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Introduction

It is hard to deny that we are witnessing a revival of interest, both devotionally and theologically, in the saints. After the event of Vatican II there may have been a measure of reserve within the Catholic community on the topic of the saints. Some were eager, if not to jettison the cult of saints, at least to tone down perceived devotional and theological excesses in the Catholic approach to the saints.

Today we find a growing appreciation for the importance of saints in the life of the faith community even as there is much re-thinking about who are the saints, what role does the communion of saints play in our religious life, and what is the significance of the saints for the Catholic religious imagination. This issue of *New Theology Review* provides a splendid overview of the creative theological ferment surrounding the topic of the saints.

Our lead essay by the much-admired scholar Sr. Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J., provides an excellent introduction to a contemporary understanding of the doctrine of the communion of the saints. Professor Johnson's essay is followed by Robert Ellsberg's astute observations on the saints for today. In both of these essays the authors draw upon rich material they have provided in recent books on this topic of the saints. Our editorial board colleague Sr. Mary Frohlich, H.M., further enriches consideration of the theme with an insightful reflection on the newest Doctor of the Church, St. Thérèse of Lisieux. And the final essay addressing our theme is a thought-provoking analysis by Gary Riebe-Estrella, S.V.D., of how the convergence of cultural worldviews results in a distinctive understanding of *La Virgen* in Mexican Catholicism.

Arguably the issue of divorce and remarriage is one of the most important items on the pastoral agenda of the Catholic Church. The sheer number of our people affected by marital breakdown and the related issues of pastoral care to the divorced and remarried make this topic a paramount concern. Among those noted for their scholarship, honesty, and sensitivity when writing on marriage and divorce the name of Michael Lawler is regularly mentioned. His clear and direct remarks in our final non-theme essay are a needed stimulus for renewed discussion on a pastoral priority.

Rounding out this spring issue are our usual array of columns and book reviews. Readers may find the new title and explanation of our preaching column to be of particular interest. The editors are also pleased to note the addition of Kevin Madigan of Catholic Theological Union and Sr. Ilia Delio, O.S.F., of Washington Theological Union to our editorial board. They replace Srs. Jaime Phelps, O.P., and Theresa

Koernke, I.H.M., who complete their service to the journal. We thank them for their good work.

In closing we must boast a bit and inform our readers that the Lilly Foundation has awarded a substantial grant to *New Theology Review.* We are one of only four Catholic periodicals to have been selected for a grant and are very grateful to the people at the Lilly Foundation for their confidence in and support of this journal's aims. The bulk of the money will be used to research how we can serve you, our readers, even better. During the three years of the grant the publisher and editors will be working with a variety of individuals to sharpen and refine the editorial focus, marketing strategy and promotion of this journal. It is our sincere hope that in the future you will continue to find *New Theology Review* worthy of your time and money.

Elizabeth A. Johnson, C.S.J.

A Community of Holy People in a Sacred World: Rethinking the Communion of Saints

> *They were nothing more than people, by themselves. Even paired, any pairing, they would have been nothing more than people by themselves. But all together, they have become the heart and muscles and mind of something perilous and new, something strange and growing and great. Together, all together, they are the instruments of change* (Hulme, 4).

Imagine, if you will, a religious symbol that joins all living people who seek the face of God into a circle of mutual companions; one, furthermore, that connects this living community with the faithful dead of all ages; one that also links them all with eucharistic bread and wine and through this sacrament with the whole realm of the natural world; one, finally, that embraces this totality with the outstretched wings of the creating, redeeming, liberating Spirit of God who unites and lures them further into participation in God's own life. Such is the doctrinal (Apostles Creed) and liturgical (All Saints Day) symbol traditionally called "the communion of saints." From every angle this symbol crosses boundaries and stretches wide, bespeaking an inclusive participation in a community brought about by the play of Spirit-Sophia from generation to generation and across the wide world.

Now imagine a religious symbol seldom studied in the history of theology; one moreover frequently reduced to the dead alone; one that focuses on those few who have been officially canonized; one that casts the living into the role of needy petitioners calling upon powerful heavenly patrons; one that is now mostly absent from the preaching, catechesis, and existential piety of large numbers of people in advanced industrialized societies. This too is the communion of saints, a symbol that has withered to the point of oblivion or at least is sound asleep in current theory and practice. But a symbol so pneumatological, so relational, so inclusive and egalitarian, so respectful of persons who are defeated and praising of those who succeed against all odds, so hope-filled and so practical, it has the potential to empower all Christians who struggle for human dignity and the integrity of creation in the name of God. As such, it is worth another look.

Drawing upon both historical and contemporary theology, this article highlights three ancient meanings which combine to form the communion of saints: the holiness of the Christian community alive today; the connection of this community with the dead; and the relation of this multitude to the living matrix of the natural world. Our exploration is guided by a core vision inspired by the Book of Wisdom, where it is written: "From age to age, she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets" (Wis 7:27). The same Spirit who vivifies and renews the natural world enters into holy souls, and not so holy ones, sanctifying their struggle to be faithful and weaving them all into a holy community for the sake of the suffering world.

THE LIVING COMMUNITY TODAY: SAINTS ALL AND EACH

In the first place, the communion of saints comprises all living persons of truth and love. While the term itself springs from the experience of grace within the Christian Church, divine blessing cannot be limited to this circle. Within human cultures everywhere the Spirit calls persons to seek truth and live in love and justice with others, so that "friends of God and prophets" can be found in every tongue and nation, even among religion's cultured despisers.

This global framework serves to keep the symbol inclusive when applied specifically to its originating context, the Christian community, where it expresses a sense of blessing that arises at the heart of faith: "where sin did abound, grace did superabound" (Rom 5:20), so that "there is now no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 1:8). Consequently, the whole community, composed of redeemed sinners, is a holy *ekklesia* being transformed into a sacred dwelling of the Spirit. The holiness of baptized persons is not simply an ethical matter, being holy as being morally perfect. Rather, it is a participation in the very life of God, according to the dynamic of a covenant relationship: "You shall be holy for I am holy" (Lev 11:45).

New Testament writers drew deeply on this Jewish tradition of the holy people of God to describe their own community, meanwhile settling on a term to express it: "the saints." Over sixty times "saints" designates the Christian community as a whole: "To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints" (Rom 1:7); "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi" (Phil 1:1); "To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints " (1 Cor 1:2); "All the saints greet you" (2 Cor 13:13). The point is that corporately, inclusively, without discrimination, the whole living Church is a communion of saints. Too often theology has squeezed this meaning dry, eliminating most of the baptized from sainthood in favor of a small group of elite office-holders or those canonized. Even today many a theologian begins discussion of the subject by acknowledging that

even though the New Testament refers to the whole Christian community as saints, this will be set aside in order to consider paradigmatic figures, who then become in practice the real saints. But this strategy woefully shortchanges the breadth and depth of the gift of God who in gracious mercy through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ calls, blesses, and sends forth all the living people who form the beloved community.

Drawing its ecclesiology from the scriptures in a renewed way, Vatican II underscored this truth in its luminous teaching on "The Call of the Whole Church to Holiness" (*Lumen gentium,* chap. 5). Through baptism persons are justified in Christ; receiving the Spirit they become sharers in divine nature. "In this way they are really made holy" (*LG* 40). This holiness, furthermore, is essentially the same for everyone. There is not one kind of indwelling of the Spirit for lay persons and another for those in religious life or ordained ministry. Rather, "in the various types and duties of life, one and the same holiness is cultivated by all who are moved by the Spirit of God" (*LG* 41). In other words, the Church is not divided into saints and non-saints. Vivified by grace, every woman, man, and child, in whatever diverse circumstances and of whatever race, class, ethnicity, sexual persuasion, or other marker that at once identifies and divides human beings, participates in God's holy life.

If this be the case, then the symbol of the communion of saints emerges with an unexpected prophetic edge. It challenges those charged with pastoral leadership in the Church, first, to bend every effort toward highlighting the extraordinary status of lay women and men, often overheard to be saying "I'm no saint" but in truth created in the image of God, graced by Christ, called and gifted in the Spirit. In other words, the holiness of ordinary persons in the midst of ordinary time needs to be ever more strongly underscored if people are not to be robbed of their heritage and their true identity. A second challenge arises from this realization that the whole community enjoys a transforming relationship with the triune God in an equal manner. In this light, social relationships and structures within the community of disciples that do not embody this truth appear questionable and in need of transforming grace. In other words, spiritual equality presses the question of social and political equality to the fore.

In a community of companionship in the Spirit that circles the globe today, living saints seek the face of God, cling to divine compassion in the face of suffering and sin, know the joy of Holy Wisdom's gracious action in their lives, and make their own contribution to the Church's heritage of faith and love. Then they pass through the shattering of death into the life-giving hands of God, to be followed by the fresh young faces of a new generation of all saints.

CLOUD OF WITNESSES THROUGH TIME

Since not even death "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:39), the communion of saints is not restricted to persons who live and breathe at the present moment but also embraces those who have died. The difficulties that this aspect of the symbol present to contemporary minds and hearts are many. We are aware that death truly ends life as we know it, and no empirical investigation can lift the veil that shrouds this unknown future. Scientific investigation into the mind-brain connection and the interchange of matter through all life-systems, philosophical understanding of the person as spirit-in-the-world rather than a dualism of body and soul, and ethical critique of other-worldly concerns as robbing the earth of intrinsic value and sapping energy for justice here and now—all have conspired to make the inherited map of the Christian afterlife quaint, like drawings of sixteenth-century cartographers. In addition, theology is acutely aware that eschatological language uses metaphor, both in the Bible and regarding the classical constructs of heaven, hell, and purgatory, so that these "places" need to be interpreted in a symbolic rather than naively realistic sense.

Due to such difficulties, people in western secular culture often sense that those who have died have truly disappeared from this world. They are no longer accessible to the living in any direct fashion, as was possible to imagine in a previous age. If this is the case with people we know, how much more does it pertain to those who have died long ago, the whole traditional roster of saints. To retrieve this aspect of the communion of saints, three issues need to be addressed: the character of God who desires all to live; the companionship model of memory and hope; and the role of paradigmatic figures.

The Character of God

Since the darkness of death is unconquerable, the only way possible to resolve the issue of the fate of the dead is not with rational argument but with an existential act of radical faith in God. For the Christian community, the bedrock of this faith is the paschal narrative of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This cruel death was a real death; it violently tore apart his whole life, no piece of him slipping through its mesh. In the face of this destruction, the Easter message proclaims that the crucified one dies not into nothingness but into the absolute mystery of the glory of God. Starting with Mary Magdalene, the disciples announce *Vivit:* the godforsaken one lives forever with God as pledge of the future of all the dead. While this is utterly unimaginable, and cannot be reduced to a kind of physiological miracle, it nevertheless affirms that Jesus in his whole person and in all dimensions of his historical existence has entered into a new and different brilliance of life in the embrace of God.

There is a precise analogy between the Spirit of God who raises Jesus to new life and the action of the same Creator Spirit bringing the world into being. In both cases one begins with virtually nothing: no world, no future for a dead person. Then the vivifying breath of the Spirit who creates the world "in the beginning" moves again and, in another act of creation, keeping faith with the beloved creature, carries a person through perishing into new life. Paul brings out this coherence when he names God as the One who "gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (Rom 4:17). The Nicene Creed also follows this logic, starting with creation and ending with the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Hope in eternal life for oneself and others is not some curiosity tacked on as an appendage to faith but is faith in the living God brought to its radical depth. It is faith in God that does not stop halfway but follows the road consistently to the end, trusting that the God of the beginning is also the God of the end, who utters the same word in each case: let there be life. There is, then, reason to hope that persons are not lost in death but are enfolded into the mystery of the gracious being of God which to us is darkness but to them is the fulfillment of their lives in the sphere of the Spirit. The biblical images of light, banquet, harvest, rest, singing, homecoming, reunion, tears wiped away, seeing face to face, and knowing as we are known, all point to a deep, living communion in God's own life. Thus the loving, faithful character of God is the foundation for including the dead in the communion of saints.

If we ask after these persons, seeking where they are to be found, the only possible answer, since they do not belong to the empirical world around us, is that they abide in God. If we seek to relate to these persons, we need to realize that there can be no direct, sensate communication such as was possible when they were alive in time. Even if we try to summon them and transpose them into our concrete world, something that is attempted in spiritualist seances or manipulative pieties, they could only appear as we are, earth-bound, and not as they are, embraced in the light of absolute mystery. But they have passed from our circle into the hidden life of God, and so they are found in our experience where God is. In Karl Rahner's careful words, "We meet the living dead, even when they are those loved by us, in faith, hope, and love, that is, when we open our hearts to the silent calm of God's own self, in which they live; not by calling them back to where we are, but by descending into the silent eternity of our own hearts, and through faith in the risen Lord, creating in time the eternity which they have brought forth forever" (353–54). In other words, we meet them not by reducing their reality to our own imaginative size but by going forth to where they dwell in the mystery of the living God as the beginning of the new heaven and the new earth.

Companions in Memory and Hope

The company of saints in heaven beggars description. While some few are remembered by name, millions upon anonymous millions of others whom we will never know are also included. In different times and places their initiatives brought compassion alive and healed and challenged the world in ways that we can never imagine. The patterns of goodness they traced in history make faith today possible; bearers of our past, they also signify our future. Among these saints, known and mostly unknown, are counted those untimely dead, killed in godforsaken incidents of terror, war, and mass death, their life's projects cut down in mid-stride. Having drunk so deeply of the cup of crucifixion, they call forth special mention in anguish and lament. Among these saints are also numbered some whom we know personally. Their number increases as we get older: grandparents, mother and father, sisters and brothers, beloved spouses and life partners, children, teachers, students, patients, clients, friends and colleagues, relatives and neighbors, spiritual guides and religious leaders. Their good lives, complete with fault and failure, have reached journey's end. Gone from us, they have arrived home in unspeakable, unimaginable life within the embrace of God. To say of all these people that they form with us the company of the redeemed is to give grief a direction, affirming that in the dialogue between God and the human race the last word is the gracious word of life. In instances where persons have wrought real and lasting damage by their actions, faith holds out the possibility that at their deepest core they did not concur in diabolical evil. The Church's prayer is that God will be more merciful toward them than they have been to others. On their behalf, at least we may hope.

When the community alive today seeks to relate to this great multitude that has gone before them, two possibilities lie open. One, a patronage relationship, developed under the influence of the civil patronage system in the late Roman Empire. It reached its zenith in the medieval period and remains a force in some quarters today. In this patron-client model, God is thought to exist as a monarch ruling in splendor, with hosts of courtiers ranked in descending order of importance. Being far from the distant throne, people need saints as intercessors who will take on their case and obtain spiritual and material favors that would otherwise not be forthcoming. That is put rather baldly but it is not inaccurate. We have friends in high places, so to speak. This pattern of relationship is rapidly waning in our western secular context, not least because its patriarchal structure of power and neediness so misreads the biblical witness to God's mercy in the midst of the holy people.

A more original pattern of relationship can be discerned in Scripture and texts from the early Christian centuries. Modeled on the experience of companionship, it names those who have died as friends and

fellow travelers in the one Spirit-filled community. Rather than prayers of petition from a client to a patron, the main way of expressing this relation is through acts of remembrance and hope that release the power of their witness into the struggles of today. Several examples may awaken our religious imagination.

In the New Testament letter to the "Hebrews" there is an extraordinary roll call of Jewish ancestors, each of whom responded with faith to the challenge of their lives. Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, the parents of Moses, Rahab, David, along with myriads of others who both acted and suffered in the name of God. The point of this dramatic naming is to encourage the community to respond in like manner: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. . . ." (Heb 12:1-2). The image here is of a stadium packed with a crowd, each of whom had once run in the race, now cheering for those on the tarmac. Here the faithful dead are not proposed as the objects of a cult nor even as exemplars to be imitated, but as a throng of faithful people whose journey Christians are called upon to share and continue. Remembrance of their lives galvanizes the courage of those now running the race and awakens hope of a similar victory. It is a matter of being inspired by the whole lot of them, this cloud of witnesses to the living God.

In the age of the martyrs, this mutual, collegial relationship between the living and the dead came to new expression as the community drew strength from those who had witnessed unto death. The church at Smyrna, explaining the difference between Christ, whom they worshiped, and Polycarp their martyred bishop whom they venerated, wrote: "For [Christ] we worship as the Son of God. But the martyrs we love as disciples and imitators of the Lord, and rightly so because of their matchless affection for their own king and teacher. May we too become their comrades and fellow disciples" (Musurillo, 17). The living were partners, comrades, co-disciples with those who had given their lives, one witnessing to the other, both graced in Christ. Even after persecution had ceased, this same lively sense of friendship appears in one of Augustine's sermons on the feast of the young women martyrs Perpetua and Felicity; despite the weakness of their sex, as he saw it, they had fought through to the crown of victory: "Let it not seem a small thing to us that we are members of the same body as these. . . . We marvel at them, they have compassion on us. We rejoice for them, they pray for us. . . . Yet do we all serve one Lord, follow one teacher, attend one king. We are all joined to one head, journey to the same Jerusalem, follow after the one love, embrace the same unity" (*Sermon* 280).

Preaching on the feasts of the martyrs over many years, Augustine provides an extended vocabulary for this partnership between the living and the dead. God is already at work among you, he points out, cultivating you like an orchard, producing buds, strengthening your branches, clothing you with leaves and loading you with fruit. Central to this spiritual growth is the Eucharist, whose consecrated elements of bread and wine have extraordinary power: "If you receive them well, you are yourselves what you receive" (*S.* 227). In this context, the saints in heaven are a gift: "Blessed be the saints in whose memory we are celebrating the day they suffered on; . . . they have left us lessons of encouragement" (*S.* 273). Sometimes the lesson of encouragement is a particular one: "If we follow Stephen, we shall be crowned with the victor's laurels. It is above all in the matter of loving our enemies that he is to be followed and imitated" (*S.* 314). More often this great cloud of witnesses inspires us by the general tenor of their lives. They are like a jar of ointment whose fragrance fills our whole house. Since they did what they did by the outpouring of the grace of God, in their company we find light and warmth and direction in our struggles to be faithful: "The fountain is still flowing, it hasn't dried up" (*S.* 315).

The early generations of Christians deserve special appreciation, Augustine thought, for they pioneered a whole new way of life: "When numbers were few, courage had to be great. By passing along the narrow road they widened it . . . they went ahead of us" (*S.* 306c). People who lived before us had no idea that one day there would be a community in Carthage, a church of the future praising God: "they weren't yet able to see it; yet they were already constructing it out of their own lives" (*S.* 306c). To realize as a people that we are the heirs of the faith passed on by such persons makes us grateful and rejuvenates our desire to contribute to this heritage for the next generation. Their adventure of faith opened a way for us, and now we go ahead of others in an ongoing river of companions seeking God. And when our own journey grows hard, we can draw strength from the memory of our forebears' sufferings and victories: "How can the way be rough when it has been smoothed by the feet of so many walking along it?" (*S.* 306). The communion of saints forges intergenerational bonds across time that sustain faith in strange new times and places. Surrounded by the cloud of witnesses, connected in memory and hope, we learn their lessons of encouragement and cherish in very different circumstances what they cared enough to live and die for. In recent times Vatican II underscored this original Christian intuition of a community of the friends of God and prophets, living and dead, using the explicit language of companionship: "Just as Christian communion among wayfarers brings us closer to Christ, so our companionship with the saints joins us to Christ, from whom as from their fountain and head issue every grace

and the life of God's people itself" (*LG* 50). Rather than be bound in a patron-client pattern, the saints in heaven and on earth become partners in memory and hope.

Paradigmatic Figures

Different times and places witness the emergence of particular persons who focus the energies of the Spirit for a local community in its own unique circumstances. When these persons are recognized by the common spiritual sense of the community, they become publicly significant for the lives of others. These are the persons traditionally and all too narrowly called saints. Theologically they have no essential spiritual advantage over the rest of the community who are saints in the biblical sense. But the confluence of their own unique giftedness with the needs of a moment in history give them a special function among their fellow pilgrims. Their names are remembered as a benediction, an act of resistance, a call to action, a spur to fidelity, a summons to encouragement.

Starting in the twelfth century, a centralized process of canonization took increasing control of this phenomenon. The results have been decidedly mixed. Gains in overcoming a certain fabulism and provincialism are offset by the nature of the list of official saints, who become an ever more elite group, proclaimed for their heroic virtue and power to produce spectacular miracles; a group, furthermore, that mirrors the face of the bureaucracy that created it, being largely clerical, celibate, aristocratic, and male; a group created in response to large investments of time and money and thus largely excluding lay and poor persons. Numerous scholars now argue that for the good of the Church, the formal canonization process should be abandoned or at least radically modified. In fact, the power of naming saints is already being reclaimed in a variety of worshiping communities. Long before the juridical process was invented, local communities, through the power of the Spirit, could recognize those persons who witnessed to the gospel in uniquely different circumstances and mediated God's presence through their life of discipleship. This power has not deserted the Church.

The position of women as a result of canonization is particularly troubling. A simple head count shows that 75 percent of the persons on the roster of canonized saints as well as on the liturgical calendar of the saints are men, while 25 percent are women. Does this mean that men are holier than women? Or does it rather underscore who has the power of naming in the Church? Least represented among these saints are married women who remained so for their lives (i.e., did not become nuns), reflecting the assessment that to be female is a handicap but to be a sexually active woman renders one almost incapable of embodying the sacred (the few exceptions are queens). As a result, the history of women's holiness has been largely erased from the collective memory

of the Church, a loss that some contemporary books on the saints unfortunately perpetuate. Even when they are remembered, the lives of exemplary women are narrated to reflect the patriarchal ideal of the "good" woman: acts of radical discipleship are transmuted into obedience to hierarchical leadership, and stereotypical feminine virtues, stressing suffering, sexual purity, and submission, are promoted in place of the history of women's raw struggle in the Spirit. Once again the prophetic character of the communion of saints shows itself as feminist theological reflection reclaims this symbol by reading poor women, women of color, marginalized women, raped and brutalized women, caring and ministering women, strong and vibrant and artistic women, sexually active women, setting-out-not-knowing-where-they-are-going women, all holy women of the world, onto the list as equal partners in the company of God's friends and prophets.

The biased character of the current list of the canonized does not undermine the importance of the role of paradigmatic saints amidst the whole community. They are women and men who distill the central values of the living tradition, making them accessible in concrete form. The direct force of their example acts as a catalyst in the community, galvanizing recognition that yes, this is what we are called to be. The uncanny integrity of their lives leavens the moral environment, luring the community ever more deeply into life lived for God. They are like a Milky Way, a shining river of stars spiraling out from the center of the galaxy to light a path through the darkness back to that center, the divine mystery. The light of their memory encourages the creative witness of others: one fire kindles another. This is their irreplaceable role, at the same time as we recognize that in the end the parameters of what it means to be holy can be given only by the whole communion of saints.

THE WHOLE COMMUNITY OF LIFE

On the face of it, the communion of saints seems to be thoroughly focused on the human community, living and dead. However, an intriguing ambiguity in the original Latin term *communio sanctorum* enables the natural world to be included in a compelling manner. On the one hand, *sanctorum* may be a form of the noun *sancti,* in which case the term means "holy persons." On the other hand, *sanctorum* may just as well be a form of the noun *sancta,* in which instance the term refers to "holy things." This latter reference was clearly intended when the phrase was first used in the eastern church, where *koinonia ton hagion* (fellowship of the holy) meant participation in sacred things, in particular the eucharistic bread and cup of salvation. Medieval theologians played with both meanings, the personal/subjective and the sacramental/objective, and in truth there is no need to choose between the two for they reinforce one another. The *communio sanctorum* is a

complex, multi-layered reality made up of the Spirit-filled community sharing in each others lives and in the sacraments, holy people and holy things inextricably linked.

