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Introduction

The theme of this issue, "Ministry and Popular Culture," presses us to examine not just what popular culture means but the strange ways in which we use these words. Webster's dictionary lists eleven definitions of the word "culture." The first three definitions suggest artistic and intellectual pursuits; a quality of enlightenment or refinement in what is excellent in the arts and letters. This seems to suggest that people who are "cultural" are high-brow. Add the adjective "popular" and you are faced with an oxymoron. After all, when we think of something being "popular" we refer to that which appeals to the people at large, not some enlightened few.

Each of the authors of this issue's articles unravels the oxymoron by reminding us that ministry is about people in the concrete circumstances of life. There are some features in our culture that challenge today's minister, e.g., the pluralistic, individualistic, relativistic values noted by Robert Bellah and his colleagues in *Habits of the Heart.* There are other features that should encourage us as ministers, e.g., the popular interest in ecology, spirituality, religiosity. *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* was "pastoral" because it urged us not to engage a culture's habits of the heart with the bias of theological dualism but with both the balm and challenge of the Gospel. "At times the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the time and of interpreting them in light of the gospel if it is to carry out its task (4).

Liturgical scholar Kevin W. Irwin of The Catholic University of America demonstrates how what the liturgy says and does contributes to a more profound understanding of the two interests in our popular culture, spirituality and ecology. Michael H. Crosby, O.F.M., Cap., an astute interpreter of the social concerns of our culture, challenges the consumerism of our times and offers as an effective antidote a look at alternative communities of resistance and compassion such as the group called "Alternatives for Simple Living." Guerric DeBona, O.S.B., who teaches homiletics at St. Meinrad's School of Theology, traces the history of how Jesus has been represented on the silver screen. He deftly shows how film's images of the Savior may be heavily influenced by our formative habits as consumers in late capitalism.

It should be noted that a recent Roman document focused on the subject of popular culture: "Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture" (1999). While the document contains many fine sentiments and helpful instructions, Anthony J. Gittins, C.S.Sp., professor of missiology at Catholic Theological Union, writes that it "simply overlooks some of the

most brute social facts of our times, and a very significant minority of the population." From his own ministry with homeless women, Gittins poignantly cites the popular religion or popular religiosity that is alive and well in our cities. David Blanchard, O. Carm., is an anthropologist who teaches at Washington Theological Union. Drawing both on his academic expertise and his "down in the trenches" pastoral experience, Blanchard pleads for pastoral ministers to examine the blurring lines of magic and religion in today's culture and offers practical suggestions of what to do and what not to do when faced with practices that seem exotic to us.

Our final non-thematic essay is by Kevin O'Neil, C.Ss.R., who provides an overview of the various sub-disciplines of moral theology from the perspective of the theme *communio.*

Our usual array of columns and book reviews hopefully will also help us focus on reading the signs of the times in light of the gospel. We urge you, once again, to write us with suggestions on how we can provide reflections that best suit your needs in pastoral ministry.

Kevin W. Irwin

Liturgy and Pop Culture—Critique and Contribution

The thesis of this article is that the contemporary reform of the liturgy can and should make a significant contribution to contemporary spirituality and theology. The particular focus of this article concerns two elements of popular culture that at present receive a great deal of attention and about which the liturgy has a great deal to say—spirituality and ecology. Most regrettably, however, for a variety of reasons, the reformed liturgy has not been mined fully or adequately for what it can and should say about both these two topics. In my estimation spirituality and ecology reflect "pop culture" in that they both can be appreciated as truly *popular,* that is they reflect what is *current* in today's culture and affect *people* in today's culture. (These meanings are offered at the outset lest "pop culture" be [mis]understood to refer to what is less than serious, profound or deep.) The article is divided into three parts dealing with (1) liturgy, (2) spirituality, and (3) ecology. In the first part I will argue the role which liturgy should have in delineating what comprises spirituality and theology, especially given their respective histories and the status of contemporary debates about method for the study of both theology and spirituality. In the second and third parts I will argue how what the liturgy says and does can contribute to a more profound understanding of both spirituality and ecology.

LITURGY

Just prior and subsequent to the Second Vatican Council the reformed liturgy was both "hot copy" and an exciting academic and pastoral field to enter. As the Public Television Series on Vatican II revealed again and again through interviews with American Catholics, it was the reform of the sacred liturgy after Vatican II that put a face on the reform council for the Catholic world. The term "liturgy" itself, once the science of abiding by rubrics, became commonplace to signify the public prayer of the Church engaged in by the whole Church, not just the ordained.

Liturgical changes imaged the winds of change at work in Catholicism. Praying the liturgy in the vernacular made it accessible to the whole Church. Liturgy was restored as a primary source for the Catholic imagination and the Catholic mind. On a more reflective level it also

ushered in new possibilities for the craft of theology (especially sacramental theology) precisely because of the traditional axiom *lex orandi lex credendi.* If not always stated outright, liturgy was perceived to be a central means to do what the stated aim of the council was:

> to impart an ever-increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more closely to the needs of our age those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call humankind into the Church's fold. Accordingly it sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy (*Sacrosanctum concilium,* n. 1).

