judges 4–5) is illustrative of his measured judgment on the historical value of the narratives in Judges. Lindars asserts that this story has "a real basis in history," though it has "tended to be conformed to the conventional pattern (of Holy War narratives) in the course of transmission" (171).

Another positive feature of this book is that Lindars is conversant with the archaeology of the period and of the sites that he discusses, such as Hazor (176–7), though he was not an archaeologist himself. Too often commentators with strong interest in textual matters considered archaeology an interesting sideshow, but without substantive value for the illumination of the text. Fortunately, Lindars was not of this stripe.

This is a serious, scholarly commentary on Judges 1–5. This should not mean that readers whose interest is more general ought to ignore this book. If they are not conversant with the textual issues that occupy Lindars' attention, they can simply move on to other parts of the commentary. Their efforts at wading through material that is foreign to them will be rewarded. Lindars' life-long study of Judges made him a careful, sensitive, and thoughtful reader whose insights can be ignored only to the detriment of anyone interested in the Old Testament.

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The Language of Faith: Essays on Jesus, Theology and the Church.

By Edward Schillebeeckx. Introduction by Robert J. Schreiter.
Concilium Series. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books; London: SCM Press,
1995. xiii + 270 pp.

Edward Schillebeeckx is now over eighty years old. It would be hard to overestimate his contribution to theology in the last fifty years, and it is surely not an exaggeration to speak of him and his work in terms of two periods. His earlier work on the sacraments, mariology, and various themes from fundamental theology earned him a respected place among theologians of the *nouvelle theologie* and among bishops intent on the *aggiornamento* of Vatican II. His books on the sacraments in general and on marriage in particular are still part of contemporary discussions of these topics. The second Schillebeeckx appears on the scene after the council with his Jesus book in the mid-seventies. It was surely his interest in the dialogue with European secular humanists that kept him rethinking basic questions of Church doctrine and practice. The basic characteristic of the second period of his work is attention to new questions for which not even he has been able to propose completely satisfying answers.

The present collection of essays is published in the Concilium Series. Fourteen of the sixteen essays first appeared in the journal Schillebeeckx founded in 1965 with Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, and Hans Kung. The last two are reprinted from other sources. Robert J. Schreiter, student, friend, and translator of Schillebeeckx, offers an excellent introduction to the essays and to Schillebeeckx's thought in general. The essays are presented in chronological order. The first essay ap-

peared in the opening issue of *Concilium* and the last one in a *festschrift* for Gustavo Gutiérrez in 1989.

As the subtitle indicates, the essays can be grouped under three headings: Jesus, theology, and the Church. Not one of these essays is outdated; each still has something to say. The topics covered include Christian humanism, the magisterium's role and authority, the basis and limits of Christian discourse on the afterlife, religion and political concerns, the interpretation of religious language, the meaning of salvation, Jesus' relationship to God, the gospel of peace, the Church and the poor, the role of history in theological reflection, and religious pluralism. Schillebeeckx's competence and honesty in dealing with all these topics merit respect and admiration.

One theme that moves through all Schillebeeckx's work and is present in each of the sixteen essays in this collection is concern for the *humanum* and Christian faith: What is the relevance of faith to the quest for fully human life in this world? In the first essay, "The Church and Mankind," he speaks out of concern for the widely evident reaction "against any kind of religious practice which is alien to this world" (1). And the final essay, "The Religions and the Human Ecumene," discusses the pluralism of religions as so many "ways to salvation and blessing" (249), with religions understood as "systems that help us come to terms spiritually, emotionally, and especially existentially with our vulnerable, precarious existence in an ambivalent society" (250). The essay "Questions on Christian Salvation of and for Man" analyzes briefly seven anthropological constants that have to be taken seriously in any account or proposal of human salvation or wholeness of life: coporeity and the ecological situation; human existence as coexistence; the relation to social and institutional structures; the finitude and historicity of existence in a particular cultural context; truth and meaning in relation to action; utopian interest in the future; and the balanced synthesis of these dimensions according to norms arising from their interplay. Schillebeeckx presents this concern for the *humanum* as the retrieval of what is central in Jesus' words and deeds, the biblical authors' interpretation of the relationship with God, and early Christian theologians' basic apologetic conviction.