In the light of the contemporary moral imperative to treat the evermore damaged earth as a sacred creation with its own intrinsic rather than instrumental value, the elusive quality of the phrase's original meaning is a happy circumstance. At its best, sacramental theology has always drawn on the connection between the natural world and the signs of bread, wine, water, oil, and sexual intercourse which, when taken into the narrative of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, become avenues of God's healing grace. Now, in the time of earth's agony, the *sancta* can be pushed to its widest meaning to include the gifts of air, water, land, and the myriad creatures that share the planet with human beings in interwoven ecosystems. For the universe itself is the primordial sacrament through which we participate in and communicate with divine mystery. Since the same divine creativity that fuels the vitality of all creation also lights the fire of the saint, then "communion in the holy" includes holy people and a holy world in interrelationship. Thus from within the symbol itself a way opens to include all beings, sacred bread and wine certainly, but also the original sacrament, the earth itself. Once again, this symbol reveals its prophetic edge as its cosmic dimension calls forth an ecological ethic of restraint of human greed and promotion of care for the earth.

Including the natural world in the communion of the holy sets up an interesting dynamic between human hope for the dead and hope for the natural world. In an evolutionary perspective, human hope for eternal life can be interpreted to embody the hope of the universe itself. Billions of years before our appearance the cosmos was already seeded with promise, pressing toward its future with an innate impulse that blossoms in religious longing for future fulfillment. "Human hoping is not simply our own constructs of imaginary ideals projected onto an indifferent universe, as much modern and postmodern thought maintains," argues John Haught. "Rather, it is the faithful carrying on of the universe's perennial orientation toward the unknown future" (109). Conversely, breaking connections with the memory of the dead saps our moral energy to care for the earth. Haught continues: "If we are unable to symbolize immortality in one way or another, we lose any sense of relatedness to the vast world that has gone before us, as well as to generations of living beings that may follow. In breaking our connection with other generations, we forfeit our responsibility to them. Stranded in a meaninglessly brief life span, and severed from communion with the perished past or the promised future, we grow ethically impotent" (129). This intriguing insight highlights the importance of the interconnection of all three aspects of the communion of saints

explored in this essay. Set within the life-giving history of God with the world, the community of the sacred encompasses all creation, past, present, and to come, holy people and the whole natural world imbued with God's blessing, together.

CONCLUSION

The religious symbols of creation, sin, covenant, messianic promise, incarnation, redemption in Christ, and eschaton have always carried a universal intent, relating the whole world in a common origin, history, and destiny through the one Spirit. The communion of saints is another such symbol, developed in Christian vocabulary to express the experience of being connected to one another in virtue of being graced by the mystery at the heart of the universe. Potentially it is a most inclusive symbol, for it relates not only disparate cultural, national, ethnic, and racial groups, and women with men, and the most socially marginalized with the powerful, all within an egalitarian community of grace, but also the living with the dead and the yet to be born, all seekers of the divine, in a circle around the eucharistic table, the body of Christ, which encompasses the earth itself. Allowing this symbol its full play in ecclesial life through remembrance and hope turns the Church toward historical praxis that adds to, rather than subtracts from, the measure of compassion and justice in the world that the next generation will inherit.

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Elizabeth Johnson, C.S.J., is Distinguished Service Professor of Theology at Fordham University in New York City. Among her many books and articles is the award-winning text, She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse *(Crossroad, 1992). For fuller exploration of the points made in the present article, readers are referred to her recently published,* Friends of God and Prophets: A Feminist Reading of the Communion of Saints *(Continuum, 1998).*

Robert Ellsberg

Saints for Today

Many years ago, when I became a Catholic, someone gave me a little Penguin *Dictionary of the Saints,* inside which, as I recently rediscovered, there is a short inscription: "Welcome to the Catholic Church. The saints are the best thing about us!" To this invitation I responded eagerly, though I needed little encouragement to study the saints. Already I knew that anything of value that I had learned in my life had come through conversation with people I admired. Similarly, my attraction to Catholicism owed less to the study of theology than to the compelling witness of holy lives.

Among these was Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker in New York, whom I met when I was nineteen and with whom I worked during the last five years of her life. Dorothy had a passionate interest in the lives of the saints. She talked about them as if they were personal friends or members of the family. It was through Dorothy that I came to know the stories of St. Augustine, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Catherine of Siena, and, of course, her beloved St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

But any reader of the Catholic Worker knows that the list of CW "saints" is much broader than the official canon. It includes peacemakers like Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Franz Jägerstätter; philosophers like Emmanuel Mounier, Nicolai Berdyaev, and Jacques Maritain; writers like Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Leon Bloy; activists and prophets like Cesar Chavez and Oscar Romero, and mystics like Simone Weil and Thomas Merton.

These were the figures who continually surfaced in our conversations. They were our companions and our teachers and we debated their relative merits with passionate conviction. Some of these figures might be candidates for canonization, but not all. Nevertheless, all of them disclosed something about the fundamental challenge that engaged the life and vocation of Dorothy Day: as she put it, to unite "body and soul, this world and the next."

These are the people who have continued to guide my own journey. Not a day has gone by without some mental reference or communion with this "cloud of witnesses." In setting out to write a book on saints my intention, simply, was to enlarge the conversation, to invite others to join me in drawing inspiration and challenge from the witness of these holy men and women.

ALL SAINTS

The title of my book *All Saints* is taken from the feast of that name. It is a feast which reflects the Church's recognition that the number of saints is much wider than any official tally. There are many anonymous saints, recognized by only a few or perhaps by God alone. But the feast of All Saints is also a reminder of the great variety in the paths to holiness. Some saints were married or widowed; others embraced celibacy. Some lived solitary lives, others in community. Some had visions of Christ and his angels; others, as Dorothy Day used to say, merely had visions of dirty dishes. There were saints who were rewarded and honored in their lifetime while others were nailed to the cross. Some had a clear sense of vocation, while others spent their lives in an agony of doubt about their own fruitfulness or their ability to discern God's will. Some were brilliant; others simple; others evidently quite mad. All of them struggled to achieve the "one thing necessary," to obtain the pearl of great price, to conform their lives to the mysterious pattern of the gospel, at whatever cost.

In writing this book I had two overall purposes. One was to hold up the stories of many of the great traditional saints and to show their originality and their struggles, and to highlight aspects of their witness that speak to contemporary concerns. One of the problems with talk of "sainthood" is that it often tends to abstraction, removing persons from an actual context, and wrapping them in an aura of timelessness. For me this empties them of a good deal of their attraction and meaning. I believe their interest lies not in having achieved some static quality called "sainthood" but in their very particular struggles to be faithful in the circumstances and context of their time and culture.

But I had another purpose, as well. By exploring a range of lives far beyond the official canon of saints I hoped to expand the popular understanding of holiness itself. The official process of naming saints has the effect all too often of imposing a stereotypical pattern on holiness. It encourages the view that the saint is somehow completely "other," a perfect person, who conforms to some predetermined ideal. I think that people's actual lives reveal ideals and virtues that we could not always define in advance. I also think that we can discern the face of God refracted in the features of men and women who were not completely virtuous or admirable, who were not completely orthodox, and certainly among those who were not Catholic or even Christian, and who nevertheless test and challenge our own faithfulness.

And so in this book I have joined potential candidates for canonization like Romero and Mother Teresa with more surprising selections: Oscar Schindler, Vincent van Gogh, Albert Camus, Mozart, and Henry David Thoreau. While any particular choice might raise eyebrows, I believe there is an aesthetic and moral logic to the work as a whole so that

each note contributes to the overall harmony. It was Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who observed that "everything that rises must converge." If that is so, then perhaps from the perspective of eternity there is more in common among these disparate seekers and witnesses than their evident differences and disagreements would suggest.

Among other things they shared a determination to find their own distinctive vocation. Reduced to variations of stained glass, the saints may appear to have conformed to one or another established religious type: the ascetic, the contemplative, the mystic, the martyr, the bishop. But a closer look at the great saints—whether Dominic or Teresa of Avila or Vincent de Paul—shows the struggles they undertook to find a path of faithfulness that was appropriate to their time. So many of the saints are remembered as founders of religious orders that we tend to think of them as "institutional" types. But in their own time what distinguished them was their intuition of some new way of discipleship or religious life that departed from all of the available options. They were actually "anti-institutional" in relation to the given structures of their time. Similarly, so many of the great "doctors" of the Church—whether Teresa of Avila or Thomas Aquinas—are renowned not because of their mastery of the established program of theology but because they enabled the Church to understand the gospel in new ways. Such originality left them vulnerable to charges of heterodoxy or worse.

SAINTLINESS FOR THE PRESENT MOMENT

In compiling this book I was guided by a comment of Simone Weil, one of the paradoxical religious figures who appears in my calendar: "Today it is not nearly enough merely to be a saint; but we must have the saintliness demanded by the present moment." Others have made similar remarks. As Charles Péguy wrote, "There have been saints of all sorts, but today perhaps there is need for a new kind of saint," the saint who combines the mystical and the political. An obvious example is Dorothy Day, who wrote of her attraction, as a child, to the stories of the saints and their heroic charity. But where, she asked, were the saints to transform the social order, not merely to bind up the victims of injustice? Dorothy Day is a figure who joined the practice of charity with a radical passion for justice and peace. This innovation is one example of the type of holiness that is required of our time.

It is often remarked that the official calendar of saints is woefully deficient in examples of lay holiness. Ostensibly the Church has discarded a two-tiered spirituality that differentiates between the consecrated "religious world" of priests and nuns and the inferior world of family life and secular work. But clerical and monastic models of holiness still predominate. Even those occasional lay people who are canonized tend to be indistinguishable from monks or nuns. I maintain that we need

more models of holiness drawn from the worlds of scholarship, political struggle, literary and artistic life, the ordinary worlds in which most people find themselves.

We have had abundant models of holiness that fostered disdain for the body, for women, for the earth. We have had saints who embodied the prevailing chauvinism toward people of other cultures, other races, other religious paths. We have had saints who granted license to holy war and the denial of liberty, even to their fellow Christians. That was then, we might say, and this is now. All the more reason to look more broadly at the models of holiness necessary for our time.

If these are some of the concerns I brought to my reflections on the saints, I would like to note some of the lessons I have taken away.

A NEW APPROACH TO CHRISTIAN HISTORY

The standard history of Christianity focuses on the fortunes of institutions or the development of doctrine and theology. My book offers a somewhat different approach, focusing instead on holy lives. The result is, in part, an informal examination of the "Christian ideal" as it has been embodied in various and disparate forms. But at the same time what emerges from this perspective is a history of Christianity that emphasizes the constant dialogue between the gospel and new cultural, intellectual, and political horizons.

A parallel to this approach is found in the work of Andrew Walls and those scholars who have recently opened up the study of "world Christianity." In this perspective, the history of Christianity is seen as a progressive translation of the faith into new cultural idioms. It is a history that begins with the translation of the gospel from its Jewish origins into terms comprehensible to a wider gentile audience. But what follows is not simply an unvaried era of Western Christianity. There were equally significant trajectories of Eastern Christianity, while missionary saints like Boniface and Patrick went on to translate the gospel once again in terms comprehensible to the emerging tribes and peoples of Europe. The same process occurred with the missionary expansion of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. In each case it was not simply a matter of implanting a single uniform brand of Christianity. There was always a more complicated dialogue between Christianity and the local culture. And in each case new accents, new potentialities of the gospel were uncovered.

One might say that the saints are those individuals who strive to incarnate the Christian ideal in relation to the questions, challenges, and needs of their particular time. I confess that I am particularly attracted to those figures on the frontier, those who probed new possibilities, who resonated with ancient and forgotten notes of the gospel and applied them to new situations. For example:

Holy women who devised original styles of religious life, apart from the options posed by their societies or the Church of their time. (See Mary Magdalene, Prisca, Marcella, and Paula in the early centuries; Clare, Julian of Norwich, Catherine of Siena, Joan of Arc, Hildegard of Bingen, Mechthild of Magdeburg and the Beguines; Mary Ward, Sor Juana, Louise de Marillac, Cornelia Connelly, Mother Maria Skobtsova, Thea Bowman.) Missionaries like Matteo Ricci and Roberto de Nobili, pioneers of inculturation in Asia, or their modern counterparts like Vincent Lebbe, Bede Griffiths, or Anthony de Mello, who have tried not only to translate the faith in terms of Asian wisdom but also to convey to the West some sense of the spiritual richness of the East.

Liberal Catholics of the nineteenth and early twentieth century who tried to effect some reconciliation between the Church and the positive features of the Enlightenment—including the spirit of democracy, human rights, critical reason, historical consciousness. This would include figures like Lord Acton, Lacordaire, Frederic Ozanam, Marc Sangnier, and Modernist scholars like Baron von Hügel. Peacemakers like Erasmus, Thomas Merton, and Dorothy Day, as well as modern prophets and martyrs who have resonated with the gospel themes of liberation and social justice: figures like Dom Helder Camara, Pedro Arrupe, Oscar Romero, Ignacio Ellacuria, Stanley Rother, Maura Clarke and the martyred North American churchwomen in El Salvador.

It may seem that it is a special challenge to discern the meaning of the faith for our "postmodern age." But it is no more difficult than the task that faced St. Augustine with the fall of the Roman Empire, or St. Francis of Assisi, or St. Ignatius Loyola. Those who today try to interpret the gospel in terms of existentialism or Marxism, the insights of feminism, Eastern philosophy, evolution, or quantum physics, are doing no more than what Clement of Alexandria attempted with Hellenistic philosophy, or Thomas Aquinas with the pagan philosophy of Aristotle—convinced that whatever is true is of God.

A NEW APPROACH TO THEOLOGY

Reflection on the saints also makes its contribution to the emerging field of narrative theology. We are becoming aware of the fact that stories, by virtue of their very structure, disclose meanings that cannot simply be reduced to a simple "moral" or lesson. There is a dimension of mystery that is not exhausted by the pat interpretation. Jesus himself chose to teach through parables, and clearly stories like the Good Samaritan or the Prodigal Son tell us more about the meaning of charity, repentance, or the love of God than many a sermon or theological tome.

The most potent vehicle for communicating the message of Christ has, in fact, been the gospel narratives themselves. The four Gospels do

not simply relate the teachings of Jesus; they set his teachings in the context of a life, a story of relationships and conflicts, a story of suffering, death, and ultimate vindication. That story, repeated over two millennia, has had the power to transform countless lives. It has that power still. And it reminds us that ultimately Christianity is not a matter of gnostic truths or logical syllogisms, but a challenge to enter into the logic of that story—to see and understand one's own life in its light.

Many of the figures in my book undertook such an explicit self-examination. They saw their own lives as a kind of text, in whose composition they discerned the hand of Providence. St. Augustine in his Confessions was the first to adopt this project, with immense implications for subsequent theology. Augustine's insight was that one's own experience, one's own psychology, might be the starting point for theological reflection.

Others in this tradition would include Pascal, Teresa of Avila, Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Simone Weil, Thérèse of Lisieux, and Henri Nouwen. It was not narcissism that motivated these writers to tell their own stories. To be sure, they believed that the meaning of their lives was comprehensible in terms of God's story of Jesus. But they did not believe this set them apart from all other people. Rather, they hoped to awaken readers to the fact that all our lives are illuminated by the same source.

The stories of the saints encourage us to examine our own lives in this light, to discern our own vocation, to understand the ways we are being challenged to respond more radically to God's invitation. As Jean-Pierre de Caussade wrote: "The Holy Spirit writes no more gospels except in our hearts. All we do from moment to moment is live this new gospel of the Holy Spirit. We, if we are holy, are the paper; our sufferings and our actions are the ink. The workings of the Holy Spirit are his pen, and with it he writes a living gospel."

The lessons of the saints are not contained in a set of "teachings." It is the saint's life itself that is our text, that offers meanings and mysteries that are never fully exhausted, and that reverberate with possibility and challenge even across the distance of centuries. Surely the message of St. Francis of Assisi is inseparable from his story. The same is true for St. Thomas More or St. Edith Stein.

At what point in a person's life do we determine that he or she "became" a saint? In some cases we detect a certain temperament, an instinct or appetite for the absolute that awaited the propitious circumstance: the obstacle that summoned untapped determination, the crisis that inspired invention, or the "chance" meeting that opened unseen doors. In other cases an incremental, all but invisible evolution in virtue results in a qualitative distinction between the saint and her contemporaries.

Where do we find the meaning of such a story? Is it on the last page, or the wisdom of a deathbed utterance? I think it is found in the story itself—a story that is not just about moments of religious exaltation, but that is also about loneliness, the restless search for a vocation, the experience of misunderstanding, friendship, failure, and the will to persevere in the face of all that and more.

A NEW APPROACH TO HOLINESS

Half of the figures in my book are officially recognized saints. Many others, like Mother Teresa, Pope John XXIII, John Henry Newman, or Padre Pio are plausible candidates for canonization. But my book invites readers to consider the distinctive "holiness" of many men and women far beyond the restrictive canons of the Church. To what extent can we say that these figures, and others like them, perform the "function" of saints? Indeed, what are the functions of a saint? Throughout much of Christian history the saint has been someone who was pretty much ignored in life and afterward venerated as a heavenly patron. But there is another tradition which sees in the saint a witness to God's mercy and justice; a mediating figure of the many paths of discipleship; an example, in Alban Butler's words, of the gospel "clothed as it were in a body"; a reminder, in short, of God. Such reminders take many forms.

Most readers—even Catholics—need little persuading that holiness is not the exclusive possession of the Catholic Church. Doubtless our faith may be nourished and sustained by examples of love and courage and virtue wherever they are found. Jesus himself so frequently drew on examples of Samaritans and others beyond his own Jewish family to highlight the meaning of faith or charity. Indeed, in one memorable parable he indicated that our salvation rests not on the orthodoxy of our confession but on whether we have given food to the hungry or water to a thirsty stranger.

Among the most powerful stories in my book are a pair of very different contemporaries: Franz Jägerstätter and Oscar Schindler. Jägerstätter was an Austrian peasant and a devout lay Catholic who was beheaded by the Nazis in 1942 for refusing to serve in Hitler's army. The fact that he was the single lay Catholic to pursue this course is remarkable enough. What is particularly striking about his story, however, is the extent to which he consulted a range of spiritual authorities, including his local bishop. All of them instructed him to do his duty and take the military oath. And yet, faithful to his conscience, he held firm to the conviction that any compromise with Hitler would be a betrayal of Christ. In many ways his witness conforms to a very traditional model of martyrdom. Like the early Roman martyrs he died bearing witness to Christ in the face of an idolatrous state. And yet the

idea of calling him a saint makes many people uncomfortable because it implies a judgment on everyone else, including church authorities, who let him die alone.

Then there is Oscar Schindler, the German industrialist who, during the war, made a fortune off of Jewish slave labor in Poland. Unlike Jägerstätter, Schindler seemed to live for nothing but his appetites and desires. But at some point he changed. His factory became a haven, an enterprise devoted to no other cause but saving lives. To this end he impoverished himself and repeatedly risked his life.

Jägerstätter may well be canonized one day. But what are we to make of a Schindler—how does his example relate to the company of saints? By conventional standards he was not a "good" man at all. Doubtless if he had gone to confession a priest would have scolded him about his adultery, his drinking, and his gambling. Who would guess that this "sinner," among his contemporaries, would be counted as a Righteous Gentile?

In the Jewish tradition one speaks of the Just, those anonymous men or women who maintain some redemptive enclave of virtue or faith, and thereby keep the world from destroying itself. How important it is for us to remember such figures, to enlarge our memory and our moral vocabulary to include such men and women, to know their names, to celebrate their deeds. They are proof that the evil of our century does not have to have the last word, that even in a dark time there remains a candle light of courage and virtue. In telling the story one candle lights another.

A common theme in the stories of the saints is the impact of an encounter with another saint—sometimes through a personal meeting, but often through reading. St. Augustine records the impact of his reading of the life of St. Antony. St. Ignatius credited his conversion to his reading of *The Golden Legend.* It was her reading of the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila that set Edith Stein on her own path to holiness. Holiness is contagious.

The Venerable Bede relates the story of St. Alban, who lived in third century Roman Britain. Though not a Christian, Alban gave shelter to a priest fleeing persecution. After listening to his guest's testimony, Alban exchanged garments with the hunted priest and so faced arrest and execution in his place. A thousand years later, another priest, the Jesuit Edmund Campion was executed in Elizabethan London. His blood splashed on the coat of a bystander, a student named Henry Walpole, who was so undone by the event that he himself went abroad to become a Jesuit and returned to face his own martyrdom.

Young people, as Dorothy Day used to observe, have an instinct for the heroic. There was a time when Catholic formation encouraged all believers to aspire to such heroism, if only in the arena of sexual purity

and obedience to church discipline. The exercise of the will through fasting, novenas, and prayer reminded ordinary believers that their faith made demands on them. Undoubtedly there was often a negative aspect to this, a tendency to compulsive scrupulosity, legalism, and hypocrisy. The Catholic rigorism of an earlier generation had nothing to teach Franz Jägerstätter or Oscar Schindler about the moral demands of their moment. Nevertheless the stories of the saints remind us that we are called to something higher and more demanding, that holiness is our vocation and the standard by which we must be judged. The stories of the saints, those who wagered everything, have the power to call us back to the life and death seriousness of the gospel challenge.

At the same time there is a sense among many Christians today that old models are not adequate and that we must somehow find our own way of being faithful. How important to discover that this has always been true. So many of the great saints in every age were pioneers, discoverers, who explored the boundaries, who imagined and lived out new ways of being faithful. As a result—long before they were canonized—they were often marginalized, persecuted, and accused of transgressing boundaries. In that sense too these figures may serve as heroes and guides, encouraging us to be faithful in our own way.

Not a few reviewers have felt compelled to note the many "obvious" saints I have neglected in my book. Aside from the fact that I deliberately limited myself to 365 entries, many of these overlooked saints undoubtedly reflect my own ignorance. But I am delighted if readers should be inspired to imagine their own lists. Let them include the friends and family members who have brought them closer to God. And let them correct my shameful omissions of Sts. Bernadette, Ita, and Christina the Astonishing. For my own part I have noted the passing of many servants of God who deserve to be included in a future volume: Victor Frankl, who shared the wisdom gleaned from the Holocaust in *Man's Search for Meaning;* Bishop Gerardi in Guatemala, who was murdered after releasing a prophetic report on human rights; Paulo Freire, the revolutionary educator from Brazil who invented the word "conscientization"; Bernard Häring, the moral theologian, who reminded us that the law of Christ is the law of love; Fr. Lawrence Jenco, the priest who survived years as a hostage in Lebanon, and who taught his captors a lesson in forgiveness; Danilo Dolci, who employed Gandhian nonviolence to combat the Sicilian mafia. We are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses.

The canon of saints is obviously weighted to the past. But we have suffered no lack of saints in our time, men and women who exhibit qualities of holiness that speak to the present age. Naturally I would include Dorothy Day in this company. For her integration of charity and justice, her vindication of the peace message of Jesus, her contributions

to the lay apostolate, and her attention to the radical implications of the Incarnation, I would count her as one of the great saints of our time. This would be so regardless of any official recognition. Nevertheless, it was a great moment in my life to be present at St. Patrick's Cathedral in November 1997 for a special Mass commemorating the hundredth anniversary of Dorothy's birth. There, in his homily, Cardinal John O'Connor reflected on the meaning of her life, and her special gifts to the Church, and announced his intention to introduce her cause for beatification.

One of the factors that enter into such a discussion would surely be the fact that Dorothy herself hated to be called a saint. "I don't want to be dismissed that easily," she used to say. She knew of the tendency, when we call someone a saint, to put him or her on a pedestal, out of reach, belonging to some rarefied atmosphere that we cannot hope to breathe.

At least part of my motivation for writing this book was to challenge that attitude. I believe that the saints are our true friends and companions. What we experience of life, its terrors, anxieties, and sorrows, they too have known. They shared our weaknesses. They too relied on grace. They were those who went before us on the path to which we all are called. One could say that the vocation of the Christian is nothing less than sanctification, the task of putting off the old man or woman and putting on Christ. It is a task that is never fully completed, and one that easily occupies our efforts for our entire lives. Nevertheless, we are not alone. The saints, those who finished the race, remind us that there is a path to holiness that lies within our individual circumstances, that engages our own talents and temperaments, that contends with our own strengths and limitations, that responds to the needs of our own neighbors and our particular moment in history. We are not called to be another St. Teresa, or St. Francis, or Dorothy Day. We are only called to be the saint who lies within our capacity, within the imagination of our better selves, to be one of the anonymous company of witnesses commemorated on the feast of All Saints. God help us.