Liturgy then went through the "liturgist/terrorist" phase with both good-hearted and mean-spirited jokes and finger pointing abounding. Today, most regrettably, I judge that we are in the midst of numerous "in house" (perhaps "hothouse"?) liturgy wars over the techniques of liturgical structures, i.e., precision in rubrics, increasingly legalistic interpretations of who can minister in what ways liturgically, adequacy of vernacular translations and *a priori* determinations of the locations of what I regard as the most neuralgic of the liturgical architecture debates today—tabernacles, kneelers, statues and stations. Let me be clear. For me each of these issues has merit. Especially if one argues, as I do here, that what we say and do liturgically affects theology and spirituality, then the more adequate our liturgical texts and rites can be the better—for the sake of the act of liturgy itself and the implications which liturgy should have on church life. Certainly at this juncture thirty years after the implementation of the conciliar call for a liturgical reform, a reform to that point unknown in the history of our tradition, who would not expect some "mid-course corrections" and energy put into deepening what the liturgical reform was all about? This means corrections in vernacular texts, composition of more adequate music for liturgy, more aesthetically pleasing buildings for worship, etc. However, for me the skirmishes and fights in the current liturgy wars belie a deeper set of issues.

LITURGY AND REAL RENEWAL

Liturgical *reform* was and is meant to serve liturgical and church *renewal.* It is easier and much less challenging to debate the externals of the revised liturgy than to mine what the reformed liturgy was meant to unleash—a deep and profound conversion to Christ and a spirituality the scope of which goes far beyond self-help books, recipes of chicken soup for all kinds of souls and the good feelings many Americans expect on Sunday nights when they tune into and want themselves to be *Touched By An Angel.* All too commonly today liturgy's storehouse as

a measure of our theology—*lex orandi, lex credendi*—is kept locked with a "do not disturb" sign. When the attention is placed only on liturgy's externals more often than not attention gets focused on the ministers, both clergy and nonordained, in which case the very thing that the present reform of the liturgy tried to reestablish, namely the enactment of the liturgy by, with and for the assembly, cedes to a Tridentine framing of the issue where assemblies were passive while the clergy conducted services before them.

Similarly to appreciate liturgy as a foundation of true Christian spirituality—that is, the way we look at life and live the Christian life in our world in this day and age—what I term *lex vivendi*—is forsaken by some virulent critics of the contemporary liturgical reform who want to "reform the reform" by which they mean to turn altars around, put Latin back so we do not know what the *orandi* is saying and reconfigure cushions for kneelers attached to increasingly comfortable pews. The proclamation of the two-edged sword of the living Word of God is forsaken in favor of homilies about liturgical etiquette instead of the Incarnate Word of God being reincarnated through the Word at worship. All too often I fear, the two-edged sword of the proclaimed scriptures has been forsaken in favor of a butter knife to spread your soul-soothing balm of choice (to make one feel good) rather than a knife that makes an incision to dig out the cancer of selfishness and "me-ism" of the nineties. Frequently today's liturgy wars are about the liturgy as an *end* in itself and not a privileged *means* to discover God both in the act of liturgy and in all of life, more often than not in largely unexpected ways. I am deeply concerned to recover liturgy within its mainline theological roots—*lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*—so that what we celebrate and how we celebrate has its requisite impact on the way we "do" life. We need to recall that "doing liturgy" is not just about ritual behaviors—it is really all about "doing life" from the perspective of Christ's dying and rising.

But in fact that may be the problem, or at least one of the present problems. That is, liturgy's real meaning may well be too much to take. Dying and rising and all of that, through, with and in Christ. Is it any wonder that we collectively seem to prefer the trees for the forest, to debate each other about jot and tittle of rubrical details and in the process make liturgy seem to be a meeting of the disincarnated and those fleeing into the cult of liturgy in order to distance themselves from human life? This is at least paradoxical since one of liturgy's main purposes is to immerse us as fully as possible in human life, lived from the perspective of Christ's paschal victory. In some attempts to make the liturgy comprehensible and available to people, there have been times then we have all too often flattened its imagery, "explained" (away?) its intrinsic multivalent nature, and gotten caught up in seeking comfort

from it when the good news to be preached and lived is more often than not about discomfort first, deepening conversion then tranquility in God. Or as the old poster used to say, "the truth will set you free; but first it will make you miserable."

GETTING A PROPER FOCUS

My intention in this article is not to make us miserable! But my first concern is that we focus as keenly as we can on ways in which the present reformed liturgy can and should achieve two of its classical purposes—that is to contribute to both the Church's theology and its spirituality. To do this we will need to view the liturgy principally through the lens of *what* it reveals, proclaims and discloses, and not only *how* the Church's common prayer is conducted. This means that we are to appreciate what the liturgy celebrates through biblical proclamation, euchological (prayer) texts, symbolic engagement and ritual behaviors in the context of a praying Church that seeks to become the ever less imperfect pilgrim Church on earth.

Such an approach shifts our attention from external enactment to attention on what it is we say and do when we celebrate the liturgy. It respects that the liturgy is always the enactment of the Church's prayer (sometimes referred to as the *actio* of the Church) but it also emphasizes that the Scriptures, prayers, symbols and gestures (among other things) have meanings that transcend the ritual act itself and that these all have theological meanings and spiritual ramifications. That we still need to be reminded of this some thirty years after the postconciliar reform of the liturgy is its own indictment that perhaps all too often we have not allowed the liturgy to challenge conventional ways of thinking, acting and being.

Some would argue that this is the fault of fussy liturgists whose interpretations of the reforms have been too concerned with ritual details or things. (The "liturgist" as "terrorist" phase.) This is likely very true —at least in some places and as far as it goes. However, what may also be true is that the challenge of the reformed liturgy was so deep and far reaching that people decided (at least subconsciously and perhaps only by default) that it was indeed preferable to stay on the level of liturgy's external, ritual side. But the truth is that by its nature liturgy challenges and disturbs, and when it comforts it does so from the paradoxical perspective that suffering can lead to glory, that humiliation before others may in fact mean exaltation before God, that true Christian witness may well mean challenging assumptions of contemporary culture and society from the perspective of a gospel whose good news centers on the death of the God man Jesus whose truth, and only whose truth, can claim to set us free.