Perhaps the basic unresolved question in Schillebeeckx's theology is this: How can we speak of Jesus and his relationship to God and humankind without dissolving his uniqueness in a universal God-willed concern for wholeness? It is Jesus' own question: "And you, who do you say that I am?" For example, in the opening essay from 1964, Jesus is the Christ and God's project is to form all humankind into a *communio* with Christ as the center (4). The hypostatic union realized in the

incarnation means that “in the Son the eternal has presented itself personally within temporal and terrestrial realities” (9). It is the universal significance of the Christ-event that justifies speaking of an anonymous Christianity and of an anonymous presence of the mystery of the Church in those who share in the grace of God in Christ without explicitly knowing and recognizing it.

In the final essay on the pluralism of religions—a pluralism that will surely get bigger with the founding of more religions—the themes of incarnation, hypostatic union, and anonymous Christianity have disappeared. Schillebeeckx now explicitly rejects the expression “anonymous Christian” (255) and says that “redemption in Christ is only unique and universal insofar as what happened in Jesus is continued in his disciples” (259). He also says that “*in religiosis* we must put behind us both absolutism and relativism” (255).

In an interview published about the same time as this collection of essays Schillebeeckx speaks of himself as a happy theologian. We can be both happy and grateful to have had his help in thinking through our faith again for the world of today.

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In the Embrace of God: Feminist Approaches to Theological Anthropology. Edited by Ann O’Hara Graff. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1995. 234 pp. \$19.00.

This collection of essays is presented as “a first step” in filling the void of feminist work in theological anthropology. Ten women theologians and one man contribute twelve short papers that originated in the seminar on theological anthropology and the women’s seminar on constructive theology of the Catholic Theological Society of America. The editor, now deceased, taught at the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University, Chicago, and at Seattle University. She also provided the introduction, wrote two of the essays, and collaborated on a third.

The first section of the book sets the context by giving an overview, first of feminism in general and then of the development of feminist theology. Readers unfamiliar with either topic will find these essays an excellent introduction, and their endnotes provide a useful bibliogra-

phy. The second section considers some ways in which women's experience can provide a starting point for theology. Two of the three essays are written from the Latina perspective. The third section explores how particular aspects of women's experiences (sexuality, psychology, suffering) lead to a critique and reconstruction of Christian theology. Finally, the last section examines feminist contributions to four specific theological issues: sin, ecological awareness, the image of God, and eschatology.

In contrast to approaches based on finding universal "anthropological constants" in human history, whether by transcendental method or by the incorporation of socio-biological perspectives, the theology of these essays is self-consciously contextual: the basis is specifically female experience. (The idea of "female" as a cultural "gender construct" is one of the problems with which the first part of the book grapples.) Although the authors are committed to the Christian tradition, the brevity of each essay and the concentration on contemporary feminist sources prevents any thorough exploration of its resources. Hence, of the three hermeneutical tasks set by feminist theology (negative critique of the tradition as a locus of patriarchy; retrieval of its positive moments; reconstruction in the light of female experience), the third is emphasized, while the first is engaged more briefly and the second only in passing. Much of the theology here is, in the words of one author, "evocative and not systematic." Nevertheless, the level of scholarship in most of the essays is high. Some authors, however, venture into areas beyond their expertise. The writing in general is clear, frequently impassioned, and comprehensible to the nonspecialist. A few essays lack polish: there are several striking malapropisms and some lapses in syntax that might pass in speech, but that stick out on the printed page.

A major limitation of such a collection is indicated by the recurrence of phrases like "a survey as brief as this," "this initial attempt," "so brief an exploration as this one," "in so limited a space, this essay cannot begin," etc. Despite the number of voices represented and an explicit commitment to pluralism, the volume is given continuity by the authors' common Catholic perspective, similar interests, and frequent use of the same sources. On the other hand, these also lead to a certain predictability and even a degree of repetition in the various essays.

A number of issues treated (e.g., female psychology, different forms of women's suffering, sin from a female point of view) are of interest to pastoral ministers, but the focus here is theological reflection rather than practical action. Beginning theological students will find much of value in this collection if they approach it in the light of the editor's

admonition: "Consider these essays the journey, perhaps more truly the wanderings, of diverse people committed to etching new maps on the charted and uncharted territory of the human and Divine."

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The Divine Matrix: Creativity as Link between East and West. By Joseph A. Bracken, S.J. Faith Meets Faith Series. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books; Herefordshire, England: Gracewing, 1995. xi + 179 pp. \$21.00.