Robert Ellsberg is editor-in-chief of Orbis Books. He has written and edited several books, including Dorothy Day: Selected Writings, Charles de Foucauld: Selected Writings, *and* Gandhi on Christianity *(all Orbis Books). His most recent book,* All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time *(Crossroad), won a Christopher Award and the Catholic Book Award for the best work in spirituality.*

Mary Frohlich, H.M.

Thérèse of Lisieux: "Doctor for the Third Millennium?"

In October 1997, one hundred years after her death, St. Thérèse of Lisieux was named "Doctor of the Church." The focus of this article is on what this newest Doctor may contribute to the development of theology in the current era. After a brief reflection on various evaluations of what Thérèse has to offer, I will review her milieu, her education, and some moments in her life story that were particularly significant for her development in theological insight. Finally, the concluding section will take a closer look at Thérèse's potential contributions to theology in the postmodern age.

ASSESSMENTS OF THÉRÈSE'S SIGNIFICANCE

While some are horrified at Thérèse's doctorate, and others find it difficult to fathom, a third group rejoices at the new affirmation of her outstanding sanctity and wisdom. Even among those who acclaim the power of her charism, however, a crucial question further differentiates the assessments of her significance. This is the question of whether her gift is essentially a confirmation of traditional, premodern understandings of the Christian way, or whether her life and work uniquely address the needs of humanity as it moves into the postmodern era.

This differentiation of views comes to the fore most clearly in discussions of Thérèse's final "trial of faith." Eighteen months before she died, only a few days after she began coughing up blood and realized that death was imminent, Thérèse fell into a profound state of spiritual darkness from which she apparently never emerged. The degree and character of this climactic experience have only comparatively recently become matters of public discussion; many who know Thérèse only from pious devotional materials or from reading her *Story of a Soul* in older versions are still unaware of it.

A recent review article summarizes the positions that various commentators have taken on this "trial of faith" (Marxer). At least two basic questions are under debate. First, was this final trial simply a manifestation of the "normal" development of the deeply-lived spiritual journey, such as has been described by Thérèse's Carmelite mentor John of the Cross under the rubric of the "dark night"? Or, alternatively, was Thérèse being given a special charism of lived identification with the contemporary non-believer, so that she shared to the full the emptiness,

alienation, and darkness of those without faith? The second question is related: Did Thérèse actually doubt? Or did she simply rest ever more deeply in dark, unrewarded faith, bearing patiently the tortures of temptations against faith even as she underwent the most intense agony of unanesthetized physical suffering?

Of even greater interest than the often complex and sophisticated answers that commentators give to these questions is the simple fact that they are being so seriously debated. Thérèse's "trial of faith" seems to strike to the quick of what is most at issue in the modern-become-postmodern world. Is the core of the human spirit empty? Are all our grand stories of "meaning" only pomp and circumstance? Is there really any balm for the vast and horrifying suffering—physical, emotional, and spiritual—that has been the lot of so many of our fellow humans? "The Little Flower" participates in these questions to a far greater degree than many of her ardent, but more traditionally-minded, devotees have ever imagined. Still, in order to assess the appropriateness of the title given her in a circular letter from the Superiors General of both major orders of Carmelites, "Doctor for the Third Millennium," we will have to examine more closely her life and work.

THÉRÈSE'S CULTURE, FAMILY LIFE, AND EDUCATION

Many of the concerns about Thérèse's doctorate arise from uneasiness with the character of the culture and upbringing that humanly shaped her. She came from a bourgeois, royalist, ultramontane milieu that practiced a highly visible and insular form of Roman Catholicism. Devotion to the pope, obedience to the laws and customs of the Church, reverence for priests, and the almost ostentatious practice of multiple devotions and penances were *de rigeur.* This ethos lumped materialism, positivism, liberalism, republicanism, and anticlericalism together as one massive evil, and the rising influence of these views in French society of that era was regarded with great horror. Many French Catholics developed a fortress mentality, devoting themselves to their families and withdrawing into rural or semi-rural enclaves where they could avoid the evils of "the world." The "grand narrative" of penance, spiritual warfare, trial, and heroic sacrifice on earth, followed by the reward of eternal life in heaven, shaped everything that these believers did. As has frequently been noted, much of their piety was sentimental and lacking in theological or aesthetic depth. It was also often legalistic and rigoristic, encouraging believers to count up their devotions and penances so as to earn divine favor and, ultimately, assure their entrance to heaven.

Thérèse was very much part of this milieu. She was born January 2, 1873, the youngest of five surviving children (all girls) in the family of Zélie and Louis Martin. Both parents had considered religious life, and they established a home life that was deeply immersed in Catholic

piety. Mme. Martin—a lacemaker whose business acumen had made the family financially quite comfortable—died when Thérèse was only four. Subsequently the family turned even more decidedly inward, moving permanently to the semi-rural refuge of Les Buissonets (near Lisieux). Living on their investments, they rarely had occasion to engage in significant interaction with anyone outside the extended family. Thérèse's only education outside the home consisted of five years of intermittent studies at a Benedictine abbey, and a few more years of individual tutoring. At the abbey she was exposed to the invigorating freshness of Guéranger's liturgical renewal, but also to the stultifying remnants of Jansenistic "hellfire and damnation" spirituality.

Before Thérèse had reached puberty, her three oldest sisters entered cloisters—two of them at the Carmel of Lisieux. In 1887, at age fourteen, Thérèse conceived the intense desire to enter Lisieux Carmel herself. Despite much opposition, she prevailed; on April 9, 1888, the fifteen-year-old Thérèse became a Carmelite postulant.

Female Carmelites of those days did not study theology in any formal sense. Rather, Thérèse imbibed the lived theology of her particular Carmelite tradition, especially through the liturgy and through observation or conversation with her novice mistress and other sisters. Some written materials that were available and highly regarded included the traditional documents of the Bérullian Carmels, the writings of the Carmelite saints Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, and certain other contemporary devotional texts. The Bible was usually available only in printed excerpts and through the liturgy.

In the end, young Thérèse only had nine and a half years to complete her life's work, for she was to die of tuberculosis on September 30, 1897. The sum total of her writings consists of the well-known *Story of a Soul,* plus 64 poems, 266 letters (some mere fragments or inscriptions), and 8 plays written for community recreations. All except the last are now widely available in English translation. The *Last Conversations* recorded during her final illness by her sisters and others are of more uncertain authenticity, but nevertheless offer another perspective on her spiritual journey. Also of great interest are numerous photographs, art works (many done by Thérèse herself), and other visual memorabilia. Besides these, there are the letters, testimonies, and statements of dozens of people who had some interaction with her, some of whom were still alive into the 1960s.

KEY MOMENTS OF THEOLOGICAL INSIGHT

Here I will present eight events or periods in Thérèse's life in which significant theological insight emerged.

1. *May 8, 1884: First Communion.* Thérèse made her First Communion when she was eleven years old. Her report, written in 1895, states: "Ah!

How sweet was that first kiss of Jesus! It was a kiss of *love;* I *felt* that I *was loved,* and I said: 'I love You, and I give myself to You forever!'" Of her next communion, about a month later, she reports: "My tears flowed again with an ineffable sweetness, and I repeated to myself these words of St. Paul: 'It is no longer I that live, it is Jesus who lives in me!'" (*Story* 77, 79). While yet a child, Thérèse already manifests her characteristic instinct for going straight to the heart of the matter—and for linking it intimately with the text of the Bible.

2. *December 25, 1886: Her "Grace of Conversion."* After Christmas Midnight Mass of 1886, in the midst of a trivial family incident, Thérèse received a grace that she remembered throughout her life as a definitive moment of conversion. Although she was nearly thirteen years old, she was still accustomed to being pampered with certain childish treats—in this case, little gifts in her shoes upon return from Midnight Mass. When her over-tired father made a disparaging remark about her babyish ways, Thérèse started to react with tears but then was astonished to discover that she was able to maintain her serenity and to seek to give her father joy despite the remark. In 1895 she summed up: "The work I had been unable to do in ten years was done by Jesus in one instant . . . I felt charity enter into my soul, and the need to forget myself and to please others; since then I've been happy!"

She then notes that shortly thereafter she began to hear echoing in her soul the cry of Jesus on the cross, "I thirst!" (John 19:28), and "I wanted to give my Beloved to drink and I felt myself consumed with a *thirst for souls*" (*Story* 98–99). Subsequently she began to pray for the conversion of the famous criminal Henri Pranzini, who did in fact kiss the cross before his execution. In this series of incidents we see young Thérèse already discovering the other-oriented thrust of her charism. In her adulthood this would develop into a deeply-felt missionary vocation, which she primarily manifested through prayer.

3. *January 10, 1889: Taking the title "of the Holy Face."* When Thérèse entered Carmel, she took the title "Thérèse of the Child Jesus." Only nine months later, however, when she entered the novitiate, she chose to be known as "Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face." Devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus, centered around the story of Veronica's Veil and the image that was said to have been imprinted thereon, was widespread in her milieu. Thérèse's particular way of developing this devotion focused strongly on the "hiddenness" of Jesus' face. Her discovery a few months later of the text of Isaiah 53, which includes the line "His face is as though hidden," was an intensely revelatory moment to which she returned repeatedly throughout her life in Carmel. The Holy Face became a symbolic node that nourished many of the most profound themes in Thérèse's spirituality: the deep, childlike hunger for Jesus' intimate presence; the sense of the "veil" that hides

the face of the Beloved; the identification with the passion, and with Jesus' own hiddenness; the eagerness to love Jesus in the smallest details of life, as Veronica had done.

4. *Late 1894: Growing Insight into "The Little Way."* In Thérèse's letters, especially the earlier ones, anything and everything is termed "little": little Thérèse, little heart, little Jesus, little place, little rabbit, etc. etc. On that level, this way of speaking comes across as merely a sort of cultural affectation. At the end of 1894, however, Thérèse discovered two scriptural texts that catalyzed a more profound appropriation of this theme of "littleness" within her spiritual life. The texts were: "Whoever is a little one, let him come to me" (Prov 9:4); and, "As a mother caresses her child, so I will comfort you; I will carry you on my breast, and I will rock you on my knees" (Isa 66:13, 12).

In September 1896, in a letter to her sister Marie, Thérèse used these texts to express her insight that "It is only love which makes us acceptable to God . . . Jesus deigned to show me the road that leads to the Divine Furnace, and this road is the surrender of the little child who sleeps without fear in its Father's arms" (*Story* 188; *Letters* II, 994). In May and June of 1897, she made the creative link between this insight and the image of an elevator "lifting me without fatigue to the infinite regions of love" (*Letters* II, 1098; *Story* 207–8). This image of the "elevator of grace" is perhaps the most succinct and engaging encapsulation of Thérèse's "little way" of radical, childlike trust.

5. *June 9–11, 1895: The Offering to Merciful Love.* On Trinity Sunday 1895, Thérèse received the inspiration to offer herself completely as a "victim of Merciful Love." This was a new and creative twist on the widespread spirituality of reparation, in which pious people offered themselves as victims of Divine Justice to make up for the sins of the world. It was also an explicit rejection of the then-common assumption that one must present God with many and difficult acts of asceticism and charity in order to "earn" salvation for oneself and others.

Thérèse's insight was that what God desires most is to love the world; therefore, simply to open oneself radically to that love—to be completely consumed by it, and thus to be its "victim"—is the greatest act of love for both God and neighbor. She wrote: "In order to live in one single act of perfect Love, I offer myself as a victim of Holocaust to your merciful love, asking You to consume me incessantly, allowing the waves of *infinite tenderness* shut up within you to overflow into my soul, and thus I may become a *martyr* of Your *Love,* O my God!" (*Story* 277). On June 11, along with her sister Celine, the twenty-two year old Thérèse made this Offering. It is perhaps the definitive statement of Thérèse's understanding of her vocation as lover, missionary, and martyr.

6. *April 5, 1896: Entrance into the "Night of Faith."* On the night of Good Friday of 1896, Thérèse coughed up blood and knew that her life

on earth would not last much longer. At that time her spirit was so clear and full of peace that the prospect of imminent death only increased her fervor and joy. Easter Sunday, however, told a different story. She found herself "invaded by the thickest darkness," so that "the thought of heaven, up until then so sweet to me, [was] no longer anything but the cause of struggle and torment." The works of John of the Cross, who had already been a favorite mentor for some years by this time, offered an interpretation of this sort of trial; but in this case the depth of the darkness was so extreme that it overwhelmed any attempt at finding meaning, even from such an old friend.

Whereas previously she could not even imagine that some people actually had no faith, now she learned from experience that there are "souls who have no faith, and who, through the abuse of grace, lost this precious treasure, the source of the only real and pure joys" (*Story* 210–11). In this state of darkness and trial, which apparently lasted until her death eighteen months later, Thérèse learned to pray in a new way: "Have pity on us, O Lord, for we are poor sinners!" She no longer set herself apart; she sat at the table of sinners as one among the others. Yet even here, she was faithful to her missionary vocation. She wrote: "O Jesus! If it is needful that the table soiled by [sinners] be purified by a soul who loves You, then I desire to eat this bread of trial at this table until it pleases you to bring me into Your bright Kingdom" (*Story* 212).

7. *September 8, 1896: "Love in the Heart of the Church."* Thérèse was on a private retreat from the evening of September 7, 1896, to the morning of September 18. During the period prior to the retreat she apparently had been struggling mightily with the contrast between her vast desires and her painfully limited and mundane actuality. As was her wont, she turned to Scripture — in this case, to 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. On September 8 she wrote down the astonishing insight that emerged. First she named all her desires: to be warrior, priest, apostle, doctor, martyr, crusader, papal guard, prophet. Then, reading 1 Corinthians 12, she saw that each of these gifts is given to a different member of the body, and no member can have them all. Continuing on to 1 Corinthians 13, she read that the greatest gift of all is love.

Thérèse then made perhaps the best-known and most magnificent of her creative leaps to insight. "I understood that if the Church had a body composed of different members, the most necessary and noble of all could not be lacking to it, and so I understood that the Church *had a Heart and that this Heart* was *burning with love.* . . . I understood that love comprised all vocations, that love was everything, that it embraced all times and places . . . in a word, that it was eternal! Then, in the excess of my delirious joy, I cried out: O Jesus, my Love . . . my *vocation,* at last I have found it . . . my vocation is love!" (*Story* 194). Thérèse had discovered the culminating insight of her "little way": no

matter how small or limited one's sphere of life, one can embrace the infinity of God simply by loving.

8. *June–August, 1897: Letters on "Heaven."* Thérèse's final testament comes in the last letters she was able to write to the two priests who had been given to her as "spiritual brothers." She wrote that she was happy to be dying—not, however, because she would be freed from her trials and suffering, as was a common theme in the "grand narrative" of her era. Rather, her eagerness was for the opportunity to fulfill her vocation of loving both God and her neighbor much more totally and freely from heaven than she could from earth.

On July 14, in her last letter to Père Roulland, she wrote: "Ah! Brother, I feel it, I shall be more useful to you in heaven than on earth, and it is with joy that I come to announce to you my coming entrance into that blessed city . . . I really count on not remaining inactive in heaven. My desire is to work still for the Church and for souls. I am asking God for this and I am certain He will answer me." In several letters to Abbé Bellière, she repeats similar themes. Once again, we see Thérèse boldly revisioning the received wisdom of her era in view of her charism of radical trust and love.

THÉRÈSE AND THEOLOGY

What could it mean to call Thérèse a "Doctor for the Third Millennium"? The suspicion of some is that this is an effort on the part of Church authorities to return to certain problematic forms of either premodern or modern understandings of the theological task. There are significant witnesses in the patristic tradition for the idea that the true theologian is the person who knows God—that is, the saint or mystic—rather than the one who has studied a great deal. While few would dispute an element of truth in this premodern view, its simplistic application as a standard of theological astuteness could easily reduce theology to little more than the collection of wise insights from holy people. In the modern context, on the other hand, a significant stream of Roman Catholic theology has strongly emphasized such themes as papal primacy, the extrinsic authority of the magisterium, and an exclusivist view of the Roman Catholic Church as "true Church." Thérèse's cultural insertion, as well as certain aspects of her personal worldview, seem at face value to reinforce this sort of theology. If either of these views is the central meaning of Thérèse's doctorate, it does not seem to bode well for theology's future development.

To be truly a "Doctor for the Third Millennium" would, it seems, require that the individual offer a response to the issues of what we call "postmodernism." The postmodern world is one in which all "grand narratives" and overarching schemes of order have been pronounced illusory, and even personal identity has been discovered to lack basic

coherence and continuity. "Things fall apart, the center cannot hold," Yeats wrote, naming in poetry the forboding of a world whose very foundations appear to have crumbled into teetering piles of ruins. Do Thérèse's life and writings significantly address the theological issues this raises? Here I will make a case that they do.

Bernard Lonergan has spoken of "foundations" as the conversions (religious, moral, intellectual) which establish the horizon within which one can judge what is true and commit oneself to it. In the full theological enterprise, the functional specialties of research, interpretation, history, and dialectic can proceed even without these conversions; but the specialties of doctrines, systematics, and communications require them (1971: 267f). An argument can be made, I believe, that Thérèse is a "foundational theologian" even though she was not formally trained in any of the other functional specialties which normally make up the repetoire of a professional theologian.

The key moments of theological insight reviewed above have in common that they are events of profound, experiential conversion for Thérèse. Her understanding of who God is, what God is doing in the world, the nature of the Church, and other theological themes emerges as autobiography. In this, she represents in an unvarnished way the "turn to the subject" that has restructured theology in the past 150 years. Yet, significantly, Thérèse does not fall into the trap of a subjectivism that simplistically claims one's own experience as the final authority. Powerful insight into truth emerges for Thérèse as she engages in profound conversation with liturgical events, biblical texts, or other Christian classics. This conversation is mutually reinterpretive: Thérèse's identity and personhood are reshaped, at the same time that she discovers a fresh and deeply-grounded interpretation of the event, text, or classic. Often, these Theresien interpretations are quite at odds with what was commonly believed and taught in her environment; yet they are not merely idiosyncratic reflections. Rather, Thérèse's theological insights are, at their core, articulations of the religious and moral conversions she experienced in a life-conversation with Christian traditions. In this sense, she seems to fulfill the most basic qualifications for being a "foundational theologian" in Lonergan's sense.

One may raise a question, however, about her "intellectual conversion." In Lonergan's framework, this differentiation of what he terms "interiority" requires a conscious awareness of the different types of operations of knowing (i.e., experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding) as one engages in them, along with the ability to move among them appropriately and intentionally. Not surprisingly, Thérèse is far from manifesting such sophisticated cognitive introspection—at least in the discursive form commonly described in Lonerganian literature. Elsewhere, however, I have explored the possibility that the most pro-

found contemplatives develop a form of interiority that is even more significant for cognitional knowing; that is, the ability to differentiate the contents of mind from the primordial ground of knowing, which is a state of "bare consciousness" without explicit content (Frohlich: 196f).

At this stage of research my application of this to Thérèse is still speculative, but the question I would propose is whether perhaps her "night of faith" can be understood from one angle in terms of this more contemplative form of interiority. The chief terror of this night for Thérèse seems to have been that it forcibly shifted her mental center of gravity away from the images and stories about "heaven" that had given her personal world coherence since childhood. These suddenly seemed like fairy tales; nothing remained except an abyss in which one lives by faith or not at all. My suggestion is that this was—among other things—a kind of radical "intellectual conversion" that definitively shifted Thérèse's core way of knowing from one that was still delimited by psychological and cultural frameworks, to one that could relativize these in favor of a way of knowing based in the boundlessness of God.

The doctrine of "heaven" that Thérèse began to expound during her last months, under the influence of the night of faith, can easily be interpreted at first glance as nothing more than a new version of the childish stories that she had heard all her life. A deeper look, however, finds that it is exactly the cotton-candy image of heaven that has fallen away. What remains is one thing: absolute fidelity to the love of God and neighbor. Thérèse begins to teach that heaven is not a far-away happy land of ethereal beings, but rather is love—love in this small time and place, and love unbounded by time or space. Thérèse's growing conviction that the love she has begun to practice in her earthly life will only grow and become more effective for others after she has passed from this life is not just a naive "continuation of life" view of bodily resurrection. Rather, it is an insight into the mutual coinherence of eternity and each moment of time, so that this small moment already opens out onto eternity, and entrance into eternity does not remove one from presence in time.

In fact, this was not only an intellectual insight for Thérèse, but a summary of the witness of her life. Thérèse indeed lived a remarkably "small" life—small in years, in diversity of personal contacts, in education, in the concrete scope of her deeds. What she discovered was that far from being an obstacle to God, smallness is in fact the only avenue of approach. Each one of us will find God nowhere except in this small place where we are standing, and in this small present moment. And yet from this small place, intimately linked to God, it is possible to love without boundaries. There is profound material here for reflection on how to resolve one of the quandaries of postmodernism: How can we

affirm the vast diversity of cultures and worldviews, without gutting completely the notion of "truth"? Thérèse witnesses to a kind of truth that is known only through complete immersion in particularity, yet which blossoms into a communion accessible to all without exception.

These theological insights, of course, call for further reflection and systematic articulation of a type that Thérèse herself was not equipped to do. Nevertheless, her contribution functions as what David Tracy calls a "classic": "the disclosure of a reality we cannot but name truth" (108). In a similar vein, William Thompson has explored how the lives and writings of the saints are central to the development of theology. And Paul Ricoeur has written about the core role of "testimony"—"words, works, actions, and . . . lives which attest to an intention, an inspiration, an idea at the heart of experience and history which nonetheless transcend experience and history" (119–20). It is only in testimony, he observes, that "the self-manifestation of the absolute here and now indicates the end of the infinite regress of reflection" (144).

It is thus, I think, that we can affirm the contribution of Thérèse as a "foundational theologian." By no means do Tracy, Thompson, or Ricoeur suggest that recourse to saints' lives or writings should bring an end to the discourses of professionally-trained theologians. Rather, they should stand at the beginning, as the witnesses to foundational truth without which our discourses soon begin to chase their tails. At the beginning of the twentieth century Friedrich Von Hügel observed that in our times it is only the life of a saint that can resolve for us the antinomy between "the particular concrete experience which alone moves us and helps to determine our will, but which, seemingly, is untransferable, indeed unrepeatable; and the general, abstract reasoning which *is* repeatable, indeed transferable, but which does not move us or help directly to determine the will" (von Hügel: 10).

Perhaps we should see in von Hügel's comment, and in Thérèse's doctorate, the beginnings of a sort of "second naivete" period in the Christian theological undertaking. Paul Ricoeur speaks of the "first naivete" as involving an enthusiasm born of the comparatively uncritical mixing of our own projections and a text's witness. In theology, the period when allegorical methods reigned would be an example of first naivete. The second period is one of critique and analysis, in which one strips away both one's own and the text's pretensions. The entire modern era has emphasized this sort of mentality. A "second naivete" period may emerge when one can return to the text able to receive its witness as actually enhanced by the humility born of the fruits of critique (Ricoeur: 23). The postmodern era may be such an opportunity for such a "second naivete" in theology, as theologians—without abandoning all the highly-developed tools of critical analysis—search for theological foundations in the testimonies of the saints.

A recent book by Christopher O'Donnell (1997) proposes that insight into the "Communion of Saints" is at the very core of Thérèse's contribution to theology. O'Donnell points to the "Offering to Merciful Love" and the famous discourse on "Love at the Heart of the Church" as key documents with which ecclesiologists can develop a more profoundly-based doctrine of the Church. While basically agreeing with his analysis of the significance of this theme, I would place Thérèse's core contribution at an even deeper level. In her final night of faith, when the very face of God—indeed, every representation that had sustained her—sank irretrievably into the darkness, she witnessed to what may be the only "foundations" upon which theology in a postmodern age can build: namely, a small and naked person standing in the abyss, trusting in God and absolutely committed to loving. That is, after all, how the Church began. It would not be surprising if it had something to do with how it will continue.

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Mary Frohlich, H.M., is assistant professor of spirituality at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. She is the author of Praying with Scripture *(Center for Learning, 1993) and* The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic: A Study of Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle *(Scholar's Press, 1993).*

Saint-Related Information on the Web

http://www.catholic.org/saints/stsindex.html

Catholic Online Saints and Angels provides histories of saints in alphabetical order. They also maintain a frequently asked questions page about saints at http://www.catholic.org/saints/faq.html.

http://www.catholic-pages.com/saints/

The Catholic Pages saints page offers an introduction to the saints and the canonization process and a list of doctors of the church.

http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook3.html

The *Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies* presents ancient, Byzantine, and medieval hagiographic original texts along with basic information on the saints.

