

New Theology Review: An American Catholic Journal of Ministry, is published quarterly in February, May, August, and November by the Proprietor and Publisher, The Liturgical Press, St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, MN 56321.

Co-Editors: Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M. and Robert P. Waznak, S.S.

Associate Editor: Edward Foley, Capuchin

Book Review Editor: Daniel P. Grigassy, O.F.M.

Editorial Board

Diane Bergant, C.S.A.

Stephen Bevans, S.V.D.

Mary Frohlich

Theresa Koernke, I.H.M.

Mary Maher, S.S.N.D.

Dominic Monti, O.F.M.

Michael Naughton, O.S.B.

Jamie Phelps, O.P.

James Scullion, O.F.M.

The editorial policy is under the aegis of Catholic Theological Union of Chicago and Washington Theological Union, from whose faculties the Editor and Associate Editor are appointed.

© 1998 The Order of St. Benedict, Inc. All rights reserved.



All manuscripts, books for review, and editorial correspondence should be sent to THE EDITORS, *New Theology Review*, Washington Theological Union, 6896 Laurel Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20012. Authors should certify that the article is not being submitted simultaneously to another journal. See February 1998 vol. 11, no. 1 for a Style Sheet and author's instructions.

New subscriptions and renewals should be accompanied by a remittance in U.S. funds and sent to *New Theology Review*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 56321. Phone orders (U.S. and Canada): 1-800-858-5450.

Changes of address and business correspondence should be sent to *New Theology Review*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 56321.

Yearly subscription: U.S. \$26.00 (\$49.00 two years). Canada & Foreign \$30.00 (\$57.00 two years). Single copies and back issues \$7.00. Subscription Manager: Lloyd Svihel.

Cover by Ann Blattner.

Typography by Mark Warzecha.

Printed by Edwards Brothers, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America.

POSTMASTER, please send address changes to *New Theology Review*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN 56321.

Periodicals postage paid at Collegeville, Minnesota, and at other mailing offices.

ISSN 0896-4297

New Theology Review

Volume 11, Number 4 November 1998

Introduction	3
<i>Bruce H. Lescher</i>	
Forming a People of the Spirit: What Are They Saying about Spiritual Formation?	5
<i>Robert D. Duggan</i>	
Parish as a Center for Forming a Spiritual People	14
<i>Elizabeth A. Dreyer</i>	
Images of the Spirit: Renewing Source for the Spiritual Life	28
<i>Kathleen T. Talvacchia</i>	
Finding God Experientially in the Tradition: Theological Reflection as Spiritual Formation	43
<i>J. Michael Utzinger</i>	
Our Anxious Grief: A Christian Response to Death	53
<hr/>	
Signs of the Times:	
<i>Gregory Byrne</i>	
A Homily By Any Other Name: Lay Preaching in the United States	61
Scripture for Preaching:	
<i>James P. Scullion, O.F.M.</i>	
Preaching the Gospel of Matthew	66
Keeping Current:	
<i>James A. Wallace, C.Ss.R.</i>	
A Preacher's Dozen, or Help for Stoking the Homiletic Fires	70

Book Reviews	
Avery Dulles, S.J., The Priestly Office: A Theological Reflection. (Reviewed by John J. Burkhard, O.F.M. Conv.)	75
Dennis Billy, C.S.S.R., and Donna Lynn Orsuto, ed., Spirituality and Morality: Integrating Prayer and Action. (Reviewed by James Keating)	77
Gary Gunderson, Deeply Woven Roots: Improving the Quality of Life in Your Community. (Reviewed by Daniel P. Sulmasy, O.F.M.)	79
Zachary Hayes, A Window to the Divine: Creation Theology. (Reviewed by Ilia Delio, O.S.F.)	80
Gilbert Meilaender, Bioethics: A Primer for Christians.	
Sondra Ely Wheeler, Stewards of Life: Bioethics and Pastoral Care. (Reviewed by Thomas A. Nairn, O.F.M.)	81
William H.C. Frend, The Archaeology of Early Christianity: A History. (Reviewed by Leslie J. Hoppe, O.F.M.)	83
Robert L. Kinast, Let Ministry Teach: A Guide to Theological Reflection. (Reviewed by Louis T. Brusatti, C.M.)	84
James E. Harvey, Who's in Charge? Leadership Skills for Clergy and Others in Ministry. (Reviewed by Paul J. Levesque)	86
The Interreligious Council of San Diego, Bridging Our Faiths. (Reviewed by J. G. Donders M.Afr.)	87
David Rhoads, The Challenge of Diversity: The Witness of Paul and the Gospels. (Reviewed by Patricia M. McDonald, S.H.C.J.)	88
William M. Thompson, The Struggle for Theology's Soul: Contesting Scripture in Christology. (Reviewed by Richard Viladesau)	89
Ronald J. Allen and John C. Holbert, Holy Root, Holy Branches: Christian Preaching from the Old Testament. (Reviewed by Leslie J. Hoppe, O.F.M.)	91
Annual Index	92

Introduction

John Westerhoff has described our time as one where people relate to God in two kinds of experiences: the pietistic and the mystic. The pietistic is characterized by an immediate, affective religious experience that typically comes in the form of a single, emotional conversion event. Born-Again Christians and the Promise Keepers are representative of this religious experience. The mystic, by contrast, stresses a long, slow journey into a union with God through spiritual exercises. Flourishing spiritual formation programs, a renewed interest in classical spiritual writers, centering prayer, spiritual direction, the success of books that detail the spiritual pilgrimage such as those by Kathleen Norris, all point to the popularity of the mystic way in our times.

This issue of *New Theology Review* seeks to explore the content and contexts of our contemporary search of the mystic through the theme of Spiritual Formation. As Bruce H. Lescher demonstrates in his article, “spiritual formation” is a slippery term to grasp. That is why his overview of the literature of spiritual formation makes a valuable contribution to the topic. Lescher provides a working definition that helps us connect faith with our daily lives. He also wisely challenges the simplistic separation some make of spirituality from religion.

That separation has been emphasized throughout literature. Emily Dickinson found God not in a church building and service but in her own private world of nature:

Some keep the Sabbath going to church;
I keep it staying at home,
With a bobolink for a chorister,
And an orchard for a dome.

Robert D. Duggan, pastor of St. Rose of Lima Church in the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., demonstrates just how foolish it is to make the simplistic separation between spirituality and religion. Duggan’s reflection shows how spiritual formation occurs or can occur in a Roman Catholic parish. His article provides readers with an exciting and practical blueprint for relating to God and one another in spiritual formation within the context of an ecclesial community.

In her article, Elizabeth A. Dreyer leads us through the historical spiritual traditions to help us understand that spiritual formation takes a lifetime: “one grows in one’s ability to recognize and respond to the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit.” Her interpretation of the Spirit’s presence and activity helps us to understand that the process

4 *Introduction*

of spiritual formation leads to ever greater trust in God's love and an engagement in loving service to others.

Another context for spiritual formation is a school for ministry. In the past few decades courses in theological reflection have emerged which help students find connections between their ministerial experiences and their theological studies. Kathleen T. Talvacchia draws upon her experience in theological reflection at Union Theological Seminary in New York City to show how we can relate to God experientially in the theological tradition.

J. Michael Utzinger offers our readers a touching and enlightening example of theological reflection. His case comes not from a textbook but from the news he and his wife received that their first child had died.

Our November issue of *NTR* does not contain the usual column *Getting Down to Cases* since two thought-provoking cases are provided in the articles by Talvacchia and Utzinger. We hope the featured articles on Spiritual Formation plus our regular columns and book reviews will prove intellectually and pastorally helpful in your on-going journey with the Spirit.

R.W.

Bruce H. Lescher

Forming a People of the Spirit: What Are They Saying about Spiritual Formation?

Let's say it's fifty years ago—1948. Let's say you are a thirty-something parishioner at St. Mary's, an Irish parish in Chicago. This is the church of your grandparents and parents and will be that of your children. You go to Mass each Sunday, attend devotions to Our Lady of Perpetual Help on Tuesday evenings, say your Rosary before falling asleep. You scrap and save to send your children to the parish school. You help decorate the hall for the St. Patrick's Day dance each March 17, volunteer to work at the parish's annual summer bazaar, borrow funds from St. Mary's credit union to make a down payment on your home. You don't eat meat on Fridays; you fast and abstain each Lent. On several levels, your life is intertwined with the parish. You probably never hear the word "spirituality," but you certainly know what is expected of you as a Catholic.

But it's not 1948—it's 1998. You are a thirty-something parishioner at St. Mary's in Chicago. You moved here last year from Newark when your company transferred you. A typical Sunday finds a mixture of folk in the congregation: descendants of the old-time Irish families, Mexican-Americans, who began to move into the parish in the early 1980s, and, the newest arrivals, some young professionals drawn to the renovated lofts in the neighborhood. You get to Mass when you can but feel much closer to the members of your Adult Children of Alcoholics group than to anyone in the parish. A friend in ACOA has invited you to attend services at her nondenominational Church of the Living Word, with its new three thousand-seat worship space. You found those services speaking to you. You're taking an evening course in yoga at a local hospital, and last year you purchased a video introducing Zen meditation. You and your friends sometimes discuss "spirituality," and you are convinced that you are on a spiritual journey, but you are less clear on how St. Mary's fits in.

WHAT IS "SPIRITUAL FORMATION"?

Ministers develop new insights, plans, and programs as they listen to people and respond pastorally to changing contexts. Programs in "spiritual formation" constitute one pastoral response to the changed

contexts in the hypothetical situations just described. The fragmented, uprooted nature of contemporary society has given rise to a widespread sense of spiritual emptiness; this emptiness in turn fuels interest in "spirituality"; "spiritual formation" represents one way for ministers to respond to the hunger for "spirituality." Yet "spiritual formation" is one of those terms, like "ministry" or "spirituality," that can get slippery when one tries to define it.

A survey of the literature on spiritual formation reveals a wide diversity of perspectives. For example, the CD-Rom containing the Catholic Periodical Index lists 366 entries under this title, and the CD-Rom containing Religion Index One (which indexes Protestant publications) contains 648 entries. Many of these articles discuss "spiritual formation" without attempting to define it, apparently assuming that its meaning is self-evident. Those which offer definitions do so under a variety of rubrics: spiritual formation is alternately seen as character development, faith formation, a school of discipleship, an education in the spiritual classics of western Christianity.

For the sake of clarity, then, the following definition is proposed: Christian spiritual formation is a process of personal and spiritual maturation in which a person appropriates the image of Christ for the sake of others under the guidance of the Spirit mediated through an ecclesial community. This definition builds upon one offered by M. Robert Mulholland, Jr. (1993: 15–17). The last section of this article will provide an opportunity to return to this definition to clarify some points for further discussion.

THE CONTEXTS OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION

"Spiritual formation" is not a univocal term which carries the same meaning in different environments. Rather, the context profoundly affects the perspective on spiritual formation which persons in that context take. "Spiritual formation" is likely to be understood differently in a novitiate, where novices are seeking to appropriate a community's charism; a university divinity school, where persons from different denominations train for ministry; and a local parish, where parishioners seek to deepen their prayer lives in the midst of an increasingly hectic world. For the sake of simplification, the basic contexts of formation are here reduced to four: religious life, schools of ministry, spirituality programs, and local churches. Where applicable, these will be discussed with references to both Catholic and Protestant authors. This approach has no polemic intent, as if to point out differences between camps and claim that one is superior to the other. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that theological positions and church polity profoundly affect our efforts to appropriate the wisdom of the past.

A considerable percentage of Catholic writing about spiritual formation concerns the religious life. Religious congregations have always trained their members in the theories and practices of their traditions, although they more often use the vocabulary of “initial” and “ongoing” formation. During initial formation new members are introduced to an order’s charism, its customs and regulations, and those disciplines and practices conducive to growth in holiness. Ongoing formation, as the term implies, concerns the continuous process of conversion and renewal for all members. Religious communities provide perhaps the most obvious setting for spiritual formation. Persons who join a community consciously undergo a change of identity, leaving behind a “self” formed by their family and society in order to put on a new “self” rooted in the charism and traditions of the community. This change of identity, paradigmatic of the conversion process, necessitates some clarity about the goals and processes of formation. Thus, in the context of religious life, spiritual formation tends to be clearly spelled out.

Schools of ministry provide a second context for discussion of spiritual formation. In both Catholic and Protestant schools, classes and programs dealing with spirituality and spiritual formation have proliferated.

Catholic seminaries trace their roots back to the reforms of the Council of Trent. Since that reform the Church has emphasized that candidates for the priesthood should cultivate prayer and other spiritual disciplines apropos to a life of ministry. Priests were expected to be holy men as well as competent ministers. This concern for spiritual formation continues in the 1994 *Program of Priestly Formation*, the document of the U.S. bishops which governs seminaries. The bishops state:

Every seminary must provide a milieu of human and spiritual formation in which seminarians are encouraged to grow continuously and progressively in their personal relationship with Christ and in their commitment to the Church and to their vocation. A well-rounded and effective program of spiritual formation presumes and builds upon continuing theological and personal growth and character development consistent with a priestly vocation (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1993: 51).

Protestant seminaries face different issues. Language of “spiritual formation” is foreign to most Protestant denominations, whose members would more likely speak of “piety.” In recent years, however, many Protestants have taken a deep interest in the traditions of Christian spirituality. Baptists Dan R. Stiver and Daniel O. Aleshire, for example, comment:

Despite Protestant fears about all forms of works righteousness, an increasing number [of Protestant Christians] have discovered the necessity of disciplines that nourish the spiritual life. Glenn Hinson has suggested that it is time for us to be honest about the spiritual impoverishment of much of the Protestant tradition and, while clinging to what is good, also seek a corrective (1990: 28).

Thus many Protestant seminaries have begun classes or programs in spiritual formation. Even the Association of Theological Schools, the accrediting agency for schools of ministry, states that programs oriented toward ministerial leadership “provide opportunities for formational experiences through which students may grow in those personal qualities essential for the practice of ministry, namely, emotional maturity, personal faith, moral integrity, and social concern” (*Bulletin*, 1996: 42).

All schools of ministry, Catholic, Protestant, and those affiliated with universities, have experienced at least two significant shifts in their student population. First, candidates for ordination are generally less “churched” now than they were in the past. Many ministerial candidates come to seminary as spiritual seekers looking for meaning rather than persons whose faith is settled and who enter the ministry to share that faith with others (see Cunningham and Weborg). Seminary faculties can no longer assume that students have interiorized their denomination’s symbol system and spiritual practices.

Hence schools provide classes and pastoral training for disciplines, such as communal and personal prayer, that were once taken for granted. Second, the number of lay students, both women and men, has risen dramatically. What sort of spiritual formation is appropriate for these new lay ministers? Traditional spiritual disciplines often arose out of a celibate, monastic lifestyle. What spiritual practices are appropriate to a person whose commitments include marriage and children rather than celibacy and whose creativity is expressed in the world of work outside a monastic cloister? Lay spirituality ought to be honored in its own right rather than being a watered-down version of the spirituality of the contemplative or active religious life. A great deal of work remains to be done in achieving this goal, as the questions posed by lay seminary students are relatively new in the experience of the churches.

Spiritual programs, admittedly a catch-all term, constitute a third context in which spiritual formation occurs. These may be free-standing or sponsored by an ecclesial body. Some are residential while others are designed around people’s everyday lives. Programs provide a structure in which persons receive instruction and/or supervision in spiritual disciplines. Two examples provide a flavor of such approaches.

The United Methodist Church sponsors the Academy for Spiritual Formation, designed primarily for the renewal of persons in active ministry. The academy is a live-in program, removing participants from their normal daily routine so that they can re-evaluate their spirituality. The program is based upon three key elements: a regular schedule of prayer and worship, presentations on various aspects of theology and spirituality by an ecumenical faculty, and a communal life built around covenant groups. The program lasts forty days and is spread over two years; participants have assignments to do in between the residential segments (Clapper, 1991). Lay Spirits, an eighteen-month program sponsored by St. Francis Xavier Church in New York City, represents another approach. This program is not residential and assumes that people will continue participating in their day-to-day activities. Participants are broken into small groups which meet weekly for three hours. Elements of the program include presentations (sometimes by former participants), communal prayer, group meetings, optional spiritual direction, days of prayer, and an annual conference (Piccolino, 1992). These two examples are hardly exhaustive, but they do give a sense of how a spirituality program can be structured. Other programs provide variations on the components presented here.

Local churches provide a fourth and final context for spiritual formation. This context will not be examined at length here because it is the subject of another article in this issue; nonetheless, a few basic comments are in order. Christians in the first three centuries expected spiritual formation to occur through their involvement in their local church. In particular, the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist would nurture the Christ-life in believers. Throughout the centuries Catholic piety began to shift its focus from the sacraments to popular devotions. Vatican Council II sought to revive the patristic vision, as seen, for example, in the new Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and in the reforms of the liturgy and the *Sacramentary*. By and large, this vision of formation through liturgy, word, and sacrament has not yet taken root at the parish level. Thomas P. Sweetser, for example, observes: "Spiritual growth should be the essence of parish life. Should be but isn't. It takes a back seat to building projects, competition for limited finances, space, resources, personality conflicts among staff, council, ministries, and organizations" (1992: 5). Protestant authors, as well, are exploring the formative dimensions of corporate worship, both in ritual and in the singing of hymns. Stephen C. Hancock argues that "corporate worship is an essential element in the formation of personal spirituality" (1992: 115). Local churches, both Catholic and Protestant, can foster spiritual formation through classes, prayer groups, Bible study, resources for spiritual direction, opportunities for service, and most of all through preaching and worship.

COMMON ELEMENTS

Because “spiritual formation” is defined in a variety of ways and carried out in a diversity of contexts, the term is plagued with vagueness and diffusion. Nonetheless, some agreement about the elements which go into a program of spiritual formation undergirds the diversity of ways in which those elements are manifested at the programmatic level. Most programs include instructional content, some experience of spiritual disciplines, accountability to a group, and service.

Instructional content addresses people’s desire to know more about integrating spirituality into their lives. Instruction runs the gamut from formal classroom (as would be likely in a school of ministry) to workshops to presentations and discussions in informal settings. Many programs draw upon a variety of presenters, each speaking on a topic related to his or her competence, rather than relying on one or two experts. Input can cover a variety of topics: the implications of dogmas for spirituality, the spiritual teachings of world religions, explanations of the spiritual practices recommended in a given program. The literature on these programs indicates widespread interest in the writings of some of the great figures in Christian spirituality, e.g., Bonaventure, Julian of Norwich, Ignatius of Loyola, Thérèse of Lisieux. Holistic integration is another recurring theme: how to integrate the various elements comprising a program of spiritual formation into one’s daily life.

Spiritual practices comprise a second facet of many programs. Participants are introduced to various styles of prayer: traditional methods of mental prayer using one’s rational powers, centering, praying with one’s imagination, eastern styles of meditation. Spiritual reading, based on the monastic practice of *lectio divina*, is widely advised. Practices encouraging reflection on one’s experience are also popular. Journaling and spiritual direction (either individual or group) are two of the most frequently mentioned. This concern for experiential practice reflects a hunger for holistic knowledge, for the integration of theory and practice, for a way of knowing that becomes embodied and is not only a “head trip.”

Most programs also require that participants be accountable to a group. In a parish setting the group may well be the worship community. In many programs, including those based in parishes, participants are divided into small groups so that they can reach levels of sharing not possible in a large group. Michael I.N. Dash, in describing the spiritual formation program at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, speaks of “small group processes in which members developed in-depth relatedness, care for one another, trust, willingness to share. . . .” (1992/1993: 61). Such processes, when done well, inevitably enrich spiritual development. In addition, participants

become resources for one another and do not rely solely on the staff or speakers for enrichment.

Finally, many formation programs include a dimension of service. Both Catholic and Protestant authors recognize the tendency (widespread in North America) of spirituality to become privatized. In post-modern culture spirituality can be taken over by consumerism. The spiritual seeker becomes a consumer of spiritual goods, seeking those which meet his or her needs. As a guard against this tendency toward privatization, many programs of Christian spiritual formation include a service component. Participants are expected to embody their spiritual integration by serving others, especially the poor or those who are "other" or "different" from one's everyday world. Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruits" (Matt 7:20). The Christian spiritual tradition has always affirmed that the test of a spirituality is how one lives out one's commitments to others. This wisdom is acknowledged across a diversity of programs.

TWO BASIC ISSUES

As ministers ponder the role of spiritual formation in the lives of those they serve, they may wish to clarify their stance on two questions implicit in much of the literature on spiritual formation.

First, what is the connection between spiritual formation and ecclesial communities? On the surface this may appear to be an odd question, but it is nonetheless very real. Increasingly, contemporary writers at the popular and even the academic level make a distinction between "spirituality" and "religion." "Spirituality" focuses upon peoples' inner spiritual search, whereas "religion" concerns institutions: dogmas, cult, polity, buildings. The inner quest is life-giving, but institutions, by and large, become self-serving and stifle growth. Comments like this become increasingly common: "I've never felt more spiritually alive, but I have stopped going to church."

Undoubtedly, persons who hold such views must be met with pastoral sensitivity. Many people have been injured and stunted as a result of bad experiences with organized religion. And churches have, at times, supported ideas, policies, or actions which foster racism, sexism, and homophobia. Nonetheless, the separation of "spirituality" from "religion" runs the danger of throwing the baby out with the bath water. The Christian tradition affirms the harmony of inner and outer, of personal search and ecclesial community. Polarizing these also opens spirituality to privatization and commercialization, since the seeker without a community of accountability is likely to become a consumer of spiritual goods. Incorporating the voices of those who have been hurt and alienated into the Christian community remains a daunting challenge, but one that is well worth the effort.

To return to the definition proffered at the beginning of this article: Christian spiritual formation is a process in which a person appropriates the image of Christ for the sake of others under the guidance of the Spirit mediated through an ecclesial community. Private spiritual formation is an anomaly.

The second question: assuming that Christian spiritual formation is connected to an ecclesial community, what is the place of spiritual formation in the life of a church? Is it a program which takes its place beside other programs, such as youth ministry, religious education, and liturgical planning? Or is it central to the identity of a church, so that other forms of ministry flow from it? Evangelical Protestants in particular render a service to all churches by raising this question. John M. Dettoni, for example, argues that

. . . the nurturing process of transformation lies at the very heart of the church's ministry. The programs of the church are outgrowths of this singular ministry, rooted and grounded in what the church is called to be: a nurturing, disciplining, equipping, renewing, and compassionate ministry of Christ in this world (1994: 13).

This approach echoes Sweetser's comment (quoted earlier) that "spiritual growth should be the essence of parish life."

This vision of "the nurturing process of transformation" as "the essence of parish life" places spiritual formation at the center of Christian ministry. Formation is not another church program; rather, a parish's programs are the outgrowth of the commitment of its members, all of whom are involved in a process of spiritual growth.

CONCLUSION

The term "spiritual formation" is occurring with greater frequency in books and articles dealing with Christian ministry. This article provided an overview of the literature of spiritual formation by looking at both the contexts and contents of formation programs. The contexts include religious life, schools of ministry, spirituality programs, and local churches. Common elements include instructional content, an experience of spiritual disciplines, group accountability, and service. This overview also surfaced two fundamental questions relevant to any minister who is interested in beginning a spiritual formation program: what is the connection between spiritual formation and the ecclesial community, and what is the place of such formation in the life of a church?

It's 1998. You are on the staff of St. Mary's in Chicago, an ethnically diverse congregation. Though bothered by the vagueness of such buzz words as "spirituality" and "spiritual formation," you know that your

parishioners are intensely interested in connecting their faith with their daily lives. You are especially concerned about those thirty-something professionals who speak to you of their desire for a deeper spiritual life. This article is written to encourage you to begin a program of spiritual formation. You've got a lot to think about as you do so, but you also have the experience and wisdom of many churches, schools, and freestanding organizations upon which to draw. You don't have to reinvent the wheel. You stand in the tradition of ministers down through the centuries, ministers focused upon the "cure of souls." You foster the formation of your people as a people of the Spirit.