Among other things the liturgy can and should challenge some of the assumptions on which the contemporary fascination about spirituality is based (part two) and can help shape an appropriate Christian response to today's ecological crisis (part three). Unless the contemporary liturgy, in its theological and spiritual meaning and depth, helps us frame debates about such things as spirituality and shape responses to contemporary crises like the environment, then it can be perceived to have imitated the extrinsicism of the Tridentine reform, which extrinsicism it was supposed to overturn in order that active participation in the reformed liturgy could lead to personal and communal Christian renewal.

SPIRITUALITY

There can be no doubt that *spirituality* is "hot copy" in America today. We are inundated with images and likenesses of angels on everything from picture books, to cocktail napkins to beach towels. A glance at *The New York Times* "Best Sellers" lists in recent years reveals that Scott Peck's *The Road Less Traveled* continued to maintain its place among paperbacks (for over 650 weeks in all!) and his subsequent books *Further Along the Road Less Traveled, Meditations from the Road,* and *The Different Drum* were also best sellers. For over two years James Redfield's *The Celestine Prophecy* about principles for achieving a fulfilling life, sustained best seller status (under fiction, please note) as did his other books (for shorter periods) *A Pocket Guide to the Insights, The Tenth Insight* and *The Celestine Vision.* Clearly more substantial than the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* "series" or Redfield are the writings of Thomas Moore, *Care of Soul* and *Soul Mates.*

Despite this proliferation of literature and angelic bric-a-brac, should not one pause to take stock about what is passing as "spirituality" and ask whether it is not really "spirituality lite?" This is not to caricature or to dismiss outright these evidences of a burgeoning interest in the transcendent. (Peter Berger's *A Rumor of Angels* from the late 1960s has been heard and is now broadcast abroad in the land!). But it is to ask whether and how foundational aspects of the Catholic life and the Catholic spiritual and theological tradition are making their legitimate contribution to this popularity. Specifically the question is whether what passes as "spiritual" today is sufficiently God-centered, revelation-based and concerned for the common good—both of the Church and of the world? As those who preceded us in fostering the reform of the liturgy in this century in America reminded us again and again, the *liturgy* is the matrix for experiencing God in the here and now both in cult and culture, in rite and in life. Catholic liturgy and Catholic spiritual traditions have a great deal to offer here (Pecklers, 1998).

LITURGY VS. SPIRITUAL INDIVDUALISM

Among others, one of the defining characteristics of (especially Catholic) liturgy which can contribute to Americans' hunger for spirituality and the transcendent in today's pop culture and which is, by intention, aimed at weaknesses in some common assumptions about spirituality is its intrinsic communal nature. In my estimation there is something of a "disconnect" between many examples of concern for one's own personal spirituality in pop culture today and the fact that what the liturgy enacts are rites for the assembly and for the whole Church. This is to say that by its nature the Christian liturgy is for the whole Church whereas all too many examples of concern for contemporary spirituality concern the *self*. (I sometimes wonder whether there is something to the popularity of *People* magazine in the seventies, of *Us* magazine in the eighties and *Self* magazine in the nineties.) Such a preoccupation flies in the face of the essential characteristic of all liturgy—that it draws us out of ourselves and reiterates again and again that "we" come to pray for and with the whole Church, exemplified in the local assembly at liturgy and as each assembly is related to the Church throughout the world. Notice the pronouns which the liturgy uses to refer to ourselves—almost always they are plural: "we," "our" and "us." Almost always when individuals pray they do so for and with the wider Church. What this grammatical evidence reflects is the ecclesiology of every act of liturgy. Hence if we take the liturgy seriously as a primary locus of spirituality, then by its nature the liturgy offers a serious (and much needed critique) to spiritualities that concern the "self" only.

Recall here the assertion of the Liturgy Constitution that liturgical services "are meant to be celebrated in common, with the faithful present and actively participating" (n. 27), the recent assertions of Pope John Paul II about the relationship of the liturgical assembly to the theology of Sunday in chapter 3 of *Dies Domini* and the way this theme undergirds much of the teaching of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on liturgy and sacraments. Here the traditional maxim that "the liturgy makes the Church—the Church makes the liturgy" should be recalled. In a very real sense to say the word "liturgy" implies other people in community and the common good. Unfortunately today to say "spirituality" all too often implies concern for me and myself alone. Hence our need to allow the liturgy itself to challenge self-absorption and aspects of the search for spirituality that concern "me" only.

Classical evidences of this relationship concern appreciating how baptism and confirmation celebrated in common (especially at Easter) lead us to the Eucharist, that these sacraments taken together comprise what we now properly term the "sacraments of initiation" and that

each of them are liturgical experiences to build up the body of Christ, the Church. Another example is the act of collecting gifts for the poor at the Eucharist so that the gifts we have been given are shared, not hoarded. The traditional role of the deacon at the Eucharist exemplified this as he who helped in the collection of such gifts was the one charged with delivering them. It is not a coincidence that it was also the deacon who announced the intentions of the prayer of the faithful at liturgy and named those who were sick and in need. That liturgy is intended to be intrinsically connected with life and that our spiritual lives are to be expressed in the liturgy and that both relate us directly and fully with others are all premises of church life that can critique some contemporary "self help" programs that pass for spirituality. For the Christian there is no true spirituality or honest search for God that does not also imply concern for the other and the search for the common good. It seems to me that where the delicate balance in the American ethos between individual freedoms and the common good trips in favor of the individual, it is the very act of liturgy that should cause a reintegration of the common good as intrinsic to the equation of what comprises an adequate search for God. In Christianity it always includes the search for God in service of the other.