Read an excerpt from Robert Ellsberg's book *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time* online at http://www.sojourners.com/soj9709/970921.html.

Gary Riebe-Estrella, S.V.D.

La Virgen: A Mexican Perspective

INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of the communion of saints has had a long history within the Christian tradition. The understanding of this doctrine, however, has shifted through the ages, reflecting both changing theological concerns as well as the preoccupations of the Christian faithful (Osborne, 1987). As is true for all attempts to unpack the meaning of the faith, understandings of the communion of saints are exercises in contextual theology. Particular factors in a given context shape the outcome of a particular theological effort, but in every case contextualization is part of the very nature of all theology (Bevans, 1992).

A critical part of the consideration of the communion of saints is the understanding which emerges of Mary, the special saint. The thesis of this article is that, given the particular cultural and historical factors out of which Mexican religious faith has emerged, *la Santísima Virgen,* particularly, though not exclusively, under the title of Santa María de Guadalupe, is *not* viewed by most Catholics of Mexican descent as a saint—a human being who has led an exemplary Christian life and who after death shares in the beatific vision. Rather, *la Virgen* functions in this context as an icon of God.

Every image of God "functions," both to explain the current situation in which a people finds itself and, out of that world view, to orient the behavior of the group and of the individual believer (Johnson, 1993). As a result, an exploration of the life situation out of which an image of God comes, and of the behaviors to which it leads, can be used as a methodological key to discover the meaning of any image of the divine. The first three sections of this article, therefore, will deal with the cultural and historical circumstances which have allowed *la Virgen* to be reinterpreted within Mexican Catholicism[1] as an image of God. I will then raise a series of questions which demand further research, and, finally, will explore the giftedness that this particular feature of Mexican Catholicism might be to Roman Catholicism as a whole.[2]

[1] Although a number of Latino theologians refer to this world view as popular religion, I would suggest that it is actually an alternative, though equally valid, form of Catholicism to that which has developed in North Atlantic countries. See Riebe-Estrella 1998.

[2] While the contributions of Latinos to the Catholic Church are most often thought of as the result of specific cultural values important in Hispanic life, such as that of family, the U.S. bishops expressly include challenges offered by Latinos to the faith life of the Church: "This Hispanic presence challenges us all to be more *catholic,* more open to the diversity of religious expression" (NCCB, 1984, §1).

A SOCIO-CENTRIC CULTURE

Mexican culture is fundamentally a socio-centric or organic culture. That is, it is premised on the group as the fundamental unit of society. In a socio-centric culture, one's identity is rooted in the group (first, usually, in the primary group which is the family). One matures by accepting and perhaps redefining one's role *within* the group, but never by stepping outside the group (Schweder and Bourne, 1984). For the purposes of this article, the principal consequences of the socio-centric nature of Mexican culture are twofold. First, relationship is primary; maintaining harmony with the other members of one's group and expanding one's world by the inclusion of others in one's group are primary motivators of interpersonal behavior. Second, institutional roles are secondary to roles defined by one's group membership; these latter are relationships founded on trust, a trust which is inviolable since it is the glue of the mutual relationships of the members whose primary source of identity is precisely their membership in the group.

THE RELIGIOUS *MESTIZAJE*

The second factor which has influenced the texture of Mexican Catholicism is the religious *mestizaje* that took place as a result of the conquest. *Mestizaje* is the mixing together of two elements (cultures, religious systems, races) in such a way that a wholly new element is created: a new culture, a new religious system, a new race (Elizondo, 1978). The two elements of the religious *mestizaje* relevant here are the indigenous or Meso-American world of religious imagination and that of the *conquistadores* of sixteenth century medieval Catholic Spain. These two elements have a peculiar relationship to one another: the indigenous religious world is the *underlay,* what pre-existed and was foundational for Meso-Americans; the religious world of the Spanish conquerors and missionaries is the *overlay,* one imposed from above and foreign to the foundational underlay. This type of relationship is distinct from the meeting of two elements in a situation of equality, and has determining effects on the content of the images of God which result from the *mestizaje*.

The Ancient Mexican Faith

The Nahuas (the cultural group to which the major indigenous tribes of the central valley of Mexico belonged) experienced life as the result of opposing forces in tension with one another (Carrasco, 1990). If left to itself, life in the natural world was unstable at best. The Nahuas were an agricultural people and depended upon the interrelation of the natural and divine worlds. In fact, the dynamism of the world was envisioned as a mirror of the world of the divine. Each world was composed of time and space. Like two sets of twin inter-

locking wheels, the time and space of the divine regularly intersected with the time and space of the human and natural world. At those times and in those places, the world of the divine and its power were accessible, with energy flowing in both directions. The tone of encounter was defined as reciprocity (León-Portilla, 1993). That is, the Nahuatl myths of creation told of secondary manifestations of the divine who sacrificed themselves so that the world could be.[3] The human response to this divine self-sacrifice was penance and offerings, aimed to reciprocate for the actions of the divine and, in so doing, to feed the energy of forces held in tension, the origination of all that is. Acts of reciprocity accessed the divine power in order to bring it to bear on this life and the vagaries of this life.

Since the human mirrored the divine in an interlocking relationship, religion for the Nahuas was primarily a social phenomenon (of individuals within society and of society with the divine). The divine itself was characterized as social (León-Portilla, 1963:85–95). Though there is plentiful scholarly debate on whether or not Nahuatl religion was polytheistic, the first god (Ometéotl) was dual in manifestion (male and female), but nevertheless one. The sages, some scholars argue, understood all the other "gods" to be further manifestations of the one god (determined in their individuality by times and places), and all of these were also dual (male and female). The common folk may have understood these secondary manifestations to be separate from the first god, but the incorporation of countenances and other attributes of one member of the pantheon into the traits of other members demonstrates the mutual permeability and intrinsic interrelationship of the Nahuatl images of the divine. Whether in the more sophisticated circle of the sages or in the popular beliefs of the common folk, the divine was imaged as multiple, as social, as group; of that we can be certain.

Lastly, it is important to note that the Nahuas had no philosophical system which might elaborate a metaphysical basis for their understanding of the relationship between the manifestations of the divine. Rather, they used poetic structures to open the depths of the human personality to the elusive world of truth. Basing their approach on duality as rooted in the divine, they developed the use of the *difrasismo*, metaphors which generally consisted of two words or phrases joined to form a single idea. Immersion in this poetic language allowed the human heart to perceive in metaphorical language the divine reality, or truth,

[3] There is an uncanny similarity in the divine action between the Nahuatl creation myth of the Age of the Fifth Sun and Johannine theology. In the former, creation resulted from the decision and voluntary sacrifice by the sons of the Dual God, who threw themselves into the sacrificial fire; in the latter, God freely gives his Son for the life of the world. For a recounting of the Nahuatl creation myth, see León-Portilla 1963, 38–45.

which was mirrored in human life (Carrasco, 1990:79–81). The metaphorical nature of this language is fundamental for grounding the interchangeableness of images of the divine in the Nahuatl religious imagination.

The Spanish Overlay

Interestingly, sixteenth-century Spanish Catholicism was also shaped by opposing forces held in tension (Marzal, 1993). The nine hundred years of the *reconquista* of Spain from the Moors left their militaristic and triumphalistic imprint on the ethos of medieval Spanish Catholicism. At the same time, it is important to remember that the Catholicism of the conquistadors and the missionaries was one almost untouched by the controversies of the Reformation. Its thought and structure "are essentially identical to those inherited from the twilight of the ancient world and the patristic period" (Weckmann, 1992: 296).

For Spanish Catholics, in contrast to the Nahuas, the divine intervened in this world, but resided in another. Divine power was characterized less as permeating reality than breaking into it. The divine worked often, if not predominantly, through intermediaries (Mary and the saints) who were the objects of intense devotion and subjects of miraculous interventions. The power of the divine was accessed through prayer, ritual and sacrifice. These were understood as a kind of barter, or exchange of one good for another (Marzal, 1993: 149). In this way divine power was brought to bear on this life and the next.

A brief comparison of these two worlds of religious imagination shows striking similarities but with significant differences. Both worlds of religious imagination had a preoccupation with avoiding disaster and with protection from evil (life forces/*reconquista*). In both worlds, the divine was readily accessible, though for Meso-Americans it was by interpenetration, and for Spaniards by intervention. In both, one accessed a single divine source or power, but in multiple manifestations or through intermediaries. Access was achieved through ritual where there is an "interchange" between the human and the divine (for the Nahuas, it was understood as reciprocity, due to the divine initiative; for Spanish Catholics, it was seen as earning a favor).

The imposition of the Spanish religious imagination over the Nahuatl recalls the inequality of the relationship between the two elements. Visually, one might think of the Spanish world being pushed down over the indigenous. But the indigenous is the *materia prima,* the matrix, as it were, on which the Spanish imagination was imposed. Where there are similarities between the overlay and the underlay, Spanish imagery can be accepted, though it is still seen within a different matrix, or through different eyes. In this case, religious forms be taken on by the indigenous; even the imagery can be adopted, though its mean-

ing will be at least somewhat transformed by the matrix. Where the worlds are greatly dissimilar, chances are that the indigenous perspective will prevail since it is foundational.

At this juncture, one must also recall what has been said about the contours of Mexican culture. In the peculiar mixing that is a *mestizaje* the cultural contours of the indigenous world will help determine the shape the overlay begins to take as it is imposed on the indigenous underlay.

Mexican Religious Imagination

Mexicans begin with the primacy of relationships. As we have seen, the primacy of relationship in a socio-centric culture is founded on the group as the source of identity. One's primary world is expanded by the inclusion of others, not simply in relationship, but in membership in the group. The interlocking of the divine with the human in the Nahuatl religious world reflects the expansion of the human world to include the divine. In other words, the new religious world of the *mestizaje,* of Mexican culture, will image the divine as part of life's landscape. The presence of the divine is pervasive and close; it can be encountered everywhere and always, without prejudicing *particularly* sacred times and places. One is unable to separate either life or the world into spheres of sacred and profane (Elizondo, 1975:158)

This foundational relationship with the divine implies, as it does with any member of one's group, mutual responsibilities based on trust. The exercise of these responsibilities issues in an interchange of goods, though this is understood not as earning a favor, but as the natural outcome of the fundamental relationship. One can approach the divine, either directly or through intermediaries/manifestations, and in a spirit of reciprocity one makes an offer in exchange for the divine power which is needed to effect change in one's life and one's world. This is not to force God's or a saint's hand; it is rather a way of concretizing the mutual responsibility that relationship with the divine naturally demands. The *manda/promesa,* the promise to do something for God or a saint if, or, better, *as* the divine acceded to the request, is more correctly interpreted within the context of reciprocity rather than as a form of bartering because, in practice, the promise must be kept whether or not the favor is forthcoming. To be in relationship, to love, is to "do for."

The exercise of reciprocity or mutual responsibility enfleshes the trust which is the "glue" sealing the relationships of the group members. While it is true that roles are defined before the exercise of reciprocity and they must be respected, nevertheless it is the fulfillment of the trust which actually determines the relationships which will be solidified and relied upon. Though in European Catholicism patron saints or Mary are not God, Mexicans approach these figures primarily because their reciprocity in relationship is tested and true.

Furthermore, it must be said that discerning whether or not the intermediaries are divine themselves is not a preoccupation for us Mexicans. Rather, in exercising their reciprocity, such intermediaries allow us truly to expand our world to include the divine. No matter who the intermediaries are in themselves, therefore, the divine is present to us in them on the foundational level on which they live. Therefore, attention to the specificity of roles (God, Christ, Mary, the saints) is not of great importance; they may, in fact, be interchangeable. Being Christo-centric, Marian, or God-centered are not our questions. What we do perceive is that the divine is present to us in all the graciousness that reciprocity entails (mutual love), however we might image that relationship.

THE ORIGINATING CONTEXT: THE CONQUEST

The third factor that has influenced the texture of Latino popular religious beliefs is the originating context of Latino popular religion, the conquest itself. Whether one chooses to talk of the events following 1492 as "encounter" or "discovery," the next decades were for the indigenous of the Americas decades of violence and vanquishment. More than simply an atmosphere of violence, the context of the religious *mestizaje* I have been describing was one of vanquishment, of some peoples "having become the losing victims of someone else's victory" (Espín, 1992a: 74). The resulting sense of powerlessness and of marginalization serves as the color for the texture of the cloth woven from the coming together of two worlds of religious imagination. It should not be surprising that the way we Latinos image our relationship with the divine is an attempt to counter both our powerlessness and our marginalization.

The socialization of the divine, imaged as relationships quite similar to those we have in the group(s) which found our identity, allows us access to the divine power in acts of reciprocity which serve to ward off the evil and bring the good, acts which we are sociologically powerless to do ourselves. Mexican religious practice often centers on the themes of protection and nurture, imaged in the icon of Our Lady of Guadalupe. As a female representation of the divine (the Nahuatl divine is both male and female), she guards and protects her children, wraps them in her maternal mantle, and accompanies them on their journey. As *la Dolorosa,* another pivotal aspect of *la Virgen,* she herself has felt powerless in the face of the death of her Son and, though vanquished, she was not victimized, but endured her powerlessness with integrity. More than a model of the prime virtue of *aguantar,*[4] she is the source of the power to do as she did. Whether as Guadalupe or as *la Dolorosa,* she images the presence of the divine in power for the powerless, some-

[4] *Aguantar* is usually translated as "to endure." However, it bears the connotation of "persevering through."

times to change life but always to endure it with integrity. For those who cannot change life's conditions, meaning is found *in* suffering, not simply beyond it. The important arena is not the next encounter with the enemy; those lines have been drawn and we have been counted the losers. The important arena is the integrity of the group, preserving intact the relationships from which identity, and so life, come.

QUESTIONS THAT REMAIN

The contours of Mexican culture, the similarities of the overlay and the underlay in the religious *mestizaje* which is Mexican Catholicism, and the marginalization and powerlessness of the majority of Mexican believers set the stage for the reinterpretation of *la Virgen* as an image of the divine. Yet the exact contours of this new religious imagination remain shrouded by the catechesis that the Mexican faithful have undergone. Analysis of significant religious celebrations such as *Mañanitas* to *la Virgen* indicate that indeed she functions as the divine (Riebe-Estrella, 1998). A growing body of Latino literature portrays her as the divine presence (Villaseñor, 1991, esp. 423–25 and Castillo, 1996). Yet Mexican Catholics, in the imposition of Spanish medieval Catholicism, have learned to articulate their faith in Western categories of thought. How does one get underneath the language to the religious imagination which actually informs religious practices and expressions, especially when one suspects that the language hides the actual configuration of faith? (Espín, 1992b and 1994). In addition, what effects has the *segundo mestizaje,* the encounter between Mexican Catholicism and U.S. Catholicism, had on this reinterpretation of *la Virgen,* given the improved socio-economic conditions of many U.S. Latinos and their exposure to church life and religious education within the context of the United States?

Both these questions call for further research, not only from within the theological disciplines but also research which employs the perspective and tools of the social sciences.

THE GIFTS OF *LA VIRGEN*

Yet, while this research remains to be undertaken, Mexican Catholicism's reinterpretation of *la Virgen* as an image of God already offers a series of insights which might prove enriching to Roman Catholicism in today's Western cultural scene.

The death of the great utopias and demise of a single overarching narrative which mark the boundary between modernity and postmodernity leave many U.S. Catholics with only a quite personalized and privatized faith. *La Virgen* counters that perspective as the active presence of the divine in a resacralized world.

As a female image of the divine, she allows women another avenue for understanding themselves as *imago Dei*. Not only does the God portrayed in Roman Catholicism have female characteristics, but the divine itself can be understood as female. Rooted in a religious imagination which holds to duality but equality, woman is affirmed as reflective of God without denying God's image present in men as well.

Finally, in a society in which the gap between rich and poor grows larger each day and approximates in the U.S. context what has been true for so long in marginalized countries, *la Virgen* makes readily available a sense of the divine which is in solidarity with the world's suffering and oppressed.

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Gary Riebe-Estrella, S.V.D. is assistant professor of systematic theology and Hispanic ministry at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, where he serves also as vice-president and academic dean. He is past president of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States.

Michael G. Lawler

Divorce and Remarriage in the Catholic Church: Ten Theses

THESIS 1 *Marriage between baptized believers is a sacrament, that is, a prophetic symbol of the union between Christ and the Church.*

Prophets were fond of symbolic actions. Jeremiah bought an earthen pot, dashed it to the ground, and proclaimed, "Thus says the Lord of Hosts: so will I break this people and this city as one breaks a potter's vessel" (Jer 19:11). Ezekiel took a brick, drew a city on the brick, laid siege to the city, and proclaimed the city "Jerusalem" and his action "a sign for the house of Israel" (Ezek 4:1-3; see also 5:5). Prophetic action-symbols reveal in representation the presence and action of God. Jeremiah's shattering of his pot and Ezekiel's destruction of his city is God's shattering of Jerusalem. The prophet Hosea portrayed marriage, the union of a man and a woman, as a prophetic symbol of the union between God and God's people, a reality not only of law but also of grace. On the one hand, it bespeaks the covenanted love of a man and a woman; on the other hand, it *also* bespeaks the covenanted love of God and God's people. This Jewish view of marriage, with a change of *dramatis personae,* became the Christian view. The Letter to the Ephesians taught that marriage is a prophetic symbol of the new covenant between Christ and Christ's Church; later Christian history taught that it was sacrament (Lawler: 1995, 5–62).

A sacrament, then, is a prophetic symbol in which the Church reveals in representation the grace of God. To say that marriage is a sacrament is to say that it reveals the intimate union of a man and a woman *and* the intimate union of Christ and Christ's Church. A couple entering any marriage says to one another "I love you and I give myself to and for you." A couple entering a sacramental marriage say that too, of course, but also more. Each says "I love you as Christ loves his Church, steadfastly and faithfully." From its beginning, therefore, a sacramental marriage is intentionally more than human covenant; it is *also* religious covenant. It is more than law; it is *also* grace. From its beginning, God and Christ are present in it, gracing it, modeling and challenging its faithfulness. This presence of God, grace in its most ancient Christian meaning, is not something extrinsic to Christian marriage but something intrinsic to it, something without which it would not be *Christian* marriage at all.

I note here, and will develop below in Thesis 7, an important sacramental fact. A truly *Christian* marriage is not simply a marriage between two people who *say* they are Christians (Lawler, 1991: 712–31). It is a marriage between two Christian *believers* for whom the steadfast love of God and of God's Christ is consciously present as model for their mutual love. The love of faith-filled spouses is, indeed, the very matrix of the sacrament of marriage, for it is in and through the spouses' love that God and Christ are prophetically made present. It is a matter for empirical verification, however, that not all Christian marriages become permanent. Some die, and when they die it makes no sense to claim they are still binding ontologically, for the death of a marriage is as definitive as the death of a spouse. When a marriage dies, the Church traditionally deals with it in one of its many canonical processes. Its claim that it is precluded from doing otherwise by "fidelity to the words of Jesus" is not convincing in the honest light of its own ancient tradition.

THESIS 2 *The theology and practice of the Catholic Church with respect to divorce and remarriage are not as faithful to the New Testament as is claimed.*

On October 14, 1994, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith sent a letter to the bishops of the world entitled "Concerning the Reception of Holy Communion by Divorced and Remarried Members of the Faithful" (CDF, 1994). That letter purported to articulate Catholic doctrine concerning divorce and remarriage and claimed, citing Mark 10:11-12, "fidelity to the words of Jesus Christ." The implication was that, since the doctrine in question is based on fidelity to the words of Jesus, it is irreformable. That argument might be true if the words of Jesus as cited from Mark were the only teaching in the New Testament on divorce and remarriage. That, of course, is not the case.

Paul attributes a prohibition of divorce and remarriage to the Lord (1 Cor 7:10-11), and the Gospels report four times words of Jesus about divorce and remarriage (Mark 10:11-12; Matt 5:32 and 19:9; Luke 16:19). What is critical about these reports for our present purpose is that there are five of them, that they are not in agreement, and that they are not all derived from Jesus. Though Paul reports Jesus' command on divorce and remarriage (1 Cor 7:10-11), he also gives it his own nuance (7:12-16) and that nuance passed into the law of the Catholic Church as the Pauline Privilege. Matthew also nuances Jesus' words with his own exception (5:32; 19:9) which is a genuine exception to Jesus' received words, though "its meaning is not self-evident to modern interpreters" (Collins, 205). These divergent accounts exist because divergent Christian communities had divergent concerns about marriage and divorce

that needed to be addressed. The nuancing of the words of Jesus on the basis of contextual need, initiated by the early Church, was continued in the later Church by Gratian in respect to what consummates a marriage as indissoluble (1140), and by the so-called Petrine Privileges of Popes Paul III (1537), Pius V (1561), and Gregory XIII (1585) with respect to the circumstances of polygamy and slavery (Lawler, 1993:92–93). This consistent nuancing of the words of Jesus in the Church makes arguments based exclusively on the words of Jesus at best incomplete and at worst dishonest.

This brief consideration of the traditional data on divorce and remarriage leads to several important conclusions. First, it is incorrect to speak of the New Testament *teaching* on divorce and remarriage; there are several *teachings* which do not all agree. Second, not all these teachings derive from Jesus, as the Catholic Church claims. Third, diverging accounts of divorce and remarriage are an integral part of the New Testament and later Christian traditions because the diverse cultural followers of Jesus sought to translate the meaning of his life, death, and resurrection into their concrete lives. Fourth, though popular unwisdom later singled out one element in those diverging accounts, namely the demand for indissoluble marriage, and allowed that one element to override all the others, that fact should not be allowed to obscure the original divergence.

THESIS 3 *The solemn teaching of the Council of Nicea is intimately related to the Church's teaching on divorce and remarriage, and has much to say to its pastoral practice today.*

There is a veneration in the Church of ecumenical councils, especially of the first four councils, and most especially of the first of them, the Council of Nicea (325) whose Creed established the doctrinal basis of the Christian faith. Canon 8 of that council goes to the very heart of the question of divorce and remarriage.

> As regards those who define themselves as the Pure and who want to join the Catholic and Apostolic Church, the holy and great Council decrees that they may remain among the clergy once hands have been imposed upon them. But beforehand they will have to promise in writing to comply with the teachings of the Catholic and Apostolic Church and to make them the rule of their conduct. That is to say, they will have to communicate both with *those who married a second time (digamoi)* and with those who failed under persecution but whose time has been established and whose moment of reconciliation has arrived. They will, therefore, be bound to follow the teaching of the Catholic and Apostolic Church completely (Mansi, II, 672. My emphasis).

According to this canon, the "Pure," those who belonged to the rigorous sect called Novatians (Hefele, I, 410), had to promise in writing to accept the teaching of the Catholic Church before they could be reconciled with it. Specifically, they had to accept to live in communion with those who had been married twice *(digamoi)* and those who had apostacized during persecution but who had completed their period of penance and had been reconciled to the Church. We are concerned here only with those *digamoi* who have done penance and have been reconciled to the Church.

Novatian teaching excluded from penance and reconciliation those who were guilty of certain sins "leading to death," among them *digamia* which refers to remarriage either after the death of a spouse or after a divorce. Since, however, remarriage after the death of a spouse was not considered a sin leading to death until long after the Council of Nicea, the council's *digamoi* must be those who have remarried after a divorce or repudiation. That "sin," according to the council, can be forgiven and reconciliation with the Church can be achieved after a period of suitable penance. Acutely relevant is the fact that neither the Church before Nicea nor the council itself required the repudiation of the new spouse as a prerequisite for forgiveness and reconciliation. This was in keeping with the proscriptions of Deut 24:1-4, which was taken to be binding in the Church before Nicea and which forbade a husband to take back his repudiated wife after she had married another (See Origen, PG 13, 1237 and Jerome, PL 22, 563). Basil explicitly reports the treatment of a man who had abandoned his wife and remarried, who had "done penance with tears," and who, after seven years, had been accepted back "among the faithful" (Basil, PG 32, 804–5). The man's second marriage is accepted and neither the repudiation of his second wife nor his taking back of the first is demanded as a prerequisite for full communion. This teaching of Basil is the foundation for the teaching and practice of the Orthodox Church known as *oikonomia*.