REFERENCES

- Bulletin of The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada* 42:3 (1996) 42.
- Clapper, Gregory S. "Spiritual Formation in a Part-time Monastery," *Christian-Century* 108 (1991) 388-90.
- Cunningham, Agnes, and C. John Weborg. "Understanding Christian Formation for Ministry," *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 15 (1994) 144-55.
- Dash, Michael I.N. "Exploring Spiritual Formation in the Classroom," *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 20 (Fall 1992/Spring 1993) 58-71.
- Dettoni, John M. "What is Spiritual Formation?" in *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, eds. Kenneth O. Gangel and James C. Wilhoit, 11-20. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1994.
- Hancock, Stephen C. "Corporate Worship as Spiritual Formation." *Reformed Liturgy and Music* 26 (Summer 1992) 115-19.
- Mulholland, M. Robert, Jr. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Downer's Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1993.
- National Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Program of Priestly Formation*. Fourth edition. Baltimore, Md.: United States Catholic Conference, 1993.
- Piccolino, Alberta. "Lay Spirituality Program," *Church* 8 (Winter 1992) 36-38.
- Stiver, Dan R., and Daniel O. Aleshire. "Mapping the Spiritual Journey," in *Becoming Christian: Dimensions on Spiritual Formation*, ed. Bill J. Leonard, 19-30. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990.
- Sweetser, Thomas P. "Fostering Spiritual Growth Through Parish Structures." *New Theology Review* 5 (November 1992) 5-21.

Robert D. Duggan

Parish as a Center for Forming a Spiritual People

INTRODUCTION

This article offers a reflection on the contexts within which spiritual formation occurs (or can occur) in a Roman Catholic parish. The author writes from the perspective of nearly thirty years of ministry in Catholic parishes, the last twelve as pastor at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Gaithersburg, Md., a suburb of Washington, D.C. The thoughts that are offered here, while certainly influenced by an ongoing attempt to remain theologically literate, are primarily the distillation of the author's actual praxis of parish ministry. Critical reflection on that praxis has resulted in several insights about spiritual formation in the parish that are rock-solid; others are offered with a high degree of confidence, but may not find universal agreement; still others are personally held convictions, but will certainly be subject to debate by many. These insights are offered first in the form of nine theses by way of summary, and then each is developed in further detail:

- Strong ritual, carefully prepared and celebrated well, remains the primary "school of faith" for the vast majority of Catholics.
- The Word of God shapes the spirituality both of individuals and of the community itself when a parish encourages and helps its members to read, pray, discuss, understand, proclaim and apply the Scriptures in the context of their daily lives.
- A parish is a more effective place of spiritual formation when its catechetical efforts consistently implement, at every level, a comprehensive philosophy of catechesis that emphasizes (trans)formation in addition to religious literacy.
- The parish provides an important context for spiritual formation when it makes abundantly available a variety of opportunities for service, both in ecclesial ministries and in outreach to the poor and marginalized. The potential for parishioners being formed through these involvements is maximized when they are encouraged and supported by (1) personal invitation, (2) preparation that attends to both technical skills and spirituality issues, and (3) regular opportunities to reflect on and integrate the significance of their participation in light of our shared Catholic faith.

- A parish that seeks to be a center for forming a spiritual people will make available to its members multiple opportunities to receive training in the ways of prayer and discernment.
- Spiritual formation happens at deeper levels when parish leaders make a deliberate decision to define membership in terms of an intentional faith model rather than “cultural Catholicism.”
- A parish community where the social bonds among its members are strong, and where there is a shared vision that builds a clear sense of identity and mission, touches the lives of its parishioners in deep and lasting ways.
- Encouraging parishioners to offer public witness to their spiritual experiences inspires others by offering positive role models of lived faith. Such witnessing also results in a more consciously owned faith on the part of those who give the testimony.
- The structures of leadership and governance that exist within a parish represent an operative ecclesiology and are formative of the spirituality of its members.

STRONG RITUAL

The ancient adage that liturgy is the “school of faith” has received one of its most provocative contemporary restatements in the U.S. Bishops’ document *Music in Catholic Worship*, where they state: “Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations weaken and destroy it” (USCC, 1983: #6). The truth of this insight cannot be overstated. For better or worse, the primary spiritual formation experience that most Catholics receive most of the time is their participation at Sunday Eucharist. Anthropologists have amply documented the formative power of ritual. A simple reflection on how often musical jingles are used in advertising will remind the reader that Madison Avenue’s PR geniuses have made billions by exploiting the power of ritual music to sell products. The implications of these realities for those concerned with faith formation in a parish should be obvious.

Robust symbols used in strong rituals have an immense impact on the faith of those who participate in Sunday liturgy. Liturgies where the expressive power of symbol is muted miss an irreplaceable opportunity to touch the hearts and minds of those who gather. One example of this is the decision of our parish no longer to celebrate a “routinely scheduled” communal anointing of the sick. Instead, whenever the opportunity presents itself, we anoint at the Sunday Eucharist any member who is facing serious illness. At the laying on of hands, all in the assembly who wish to come forward are invited to do so. The experience of fellow parishioners silently joining the presider in the laying

on of hands is powerful beyond words and has had a deep and lasting effect on our community. It has changed how the suffering of illness is perceived and has made possible a bond with those who suffer that none of us would have thought possible. All this, simply because in our ritual we have trusted the primal power of touch, silence and faith-filled prayer! Good ritual has made solidarity in suffering (with Christ, with others) move from being an abstract to a lived reality, an integral component of our spirituality. We no longer have to “encourage” people to request such public rituals during their illness—they are eager for the prayer of the community, and they seek it out. Even the shy ones who are sick “come out” in public in this manner. Spiritual formation happens through strong ritual.

THE POWER OF THE WORD

About ten years ago, the pastoral staff at St. Rose decided to try, in as many ways as possible, to make the Word of God as it is proclaimed in the Sunday readings the center of parish life. We shared a common conviction that the power of the Word to transform lives was foundational to the kind of community we wished to help build. And so, we set about developing strategies that we hoped would ground our common life in the Scriptures that we were hearing proclaimed each week. We were realistic about the massive ignorance of Scripture that has characterized Catholics for centuries. But we were committed to the hope of the Second Vatican Council that “a richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God’s word” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1963: #51) so that the faithful would experience “the force and power of the Word of God that . . . can serve the . . . children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting fount of spiritual life” (*Dei Verbum*, 1965: #21).

Intensive work with our lectors to make their proclamation more effective included mandatory preparation sessions with exegetical background to the readings, prayer and discussion over their meaning, as well as skill-building in the art of public proclamation. Efforts were set in motion to make our children’s religious education programs lectionary-based, thus insuring that our youngsters, their parents and their catechists would all grow in understanding how the Word shapes the content of Catholic faith as well as serves as a guide to right living. We took seriously the hope of Paul VI that Sacred Scripture would “be a perpetual source of spiritual life, the chief instrument for handing down Christian doctrine, and the center of all theological study” (*Missale Romanum*, 1969). At all parish meetings—including the weekly staff meeting—instead of beginning with a perfunctory opening prayer, we ask that those present read and pray over and discuss the meaning of one of the Sunday readings. Various Bible study groups

and formats have been offered over the years to increase parishioners' general scriptural literacy. Those in our small faith communities are encouraged to center their gatherings around a proclamation and discussion of the Sunday readings. And, of course, formation of those in our catechumenate is thoroughly lectionary-based.

What has been the long-term impact of these concerted efforts? Gradually, but clearly, we are becoming a people of the Word. The goal will not be met completely in our lifetime; but, more and more, we see people struggling to understand and live the Word they have heard proclaimed on Sunday. Our lectors have a keen sense of their responsibility to understand the spiritual depth of a passage before they approach the ambo to proclaim it. Parishioners expect thoughtful homilies that are based on the readings, and they are not hesitant about entering into dialogue with the homilist after (or, even during) Mass concerning the application of the Word to their daily lives. Even broader discussions of parish policy or future planning that happen at the level of the parish Pastoral Council increasingly reference what parishioners have heard proclaimed in the Sunday assembly as a criterion for discernment and decision-making. Eucharistic ministers to the sick take with them not only Communion but also the text of the Sunday readings, which they proclaim, pray over and discuss with the homebound.

Casual conversations among parishioners often reference how their small faith community came to this or that insight into the Gospel, and how they see the cost of trying to live up to its challenge. Staff members are regularly approached and asked where one can find background materials to help understand the Sunday readings. We still struggle to find good, attractive models for providing our members with an overall scriptural literacy, realizing that a lectionary-based approach is only the beginning of that literacy. Some of our members regularly attend Bible-study at churches of other denominations, and they have shared with us the benefits they receive from immersing themselves in a kind of in-depth study and practical application that is as yet not a common feature of our Catholic approach to Bible study.

CATECHESIS THAT EMPHASIZES (TRANS)FORMATION

For more than a generation, our parish praxis has anticipated the assertion of the revised *General Directory for Catechesis* that the catechumenate "is the model of [the Church's] catechizing activity" (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997: #90). From our efforts to implement the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, we have learned that conversion, not just religious literacy, must be the aim of all of our catechetical efforts. A holistic emphasis on message, community, worship and service which has become the hallmark of post-Vatican II documents

describing the essential dimensions of catechesis (NCCB, 1979: #213) means that we understand very broadly the tasks of our catechetical activity. A new paradigm is emerging as more and more we bring consistency to the goals of our diverse efforts at catechesis. Preparation for the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, first Eucharist, first reconciliation, and marriage all follow a “catechumenal model” that is gradual, progressive, developmentally sensitive and wherever possible family-centered and inter-generational. Commitment, conversion, intentional faith and such terms aptly describe the “hidden agenda” of all learning in these diverse contexts. Our approach is frequently as much about evangelization—first proclamation of the Gospel—as it is about passing on the fullness of our Catholic tradition, but this does not mean we are “soft” on doctrine. Rather, we recognize that too often in the past religious literacy was the exclusive aim of catechetical activity, and we do not want to let ourselves off the hook too easily for too little. We strive to make it clear that learning about one’s faith is a life-long process that does not end with confirmation, that our Catholic faith involves moral imperatives, that participation in worship has pedagogical dimensions and ethical implications, and that a praxis of service both within and beyond the Christian community is the natural correlate of one’s baptism into discipleship.

What have been our results? Our members include the “children of the ‘60s” whose flirtation with experiential methods of catechesis often left them ignorant of much of Catholic doctrine. Their children (and grandchildren) are also our parishioners, Generation X, starting their own families now but without the clear sense of Catholic tradition that allowed their elders to rebel so freely against the past. This younger generation often knows they have been cheated, and they are eager to learn (and pass on to their own children) the content of Catholic faith. They are also hungry for a meaningful spirituality, and they seem to “get it” when we offer approaches that combine spiritual formation with basic information about what we Catholics believe. The eclecticism of their spirituality is real; and, to an extent, they are “cafeteria Catholics,” selective about certain moral teachings. But their search is genuine and deep, and a catechetical approach that emphasizes (trans)formation as well as religious literacy seems to be helping them to grow spiritually in significant ways. Their children, our youngest members, also seem to be “getting it” in ways that are promising and truly exciting. Careful ritual catechesis has given them a deep sense of our liturgical tradition, and they are skilled and articulate in situations that call for them to share their faith. The savvy they display at our summer Bible camp speaks well of how much they already know about Sacred Scripture; and their spirituality, although expressed in developmentally appropriate ways, is internalized and impressive to behold.

ABUNDANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

Confirmation programs that require young people to do a set number of “service hours” are a wonderful example of new wine in old wineskins, an attempt to place one element of a new paradigm of catechesis into an old and mostly bankrupt model. Such an approach makes “service hours” part of a required curriculum rather than an integral part of the fabric of Christian life. Once confirmation is over, so are the “requirements,” and experience has shown that all too often the newly confirmed cease not only doing service, but attending religious education classes and Mass as well.

A parish should be a place where there is an abundance of opportunities to serve, a place with so many different kinds of service opportunities that virtually every constituency in the parish can readily find something that is possible to do. The message to confirmands and everyone else in the parish must be loud and clear: Baptism is about a life dedicated to service. We do not recruit volunteers; we empower disciples for the life of service which is their birthright. A parish should constantly be about the business of calling its members both to ministry and to mission. Ecclesial ministry serves as the place where one learns the habits of being and even many of the skills that must be carried over into one’s Christian mission “for the life of the world.” Both spiritual formation as well as skill training characterize preparation for the ministries that serve our community. Eucharistic ministers, Pastoral Council members, catechists, greeters at Sunday Mass, members of the Evangelization Commission, in fact all who serve our community are expected to equip themselves for ministry both by appropriate times of spiritual formation and by the hard work needed constantly to improve the skills required for their respective ministries.

The father of two children in our catechumenate (he is a long-time, active member; they had recently come to live with him after a change in custody arrangements) brought his children one Saturday to help out at a very creative outreach effort, in which clothing and furniture were collected in the parish parking lot and then delivered immediately to the needy of our area. At home that night, the father read over the next day’s gospel and reflected with the children on how what they had done was connected with their desire to be baptized disciples of Jesus. His years of involvement in the way our community links service with formation had taught him the importance of integrating such activities into the children’s spiritual journey. He instinctively knew what holistic catechesis is all about, and so he was able to help the children understand more deeply that action for justice is a constitutive dimension of the proclamation (and living) of the gospel.

For better or worse, a parish forms the spiritual values of its members by virtue of how much (or how little) effort it devotes to making

available opportunities to serve in ministry and mission. Where there is little opportunity made available to serve the needs of the community, where there is little organized effort to reach out beyond the parish through initiatives in the areas of direct service, advocacy or experiences of solidarity, then the message is effectively communicated that a life of service is not integral to one's being Christian. On the other hand, a parish community that consistently devotes a significant proportion of its resources (i.e., time, money, staff, volunteer involvements, space, etc.) to service of the poor and marginalized proclaims to one and all that the gospel requires such commitment on the part of Jesus' disciples. Such a proclamation, consistently backed up by action over the long haul, is an extremely effective way to form a spiritual people.

TRAINING IN PRAYER AND DISCERNMENT

Paul Philibert has written of the competencies that are required if one is to participate fully and actively in the Church's liturgical action (Philibert, 1987). A parish community has a real responsibility to empower its members with the basic competencies required to live a full life of Christian prayer. In this regard, liturgical prayer clearly enjoys a primacy. Something as simple as having a song leader go over the day's music each week before Mass begins serves as an icon of a much larger commitment to give parishioners all that they need to enter fully into the community's prayer. The skills needed for liturgical prayer are mostly taught by experience, however, and so it is important to celebrate fully and well the entire scope of the Church's liturgy. For example, we have been working for years to help people "own" the Liturgy of the Hours as one of the primal forms of Christian prayer. We always sing the responsorial psalm at Sunday celebrations (even in the gatherings for children's Liturgy of the Word), and over the years we have built up a considerable repertoire of psalmody with which the entire community is familiar.

Adapted versions of Evening Prayer are incorporated into the rhythm of all religious education sessions for children and youth, and a more solemn version of Evening Prayer is regularly offered on a designated weeknight during Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter. Morning Prayer is used during days of recollection and retreat times, as well as at our Saturday morning meetings of the Pastoral Council. On Sundays we are still working at helping the community become more comfortable with extended times of silence (e.g., after readings, homily, Communion), and this continues to be a significant challenge in a parish with many small children.

From time to time a parish needs to offer specific training in other forms of prayer as well. Our people experience both a hunger and a

need for a deeper experience of contemplative prayer. Times of retreat for ministry groups, members of the catechumenate, small faith communities, families and just general parishioners afford a wonderful opportunity to do the deeper formation needed for specific prayer forms. In addition, by offering opportunities for traditional devotions such as the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary, novenas and eucharistic adoration, a community expands and deepens its members' range of comfort with different ways of prayer. Particularly if these devotions are sensitive to the rhythms of the liturgical cycle, they foster rather than compete with the basic liturgical spirituality that every Catholic should possess. Although we have done some work with our Filipino community in restoring traditional devotions, we continue to wrestle with the theological and pastoral issues related to reinstating devotions such as novenas and eucharistic adoration. We recognize the work still ahead of us if we are to help our parishioners embrace these devotions in a way true to the spirit of Vatican II, yet meeting the needs of a piety often formed in the pre-Vatican II era.

Discernment is a very particular experience of prayer that can be developed and strengthened with practice. Spiritual direction is an invaluable resource for those who wish to grow in the ways of discernment, and it ought to be available in every parish community for those who sense a call to deepen their spiritual journey or are in important times of crisis or transition. Today there are increasing numbers of gifted people trained in the art of direction, and the ways it is offered in individual and group settings are likewise expanding. Catechumenal teams are becoming more adept at discerning readiness of those in the catechumenate, and this has led to an overall growth in the conviction that ordinary Catholics can and must practice discernment.

MEMBERSHIP DEFINED IN TERMS OF COMMITTED BELONGING

Historians trace the birth of "cultural Catholicism" back to the Edict of Constantine and the triumph of Christendom as a political and social force in the Roman Empire. James Joyce perhaps said it best in describing the Catholic Church as "here comes everybody." The fact is, our Catholic tradition's paradigm for membership has for well over a millennium been tied to cultural, ethnic, social and political factors as much as to personal acceptance of the Christian message and a commitment to live out the implications of discipleship according to the demands of the gospel. Sociologists of religion distinguish between a "believers church" where the criterion of membership is "committed belonging," based on lived faith, and the kind of belonging based on cultural factors that characterizes millions of nominal Catholics the world over. The fact is, countless Catholics still register surprise if any-

one suggests that their claim to a Catholic identity may be inappropriate when they neither participate in worship on a regular basis nor have any involvement in the life of a local Catholic community, nor hold many of the doctrinal positions that constitute orthodox Catholic faith. Their surprise is the result of a paradigm of membership based on cultural Catholicism rather than intentional faith.

Many theologians and pastoral ministers, including the author, are convinced that the vision of Vatican II requires a change in this model. But making a dent in so massive and deeply ingrained a paradigm will require the persistent efforts of many generations and will not come easily to a Church as entrenched as our own. Indeed, many observers these days recognize in the retreat from the vision of Vatican II currently underway, especially in areas of liturgical renewal and ecclesiology, regressive forces symptomatic of a predictable resistance in the face of a significant attempt at systemic change. Given the epochal nature of this change that is underway in our own time, a parish community and its leadership must be quite deliberate (as well as pastorally sensitive) in its attempt to be a change agent within a system in flux. These are some of the specific pastoral strategies being employed by our community to redefine membership in terms of committed belonging rather than cultural Catholicism:

- The catechumenate has been made a pastoral priority and has been given high visibility within the life of the parish, primarily because of the way in which it embodies a redefinition of membership in terms of intentional faith.
- Homilies consistently call parishioners to an owned faith and urge them to make a commitment to the life of the local faith community as an expression of their personal conversion.
- Sacramental preparation programs (for parents of infants to be baptized, for families whose children are preparing for first penance and Eucharist, for youth in the confirmation process, for those engaged to be married, and for all in the catechumenate) are identified as key opportunities to articulate a consistent understanding of sacrament in terms of intentional faith and of membership in terms of active participation.
- An understanding of evangelization has been developed which sees the spiritual renewal of our active members as an essential first step in calling others to faith. An emphasis has also been put on hospitality and active invitation as a practical way for all in the community to share the task of evangelization. A very visible ministry to returning Catholics is a high-profile way of keeping this understanding of evangelization before the community on an ongoing basis.

- A broad understanding of the spirituality of stewardship as a way of life (such as is found in the U.S. Bishops' document *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*) is aggressively promoted through a planned program of formation. Specific requests are made annually by fellow parishioners to make a commitment to sacrificial giving of time, talent and treasure.
- A welcoming/orientation process for newcomers has been developed which stresses the values of committed belonging. As part of the registration process, newcomers are invited to sign a Membership Covenant that spells out the expectations of active participation in our community.

STRATEGIES THAT BUILD A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

The sociological study of religion has demonstrated the importance of social bonding in the conversion process. Rosabeth Moss Kanter's masterful study of utopian communities, *Commitment and Community* (Kanter, 1972), is a treasure trove of insight into commitment mechanisms and how they operate in social settings. At St. Rose we try to understand and capitalize upon these understandings of how the human animal is affected by social forces. We provide numerous opportunities for social interaction among parishioners, in our fund raising efforts, at parties, picnics, dances, etc., as well as in more religious contexts such as our small faith communities, retreats and formational gatherings of specific ministry groups. We manifest many of the characteristics of a "greedy organization" which asks for-and gets-proportionately higher levels of commitment from its members.

Parish leaders have tried to learn from the expertise that is available to us in various "secular" contexts. Family systems theory has proven a very fruitful source of insight, thanks to the work of Edwin Friedman (Friedman, 1985). His approach to leadership by attending to one's own self-differentiation as well as to the emotional process within the system has paid off in a more mature, less reactive modal level of functioning among parish leaders and, as a consequence, within the community at large.

We have also learned a great deal about how a successful strategic planning process can build a shared vision in a community, and how enormous the impact of that shared vision can be in mobilizing and focusing the energies of a community around common goals. The work of organizational development theorists such as Stephen Covey (Covey, 1989, 1990) has helped us to become a "learning organization" where leaders are purposeful in their efforts to marshal the community's resources around a powerful and inspiring vision which has been embraced as a guide for all parish efforts. The statement of our vision

("We Are Bread for One Another: *Broken . . . We Gather. Nourished . . . We Reach Out.*) has been a profound source of spiritual nourishment as well as an exceptionally effective organizational tool that has guided the development and implementation of our parish's pastoral plan. Parishioners have a clear sense of the parish's identity, and they know well the common mission that is ours. The intersection of spiritual formation and leadership theory has, for us, provided a significant opportunity for cross-fertilization and mutual reinforcement. Spiritual formation, we have found, happens in better and deeper ways when the organizational/social dynamics of a community's life are functioning in a healthy manner.

THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC WITNESS

It is axiomatic that "faith is caught, not taught," and so a parish forms its members in the faith more effectively in proportion to the availability of positive role models and those willing to offer public witness to their faith. We provide numerous opportunities throughout the year for parishioners to speak to the community (usually during the Sunday Eucharist) and share something of their own faith. Neophytes give testimony at all Masses during the Easter season (2nd Sunday), as do other parishioners who speak about their experience of stewardship (4th Sunday) and about how they have come to know the dying and rising of Jesus in their lives (6th Sunday). At other times of the year, the entire community hears appeals for participation from those who are part of a small faith community and from those engaged in outreach efforts. Couples have witnessed to their experience of the sacrament of marriage, and even youth returning from weekend retreats have spoken eloquently of the power of their encounter with the Lord on those occasions.

In addition, our small faith community model encourages regular faith sharing among participants by way of mutual support and inspiration. Willingness to share one's encounter with God in Sacred Scripture is so common as to be taken for granted at parish meetings of all sorts. Not surprisingly, the impact of sharing the story of one's spiritual journey is as great on those who do the witnessing as on those who are the listeners. For us, "the power of storytelling" is not a piece of jargon from an abstract description of narrative theology; it is a lived experience, deeply rooted in the fabric of our communal life, and highly effective as a form of spiritual formation.

ECCLESIAL STRUCTURES ARE FORMATIVE OF A SPIRITUALITY

We joke today about an earlier generation, when Catholics were expected to "pray, pay and obey." But, in fact, the structures of leadership and governance which characterized the Church in that earlier age did

reinforce a spirituality of docile obedience more than one of creative initiative. Vatican II has called us to a new spirituality, one that emphasizes the common priesthood of the faithful and our call to mission rooted in baptism. The laity are no longer mere helpers of the ordained. They are consecrated disciples of Jesus with their own call and mission in the world. It is no accident that Catholics today hunger for a more participatory model of governance and seek leaders who will inspire and support more than command and control. The operative ecclesiology of a parish is an important element which shapes the spirituality of parish members. Shared leadership tends to call forth the gifts of the faithful much more effectively than an emphasis on hierarchical power and clerical privilege. A controlling and authoritarian pastor who stresses his power over the faithful by virtue of his ordination may help the faithful practice patience and forgiveness, but cultivating a spirituality of empowered discipleship will be an uphill struggle in such a milieu. The paternalism of the patriarchal structures so prominent in the pre-Vatican II Church militated against a mature faith, in which Catholics would assume adult responsibility for their spiritual life.