At the same time there is something of a "connect" between the phenomenon of the "self-help group" in America today and what the liturgy enacts, that is support for all, especially when some of us are weak and in need. The proliferation of support group meetings—for example for those in grief, with terminal illnesses, alcohol and drug dependency, etc.—illustrate that the preoccupation with the *self* is paradoxically balanced in pop culture by concern for others who suffer. No one would ever wish to criticize such initiatives or groups. In fact in its own way the liturgy itself is supportive for the weak in faith (all of us?). It is especially when we feel ourselves weakest in faith or virtue that celebrating liturgy with others can give us a better perspective on what it means to admit our unbelief and to hear the consoling words of the third eucharistic prayer when we pray "strengthen in faith and love your pilgrim Church on earth." If we were not pilgrims journeying to the kingdom and if we were not all weak in faith to some degree we would not need the medicines (as the medievals put it) of the sacraments to heal us and strengthen what is weak and found wanting.

But again, one aspect of liturgical ecclesiology that can challenge the contemporary self-help group model of support is that the liturgy (and the Church itself) is always the gathering of a wider group than we would normally regard as those who share our circle of intimacy. Liturgy is not for the like-minded or only those of similar political persuasions, or geographical locations, or economic status or particular needs. The liturgical assembly is always of the wider Church—both

sexes and all colors, ages and incomes—since together in our differences we form the mosaic and tapestry that is the body of Christ on earth. We share a common belief in God through Christ in the Spirit in the communion of the Church, but we do this with all the diversity that humanity itself betrays. Hence to "belong" and be a part of the body of Christ also means to be stretched to accept and love others even when we do not see eye to eye on those conventionally celebrated controversial issues: politics or even all aspects of religion. What matters is that we have our eyes fixed on God and through the liturgy have our vision expanded to include all others who pursue the same God. That we go to God together is what matters and at times that fact is its own consolation. In effect, the bedrock of a liturgical spirituality is ecclesiology—that we are part of each other as we search for God in the here and now.

ECOLOGY

Given the fact that whole sections of bookstores concern ecology and "environmental studies" (with the former term in my estimation conveying more adequately that this world is our home and not just nature outside of us) and "earth day" has occurred for over a quarter century in the spring it should be no surprise that I should raise ecology as an aspect of "pop culture." These facts reflect that there is really no need here to recycle statistics about predictions for increased global warming, the destruction of rain forests, water pollution, the crisis in water rights for all people or that Americans who make up 5 percent of the world's population consume close to 30 percent of the world's oil supply and that we produce 290 million tons of toxic waste yearly. What might well raise eyebrows is that I regard the liturgy as having something to offer to this contemporary concern. In line with the argument of this article, I regard liturgy as a theological reality and source which has ramifications for all of life—the environment included. The intention here is to engage theology with contemporary issues the way Catholic theologians have classically done.

This is not meant to politicize theology. It is rather to insist that theology face into and deal with contemporary issues in the light of our biblical, liturgical and theological tradition. This would prevent theology from becoming to "otherworldly." It would also rescue liturgy and sacraments from becoming solely anthropomorphic at best or boringly irrelevant at worst. My own suspicion is that contemporary theology's "turn to the subject" has not always been that beneficial for reflecting on humanity's place in the world, on the world as God's gift to all humans on it, now and in the years to come. A certain presumptiveness in repeating theology's formulae from a former age—a theological fundamentalism—needs to be critiqued by a theology that builds bridges from our tradition to the present. This is what I regard as a Catholic

theological strong suit—adaptability in light of contemporary needs and concerns. One such need is clearly the environment.

Contemporary liturgical and sacramental theologians stand in solidarity with the best of their forebears when they raise new questions for Catholic theology in light of new cultural and ecclesial circumstances. This has occurred in significant ways in sacramental theology before Vatican II beginning with pioneering works by several continental theologians. These include, for example, Edward Schillebeeckx in *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* and Karl Rahner in *The Church and Sacraments.* But without wishing to denigrate their ground breaking and truly revolutionary works, it may at least be observed that nowhere in these two books do you find any sense of the devastation in their part of the world as a result of the Second World War. One can only wonder what would have resulted if in fact their emphasis on the objectivity of sacramental engagement and the way sacraments "work" were placed alongside some treatment of the ability of sacraments to offer hope in the midst of hopelessness or reconciliation in the midst of hostilities resulting from a world war. Or that their sacramental theologies might have included some attention to the Holocaust and mass murders. Or perhaps their theologies of grace graciously given might be placed alongside the notion that "cheap grace" dispensed from quasi automatic sacraments may well have dulled Christian consciences and sensibilities.

Today the environmental challenge reflected in much pop culture offers a challenge and stimulus for growth in theology. A truly Catholic contribution can come from what we do, say and use at the liturgy. Therefore for me to use Schillebeeckx's work requires that I reflect on his categories for the way sacraments work in light of ecology and liturgy. His sound argument is deductive, from God through Christ, in the Church by the use of creation. But perhaps another, more adequate way might be to suggest that we use things from creation in sacraments because creation was given to us by God, that was good, that its resources were meant to be shared and that stewardship of sacred mysteries necessarily implies good stewardship of the world's goods and resources.

What I should like to propose is an appreciation of liturgy and a concomitant sacramental theology that discusses sacramentality and the theology of creation at the outset and as a framework continually referred to for the study of liturgy and sacraments. In effect this would take Schillebeeckx's helpful paradigm from God to Christ to Church to sacraments, to human life and (finally) creation and reverse it. This would make creation the ground of theology, both natural and revealed, and would order a study of sacraments as based on how the God of creation and redemption is incarnated in the world and therefore discovered in the world and in all of human life. This would restore the integral

vision of Catholicism in supporting the value of life in the world, not out of the world, and the credibility of our sacramental structure so that what is celebrated in liturgy is based on how we always experience God—in nature, creation and human life and love. The contribution of the celebration of the liturgy as constitutive of the Christian life would be the way it reveals and discloses how God is discoverable and discovered in human life.