Of the many dimensions of interreligious dialogue, Joseph A. Bracken of Xavier University in Cincinnati focuses on the often neglected role of metaphysical speculation in searching for structures of intelligibility that can embrace widely different religious affirmations. In his earlier work, Bracken developed an understanding of God that combines central themes of Whiteheadian process theology with Christian trinitarian theology. In the work under review, Bracken places this model in dialogue with perspectives from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. While the writing is succinct and clear, this work is intended for a speculatively-minded audience with a background in philosophy.

The center of his proposal is the insistence on viewing ultimate reality as an ongoing activity in process and not as an ultimate entity transcendent of the world. The divine matrix is the underlying infinite activity that grounds all reality; it is "an energy source or principle of activity" immanent to all entities, creaturely or divine (5). Bracken begins by grounding his proposal in a creative reinterpretation of Western metaphysical texts ranging from Aristotle to Aquinas and Schelling and Heidegger. Meister Eckhart furnishes the clearest support for distinguishing the divine ground as infinite activity from the divine persons as entities.

Adapting the philosophy of Whitehead to interpret the Trinity, Bracken sees the divine matrix as the ground of the divine persons themselves. The divine persons are finite entities, limited by time and ignorant of the future, and they participate in the infinite divine nature. They are one because "they share . . . the same intentional field of activity which in its basic structure never changes" (62).

Bracken then turns to the East in part II and questions the Upanishads, Shankara, the Buddha, Nagarjuna, Kitaro Nishida, Lao Tzu, and Chuang Tzu on whether they view ultimate reality as an entity or an activity. In each case, Bracken finds resources within the Asian tradition for affirming that the true ultimate is ongoing activity. He interprets Hindu, Buddhist, and Taoist affirmations of nonduality in light of his own metaphysics, repeatedly rejecting any drift toward either monism or a transcendent entity. Brahman, dependent coarising, and the Tao all turn out to be different names for the divine matrix.

The breadth of Bracken's proposal is daring and refreshing. Readers familiar with traditional perspectives, both Eastern and Western, may well have questions, however. Bracken acknowledges that his reinterpretation of Asian texts repeatedly goes against the traditional interpretations of these texts by members of the religions themselves. Whether the radical diversity of these religious traditions can be accommodated by the simple affirmation of the ultimate as infinite activity is questionable. Bracken's own metaphysics shapes the terms of the conversation at every turn.

Moreover, limiting the consciousness of the divine persons by time raises problems for contemporary cosmology. After Einstein, science views space-time as a four-dimensional continuum. If the divine persons are limited by our dimension of time, it would seem that they are also limited by our dimension of space. The future of which the divine persons are ignorant would appear to be relative to a particular region of the universe. Whitehead himself had adroitly avoided this problem by viewing God as the one nontemporal actual entity. By viewing the divine persons as ongoing societies of actual entities, Bracken faces difficulties in light of relativity theory itself.

Nonetheless, this is an exciting and thought-provoking proposal. While the work does not directly address questions of pastoral ministry, it does offer much material for reflection on the cosmic and interreligious context of all ministry. Bracken has accomplished his goal of offering a stimulating invitation to further metaphysical reflection among the world's religions.

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Soul in Society: The Making and Renewal of Social Christianity.

By Gary Dorrien. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

Gary Dorrien, an Episcopal priest and associate professor of religion at Kalamazoo College (where he also serves as dean of its chapel) has produced a truly marvelous synthesis of developments in Protestant social ethics. This volume provides a clear, concise introduction to the major movements and figures that shaped the churches' social vision.

Dorrien focuses particularly on the works of Walter Rauschenbusch, Paul Tillich, Jurgen Moltmann, and Reinhold Niebuhr. Catholics unfamiliar with the history of the Social Gospel and Christian Realism as defining movements in twentieth-century Protestant thought will find this volume an eye-opener. Individual chapters, as well as the book as a whole, are a ready-made resource for use in college and seminary courses as well as more advanced adult education programs.

Dorrien does not entirely ignore the Catholic tradition of social ethics (although he largely avoids consideration of the social encyclicals and Vatican II documents). John Courtney Murray, Gustavo Gutiérrez, Juan Luis Segundo, and Rosemary Ruether receive some attention, but the perspective of a major American Catholic figure such as Msgr. John A. Ryan, who was central to the interreligious coalition that garnered religious support for the New Deal among Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, goes virtually unmentioned. I point to this omission not so much to critique Dorrien as to indicate an area where his book would need to be supplemented with other material. What he chooses to cover he does in a very accurate, concise, and readable way in a text that runs some 389 pages.