It is one of the great pastoral challenges of our generation to create structures of leadership and governance that will encourage and support the Catholic faithful in the new spiritual maturity to which Vatican II has called them. Ecclesiology is formative of spirituality, and so we must seek a renewal of parish structures if we are to instill a renewed spirituality in our members. At St. Rose we continually work at becoming more collaborative in our leadership structures. Our professional staff supports the work of two councils (finance and pastoral) as well as nine pastoral commissions, each of which serves to coordinate the efforts of various committees, task forces and ministry groups. We have found that embracing the discipline required for collaborative process is a kind of contemporary asceticism that truly does help to shape a new spirituality.

CONCLUSION

Something called a “goal fabric,” which I learned about from strategic planning, has helped me to understand how all of these diverse initiatives work together in contributing to the parish as a place of spiritual formation. A goal fabric is an organizing framework which indicates the interlocking relationships that exist among an organization’s vision, goals, objectives, desired outcomes, and implementing actions. The graphic portrayal of these relationships shows how each strategic initiative contributes in multiple ways to the overall vision of the organization. The overlap which the reader surely noted in the descriptions of how our parish attempts to implement the nine key insights is

an indication that we are dealing with a goal fabric approach to spiritual formation.

Taken as an isolated initiative, any one of the areas of concentration would have a more limited impact. But together, with the mutual reinforcement and enhancement that occurs among the various areas, the whole truly is greater than the sum of its parts. My experience has led me to understand better the wisdom of Jesus' teaching about new wine in new wineskins. The spiritual renewal of a parish happens best when a consistent, overall approach is undertaken, rather than piecemeal attempts that falter on their own. The "new Pentecost" of the Church universal for which Pope John XXIII had us pray prior to Vatican II must occur at the most basic level of the parish, working to be a place of spiritual formation for its people. It is the author's hope that the reflections above will offer an example of how one parish has undertaken this work.

REFERENCES

- Congregation for the Clergy. *General Directory for Catechesis*. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1997.
- Covey, Stephen R. *Principle-Centered Leadership*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990.
- _____. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989.
- Friedman, Edwin H. *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. New York: Guilford Press, 1985.
- Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972.
- National Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States*. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1979.
- _____. *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1993.
- Paul VI. *Missale Romanum*. Apostolic Constitution approving the new Roman Missal, 3 April 1969, in *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-79: Conciliar, Papal and Curial Texts*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1982, 458-61.
- Philibert, Paul J. "Readiness for Ritual: Psychological Aspects of Maturity in Christian Celebration." *Alternative Futures for Worship. Vol. 1: General Introduction*. ed., Regis A. Duffy. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1987, 63-121.

United States Catholic Conference. *Music in Catholic Worship*. Rev. ed. Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1983.

Vatican II. *Dei Verbum* (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation) in Austin Flannery, ed. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*. Northport, N.Y.: Costello Publishing, 1975, 750–65.

_____. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy) in Austin Flannery, ed. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*. Northport, N.Y.: Costello Publishing, 1975, 1–37.

Robert D. Duggan is a presbyter of the Archdiocese of Washington and is pastor of St. Rose of Lima Parish in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Christmas takes a person into a realm of poignant memory and deep need and maudlin guilt and, since gifts are involved, into the treacherous waters of taste and judgment, but Thanksgiving is a peasant holiday, and good taste has never been part of it. That's why it is such a comfort. All you have to do is sit down to it. . . . You fix a big table full of dinner and plop down and think, Life is good, thank You for this, it could be a lot worse, and I'm grateful it's not. God bless us. More we do not need.

Garrison Keillor

Elizabeth A. Dreyer

Images of the Spirit: Renewing Source for the Spiritual Life

I. THE SPIRIT AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Over forty years ago, G. J. Sirks wrote an essay in which he called the Holy Spirit “Cinderella” (1957: 8). The name calls forth the image of a poor, bedraggled sister, relegated to the dungeon to perform dirty and menial tasks—ignored or forgotten by the world. This “Cinderella status” is reflected in many descriptors of the Spirit—“personally amorphous,” “faceless,” “forgotten,” “upstaged,” “ethereal and vacant,” “unclear,” “invisible.” Kilian McDonnell has catalogued the hesitant and groping theologies of the Spirit in the Scriptures and in the early Church that gave rise to a pneumatological vagueness across centuries, nations, and denominations from Augustine, through Nicolas Berdyaev and Nikos Nissiotis to Pope Leo XIII and Albert Outler (1985: 191–204). Traditional portrayals of the trinitarian persons deepen the dilemma—two male persons and a bird! But Elizabeth Johnson reminds us that forgetting the Spirit is tantamount to ignoring “the mystery of God closer to us than we are to ourselves, drawing near and passing by in quickening, liberating compassion” (Johnson, 1992: 131). The Spirit is the means of God’s personal engagement with the world in its history filled with both glory and tragedy.

The ending of the Cinderella story, however, is a happy one, and pneumatology might be said to enjoy a similar recovery. Exclusive theological preoccupation with christological questions has given way, making room for spirit—christology and pneumatology. We are now aided in our reflection on the Holy Spirit by a steady stream of books and articles (Congar, 1979, 1980; Kovel, 1991; Olson, 1992; Smith 1988; Williams 1992). Just like Cinderella, the Holy Spirit is being rescued from the shadows and placed in the spotlight.

A recovery of the Spirit is significant for several reasons. From a theological perspective, it is important to take the trinitarian foundations of Christian faith seriously, giving due weight to all three persons, as they relate both to one another and to the world. The point of a renewed pneumatology is not to upstage the figure of Christ, demanding that an over-exposed christology step aside in order to give the Spirit a turn. The context for pneumatological reflection is always christology and trinitarian theology. Being “in Christ” and “in the Spirit” mutually interpret and enrich each other (McDonnell, 204). Ad-

ditionally, we stand to glean significant benefit from delving into the tradition to recover ways in which our ancestors in the faith spoke about the Spirit's presence and work. One discovers that the Spirit was not as invisible or faceless as some would claim. Finally, recovering the language and imagery of the Spirit will aid us in our present efforts to form and shape our own experience and understanding of the Spirit's presence. In this essay, we turn to Augustine of Hippo (354–430), whose thought has so profoundly influenced later trinitarian thought in the west; and two medieval women mystics, whose voices are only beginning to be heard in theological discussions—Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) and Catherine of Siena (1347–1380).

Spiritual formation is a multi-faceted and never-ending process that should explore the many roles of the Spirit. In fact, one could describe spiritual formation as an "awakening" of the self to the Spirit in all facets of experience (Hauser, 1986: 5). Throughout a lifetime, one grows in one's ability to recognize and respond to the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit. Always rooted in one's specific socio-historical setting, spiritual formation takes one form for children and another for adults. Initial formation will have characteristics different from those in on-going formation. Education can be by both word and example. It goes on in families and neighborhoods as well as in classrooms and at liturgy. It can focus on one's own personal formation and/or on the ministry of formation in which one becomes explicitly responsible to help others grow in the faith. And spiritual formation always has both individual and communal dimensions. Many theologians who write about the Spirit today emphasize communal dimensions as a corrective to what is perceived as a too individualistic understanding of the Spirit's work in the past (Moltmann, 1992; Smith, 1988; Kovel, 1991).

One way to expand our understanding of the Spirit's role in spiritual formation is to retrieve key images and symbols from the tradition. How did our ancestors in the faith talk about their experiences of Spirit? In *God the Spirit* Michael Welker suggests that we need to analyze "complex symbolic resources" in order to decode and reformulate them (1994: 132–33). We can correct abstract and reductionistic notions of the Spirit by entering into the rich symbolism of the tradition. Although images of Spirit-presence are always embedded in a particular socio-historical matrix, they do not, for that reason, remain foreign or unusable to us. Symbols, images and the narratives that contain them function as vehicles of a deeper meaning and can provide a bridge between the past and the present. Here we will explore how select medieval figures used Spirit images and how these images might assist us in renewing the Spirit's presence and role in spiritual formation in both its individual and communal dimensions.

II. THE SPIRIT AND THE INDIVIDUAL

1. *The Spirit's Call: Charism and Vocation*

American culture emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual. We take note of special attributes or gifts that suggest a direction in which life is calling us. This awareness of individual giftedness can function in the spiritual life as well. Most Christians are familiar with the passage in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians: "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (12:4-7). One of the tasks of spiritual formation is to pay attention to the particular ways in which the Spirit gifts the individual.

In his *Life of Catherine of Siena*, Raymond of Capua cites a passage from Catherine's major theological work, the *Dialogue*, to underline the way in which Catherine's special gifts were a participation in the very life of the triune God. In the text, Catherine addresses God: "For you endowed me with something of the Power which is proper to yourself, Eternal Father; and you endowed my intellect with something of your Wisdom . . . and the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from you and from your Son, has given my Will, the faculty which makes me capable of love" (*Life* III.3.356). While we no longer understand ourselves in terms of a medieval faculty psychology, Catherine's words invite us to reflect on, and acknowledge our participation in, the power, wisdom and love of the triune God.

The Spirit is the enabler, the power within and around us that makes a life of love and service possible. Spirit-christologies remind us that the Spirit who enabled Jesus to live the life he led is the same Spirit who operates and empowers the life of every Christian. Linking Catherine to Christ, Raymond writes, "The little one grew and waxed strong, in readiness for the day when she would be filled with the Holy Spirit and the wisdom of God." He compares Catherine to a seedling that would grow into a lofty cedar because it was watered by the fountain of the Holy Spirit (*Life*, I.2.34). The Spirit fortified Catherine in times of temptation and enabled her to cling to the truth in times of sorrow (*Life*, I.4.49). Catherine's insight into the things of the Spirit permitted her to react to criticism as Jesus did—with patience (*Life*, II.5.176). Since Catherine refused to "quench the Spirit," the Spirit taught her heroic virtues (*Life*, I.3.35; I.4.51).

Exemplary models of the spiritual life include past narratives of designated saints such as Catherine as well as present, living narratives of people around us in our world. Moral philosopher Edith Wyschogrod reminds us that understanding the works and lives of

such holy people consists not in recounting their meaning, but in being “swept up in their imperative force.” Comprehension equals practice. We are “gathered into the narrative to extend and elaborate it in our own lives” (1990: xxiii). If we allow ourselves to be touched by the exemplary lives of others, we acquire a “felt sense” of these stories that then becomes inspiration for our own. These models offer clues to help one realize what it might mean, in very concrete terms, to have the Holy Spirit descend upon us. The Spirit’s gifts are forms of real power. They may be personal talents and strengths that operate within various social structures for the good of others. Or they may be counter-cultural and prophetic—appearing in paradoxical ways that confound power that is self-seeking or destructive. The lives of the “saints” offer patterns and language by which one can invite the Spirit to empower for virtue, and to transform us and our gifts for the good of others.

2. Transforming the Affections

Contemporary attempts to overcome dualisms of every stripe have led to an articulation of a holistic anthropology and spirituality. We are not happy with a spirituality that takes account only of a narrow range of human existence. We want to include our bodies and our feelings as well as our minds and wills. Feminist theology has been a crucial locus for the recovery of bodiliness and the affections in our theologies and spiritualities. We ignore the need to train our affections at our peril. Throughout the tradition, the Spirit’s power is often invoked to account for the conversion of affections.

Perhaps the most common symbol for the Spirit, showcased in the story of Pentecost, is fire, a multivalent image, often linked to the affections, that represents intense engagement with God, purification, ecstatic absorption, erotic consummation, prophetic courage. The symbol of fire is extended to include images of light and warmth. The Spirit’s presence brings light to dispel the darkness. Hearts that are made of stone or that are even as hard as diamonds melt and become flesh under the Spirit’s influence. Timidity and fear are cast out, enabling one to live and preach the good news with clarity, courage and abandon. In Germany, twelfth-century seer and abbess Hildegard of Bingen unleashes a plethora of images to describe the sweetness of the Spirit bestowed at Confirmation. “Its path is a torrent, and streams of sanctity flow from it in its bright power, with never a stain of dirt in them; for the Holy Spirit is a burning and shining serenity, which cannot be nullified, and which enkindles ardent virtue so as to put all darkness to flight” (*Scivias*, II.4.2).

But Hildegard is perhaps best known for her use of the agricultural metaphor of “greening” (*viriditas*) to point to lively affections. For Hildegard, *viriditas* is a cosmic idea. It expresses and links the bounty

of God, the fertility of nature, and especially the presence of the Holy Spirit. Barbara Newman comments about this aspect of Hildegard's thought: "If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, then you are filled with *viriditas*. You are spiritually fertile, you are alive" (Newman, 1989). Green things need water; thus, Hildegard associates *viriditas* with moisture (*humor, humiditas*). If the earth did not have moisture or greenness it would crumble like ashes, she says. In the spiritual realm, both *viriditas* and *humiditas* are manifestations of God's power, qualities of the human soul, for "the grace of God shines like the sun and sends its gifts in various ways; in wisdom, in greenness, in moisture." A lack of moisture causes the virtues to become dry as dust (Letter 85r: Baird and Ehrman, 195–196).

Hildegard describes the presence or absence of *viriditas* in terms that can be easily related to various aspects of spiritual formation. For example, she counsels the neophyte in religious life to strive for "spiritual greenness" (Baird and Ehrman, 7). Like a fallow field, a person with good heart receives the seed of God's word and thus is granted the gifts of the Holy Spirit in superabundance. She writes, "And so these three Persons are in the unity of inseparable substance; but they are not indistinct among themselves. How? He who begets is the Father; He who is born is the Son; and He who in eager freshness proceeds from the Father and the Son, and sanctified the waters by moving over their face in the likeness of an innocent bird, and streamed with ardent heat over the apostles, is the Holy Spirit" (*Scivias*, III.7.9). At the various stages of spiritual formation, one can reflect on the state of one's "field" in terms of readiness to receive and nurture the word of God. Is the Spirit's warming heat able to penetrate our lives, make us more generous, more supple to the nuances of grace that are available at each stage of one's life?

As one engages in ongoing spiritual development, there will undoubtedly be times when progress is arrested or reversed or when the Spirit is known by absence rather than presence. Hildegard describes a prelate who is filled with weariness (*taedium*) as lacking in *viriditas*. And we saw above how she uses the metaphor of dryness to describe a spiritual life that is lagging in growth and virtue. These images invite the believer to reflect on the state of one's spiritual affections. Have they become cold or dried out? What are the sources of this aridity? What is an appropriate response that might irrigate the affections, making them supple and expansive once more? Hildegard offers a counter-image when she speaks of St. Rupert, a man of exceptional virtue and the patron of her monastery as the *viriditas digiti Dei*, the "greenness of the finger of God" (Letter 38r: Baird and Ehrman, 107). No doubt every community includes persons who have "spiritual green thumbs," who function as models of spiritual aliveness and ma-

turity and who can point the way to fertility by their fervor and example.

3. *An Intelligent Faith*

Throughout most of the tradition, the Word/Logos has been linked with the mind, while the Spirit is often associated with love, the bond that unites the first two persons of the Trinity. But in the Gospel of John, the Spirit is called the Spirit of truth (14:17), the one who leads us into all truth (16:13). Augustine of Hippo delineates stages of spiritual growth, distinguishing between simply having the gift of faith and knowing that one has it. This later stage is seen as a completion, a fulfillment, a more mature stage in one's spiritual development. Pentecost represents a fuller possession of the Spirit. He writes, "We are therefore to understand that he who loves has already the Holy Spirit, and by what he has, becomes worthy of a fuller possession, that by having the more he may love the more . . . for this present possession has also a bearing on that fuller gift of the Holy Spirit, that they might come to a conscious knowledge of what they had" (*On the Gospel of John*, LXXIV.2).

Augustine fought for an inclusive Church—Christ died for all, not just for those who understood the faith—but he also held out for inclusion of the "highest peak of human reason" within the realm of faith (Letter CXVIII.5.32-33). He admits that, in the end, the Spirit infuses us who are infirm with a "certain learned ignorance" (Letter CXXX.15.28), but in the heat of daily life in the Church, he combated the fundamentalism and anti-intellectualism around him: "Far be it from us to think that God would hate in us that which distinguishes us from the beasts . . . Love understands wholeheartedly" (Letter CXX.3; CXX.13). Spiritually mature persons do not travel the spiritual journey in a mindless, empty "going-along" way but rather in a conscious, intentional embrace that includes heart, mind, speech and behavior. Without the Spirit's presence, individuals may hear about the Good News of salvation, but they would be unable to know the truth about God's life; or that God dwells within (1 John 3:24; 4:13), or to proclaim that "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor 12:3).

For Augustine, the Christian life is a longing for home that admits of growth and development. It is as if he says, Don't just be a stupid believer (one is reminded of Paul's remonstrance, "O you stupid Galatians!"), but rather live in the Spirit, that is, seek understanding, vision, wisdom and joy that accompanies ease in being good. The presence of love and the gifts and fruits are signs of the Spirit's presence. But being conscious of that love is a fuller gift. One often hears the comment that many forty-year-old Christians are satisfied with a fourth-grade faith. Augustine implies that spiritual maturity is connected with the fullness

of the Spirit's truth. It is through the power of the Spirit that God knows about human reality and it is that same Spirit that makes it possible for us to know what takes place in God (On the Gospel of John XXXII.5). The Spirit is the means by which we know the things of God and appropriate that knowledge in a conscious, intentional way.

III. THE SPIRIT AND COMMUNITY

The point of distinguishing between the Spirit's role in individual and in communal aspects of spiritual formation is not to separate them, but to underline their integral relationship. The overemphasis on the individual that appears so prominent in American culture falsely obscures the primacy of communal existence. From the moment of conception, every human being is enmeshed in relationship—from the womb to the early moments in a family and thence to engagement with ever broader and more diverse communities. It is from these communal matrices that the individual emerges and not vice versa. But we also value and hold precious the individual, struggling to respect and tolerate, if not embrace differences. Pluralism is surely a hallmark of the global village in ways our ancestors in the faith would never have dreamed. We do not understand unity as sameness or oneness but strive rather for community-in-plurality where differing gifts are seen as assets and treasures rather than as causes for dissension.

One can extend this principal to spiritual formation that takes place within a complex matrix of communities. We are influenced by family, church, friends and nation—as well as the “communion of saints”—and it is out of all these influences that one's unique spiritual portrait emerges. Throughout the Church's history, the Spirit has been understood to function to build up the community and today, we extend that function to the entire world. The Spirit's power functions for the good of the “other” as this “other” comes to us in an infinite number of guises throughout the ages, with the ultimate Christian challenge being the command to love even the enemy. We examine two particular functions of the Spirit in community—as a power for unity and reconciliation and as the enabler of service to the neighbor.

1. Unity and Reconciliation

Because of sin, the realization of community is difficult. Transgressions and omissions erode the bonds that link us together, making forgiveness and reconciliation indispensable to our common life. Sebastian Moore calls the topic of God's forgiveness the most spiritually ambitious of religious ideas because it links two ultimate extremes of human experience: the infinite, all-transcending whole and the experience of one's life as sordid, trivial and self-seeking. Forgiveness is an

act of God acting like God in the very heart of the small, mean world of the sinner. The touch of God's mercy invites us to become more, not less aware of our meanness, knowing that it is in this very place that God touches us (Moore, 1977: 85-86). In the tradition, the Holy Spirit is often associated with the mercy of God. In the fourteenth century, the ever hopeful Julian of Norwich (c 1343-c 1416) encourages her readers by reminding them that the Spirit inspires persons to contrition and "turns bitterness into hope of God's mercy" (Julian of Norwich, 1978: 244).

Augustine struggled in the midst of a failing empire to combat forces that he judged inimical to orthodoxy and the Church's integrity. The fourth century witnessed the Arian controversy and debate about the Spirit's identity. At every turn, Augustine invoked the Holy Spirit to support his idea of Church against that of the Donatists. For Augustine, the sending of the Spirit revealed a trustworthy God who fulfills all promises, but he warned his congregation that just as the soul departs from a severed limb, so the Spirit departs from those who cut themselves off from the Church (Sermon 267.3). "So if you wish to be alive with the Holy Spirit, hold on to loving-kindness, love truthfulness, long for oneness, that you may attain to everlastingness" (Sermon 267.4). It is easy to take community for granted. When it is functioning well, we may not advert to the ways in which it nurtures us spiritually. Perhaps it is only when unity is threatened, as Augustine judged it to be in his time, that we speak up and become advocates and protectors of that unity.

The sign of the Spirit's presence for Augustine was the unity of a world Church that embraced all the languages symbolized at Pentecost. He writes, "Among you is being fulfilled what was prefigured in those days, when the Holy Spirit came. Because just as then, whoever received the Holy Spirit, even as one person, started speaking all languages; so too now the unity itself is speaking all languages through all nations; and it is by being established in this unity that you have the Holy Spirit, you that do not break away in any schism from the Church of Christ which speaks all languages" (Sermon 271). For Augustine, the Holy Spirit is the Gift that makes possible communion with God and with each other. In Sermon 71, Augustine links the bond of love that is the Holy Spirit within the Trinity, with its effects in the community of faith. "The Father and the Son have willed that we enter into communion among ourselves and with them through . . . the Holy Spirit, God and gift of God. It is in him in fact, that we are reconciled with the divinity and take our delight in it" (Sermon 71.12.18).

Augustine understood deeply Paul's ambiguity and inner struggle expressed in Romans 7:19: "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do." For Augustine, it is the Spirit who

accomplishes in us freedom from this inner duplicity and division. The Spirit has the power to reconcile the war that rages within us and to extend that reconciliation to others. The Holy Spirit is the Gift that makes possible communion with God and with each other. For Augustine, the remission of sins is the first blessing of God's goodness in the Holy Spirit. In his commentary on Psalm 8, he locates the bowels of the mercy of God in the Holy Spirit (Ps VIII:8). Against this gratuitous gift, the impenitent heart stands as an affront of enormous proportion.

In a number of texts, Augustine calls attention to the passage from Matthew (12:31-32) about the sin against the Holy Spirit. Part of the context for these comments was the debate about the contrast between the ideal unity and holiness of the Church and the actual, often unedifying behavior of its members. In Sermon 21, Augustine excoriates the recalcitrant individual who remains impassive in the "persevering hardness of an impenitent heart" (Sermon XXI.20). Both the sources and fruits of reconciliation are found in the love poured forth into hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5)—perhaps Augustine's favorite biblical reference to the Spirit. Reconciliation in love, he says, makes us sons and daughters of God (1 John 4:18); casts out fear (Rom 8:15); calls us back into friendship and acquaints us with all the secret things of God (John 16:13).

God's forgiveness of us is always linked to our forgiveness of one another. In a *New Yorker* Comment entitled "Getting Over," the author reflects on forgiveness in light of conflicts in both the former Yugoslavia and U.S.S.R, Africa, Northern Ireland, Central America, Sri Lanka, India, Palestine and Crown Heights, N.Y. The author notes that in *The Human Condition*, philosopher Hannah Arendt sees forgiveness as essential to human freedom. "Only through this constant mutual release from what they do can men remain free agents, only by constant willingness to change their minds and start again can they be trusted with so great a power as that to begin something new" (Arendt, 1958: 240). The article goes on:

And yet the forgiveness she [Arendt] sees as the ground for that hope is not a simple forgetting. If anything, it is a highly charged and continuously recharged form of remembering that cannot be done in isolation . . . True forgiveness is achieved in community: it is something people do for each other and with each other—and, at a certain point, for free. It is history working itself out as grace, and it can be accomplished only in truth (*New Yorker*, 4/5/93).

In significant ways, our future as a global community depends on the kind of remembering that leads to genuine compunction and for-

givenness. For Christians, this very difficult and challenging gesture is made possible through the Spirit's power and intimate presence.