In such a paradigm shift the liturgy would be taken very seriously as a reflection of the theological principle of sacramentality which asserts that all reality

> is potentially or in fact the bearer of God's presence and the instrument of God's saving activity. This principle is rooted in the nature of a sacrament as such, i.e. a visible sign of the invisible presence and activity of God. Together with the principles of mediation (God works through secondary agents to achieve divine ends) and communion (the end of all of God's activity is the union of humanity), the principle of sacramentality constitutes one of the central theological characteristics of Catholicism (Unsigned, 1148).

This is to suggest that our focus should not only be on what the liturgy *accomplishes* but it should also be on what the liturgy *reveals* about our world and all that dwells in it. One major contribution that the act of liturgy itself makes is that its very enactment continually evidences the Catholic theological principle that all creation is good and that al creation's resources are for the common good. The very fact that we use the primal elements—earth, air, fire and water—in the liturgy reveals that God is disclosed through material means. It should also therefore have its requisite consequence in reminding us that what we have is really "ours" only to use and that the strong suit in a Catholic world view is that we are to be stewards, not masters of what we have. Recent American episcopal leadership on this issue in "Renewing the Earth" in 1991 reflects the clarion call from Pope John Paul II on the environment in his World Day of Peace Message, January 1, 1990, "Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All Creation."

Here the intrinsic relationship between liturgy and social justice receives a wide angle lens. This is to say that when we pray to the God of creation and redemption (as we do in prayers for blessing water at baptism, or the eucharistic prayers at the Eucharist) that we also view all parts of creation as gifts of God for us all. Such an integral and integrating vision derived from the liturgy can go a long way toward deepening our society's ecological consciousness from any unfortunate separation between persons and things toward an integral vision of persons and things as creations of God and as beings to be appropriately revered and cherished. Even more fundamentally such an ap-

proach can foster a sense of ecological concern that makes theology and a God-consciousness prime elements in any kind of response to today's environmental crisis.

Once the Catholic strong suits of liturgy and sacramentality are brought to bear on the ecological concerns of the day, then ecology itself becomes not the concern of a small interest group; rather it becomes an obvious concern of the Church and the wider world. Just as the burgeoning social justice consciousness about persons reflected in papal teaching in this century helped to redirect attention toward liturgy as related to and not separated from life, so today the justice dimensions of liturgy can be seen to refer intrinsically to all of creation.

CONCLUSION

Paradoxically, it may well be that once concerns about spirituality and ecology are enlarged and enlivened by attention to the liturgy as a primary theological source, then the liturgy can be restored to the Church to its rightful place for what it discloses about life and for what it challenges us to do about true Christian living. In fact these two aspects of pop culture may be making the liturgy return to what it is always meant to be—participating in the life of God through Christ in the Spirit in a privileged but provisional way that is derived from and sends us back to life shaped by what we have celebrated. Such challenges can only help serve to make liturgy less self-serving but rather the service of God before the whole world.

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Kevin W. Irwin is professor of liturgy and sacramental theology at The Catholic University of America. His latest book is Responses to 101 Questions on the Mass *(Paulist, 1999).*

Michael H. Crosby, O.F.M.Cap.

Living Compassionately in a Consumer Culture

I was asked to write this article while visiting Ann and Ted Bradley, friends in South Bend, Indiana. He is a cardiologist; she just received her master's in theology from Notre Dame. While society might consider them prosperous because of their professions and comfortable home, their own concerns have taken them beyond the consumer lifestyle. In fact, just before checking my voice mail and the request for this article while at their house, Ann had shown me materials she had received from a group called "Alternatives for Simple Living." In her effort to find information to help her and a small group in her parish address consumerism and live more compassionately, she had discovered "Alternatives" through a Web search.

I was delighted about this for two reasons. First, the Bradleys' concern about living non-violently and compassionately is a shared passion. Secondly, I was happy her interest had taken her to Alternatives in Sioux City, Iowa; I have been serving on its board for the last five years. As far as I know, Alternatives is the only religiously-oriented group whose purpose is to address the issues of living in a consumer culture in creative ways. Our Mission is to "equip people of faith to challenge consumerism, live justly and celebrate responsibly."

Unfortunately, the more Ann talked about what she wanted for her group, I realized we at Alternatives would not be able to give her the materials she really needed. She said: "What you provide seems oriented toward people who have already made a commitment to live simply. How can we find ways of approaching people in the pews who have 'bought into' the culture, who don't even think about the effect our U.S. materialism has on people and the planet, and invite them to voluntary simplicity?"

This article is an attempt to address this concern. Following Ann's remark I will divide my remarks into three sections: (1) How does the average Christian "buy into" the consumer culture, (2) How does our consumer culture affect other people and the planet, and (3) How can we invite people not to live more simply but to a compassionate lifestyle?

I prefer to talk about living compassionately rather than promoting voluntary simplicity (VS) for one main reason: VS has already become a growth industry for producers and marketers who know how to capi-

talize on new trends. Years ago I remember reading a futurist-oriented magazine describe the marketing potential of the VS movement. Now it is estimated that 15 percent of our country's 77 million baby boomers constitute the "simplicity" market. There's money to be made for those concerned about voluntary simplicity; I want no part of this insofar as it only reinforces the exploitive nature of our consumer-form of capitalism.

With this disclaimer I would like to examine the three points raised by Ann. In the process I hope I might offer a pastoral approach to the issue of contemporary consumerism.