THESIS 4 *The Catholic Church has never practiced what is enshrined in its law, namely, that "the essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility" (1983 Can 1056). The actual number of marriages the Church holds to be indissoluble is very limited.*

If the Church truly believed that indissolubility was an essential property not just of Christian marriages but of all marriages, and that by the will of God "from the beginning" (Mark 10:6; Matt 19:4) then it would treat all marriages as indissoluble. It does not and never has. The Church accepts the marriages of the non-baptized as valid when they have been performed according to the laws which govern them and yet, utilizing the Pauline Privilege, it regularly dissolves them "in

favor of the faith of the party who received baptism" (1983 Can 1143). It has further extended the Pauline Privilege, as already noted, to embrace the dissolution of valid marriages utilizing the Petrine Privilege. In Christian marriages, indissolubility is said to acquire "a distinctive firmness by reason of the sacrament" (1983 Can 1056), and yet valid sacramental marriages which have not been consummated are dissolved "by the Roman Pontiff for a just reason, at the request of both parties or of either party" (1983 Can 1142). Long-standing church practice with respect to the dissolution of valid marriages demonstrates anything but a belief that an essential property of marriage is indissolubility.

The formal doctrine of the Church on the indissolubility of marriage demonstrates that fidelity to the words of Jesus is not the only criterion for ecclesiastical judgments about divorce and remarriage. Only that marriage "which is ratified (as sacrament) and consummated cannot be dissolved by any human power other than death" (1983 Can 1141). The two conditions which make a marriage indissoluble in the eyes of the Church, that it be both sacramental *and* consummated, are not conditions ever mentioned by Jesus or any of the New Testament writers. They are both the result of historical nuancing long after Jesus, despite the teaching of the recent *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that "the marriage bond has been established by God himself in such a way that a marriage concluded *and consummated* between baptized persons can never be dissolved" (n. 1640, my emphasis). That marriage was created by God no Catholic theologian would debate. That the marriage bond becomes indissoluble, even in a sacramental marriage, only when the marriage is consummated is a nuance added in the twelfth century.

THESIS 5 *The Code's claim that "a valid marriage contract cannot exist between baptized persons without its being by that very fact a sacrament" (1983 Can 1055,2) contradicts the Catholic dogma that faith is necessary for the reception of grace and salvation.*

The Code presumes something that cannot be theologically presumed, namely, that all that is required for the *sacrament* of marriage is prior baptism and a valid marriage contract. That presumption stands in contradiction to the long tradition about the necessity of personal faith in Catholic teaching. The Gospels record that Jesus both complained about the absence of faith and praised its presence (Matt 8:5-13; 8:23-27; 9:2; 9:20-22; 17:19-21; 21:18-22; Mark 5:25-34; 6:1-6). Paul vehemently defended the necessity of personal faith for salvation (Rom 1:16-17; 3:26-30; 5:1; Gal 3:6-9). That tradition of the necessity of faith continued in the Church and flowered on both sides of the Reformation controversies.

Martin Luther made his stand on "faith alone." Though wishing to combat the Lutheran teaching that faith *alone* was necessary for salvation, the Council of Trent left no doubt about the necessity of personal faith: "Faith is the beginning of man's salvation, the foundation and source of all justification, 'without which it is impossible to please God'" (Heb 11:6) (DS 1532). Baptism is "the sacrament of faith, without which no man has ever been justified" (DS 1529). The Latin text makes clear that "without which" *(sine qua)* qualifies faith and not sacrament or baptism, both of which would require *sine quo*. There is no doubt that the Fathers of Trent wished to affirm solemnly the primacy of active, personal faith for salvation. So also did both the First and Second Vatican Councils: faith is an act by which "a man gives *free* obedience to God by cooperating and agreeing with his grace, which can be resisted" (DS 3010, my emphasis); faith is an act by which "man entrusts his whole self *freely* to God, offering 'the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals,' and *freely* assenting to the truth revealed by him" (*Dei Verbum,* n. 5). That free, cooperating, personal faith is required for salvation is a solemn dogma of the Catholic Church.

Convinced of the necessity of faith for the validity of baptism, Augustine sought to make good the lack of faith in infant baptism by arguing that *ecclesia fidem supplet,* the Church makes good the faith required (*Epist 98, The Fathers,* 133–38). That argument cannot be applied in the case of marriage, a sacrament for adults who are required to have an active faith to participate in any sacrament. Aquinas never doubted that "every sacrament remains a sign and a proclamation of personal faith. Whoever receives it without believing in his heart places himself in a violent state of 'fiction' and deprives himself of sacramental grace" (Villette, 40). Bonaventure agrees: the sacrament of marriage can be distinguished only by personal faith (*IV Sent.,* d.26, a.2, q.1. *Opera Omnia,* 6,215).

The 1980 Synod of Bishops gave quasi-unanimous support (201 placet, 3 non placet) to the following proposition: "We have to take into account the engaged couple's degree of faith maturity and their awareness of doing what the Church does. *This intention is required for sacramental validity.* It is absent if there is not at least a minimal intention of believing with the church" (My emphasis). Sacramental intention is critical in sacramental theology. To intend to participate in a sacrament, the participant must intend what the Church intends in the sacrament. The theological question is: Can a person have a real intention to participate in a sacrament without at least minimal personal faith?

Aquinas has no doubt: "Faith directs intention, and without [faith] intention cannot be right" [*Fides intentionem dirigit, et sine ea non potest esse . . . intentio recta* (*IV Sent.,* d.6, q.1, a.3 ad 5)]. The International Theological Commission continues that tradition: the real intention is

born from and feeds on living faith (Malone, 15). One cannot have a right sacramental intention without at least a minimum of personal faith. When personal faith is absent, so too is right sacramental intention; when right intention is absent, as the tradition universally holds, the sacrament is not valid. No personal faith/no right intention is a well-founded theological judgment. The conclusion that flows from it is equally well founded: without faith no one can enter into a valid sacramental marriage.

The intention required to participate in a sacrament, as distinct from a mere physical rite, is the intention to participate in a rite that offers salvation, a God-in-Christ and Christ-in-Church event. Neither God-in-Christ nor Christ-in-Church can be intended, however, without being at least minimally known and embraced in faith. The connection of personal faith to a valid sacrament is particularly relevant today when Catholic theology distinguishes the baptized as *baptized believers,* those who have been baptized *and* nurtured into active faith, and *baptized non-believers,* those who have been baptized *and* not nurtured into active faith (see Malone, 14–21). The two should never be confused in law.

THESIS 6 *The Catholic Church, which teaches that the only marriage which is indissoluble is the sacramental and consummated marriage, today has no criterion for judging when a marriage has been consummated and therefore made indissoluble.*

A theological question is consistently raised about the Catholic teaching on the effect of consummation: What is it that consummation adds to sacrament that makes the consummated sacramental marriage immune to dissolution? Pius XI suggested the answer lies in "the mystical meaning of Christian marriage," namely, its reference to that "most perfect union which exists between Christ and the church" (AAS, 1930, 552). Though it does not specify as precisely as Pius that it is the consummated sacramental marriage that is indissoluble, the International Theological Commission offers the same reason for the indissolubility of Christian marriage. The ultimate basis for the indissolubility of Christian marriage lies in the fact that it is the sacrament, the image, of the indissoluble union between Christ and the Church.

But questions remain. When Pius XI wrote in 1930, he took for granted the 1917 Code of Canon Law that dealt with marriage as a contract (Can 1012), that declared the object of the contract to be the exclusive and perpetual right to the body of the other for acts suitable for the generation of offspring (Can 1081,2), and that declared the ends of marriage to be primarily procreation and secondarily mutual help and the remedy of concupiscence (Can 1013). In such a legalist and physicalist context, it is easy to see how a single act of sexual intercourse could be

taken to be the consummation of a marriage. It is not so easy to see in the changed theological and personalist climate in which the Second Vatican Council rooted its doctrine on marriage.

The council teaches that marriage "is rooted in the conjugal covenant of irrevocable personal consent" (GS,48). Despite insistent demands to retain the legal word *contract* as a precise way to speak of marriage, the council demurred and chose instead the biblical, theological and personal word *covenant*. This choice locates marriage as an *interpersonal* rather than as a *legal* reality, and brings it into line with the rich biblical tradition of covenant between God and God's People and Christ and Christ's Church. The revised *Code* also preferred *covenant* to *contract* (1983 Can 1055,1), though it relapses into contractual language some thirty times.

The council made another crucial change to Catholic teaching about marriage, which is central to any modern theological discussion of consummation and which was later also incorporated into the revised Code. The traditional teaching on the ends of marriage was the primary end-secondary end hierarchy between procreation and spousal love (1917 Can 1013). Despite insistent demands to reaffirm this hierarchical terminology, the council refused to do so. It taught explicitly that procreation "does not make the other ends of marriage of less account," and that marriage "is not instituted solely for procreation" (GS, 50). That this refusal to speak of a hierarchy of ends in marriage was not the result of oversight but a deliberate choice was confirmed when the council's teaching on ends was incorporated into the revised Code (1983 Can 1055,1).

This change of perspective raises questions about the claim that the spouses' first sexual intercourse is the consummation of their mutual self-gifting and marriage. If the procreation of human life *and* the *consortium*-communion between the spouses are equal ends of marriage, why should an act of sexual intercourse alone be the symbol of the union of Christ and Christ's Church? Why should the extended marital *consortium,* itself symbolized in sexual communion, not be the symbol? These questions have been exacerbated by the change in the way consummation is specified in both the council and the revised *Code*. A marriage is now said to be "ratified and consummated if the spouses have in a *human manner (humano modo)* engaged together in a conjugal act in itself apt for the generation of offspring" (1983 Can 1061,1). The phrase I have underscored has placed Catholic teaching on consummation and indissolubility on hold theologically and canonically, for as yet a theology of sexuality elucidating what sexual intercourse *humano modo* means has not been elaborated. Since marital intercourse *humano modo* cannot be precisely defined, neither can the marital consummation it is said to effect. Since consummation cannot be defined, many more valid marriages than heretofore ever imagined are open to dissolution in the Church.

THESIS 7 *The Code's claim that "a ratified and consummated marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power" (Can 1141) ignores the more-than-human power in the Church capable of dissolving such marriages.*

Though the question of the consummation of a marriage is now moot until the meaning of *humano modo* can be defined, there is still a more-than-human power in the Church to dissolve a failed ratified and consummated marriage. Two things are to be noted. First, the question asks about extrinsic indissolubility, the immunity of a marriage to dissolution by an agent other than the spouses. There is universal agreement that a *marriage* (not only a ratified and consummated marriage) is intrinsically indissoluble, that is, immune to dissolution by the spouses. Second, the extrinsic indissolubility of a ratified and consummated marriage as prescribed in the Code is not a revealed truth. Billot's opinion that it is *de fide catholica* has never found support (Billot, 440); most theologians judge it to be *doctrina catholica*. Navarrette's claim that Pius XI implicitly and Pius XII explicitly affirm that the ratified and consummated marriage cannot be dissolved, not even by the vicarious power of the Roman Pontiff, is an exaggeration (Navarette, 449). Both Popes do no more than cite without comment the legislation then current in Canon 1118. They add nothing that would elevate the teaching to a theological level higher than *doctrina catholica.*

The history of the doctrine and law about ratified and consummated marriage in the Catholic tradition demonstrates three facts. First, it is a compromise between the Roman law in which consent makes marriage and the northern European custom in which sexual intercourse makes marriage. Second, the compromise emerges from a mixed cultural understanding of marriage, the southern culture and the northern culture of twelfth-century Europe. Third, it is not *de fide;* it is *doctrina catholica*. That is not to say that it is not true. It is to say only that it is not irreformable, and to suggest that the agent of reformation is the same agent that introduced the teaching in the first place, namely, the magisterial Church, whose power extends to the binding and loosing of sin, to the transformation of bread and wine, and certainly to the reformation of a reformable doctrine it itself inaugurated. If a non-consummated marriage between baptized believers, that is, a sacramental marriage which falls under God's law, "can be dissolved by the Roman Pontiff for a just reason" (1983 Can 1142), a ratified and consummated marriage which falls under the Church's law can also be dissolved by the Roman Pontiff for a similarly just reason. The bond of a ratified and consummated marriage is far from immune to the more than human power daily exercised in the Church.

THESIS 8 *The argument that Catholics who are divorced and remarried civilly without annulment are "in a situation that objectively contravenes God's law (and) consequently they cannot receive holy communion as long as this situation persists" (CDF, 339) is contrary to the universal law of the Catholic Church, obedience to which takes precedence over obedience to a Roman dicastery.*

The matter is clear from Book IV, Title III, Chapter I, Article 2 of the current Code, "Participation in the Blessed Eucharist." The relevant canons prescribe the following: "Any baptized person who is not forbidden by law may and must *(debet)* be admitted to holy communion" (1983 Can 912); "those upon whom the penalty of excommunication or interdict has been imposed or declared, and others who obstinately persist in manifest *grave sin,* are not to be admitted to holy communion" (1983 Can 915. My emphasis); "anyone who is conscious of *grave sin* may not celebrate mass or receive the Body of the Lord without previously having been to sacramental confession. . . ." (1983 Can 916. My emphasis).

Since the first part of Canon 915 does not apply to Catholics who have been divorced and civilly remarried without annulment, because they are neither excommunicated nor placed under interdict, that leaves only the question of *grave sin* or *mortal sin* in the terms of Canons 915 and 916. The question can be put succinctly: Does grave sin in the Catholic tradition, and therefore in the mind of the legislator, follow from the fact that an action "objectively contravenes God's law" or constitutes gravely sinful matter? The answer can be put just as succinctly: In Catholic moral theology an objectively serious sinful action does not *ipso facto* result in grave sin.

In addition to objectively grave matter, grave sin requires both full consciousness of the sinfulness of the action *and* fully free consent to the action. The civil remarriage of the Catholic divorced and without annulment may constitute grave matter in the eyes of the Church; it *may* even constitute sin. But it constitutes *grave* sin only when there is full awareness and free consent. Those Catholics who have attempted remarriage after divorce without obtaining an annulment, or who have been unable to obtain an annulment for some formal reason, do not all *necessarily* have the required full awareness and free consent to commit grave sin. They are not, therefore, all guilty of grave sin and are not all, therefore, prohibited by law from receiving holy communion.

Those who are not guilty of grave sin because the traditional conditions for grave sin, objectively grave matter, full consciousness and free consent, have not all been met—and whether or not the conditions have been met will have to be decided on a case by case basis in discus-

sion with a pastoral counselor—*must* be admitted to holy communion according to the universal law of the Catholic Church (1983 Can 912). No undifferentiated pronouncement of any Roman dicastery, or even of the bishop of Rome (AAS, 74, 185), can bar them from the communion to which they are entitled by faith and by law. And no minister of the Church should either take or be put in the invidious position of refusing them the holy communion to which they are entitled.

THESIS 9 *The scandal insinuated in both papal and dicasterial statements if divorced and civilly remarried Catholics are admitted to communion is no different from the scandal one could insinuate in solutions approved by the Church.*

Pope John Paul II specifies the scandal that might ensue if the divorced and civilly remarried were admitted to communion: "the faithful would be led into error and confusion regarding the Church's teaching about the indissolubility of marriage" (*Familiaris Consortio,* n. 84). The CDF repeats his judgment without commentary (CDF, n. 4). The implication is that, if the divorced and civilly remarried were admitted to communion, people could come to believe that the Church no longer teaches that fidelity is required in marriage and that marriage is indissoluble. No one should ever underestimate the possibility of scandal; but neither should anyone overestimate it. No one, in fact, should ever estimate it at all, for real scandal is a fact which can be clarified *empirically*. Real scandal is in the same category as real sin; it can, and therefore must, be clarified on a case by case basis.

There are two cases in which the Church permits the civilly divorced and remarried to approach communion. The first is the case in which a couple has received the necessary annulment(s) to be free to marry; the second is the case in which a couple agrees to live as brother and sister. Neither case removes the threat of scandal.

The brother-sister case, in which the couple lives together publicly as husband and wife but abstains from all sexual intercourse, provides the same threat of scandal as the case of a couple not living as brother and sister, for no adult conscious of the ways of men and women would ever presume sexual abstention in a couple living together as husband and wife. Kelly notes the obvious: "Unless a couple had a 'brother and sister' logo on their doorstep, neighbors and fellow parishioners would be none the wiser and so the alleged scandal would presumably still be given" (Kelly, 1994: 1374). Given these obvious empirical considerations, it is astonishing to see the Pope (AAS,74,186) and the new Catechism (n. 1650) presenting the brother-sister solution as a genuine pastoral option, completely ignoring the weight of theologians and canonists who teach that this option is *res plena periculis* and

should be employed *rarissime* and *fere numquam* (Sullivan, viii). The case of annulment runs the same peril. Unless a couple publicized their annulment from the sanctuary, most fellow-parishioners would never know about its existence. Today, indeed, when annulment has become so commonplace, those fellow parishioners would simply assume that the couple had been granted annulment(s) and think no more of it. Most of them would take the same approach to the divorced and civilly remarried approaching communion.

The scandal given in the case of the divorced and civilly remarried may lie elsewhere, not with the remarried but with the Church which bars them from communion. Based on interviews with priests working with alienated Catholics in Boston, New York, Providence and Wilmington (Del.), Himes and Coriden report that "the single biggest reason people cease active participation in the Church is that they have found themselves in irregular marital situations and feel unwanted and rejected by the Church" (Himes and Coriden, 118). Cardinal Newman taught that the *consensus fidelium* senses error "which it at once feels as a *scandal*" (Newman, 73). After a five-year study of divorce and civil remarriage in England, Buckley reports that the consensus of bishops, priests, and people is that "something is seriously wrong with the present teaching and that more than that it is a *scandal*" (Buckley, 178). There is sound basis for extending that judgment to the United States where, in a 1992 survey, only 23 percent of Catholics agreed that the magisterium *alone* should decide the morality of a divorced Catholic remarrying without an annulment, and 72 percent agreed that divorced and remarried Catholics should be able to receive communion (D'Antonio, 53).

THESIS 10 *The Roman Catholic Church should embrace the practice of* oikonomia, *declared by the Council of Trent to have certain claim to the gospel and to the name Christian.*

Questions raised today by divorce and remarriage confront all Christian churches in the United States. Not one escapes them. What should the churches do about divorce and remarriage? They should, I suggest, pay closer attention to the ancient Orthodox practice of *oikonomia*. *Oikonomia* flourishes within a context of spirit and grace, not within a context of law; it grows out of faith in the Spirit of God and of Christ. It heeds the scriptural injunction that "the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor 3:6).

What does *oikonomia* have to say to the churches about divorce and remarriage? It admonishes them to be realistic, to understand that, though the gospel demands that marriages be lifelong, real men and women sometimes do not fully measure up to the gospel. It instructs them that marriages, even marriages between Christians, sometimes

die and that when they die it makes no sense to argue they are still binding. When a marriage is dead, even if the former spouses still live, *oikonomia* moves the churches to be sad, for the death of a marriage is always "the death of a small civilization" (Wallerstein, xxi), but also to be compassionate, even to the point of permitting the remarriage of an innocent spouse. The ritual of that remarriage, however, is not on a par with the first marriage, now dissolved, as the liturgy makes clear.

There are prayers for the couple now entering into the bond of a second marriage. There are petitions that the spouses be pardoned for their transgressions and confession that there is none sinless save only God. Absent is the unbridled joy of the first-marriage ceremony; present is sorrow and repentance for its failure. Present too is the necessary confession that no one in attendance, including the Church's minister, is without sin. The economy of spirit and grace is always threatened by sin; the Christian ideal is ever at the mercy of human frailty. It is precisely in such an economy that the Church of Christ is summoned to minister and to be compassionate on behalf of the compassionate God.

A reasonable Christian objection arises at this point. Should not what the churches do about divorce and remarriage be based on the tradition of Jesus mediated to them in the New Testament? Yes, it should, and we considered that tradition briefly in Thesis 2 where we found diverging accounts of divorce and remarriage in the New Testament tradition as culturally diverse followers of Jesus sought to translate the meaning of his life, death, and resurrection into their diverse lives.

The early process of interpreting the Lord's command concerning divorce and remarriage continued in the churches of both East and West. The East developed its doctrine of *oikonomia* related to marriage; the West developed its law related to marriage which continues in force today. In the twelfth century, the Bologna canonist, Gratian, developed two pieces of legislation which continue to be a central part of Roman Catholic law. The first was a continuation of Paul's exception, now called the Pauline Privilege, which remains today one of the bases on which the Catholic Church grants the dissolution of a valid marriage. The Pauline Privilege, as noted earlier, has been much extended beyond what Paul ever envisioned by the so-called Petrine Privilege. The second piece of legislation was a compromise solution between the Roman and northern European answers to the question of when a valid marriage came into existence. "Marriage is initiated by betrothal (consent), perfected (or consummated) by sexual intercourse" (Gratian, PL 187, 1429 and 1406). These two pieces of legislation became enshrined in the law of the Roman Catholic Church with respect to the indissolubility of marriage. That Church regards as indissoluble only that marriage which is both sacramental *and* consummated by sexual inter-

course (1983 Can 1141). It holds all other marriages to be dissoluble and it dissolves them on occasion "for a just reason" (1983 Can 1142) or "in favor of the faith" (1983 Can 1143).

Several things are clear. First, despite every claim to follow only the Lord's command, the Catholic Church also follows Paul and Matthew in interpreting that command for their ongoing situations. Second, it is not true that the Roman Catholic Church never grants divorces. It grants them regularly in marriages which are not sacramental or not consummated, though it obscures that fact by naming the process *dissolution* rather than *divorce*. Third, though there is no warrant in the New Testament for such canonical processes, there is ample warrant for *oikonomia,* a fact to which the Council of Trent attested. Despite hewing to a rigid line on the question of the indissolubility of marriage, the council steadfastly refused to condemn the practice of *oikonomia* or to declare that it did not have equal claim to the gospel tradition and to the name Christian (DS, 1807).

The 1980 Synod of Bishops presented to Pope John Paul a request that the Orthodox practice of *oikonomia* be carefully studied for any light it might shed on a pastoral approach to Catholics who are divorced and civilly remarried. Many of those second marriages have become so stable, and the families nurtured in them so Christian, that they cannot be abandoned without serious spiritual, emotional, and economic harm. The Catholic Church is summoned to discern whether its understanding of the gospel precludes the development of an *oikonomia* approach to the pastoral care of its members in second marriages. It is summoned to gospel *oikonomia* as a way to alleviate the suffering of those thousands of Catholics divorced and remarried without sin and as a way to attain the ecclesial peace and communion to which God has called all Christians (1 Cor 7:15).

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Michael G. Lawler is the Graff Professor of Catholic Theological Studies at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. He is the author of numerous articles and among his books are Marriage and Sacrament: A Theology of Christian Marriage *(The Liturgical Press, 1993) and* Symbol and Sacrament: A Contemporary Sacramental Theology *(Creighton University Press, 1995).*

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Lahleh Bhaktiar

Islam in the USA

If anyone had said at the turn of the twentieth century that Islam would become one of the four major religions in America by the millennium, people would have thought it a joke. Here we are, however, at the edge of the twenty-first century with Islam as a real presence in America. The reasons for this are many, but it is estimated that there are about six million Muslims in America, making Islam, after Christianity, the second largest religion in this country. I say "about" because nobody knows for sure since this is a secular culture and it is against the Constitution to ask someone, "What is your religious preference?" Measuring by mosque attendance is not reliable because many offer the five times a day daily prayer in their homes and many more do not offer it at all but still consider themselves Muslims.

The word "islam" means "surrender" (to God's Will) and therefore refers to those who are committed to the faith struggle on a daily basis of trying to determine what is God's Will as opposed to their own will. This is considered to be the greatest struggle (jihad), while struggling externally in God's cause is the lesser one. As this greater struggle takes place internally, it is hard to measure externally, and almost impossible for a social scientist to know what to ask in order to get a reliable answer. Whereas ethnic origin may be known and questioned, this does not get to the heart of Islam which is a multicultural, multiracial, and multisocial phenomenon.