Spiritual formation must take into account the complex dynamics that characterize the many communities to which we belong. Spiritual writers often speak of the initial stages of the spiritual journey in terms of one's awareness of, and sorrow for, sin. This difficult road to genuine self-knowledge is possible because of the Spirit's empowering presence. Sin becomes horrible to the extent that we are aware of betraying a relationship with an infinitely loving God. As one grows in love, one becomes more and more sensitive to the ugliness of sin. In turn, this experience leads to a willingness to offer reconciliation to others who have harmed or offended us. After Christ ascends to heaven, the Holy Spirit becomes the means of God's merciful activity toward the world.

Many of our ancestors in the faith speak of the Spirit in ways that give the reader a clear sense that the Spirit is not an abstract principle, but rather a present and compelling force, engaged in the struggle to preserve the faithful and give them hope. The present challenge is to engage the Spirit in as real and compelling a way as they did. Their stories can inspire us to call upon the Spirit to empower us as agents of reconciliation and communion within and beyond the borders of the Church.

2. Servant to Others

The ultimate test for growth in the spiritual life is its fruits. The gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit become concrete in the ways in which we live in community and relate to others, near and far away. The fast-paced nature of much modern living can block us from noticing the Spirit's gifts in ourselves and others—a moment of gratitude, a forgiving gesture, a generous act. The Spirit functioned in Jesus when he washed the feet of his disciples (John 13:1-5), providing a model of relationship to the neighbor. It is this same Spirit that disposes and empowers Christians to act in love for the well-being of others.

Throughout the tradition, theologians and mystics have associated the Spirit with the charity that is lived out in service to the neighbor. For example, in the thirteenth century, Bonaventure of Bagnoreggio (1217–1294) links the Holy Spirit with activity, with the presence of the virtues, and to the living of the moral life (Pentecost sermon 1, 331). But one of the most unusual metaphors for the Spirit's role as servant comes from the fourteenth century. Catherine of Siena makes the Spirit's role in neighbor love explicit when she speaks of the Spirit as a waiter at table. This particular image brings up an important consideration. For some, a certain image can have a negative impact, or an image can be meaningful at one stage in life and not at all in another. For example,

some women may balk at this image of God as waiter because it is perceived as a sign of diminishment or oppression. Social expectations that women are the ones to “wait on table” can minimize their ability to choose this role in dignity and freedom. In response, one can throw the image out completely; simply let it go, knowing that while it may be helpful to some, it is not for everyone; or remain open to the possibility that this symbol of humble service can be transformed and appropriated in a new key that is indeed revelatory of God and liberating for humans. Let us explore this latter possibility—envisioning this gesture of service as one of authentic love and genuine hospitality.

Catherine images the persons in the Trinity as table, food, and waiter. Perhaps her starting point for this metaphor was the Eucharist, the food that is Christ’s body, from which she broadened the metaphor to include the other persons in the Trinity. She writes of her experience at Eucharist on the feast of the martyr, St. Lucy. Catherine recounts that St. Lucy allowed her to taste the fruit of her martyrdom—a desire that Catherine always harbored for herself. At the table of the lamb, God says to Catherine, “I am table and I am food.” Catherine continues, “The hand of the Holy Spirit was dispensing this food, sweetly serving those who relished it” (Letter 47, 145).

In the *Dialogue*, Catherine’s major theological work, she describes the experience of those who have reached the fourth and highest stage of the spiritual journey—those who experience the indwelling of God in a steady, on-going way. Souls find rest at this stage of perfection in which they find “table and food and waiter.” God is their bed and table. The Word is their food and the Holy Spirit, God’s loving charity, is the waiter who serves God’s gifts and graces. The Spirit is the go-between between heaven and earth. God speaks to Catherine, “This gentle waiter carries to me their tender loving desires, and carries back to them the reward for their labors, the sweetness of my charity for their enjoyment and nourishment. So you see, I am their table, my Son is their food, and the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from me the Father and from the Son, waits on them” (*Dialogue* 78, 146). The fruits on this table are the “true solid virtues” (Letter 6, 49). We often speak of spiritual formation as *imitatio Christi*. This provocative metaphor of the Spirit as waiter gives an added perspective on God as servant of all. When the Spirit is imagined as a waiter at table, we may be motivated to take on this same role in service to the neighbor.

In a letter to a Florentine bishop, Catherine specifies the image of waiter, referring to the Holy Spirit as a cellarer. She writes, “Bleeding from every member, he had made himself cask and wine and cellarer for us. Thus we see that his humanity is the cask that encased the divine nature. The cellarer—the fire and the hands that are the Holy Spirit—tapped that cask on the wood of the most holy cross” (Letter

37, 126). Catherine understands the Spirit to be the energy or the means by which redemption is effected. It is in and through the Spirit that the blood of Christ becomes the grace of Christ present to the community in every age.

The image of the Holy Spirit as waiter is further extended to include not only food for the soul but also food for the intellect in the form of teaching, and food for the neighbor in the form of charity. In one of her prayers, Catherine says, "And the Holy Spirit is indeed a waiter for us, for he serves us this teaching by enlightening our mind's eye with it and inspiring us to follow it. And he serves us charity for our neighbors and hunger to have as food souls and the salvation of the whole world for the Father's honor" (Prayer 12, 102). The soul comes to know the Truth through the "light from the Holy Spirit, whom I have given her as a servant" (*Dialogue* 141, 293). Food for the neighbor is described in an arresting juxtaposition of opposites—the Holy Spirit serves us hunger. Not exactly what one expects to receive at a table! But being hungry for souls and for the world's salvation go hand in hand with being fed charity for these same neighbors.

In a rare instance, Catherine explicitly extends the effects of God's love to the worldly, indicating by this rather inexplicable move just how great God's love really is. God speaks, "For the Holy Spirit, my mercy, waits on these and gives them love for me and warm affection for their neighbors, so that with immeasurable charity they seek their salvation" (*Dialogue* 143, 297). The abyss that separates even the perfect from God must be even greater between God and the worldly. By suggesting that the Holy Spirit "waits on" the worldly, Catherine suggests the awesome nature of God's condescending love who chooses to bridge even the widest gap, reaching out to those who are the least deserving of God's tender care. But even here, the goal of the extension of God's mercy is not the individual soul, but the neighbor.

Catherine's association of the Spirit with divine providence is made the centerpiece of one section in the *Dialogue*. The Holy Spirit as servant provides whatever is needed to individuals and communities. The services the Holy Spirit performs are many. God speaks, "This servant, the Holy Spirit, whom I in my providence have given her, clothes her, nurtures her, inebriates her with tenderness and the greatest wealth" (*Dialogue* 141, 292). In this part of the *Dialogue*, Catherine is wrestling with her intense desire to receive frequent communion; with the ways in which God thwarts this desire in order to enhance her hunger; and with the final resolution in which God provides for her in unimaginable ways. The goal of this "cat and mouse" game is to get Catherine to trust "that the Holy Spirit, her servant, would nourish her hunger" (*Dialogue* 142, 296). The Spirit even pricks the conscience of the priest who refuses Catherine Communion! (*Dialogue* 142, 294).

Among other things, what the Holy Spirit serves is grace. In one instance, Catherine writes that the Holy Spirit serves us God and “every grace and gift, spiritual as well as material” (Letter 53, 161). Catherine is angry at the abuses in the Church, in particular at those who “sell” the Holy Spirit’s grace like a piece of merchandise. The vices that cause ministers to do this are impurity, bloated pride and greed (*Dialogue* 126, 244). “Not only do they not give what they are in duty bound to give to the poor, but they rob them through simony and their hankering after money, selling the grace of the Holy Spirit” (*Dialogue* 114, 213; 119, 221; 121, 232; 127, 247; 127, 248; Letters 28, 101; 65, 207). When the Church administers the sacraments worthily, the Spirit is able to serve those who partake.

Catherine always interprets life’s obstacles and suffering in terms of a loving God who sends hardships in order to test faith and strengthen the faithful in love. God makes things difficult in order to invite the believer to see better that God can and will provide whatever is needed and to trust in that providence. God speaks about bringing souls to the brink “so that they will fall in love with my providence and embrace true poverty as their bride. Then their servant, the Holy Spirit, my mercy, when he sees that they lack anything that is necessary for their bodies, will light a nudging spark of desire in the hearts of those who are able to help, and these will come to help them in their need” (*Dialogue* 149, 314). Catherine uses the metaphor of God’s hands to describe the providential activity of the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit is the light that banishes all darkness, the hand that upholds the whole world” (Letter 29, 103).

Spiritual formation aims to free persons from self-preoccupation, to engender ever greater trust in God’s love, and to lead believers to engage in loving service to others. We have examined aspects of the tradition that remind us of the Spirit’s presence and activity in this process. By bringing the Spirit into sharper focus, these authors invite us to become aware of the Spirit’s presence and power within us and within our communities. Readers of the mystics are sometimes scandalized by their presumption of intimacy with God. Perhaps because they are so aware of God’s utter transcendence and awesomeness, they are able to abandon themselves to the horizontal dimensions of the relationship as well. They often speak about God as though they were equals, intimate lovers, ever experiencing the Spirit as servant. When ego predominates in the psyche, the suggestion that the Spirit is a servant produces embarrassment. But when love holds sway, one can imagine the Spirit as servant and be awed and humbled by the metaphor. The ultimate goal of spiritual formation is to fall in love with God in such a way that we become loving servants of the neighbor and of the entire creation. Catherine’s metaphor of the Spirit as waiter in-

vites us to see and appreciate the ways in which the Spirit is at our service in love, motivating us to do the same for others.

IV. CONCLUSION

As we approach the millenium, Roman Catholics have been invited to focus on the Trinity. The year 1998 has been named the year of the Spirit—an opportunity to become aware of the Spirit who, in Christ, is God's constant and intimate presence to creation. Individually and in community we can ask ourselves whether we have, like the wicked step-mother in the story of Cinderella, relegated the Spirit to obscurity or even invisibility in our spiritual formation. We can take advantage of recent theological discussions on the Holy Spirit and of the retrieval of pneumatological traditions to awaken our consciousness to the Spirit's many empowering roles. The Holy Spirit need not be on the sidelines in God's relationship with the human community. Sometimes the Spirit acts directly on an individual; at other times, the Spirit's service is deeply incarnational and communitarian. In the process of spiritual formation one learns to trust that the Spirit will inspire Christians to respond to the call to provide loving and generous service to the world. In the end, each of us is that person.

REFERENCES

- Arendt, Hannah. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.
- Augustine of Hippo. "On the Gospel of John" in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, first series, vol. I. New York: Scribner's, 1886.
- _____. "Letters" in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, first series, vol. VII. New York: Scribner's, 1888.
- Baird, Joseph L. and Radd K. Ehrman, Trans. *The Letters of Hildegard of Bingen*, vol. I. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Catherine of Siena. *The Dialogue*. New York: Paulist Press, 1980.
- _____. *The Letters of St. Catherine of Siena*, vol. I, ed. Suzanne Noffke. Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, no. 52, 1988.
- _____. *The Prayers of Catherine of Siena*, ed. Suzanne Noffke. New York: Paulist Press, 1983.
- Congar, Yves. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, 3 vols. New York: Seabury, 1979, 1980.

- Hauser, Richard J. *Moving in the Spirit: Becoming Contemplatives in Action*. New York: Paulist Press, 1986.
- Hildegard of Bingen. *Scivias*, Trans. Columba Hart and Jane Bishop. New York: Paulist Press, 1990.
- Johnson, Elizabeth. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. New York: Crossroad, 1992.
- Julian of Norwich. *Showings*. New York: Paulist Press, 1978.
- Kovel, Joel. *History and Spirit: An Inquiry into the Philosophy of Liberation*. Boston: Beacon, 1991.
- McDonnell, Kilian. "A Trinitarian Theology of the Holy Spirit?" *Theological Studies* 46 (1985) 191–227.
- Moltmann, Jurgen. *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.
- Moore, Sebastian. *The Crucified Is No Stranger*. London: Dartman, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1977.
- Newman, Barbara. "Hildegard of Bingen," video. Washington, D.C.: The National Cathedral, 1989.
- Olson, Alan. *Hegel and the Spirit: Philosophy as Pneumatology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Raymond of Capua. *The Life of Catherine of Siena*, Trans. C. Kearns. Wilmington: Glazier, 1980.
- Sirks, G. J. "The Cinderella of Theology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," *Harvard Theological Review* 50, 1957.
- Smith, Steven G. *The Concept of the Spiritual: An Essay in First Philosophy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988.
- Welker, Michael. *God the Spirit*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.
- Williams, Robert R. *Fichte and Hegel on the Other*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.
- Wyschogrod, Edith. *Saints and Postmodernism: Revisioning Moral Philosophy*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Elizabeth A. Dreyer is author, lecturer, and consultant in the areas of spirituality, historical theology and feminist thought. Her publications include *Manifestations of Grace* (Glazier, 1990); *Earth Crammed with Heaven* (Paulist, 1994); and *A Retreat with Catherine of Siena* (St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1998). She lives in Hamden, Connecticut.

Kathleen T. Talvacchia

Finding God Experientially in the Tradition: Theological Reflection as Spiritual Formation

One of the most important tasks in my job at a theological seminary training students for ministry is to help them find the connections between their experiences in the practice of ministry and the intellectual content of their courses in Bible, theology, ethics, history, and pastoral studies. The goal of this endeavor often eludes them. I have observed that many students can do one or the other easily—they can talk about the theological tradition or they can talk about their ministerial practice. It is far more difficult for them to integrate both areas into a clear and coherent insight about their work as an integral expression of Christian vocation and commitment.

That future ministers learn to make this transition into more unified thinking is, I believe, essential. Ministerial students share with many other contemporary Christians the tendency to find God either abstractly in theology or concretely in practical action. Yet without the tradition our reflection is flat, lacking any theological depth, complexity or richness; without concrete experience it is abstract and disconnected from the reality of communities and events. How, then, can we learn to find the *living* God of the Christian tradition that is infused throughout Christian ministry? How can we find God experientially in the tradition?

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION AND THE BUSY MINISTER

These questions are just as essential for those of us already active in pastoral work as they are for students in training for professional ministry. And yet, the daily pulls and pushes of ministry make it difficult to carve out the time to meet all the immediate demands on us, let alone find the time for sustained prayer or reflection. How can we find the living God of the Christian tradition when we cannot find the topic for next week's sermon? How can we find the living God of Christian ministry when we cannot find the time to pray?

Becoming adept in the process of theological reflection is a way to ground ourselves in the unitive task of seeing how the theological tradition is integral to the practice of ministry and vice versa. It is a process that helps us find God experientially in our religious heritage. Theological reflection focuses attention on the *praxis* (action/reflection)

necessary to form ministerial character rooted in a deep awareness of the source of our being and action. Seeing the living God in the depth of the theological tradition synthesized with the messiness of ministerial action grounds an ongoing spiritual formation for ministry. Through the process of theological reflection we can become more spiritually centered and focused so as to better discern the presence of God in our ministry.

There are many ways to engage in theological reflection. The various methods, however, have some common elements. Each counsels engaging in-depth in an experience, understanding it in conversation with the theological tradition of a community, moving towards a new insight into the richness and relevance of God in one's awareness and in the world, and ultimately letting all of this feed our pastoral action. Theological reflection seeks a rigor that encompasses both an intellectual heritage and a personal and communal consciousness. It is "theological" insofar as it is concerned about God, but its concern is not abstract or academic. Rather, this approach seeks a concrete awareness of God's presence that has ultimate significance for one's faith and action. Thus, theological reflection is a profoundly formative process. As Robert Kinast states:

It tries to help a person (or group) discover God's presence in that person's (or group's) experience. In this respect theological reflection is akin to prayer or spiritual direction (guidance, counseling). It is not satisfied with learning more about God but with leading a person more directly to encounter God. As this happens, theological reflection asks the person to consider what difference God's presence makes (the reflection stage) and what God expects as a result (the action stage). This integration of reflection and action is what ultimately makes theological reflection theological (Kinast, 1996: x).

What does theological reflection look like? Given the various ways of engaging in pastoral reflection it will be useful to highlight two methods of theological reflection. Both methods have a similar process, yet each approaches the task from a different perspective. The first method proceeds from the understanding of theological reflection as a movement of insight and correlation, while the second method proceeds from an understanding of theological reflection as conversation.

A METHOD OF INSIGHT AND CORRELATION

Patricia O'Connell Killen and John de Beer articulate a theological reflection process that focuses on the movement toward insight and correlation. They provide a useful definition that clearly articulates the dialogic nature of the experience:

Theological reflection is the discipline of exploring individual and corporate experience in conversation with the wisdom of a religious heritage. The conversation is a genuine dialogue that seeks to hear from our own beliefs, actions, and perspectives, as well as those from the tradition. It respects the integrity of both. Theological reflection therefore may confirm, challenge, clarify, and expand how we understand our own experience and how we understand the religious tradition. The outcome is new truth and meaning for living (O'Connell Killen and de Beer, 1994: viii).

In theological reflection both personal experience and the Christian story are mutually respected. It is not automatic, rather it is a discipline undertaken in openness and faith. It has the potential to both confirm and challenge our accepted understandings. The anticipated result is insight and transformative action.

O'Connell Killen and de Beer believe that there is a structure to the process of meaning-making. They refer to this as the "movement toward insight." First one enters experience, encounters feelings, and apprehends the images that arise from those feelings. Considering and questioning those feelings may spark an insight, which potentially leads to action. Theological reflection, then, is the intentional attempt to incorporate the wisdom of the Christian tradition into the process of meaning-making.

The authors note that one's ideological standpoint influences the quality and trustworthiness of the theological reflection. A standpoint of dogmatic certitude, for example, does not allow personal experience to challenge the religious tradition; rather, one is controlled by a pre-established religious interpretive framework. At the opposite extreme, a standpoint of absolute self-assurance does not allow the religious tradition to challenge one's understanding of personal experience; one is controlled by self-interpretation. Genuine theological reflection takes place with a standpoint of exploration, which allows one to be open to the wisdom of both experience and the religious tradition. Here one is open to the possibility that one's interpretive framework is in need of revision and will be changed by reflection and experience.

O'Connell Killen and de Beer's method of theological reflection develops an understanding of the "movement toward insight" in three major ways: expanding the concept of experience, determining what to reflect on, and deliberately incorporating religious heritage into the reflection.

The category of experience is vast. In order to make it manageable for reflection, the authors distinguish among several sources that categorize experience. One source is action, that is, the lived narrative or life story of a person. Another source is tradition, that is, the authoritative scriptures, doctrinal teachings, church history and stories of the

community's inspirational persons. Culture is a third source of experience. This includes the ideas, social structures and ecological environment of a people. A fourth source of experience is the category of positions, that is, the attitudes, opinions, beliefs and convictions that one holds and is willing to defend.

To determine what to reflect on, one must pay attention to feelings so that images arise. The combination of feeling with image directs reflection to the central issue in an event. The authors refer to this significant issue as "the heart of the matter," i.e., the central question, tension, issue, theme, problematic or wonderment involved. This involves a careful spiritual listening and discernment of the movement of God's Spirit in the event.

Next, the minister puts what he or she understands to be the heart of the matter in conversation with the wisdom of the Christian heritage in the intentional activity of correlation. This movement deliberately incorporates the religious heritage into the reflection process. It creates a correlation between experience and the wisdom of the religious heritage. The correlation has two parts. In the first the conversation explores the religious or theological meaning of the experience. In a second part, the specific materials of the religious tradition (scriptures, doctrines, history, etc.) are brought to bear in consideration on the heart of the matter.

Thus, the framework of theological reflection for O'Connell Killen and de Beer consists of four basic steps (O'Connell Killen and de Beer 68–69): (1) Focus on some aspect of experience; (2) Describe that experience to identify the heart of the matter; (3) Explore the heart of the matter in conversation with the wisdom of the Christian heritage; (4) Identify from this conversation new truths and meanings for living. The framework provides a structured process for theological reflection. Many specific designs for the process can be developed by using such elements as prayer, meditation, contemplation, worship, art and movement. Each design, however, will share these fundamental elements of the framework for theological reflection.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION AS CONVERSATION

In *Method in Ministry* James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead provide another approach to pastoral reflection. They present a method for theological reflection rooted in the model of "conversation." They understand this lively exchange between Christian faith and contemporary life to be a conversation that is by turn debate, dialogue, reconciliation and accusation. As a communal process rather than a monologue, it is a process of communication that should be at the core of our life together.

The model they present engages three conversation partners. One partner is the Christian tradition—the religious heritage of both the sacred texts of holy Scripture and the wisdom of the Christian Church in its history. A second partner is experience—both the experience of individual Christians and the collective experience of faith communities. A third conversation partner is culture, that is, “the convictions, values and biases that form the social setting in which the reflection takes place” (Whitehead and Whitehead, 1995: 5). The method of theological reflection describes how the conversation among the Christian tradition, experience and culture proceeds in a movement from listening, to assertion, to pastoral response.

Listening or attending is a fundamental attribute of spiritual discernment. In attending one seeks to know the movement of God wherever God may be found. The Whiteheads see many interpersonal skills as necessary for attending in theological reflection. These include patience, active listening, and the ability to respond with accurate understanding. Such skillful listening begins the spiritual discernment process in which one “tests the spirits” by attending to the information available in the Christian tradition, experience and culture. They view “attending” as a “ministerial asceticism,” an emptying of self that allows space for God’s revelation to emerge (Ibid., 73).

When a community has engaged in skillful listening, participants realize the diversity of experiences and interpretations that are part of their life. At times God’s revelation challenges accepted doctrines and understandings. It is at this point that assertion is necessary as an aspect of theological reflection. In this step the community engages in the honest and respectful sharing of their plurality of opinions and convictions. Assertion demands a willingness to engage in the constructive conflict that is part of engagement with people of diverse perspectives. Such constructive dissent and disagreement has the potential to be a positive dynamic, and draws upon interpersonal skills of mature interaction and assertiveness. The Whiteheads especially note that the success of assertion in theological reflection depends upon the mutual partnership of the sources in conversation. Religious tradition, experience and the surrounding culture must be given equal right to assert their claims in the conversation. Otherwise, the danger can be stated as follows:

A reflection in which tradition simply interprets experience, without consideration of cultural information . . . leads us towards fundamentalism. A reflection that limits the dialogue to cultural information and individual experience is not explicitly Christian. Finally, a reflection which is essentially a dialogue between the Christian tradition and cultural information (whether philosophy,

philology, or science), to the neglect of personal experience, tends to yield conclusions of a more theoretical nature. Since the experience of participants is overlooked, the pastoral conclusions arising from such a reflection are often abstract or simply irrelevant (*Ibid.*, 82).

In the final stage of theological reflection according to the Whiteheads' method, the insight of the reflection process is turned into pastoral action. The goal of theological reflection is tested not just in the quality of the discernment, but in the effectiveness of the pastoral action. This means that there are many ways that important insights can be brought to fruition in a common response.

A CASE STUDY: WHAT IS "PRIESTLINESS"?

A case study of a theological reflection process will help to concretize and exemplify the frameworks reviewed. The case is taken, with permission, from a ministerial colleague at a large, interdenominational Protestant church in a major urban center. This colleague is a Roman Catholic woman, Mary (name changed), with twenty years of ministerial experience in the areas of community organizing, liturgy, and worship. Her professional position at this church is Coordinator of Worship.

While setting up for a Lenten program, she was approached by her student intern who asked for help in dealing with a man who was in distress and "looking for a clergy person." Since none of the ordained clergy were there at that moment, Mary invited him to speak with her. She recognized him as a member of the church who suffered from mental illness. He had the reputation of not being dangerous, and she observed that, although he was agitated, he did not seem in crisis or a threat to himself or others. After this assessment, she invited him to join her in a routine task that she was doing to prepare for the service, folding programs. As they talked and folded he began to calm down and told Mary about himself. He said that he was on medication to prevent delusion, but that this medication had a side-effect of memory loss and loss of concentration. He was worried that he would lose his part-time job because of this problem. During the course of their conversation he asked, "If God is perfect, why did God create me with such an awful problem?"