HOW THE AVERAGE CHRISTIAN "BUYS INTO" THE CONSUMER CULTURE

Before discussing what I mean by a "consumer culture," we need to agree on what we mean by *culture* itself as well as what the ethos of the culture of consumerism entails. Not having had the benefit of the definitions used in other articles in this issue, I'll have to rely on my own.

Culture is an integrated system of beliefs, values and traditions that are received and handed on in a way that defines the character of a people. These influence relationships among a society's members and the way resources will be allocated within systems that support and give expression to those beliefs, values and traditions. Culture serves as a society's glue. It gives people a sense of identity, meaning, cohesion, security and continuity.

The ethos of a people reflects its culture. A community's ethos involves those styles of operating, customs and practices that are not only considered acceptable but normative in the way they take on religious and ideological legitimation. An ethos reflects a network of habits, values, expectations and the like that give communities their unique character.

Since both culture and ethos are connected in ways that include dimensions related to the character of a people, what do we mean when we say a culture can be characterized as being a "consumer" culture?

A culture has become consumeristic when its members effectively define themselves in terms of their wealth (power, possessions and prestige) rather than their personal significance vis-a-vis others, be these "others" humans, living creatures or creation itself. When people define themselves by what they have (or don't have) rather than who they are and with whom they share this earth, they are no longer subjects but objects. They have become commodities. They are "homo consumens" rather than "homo sapiens." When the ideology of the culture's political economy serves this definition via advertising and the goals of education you have a system of consumerism. When this symbiotic relationship takes over the social forces of consumerism

people are dehumanized; they no longer are individuals or persons but a potential share in a certain demographic area or market.

The process of dehumanization inherent in a consumeristic culture begins for its members at their birth; it continues throughout life and into death. Thus we even have an "American" way of dying. The main vehicle for this gradual alienation of persons from each other and creation itself comes through the media. The media is the conduit through which marketers reach out to influence people to buy various goods and services. Most of these resources are "sold" to the consumer as life-enhancing and meaning-making. While people have been "worried about" and "running after" items that will satisfy cravings of the body from the beginning (see Matt 6:25-34), it seems that our consumer culture has found ways of enticing people at ever-younger ages In an article showing how the youngest of our people have become seduced into the consumer culture, Leslie Kaufman wrote in *The New York Times* in 1999:

> While children have always used fashion to fit in with their peers—demanding the Air Jordans that are de rigueur at the playground —their desire to match the clothing popular among older siblings and even adults is rising. The change is not so much that second-graders are asking for sexually suggestive clothing (though that happens), but that their taste is no longer the cute and innocent–like T-shirts with hearts and teddy bears. Instead, the desire is for the culturally clued in, like the henna-style tattoo necklaces that ape the stencils worn by the pop diva Madonna (1999).

Unwitting Or Voluntary Addicts?

While many people give voice to their frustration in being personally coopted and by having their loved ones manipulated by the consumer culture or find themselves "overspent" in material and spiritual ways, an increasing number of social critics now contend that our culture's consumer lifestyle has not been the result of exploitation. The U.S.-brand of consumerism has found us eagerly embracing it. In his book *Lead Us into Temptation: The Triumph of American Materialism,* James B. Twitchell argues that, if we have found ourselves swimming in a consumer culture, it is because we have freely entered its waters. In the past it was argued that people were led into this lifestyle by manipulative advertisers. While the manipulation continues, we have not embraced it like innocent sheep led to the slaughter. Twitchell writes that consumers have not been victims in this process. In fact, we have eagerly participated. And while producers conspired, to be sure, we consumers have always been willing buyers. In effect, as Pogo would say, "We have met the enemy and the enemy is us." The result of this,

Twitchell declares, is a transformation of the key controlling element in all cultures: shame. He notes: "In the last generation we have almost completely reversed the poles of shame so that where we were once ashamed of consuming too much (religious shame), we are now often ashamed of consuming the wrong brands (shoppers' shame)" (1999, 27).

Twitchell also makes the point that consumerism has become the operative religion in our culture. Where once communities organized themselves around the cathedral, we now congregate at the mall. Buying and selling become dominant rituals. The ideology behind this form of consumerism belies a form of idolatry in the way materialism has wrapped itself in packaging of religious overtones meant for spirituality and the soul. [We exchange the glory of God that is the human fully alive for images resembling ourselves as our way of salvation (see Rom 1:25).] Thus, decades ago, we had an ad campaign that promised redemption and liberation though transportation: "Datsun Saves; Datsun Sets You Free." Penelope Green wrote a 1999 piece in *The New York Times* showing how images of the spirit are being used in unnecessary consumer items related to cosmetics: "Last week I bathed in purple water ('I Trust' bubble bath, made by Philosophy), and powdered up with pink powder (Rebirth, by 5S, 'to renew the spirit and recharge the soul'). My moisturizer was Bliss (Chakra VII by Aveda, for 'the joyful enlightenment and soaring of the spirit'); my nail polish, Spiritual (by Tony and Tina, 'to aid connection with the higher self')" (1999).

When the average Christian in the U.S. has a priority identified with seeking wealth in consumer-identified forms of power, possessions and prestige, it is difficult to preach the gospel of seeking first the reign of God and God's way of justice in a way that "all these things will be given you as well" (Matt 6:33). In fact, in my own ministry of promoting socially responsible investing, I have found it virtually impossible. For over twenty years, in my efforts to find a pastoral approach to consumerism, I have been stymied by the addictive dimension of consumerism and how the people in the pews live under its effective control. The only viable alternative seems to be involved in reaching out to people when they bottom out (or to help them "bottom up" by becoming aware of its addictiveness and its affect on their lives). When people find their lives and others' becoming unmanageable they seem more open to alternative ways of living (Crosby, 1980:62–73).