Speaking from the Muslim (one who has surrendered to God's Will) perspective, the greatest challenge for American Muslims today is to be able to maintain their Islamic identity in a secular environment which promotes the separation of Church and state. This is a most crucial challenge and one which Muslims believe challenges the very preservation of their faith. It is, however, a defensive position and one which is continuously being brought forward by the—more often than not—unfair news coverage of Islam in American news circles. All practicing Muslims are united in this defense. Just as the Jewish people follow different interpretations of religious law, Muslims may be followers of one of the five major schools of Islamic law: Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki, Shafii or Jafari. And just as Christians follow a spiritual way, Muslims may be followers of one of forty traditional schools of mysticism or Sufism.

American Muslims, while always prepared to verbally defend their faith, are beginning to take the offensive, a stance which often works

out to be a position of integration. This can be best understood by viewing a faith group in its various manifestations. As with any faith group in the United States, there is a continuum of views ranging from the liberal to the conservative.

Liberal Muslims, as defined by a believer (one who practices Islam), are people who may have had parents or even grandparents who were Muslim, have a Muslim name but do not perform the practices on a regular basis. They pick and choose what practices are convenient for them. Their Islam is therefore defined as "supermarket" or "American" Islam. When asked to describe themselves, they would say, "I am first Lebanese (or Syrian or Iranian or Pakistani) and secondly Muslim." They do not follow any particular religious law and may not even know that there are various schools of Islamic law.

On the far right are the conservative Muslims. These are the ones who practice the letter of the law to the extreme in all areas including views on women, holding that a woman's place is only in the home; she has no choice. Even in the home she lives in a segregated space. Muslims do not believe that there is a meaning behind a form and, therefore, they end up worshiping the form itself instead of God because they have dissociated with their inner being. They follow the letter of the law to such an extent that they offer the five daily prescribed prayers exactly on time, five times a day, seven days a week for years and years from the age of fifteen until their death, and will even boast about this to others in an attempt to compete for piety. But in their compulsion to follow the exact letter of the law in regard to, say, prescribed prayer, they overlook so many other aspects of the Quran and the Prophet's emphasis upon inner healing. It is this group which most often produces wife and husband beaters, rebellious teenage children who turn away from their faith, or teenagers who keep their rage within and then marry and end up beating their own children.

The best example of this group is in Saudi Arabia where there is one law for the ruler—who can steal from the people, practice prostitution and homosexuality, and drink alcohol (all forbidden according to the five schools of Islamic law) yet follow the letter of the law with a person who steals a chicken because he is hungry and who gets his finger cut off because of it. The Saudis have been pouring money into the United States to fund mosques and Islamic centers since the 1960s in an attempt to try to control the American Muslim community through economic support, much to the opposition of today's American Muslims who want to be independent of foreign influence and control.

The Saudis are historically tied to the Wahhabi movement in the nineteenth-century in Arabia which has some ties with the Hanbali school of law. While they call themselves "Salafis," that is, "followers of the way of Prophet Muhammad," peace be upon him, they become

obsessed with one aspect of the Prophet's sayings and deeds to the exclusion of a holistic approach, the true Salafi approach, and, therefore, theirs is rightly called "Saudi" Islam.

In the middle of the continuum are those who call themselves followers of "mainstream" Islam. This is the fastest growing Muslim group in America and the most interesting to follow because it is attempting to equate being a Muslim with being a good American citizen. This group accepts people from all races, ethnic groups, and schools of law. If another word had to be used to define them, it would be to say that they practice "traditional" Islam. Traditional or mainstream Islam is defined in the following way: Mainstream Islam consists of all schools of Islamic law which follow the Straight Path. This means following the Quran and sunna (reliably recorded practices and sayings of the Prophet) and being, therefore, respectful of the Prophet, his Family and Companions. It also includes the Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki, Shafii, and Jafair schools of law (Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine,* vol. 1, p. 2). Under the direction of the Supreme Islamic Council of North America, this group is challenging "Saudi" and foreign dominated and foreign supported Islam in the United States.

Mainstream Islam consists of Muslims who emphasize spiritual healing as well as and alongside religious practice. In a sense one might say that they are followers of the way of Jesus while not forgetting the law of Moses, both exemplified in the prophethood of Muhammad, peace and the mercy of God be upon them all. They are Muslims who are striving and struggling to be good American citizens as well and to prove by example that this is possible.

Perhaps the best example that can be given to explain a position of mainstream Muslims is to consider their view of women. At the same time that a woman believer who follows one of the five schools of law and the Quran would wear the modest dress, mainstream Islam quickly points out a Quranic verse, "There is no compulsion in religion." Women must have an education, which will more likely produce children who place emphasis on education. According to Islamic law, it is preferable if a woman can go to a woman doctor or dentist or have a woman teacher. All this means that women must be educated to fill these positions. While "marriage is half of faith" according to a saying of Prophet Muhammad, a woman who freely chooses to get married knows that she is not religiously responsible to look after her children nor to clean her home nor cook. If she chooses to do so, the husband must be grateful to her. Her only religious obligation in regard to marriage is to satisfy her husband sexually within what the divine law allows. Marriage is not always a possibility, and so having an education will insure the person, man or woman, the possibility of leading a pro-

ductive life. Everything a woman earns, either through work or inheritance, is hers and hers alone, which she may choose to share with her family or not. Whatever she has or owns, the husband is religiously responsible to support her financially. She is equal to any male in terms of the political process as well as spiritual rewards and punishment for the way that she freely chooses to live her life.

With just these few examples, it will be interesting to watch the signs of the times and the unfolding of Islam in America. Will it go the way of the liberals, conservatives or mainstream Islam, or will it continue along the same continuum?

Lahleh Bhaktiar holds a Ph.D. in educational psychology and masters degrees in counseling, psychology, and philosophy. She is the author of ten books on Islam and Sufism and has translated twenty books on Islam. Dr. Bhaktiar teaches at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and is resident scholar at KAZI Publications, the oldest and largest Muslim publisher and distributor in the United States.

It is easier
To gaze into the sun
Than into the face of the mystery of God.

Such is the beauty and its radiance.

God says:

I am the supreme fire;
Not deadly but rather,
Enkindling every spark of life.

—St. Hildegard of Bingen
Gabriele Uhlein, O.S.F., *Meditations with Hildegard of Bingen* (Santa Fe: Bear and Co., 1983) 25.

LITURGICAL PREACHING

Edward Foley, Capuchin

Preaching *In* and *Of* the Liturgy

In one of the more celebrated discussions of the topic, Shakespeare's Juliet asks, "What's in a name? that which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet? (*Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, scene 2). While splendid prose, Juliet's assertion is problematic from many perspectives. Language is not neutral, and the words we employ for naming things or addressing others have consequences. This is true in the political and social arena; it is equally true in theology and ministry.

This brief excursus on "naming as consequential" serves to introduce this newly christened column. Previously published under the banner "Scripture for Preaching," the column is as old as *New Theology Review.* It debuted with this journal out of an abiding concern that those who preached the word might be properly grounded in that word. The current editorial board has not abandoned this concern; on the contrary, we are more concerned than ever that *New Theology Review* provides accessible and quality resources to pastoral ministers. It is in the interest of providing such resources that this column has widened its scope, not only helping preachers to plumb the Scriptures which are so foundational for the homily, but also helping them to consider the whole of the liturgical event which is equally foundational.

While it might seem surprising to place other parts of the liturgy on a par with the lectionary readings as a basis for liturgical preaching, such a perspective is a central teaching in virtually all major conciliar and post-conciliar documents. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,* for example, teaches that in the homily "the mysteries of the faith and the guiding principles of the Christian life are expounded from the sacred text during the course of the liturgical year" (n. 52). The meaning of the ambiguous phrase "the sacred text" was clarified in the 1964 instruction *Inter oecumenici* which commented: "A homily on the sacred text means an explanation, pertinent to the mystery celebrated and the special needs of the listeners, of some point in either the readings from sacred Scripture *or* in another text from the Ordinary or Proper of the day's Mass" (n. 54).

The basic understanding of the homily as related to the scriptures or some other liturgical text is repeated in *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* which notes that the homily "should develop some point of the readings or of another text from the Ordinary or from the Proper

of the Mass of the day, and take into account the mystery being celebrated and the needs proper to the listeners" (n. 41). A similar instruction is found in the *Introduction to the Lectionary* (n. 24).

Those who have preached the lectionary texts for any period of time instinctively understand the reasoning behind this teaching. Consider, for example, the major solemnities of the church year: here it is not the Lectionary which sets the feast, but the feast which sets the Lectionary. Easter, Christmas, Trinity Sunday, the Immaculate Conception and all other great festivals do not have gospels which follow in sequence along with the others proclaimed in that year's lectionary cycle. Rather, they are special texts—what the *Introduction to the Lectionary* calls "thematic"—chosen because they reflect some basic image or teaching central to the feast. Just as these feasts, and the whole of the liturgy which celebrates them, are determinative for the lections chosen for that feast, so should these feasts and the whole of the liturgy be determinative for that day's liturgical preaching.

And exactly what does it mean to say that "the whole of the liturgy" needs to be a source of any preaching worthy of the name liturgical? Answer that question by thinking of all the texts besides those from the Lectionary which are proclaimed at Eucharist. Consider the Eucharistic Prayers which *The General Instruction* considers the "center and high point of the entire celebration" (n. 54). When was the last time the texts, action or theology of that prayer held center stage in your preaching? Think of all those invariable prayers which we sing and proclaim each Sunday: the "Kyrie," "Glory to God," "Creed," "Holy," "Lamb of God." Certainly they are a treasury of tradition and belief. Furthermore, they are already deeply rooted in the memories of so many worshippers. What a boon: to preach texts that people could actually recite with you. Then there are the hymns that we sing, the orations that we pray, the blessings which punctuate the rite, and the proclamations of faith.

Besides the texts, however, think broadly about the whole of the liturgy as a potential source for preaching. Consider not just the words, but also the ritual actions, and even the very feasts and seasons that we celebrate throughout the year. What is the significance of the sprinkling rite, especially as it punctuates the Easter season or brings the Christmas season to a close at the feast of the Baptism of the Lord? How does the blessing of the Advent wreath illuminate the strong eschatological message of the First Sunday of Advent? What does it mean for the Church to celebrate feasts of "All Saints" and "All Souls" back to back at the close of the church year? How does the change in a feast's name—e.g., from *Corpus Christi* to the "Body and Blood of Christ" (June 6 this year)—provide an insight into the heart of the liturgical matter?

You are looking for something fresh to say on Pentecost. Maybe you have preached that grand solemnity for decades, and do not know

whether you have another insight into this closing moment of the Easter season. Turn to *Eucharistic Prayer for Masses of Reconciliation II.* Read those stirring lines of the preface which praise divine presence and action in the world and underscore the Spirit's work as a mark of that presence: where understanding puts an end to strife, hatred is quenched by mercy, vengeance gives way to forgiveness. Turn deep into the Eucharistic Prayer, and recall the two pivotal moments when the Spirit is invoked: first over the gifts, then over people. The "consecratory" epiclesis proclaims how the Spirit is at work in this Eucharist, the source of all sanctification. In even more pointed language, the great "communion epiclesis" prays that this very meal-sharing might be a source of the Spirit for us—a new Pentecost—that eliminates all division. Here are texts and accompanying gestures which ring in our assembly's ears and register in their mind's eye. Yet they are so often overlooked or underutilized. The Church wisely teaches, however, that such should not be the case.

This current issue of *New Theology Review* focuses on "Saints." This happy coincidence prompts us to look ahead a few months, where we discover that in August 1999 the solemnity of the Assumption falls on a Sunday. The readings for that day certainly provide rich material for preaching: a first reading from Revelation which speaks of the pregnant woman clothed with the sun; Psalm 132 with its refrain "go up to the place of your rest"; a second reading from 1 Corinthians about Christ as the first fruits of those who have died; Luke's Gospel account of Mary's visit to Elizabeth and her *Magnificat*. While not abandoning those readings, it might help the preacher to begin the homiletic consideration with the day's preface which speaks of Mary as a pattern for the Church and a sign of hope for us on our pilgrim way. Such a text makes it clear that at the core of this solemnity is not Mary but God's care for all shining through Mary. Like the moon, her light is reflective on the sun, her Son. The alternate opening prayer reiterates this insight when it praises God for revealing the beauty of divine power by exalting the lowly virgin Mary—back to its divine source as revealed in Jesus. Resonance for this direction is easily found in the second reading and gospel assigned for the day. Thus the readings are not ignored, but interpreted from the prism of the liturgy.

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* teaches that the liturgy—all of it—is the fount and summit of the Church's life. It is a good thing for those called to preach to remember. Thus, preaching is not only *in* the liturgy, it is *of* the liturgy.

Edward Foley, Capuchin, is professor of liturgy at Catholic Theological Union and associate editor of New Theology Review.

KEEPING CURRENT

Scripture
Liturgy and Preaching
Systematic Theology
Church History
Cross-cultural Studies
Spirituality
Moral Theology
Pastoral Theology

Thomas A. Nairn, O.F.M.

New Resources for Bioethics

One of the most quickly changing areas of moral theology these days has been that of medical ethics. As advances in medical knowledge and technology continue to raise ethical questions, it is not surprising that the one area in which new books have been most in evidence over the past year has been this field. Not only are new books constantly being published, but old favorites continue to re-appear in new form. During the past several months, three such previously published texts on medical ethics have become available in new editions. Each of these books can prove helpful to the pastoral minister, but each for a different reason.

For over ten years, Stephen Lammers and Allen Verhey's *On Moral Medicine* has been a standard text for viewing a variety of Protestant and Roman Catholic theological viewpoints on most issues encountered in the study of medical ethics. The thousand page, second edition of this work (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998) may be seen as the "everything-you-wanted-to-know-about-medical-ethics-but-were-afraid-to-ask" volume. It presents 128 previously published essays, classic and contemporary, on more topics than were present in the first edition. As in the first edition, the chapters are arranged around three general categories: the relation between medicine and religion, medical-moral concepts—such as life, death, health, care, and nature—and finally the spectrum of medical ethical issues themselves. Over half of the current entries were not part of the original volume.

The value of the book is the sheer diversity of authors and points of view. The discussion of the concept of "personhood," for example, ranges from Joseph Fletcher's 1975 article in which he asserts that "neocortical function is the key to humanness" (378) to critiques of

such a point of view. For example, Gilbert Meilaender maintains personhood entails having a history, and that this history "begins before we are conscious of it, and, for many of us, continues after we have lost consciousness of it" (399). Or again Stanley Hauerwas rejects the language of personhood itself, demanding that "the story that determines how the virtues of medicine are to be displayed for us is quite different from the one claimed by the language of 'person'" (389). Similarly, in the area of reproductive technology, there is a spectrum of religious responses, ranging from absolute prohibition, represented by the Vatican's *Instruction on Respect for Human Life,* to a variety of attempts to draw lines between what is appropriate and inappropriate. For the hospital chaplain, the pastoral minister who may find himself or herself on an ethics committee, or for anyone interested in the variety of theological arguments developed in response to the ever-expanding field of medicine, this book is a treasure.

A useful book for a totally different reason is the fourth edition of *Health Care Ethics: A Theological Analysis* by Benedict Ashley and Kevin O'Rourke (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998). This 500+ page text is a compendium of the official Catholic teaching on the vast array of medical ethical issues which might confront a person—or a minister trying to offer guidance to such a person. The first half of the book takes the form of an extended argument against more liberal Catholic interpretations of morality, especially that of proportionalism, citing extensively from the documents of the magisterium. It is the second half of the book, however, that may be particularly helpful to the pastoral minister. This new edition affords the minister the authors' analysis both of recent developments in the field of medicine and also of recent ecclesial documents such as Pope John Paul's encyclical *Evangelium vitae* and the "Charter for Health Care Workers" promulgated by the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance. The result is a work which is very careful in the guidance it offers the pastoral minister but nevertheless one which is pastorally sensitive. The authors thus show the latitude which is available to the minister within current church teaching.

Two examples can be illustrative of the helpfulness of this point of view. In their section on end-of-life decisions, for example, the authors raise the question of the morality of withdrawing medically assisted nutrition and hydration. In doing so, they make a point to distance themselves from proportionalist methodology, going so far as to suggest that the 1980 Vatican document on euthanasia should not have spoken of "disproportionate means." Yet when the authors speak of what should be done, they concede the complexity of the issue and acknowledge that the tradition recognizes artificial nutrition and hydration as a medical intervention and therefore subject to the benefit-

burden calculus associated with the Catholic Church's teaching regarding extraordinary means. They further suggest that this calculus is valid even in the case of those patients permanently unconscious: "When those who have responsibility for the care of an irreversibly unconscious person act on the basis of a careful and conservative diagnosis of PVS or some other condition in which present medical science has no ability to enable the person to continue human acts, further life support can only be judged 'aggressive' and 'extraordinary,' and thus ceases to be obligatory" (427). They commend the motivation of pro-life advocates who might disagree with them but nevertheless conclude that, however laudable their concern is, such advocates inappropriately treat life as an absolute good.

The authors' treatment of beginning-of-life issues, including sexuality and artificial reproduction, is conservative, as would be expected. But even here they show that a careful reading of the Church's tradition is more inclusive than many would believe. In their discussion of the prevention of conception in the care of a victim of rape, for example, they acknowledge the tradition that a woman "may do what is possible to render the sperm inoperative, to prevent it from joining the ovum, or to delay the production of ova" (304). Pastoral ministers can thus find in this book careful but compassionate guidance for the issues which many Catholics are facing in trying to deal with health care problems.

A general text which might be helpful for those looking more for an overview of recent developments in medical ethics rather than an in-depth treatment is the third edition of Thomas Shannon's *An Introduction to Bioethics* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1997). This text can serve as a quick and easy update regarding what has been happening recently in the field or may be of use in a parish adult education class. As with the other two books, the text first deals with thematic questions and then looks to specific bioethical issues such as reproductive technologies, abortion, end-of-life decision-making, physician assisted suicide, genetic engineering, transplantation, and experimentation of human subjects. Each chapter is relatively short and contains a simple but accurate treatment of the issue, followed by discussion questions and a short bibliography. It is the presence of the discussion questions that makes the book especially adaptable for an adult education program. Unlike the other two books, Shannon's *Introduction* informs the reader about recent developments in medical ethics while not overwhelming the casual reader in the field. Although it occasionally brings up religious perspectives, the book does not come across primarily as a theological or religious text. For example, as opposed to *Health Care Ethics*, it does not explicitly treat many church documents. This can be seen as either a help or a hindrance, especially for the pastoral minister who uses the book as a text in an adult education class. The basic

strength of the book remains its well-thought-out overview of ethical perspectives of the issues in question without necessarily demanding that a certain religious or ethical position be adopted.

In addition to these more general texts, quite a few other books have been published on a variety of particular issues within health care ethics. For those who would like to understand more completely the ethical nuances of managed care, for example, there is Jack Glaser and Ronald Hamel's *Three Realms of Managed Care: Societal, Institutional, Individual* (Kansas City, Mo.: Sheed and Ward, 1997), an anthology of seventeen current articles on the ethics of managed care, along with several processes to guide reflection on this phenomenon. Those who would like to read more about issues at the beginning of life, including artificial birth technologies and genetics, may want to read LeRoy Walters and Julie Gage Palmer's *The Ethics of Human Gene Therapy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) or Martha Nussbaum and Cass Sunstein's delightful anthology, *Clones and Clones: Facts and Fantasies about Human Cloning* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1998), offering selections from literature as well as from science, ethics and law. There have also been many recently published books that deal with death and end-of-life decisions. Compared with these, however, one of the best books on this subject remains Daniel Callahan's *The Troubled Dream of Life: In Search of a Peaceful Death* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1993). This book continues to be a powerful analysis of the meaning of death and living with mortality as well as a counterbalance to that mentality which relies too heavily on what the author calls technological monism—the belief that all meaningful actions are technological—exhibited by proponents of both euthanasia and medical vitalism.

This smorgasbord offers just a few of the texts in medical ethics that have been published within the past several months. But let the buyer beware: In this quickly changing field, the next several months will probably offer just as many if not more important books as ethics continues to respond to even newer developments in medical knowledge and technology.

Thomas A. Nairn, O.F.M., is associate professor of moral theology at Catholic Theological Union and serves as an ethics consultant to a number of Catholic hospitals and health care systems.

GETTING DOWN TO CASES

Herbert Anderson and
Thomas A. Nairn, O.F.M.

A Burdensome Gift: Birth by *In Vitro* Fertilization

Karen and Tom O'Meara were married shortly after college. Although they both worked for a while before they tried to have children, both were active Catholics and strongly believed that their marriage needed to be open to children. When they were not successful after several years of trying, they began to use fertility drugs under a physician's supervision. Nothing worked. When their specialist eventually suggested in vitro *fertilization, they balked at first knowing that the Church did not approve of this practice. Their desire for a child of their own, however, finally led them to accept this alternative. Karen's ova were fertilized with Tom's sperm resulting in eighteen fertilized eggs. Three of those eggs were implanted in Karen's uterus from which healthy twins were born. The remaining fifteen fertilized eggs were* cryo-preserved *or kept frozen.*

The following year, when Karen was thirty-two, another egg was implanted and a child was born. Another year later, Tom and Karen decided to have another child. This time three fertilized eggs were implanted and one child was born. At that time the physician remarked at their unusual success rate, much higher than the 15 percent rate usually obtained for IVF. This remark brought home to the couple their predicament. After the birth of their fourth child, there were eleven fertilized eggs still frozen, over half the number with which they began. The O'Mearas sought consultation with an expert in medical ethics in order to decide what to do with the remaining eggs whom they regarded as human life. They were not comfortable speaking with the pastor of their parish because Tom and Karen knew their actions were not in accord with church teaching. Moreover, no one in the parish or even in their family, including the children, knew the circumstances of the births.

Together, the O'Mearas and their ethicist considered five alternatives. (1) Have more children and in the process use up all the fertilized eggs. *This was not a desirable alternative because of Karen's age. She would be thirty-six before she could become pregnant again and the risks were too great. Moreover, four children under the age of five were enough to wear them out. (2)* Offer the fertilized eggs to another couple having difficulty conceiving a child. *Karen and Tom quickly rejected this alternative. They said that they could not forgive themselves if their child ended up in an abusive or neglectful home. The thought that a child from their union would be unknown to them somewhere in the world was unbearable. (3)* Destroy the fertilized eggs. *This option was wholly unacceptable because Tom and Karen regarded*

the eggs as fully human life. To kill human life is gravely wrong. (4) Make the eggs available for research or experimentation. *This option was a very unsettling alternative for the O'Mearas that compounded the option of destroying the eggs. They had visions of mutilation when they considered this alternative. (5)* Make no decision and leave the eggs frozen indefinitely. *When they began this process, they had paid a storage fee in advance for all of the eggs. The clinic had been willing to keep the eggs for a nominal annual fee as long as Tom and Karen continued to expect to have more children. The couple was not certain how long the clinic could or would keep the remaining eggs frozen.*

None of the five options were desirable or even acceptable for the O'Mearas. They felt increasingly uncomfortable about the decision they had made in the first instance to use in vitro *fertilization to have children. They asked why the physicians at the clinic had not told them of the possible long-range consequences of their actions. When they left the meeting with the consultant in medical ethics, Karen and Tom were keenly aware of the tragic dimensions of moral decision-making but no more clear about what to do with the frozen fertilized eggs.*

COMMENTARY

This case raises several complicated pastoral and ethical questions. The O'Mearas feel isolated from the support of their faith community because they have made decisions counter to the moral teachings of the Catholic Church. Even if this pastoral situation were beyond the competence of ministers in their parish, it would have been beneficial to Tom and Karen to have someone with whom to celebrate the extraordinary gift of four healthy children and walk with them as they choose among equally tragic moral alternatives. The secrecy of their actions contributed to the isolation that Tom and Karen experienced in the parish. Because the reality is still so new, it remains a matter for debate if or when children who come into the world through the process of *in vitro* fertilization should be told of their birth. One would hope, however, that at least family members could be told so that couples do not have to carry this burdensome gift all alone.