In response, Mary initiated reflection on the Psalms and how these Scriptures articulate the struggles of persons confronting God in the midst of their pain and suffering. They prayed together with Psalm 23—"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul." Eventually the man was calmer and said that he was tired and

needed to go home. When he left, Mary made a mental note to report this event to the clergy staff person who dealt with pastoral care concerns in the congregation. She then continued her preparation for the Lenten service.

The event seemed ordinary at the time for Mary, but it stayed with her enough that she asked me to engage in a theological reflection process with her about it. As she told me the details and we reflected on them together, she discovered that a key feeling for her was that she felt “priestly” in the encounter. In fact, the heart of the matter for her was that, even though ordination is denied to her in the Catholic tradition, in this incident as a lay minister she was able to function in a priestly way with someone in need. It became clear as we spoke that an aspect of the spiritual discernment she brought to the reflection was her awareness of her own struggles with depression and medication. Attending to the event in this way gave her a compassionate entry to the struggles of this man.

I asked her what the feeling experience of being priestly was like. She said that it felt as if she was a vehicle or channel for God’s love and care to this man. Specifically, she felt like a companion to him; she felt that she was able to engage him both from her own woundedness and from her desire to help him feel God’s presence to soothe his mental and spiritual agitation.

We began to probe these ideas further to understand how they might correlate with Christian religious heritage. Since I knew she was currently engaged in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, one connection I proposed was with St. Ignatius Loyola’s depiction of the Jesuits as “companions to Jesus.” This helped her reflect more deeply on her understanding of priesthood.

Also, she made connection to two biblical resources. Wisdom 7:27 speaks of Wisdom entering persons who are holy, making them friends of God and prophets: “Although she is but one, she can do all things, and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets.” Mary understood the holiness of this tormented man and the wisdom of his simplicity and honesty. He was stable enough to realize his disability, and he struggled to find God’s love and acceptance of him. His unblinking openness to see himself and the world spoke of an inner integrity of self that was holy. Mary recognized that this man was deeply connected to God in his suffering and struggle, and that he was prophetic to her in her own struggle to deal with depression and medication.

Another biblical resource for her was from John 15:15: “I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made

known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.” In his discussion of servant leadership, Jesus offers insight into what constitutes a priestly role. In the gospel story Jesus tells the apostles that he does not call them servants, he calls them friends, ones who know what is on the mind of God, and who offer their lives generously for one another. Mary saw in this biblical passage the notion of equality; that is, since all are made in God’s image, priests incarnate God in humanity through generous service given friend to friend, and not in hierarchical relationship.

These correlations with the Christian tradition helped Mary to gain insight into the spiritual reality of priesthood. In serving this man she was being a friend to him, as well as a professional person in a service role. It was the ministerial model of the pastor as friend. The emphasis was on the character of their relationship, rather than on a separation of role. He was a friend of God, as was she, and together they were befriending each other for the purpose of healing and wholeness.

Out of this theological reflection Mary understands that what was a seemingly ordinary event was, in fact, a graced moment in which many strands of her vocational journey came together. First, these insights are now part of her work with her spiritual director as she moves through the Ignatian Exercises. This reflection has fueled her attempts to learn to be more intentionally a “contemplative in action.” Secondly, she feels more accepting of her own struggles with depression and medication, and how these struggles play a role in her professional life. She has a greater understanding of herself as both wounded and healer, as one who is served and one who serves. Finally, she feels more empowered to take seriously her vocational call to priestly work, understanding the need to see the priestly character of her ministerial action more carefully and intentionally. In this way she can spiritually and emotionally support herself through the pain associated with the denial of ordination, and find a way of being able to more or less thrive in the life of ministry to which she feels called. Mary also sees this as a constructive way to resist the gender discrimination that she experiences in both Protestant and Catholic traditions. While her future as an ordained minister is not assured, she has a better sense of herself as priestly in her present ministry. While she waits for the Church to recognize her as a priest, she takes great spiritual sustenance in knowing that this man in need recognized her as one.

SUSTAINING A LIFE OF MINISTRY

As the case study indicates, theological reflection has the potential to produce deep spiritual insights that can then become sources for our ongoing spiritual formation as ministers. It can focus our discernment so that we understand more profoundly God’s presence in our work

and the implications of this presence for our pastoral action. It can connect us to the richness of the religious heritage that is the wisdom of our community life. And it can sustain a dialogue between that tradition and our ministry experiences that will empower our vocation over the course of our life. Thus, regular engagement in theological reflection can sustain our vocation and prevent ministerial burnout.

Theological reflection processes can also be used for communal discernment of ministerial experiences. The weekly seminar classes that I run for ministry students are examples of this. Each week we gather to discern the presence of God in the events of each student's field site, and we seek to correlate our insights with the Christian religious heritage in order to discover ways of acting that are more faithful to the gospel. But use of communal theological reflection should not be limited to the seminary classroom. A parish social justice committee could use theological reflection to probe more deeply into a communal experience of service work that all shared. A group of hospital chaplains might engage in the process to discover ways to maintain their pastoral integrity amid the escalating changes in health care systems. Whether used individually or communally, theological reflection has the potential to help people engage more deeply in the life of the Spirit as revealed experientially in the tradition.

What are some concrete ways that we who are overly busy in the work of our ministries can ensure that theological reflection is a consistent part of our vocational life? O'Connell Killen and de Beer have very useful exercises in their book for individual and communal theological reflection. Another suggestion is to schedule monthly or twice monthly meals with a colleague in which the agenda for the meal is to engage in theological reflection. A staff team could use a part of regularly scheduled staff meeting time for theological reflection; or, a group from a church or agency can be recruited specifically to engage in communal theological reflection.

It is important for all of us to bring theological reflection to ministry as a habit and an intuitive sense. Through theological reflection we are seeking to form the discipline, instincts, and skills that will serve us in the course of our ministry and sustain us in our faithfulness to the sacred trust to which we have been called.

REFERENCES

- Kinast, Robert L. *Let Ministry Teach: A Guide to Theological Reflection*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996.

O'Connell Killen, Patricia, and John de Beer. *The Art of Theological Reflection*. New York: Crossroad, 1994.

James D. Whitehead and Evelyn Eaton Whitehead. *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry*, rev. edition. Kansas City, Mo.: Sheed and Ward, 1995.

Kathleen T. Talvacchia is assistant professor of ministry and theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She teaches in the areas of field education, religious education, and urban ministry.

Christianity is so human and so historical that it is too human for many people, who think that true religion must be inhuman, that is, not of the senses, nonhistorical. But the word was made flesh. The word of the Lord went forth to John in the fifteenth year of the emperor Tiberius. And so it has remained. Christianity is an historical and a very concrete and sturdy religion, a stumbling block to the proud who really—at least in religious matters—do not wish to be human beings, but it is grace and truth for those who with humble hearts are willing to be human beings in space and time even when they are adoring the God of eternity and infinity.

Karl Rahner

J. Michael Utzinger

Our Anxious Grief: A Christian Response to Death

God, Creator and Ruler of All . . . set us free from our anxious grief.
(Ambrose)

Joy and I were excited. Today we would discover whether our child would be a boy or a girl. Today was the routine twentieth-week ultrasound. We playfully considered the name of our baby. If it were a girl, we would name it after Joy's grandmother Margaret. The two of us had gotten stuck on the boy's name, when the technician arrived and prepared us for seeing our child on the television screen. He explained what we could expect during the procedure, but asked that we let him do a full examination before asking questions. We agreed and anticipated.

The screen came on, and we saw the baby. It was beautiful even in black and white. I smiled even as I noticed the technician's furrowed brow. At first it seemed that he was just proceeding with the examination, but eventually he kept working the same spot again and again. "Has the baby ever kicked, Mrs. Utzinger?" *My God, I haven't seen a heartbeat!* "I don't think so." *He can't find a heartbeat!* "I'll be right back. I need to speak to the doctor on call."

Joy and I instinctively reached for one another's hand and prayed. Although I spoke aloud, I do not remember the words. The air in the room suddenly seemed lifeless and sterile. The door opened. The technician nervously reappeared and said that our child was dead. "I hope I handled this well for you two," he added. "This is the first time I have had to tell someone something like this." Were I not feeling ill, I might have noticed the irony of the moment. This man wanted my approval and sympathy; I had neither to give. Joy and I returned home and collapsed into each other's arms.

THE VITAL LIE

In our culture we live by what Ernest Becker called a "vital lie": that death is not important and can be ignored (Becker, 1971). Critics commonly observe that our culture sanitizes itself from the elderly and dying by placing them in convalescent or nursing homes. Americans have typically moved death out of family homes and churches and placed it into the hands of specialists, such as psychologists and funeral

home directors. We are a nation that is fascinated with the means of death, yet rarely considers the immense problem that death itself poses. Our cinema, theater, art, and literature focus upon violence, abuse, and hatred as acts which denigrate the individual; however, little thought is given to the greatest offender of human dignity: death. There can be no dignity if one ceases to be human at all.

Consider the media's coverage of the death of Princess Diana. While there have been some moving tributes to her life and humanitarian pursuits, her death and its meaning has stymied our news reporters. The issues raised by Diana's death, according to the media, have surrounded paparazzi, drinking and driving, and the public's complicity in reading tabloids, yet they do not provide a meaning for the loss of her life. Were there lessons to be learned from her death? The media would have us believe that an important lesson was that one should not travel at high speeds in tunnels without fastened seatbelts. Other journalists chided the French transportation department for ignoring the importance of guardrails on public roads. However, such attempts to provide a meaning for Diana's death ring hollow upon close inspection. The lessons for which we seem to be groping circle around the idea that her death could have been prevented. It seems that no one has considered that the tragedy of Diana's death was not that it was preventable but that it was inevitable. This is the lesson, which our culture carefully avoids, about which we tell lies.

Christians, one should expect, would expose such untruth about death, yet the vital lie filters into our churches as well. We flock to Easter services every year, while pews remain empty on Good Friday. The theological project of "demythologizing" the resurrection de-emphasizes the problem of physical corruption for which resurrection is the antidote. Such a project also betrays a subtle dualism between body and soul, which suggests that when the physical has perished nothing essential has been lost. These practices, among others, help obscure the significance of death for human beings, who are body, mind, and spirit. As a result we have trouble ministering to the grieving and contemplating death from a Christian perspective. Upon the death of my child, I began to consider grief and death. I believe that Christians in this country have a long way to go before they have grappled honestly with these two issues. What I offer here are modest reflections, which perhaps may contribute to an ongoing conversation in the Church.

GRIEF AND ST. AUGUSTINE

Grief after loss, while necessary, is difficult, but we Christians do have guides. During the weeks following the miscarriage, I found myself reading and rereading Augustine's description of his grief following the death of his mother St. Monica:

As I lay alone in bed, I remembered the verses of your servant Ambrose and realized the truth of them:

God, Creator and Ruler of all,
who clothes the day with beautiful light
and the night with restful grace
to restore tired and quieted limbs for toil and use,
let wearied minds be uplifted
and set us free from our anxious grief.
(Author's trans.)

Then little by little, my old feelings about your handmaid came back to me. I thought of her devoted love for you and the tenderness and patience she had shown me, like a holy woman that she was. Of all this I found myself suddenly deprived, and it was a comfort to me to weep for her and for myself and to offer my tears to you for her sake and mine. The tears which I had been holding back streamed down, and I let them flow as freely as they would, making of them a pillow for my heart. On them it rested, for my weeping sounded in your ears alone, not in the ears of men who might have misconstrued it and despised it (Bk. 1x, Pat. 12, 202).

A former professor and mentor of mine pointed out to me the subversiveness of this prayer. Augustine would not have found himself unfamiliar with a culture that fends off emotions of grief with such pithy sayings as “be a man,” “you have to move on,” or “all things happen for a reason.” The classical notion that God is simple dictated that he be apathetic. Emotion, it was said, divides God and suggests that he can be influenced and moved by something other than himself. In a like manner, therefore, pathos was seen to be a denigration of the human being. Augustine's reflections on death, however, gives honor to pathos and grief. Tears of grief can be an acceptable prayer and sacrifice to God, when you have nothing else to offer (such as approval or sympathy).

And now, O Lord, I make you my confession in this book. Let any man read who will. Let him understand it as he will. And if he finds that I have sinned by weeping for my mother, even if only for a fraction of an hour, let him not mock me. For this was the mother, now dead and hidden awhile from my sight, who had wept over me for many years so that I might live in your sight. Let him not mock at me but weep himself, if his charity is great (202–203).

The mockery of which Augustine speaks is a lack of Christian solidarity and love with a grieving brother or sister. He asks that we should weep with him, if we have love. Such mockery might include the

sentiment that we would have handled loss differently (read: better or more seemly) than the bereaved, the belief that we can promote some kind of “grief damage control” by positing God’s providence, or the assumption that there is nothing that can be done for a person who has suffered loss. Upon seeing those who mourned for Lazarus, Christ himself was deeply moved and troubled in spirit. Jesus wept.

EXPERIENCE, FAITH, AND INCARNATION

Some believers overlook the Christian significance of death and loss because they have not experienced it themselves. Many view lack of experience as an unbridgeable chasm which forever separates individuals on the basis of culture, gender, race, or personal history. This understanding of the world leaves the individual alone to make sense of a world created by himself. I too have fallen prey to this kind of thinking; its currents run deep in our individualistic culture, which glorifies Horatio Alger and the pioneer on the frontier. Religiously, this individualism translates into a propensity to theologize one’s own experience. Such a project, however, almost always betrays a lack of humility. If Christians neglect the deposit of our faith carefully guarded by our forebears, theology becomes an exercise in self-glorification, often self-gratification. Like Narcissus we gaze into the spring we call God, content to see our own lonely reflections.

Christians, however, see experience through faith, rather than faith through experience. Writing to the Ephesians St. Paul wrote, “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all and through all and in all” (4:4-6). In the common faith, which we share by virtue of our baptism into the one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we find ourselves transformed into a community, one body with Christ as our head. The Christian, therefore, has the opportunity to see the experience of another through the eyes of a common faith. Having drunk from the same Spirit, she also necessarily suffers loss when a brother or sister in Christ suffers loss.

In his First Letter to the Corinthians Paul warns that we cannot faithfully remain isolated from other members of the Church:

Now the body is not made up of one part but many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where

would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body (12:14-20).

While Paul claims that the community of faith is not divided despite a multiplicity of vocations, I believe that this notion can be extended to all those differences in the Church, whether race, culture, gender, age, or personal history. We become complicit with our own sins of divisiveness, therefore, if we glorify difference such that members of the body are considered independent or expendable. A human body suffers if it loses an eye or a limb; however, the separated eye or limb itself suffers a far worse fate—it ceases to be human at all. In the same way, the Church is incomplete without all its members, and the members are nothing apart from the body. In other words, in the Church our lives make claims upon one another. Paul notes that “God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it” (12:24-26). If Christians ignore the suffering of their brothers or sisters they participate in an exercise of self-hatred. Understanding this is the beginning of learning to grieve with those who have suffered loss in the body of Christ.

Joy and I found solace and support in the community of faith. I did not find myself surprised that a God who became incarnate showed his love to us through members of his body, the Church. By grieving with us, making us meals, visiting us, or sending flowers I experienced the incarnate Lord. The Church as the mystical body of Christ makes God present for us and for the world. The Gospels consistently remind us of our obligation to the poor, oppressed, and suffering of the world; therefore, consider how much more we are obliged to minister to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Such manifestations of incarnation, however, suggests that death has importance. Christians cannot participate in the exorcism of death’s significance prevailing in our culture and at the same time expect that they can minister fully to the bereaved. The Church must articulate why death is important or be content to turn over all the issues surrounding grief to psychologists and counselors.

PERSON AND NATURE

Joy’s and my miscarriage is not important just because it happened to us, the parents. Its significance, and therefore its tragedy, lay in the fact that a human being of great worth has been lost. For centuries our forebears have reflected on the implications of classical christology for a theological anthropology. Chalcedonian christology asserted that the Son, the second person (or hypostasis) of the Trinity, is “recognized in

two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation." The hypostasis of the Son is characterized as his mode of existence (that he is eternally begotten of the Father). The natures of the Son consist of his being fully human and fully divine. Reflecting on the development of this christology, theologian John Meyendorff wrote: "The concept of hypostasis [as worked out by the Cappadocian fathers] cannot be reduced to that of 'particular' nor to that of 'relation.' The hypostasis is not the product of nature: it is that in which nature exists, the very principle of its existence" (Meyendorff, 1987:77).

All this is to say that human nature cannot exist without human personhood (or hypostasis). One way in which human beings are created in God's image is that we are personal. Although our natures are infected by death and sin, we nonetheless have dignity as persons. Joy's and my unborn child, despite the reality that she suffered from the same corruption as you and I, had a hypostatic existence. That baby, with or without a fully developed body or mind, possessed an inherent dignity of personhood. While the ethical implications of this line of thinking could be fruitfully mined by the thoughtful theologian, I am content to observe a single point: the Christian cannot see death and refuse to admit that something is terribly wrong. A unique person of great worth and importance has vanished. My child can no longer receive my love, which I was meant to give and she to accept. Her death has created an incompleteness in her life and mine.

THE LAST ENEMY

One explanation of death Christians often employ suggests that a tragic event or circumstance constitutes God's will. How often did Joy and I hear that, while we may not understand it now, God intended our tragedy? Paul, writing of Christ, provides a counterpoint to this line of thinking: "The end will come, when he hands over the kingdom of God to the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death" (1 Cor 15:24-26). Death is an enemy of Christ. The God of Life does not will the death of another. God's very name as revealed to Israel, I AM, bespeaks the fact that God is life and being itself.

Questions about death can certainly be asked. It is possible, for example, that God permits a death because of mercy, but I do not know how this could be determined. Most of the time the Christian finds herself in the Wilderness with few answers. While such inquiries about death may have their place, I believe that the Christian should be wary about her questions concerning the why of death, because this too can be an escape from the tragedy of death itself. Simply, death occurs be-

cause there is sin and corruption in the world. However, focusing on the cause of death will never provide the seeker with its meaning. Death itself is meaninglessness, disorder, the absence of life. The significance of death can only be found in the fact that we know it must be remedied. The Scriptures say that the whole creation groans in anticipation of redemption “that it will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God” (Rom 8:22). We Christians, like the rest of creation, anticipate the redemption of our bodies as adopted children of God. This redemption, however, has not yet happened, and we suffer, even groan, in hope of it.

The question remains, therefore, how can we experience the peace of God in the face of such a tragic reality as death? St. Paul reminds us that “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us” (8:18). I find this statement a remarkable one, because the suffering of those who survive the death of a loved one is quite considerable. I will live with the pain of the death of my child for a long time, if not forever. So, imagine the hope implicit in the apostle’s statement. We live in the hope of the resurrection, the day in which death will be swallowed up in victory. Indeed, “if only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men” (1 Cor 15:19).

Nonetheless, hope in Christ is not only for the future! Christians understand a great mystery of faith revealed in the Letter to the Romans: “God works all things together for the good of those who love him” (8:28). This translation of the Greek is surely preferable to: “And we know that all things work together for the good of those who love God.” Unlike the ideas implicit in the latter translation, the story of the death of our baby does not exemplify God’s elaborate plan triumphing over my life, Joy’s life, and our baby’s life—despite any of us. Rather, as the former translation suggests, the passage testifies to God’s grace and love. This grace and love provides a place for the suffering to stand in the midst of tragedy. The passage reveals a mystery that God can use evil and death for good, and this need not connote that God is their author.

The confession that God works all things together for the good of those who love him is not a formula to make sense of the past; rather it is a promise concerning the present and future. It is a promise that God will, under the worst of circumstances, provide the grace upon which we can stand, learn, and even grow from the tragedies of sin and death. Constantly in this life we live with the burden of the Cross, its shame and its suffering. We also cry out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Christians know, however, that God used the ultimate tragedy for good. Christ’s death on the Cross conquered sin

and death. Resurrected, Jesus himself was the first fruits of this victory. God allowed himself to die in order that we could be redeemed and have hope in the resurrection. It is in this hope that we can have peace and confess:

For none of us has life in himself,
and none becomes his own master when he dies.
For if we have life, we are alive in the Lord,
and if we die, we die in the Lord.
So, then, whether we live or die,
we are the Lord's possession (Rom 14:8).

The pain which the bereaved suffer is indeed profound; however, Christ's death and resurrection maintains the significance of the death of a loved one and provides hope for the Christian. The Church must not avoid or sanitize death like the culture around us. If we do not acknowledge the tragedy and horror of death we cannot minister to those who grieve. More importantly, if we act as if death is not significant, we cannot preach the Gospel of Christ to the nations. In the end, to ignore the importance of death is to trivialize the Cross.

REFERENCES

- Augustine. *The Confessions*. Trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin. New York: Penguin Books, 1961.
- Becker, Ernest. *The Denial of Death*. New York: The Free Press, 1971.
- Meyendorff, John. *Christ in Eastern Social Thought*. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987.

J. Michael Utzinger is currently lecturer and doctoral candidate in European and American religious history at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

A Homily By Any Other Name: Lay Preaching in the United States

Predictably, the *Official Catholic Directory* for 1998 contains some dispiriting news. While the U.S. Catholic population has grown to more than 62 million, the number of men ordained to serve as pastors continues to decline. According to an analysis of the *Directory*, fully one-fourth of all U.S. diocesan priests are now retired, sick, or otherwise absent from active duty. The number of parishes without a resident priest has grown to 2,460, or more than 13 percent of all parishes.

In reading the signs of the times, one wonders who is left to preach the good news of Jesus Christ to all the people in those priestless parishes? And what of those parishes that are fortunate enough to have a priest, but are still severely understaffed? How can the Church in the United States possibly fulfill canon 213 in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, which states that “The Christian faithful have the right to receive the word of God and the sacraments”?

One answer—and it remains a highly controversial one—is that lay people are beginning to preach at Mass in unprecedented numbers. This became clear to me as I undertook research for a master’s thesis in 1997–1998. While there are no national data available, Patricia Hughes Baumer, a leading trainer of lay preachers, calls lay preaching “a vastly underreported phenomenon.” In some cases, individual bishops are authorizing lay persons to preach at Mass, especially in parishes with lay administrators (or so-called “pastoral coordinators”). In other cases, pastors are quietly giving lay people the nod without their bishop’s consent. One such pastor summed up his reasoning this way: “One, I have a bunch of people here who know what they are doing, and I want to give them the chance to do it. Two, I want to foster the notion of lay ministry here in the parish. And, three, I am the only ordained cleric in this parish. I think I’m a pretty good preacher. It’s one of the things I do well. But there is no way I can preach effectively fifty-two Sundays a year.” Whatever their reason, the clerics doing the authorizing think they have a basis in canon law.

When the revised Code of Canon Law was promulgated, it contained a provision on preaching that marked a complete turnaround from the law in the 1917 Code. Canon 766 of the revised code expressly

grants lay persons permission to preach in a church or oratory under certain circumstances. Specifically, the code allows lay persons to preach if doing so is “necessary” or “useful.” The question is: What exactly does that mean? Some bishops apparently feel it is necessary or useful when they have parishes without a resident pastor. Some pastors seem to think it is necessary or useful when they themselves are overworked.

Since the code was published, a number of canon lawyers and liturgists have commented on the lay preaching provision in a host of journal articles and books. They agree that canon 766 clearly allows lay people to preach anywhere they like outside church; inside a church, they need the approval of a cleric. They also agree that canon 767 reserves the homily to a priest or deacon. Here we come to the heart of the matter. Just what is a homily? Canonist James H. Provost argues strongly that “the term ‘homily’ has become a technical term attached to what a priest or deacon does, and not a restrictive term describing what actually happens during a liturgy” (Provost, 1983:148). For Provost, any time an ordained man speaks at a liturgy, you have a homily. Any time a lay person speaks at any liturgy, you cannot have a homily. Canonist John H. Huels picks up this theme and explains it this way: “Another way of putting it is to say that a homily is like a presidential address: Only the president can deliver the presidential address” (Huels, 1988:21). Indeed, Baumer and others involved in lay preaching generally avoid the word “homily,” preferring to speak in terms of “Lectionary-based, liturgical preaching.”