Dorrien's purpose in writing *Soul in Society* is not merely historical analysis. His goal in a sense is to rescue the tradition of social Christianity for contemporary American society "after the disestablishment of American Protestantism and the loss of any unitive source of moral value in American culture" (16). In his introduction (viii-ix) he posits a series of questions, a response to which he regards as critical if social ethics is to continue to thrive. They include the possibility of a reconstructed common good in the face of the current stress on race, multiculturalism, and anti-imperialism and the development of a spirituality and sustainable praxis that can help heal the natural world.

In the final two chapters of the volume Dorrien begins to lay out his own response to the questions he posed in the introduction. Taking the "dethronement" of liberal Christianity in the postmodern age more as a blessing than a curse, for the Church is now free to define itself without feeling beholden to the dominant order, Dorrien believes that the new social ethics must move beyond the currently available options of neoliberalism, liberationism, feminism, etc. Its focus needs to be on the democratization of power in every sector of society—the political, the

economic, and the “living place.” It must give more realistic attention to economic matters than the generally socialist-oriented ethics of twentieth-century Protestantism. On the other hand, it must pick up on issues such as health care, child care, housing, a clean environment, and healthy neighborhoods that figures such as Rauschenbusch and Tillich tended to overlook.

To put a name on his model, Dorrien turns to James Gustafson’s “participant Church” proposal, which neither condemns modern society nor affirms it as an unqualified failure. Rather, the model envisions the Church as a partner in the human conversation that will give direction to the way people use technical and political resources so that they might result in a humane society. The Church’s social ethic must be for the here and now, not for the age to come. It must be seen as a part of the process of incarnating the way of Christ and transforming society into Christ’s reign of justice and peace. In this sense, for Dorrien, Christian social ethics must be rooted in a theology of the kingdom.

The incompleteness of Dorrien’s own perspective is a drawback to an otherwise masterful volume. He is clearly moving in the right direction, but he has not answered, or even taken up, critical issues such as appropriate language, pluralism, or the use of political power by the Church. It would be exciting to see Dorrien turn his attention to this more constructive task now that he has presented us with the history.

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An American Emmaus: Faith and Sacrament in the American Culture. By Regis Duffy. New York: Crossroad, 1995. 184 pp. \$15.95.

When setting out into unfamiliar territory, it is useful to have a guide who knows the terrain. Regis Duffy is such a guide in *An American Emmaus*. As Duffy employs it, “Emmaus is not only the name of a town in the Gospel of Luke; it is also a stage of mind . . . [which] refers to the ongoing conversion of people who had already thought of themselves as disciples of Christ” (1). *An American Emmaus* thus serves as a metaphor for the journey of twentieth-century Christians attempting to recognize Christ within the pluralistic cultures of the United States. Since the author believes that this journey cannot be separate from the

way a community celebrates the liturgy and sacraments, he focuses on the impact of post-technological American culture on Catholic faith and worship and, conversely, on the impact of Catholic worship and witness on the culture in this country.

Duffy examines this dual question through six chapters. The first of these considers the image of new creation, and asks to what extent our culture helps or hinders us from seeing God's footprints in creation and giving thanks for this presence. Through a series of historical and cultural vignettes in chapter two, he demonstrates how the American Church has sometimes been prophetic in its liturgical/devotional practices, and other times has colluded with some of the more negative aspects of our culture. Placing the images of American individualism and ecclesial communitarianism in dialogue in chapter three, the author asks whether the recent liturgical reforms have resulted in authentic redemptive reception of the meaning announced in those rites. Duffy treats American's sense of time as a kind of case study in the subsequent chapter to further examine this question. In the penultimate chapter the author proposes the image of America as a "new wilderness" where the dual forces of American individualism and a communal ecclesiology need to strengthen and purify each other. The final turn is to American sacramental praxis where this long-time advocate of active participation in the liturgy questions whether current liturgical participation is authentic enough to provide liturgy with a prophetic edge in U.S. culture.