The desire to have children, which was both personal and a matter of faith for Karen and Tom, becomes complex when natural means of conception do not work. On the theoretical level, the Catholic Church has maintained that no one has a right to a child. If a couple cannot have children by natural means, the spouses are asked either to find in that fact the occasion to find other ways to be of service to life or to accept the fact as "an opportunity for sharing in a particular way in the Lord's cross" (see the Vatican's "Instruction on Respect for Human Life," II, 8). Yet, in the concrete, not all couples find solace in these words nor follow the Church's teaching to the letter. As it is an on-going

agenda for the Church to create an environment within parishes in which people experience pastoral support as they struggle to make responsible choices within a moral framework, ministers also need to learn how to care for people who make decisions not in keeping with Church tradition. The fact that the couple felt that they were unable to discuss the issue of *in vitro* fertilization within a moral context at the beginning of their deliberation had obviously adverse consequences for later decisions. Could appropriate moral counseling earlier in their decision-making process have helped them to appreciate that often the way we make early decisions provides a moral context for further decisions?

The minister needs to see that concrete ethical decisions are also emotionally-involved decisions. The couple's real desire for a child could not be answered simply by repeating the statement that no one has a right to a child. Similarly, what from the outside might seem to be the most logical and ethical choice, that of donating their embryos to other couples, may not look as ethical from the point of view of the couple who has to make the decision. For at least some couples the choice of giving up one's embryos has the same ethical and emotional negativity as giving up an already-born *child* to another couple. Such a decision can carry the stigma of being bad parents, unable to care for what was really theirs. Concretely, the option of giving up the fertilized ova raised the possibility that a child of theirs may be out there somewhere in need of their care. This concrete mixture of the ethical and the emotional made this decision-making process a truly tragic one.

Herbert Anderson, a former member of the editorial board of New Theology Review, *is professor of pastoral theology at Catholic Theological Union. Thomas A. Nairn, O.F.M., is associate professor of moral theology at Catholic Theological Union and serves as an ethics consultant to a number of Catholic hospitals and health care systems.*

To the readers of *New Theology Review:* You are invited to submit cases from your ministry practice for consideration in this column. In a paragraph or more, write the story of the situation and send to Robert P. Waznak, S.S., and Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M., Editors, *New Theology Review,* 6896 Laurel St. N.W., Washington, DC 20012. Thanks for your participation.

BOOK REVIEWS

What is Theology? Foundational and Moral. By Edmond J. Dunn. Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publications, 1998. Pages, 263. Paper, $14.95.

In the catalogue of the college where I teach there is a course entitled "Introduction to Christian Theology." I have often mused about the kind of text I would use in the teaching of such a course. Now that I have read Edmond Dunn's excellent book, *What is Theology?,* I have found exactly the right one.

Dunn organizes his book around two basic questions: (1) What do we believe, and why? and (2) What as Christians are we to do and be? In answering the first question Dunn provides us with a useful working definition of theology: "Theology is our attempt to express in clear and concise language what we presume to be the self-disclosure of God in person, nature, history, everyday experience and, for Christians, in an ultimate way in Jesus of Nazareth" (31–32). Then, within a theological method he describes as correlative, he explores the nature of revelation and faith, the roles of Scripture and tradition, as well as the identity and mission of the Church. This section concludes with a fascinating chapter on the quest for church unity, with a particularly provocative interpretation of what it means for a church to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

The second section of the text probes the dynamics of the Christian moral life within the context of a Christian anthropology. Thus Dunn takes the reader through discussions of the nature of moral theology, various approaches to moral decision-making (he opts for the priority of what he terms the relational/responsible-oriented model), and the contemporary attention given to the human person—free, graced, and capable of a fundamental option. He offers useful presentations of the limits of freedom and the process of moral development, the latter reflecting the influence of Kohlberg and the distinction between premoral and moral values. In this section he does not shy away from addressing issues at the center of much controversy such as proportionalism and dissent from church teaching, as well as masturbation, birth control, and civil disobedience.

In addition to the topics addressed, this book has much to recommend itself. First, the author's writing style is lucid and engaging. Second, it is evident that the author has been deeply influenced by the college students he has taught. His examples and illustrations clearly reflect his desire to engage a classroom or audience of young adults. Third, the work is professedly ecumenical. In treating issues that divide the churches, such as the use of Scripture, various ecclesial polities, and the nature of the eucharistic presence, Dunn does a very good job of highlighting the commonalities and sensitively dealing with differences. Fourth, the author has folded into the text a series of what he calls "foci." These deal with questions which are often provoked by the topic under consideration. Examples include the nature of the resurrected body of Jesus, the difference between doctrine and dogma, the nature of the infancy narratives, the meaning of the creation story, and the Mormons.

Dunn pulls no punches as to where he is situated theologically. His references and quotes include the following: Rahner, Küng, McBrien, Curran, McCormick, Patrick, O'Connell, and Tracy. If this is a constellation of thinkers you find congenial, you will find this book very useful. If not, then you should look elsewhere for an introduction to Christian theology.

William McConville, O.F.M.
Siena College

Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture. By Marva J. Dawn. Foreward by Martin E. Marty. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1995. Pages, xi + 316. Paper, $18.00.

Marva Dawn holds a Ph.D. in Christian ethics and the Scriptures from the University of Notre Dame. In this present work Dawn, the author of eight previous books, draws from twenty years of experience as worship leader, preacher, and musician in many churches and denominations to address current issues in both public worship and Christian culture.

In a culture that "dumbs down everything," the search for new ways and means to bring back those who have given up on public worship has resulted in numerous unfavorable situations which are addressed in the book. Changing patterns of worship and/or offering worship services tend toward the shallow, thus creating "smaller faiths." This is not the solution. Furthermore, the traditional versus contemporary "worship wars" created by these predicaments are preventing true worship from taking place. Because these "worship wars" occur principally in the liturgical churches of the United States, they are the intended audience, though the author's words are applicable to every denomination in many countries.

The text is intended to lead the reader to a more thorough understanding of culture and worship. Toward that end a set of standards is presented whereby the various unfavorable influences in our culture might be judged, and some specific practical recommendations are offered. The book is organized into five parts, each of which contains a varying number of chapters: Our culture *and* the Church's Worship, The Culture *surrounding* our worship, The Culture *of* Worship, The Culture *in* our Worship, and Worship *for the sake of* the Culture. Each chapter contains extensive quotes from some excellent sources which are used to give further emphasis to the topic under consideration. A bibliography of the works cited is also included.

The first sections of the book are quite lengthy and contain a consideration of the many negative aspects surrounding our culture. Although they are rather difficult to get through, they lay the foundation for the final sections which deal with worship itself. Sections four and five contain many useful suggestions and are worth the efforts put into the early part of the book. Topics such as the true meaning of worship, its importance in the life of the worshipper, the necessity for preparing well, the importance of preaching and the use of silence are addressed and useful advice is offered. The author's musical expertise

comes through in a lengthy section devoted to music. In search of criteria whereby leaders can determine how matters of style fit into the selection process, Thomas Gieschen's selection grid is included which analyzes text, style, propriety, and worth of different pieces.

In the foreword to the text, Martin Marty refers to the work as a kind of "manual of worship" intended to assist the assembly to understand what is wrong and to encourage leaders to do better (ix). Liturgists and musicians alike would profit from this pastorally oriented text. The author's genuine, convincing, impassioned account of the meaning of worship and its importance in the life of the worshipper should enable the fulfillment of her hope that it will lead to asking "better questions."

Mary Alice O'Connor, C.S.J.
The Catholic University of America

For Our Salvation: Two Approaches to the Work of Christ. By Geoffrey Wainwright. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997. Pages, xii + 186. Paper, $18.00.

In this work Wainwright, the Robert Earl Cushman Professor of Theology at Duke Divinity School, brings together in two major parts two sets of lectures whose original audience was theological students, pastors and interested laity. Wainwright's goal is to present two approaches to the saving work of Christ that are firmly grounded in the scriptures, the tradition, especially liturgical, and the practice of the Church "catholic and evangelical." While sensitive to the need to correlate the Scriptures and tradition to contemporary questions and needs, he believes that the greater need is for a reimmersion in Scripture and tradition. He unabashedly states that behind both approaches to the saving work of Christ in this book stands the Nicene Creed.

The first part of the book keys off of John 1:14: "The Word became flesh." Deeply appreciative of "the corporeal character of Christ and his gospel" and as antignostic as Irenaeus, whom he cites frequently, Wainwright moves beyond an exclusive christological to an ecclesial-sacramental understanding of this statement. God's saving presence and address to us (the Word), found fully in the historical enfleshment of Jesus, continues to come to the Church by material means. Hence he dedicates three chapters to ways the salvation of Christ encounters us through the five senses. In these very earthly chapters, strongly rooted in the Scriptures and steeped in the tradition, Wainwright offers a very rich, sacramental anthropology, showing how all the human senses are addressed through the various aspects (words, actions, gestures, material elements) of the liturgy. The salvation of God in Christ encounters us in very "fleshy" ways, or in the words of Tertullian: "the flesh is the hinge of salvation"; not only Christ's flesh; our flesh also. Catholics will resonate with these pages in which he also frequently points out not only the doxological and eucchological dimension of sacramental worship but also its praxiological and

ethical dimensions. In an emerging postmodern world in which men and women claim to throw off the shackles of the isolated and alienated spiritual subject of Plato and Descartes and express a desire to reclaim their materiality and relationality, including their relationality to the cosmos itself, Wainwright's reclamation from the tradition of the materiality and hence sacramentality of salvation should play well.

In the second part Wainwright attends to another theme related to salvation, the threefold office of Christ as prophet, priest and king. Here again he reclaims the foundations in the Scriptures and tradition for this theme which was revived especially by Calvin as a schema within which to treat the salvific work of Christ. Moving beyond Calvin, Wainwright addresses each office or function in its five-fold usage: christological, baptismal, soteriological, ministerial, and ecclesiological, at all times indicating both the ecumenical base and future ecumenical potential of the three-fold office. In his discussion of each office Wainwright attempts to correlate that office with some aspect of the contemporary human condition: the prophetic office addresses the crisis of knowledge and meaning; the priestly deals with human alienation and estrangement; the royal responds to questions of power and authority. He nicely shows how the threefold office is itself reflected in the structure of the Eucharist and in the format of the liturgical year. It also unites doxology and dogma and can be of great value for the Church both in its self-understanding and practice in both its internal life and its mission to the world. Not surprisingly, Wainwright ends with "the end," i.e., how the three-fold office is geared toward ultimate salvation.

This book and the immense erudition of its author do not need my recommendation. One cannot but be impressed by Wainwright's profound knowledge of the "great tradition," which he mines as a valuable theological source for today. Above all I am profoundly inspired by the ecumenical pathos of the author who chairs the international dialogue between the World Methodist Council and the Roman Catholic Church. This pathos runs throughout the book as he frequently cites multiple Protestant, Roman and Orthodox sources and draws out possible ecumenical challenges and implications from his themes.

Two minor reservations. First, though Wainwright is aware of the need to correlate the Christian past with today's quite different worlds or cultures, his admitted emphasis upon continuity with the tradition at times leaves his attempts to "respeak" the tradition to today's many worlds somewhat lacking. Second, why no subject and author index?

Donald W. Buggert, O.Carm.
Washington Theological Union

Could You Ever Come Back to the Catholic Church? By Lorene Hanley Duquin. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1997. Pages, x + 203. Paper, $9.95.

Lorene Hanley Duquin has experience as an alienated Catholic, has ministered to alienated Catholics in the Diocese of Buffalo and has a vibrant faith despite the tensions in the Church. Bishop Mansell of Buffalo writes in his Afterward: "Lorene Duquin is as positive and affirmative as anyone can be this

side of the Eternal Banquet. She goes all the way with realism and arrives at a point beyond." Her realism is refreshing and honest.

In 1982 Paulist Fr. Alvin Illig boggled many minds with the Gallup statistic that "fifteen million Roman Catholics in the United States feel alienated from the Church and *forty percent have a strong desire to return* to the Church." He asked: Are we becoming an elitist Church with no room for fringe people who often make up the unchurched and inactive? Are we forgetting that the Church is for saints and sinners?

From 1985 to 1990 I was involved in ministry to alienated Catholics in New York City. Within five years over four thousand people responded to our newspaper ads, and many participated in group sessions. I researched various programs, gathered relevant articles, and read dozens of books by the experts. All my resources and notes were collected in three huge loose-leaf binders. All the necessary ingredients for a comprehensive book on ministry to alienated Catholics in America had been gathered. I was wrong. Lorene Duquin's work is the best I have read to date, and I have shredded my three volumes of precious materials.

Lorene Duquin kindly sent me a copy of her book which I read with delight and genuine gratitude in one sitting. She has captured the feelings and hopes of many alienated Catholics whom Gallup claims have *"a strong desire to return to the Church."* Sound theology and common sense characterize her description of human freedom and the sanctity of individual conscience. Her compassionate treatment of the most sensitive areas which confront the alienated are honestly and squarely faced. Complicated issues such as divorced and remarried Catholic, annulments, internal forum, gays and lesbians, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, etc., will capture even the most cynical of readers.

A wide net is cast and no one is excluded from the love of Christ and the Church. The very chapter titles are captivating, each offering a ray of hope. The "Chapter Notes" are especially helpful, adding a positive touch and tone to each chapter. Anyone interested in organizing a parish program or diocesan outreach to alienated Catholics will profit from this very readable work. It can be placed confidently into the hands of anyone who feels alienated from or by the Church. Ms. Duquin reaches out to those who cannot displace whatever stirring there is to come back home. She invites them to "hook back with their tradition." Alienated Catholics will find this practical and compassionate book helpful on their faith journey back home to God, to Christ and to their truest selves.

Flavian A. Walsh, O.F.M.
Our Lady of Holy Angels Church
Little Falls, N.J.

The Healer's Calling: A Spirituality for Physicians and Other Health Care Professionals. By Daniel P. Sulmasy. New York: Paulist Press, 1997. Pages, iii + 131. Paper, $11.95.

Daniel Sulmasy, O.F.M., M.D., is a well-known participant in current medical-ethical debate. He enjoys a distinctive vantage point in this debate, that of Franciscan friar and practicing medical internist, that places him in rare company.

His credibility derives in good measure from his position as a practicing physician in the tumultuous hodgepodge that is healthcare today. In this book he offers the reader a road map to spirituality in healthcare. That is, he attempts to provide a concrete example (his) of how God can be found in the work that we do. Most of the anecdotes are, naturally, oriented toward physician-patient or nurse-patient relationships, but the lessons and arguments are equally useful to anyone who cares for a sick one.

The book contains eight essays, each of which could stand alone as a talk or the subject of a group discussion. These essays range in topics from musings on the health benefits of spirituality to the role of faith in the practice of medicine, and the place each may take in doctor-patient interactions. In exploring these topics he gives validity to the physician/nurse as human and discredits the image of the superhuman physician. In fact, Sulmasy makes the point that the relationship between a doctor and patient speaks to the humanity of each party. By embracing and nourishing their own spirituality, health care providers can present a much richer version of themselves to attend to their patients. In so doing, they will have a broader armamentarium with which to deal with their patients' ailments.

Sulmasy sets out a careful discussion of suffering as part and parcel of the human experience. He draws a parallel between enduring suffering and every person's search for the transcendent: "Suffering is the experience that human beings have of knowing themselves as finite creatures who have been given the gift of a freedom that orients them to the infinite." He does not attempt to explain why one suffers, but rather he constructs a framework in which one could distill meaning from the experience.

This is a timely collection of essays. Its common thread is that spirituality (read as having a relationship with God, in Sulmasy's case) has a legitimate central role in caring for and treating patients. Sulmasy makes the case that the joyful practice of medicine has as its predicate a practitioner with a deep self-knowledge and awareness of a higher purpose. I find his arguments compelling. They speak to the physician with a voice that is genuine. The vernacular is that of the doctor "in the trenches." The anecdotes are easily recognizable. They remind physicians that we are not merely automatons who dispense cutting-edge technology to "health care consumers." For these reasons I would recommend this book to any of my colleagues who desire to explore further why it is that we do what we do.

Theodore J. Choma, M.D.
Walter Reed Army Medical Center
Washington, D.C.

That All May Be One: Hierarchy and Participation in the Church. By Terence L. Nichols. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1997. Pages, viii + 355. Paper, $29.95.

A pervasive concern for the unity of the Christian churches drives this book. If church order, particularly a Petrine ministry, has been a stumbling block to unity for so many centuries, then a renewed approach to church structure

within the Roman Church, one founded upon wide-ranging participation and consensus, could be Rome's single contribution to a reconciled Christianity. To achieve this end, a deeply participatory hierarchical structure, which avoids the twin pitfalls of monarchical domination and egalitarianism, is proposed for the Catholic Church.

Intending his book for a wide audience, Nichols, an assistant professor of systematic theology at the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, asserts in chapter 1 that the most serious problem with modern Catholicism is a misunderstanding about the nature of hierarchy. Defenders and opponents alike misconstrue it for domination. Hence, Nichols distinguishes two models: first, a command hierarchy which stresses personal inequality, authority of force, and servile obedience, and second, a participative, integrative model where equality of persons, hierarchy of function or office, authority of virtue, and filial obedience are the operative traits. He then relates these two models of social or ecclesial hierarchy to the hierarchy of being or ontological hierarchy, namely, participation in created being and in the life of God; he affirms important interrelationships between these two orders. Distortions and misunderstanding in one realm cause negative repercussions in the other. Indeed the two are usually interconnected and legitimize each other. Nichols attempts to sketch out major interactive moments of these correlative hierarchies from biblical times to the Second Vatican Council. He criticizes roundly both dominative as well as egalitarian tendencies in light of what he sees as a more participatory and consensual kind of structure reflected in the scientific model of the holon proposed by Arthur Koestler in 1971. Every organism consists of levels of interacting units or holons which comprise wholes containing parts. These holons exert an ascending as well as descending causal influence within the complex structure of the organism. From the resulting arrangement of holons (a holarchy) emerges an integrated, diverse, and participatory reality. As analogously understood, holarchy becomes for Nichols a key insight for a renewed Catholic leadership structure and for a reunited Christianity. "I will maintain that holarchy, as universal in nature, reflects a divinely intended principle of order in creation which is applicable to society and the Church" (17).

In his survey of the emergence and development of hierarchy, he accepts episcopal structure as divinely intended and has high praise for the consensual governance of the Church exemplified especially in the first seven ecumenical councils. With a decided sympathy for the Eastern tradition he traces the claims of the bishops of Rome to a certain primacy of authority, while he underlines the lapses of at least two early occupants of that see. From the Gregorian Reform to the High Middle Ages, from Ockhamism, Conciliarism, the Reformation, and the Tridentine Reform to Gallicanism, Ultramontanism, Vatican I, and the renewal of Vatican II, Nichols analyzes the dominative and egalitarian swings of ecclesial structure and the obstacles impeding authentic participation and consensus.

In the last three chapters, Nichols explicates the scientific, metaphysical, and theological principles that underlie his project. He places central importance upon a hierarchy of being (Aquinas as interpreted by Norris Clarke) that promotes the fullest participation and diversity from the proton to the triune God. Trinitarian doctrine serves as the ground as well as the crown of this ontologi-

cal hierarchy, for divine life models participation and is shared in history through the sacramental mediations of the incarnation, the mystical body of Christ, and seven sacraments. If the Catholic Church is to survive its present crisis, it must eschew both authoritarian and egalitarian structures in favor of that social participation and subsidiarity so long advanced in papal social teaching. On behalf of this participatory approach, he also presents persuasive data from recent sociological, anthropological, and managerial studies that promote shared decision-making, small group function, and consensus building.

The Church as communion represents Nichols' final theological argument for an authentically participative Roman Catholicism. Distinguishing in the Church four kinds of communion (not exactly parallel to Vatican II's understanding), he demonstrates how this rich concept could have beneficent consequences for the sensus fidelium, the parish, the local church, episcopal conferences, and the exercise of papal primacy, and how it could encourage a truly elective process for priests, bishops, and pope. However, Nichols is soberly aware of the difficulties. "The greatest obstacle to the realization of the Church as communion is the conception of hierarchy as command. It is this notion which is largely responsible for the polarization now affecting the Catholic Church" (327). Hence, Roman Catholicism's greatest contribution to its own vitality and also to the ecumenical movement is a searching examination of conscience, particularly regarding its exercise and appreciation of hierarchy in general and of papal power.

As such this book is a theoretical and foundational study; it offers significant rationale for structural reform of leadership and governance on all levels of the Roman Church. Its pastoral implications are enormous. However, no ready-made solutions or action plans for immediate pastoral implementation may be found here. Sustained ecumenical focus, interdisciplinary attention, historical perspective, and a metaphysically informed theological method recommend this work, along with its sizeable bibliography and index. But more convincing evidence would strengthen the theological section, where argumentation tends to be abstract and therefore open to divergent interpetations. Detailed discussion of Vatican II's theology of baptism, of its teaching on episcopal collegiality, and analysis of canonical studies on shared decision and on the separation of the power of orders and of jurisdiction could help significantly. Furthermore, a crucial source needs consultation—the works of Alexandre Faivre on early church hierarchy. Proofreading lapses are excessive, over twenty of them. However, this remains a bold, persuasive, and faithful book, calling for what so many feel is so painfully absent in Roman Church hierarchy, namely, the full range of the Spirit's dulcet voice.

Gabriel Scarfia, O.F.M.
Christ the King Seminary
East Aurora, N.Y.

All Saints. By Robert Ellsberg. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997. Pages, viii + 576. Hardcover, $39.95.

Ranging across recorded history, Robert Ellsberg has selected stories of people who represent the very best of our race. Concisely and accurately, he

presents individuals who make us proud to be human. He lays bare the secret buried in our human clay—we are all creatures of conflict. In the procession of struggling brothers and sisters he marches before us, we find the whole mixed bag of human ills. Each person has his or her unique problem; all fight to retain that most precious of God's gifts of personal integrity. Ellsberg's people are Roman Catholics, Protestants, Jews, atheists, Muslims, and agnostics. They often fight in the dark. When the light shines, its source is often Christ and the gospel. For some the Light never comes. They struggle and die driven by their need to remain honest and true to whatever or whomever guides them. Some are deeply flawed, others towers of strength. Some cowards, others heroes. We readily recognize them; we see their like almost every day. Although not canonized, they merit inclusion in Ellsberg's calendar because as the author informs us in his excellent introduction, they could not rest until they lived their humanity to its fullest.

Because Robert Ellsberg is a communicator (editor-in-chief, Orbis Books) he knows his readers as creatures of the instant information age. We revel in the sound bite, vibrate to the ten-second commercial, feel our pulse race against the ticking stopwatch prominently displayed with news segments like the "New York Minute" (four TV stories in sixty seconds). The very brevity of Ellsberg's sketches meets our needs yet leaves us thirsting to know more of our heroes' interior struggles. The book's careful packaging of a daily story in a few paragraphs reminds us only too painfully that our nervous age has little time to read full-length religious biography and no time to walk step-by-step with a fellow human on the path to holiness. Ellsberg can only show us the bare outlines of his heroes' and heroines' struggles. He isolates brilliantly the central issue of each subject's life, but the book's format does not permit us to measure the pain dimension, probe the corridors of fear and failure, or glory in triumph's peace and joy.

Ellsberg kindly leaves references for further reading as a footnote concluding each sketch. A brief quotation from each hero at the story's beginning gives us a glance into the person's heart and mind. Ellsberg's stories are not the stuff of traditional hagiography. No St. Patrick stands in ice water reciting psalms throughout the night. No St. Joseph Cupertino clings like a spent party balloon to the refectory ceiling. Instead we have Dorothy Day, peacenik, patron of the homeless, unwed mother, and newspaper publisher. We have Cornelia Connolly whose story is so bizarre as to be almost unbelievable. No surprise, we have Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Who is my favorite? Marc Sangnier, the French Apostle of Peace of the twenties and thirties who demonstrated heroic faithfulness to the Church.