Most commentators see room in the canons for lay people to preach at Eucharist, however, even if their preaching cannot be termed a homily. Provost sums his thinking up as follows: “From a careful reading of the revised code, it seems that a lay person could on occasion preach in place of the ordinary or extraordinary minister (an ordained priest or deacon) who would usually provide a homily. The conditions under which this could be done would depend on the physical or moral unavailability of the ordained ordinary or extraordinary minister and could arise from pastoral need” (Provost, 150). The physical unavailability is clear enough: There simply is not a priest or deacon there to preach. Moral unavailability is a bit slipperier. It could mean that the priest or deacon does not have sufficient command of English to preach effectively. Or that he is uncomfortable preaching at a Mass for children (the 1973 *Directory for Masses With Children* specifically allows for such a case).

Whenever and however lay people might preach at Mass, the commentators are clear to say it should not become such a regular practice that it displaces the preaching of the ordained. In Provost’s terms, the extraordinary minister should not become the ordinary minister.

In the late 1980s the U.S. bishops attempted to spell out guidelines for lay preaching. In brief, the guidelines repeated that the homily is reserved to a priest or deacon. It also barred lay people from preaching after the reading of the gospel. Instead, a lay preacher—having been duly authorized by the bishop or pastor—could only address the congregation after either the greeting or the Prayer after Communion (“Guidelines,” 1988). Ultimately, however, the Holy See rejected the guidelines. Thus, at this time, there is no national legislation in place governing lay preaching, and individual bishops are on their own in figuring out what to do.

Intrigued by the idea of lay people preaching at Sunday Mass, I visited two parishes to hear lay preachers in action. I also asked ten lay preachers to respond to a brief questionnaire about their activities. Seven of these individuals preach periodically in an urban parish, two are women religious who preach regularly in a very small rural parish without a resident priest, and one preaches twice a month at the parish she administers. Among other things, the survey assessed these preachers’ level of training, method of homily preparation, knowledge of diocesan regulations about lay preaching, and opinions about the challenges and frustrations of preaching and the response of the assembly to their preaching.

Seven of the ten returned questionnaires. Clearly, this is a small sample and this survey cannot be taken as representative of lay preachers in general. Nevertheless, the findings are interesting. All the preachers said their ministry was rewarding, though they also described the preparation of homilies as extremely difficult and demanding. Six of the seven were unaware of any diocesan guidelines regarding lay preaching, and indeed, these six functioned without their bishop’s knowledge or consent. One respondent even voiced an inappropriate hostility at the idea that his bishop had the right to issue guidelines.

Three areas struck me as particularly noteworthy.

1. *Adequate Understanding and Preparation of the Homily.* While all the lay preachers I interviewed had some theological training, it ranged from a handful of workshop courses to a doctor of divinity degree. The unevenness of the training these preachers have received is a major concern. Catholics in this country often complain that the preaching in their parishes is poor. Lay preaching ultimately will fail if it merely substitutes one brand of poor preaching for another. The U.S. bishops’ guidelines for lay preaching, though never formally promulgated, state that lay preachers must be “persons who have solid grounding in the basics of Sacred Scripture, theology, tradition, and liturgy” (“Guidelines,” n. 2c). Thus, it is critical that if lay people are to preach in church, they must be at least as well-prepared as ordained ministers

of the Word. That would mean a minimum of a master's degree that includes courses in homiletics, liturgy, and the ministry of presiding. It seems unlikely that a series of workshops, however well done, can substitute for a graduate degree from an accredited Roman Catholic school for ministry.

The survey suggested that these preachers spent considerable time preparing their homilies. They acknowledged that the process involved Scripture study as well as prayer. Several of them specifically noted that their preparation involved reflecting on their own life experience in terms of the gospel. Yet it is difficult to ascertain to what extent these preachers follow the homiletic method outlined in the U.S. bishops' fine 1982 document *Fulfilled in Your Hearing: The Homily in the Sunday Assembly* (FIYH, 1982). That method consists of reading, listening, praying; study and further reflection; letting go; drafting; revising; practicing; and preaching. Certainly, it is worrisome that one preacher I interviewed said with something like pride that he does not feel the need even to write out his homily!

2. *The Joys and Frustrations of Preaching.* The lay preachers I spoke with acknowledged that preaching is hard and demanding work, even for professionals who regularly speak in front of large audiences. One preacher spoke of "the struggle of the blank page" and another said she experiences "the greatest terror of my life" in preaching. One said she was glad she did not have to preach more often than she does. How often do folks leave Sunday Mass muttering "I could preach a better sermon than that!" The fact is, they cannot. Effective preaching takes considerable learning, practice, and skill. No one—ordained or lay—should be allowed at the ambo unless he or she is fully prepared.

3. *The Effect on the Spiritual Life of the Preacher.* Every preacher acknowledged that preaching affects both the listener and the preacher. As one said, "This wrestling [with Scripture] is an occasion for spiritual growth and helps to keep me from becoming complacent." This is a healthy understanding of the preacher's role. Another reflected that by struggling to make the gospel real in his own life, he came to understand the kinds of struggles that other parishioners endured. This sense of solidarity with the faithful is an important virtue for preachers to practice.

It is impossible to know how many parishes now experience lay preaching at Mass beyond the annual appeal for the bishop's collection or similar occasions. Similarly, there are no data now available on how many bishops have addressed the issue through norms or guidelines in their dioceses, or how many are aware of parishes experimenting with lay preaching at Mass and simply look the other way. My find-

ings suggest that the practice is probably more widespread than many would like to admit. They also suggest that the quality of the preaching being practiced by lay people is no better—and in some cases is worse—than that of the men ordained to do the job.

The U.S. bishops are nearing the end of their Ecclesial Lay Ministries Project, a three-year study of lay ministry, and are expected to issue guidelines for the training, certification, and hiring of lay pastoral staff. They are not expected to address the issue of lay preaching. Given the extent of the practice—and the potential problems—it may be time for the bishops as a whole to take up this thorny issue once again.

REFERENCES

- Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry. *Fulfilled in Your Hearing: The Homily in the Sunday Assembly*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1982.
- National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Guidelines for Lay Preaching," *Origins* (Dec. 1, 1988) 402-404.
- Huels, John M. "Lay Preaching," *Disputed Questions in the Liturgy Today*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1988.
- Provost, James H. "Lay Preaching and Canon Law in a Time of Transition," *Preaching and the Non-ordained: An Interdisciplinary Study*. ed. Nadine Foley. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1983.

Gregory Byrne, a recent graduate of Washington Theological Union, is coordinator of adult formation at the Cathedral of St. Matthew the Apostle in Washington, D.C.

SCRIPTURE
FOR
PREACHING

James P. Scullion, O.F.M.

Preaching the Gospel of Matthew

The First Sunday of Advent begins a new liturgical season and a new cycle of liturgical readings. The focus in Year A is on the Gospel of Matthew and the letters of Paul (1 Corinthians 1–4 [Sundays 2–8]; Romans [Sundays 9–24]; Philippians [Sundays 25–28]; 1 Thessalonians [Sundays 29–33]). The OT readings vary since they are chosen to correlate with the Gospel. The three-year lectionary cycle suggests that each Gospel is different, each has a particular focus or theological vision. The preacher can use this “Year of Matthew” to develop a deeper appreciation of Matthew’s literary and theological artistry. Here I would like to suggest some concrete steps to help the preacher prepare for the Year of Matthew and along the way to mention some important resources that are available.

STEP 1—READ THROUGH THE WHOLE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Before reading commentaries, articles, or books *about* Matthew, the preacher should read the whole Gospel since this is the inspired text, the Word of God. In this reading one should strive for a holistic view of the Gospel. Try to read it as if you knew little or nothing about Jesus, salvation, or the Church. What is the portrait that emerges? What is the conflict that is driving this narrative? Who are the characters, how would you describe them? What are the recurring themes (e.g., “righteousness,” 3:15; 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33; 21:32) or phrases (e.g., “this took place to fulfill . . .” 1:22; 2:15; 3:17; “Now when Jesus had finished . . .” 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). The lectionary cycle begins during Advent with various readings from the Gospel (Matt 24:37-44; 3:1-12; 11:2-11; 1:18-24) before settling down to a relatively continuous reading of the Gospel from the 2nd Sunday of the Year (4:12-23) to the 34th Sunday (25:31-46). A holistic reading will help the preacher to place these individual stories within the whole story of Matthew.

STEP 2—STUDY THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THIS GOSPEL

The interpretation of the weekly reading from Matthew requires that the text be placed within its proper historical and literary context. There are a number of excellent resources available that can guide the preachers in their self-study of this Gospel. An invaluable resource is Raymond Brown’s recently published *Introduction to the New Testament*

(1997). Brown studies the sources and compositional features of the Gospel, the question of authorship, the locale or community involved, and the date of writing. He guides and encourages the preacher to further study with a section on “Issues and Problems for Reflection” and a good bibliography (Brown: 203–24). Another very helpful book is Donald Senior’s recently revised *What Are They Saying About Matthew*. He provides a very good and clear survey of scholarly discussion on this Gospel.

In works such as Brown and Senior, one will discover that the first Gospel was probably not written by the apostle Matthew but by a Jewish Christian sometime in the 80s in Antioch of Syria. John Meier, *Antioch and Rome* (Brown and Meier, 1982), provides a wealth of information about Antioch and the establishment and growth of the Christian community there. This information helps us to see the Matthean community as a real flesh and blood community and thus to bridge the gap between our community and this community.

STEP 3—STUDY THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE GOSPEL

The study of the historical background is essential to protect us from interpreting a text in an anachronistic way. This historical study, however, can also make the text seem distant and irrelevant, written for another age and time. There is the need, therefore, to study the Gospel not only on a historical level but also on a social and literary level. The preacher is aided in this self-study by a number of resources. Bruce Malina provides a good and accessible overview of the social setting of the NT world and helps one to appreciate the values and identity markers in this Mediterranean society (Malina, 1993). Other books (Malina and Neyrey, 1988; Overman, 1990) apply this type of analysis to Matthew’s Gospel.

Historical research suggests that Matthew’s Jewish-Christian community has experienced the loss of their Temple (A.D. 70) and their exclusion from the synagogue (*ca.* A.D. 85). Social analysis gives us a deeper appreciation of what this loss and exclusion meant. It meant the loss of their identity markers which pushes the community into an identity crisis. This loss of identity markers is not something unique to Matthew’s community but it is something which teens, separated and divorced, and recently arrived immigrants also face. A social analysis of both Matthew’s community and our own will provide ways of actualizing these texts today.

STEP 4—STUDY THE NARRATIVE CONTEXT OF THE GOSPEL

The first evangelist is a careful author. A close reading and analysis of the text will lead to a deeper appreciation of his artistry. As we analyze the Sunday reading we should be careful to place it into its literary

context. For example in Matt 4:23 and 9:35 two phrases are almost identical. These verses describe Jesus going about and “teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness . . .” These two bookends or brackets provide the content of what is between them: Jesus *teaching* (5:1–7:29) and *curing* (8:1–9:34).

Attention to the repetition of words and phrases will help us to develop an appreciation for Matthew’s careful construction and artistry. Jack Dean Kingsbury is the Matthean scholar who has pioneered a narrative approach to this Gospel. His books will help the reader to develop his/her own skills using this type of analysis (Kingsbury, 1975, 1988). Such a narrative approach focuses on the Gospel as a story so the correlation or dialogue with the story of the community becomes easier and more direct.

STEP 5—GUIDED READING OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

The final step is to select some commentary to guide you through your reading of the Gospel for the year. The resources here vary in length and approach. Brown provides a good “mini-commentary” on the Gospel in his *Introduction* (Brown: 173–203). At the other extreme is the encyclopedic commentary of Allison and Davies in the International Critical Commentary Series (1988, 1991, 1998). Probably the most helpful for the preacher are the commentaries by Meier (1980), Harrington (1991), and Garland (1993). Meier’s commentary appears in the New Testament Message Series. His approach is a basic redactional critical study of the Gospel. Harrington’s commentary appears in the very well received *Sacra Pagina* series. His study places this Gospel into its literary and Jewish context. Finally, Garland’s commentary appears in the Reading the New Testament Series. His emphasis is not on a word-by-word analysis of the text but on the literary and theological development of the Gospel. Each commentary is very well done and reflects the plurality of methods employed in the study of the Gospel today.

REFERENCES

- Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. The Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1997.
- Brown, Raymond E. and John P. Meier. *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Christianity*. New York: Paulist Press, 1982.

- Davies, W. D. and D. C. Allison. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*. The International Critical Commentary. 3 vols. Edinburgh: Clark, 1988, 1991, 1998.
- Garland, David E. *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel*. New York: Crossroad, 1993.
- Harrington, Daniel J. *The Gospel of Matthew*. Sacra Pagina Series 1. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991.
- Kingsbury, Jack Dean. *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.
- _____. *Matthew As Story*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988.
- Malina, Bruce J. *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.
- Malina, Bruce J. and Jerome H. Neyrey. *Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew*. Sonoma, Calif.: Polebridge Press, 1988.
- Meier, John P. *Matthew*. New Testament Message 3. Wilmington: Glazier, 1980.
- Overman, J. Andrew. *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.
- Senior, Donald. *What Are They Saying About Matthew?* Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1996.

James P. Scullion, O.F.M., is assistant professor of Sacred Scripture at Washington Theological Union and a member of the editorial board of New Theology Review.

KEEPING
CURRENT

Scripture

Liturgy and Preaching

Systematic Theology

Church History

Cross-cultural Studies

Spirituality

Moral Theology

Pastoral Theology

James A. Wallace, C.Ss.R.

A Preacher's Dozen, or Help for Stoking the Homiletic Fires

Is there any group of preachers asked to preach more often than Catholic priests? Within any given week different homilies may be needed for one, even two Sunday Masses (especially if one of the Masses has a lot of children present), several weekday Masses (especially if it is Advent, Lent, or Easter season, or whenever else "a large congregation is present," *Introduction to the Lectionary for Mass*, #25), a baptism, wedding, possibly one or two wake services and funerals, a special occasion like an anniversary Mass or a civil holiday, perhaps a holy day of obligation. It is possible that a conscientious preacher may preach close to a dozen times within a week. How does one keep the homiletic fires burning? The companionship of other preachers helps. Even the voices of other preachers may provide some welcome encouragement. I would like to offer some suggestions in three areas of homiletic literature: works pertaining to motive, method, and models. I have come up with "a homilist's dozen," based on "a baker's dozen": twelve plus one, in case there is one you find insufficiently weighty.

MOTIVE FOR PREACHING:

Periodically it is worthwhile for a preacher to stop and ask, "What am I doing, or trying to do, when I preach?" Four books offer sound reflection by providing a vision of preaching. I think our motives for preaching are rooted in our vision of preaching. First, two recent books by Roman Catholic authors. Mary Catherine Hilker's *Naming Grace: Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination* (Continuum, 1997) considers preaching as an exercise of the "sacramental imagination." Preachers are called

to use their imaginations to “reconfigure reality by seeing it through an alternative lens, that is, a lens formed by the vision of the Scriptures and the rituals of Christian liturgy, which enables both preachers and the community to see the world through the prism of God’s promise, fully embodied and revealed in Jesus” (188). Hilkert reminds preachers that grace is to be discovered in everyday experience by looking at life through the lens of a biblical awareness that is self-critical first of all, and is unafraid to face human injustice wherever it is found, while fulfilling the essential task of retelling the story of Jesus as our story.

Another work that restores the focus of what Catholic preaching is about is Robert P. Waznak’s *An Introduction to the Homily* (The Liturgical Press, 1998). Waznak provides preachers with a vision rich in possibilities—the homilist seen as herald, teacher, witness, and interpreter. Yet while preaching has within it the potential to meet different needs at different times in the life of the community, the author picks up on the emphasis on preaching first articulated in the USCC-NCCB document, *Fulfilled In Your Hearing, The Homily in the Sunday Assembly* (1982), seeing the homily as offering a biblical interpretation of human existence which enables a community to give thanks and praise. Waznak’s treatment of the values and limitations of the current Lectionary is especially important for preachers who want to be faithful to the gospel message.

Two other books provide insight into this primary work of pastoral ministry: Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann’s *Cadences of Home, Preaching among the Exiles* (Westminster/John Knox, 1997) and Charles Bartow’s *God’s Human Speech, A Practical Theology of Proclamation* (Eerdmans, 1997). Brueggemann uses the biblical experience of exile as a “rich and supple” metaphor for the experience of today’s listeners, living in an age when our alliance with the dominant culture has been broken and feeling lost in a wilderness of conflicting world views and values. Brueggemann believes this metaphor “mediates our experience to us in fresh ways and gives access to spiritual resources in equally fresh ways” (11). Preaching, then, becomes a way to bring them to their spiritual home, offering an alternative script that provides a “resonance between dense text and dense life” (75). Exile once again becomes the locus of a new beginning. In a different key, Bartow’s work reminds preachers of the power of the spoken word, that both the reading of the scriptures and their proclamation are a way of “turning ink into blood,” embodying the living Word and en-fleshing it through human words, inflections, intonations, and all else that facilitates “God’s human speech.” This author is especially good for bringing together the insights of current communication theorists, both homiletic and secular, with the contribution of the diverse theologies of preaching rooted in the Reformed tradition.

METHOD

Reviewing your method of preparation can be helpful. Four books come to mind. Two older ones worth looking at are New Testament scholar Gerard S. Sloyan's *Worshipful Preaching* (Fortress, 1980) and homiletician Thomas G. Long's *The Witness of Preaching* (Westminster/John Knox, 1989). Sloyan's short work is rich in practical advice, gems of homiletic wisdom that range from the paradoxical "the chief hazard to effective preaching is having a gift with words" (20) to the very blunt directive, "If a script is your enemy, do not allow it to get near the pulpit. But if there never was a script, do not let yourself near the pulpit" (23). All of Sloyan's suggestions are at the service of liturgical preaching that incorporates hearers into the whole life of the people Israel and into the mystery of Christ in whom we have been immersed by baptism. Thomas Long's work comes from the perspective of the preacher as a witness to the truth of God's Word. The community goes to the Scriptures by means of the preacher who bears their questions and concerns, yet also comes with an openness to being surprised by God's claim. The preacher then witnesses to what has been seen and heard. Especially helpful are the author's two chapters on "Biblical Exegesis for Preaching," and "The Focus and Function of the Sermon," the latter demanding that the preachers ask themselves *what* exactly they want to say and *why*. Many congregations would be grateful for the clarity this alone can bring to a preacher's message.

Two recent books worth investigating are Alvin C. Rueter's *Making Good Preaching Better, A Step-by-Step Guide to Scripture-Based, People-Centered Preaching* (The Liturgical Press, 1997) and Eugene L. Lowry's *The Sermon, Dancing the Edge of Mystery* (Abingdon, 1997). Rueter's book provides exactly what the title promises: a solid homiletical "examination of conscience" in terms of such basic concerns as keeping a sermon cohesive, visual, oral, textual, and *Christian* (!). His voice is supportive; his concern for assisting preachers, both new and experienced, is evident in the tone of his work. Eugene Lowry continues to refine the idea of a sermon having a *plot*, his contribution to what has been called the "new homiletics," an approach to preaching rooted more in induction than deduction, more in story and image than in concept and abstraction, more in "moves" than in "points." Lowry's plot involves a sermon's movement in which ideas, images, or story are arranged in such a way that there is "a strategic delay of the preacher's meaning." Just as a good plot involves suspense and surprise, Lowry's sermon plot invites preachers to develop sermons that promise good news in a way that proceeds from conflict and complication to a sudden shift into an empowering proclamation of the gospel. Lowry's final chapter offers ten steps for preparing such a sermon. While I do not believe there is any *one* best structure, Lowry's has

much to recommend it in a culture like ours that has been so conditioned by the media to narrative movement.

MODELS

St. Augustine observed that while some people learn to speak well by following the rules of good rhetoric, more learn by studying good models. Allow me to present a final group of four. Two collections of homilies by Roman Catholic preachers can be studied to advantage. Walter J. Burghardt's latest collection, *Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters, Biblical Justice Homilies throughout the Year* (Paulist, 1998) again shows the author's work as a unique combination of scholarship, structure, and synergy. Though his structure only varies between a three-point homily and a two-point homily, there is more evidence of study and research in one Burghardt homily than can be found in all the homilies given on any Sunday in many parishes. However, while I learned a great deal from those on the various saints, I wondered why these made so little, if any, use of the Scriptures chosen.

While Burghardt provides for preachers the model of the orator-preacher, Robert P. Waznak gives us the voice of the poet-preacher in *Like Fresh Bread, Sunday Homilies in the Parish* (Paulist, 1993). Waznak's work here offers the *sound* of preaching, with the homilies written in thought phrases, as one would speak. His ability to weave together images from daily life and those of the biblical texts results in cogent flashes of revelation. For effective preaching on Old Testament texts, see Walter Brueggemann's *The Threat of Life, Sermons on Pain, Power and Weakness* (Fortress, 1996). His work is a needed reminder for Catholic preachers of the power of the Old Testament to speak to contemporary situations and of the abiding efficacy of expository preaching. And, finally, there is the most recent work of the poet-essayist Kathleen Norris, *Amazing Grace, A Vocabulary of Faith* (Riverhead, 1998). By her wrestling with the traditional theological vocabulary of the Christian tradition—words like salvation, incarnation, repentance, to name a few—Norris models for preachers the importance of relating the old words to the depths of human experience, to speak to our longings, fears, and hopes. Beautiful work here.

AND ONE FOR GOOD MEASURE . . .

A novel: *Quarantine* by Jim Crace (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998). This fascinating book is an imaginative retelling of the forty days Jesus spent in the desert, only he is not the only human present, four others are out there nearby—three men and a woman—fasting and praying, and another two, abandoned by their caravan because of a sudden, life-threatening illness. The interaction between these figures, and the form Satan takes for Jesus makes this a provocative tale that retains a

sense of mystery and awe often sacrificed in contemporary retellings of biblical stories—and in much contemporary preaching. A haunting book that lingers in the memory, as an effective homily might.

James A. Wallace, C.Ss.R., is the author of Imaginal Preaching, An Archetypal Perspective (Paulist, 1995) and associate professor of preaching at Washington Theological Union.

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

New Theology Review (Publication No. 0896-4297) is published quarterly by The Liturgical Press, Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota 56321. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, and financial manager are: *Publisher:* The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota; *Editors:* Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M., and Robert P. Waznak, S.S., Washington Theological Union, Washington, D.C.; *Financial manager:* Gerald K. Furst, Saint Cloud, Minnesota. The owner is The Order of Saint Benedict, Inc., Collegeville, Minnesota. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication during the preceding twelve months was 2,550.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Priestly Office: A Theological Reflection. By Avery Dulles, S.J. New York: Paulist Press, 1997. Pages, viii + 81. \$7.95.

Avery Dulles's love of the priesthood shines through on each page of this short book. For his loving dedication and for the book's service to the priesthood today, we are once again in debt to this outstanding theologian. Still, this is not a book which intends to add much that is novel to the discussion on ordained ministry. Its theological focus continues to be what Dulles has defended now for several years—the representative character of the priesthood or the priest as a public agent of Christ and the Church.