HOW OUR CONSUMER CULTURE AFFECTS OTHERS (PEOPLE AND THE PLANET)

Production for the sake of consumption and consumption to increase production defines our political economy. According to Amitai W. Etzioni, production/consumption is the "central project" of our so-

ciety. We produce resources during our working hours to consume them during leisure time. In other words, James P. Gannon notes: "We Americans work hard so that we can play hard: earning more to spend more, driving ourselves so we can drive our cars, producing and consuming in an ever-itensifying cycle that keeps gobbling up a growing portion of the earth's limited resources." While this "central project" may have been so for the 2 percent who were served by serfs, now "we are all out there producing and consuming hard every day, executives and steelworkers alike, doing the proper American thing of filling our production quotas and sales goals so that we can fill our gas tanks, vacation homes and two-car garages" (Gannon, 1974).

Close to 90 percent of the U.S. workforce produces consumer goods and services either directly or indirectly. Direct consumer goods include foods, medicines, toys, furniture and cars. Indirect consumer goods are the products by which we make other products: tractors and other kinds of machinery, bottling machines and trucks and trains for hauling.

With its obsession for increased production and consumption, our society rarely concerns itself with issues related to distribution. However, domestically the consequences of our consumer-driven economic system witness to an ever-increasing disparity between rich and poor to the point where the wealthiest 2.7 million have as many after-tax dollars to spend as the poorest 100 million. The ratio has more than doubled since 1977, when the top 1 percent had as much as the bottom 49 million people. This means that the richest 2.7 million people and the 100 million at the other end of the scale will each have about $620 billion to spend. Since the $620 billion that must be shared by the 100 million comes to $6,200 per person we know the consumer lifestyle is not a viable option for the poor, although poor people are as tempted to "buy into" the consumer culture as are the rich. Thus when we speak of "consumerism" we are actually speaking about the lifestyle that is promoted for everyone but is available only to the top 40 percent of the population who have 71.7 percent of the income.

When we consider the international scene the disparity between the rich and the poor is increasing as well. A 1999 World Bank study showed that the number of people living on less than $1.00 a day appears to be rising. It reached 1.5 billion people by the end of 1999. The bank noted that, while 1.2 billion people lived on less than $1 a day in 1987, this figure had risen to 1.3 billion by 1993. Assuming the proportion of people living in poverty will remain unchanged, the bank reached its figure of abjectly poor people at 1.5 billion as we start the new millenium. At the same time one in every three citizens of the U.S. describe themselves as heavily or moderately in debt because of their consumer choices.

Implications of the Data

The consequences of such disparity in the midst of the globalization of the world's economy via consumerism ("McDomination") are evident: the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. When Christians are reminded of this fact the tendency for them is to reject the message (or messenger preaching it) or to squirm. In a special way, since white ethnic Catholics are among the new rich in the U.S.A., issues related to wealth and poverty are particularly difficult for Catholics in the pews to hear (to say nothing of those of us in the pulpits!).

This became clear to me as I watched Pope John Paul II on his first visit to the United States in 1979. As he entered Yankee Stadium in New York, October 2, the people were jubilant. However their effusiveness went flush when he said in his homily "It is not right that the standard of living of the rich countries should seek to maintain itself by draining off a great part of the reserves of energy and raw materials [to sustain their lifestyle] that are meant to serve the whole of humanity" (1979, 315).

In 1998 Hillary Rodham Clinton spoke at the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. While she praised the notion of the "free market" that is at the heart of capitalism, which has "the greatest capacity to create employment, income, wealth and investment," she also recognized its shadow side. She highlighted three consequences of such a system that is based on meetings peoples' unlimited wants rather than responding to their legitimate needs:

1) "We are creating a consumer-driven culture that promotes values and ethics that undermine both capitalism and democracy." Just consider the way corporations effectively control who the candidates will be in elections and how they alone have access to the huge media markets.

2) "Consumer capitalism" is undermining the "kind of work ethic [and] postponement of gratification . . . historically associated with capitalism." Since corporations seem to show no care for their workers (as evidenced in their downsizing and outsourcing), workers have little or no loyalty to the corporation. Furthermore the sense of "entitlement" (I worked for it; I deserve it) gives people the sense that they have a right to whatever they can get as soon as they can get it.

3) "Because we are dominated by commercial television, we have a relentless, unstopping message of consumer materialistic pleasure." The whole purpose of "commerical" television is not entertainment but to provide a meeting place for advertisers and consumers. The earlier that can happen in peoples' lives, the better.

The main consequence of consumerism is heart disease. But this disease is not something physically debilitating like hardening of the

arteries; it is the kind of spiritual sickness expressed in the biblical notion of "hardness of heart." In contemporary language this is called indifference.

I believe that the capital sin of the rich, of people and a culture controlled by consumerism, might be expressed in a contemporary notion connected to sloth: indifference or *acedia.* Both reflect something that is chronic: the inability to care or show concern for the others (be these others creatures or the planet itself) in the wider community. Indifference and lack of care are the consequences when consumerism defines a culture. In his apostolic letter *Tertio millennio adveniente,* Pope John Paul II spoke about a kind of religious indifference that has been "shaped by the climate of secularism and ethical relativism" (1994).

At the heart of indifference is apathy or lack of care. Consequently people defined by consumerism *just don't care* about others as long as they get what they have defined as theirs by right or entitlement. In commenting on the Congressional Budget Office's statistics noted above about domestic inequality, Alan Wolfe, director of the Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College wrote in an op-ed piece for *The New York Times:* "If anything is a truism in American politics, it is that people do not care about income inequality" (1999).