On dark winter mornings, when my little flock gathers in our country church for Mass, I often read or relate stories from *All Saints* to the faithful few. In the hush, time and space collapse and one easily experiences the communion of saints. Ellsberg puts flesh on that beautiful doctrine. He helps us stand beside Peter hanging upside down on his cross in first-century Rome; hear the gallant Trappist, Christian de Chergé, forgive his Islamic murderers in 1996 as they slit the throats of his six fellow monks and himself in the Algerian mountains; hear Rose Hawthorne as the last century closed, comfort a dying cancer patient in a lower East side New York tenement. His heroes encourage us, prod us, and

sometimes shame us as we plod along our pilgrim way, filled with gratitude to the Lord for the great gift of being human.

Boniface Hanley, O.F.M.
Pastor, St. Joseph's Church
West Milford, N.J.

The Death Penalty: An Historical and Theological Survey. By James J. Megivern. New York: Paulist Press, 1997. Pages, xiii + 641. Hardcover, $29.95.

This large book is written from the perspective of a committed opponent of capital punishment. Megivern is a professor at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington. He demonstrates wide research and admirable moral passion through the course of the volume. Capital punishment is a much-debated issue in American society. The U.S. bishops have come to a position of opposition to the death penalty, and a particular strength of the volume is the author's detailed narrative telling how the episcopal teaching came to be.

But capital punishment is an interesting example of non-reception of a church teaching by the general Catholic population in this country. Megivern does not really help readers understand why this is so. First, he is too much the opponent of capital punishment to present a sympathetic treatment of the opposing viewpoint. More importantly, and this is the major limitation of the book, the author does not really present an analytic argument or a synthetic presentation of the capital punishment debate. Rather, the key word in the subtitle of the volume is "survey." Megivern is content to pile quote on quote in his compilation of views held by various, but largely Christian, writers. What the reader gets is a wealth of primary source material but a weaker analytic treatment of the tradition.

Particularly weak is Megivern's treatment of the biblical material which is unfortunate since many supporters of capital punishment cite biblical texts in support of their position. It is not that I disagree with Megivern's ultimate conclusion about the use of the Bible in moral argument, but more that I was disappointed in the rather brief treatment of Scripture in a book that is over six hundred pages. Roughly the last half of the book is the story of how American Catholics have wrestled with the death penalty. The documentary trail which the author pursues is impressive and the telling of the recent debates among the American episcopacy is the real contribution of this volume.

Megivern's book is a useful gathering of data from the tradition and that is to be appreciated. But more than gathering data is needed and the weak aspect of the volume is the framing of a philosophical or theological ethic for the sorting out and defending of a particular viewpoint. The book is an historical survey of what theologians and philosophers have said but it is not itself a theological or philosophical argument.

Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M.
Washington Theological Union

Relating to People of Other Religions: What Every Christian Needs to Know. By M. Thomas Thangaraj. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997. Pages, 112. Paper.

Thomas Thangaraj is associate professor of world Christianity at the Chandler School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia. In a warm and engaging manner, he presents to Christians the motives, paths, and basic confidence about relating to people of other faiths. His approach is autobiographical, anecdotal, biblical, and practical; the result is an easily read book that communicates effectively. Because of his lengthy personal involvement in interfaith dialogue, Thangaraj has a positive approach to the followers of other religious traditions. His chapters often begin by narrating a personal encounter: "Ganga [my new neighbor] and I are fellow pilgrims on the journey of faith" (7); "Ganga and I have had long conversations . . . [and we] discover many similarities; but we know we are very different . . ." (75, 87). This narrative style brings the reader directly into the heart of the question in a personal, concrete way.

Recognizing the fact that in today's global community "Christians will be increasingly drawn into interaction and conversation with other religious communities in our mission to serve humanity," Thangaraj explores several "different modes of relationship between Christians and others" (18). Six of the book's nine chapters explore various possible stances of a Christian vis-à-vis other religionists. Creative chapter titles capture these positions: "We Know and They Know Not" (chapter 3) [an exclusivist view]; "We Perhaps Know; They Perhaps Know; Who Knows?" (chapter 4) [a skeptical or relativist view]; "We and They Together Need to Know More!" (chapter 8) [an inclusivist view]. Although Thangaraj does not use the nomenclature found within the bracketed words, he explores those issues and attitudes; the mode of exploration is narrative, experiential, and attitudinal. The reader will find the approach engaging and insightful.

Some recurrent themes are played throughout the work: the God of the Bible "does not fail to celebrate plurality" (20) and "revels in the multiplicity of peoples, cultures and religions" (24); balanced judgment is needed in evaluating the missionary enterprise because for many believers (Thangaraj's own ancestors) the gospel "liberated them and helped them to affirm and assert their own self-worth and dignity" (47); dialogue includes "every act, word, and thought carried out together with others in a spirit of mutuality" (92); it is "an exercise in humility and love" (95).

The book does not romanticize other religions; the author is not compromising of his Christian faith. The thoughts of theologians (e.g., Panikkar, Rahner, etc.) are used for the insight they offer. The Bible is frequently quoted to affirm a positive and open approach to other believers. A study guide with practical suggestions for each chapter concludes the work.

This is a helpful book; it could become a basic resource for a short course on interfaith dialogue. It is easily understood, but never proposes simplistic solutions to complex problems. In a word, Thangaraj has followed the advice found in 1 Pet 3:15-16a; he has witnessed to his Christian faith and hope "with gentleness and reverence."

James H. Kroeger, M.M.
Jesuit Loyola School of Theology
Manila, Philippines

The International Bible Commentary: A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century. Editor William R. Farmer; Associate Editors Sean McEvenue, Armando J. Levoratti, and David L Dungan; Map Editor André LaCocque. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998. Pages lii + 1918. Hardcover, $99.95.

Among recent one-volume commentaries on the Bible we have the generally excellent *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (1990), and the older *New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (1969). The question that comes to mind with the present hefty work is: why another such commentary? The answer becomes clear from a perusal of the contents. It is unlike any other that I am aware of. First, among its many unique features, 118 Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant scholars from thirty-two countries on six continents contributed the general articles and the commentaries on the individual books of the OT and NT from the perspectives of their national readerships so that the spirit of their cultures can be experienced (xxxi). Second, 20 percent of the authors are women, and the same percentage are Protestant. Third, this commentary is being published in English, Spanish, French, Italian, and Polish. Fourth, the commentary intends to be "Catholic" (= Roman Catholic) and catholic (= universal, international, ecumenical) so that "on those issues where definite Catholic teachings would be treated, the official Catholic view is clearly presented" but there is also "a fair account of the main directions of the ecumenical spectrum" (xvi). Fifth, and most distinctively, though the authors employ the historical-critical method, they emphasize the pastoral dimensions of the biblical texts.

The first part of the volume (1–332) begins with two introductory articles, "The Power of the Word of God" and "How to Interpret the Bible" (1–35) by Armando J. Levoratti (Argentina); in these two superb essays, which I would make required reading for everyone interested in the Bible, the author makes frequent reference to "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," a seminal document issued by the Pontifical Biblical Commission (1993). There follow four major sections with many subdivisions: (1) "Insights into the History of Biblical Interpretation," (2) "Unleashing the Power of the Bible," (3) "How Did We Get Our Bible?," and (4) "Selected Pastoral Concerns." Many of these are self-contained essays worth reading in their own right. In the first section, for instance, "Patristic Exegesis of the Books of the Bible" by David L. Balás (Hungary/United States) and Jeffrey Bingham (United States), presents a splendid overview (64–115), with detailed bibliographies of editions and patristic studies on the several books of the OT and NT; scholars will find this essay especially useful. In the last section, Mercy Amba Oduyoye from Ghana wrote a fascinating essay, "Family: An African Perspective," a perspective most western readers know little of. "The Bible and Ecology" by Daniel G. Deffebaugh and David L. Dungan (United States) demonstrates convincingly that "the Bible has much to say about our present environmental predicament" (314).

The commentary of each book is divided into two major parts: First Reading, a rapid reading, with the commentary as a help for the reader, to see the book as a whole because the general idea or context is necessary in order to understand the individual verses and parts; and Second Reading, a slow reading,

taking in a little at a time so that the reader may savor its contents and grasp better "the shattering presence of God" in the lives of the inspired author. Thus, one can undertake a thoughtful study of the Bible as a whole or of individual books by following this effective method—a major contribution indeed.

A new commentary like this one takes time to appreciate. As one would expect with so many contributors, the articles and commentaries are not of uniform quality or consistency. In an otherwise good commentary on Exodus, for example, John F. Craghan (United States) deals rather briefly and generally with the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:1-17); but in the commentary on Deuteronomy Yuichi Osumi (Japan) provides a fine explanation of each individual commandment (Deut 5:6-21).

A few contributions deserve special mention without slighting any of the rest. In the masterful commentary on John's Gospel, Teresa Okure (Nigeria) explains the episode in Cana (John 2:1-12) with keen intuition and feminine insight. Mary "serves as a midwife who helps a reluctant expectant mother to push and give birth." When Jesus objects that his hour has not yet come, "by her undaunted yet silent faith his mother initiates the event that . . . leads to that hour. God, in this instance, upheld the rights of the mother over her son (cf. Sir 3:2b)" (1464). R. J. Raja (India) enhances his detailed comments on Judith by offering three charts that highlight the intertextuality between the story of Judith and the story of David in 1 Samuel 17; texts of Judith and texts of Exodus; and Sarah and Judith. Intertextuality, which features prominently in the volume, "is the experience of hearing echoes of one text in another, the discovery (or rediscovery, because the ancients knew it intuitively) that no text is ever truly autonomous; no text is ever produced and read apart from other texts" (xxviii). The commentaries on 1–2 Samuel and on 1–2 Kings by Antony Campbell and Mark O'Brien (Australia) can serve as an outstanding sample of what to expect in this volume: clear sprightly writing on all the major themes and expert guidance for understanding the biblical text. Curiously, some of the articles and commentaries contain no bibliographies; most do, however.

Each major section of the Bible (e.g., Pentateuch, Deuteronomistic History, Gospels) receives one or more introductory articles. "Wisdom: A Way of Thinking about God" by Sean McEvenue (Canada) is a gem that should be read before one begins a study of the individual Wisdom books. Even the scholar will find this article worth reading.

The volume lacks a general index, a significant drawback in a work of this kind. Instead, it has a "Pastoral Guide for the Use of the Bible in Preaching"—an alphabetical listing of persons, ideas, and things, followed by definitions and the biblical citation(s) featuring the same. There is an index to the sixteen maps at the end of the volume.

In sum, I recommend this new commentary to clergy and laity alike who are looking for more than a quick explanation of difficult biblical passages. Those who purchase the volume will conclude that it is one of the best buys they have ever made.

Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M.
The Catholic University of America
Washington, D.C.

Clashing Symbols, An Introduction to Faith and Culture. By Michael Paul Gallagher, S.J. New York: Paulist Press, 1998. Pages 170. Paper, $11.95.

Starting with a clarifying analysis of the concept "culture," Michael Gallagher, teaching theology for half a year at the Gregorian University in Rome and for the rest of the year active in the field of faith and culture in Europe and the United States, situates the topic of his book: "Throughout most of human history, cultures have been rooted in religious consciousness; a central crisis of culture today comes from the split between culture and religion over the last two centuries or so" (23).

Opting for Walter J. Ong's opinion that change should not be faced in a spirit of nostalgia but in the historical spirit, the author explains how the Second Vatican Council made this challenge a major theme. The council openly recognized this shift and the plurality of cultures in the world in its reflections on culture in *Gaudium et spes* (nn. 53–61).

The council laid down two foundational Catholic principles. Culture is linked with (1) the dignity of the person and with (2) the call of freedom to become more fully human. It indicated three consequent dimensions: humanist, empirical and local.

John Paul II, picking up this theme, would declare later (5-11-79) that it is on this issue that the destiny of the Church and of the world are at stake (47). The synthesis between culture and faith is not just a demand of culture, but also of faith. "Witnessing to Christ will mean drawing out of a culture the full meaning of its noblest intentions . . . at other times challenging that culture especially when the truth about the human person is under assault" (John Paul II, 8-10-95).

These foundational truths are compared with the developments in appreciation of "culture" by the World Council of Churches (and UNESCO). The agenda of the WCC is four-fold: (1) authentic witness within each culture, (2) gospel and identity in community, (3) local congregations in pluralistic societies, and (4) one gospel . . . diverse cultures. These valid agenda points remain, however, more or less "in house" issues. The main challenge for Christianity remains modernity, even though the debate has moved on to postmodernity.

The reconciliatory tone of the sixties (the Vatican Council years) was followed by a more critical reaction in the eighties. Some Christian authors saw the "fallout" of the Western enlightenment—the ensuing privatization and relativization of religion, and its displacement from the center of public life to the private sphere—as a "radical falsification" of the Christian message (L. Osborn). Detached from spiritual aims and moral values, and with no sense of revelation, culture finds itself faced with an acute spiritual problem (C. Dawson).

John Paul II offered a more positive evaluation, considering that if modernity permits "a human being to express his or her maturity, spiritual, moral and cultural, in dialogue with the Creator and creation, then the Church of the Council saw itself as the 'soul' of modernity" (9-25-94). In this line of thought the author considers the un-anchoredness of "postmodernity" (or "late modernity") as a potentially positive cultural mood. It can be seen as a "re-enchantment of the world that modernity tried hard to dis-enchant" (Z. Bauman). It is a new sensibility more open to religious horizons, the prophetic, the cosmological and the

mystical, than "modernity" (D. Tracy). The new spiritual searching is a surprising strand of postmodernity. Christ's prophetic challenge is once again offered to a broken world.

In the last four more practical chapters Gallagher draws practical conclusions from this hope-filled vision discussing inculturation, cultural discernment, cultural discernment in ministry, and a spirituality of culture. The book ends with an epilogue telling some of the author's lived experiences of the "clash of symbols," and an anthology of quotations on culture.

In the midst of the endless "cheap" words spent on culture, modernity and postmodernity, this book stands out as a gem. It is a not an easy read, but an exceptionally rewarding one.

Joseph Donders, M.Afr.
Washington Theological Union

An Introduction to the Homily. By Robert P. Waznak, S.S. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998. Pages, xi + 147. Paper, $13.95.

The ambitious and substantive contents of this modest little volume make it a worthy contribution toward correcting a regrettable "lack of scholarly homiletic literature in the Roman Catholic tradition" (93), even though it is not an "academic" book in the usual sense. Author Robert Waznak states in the preface that he is not writing "primarily for homileticians who seek new breakthroughs in their field but to provide 'sound theory' for homilists striving to improve their preaching" (ix). Based on the author's conviction that "before we begin to demonstrate *how* to preach a homily, we need to explore *what* the homily is" (viii), the book aims at working out a clearer understanding of the function of the homily within the liturgical tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Aimed as it is at a broad audience of students, preachers, and liturgists, the book is written to be accessible and easy to read, and it avoids the technical and the abstract.

On the other hand, the book may legitimately be called "scholarly" in the sense that it draws on the considerable academic and professional expertise of its author. Waznak is one of a very few Roman Catholics who holds academic credentials in the field of homiletics. Currently a professor at the Washington Theological Union, he has taught, written, and published widely on the subjects of preaching and communications for twenty-five years. All of this equips him in a unique way to bring to bear on his study "the work of homiletic scholars from the various Christian Churches, the insights found in normative church documents, contemporary theological, liturgical, and biblical studies, plus the lived experiences of preachers and people" (viii). The result is a treasure trove—a concise summary of vast amounts of material, both historical and contemporary, Catholic and Protestant.

The first chapter highlights the accomplishments of the Second Vatican Council in retrieving the homily as a particular genre of liturgical preaching based on patristic models. The author also articulates a contemporary under-

standing of the homily derived from church documents and the writings of many liturgists and homileticians over the past three decades. Waznak concludes that the homily is to be biblical, liturgical, kerygmatic, conversational, and prophetic, carefully spelling out his understanding of each. Non-Catholic readers will find useful his summary of the renewal of preaching in the Catholic Church since the 1960s. Catholic readers will find a helpful introduction to the so-called "New Homiletic" in Waznak's summary of key insights regarding contextual, imaginal, and narrative preaching from the writings of Fred Craddock, Richard Jensen, Eugene Lowry, David Buttrick, and other prominent Anglican and Protestant homileticians of the past three decades.

The second chapter takes up four major images of the preacher from Catholic homiletic tradition—the herald, the teacher, the interpreter, and the witness—on the grounds that "one effective way to discover what the homily is supposed to do is to examine what the homilist is called to be" (x). The third chapter examines the origins of the current Catholic Lectionary "to help understand its place in the preaching event and explore some practical solutions to its problems" (x). In the fourth and final chapters, Waznak answers "questions often asked about the homily," touching on a broad array of topics: methods for homily preparation, hints on homily endings, ideal length, preaching to children, and many more. Thus, a book of "sound theory" concludes on an eminently practical note.

The book is well organized and clear, but I did miss having a final bibliography which would gather together in one place all the numerous and diverse sources which are cited throughout. Perhaps Father Waznak might be persuaded to rectify that omission and to render inestimable service to the field of homiletics by writing a series of literature review articles. In the meantime, however, his little book has filled a big void in Catholic literature on preaching; it will serve as an interesting complement to Walter Burghardt's masterful *Preaching: The Art and the Craft. An Introduction to the Homily* certainly deserves—and will no doubt find—a wide and enthusiastic audience.

Daniel M. Ruff, S.J.
St. Mary's Seminary and University
Baltimore, Maryland

The Evangelizing Catholic: A Practical Handbook for Reaching Out. By Frank P. DeSiano, C.S.P. New York: Paulist Press, 1998. Pages, viii + 152. Paper, $11.95.

A fine homiletics teacher once said, "Tell people who they are and they will know what to do." It's a half-truth. In this little book, a practical handbook for Catholic evangelization, Frank DeSiano, President of the Paulist Fathers, consultant to the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Evangelization, experienced pastor, author, and lecturer to dioceses and parishes on evangelization, tells the whole truth. He knows who we are: thousands of Catholics and parishes, committed

to the Church and its life, more or less aware of what baptism means for us individually and collectively, more or less excited and enthusiastic about it, yet more often than not uncertain how to channel the excitement and enthusiasm in bringing the Church's Good News to our workplace and our world. Fr. DeSiano, in a style that is as conversational as it is theological, reminds us who we are. He begins and ends this fine "how to evangelize" manual by solidly grounding us in the theology of our baptism: called by Jesus Christ in the Church, fed by him in the Eucharist, commissioned by him to help gather all people into the grace of God's kingdom. And then, from Fr. DeSiano's storehouse of experience and insight, graciously and at times hard-hitting, he tells us how to share this faith, this identity, both as individuals and as a parish. Here is where the author is at his best.

The welcoming process of evangelization is begun, he says, "When people feel the care of Jesus in our care for them . . ." This is just as true for the individual Catholic as it is for the parish. Evangelization is begun in the human encounter, in an attitude of caring, with openness, love and respect. But it is only begun there. Witness is never enough. Proclamation must follow. And it is here DeSiano hits hard. "Catholic life," he says, "is weakest in the inviting, welcoming and proclaiming dimensions of faith." As Catholics, we overvalue the internal-organizing side of Church (maintenance) and undervalue the external-inviting side (mission). In this carefully organized and easy-to-follow guidebook, chapters 2 and 3 offer quite practical suggestions on "how to" help accomplish the mission of evangelization. There is something in these chapters for everyone: individual Catholics looking for ways to share their faith, as well as parishes beginning or continuing the evangelization challenge. There is also a special chapter set aside for the parish evangelization team. DeSiano knows that parish evangelization teams often find themselves running out of energy. His advice helps rev up, and where needed, restart parish evangelizing team engines. As a pastor myself, more than once in reading *The Evangelizing Catholic,* I wondered if Frank DeSiano has been sitting in on my staff meetings, evangelization team meetings, pastoral council meetings, and hand-wringing.

If there is any addition which might have helped the argument and the advice DeSiano gives, it's the place of parish social outreach in the evangelization process. When parishioners are engaged in social outreach, in working together as parish teams, or working together with other faith communities, their own embrace of the gospel, their own commitment to, and sense of belonging to the parish and the Church, is enriched. Any parish worth its salt must ask "What does the city need? How can we help?" It is in the awareness of belonging to a larger community and in helping to address its needs, that the parish gets off the dime, opens up its vision and its heart. Pride of partnership develops within the parish and the commitment to personal conversion and enthusiastic retelling of the Good News advances. This addition, however, in no way is meant to shortchange this finely written, soundly theological and consummately pastoral piece.

David J. McBriar, O.F.M., Pastor
Immaculate Conception Church
Durham, North Carolina

What Are They Saying About the Trinity? By Anne Hunt. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1998. Pages, iv + 97. Paper, $9.95.

Often in response to my saying that I teach the course on the triune God, I hear comments such as: "Are they still teaching that?" "Irrelevant." "Boring." Rahner is probably correct in saying that "should the doctrine of the Trinity have to be dropped as false, the major part of religious literature could well remain virtually unchanged." No wonder that most priests or deacons are pulling their hair out on Trinity Sunday morning fretting over what they are going to preach. The idea of a "subsistent relation" would not be one's lead suit in tying to help people make sense out of their lives. But if one has nothing to say on Trinity Sunday, then one has nothing to say at all for the doctrine of the Trinity is the doctrine of salvation (Rahner). It *is* the "Gospel" in a nutshell. One of the reasons why preachers are pulling their hair out on Sunday morning is that at least in the West, beginning with Augustine and culminating in the metaphysical tour de force of Aquinas' trinitarian theology, the doctrine of the trinity became a matter of divine psychoanalysis and mathematics. The big questions were: what and who made God "tick" and how can one be three and three be one? Whether this divine psychoanalysis and mathematics had much to say about us and our salvation is debatable. No wonder the triune God has slipped into oblivion, and preachers have little to say.

Anne Hunt, professor of theology at Yarra Theological Union in Melbourne, has written a short and very readable book on the Trinity which can provide preachers (and others) with an overview of the trinitarian theology of five contemporary Catholic theologians: Leonardo Boff, Elizabeth Johnson, Denis Edwards, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Anthony Kelly. Sensitive to new modes of consciousness, as well as new questions, issues, and pastoral concerns, all five are at pains to move beyond classical Western trinitarian theology and rearticulate the mystery of the triune God in ways which cannot only speak to or correlate with contemporary experience but also address meaningfully the human condition, including in the case of Edwards, the cosmos itself. In other words, all five in somewhat different ways have shown the doctrine of the trinity to be quite "relevant," even "exciting" because it is the story of our salvation. And that means it is the story of a saving God, a God who is much more sheer love *(ipsum amare subsistens)* than sheer being *(ipsum esse subsistens)*. The ramifications of this "switch" are more than semantic.

Hunt has done an excellent job in providing in such a synthetic, accurate, and accessible way the trinitarian thinking of five important contemporary Catholic thinkers. Having read this book, the preacher on Trinity Sunday will have more than enough to say which could be not only exciting for preacher and congregation, but also might be very challenging, since each of the authors surveyed in his or her own way sees ramifications for Christian living in the doctrine of the trinity. These ramifications run from an increased mystical awe (von Balthasar) to new social and linguistic practice in society and church (Boff and Johnson).

Every book of necessity has limitations. One limitation of this book is that it does not consider any of the more "eschatological" approaches to the triune God, i.e. approaches which see that the doctrine of the triune God tells not only

the story of God as a saving God but the "history" of that God, a God who *will be* all that God can be *only in the end,* only when God fully reigns (1 Cor 15:28). These eschatological, trinitarian theologies (e.g. Moltmann, Pannenberg) also can be quite exciting, relevant, and challenging. They may also offer clues to resolve the trinitarian dilemma between East and West. Perhaps the Son and the Father in some way proceed from the Spirit! Another minor limitation. Hunt offers no critical evaluation of the five authors. Augustine with his psychological model has been criticized for "projecting" his trinity, i.e. his trinity is a human creation which looks much like the human soul with its faculties. Perhaps some "models" of the triune God today may also be the result of a type of projection, of projecting our human agenda into God. In our very valid and necessary attempts to correlate the tradition or Christian fact (Tracy) with contemporary experience and exigencies, we must always be careful not to let our exigencies dominate the theological enterprise and its outcomes, lest God end up looking much too much like ourselves or merely serving our agenda. Barth and other neo-orthodox theologians, to say nothing of the apophatic mystics, speak a cautionary voice to which we must always pay heed: let God be God!

Donald W. Buggert, O.Carm.
Washington Theological Union