The five chapters represent the author's lectures on the priesthood at the National Institute for Clergy Formation held at Seton Hall University in the summer of 1996. Chapter 1 deals with the place of the priest in the Church and the special context of that question in the light of current debates about the priesthood. Dulles gives a fair treatment of what he calls "the two kinds of priesthood"—common and ministerial—both rooted in Christ's own priesthood. However, he tends to emphasize the difference between them rather than their being mutually ordered toward one another, a point article 10 of *Lumen gentium* equally stresses. This emphasis permits Dulles to develop his representational understanding of the ordained priesthood. "The ministerial priesthood involves a public representational function rather than a personal giftedness." On the one hand this moves consideration of the ministerial priesthood away from exclusively cultic actions to include preaching and pastoral activities, but it seems to exclude the rest of the Church from publicly representing Christ to each other and to the world. Here, Dulles identifies his theology of the ordained priesthood with the famous definition of the priest given by Archbishop Pilarczyk in 1990: the priest is a "representative and agent of Christ, the head of the Church, and therefore . . . [a] representative and agent of the Church community before God and the world."

In Chapter 2 Dulles gives an excellent overview of magisterial and theological opinion on the priest as minister of the Word of God. By placing the chapter in this position, Dulles clearly communicates the centrality of this activity of the priest. This is an important contribution since Catholics continue to need to be reminded of the importance of the Word in their personal and communal faith life. It does not hurt either to inform our brothers and sisters in the Christian faith of our commitment as Catholics to God's life-giving and liberating Word.

Chapter 3 picks up on the priestly ministry of worship. It is here that the term "agent" in Dulles's representational definition of the priest emerges with clarity. Through ordination the priest receives a "double empowerment." Christ and the Church act through him in a unique way. The sacrament of Orders confers this "power" and its twofold dimension—Christological and ecclesial. This power comes to particular expression in the sacraments of

penance and the Eucharist in which the priest clearly acts for the Church “in the person of Christ.” For Dulles, the true heart of priestly ministry is found in sacramental and liturgical activity which hold “a preeminent and indispensable place in priestly ministry” and for this reason “give a properly priestly tone” to all the other activities of ordained ministry. There can be no doubt that to Dulles the cultic, i.e., sacramental, liturgical, and especially the eucharistic, activity of the priest is the very center and summit of priestly ministry.

Chapter 4 develops the pastoral activity of the priest by reporting on the thought of Vatican II and important contemporary theologians. Dulles’s earlier distinction between “office,” i.e., the ministerial priesthood as representational, and “charism,” i.e., the ministry of all the faithful, comes home to roost at this point. To his credit, Dulles insists in this context on the servant character of the exercise of such priestly power, and there is much wisdom in his observations. However, he can communicate the need for service and priestly charisms only at the level of exhortation. In the end, Dulles’s representational theology of the priesthood is fateful to the two mutually ordered expressions of the priestliness of the People of God: “In delegating responsibility he [the priest] will have to let others exercise some degree of authority, but the unity of the Church requires that ultimate authority, under God, rests in the pope, the bishops, and the pastors appointed by them.” To Dulles’s credit, he stresses the evangelical or missionary character of all pastoral activity directed not just at the flock within the fold, but to society in general and its expressions of cultural values. Highly commendable, too, are Dulles’s words on the ecumenical ministry of priests.

Dulles concludes with a chapter on priestly discipleship. The author appears to achieve a better synthesis of the personal and the public or representational in this chapter. Priestly holiness is apostolic holiness, yet not at the expense of a deep relationship between the priest and Christ. Here Dulles clearly rises above dichotomous thinking to a deeper level of synthetic or unified thought. With regard to priestly spirituality, Dulles stresses prayer, the Eucharist, and the voluntariness of discipleship lived out in poverty, obedience, and celibacy as valid expressions for our day of the radicalism of the gospel message. Nevertheless, in this chapter Dulles freely makes one-sided statements regarding North American culture as too secular, too activist, and too indulgent for it to be a fruitful field for priestly vocations. This is too simple an explanation for so complex a social reality.

I have attempted to show how Dulles’s theology of priestly representation fails at many critical points in his presentation. This does not mean that much of what he says is without merit and spiritual sustenance for today’s priest. There is a great deal to be learned from reading this book. Still, Dulles’ playing off of ontological versus functional views and office versus charism seriously limits the usefulness of his argument.

I would like to share a brief reflection on Dulles’s tendency to contrast the ontological and the functional modes of thinking about the priest. Even formerly, the dogmatic tract on Christ distinguished two moments of this mystery, viz., the christological/ontological/personal and the soteriological/functional/social. The objection in the past was to their separation, not to the valid insights each brought to the underlying mystery. In an analogous way, I think we can

see the priority of the soteriological/functional today without attributing any lack to the christological/personal element. The mystery is in the relationship of these two dimensions and not in their being considered dichotomously. In one era, priority will be given the personal/ontological; in another, the social/functional. Both approaches are correct so long as we keep them in a tense relationship to each other. Can we not rethink the ministerial priesthood in an analogous way, which today will tend to stress the functional dimension, not at the expense of the personal/ontological, but in complementarity to it? If we do so, the way we approach specific problems of ministry in the Church, e.g., the law of clerical celibacy, will receive notably different answers.

What might have been the result if Dulles had invoked his prestige as a theologian of world rank to courageously pose the truly vexing questions of ordained ministry? The book would be less popular, less devotionally inspiring perhaps, but of inestimable service to the priesthood in the long run. The real issues, regretfully, are simply avoided and hence postponed for another day.

*John J. Burkhard, O.F.M. Conv.
Washington Theological Union*

Spirituality and Morality: Integrating Prayer and Action. Edited by Dennis Billy, C.Ss.R., and Donna Lynn Orsuto. New York: Paulist Press, 1996. Pages, 168. \$14.95.

There is renewed interest by moral theologians to seek the spiritual roots of virtue and right behavior. This interest appears at a time when moral theologians are exhausted over the thirty-year dialogue on moral methodology and the role of ecclesial authority in relation to the moral theologian. This book, along with Mark O'Keefe's *Becoming Good, Becoming Holy* (Paulist, 1995), stands within the initial collection of what appears to be a publishing trend in the discipline. Popularly this trend can be traced back to Michael Duffey's book, *Be Blessed In What You Do* (Paulist, 1988). Theologically it can be traced to the seminal thought of Bernard Häring and Enda McDonagh whose writings on prayer and ethics heralded this renewed interest immediately prior to and after the Second Vatican Council. Other theologians such as James Keenan have taken up explicit interest in this conversation with essays that have appeared in scholarly journals.

In this current work the finest essay is "The Unfolding of a Tradition" by Dennis Billy. In it he surveys the history of how morality and spirituality have related to each other during various periods of Church history. Billy lays out "a valuable touchstone or point of departure from which further reflection on the relationship between spirituality and morality . . . can take place" (16). With the demise of absolute trust in reason by way of deconstructionism, Billy sees an opportunity within our current culture to retrieve discarded elements of theology and spirituality, and seek a reintegration of the moral and the spiritual (24). There now appears a chance to look again at prayer, mysticism, devotion, and worship as experiences of the fullness of human presence before

the divine in our search for what is good. Billy points out that future research in the area of spirituality and morality may include exploring how God and person are in relationship, the idea of rationality, saints and virtue, prayer, liturgy, natural law, and other themes. Here he outlines these perennial topics that, when reflected upon, serve to unify the human search for what is good in the sight of God. This short but dense essay will bear fruit for years to come for those who study the interaction between the moral and the spiritual.

Another highlight of *Spirituality and Morality* is Brian Johnstone's essay on conversion. Johnstone has contextualized the relationship between the moral and the spiritual in the concrete experience of people's real lives. He utilizes the conversions of Edith Stein and Bartolome de Las Casas as illustrative of how the spiritual and moral interpenetrate in conversion from sin and in turning toward deeper faith in God. Employing the thought of Bernard Lonergan as a framework for understanding conversion, Johnstone encourages using the lives of the saints as sources for theological reflection. This kind of study will become one of the most fruitful avenues by which moral theology can approach what it shares with spirituality. Within the converted person is the "unified experience" that both moral theology and spirituality share (45). For the moralist a key question becomes, "What are the normative implications of conversion?" Johnstone admits and outlines in good detail the limits of a spiritually-imbued morality in that there are no easy answers to moral dilemmas simply because one has religious vision. He holds that both morality and spirituality must be present, however, in a "living tradition" that guides one into the transcendent even while embracing the contingencies of history. This essay underscores the vitality that can come to moral theology if it attends to reflection upon the lives of those saints the Church lifts up as good and holy. And, Johnstone's essay nicely complements Donna Orsuto's contribution, "The Saint as Moral Paradigm."

Kevin O'Neil's essay on "Forming Right Relationships" is another worthy contribution to note. He sketches a summary of psychological and moral development theory in order to underscore the relational identity of the human person. Building on the work of Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine, O'Neil contextualizes right relationships under the rubric of friendship. "True friendship orients a person toward the good embodied in another human being. . . . Far from pulling people away from human friendship, friendship with God graces human beings to live virtuous lives" (110).

Other highlights in the text are the essays by Christopher O'Donnell and Jon Michael Joncas on prayer and ethics. The weakness of this collection, if there is one, is the uneven feel of the eight essays. They range from the more scholarly (Billy) to the more popular (Orsuto). The text would work well as a collateral book within a fundamental moral class or perhaps in an adult education group; I am using it in a seminar on ethics and spirituality along with other material. It is very readable. I hope that moralists will take Billy's suggested areas for further research seriously and continue this invigorating conversation between moral theology and spirituality.

James Keating
Pontifical College Josephinum

Deeply Woven Roots: Improving the Quality of Life in Your Community.

By Gary Gunderson. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1997. Pages, xv + 135. Paper, \$15.00.

Recently, in the face of declining public will to maintain government sponsored services for the poor, many are calling upon churches to shore up various parts of the fraying social safety net. At the same time, public interest in the relationship between healing and spirituality is growing. The author of this book is a devout Baptist minister who has been an active member of a very progressive congregation for many years. He is currently the director of operations for the Interfaith Health Program of the Carter Center in Atlanta. He has substantial experience helping local congregations to implement a wide variety of health projects. However, despite the timeliness of the topic and experience of the author, this book falls somewhat short of its promise.

The book has a straightforward structure. After an introductory chapter, Gunderson devotes eight successive chapters to what he identifies as the eight major strengths of local congregations: their ability to accompany individuals (especially the alienated); to foster connections; to convene people; to connect individuals and institutions; to provide sanctuary; to give blessing; "to story"; to pray; and to endure.

Gunderson makes some good points. He boldly asserts that "the root health problem is alienation and meaninglessness" (p. 4). He gives an insightful critique of the individualism that characterizes much of the contemporary interest in spirituality and health. He notes the magnitude of the crisis in religion and health care in America. Politicians are asserting that more aspects of health care for the poor should be taken over by churches in an era when economic pressures will force the sale or closing of nearly half of the religiously affiliated hospitals in the U.S.A. over the next ten years. Gunderson has some sensible advice for the leaders of congregations interested in grass-roots collaborations. For instance, he suggests an exercise in which a congregation might "map" its many connections with other institutions, looking for both strengths and omissions. And for those unaware of the phenomenon, Gunderson gives a good, brief description of the parish nursing movement.

But these important points are often lost in a sea of jargon and vagueness. The noun, "story," for instance, is turned into a verb. Some sentences are so full of jargon that they barely make sense. For example, he writes, "What we find is that long before systematic analysis congeals and negotiated unity emerges, communities can move together around problems and opportunities if people are nurtured in their faith to look for God amid the emerging connections" (p. 54).

Strikingly, although listed in the Fortress Press "Religion/Health Care" series, the book contains only occasional references to preventive care and public health. Some significant issues for the churches in health care are simply overlooked. For example, no attention is paid to the fact that it seems almost impossible for grassroots volunteer organizations of laypersons to replace the health-care services that are being systematically stripped from the poor in this country. Congregations can effectively meet the needs of the poor for food, clothing, and shelter through relatively unskilled, labor-intensive volunteer

activities. Congregations can even hold health fairs. But treating schizophrenia, providing magnetic resonance imaging scans, and performing appendectomies seem to be quite different matters.

The book is neither a theoretical discourse, nor a simple, how-to handbook. It is neither a work of spirituality, nor of theology, nor of biography, nor even a description of the health-related projects of the Carter Center. It is much more a book of general advice about running a certain style of "activist" congregation that gives occasional examples of health related projects carried out by such congregations.

Overall, I was quite disappointed, especially because I suspect that the author has lots more to say. He is obviously a thoughtful, deeply committed Christian with a wealth of experience to share. But little of that comes through in this book. My advice to pastors and lay leaders interested in health projects would be to give the author a call at the Carter Center (404-614-3757), or send him an e-mail (ggunder@emory.edu), or check out the web page for the Interfaith Health Program (www.ihpnet.org), or sign up for their discussion group (MAJORDOMO@synasoft.com—typing in subscribe ihp-net <your e-mail address>). Asking direct questions, getting started on a health project through a local parish, and doing the necessary networking are what the author urges anyway.

Daniel P. Sulmasy, O.F.M.
Georgetown University Medical Center, Washington, D.C.

A Window to the Divine: Creation Theology. By Zachary Hayes, O.F.M., Quincy, Ill.: Franciscan Press, 1997. Pages, 100. Paper, \$9.95.

In his book *A Window to the Divine: Creation Theology*, Zachary Hayes offers a clear, insightful analysis on the religion-science dialogue with a view to retrieving an authentic Christian and christocentric creation theology. The author states in his preface that it is possible for contemporary believers to sense a remarkably rich communication of the divine mystery precisely through the insights of science (x). This belief is the basis of an attempt to formulate a doctrine of creation based on the synthesis of religion and science.

A revision of his original *What Are They Saying About Creation?* Hayes's present work attempts a sketch of what a religion-science synthesis might look like at the present time. He admits that his personal roots in the tradition of Franciscan theology influence his thought. While the roots are obvious, they are not imposing, as Hayes skillfully weaves creation and Christocentricity into an evolutionary dense and complex universe. He argues that this is the route we must take if we are to address the environmental issues that plague human society at the present time (xi).

The structure of the book is straightforward. Beginning with a discussion of science and religion as disciplines, Hayes proceeds to examine the traditional basis of the creation doctrine based on Scripture and the Fathers of the Church. He then attempts a restructuring of this doctrine focusing on the work of R. Pendergast. The subsequent section on creation and evolution offers a lucid

and succinct discussion of the pending problems and questions. Typical of his theological acumen, Hayes enters into the scientific arena without losing sight of the Christian tradition. He discusses, for example, the question of monogenism versus polygenism highlighting the fact that the sinful condition of humanity is an historical state rather than an essential condition (51). He clears the ground on original sin by examining the Genesis texts in light of evolutionary biology and then sets out to identify major shifts in Christian thinking on this doctrine. Hayes appropriates Franciscan christocentricity not only to articulate a new shape for the doctrine of creation but also to reformulate the doctrine of sin through efforts dealing with evolutionary thought patterns.

Although christocentricity appears throughout the text, it is in the final synthesis that it takes on a significant role. Hayes elucidates the meaning of cosmic christocentricity indicating that God creates towards an end, and that end embodied in Christ points to a Christified world (90). Referring to the work of P. Teilhard de Chardin, he states that what appears to the sciences as a process of cosmogenesis is seen from the perspective of faith to be a process of Christogenesis. The universe is bound in a mystery of love, the perfection of which is found in Christ.

Although the book on the whole is illuminating, I found the final synthesis to be the most rewarding. It is here that Hayes's deep roots in the Franciscan tradition nurture the entire discussion on creation in a scientific world. He reformulates the doctrine of sin not as a "mere infringement of a law extrinsic to our nature but as a failure to realize the potentiality of our nature itself" (93). He describes humanity as a history of response to the lure of God's love, and the significance of Christ as the call to universal community.

Hayes' short but insightful book draws the reader into the complex worlds of religion and science, exploring the question of creation in a comprehensive manner. It is a helpful text for any course on religion and science. He concludes that both disciplines must face the mystery that is our world and the even greater mystery of God to which the world points. Once again this remarkable scholar has produced a remarkable book. Zachary Hayes continues to lead us into the heart of the mystery.

Ilia Delio, O.S.F.
Washington Theological Union

Bioethics: A Primer for Christians. By Gilbert Meilaender. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996. Pages, 120. \$10.00.

Stewards of Life: Bioethics and Pastoral Care. By Sondra Ely Wheeler. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996. Pages, 126. \$12.95.

These books have much in common. Both are directed to the general reader rather than the professional ethicist. Both discuss bioethics from a self-consciously Christian perspective. Both explain this perspective in terms of Christian vision. Yet, they are quite different books in outlook. In fact, each points to the shortcomings of the other.

The format of Meilaender's book is more traditional, and because of this the book is possibly more accessible. After a short description of Christian vision, understood partly as a dialectic between human freedom and finitude, he discusses a variety of bioethical issues: assisted reproduction, abortion, genetic screening, euthanasia, and assisted suicide, refusal of treatment, substituted judgment, organ donation, and human experimentation. Although the author calls the book a "primer," it is more polemical than descriptive. He says at the outset that, in an effort to secure public consensus, bioethics has developed into a "lowest-common-denominator ethic" (x). As an antidote, he proposes his ethics based upon Christian vision. He adds, however, that "an ethics shaped by Christian vision will, in its general form, be what moralists term 'deontological,'" an ethics of duty (5).

Working from this presupposition, Meilaender voices traditional questions regarding the definition of death, end of life decisions, abortion, and methods of assisted reproduction. In doing so, he offers thought-provoking turns of phrase, challenging certain general assumptions. He discusses the moral meaning of the biological bond between parent and child, suggests that prenatal diagnosis can already be an act of separation of mother from unborn child, and seeks to reformulate the discussion of terminal illness into one of "irretrievable dying."

The work, however, rests on a profound suspicion regarding both medical progress and the direction of ethical reflection on this progress. His Christian vision has little tolerance for gray areas. His strong deontological outlook leads rather to a series of proscriptions, sometimes more rhetorical than the result of argument, and often introduced by phrases such as "Christians do not" or "Christians should have little sympathy for."

There are also some specific difficulties with the book. Comments he makes in his section on genetics are wrong or at least confusing (e.g., "We get a copy of each of our genes from both our mother and our father. Usually both copies of a gene *are the same*" [40, my emphasis]). Similarly, his discussion of the traditional distinction between ordinary and extraordinary means does not discuss the criteria upon which the distinction was based. Fearing a movement toward euthanasia, he simply states that for Christians it is not wise to make use of a living will (85), but he does not offer any alternative, saying nothing at all, for example, about the durable power of attorney for health care. There are also some surprises in the book. Given his general deontological outlook, one might not expect the way in which he treats truth-telling or the exceptions he allows when discussing abortion.

The format which Wheeler employs is engaging, but it limits her endeavor. In a manner similar to that of Meilaender, she begins with a discussion of the Christian vision. She then takes four principles as the core values of contemporary bioethics—autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice—and shows how the discipline views the principle and how Christian vision adds to and at times criticizes the point made by ethics. This is followed by four case studies and a final chapter suggesting ways in which pastors may be of assistance to hospitalized patients and their families "as they reclaim their own experience from the efficient alienness of the hospital" (94).

The major section of the book is devoted to a dialogue between the principles of bioethics and Christian vision. Discussing each of the four principles, she follows a method of critical correlation, allowing both the discipline of bioethics and Christian vision to clarify and to challenge each other. This method allows her to show the complexity of the concepts and to respond to them in a manner that engages human experience, a way that is cut off from Meilaender.

The major difficulty of the book, however, as an introduction for the non-specialist is that there is no systematic treatment of the issues themselves. The chapter on principles only addresses issues in a rather summary fashion and not with the depth which one would have wished. In the lengthier treatment of cases, all the cases chosen deal broadly with the area of death and dying. One would have expected a more diverse choice of material here.

The book's final chapter tries to engage pastors, showing their importance for patients and their families who find themselves in the hospital. Wheeler talks of such ministry in terms of a ministry of presence, that of interpreter, and finally as witness to the gospel. This final chapter is engaging, but does not seem to fit with the rest of the work.

*Thomas A. Nairn, O.F.M.
Catholic Theological Union*

The Archaeology of Early Christianity: A History. By William H.C. Frend. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. Pages, 412. Cloth, \$39.00.

As a field of study, archaeology is a little more than one-hundred years old. The various sub-disciplines of archaeology, e.g., biblical, classical, early Christian, New World, have undergone remarkable developments in this relatively short period. The story of this discipline's growth is as important and engaging as the description of finds made during excavations. W.H.C. Frend, a leading church historian, has done a remarkable job in telling the story of the role of archaeology in illuminating early Christianity.

Unfortunately, the popular interest in "the secrets of the past" that archaeology supposedly has uncovered has led to a spate of books that are better examples of sensationalism than scholarship. This is not one of them. Frend has written a serious book that will be appreciated by his colleagues in church history. The author's style is absorbing enough to engage a more general audience, though the reader should have more than a passing acquaintance with early church history.

Frend sets the scene with chapters on the interest shown in the material culture of early Christianity during the Byzantine period and the Renaissance. A chapter on the Napoleonic period shows how France's military adventures in Egypt became an opportunity to rediscover and explore the pharonic culture. Later European archaeologists came to North Africa to reconstruct the Christian culture of the region before the coming of Islam. Unfortunately, the zeal for finds, especially inscriptions, was not accompanied by a scientifically

developed method of excavation. The result was a significant and permanent loss of important archaeological data.

Ideological concerns—both religious and political—also harmed the archaeological enterprise. Frend shows how scholarship did not escape the rivalries and antipathies of contending European powers and the apologetic concerns of Catholic scholars. It was not until the middle of the twentieth century that advances in archaeological technique began to lessen the influence of ideology and change archaeology of early Christianity from a form of Catholic apologetic to a genuinely scientific discipline.

Frend sees two principal contributions that archaeology has made to the study of Christian origins. First, excavation has shed light on the transitional periods in the history of the early Church: the third, fifth, and seventh centuries. Second, archaeology has allowed non-orthodox movements to speak for themselves. Texts from these movements were often systematically destroyed in antiquity and the positions taken by adherents of these movements were often caricatured by orthodox theologians.

The author points out some problems faced by archaeologists of early Christianity. First, there are tensions with some classical archaeologists who hold that believers cannot be objective in their analyses. Second, the sheer volume of material makes it difficult for any one person to have this material under control. Thousands of sites in Syria-Palestine, Israel, Europe, North Africa, Turkey, and Greece have yielded an enormous amount of material that still needs careful study and interpretation. Third, the population growth has threatened the integrity of ancient sites. Fourth, what Frend calls the “academic industry” has not always led to sound judgments.

The task that Frend set out for himself is daunting. Because he covers the work of so many scholars, it is possible to argue about his treatment of some. For example, to dismiss the work of Bellarmino Bagatti, O.F.M., on Jewish Christianity in one sentence and without even mentioning his name is regrettable. Still, the book is a notable achievement for its scholarship, its comprehensiveness and its forthrightness. Every student of early church history should become familiar with it.

Leslie J. Hoppe, O.F.M.
Catholic Theological Union

Let Ministry Teach: A Guide to Theological Reflection. By Robert L. Kinast. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996. Pages, xiv + 186. \$14.95.

Let Ministry Teach by Robert Kinast synthesizes his seventeen years of work exploring the meaning of theological reflection. The book is a manual outlining and exploring his orientation toward methodology for theological reflection. The book is among a number of recent publications seeking to explore and summarize the nature and process of this important component of contemporary pastoral ministry. The book is written in a non-technical way and is

intended primarily for those who are engaged in theological reflection and those who lead theological reflection groups.

The introduction establishes a simple goal—to “explain what the ‘mysterious animal’ of theological reflection is all about” (vii). The author begins with a definition of theological reflection, summarizes the process to be developed throughout the book and explores the origins and history of theological reflection. It is clear from the outset that the central focus of Kinast’s theological reflection methodology is the discovery of God’s presence in personal and/or communal (group) experience.

The chapters of the book develop common themes found in many contemporary theological reflection methodologies: selecting and describing an experience, entering an experience, learning from an experience and enacting the learning. The seven chapters build one on the other, providing a comprehensive and developmental exploration of Kinast’s definition of theological reflection, his methodology, and the philosophical grounding for his approach. Each chapter explores a fundamental step in theological reflection.