The fundamental questions raised in *An American Emmaus* are not new. What is fresh, however, is Duffy's nuanced approach to these issues. Demonizing U.S. culture is a well accepted pastime among many students of the liturgy. So is lamenting the quality of worship and linking that poor quality with prophecies about the demise of Roman Catholic identity in this country. *An American Emmaus*, however, does not resort to such culture bashing nor breast beating. Rather, while pointedly underscoring the need for Christian faith as symbolized in our worship to be prophetic and countercultural, Duffy simultaneously demonstrates how aspects of U.S. culture contribute to authentic faith and worship. Thus, for example, our well touted individualism enables us to honor the unique divine gifts in each of us. Similarly, a culture that needs to be challenged for its consumerist tendencies also needs to be acknowledged for its ability to nourish a unique spirit of freedom, toleration, and even generosity.

This balance is achieved, in part, through a well-acknowledged reliance upon and dialogue with the writings of Andrew Greeley: a resource this volume demonstrates has not yet been appropriately

respected nor seriously employed by liturgists. As Greeley often points out, the sociological data on the U.S. Catholic Church does not support many of the “myths” about the demise of our religious identity or the collapse of our religious imagination. Constructing a dialogue with this society requires taking the data from this society seriously. Duffy is one of the few U.S. liturgists who has done so through the work of Greeley and social scientists in such a sustained and accessible manner. While he has not mapped the entire terrain, nor marked every path on the way, he has provided important directions for the journey. For that, and the always constructive insights of this liturgical visionary, we are truly grateful.

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Invisible Harmony: Essays on Contemplation and Responsibility.

By Raimon Panikkar. Edited with introduction by Harry James Cargas. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995. xiv + 210 pp. Paper.

This book is comprised of nine chapters, each of which is an original or edited talk or article of previously published materials of Raimon Panikkar, ranging in time from 1973–1991. As the book jacket indicates, the volume functions as a mini-*summa* of Panikkar’s chief insights.

The introduction by Harry James Cargas gives background on the person of Panikkar, “a Catholic priest, a Hindu, a Buddhist, and a Secularist . . . (who) is comfortable communicating in eleven languages . . . (and writes) in six” (vii). Cargas emphasizes Panikkar’s rich life experience, including his multicultural background, which gives him a particularly unique perspective from which to reflect on and critique the contributions of both Eastern and Western theological and philosophical thought. This introduction acquaints the reader with a number of themes central to Panikkar’s thinking. Some of these themes are developed in the essays; others, with appropriate references, are teasers to the reader who might enjoy further investigation of Panikkar’s thought.

These essays have several recurrent themes: the need for pluralism, the fallacy of the notion that universal concepts or symbols are possible, the importance of “being” as well as “doing” in the exploration of truth, and, related to the latter, the need to cultivate interior silence out of which the word emerges.

Panikkar purports that the Western view of reality is too narrow and, perhaps, chauvinistic. As an extension of colonialism, the West tries to export its own world view. In seeing reality through its Western lens, which it judges superior to others, the West negates the value and contribution of other cultures and ways of thinking and being. Panikkar is critical of the West insofar as it attempts to reduce everything to rational categories, to create "universal concepts," and to see unity as synonymous with uniformity. Panikkar, from an Eastern perspective, suggests that humankind, using theological and philosophical categories, cannot capture ultimate reality. Far from being a monolithic "concept," ultimate reality has multifaceted expressions and is a mystery to be lived into.

In today's immediately accessible world with so many options presenting themselves, a concrete day-to-day dilemma is created by the encounter of mutually incompatible world views and philosophies. Panikkar observes that suggesting that one world view is superior to another is courting disaster, and that one should be embraced by all. Pluralism, according to Panikkar, must be embraced if our world is to survive peacefully. By pluralism Panikkar means an acknowledgment and acceptance of the fact that no one world view embodies the whole truth. Each has a piece of it. Pluralism requires a humility to embrace the limitations of one's given perspective, a confidence that ultimate reality is manifest in a variety of ways, and a trust and respect of the other world views as carriers of part of the mystery. Panikkar sees the interplay among the variety of world views as creating an "invisible harmony" that resounds in a richness of expression rather than a monotony of a single note.

In this reader's opinion this book is not for the popular audience. Although all readers would profit from having their world views expanded and challenged by exposure to a non-Western approach to Ultimate Reality, the pastoral value of this book is limited. For maximum benefit the reader should have some familiarity with Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian categories and philosophical concepts. Panikkar makes many allusions to these, which, without the appropriate background, deprive the reader of the power of the point being made.

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