Generally, each chapter leads the reader through a narrative series of ministerial events that form the basis for subsequent theological reflection and commentary. Often a specific event is used as a springboard for a detailed discussion of a more “mechanical” component of the reflection process, e.g., “Instruments for Presenting Experience” (verbatim, case study, critical incident, role play, interview, and journal) or “Clues Along the Way” (linguistic images, physical objects, and spontaneous gestures). The author provides a commentary on and critique of the narrated experience in light of the chapter’s specific theme. Kinast then provides a chapter summary in a section titled “Particular Questions and Suggestions.” These sections are designed for those who organize and conduct theological reflection groups. They provide a concise summary of the chapter’s key points and suggest helpful focusing questions for each point. The chapters end with a statement of “Theological Background” grounding the theological reflection process Kinast presents in process philosophy, particularly that of Alfred North Whitehead.

The outline and goal of the book are concise. The overall outline of Kinast’s methodology is most clearly articulated through the “Practical Suggestions and Questions” sections of each chapter.

At times the reader may get lost in the multiple narrative descriptions and the subsequent development of the more “mechanical” components of the process in relation to the commentary Kinast offers. The reader may wonder exactly where the discussion is leading. The question of developing the philosophical foundations for theological reflection is a difficult one. Kinast attempts to do so by using process philosophy. While his attempt is laudable, it seems somewhat forced at times and in need of further development and refinement.

The bibliography Kinast offers at the end of this work, while brief, is very comprehensive. It provides the reader with many directions for future study.

*Louis T. Brusatti, C.M.
University of St. Thomas, Houston*

Who's in Charge? Leadership Skills for Clergy and Others in Ministry. By James E. Harvey. Chicago: Loyola Press, 1996. Pages, xiv + 141. \$13.95.

Depending upon the operative ecclesiology of the time, various and sometimes conflicting models of priesthood vie for pride of place. In a top-down hierarchical understanding of Church, the priest is the father figure who dispenses guidance and direction for proper ways of spiritual and moral living. In a perception of Church as servant of its members and the world, the priest provides for the constant care and well-being of any in need. In a Church where worship and the celebration of sacraments are primary, the priest directs and unites the assembly's praise offered to God and mediates God's presence. And the list is nearly endless. Clearly there is some overlapping of ideas in these portraits and somewhere in each of these simplified sketches is one view or other of an essential quality which is often overlooked—leadership.

While leadership skills are compatible with a variety of ecclesiologies and visions of priesthood, Harvey is not content on accepting simple compatibility. In *Who's in Charge?*, Harvey's approach to leadership advocates a renewed sense of ecclesiology and vision of priesthood. Leadership is neither controlling and rigid—drivership (xi, 2), nor is it lifeless and without risk—custodial care (1, 119). These two approaches may have been successful in times past, but they lack the vision and creativity Harvey suggests is necessary for a "*living* organization in an ever-changing environment" (1). Leadership is "the art of influencing the actions of others in such a way as to gain their respect, confidence, and loyal, wholehearted cooperation in accomplishing an established goal" (1–2). Earnest implementation of Harvey's suggestions will result in higher levels of competence and leadership skills which can radically transform our experience of Church.

Priests are leaders and they must be trained in management skills. Seminarians are taught how to celebrate the sacraments, how to formulate homilies, how to prepare couples for marriages, etc. Yet rarely, if ever, do seminarians receive leadership training. This book is an excellent practical guide to effective leadership skills in ministry. A place should be made for this book in the curriculum of every seminary. Also, the seasoned pastor open to learning or perfecting skills of managing people and paper will find this book challenging and affirming. This book is essential reading for clergy who wish their ministry to be viable into the next century. The primary audience for this book is ordained presbyters, and equally applicable to deacons and bishops. In keeping with his vision of Church, Harvey also addresses a secondary audience—any lay person in a position of ministerial authority. Directors of music, religious education, youth and young adult ministers, in short, all staff members in positions of leadership, can benefit from reviewing the skills discussed in this book.

The main thrust of the book is developed in ten chapters. One by one Harvey outlines personal qualities of leaders (including appearance, decisiveness, enthusiasm, knowledge, and tact), principles of leadership (such as know yourself and seek improvement, train your people as a team, make sound and timely decisions), rules of leadership (including delegate, unity of command, solve problems at the lowest possible level), and leadership tasks (such as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, budgeting, and evaluating). Harvey

also offers concise chapters on supervision, managing your time and managing others, developing organizational charts, creating memos, policy statements and job descriptions, how to run different types of meetings, and tips on how to teach. His presentation is sprinkled with case histories, which are often entertaining and humorous only because they are examples of such unhealthy rectory living. All of his anecdotes are factual and this adds credibility and a sense of urgency to Harvey's plea for leadership training.

In a final eleventh chapter, Harvey changes his topic from *how* a leader should lead, to *who* should lead as an ordained minister. The core of his argument, tactfully articulated, is to "drastically increase the selection base of applicants for the clergy" (125). This would mean making "the difficult decision to change the barriers that prevent excellent candidates from consideration," according to Harvey (125–26). From this base he suggests that "the very best applicants can be selected in sufficient numbers to effectively minister to the faithful" (125). Harvey asserts that this is the "first step in building a healthy Church for the future" (125). He further declares that the job of the clergy must be made attractive. Beyond a "true joy of doing the Lord's work" (126), living and working conditions must be reasonable, healthy, and comfortable (126–27). It would be unfortunate if this last chapter proves to be a liability in convincing those who might disagree with his vision of *who* should lead, to implement his philosophy of *how* to lead.

Some sections of this book are summarized almost as quickly as they are presented (e.g., chapter 1). Other parts are rather repetitive or elementary, but this style may enhance the book's classroom appeal. My biggest frustration with the book is that those who need it the most probably will never read it—but it remains packed full of concrete suggestions, ready to impart skills of leadership for competent ministry.

Paul J. Levesque
Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles

Bridging Our Faiths. By The Interreligious Council of San Diego in conjunction with The National Conference, New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1997. Pages, x + 105. Paper, \$8.95.

Prepared in response to a request from the San Diego Public School System, *Bridging Our Faiths* presents an overview of the major tenets of Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. A State Department of Education's text "*Moral and Civic Education and Teaching About Religion*" asked schools to take care that "Students should comprehend the religious ideas that have helped to shape Western and Eastern cultures and civilizations; they should become aware of the influence of religion on life-styles (work, prayer, devotion, ritual, worship, meditation) and on the development of ideas." The book is written in view of that task set to the schools.

The respective texts are written by representatives of each particular faith with no censorship of their material, offering the "outsiders" the chance to

understand how “insiders” understand themselves. There is no focus on how different these religions are, but instead there is the inferred suggestion to discover the similarities that exist among them, and to be open to their diversity.

Each section contains an introduction to the basic belief system, an overview of its origin and history, a glossary of its specific terms, a set of the most frequently asked questions and the answers to them, plus a suggested reading list. The questions in the Christianity section are answered fairly both from a “General” Protestant and “General” Catholic point of view. In the Islam section attention is paid the American “Nation of Islam.”

The texts are clear, concise, well-written and good initial tools to teach about world religions in their historical context ensuring objectivity, fairness, and sensitivity in the process. The “Question and Answer” format will be helpful in prompting discussion and initiate the ever more needed interreligious and cross-cultural dialogue. A dialogue in which every Christian is called to participate. This simple book should be a “must” for all those who all but too often like to hold the Word captive. Let theologians and pastors not lag behind the student for whom this excellent introduction to the religious world was written!

J. G. Donders M.Afr.

The Challenge of Diversity: The Witness of Paul and the Gospels. By

David Rhoads. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996. Pages, 172. \$12.00.

Diversity can be uncomfortable or even downright scary. Among Christians, one cause of this may be an approach to church history that tended to highlight schisms, separations, and agreements to differ. It makes for tidy history but also for a sense of unease about those who do not share our views and with whom we have increasingly to make common cause, whether we like it or not. David Rhoads asks what would happen “if we faced up to our avoidance and began by honoring differences?” (7). This would be particularly appropriate for Americans since he opines that “what we most share now as Americans is the common experience of interculturality itself” (5). It would also be not inconsistent with the New Testament writings, whose “witness to the significantly different versions of life and diverse theological beliefs that were forged out in this period” (3) made it possible for the different denominations to ground their lives in different scriptural texts. Furthermore (as Catholics used to know well and are in danger of forgetting), [c]ultural diversity within church bodies and local congregations is an essential dimension of life together in Christ” (8). Rhoads’s hope is that adverting to the diversity of the New Testament will challenge Christians in ways that enrich dialogue and stimulate renewal: “What if,” he asks, “we discovered our unity through the courage to explore our differences?” (7).

So Rhoads has written a book of seven chapters (each with about a page of bibliography): “Reading for Diversity” and “Reading for Renewal” enclose a chapter on Galatians and one on each gospel. There is a brief epilogue called “Reflections on Unity” in which he presents different modes of unity, and a

study guide that includes suggestions for parish activities and a course outline, in addition to a generous supply of discussion questions for each part.

Chapter one indicates the degree of diversity in the New Testament, sketches and evaluates three common strategies by which people avoid having to deal with it, and offers five eminently practical suggestions for enhancing one's appreciation of NT texts (e.g., "Expect to be surprised"). Chapters 2–6 have a common pattern, even as they present the distinctive emphases of Galatians and the gospels. They seek "to show the coherence in each writing between the human condition, the vision for life, and the means of salvation" (34). Rhoads also indicates how specific communities have used each text and offers "an imaginary example of a contemporary Christian community that reflects that particular biblical writing" (34).

Rhoads is a fine biblical scholar who presents complex issues with a great deal of nuance and pastoral sensitivity, hinting at much more than he could possibly treat fully in so short a compass. The parish groups he targets should find much of value here and be stimulated to take up some of his proposals. On the other hand, his enthusiasm for diversity, ancient and modern, is sometimes a bit much: American readers may need additional reminding that the New Testament's diversity came about not to provide future Christians with choices but because the underlying reality required multiple viewpoints for its expression. The book is also (on its own admission) a very Lutheran work. So the Paul of the Corinthian letters is not much in evidence. Further, this Catholic reviewer doubts that her own tradition reflects any particular non-Pauline book as much as Rhoads' Lutheranism reflects Paul, and suspects that those aspects of Catholic ecclesiology that are not simply biblical are of far greater significance than Rhoads allows. He has, nevertheless, provided much food for thought and action in this very practical and timely invitation to take the Bible more seriously.

*Patricia M. McDonald, S.H.C.J.
Mount Saint Mary's College
Emmitsburg, Md.*

The Struggle for Theology's Soul: Contesting Scripture in Christology. By William M. Thompson. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996. Pages, xii + 312. Cloth, \$39.95.

A great many commentators, including such acknowledged giants as Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar, have recognized and lamented the fact that modern academic theology has distanced itself not only from pastoral concerns but also from piety and living religion. Most Christian theologians are probably motivated by faith commitments that involve personal spiritual experience. Yet for a number of reasons—including increased specialization, fear of compromising intellectual rigor, and the peer pressures of contemporary academia—the concerns of spirituality tend to be avoided in serious theological texts. By the same token, much of what goes by the name "spirituality" frequently lacks theological depth.

In his latest book, William Thompson takes a bold step toward overcoming this separation. Thompson, a professor of theology at Duquesne University and former president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, takes as his major theme the need to unite biblical and theological studies, particularly in the paradigmatic area of Christology. Adopting a metaphor from Vatican II, he argues that Scripture is the "soul" of theology. But to attain a deep, meditative, personal knowledge of Christ from the Scriptures one must engage in a "contest" like Jacob's wrestling with God's messenger. This struggle for theology's soul includes grappling with the human mediations of God's Word as well as battling against the resistance and distortions that come from our sinful condition.

Thompson argues that alongside specialized scholarship, there should be a "family practice" style of biblical study that combines with theology and spirituality in much the same way these elements interacted in the patristic and medieval eras. Its goal is the attainment of participatory, meditative knowledge that is attuned to God's Spirit, to the lived witness of the saints, and to the "common sense" of believers.

The central chapters of the book constitute an experiment in applying such a "spiritual" reading of the Scriptures to Christology. Thompson devotes a chapter each to the psalms, the Synoptic Gospels, the Johannine tradition, wisdom literature, and the great soteriological texts. The final two chapters are synthetic: a meditation on approaching Scripture in a child-like spirit, and a concluding self-examination. Along the way Thompson appeals to such varied sources as Athanasius, Gertrude of Helfta, Calvin, Louis de Montfort, Thérèse of Lisieux, and Phoebe Palmer, and touches on many themes besides Christology: trinitarian theology, female imagery for God, ecumenism, and abortion, to name a few.

Thompson is not unaware of the dangers inherent in attempting to engage in what Balthasar called "a theology on its knees." He adverts in particular to the fear that an appeal to "self-validating" faith-knowledge may end in a vicious circle, and may foster a kind of integralism. But for Thompson this form of theology cannot be a self-contained, self-justifying system: it must be open both to other theological methods and to the challenges that come from society and world. There is another difficulty that is not explicitly treated: once theology enters the realm of spirituality and the "heart," aesthetics becomes a major consideration, and the scholar must make way for the artist. Thompson seems to be naturally at home in both worlds, but not all theologians (or ministers) are equally gifted.

There is much in this book that would be of interest and value to the educated layperson. It is organized clearly, and Thompson's main lines of thought are easy to follow. His spiritual insights show how the classical tradition can be expanded by contemporary scriptural and ecumenical sensitivity. Thompson does, however, take for granted a fairly sophisticated theological vocabulary. Therefore, although non-theologians could profitably read this work at a certain level, its argument and examples will be best appreciated and debated by those who have a substantial background in the discipline.

Richard Viladesau
Fordham University

Holy Root, Holy Branches: Christian Preaching from the Old Testament.

By Ronald J. Allen and John C. Holbert. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.

Pages, 211. \$14.95.

Pastoral ministers responsible for preaching each Sunday are always on the lookout for anything that will help keep their preaching fresh, interesting, and challenging. This is especially true for those whose career depends on the quality of their preaching. One resource that has either been untapped or misused by Christian preachers is the Old Testament. This book will help move some Christians beyond a typological or moralistic use of these texts which make up the bulk of the Bible. It will challenge others to treat the Old Testament with something other than "benign neglect."

The authors do not devote much attention to a theoretical discussion of the value of the OT for the Church. They simply assume its value and respect it on its own terms. Most of the book is practical, helping preachers move from the OT text to a sermon. One chapter offers readers a step-by-step method of making this movement. The authors do not hide from problematic issues. For example, one of the most creative chapters of the book bears the title "Texts That Apparently Offer Little or Nothing to the Christian Pulpit." Allen and Holbert show that texts, which preachers are tempted to disregard, reflect theological and moral insight that should not be ignored. The authors also offer helpful suggestions to preachers who use a Lectionary in which the OT lesson is chosen to illuminate the gospel lesson as is the case with the Roman Catholic Lectionary.

The final chapter reproduces five sermons that illustrate the suggestions that the authors make in the rest of the book. What is most useful are the italicized comments that the authors placed within the texts of the sermons. These comments make it clear to the readers what the preachers are doing at every step of the sermon. The book concludes with endnotes and an annotated bibliography that preachers who want to develop their skill in preaching from the OT will find beneficial.

The book, however, is more than a practical guide. It offers a model of the respect that Christian readers should have for the theological insight of the people of ancient Israel. The authors explicitly reject the evolutionary bias that has marred the use of the OT by Christians. That is one reason they avoid the very term "Old Testament" in the book, preferring "First Testament" instead. Allen and Holbert show how much benefit can come to preachers and their congregations when the OT and its religious insights are valued on their own terms.

There are better discussions of the theological issues relating to the value of the OT for Christian theology, but there is no better practical guide showing how preachers can find in the OT spirit and life. All those who preach regularly will be glad that they found this book. It also should be required reading in the basic homiletics course in seminaries.

*Leslie J. Hoppe, O.F.M.
Catholic Theological Union*

INDEX TO VOLUME 11

Articles

- Bianchi, Eugene C., "The Ecological Challenge to Christianity," 1:67
Buggert, Donald, "Saint Jesus or Jesus Savior," 2:20
Couturier, David B., "The Re-Invention of Work in Religious Communities of Men," 3:22
Cusick, John C., and Katherine F. DeVries, "A New Age in the Church: Young Adults," 1:6
Davidson, James D., "The Post-Vatican II Generation of 'Christian Catholics,'" 1:12
Delio, Ilia, "The Humility of God in a Scientific World," 3:36
Dreyer, Elizabeth, "Images of the Spirit: Renewing Source for the Spiritual Life," 4:28
Duggan, Robert D., "Parish As a Center for Forming a Spiritual People," 4:14
Gustafson, Allen M., "Generation X: Its Challenges and Possibilities," 1:23
Haight, Roger, "The Jesuit Martyrs in El Salvador: Liberation Christology and Spirituality," 2:32
Harrington, Daniel J., "Retrieving the Jewishness of Jesus: Recent Developments," 2:5
Kinast, Robert L., "Getting the Most Out of Work," 3:14
Lamoureux, Patricia, "Emotion, Imagination, and the Role of the Spirit: A Response to Anne Patrick," 2:57
Langford, Jeremy, "Odyssey of a Young Adult Catholic," 1:41
Lescher, Bruce H., "Forming a People of the Spirit: What Are They Saying about Spiritual Formation?" 4:5
Marzheuser, Richard, "The Holy Spirit and the Church: A truly catholic *communio*," 3:60
O'Brien, Margaret, "The Spirituality of Young Adults: Handle With Care," 1:32
Patrick, Anne, "Imaginative Literature and the Renewal of Moral Theology," 2:43
Sanks, T. Howland, "Postmodernism and the Church," 3:51
Selling, Joseph, "Homosexuality and Chastity: An Alternative Moral Criterion," 2:63
Skotnicki, Andrew, "The U.S. Catholic Church and Criminal Justice," 1:80
Sparks, Richard C., "Morality and the Next Generation: Amoral, Immoral or Morally Different?" 1:53
Talvacchia, Kathleen T., "Finding God Experientially in the Tradition: Theological Reflection as Spiritual Formation," 4:43
Utzinger, J. Michael, "Our Anxious Grief: A Christian Response to Death," 4:53
Whitehead, Evelyn Eaton, and James D. Whitehead, "Making a Living, Making a Life: Toward a Spirituality of Work," 3:5

Features

- Bevans, Stephen, *Keeping Current*, "Cross-Cultural Studies," 3:75
Byrne, Gregory, *Signs of the Times*, "A Homily By Any Other Name: Lay Preaching in the United States," 4:61
Himes, Kenneth R., *Signs of the Times*, "Catholics and Their Institutions," 2:84
Grigassy, Daniel P., *Getting Down to Cases*, "Cremation and the Order of Christian Funerals," 3:79

- John, Emily R., *Getting Down to Cases*, "A Letter to a Young Catholic Woman," 1:100
- Koernke, Theresa F., *Keeping Current*, "God, the Cosmos, Faith, and Gender Relations," 1:104
- Leckey, Dolores R., and Richard McCord, *Getting Down to Cases*, "David: Always Our Child," 2:76
- Monti, Dominic V., *Keeping Current*, "Church History," 2:87
- Scullion, James P., *Scripture for Preaching*, "Exegesis, Imagination, and Preaching in Easter Time," 1:96
- Scullion, James P., *Scripture for Preaching*, "Echoes in Preaching," 2:81
- Scullion, James P., *Scripture for Preaching*, "Scripture and Preaching in the Aftermath of the Shoah," 3:67
- Scullion, James P., *Scripture for Preaching*, "Preaching the Gospel of Matthew," 4:66
- Wallace, James A., *Keeping Current*, "A Preacher's Dozen, or Help for Stoking the Homiletic Fires," 4:70
- Waznak, Robert P., *Signs of the Times*, "The Church and Science in the New Millennium," 1:91
- Waznak, Robert P., *Signs of the Times*, "Anatomy of a Homily," 3:75

Book Reviews

- Alberigo, Giuseppe (ed.), *History of Vatican II, Vol. 1* (T. Ross), 1:112
- Allen, Ronald J. and John C. Holbert, *Holy Root, Holy Branches: Christian Preaching from the Old Testament* (L. Hoppe), 4:91
- Bergant, Dianne, *Israel's Wisdom Literature: A Liberation-Critical Reading* (J. Cook), 3:86
- Billy, Dennis, and Donna Lynn Orsuto (eds.), *Spirituality and Morality: Integrating Prayer and Action* (J. Keating), 4:77
- Callen, Barry L. (ed.), *Sharing Heaven's Music, The Heart of Christian Preaching. Essays in Honor of James Earl Massey* (J. Wallace), 1:123
- Chinnici, Joseph P., *Living Stones: The History and Structure of Catholic Spiritual Life in the United States* (B. Lescher), 1:113
- Daggy, Robert E. (ed.), *Dancing in the Waters of Life: The Journals of Thomas Merton — 1963–1965* (L. Cunningham), 3:89
- Dulles, Avery, *The Priestly Office: A Theological Reflection* (J. Burkhard), 4:75
- Falardeau, Ernest, *A Holy and Living Sacrifice: The Eucharist in Christian Perspective* (M. Francis), 2:92
- Fenwick, John, and Bryan Spinks, *Worship in Transition: The Liturgical Movement in the Twentieth Century* (E. Foley), 1:121
- Frend, William H. C., *The Archaeology of Early Christianity: A History* (L. Hoppe), 4:83
- Grillmeier, Aloys, with Theresia Hainthaler, *Christ in the Christian Tradition: The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century, Vol. II, Part 2* (J. Gross), 1:115
- Grillo, Andrea, *Teologia fondamentale e liturgia* (K. Irwin), 3:90
- Gunderson, Gary, *Deeply Woven Roots: Improving the Quality of Life in Your Community* (D. Sulmasy), 4:79
- Harvey, James E., *Who's in Charge? Leadership Skills for Clergy and Others in Ministry* (P. Levesque), 4:86
- Hayes, Zachary, *A Window to the Divine: Creation Theology* (I. Delio), 4:80

- Hennessy, Paul K., *A Concert of Charisms, Ordained Ministry in Religious Life* (J. Chinnici), 3:87
- Interreligious Council of San Diego, *Bridging Our Faiths* (J. Donders), 4:87
- Kinast, Robert L., *Let Ministry Teach: A Guide to Theological Reflection* (L. Brusatti), 4:84
- Meilaender, Gilbert, *Bioethics: A Primer for Christians* (T. Nairn), 4:81
- Murphy, Nancey, and George F. R. Ellis, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe. Theology, Cosmology, and Ethics* (Z. Hayes), 1:116
- Patrick, Anne, *Liberating Conscience: Feminist Explorations in Catholic Moral Theology* (A. Fornasari), 1:120
- Preuss, Horst Dietrich, *Old Testament Theology Vol. II* (T. Lenchak), 1:108
- Reid, Steven Breck, *Listening In: A Multicultural Reading of the Psalms* (R. Murphy), 3:85
- Rhoads, David, *The Challenge of Diversity: The Witness of Paul and the Gospels* (P. McDonald), 4:88
- Riemer, Ivoni Richter, *Women in the Acts of the Apostles: A Feminist Liberation Perspective* (B. Reid), 1:110
- Schotroff, Luise, *Lydia's Impatient Sisters. A Feminist Social History of Early Christianity* (B. Reid), 1:109
- Shannon, Thomas A., *An Introduction to Bioethics* (J. Keating), 2:93, 3:92
- Sheeley, Steven M., and Robert N. Nash, Jr., *The Bible in English Translation: An Essential Guide* (A. DiLella), 3:84
- Simmons, Martha J., *Preaching on the Brink: The Future of Homiletics* (J. Wallace), 1:123
- Thompson, William M., *The Struggle for Theology's Soul: Contesting Scripture in Christology* (R. Viladesau), 4:89
- Van der Ven, Johannes A., *Ecclesiology in Context* (J. Burkhard), 2:118
- Wheeler, Sondra Ely, *Stewards of Life: Bioethics and Pastoral Care* (T. Nairn), 4:81