HOW WE CAN INVITE PEOPLE TO A COMPASSIONATE LIFESTYLE

Since indifference or lack of care corrode the heart more than anything else, their opposites must be cultivated through care or compassion. Compassion is the way we identify with others (people and the planet), especially in their pain, in ways that celebrate the good and seek to overcome the harm. In many ways compassion is the summit of the spiritual life. Since consumerism is the antithesis to a life of the spirit, compassion is the antidote to consumerism. Following the "observe, judge and act" model of personal and social transformation, compassion has a cognitive element ("seeing"), an affective dimension ("caring") and a behavioral component ("doing"). The pastoral question for a preacher or religious educator in an addictive consumer culture revolves around how these dimensions might be tapped to bring about greater awareness, care and conversion by people that might be translated into deeper compassion rather than more spending. How might these dimensions be tapped

1. *Observe.*

Cognitive awareness of consumerism and its effects can be facilitated in two main ways: (a) either through intellectual stimulation or (b) by some kind of immersion experience that jars one's traditional categories and/or worldview.

I have met a significant number of people who have been shaken out of the lethargy that consumerism induces by a good dose of education. A conscientious professor can lead his or her students to deeper care. A good course in the social sciences that makes connections between having and not-having and why the "haves" have and the "not-haves" do not have and/or some other kind of stimulating educational experience has led people to change their lives. An economics course that asks the "whys" along with the "hows" can lead to questions about the effects of economic decisions on the poor. Since most education merely serves to facilitate entrance into the consumer culture, such alternative ways of educating can help provide alternative ways of "seeing."

Another way of making people aware comes when we use opportunities to help people make connections between their consumer choices and the ensuing consequences for others and the planet. I recall meeting a young man as both of us were on the way to the library at Marquette University. I was going to the library to do some research on "The Economic Basis of Cultural Violence." Coincidentally he was wearing a Nike baseball cap. I decided to capitalize on the opportunity. After getting his permission to ask him "something," I asked him where he got the cap ("Ohio"), how much it cost ("$17.95"), where it was made ("Probably Asia someplace") and how much the workers were paid for making it ("Probably a dollar or less"). The fact that many college students have become aware of these connections has mobilized some of them in a sense of solidarity to insist on living wages for such workers.

A second key way to promote cognitive awareness about consumerism comes from various immersion experiences. These are connected with ways people geographically move from their own cultures to enter the world of others, especially society's victims. The main ways this geographic relocation takes place comes through "volunteering," "urban plunges" or "mission trips." How many people have made major changes in their lives as a result of being inserted in poverty cultures or because they walked among people living at society's margins? How many people have changed their lives by living with the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta or at Catholic Worker communities?

Such immersion experiences are most advantageous when they are accompanied by *conscientization.* Conscientization is the way reflection on a reality helps people make deeper, societal connections that address issues of justice and right order. Here mentors help them make connections between their safe, traditional world and this hidden, covered world.

2. *Judge.*

At the second stage in the conversion process, judging or the moral dimension is stressed. An examination of the motives that bring people

into volunteerism finds one theme continually recurring: "I've been given so much; it's payback time." A variation is "what return can I make for all the good that's been done to me." Consequently, when people do move beyond their comfort zone into alternative experiences, they might be more open to see how their day-to-day living cannot continue in the same way if they truly want to make a difference. Sometimes too the moral dimension is made in a good ethics class where a professor asks simple questions about "right" and "wrong" in ways that move people beyond the limited sense of entitlement as the only right.

This second way of helping people in the pews move from being unconcerned about participation in the consumer culture deals with their affective or emotional life. Often it gets expressed as: "If I were in their situation, I'd want someone like me to do something about it. I can't keep living in the way I've been doing." I have found that, when I personalize my own story and my own "sins" related to my lifestyle, people seem much more open to listen rather than being given a bunch of statistics about the rich getting richer and the poor poorer.

Another way to impact the affective dimension of people's lives is to "capitalize" on people's disease with their lives. Wealth is like health. Without either life will be miserable. However, having it still does not define happiness. Happiness comes not from meeting one's wants but from having few wants related to possessions and finding meaning in relationships. Such an approach may help when people become disillusioned with their jobs, their "friends" or being tired. It helps when we can show how they are but cogs in the wheel of capitalism and are meaningless unless they fit into that model. It also helps when people find themselves spiritually dying in their endless pursuit of the "more." It does not hurt to remind people of what Aristotle said in his *Politics* years ago about happiness: it "belongs more to those who have cultivated their character and mind to the utmost and kept the acquisition of external goods within moderate limits."

In her book *The Overspent American: Upscaling, Downshifting, and the New Consumer,* Juliet Schor shows how "we are impoverishing ourselves" as we pursue "a consumption goal that is inherently unachievable." Consumerism's corrosive and corrupting dimensions can be found in the increasing dis-ease people find in work when it is based on a style of life that sees the paycheck as something that enables people to spend more in the "national spending spree" of competitive emulation. In other words, our identity comes from taking on the images presented us by the culture and its adherents (1998).

3. *Act.*

The third step in transformation from consumerism to compassion involves behavior changes. While I have noted ways people have taken

action around "seeing" or the intellectual dimension of observing and "caring" or the moral dimension of judging, there are certain things people can do to change their behaviors from being defined by consumer choices for choices promoting life at all levels. Some people take Pax Christi's "Vow of Non-Violence." Others decide that they will make choices around their core needs (housing, transportation, food, clothing, education, health care and basic insurance) rather than their wants. Still others decide to develop their own brand of "sabbath" or "jubilee" economics. I know a man who had enough and was very adept at finding ways to exploit new opportunities to make money. He continued his pursuit but, instead of keeping the monies realized by his new ventures, turned the monies over to programs meant to help promote social justice and empower the poor.

While all of these may be commendable, they still do not a compassionate person, group or society make. Compassionate living finds us decentering ourselves from making choices that place ourselves at the center of the universe to considering how we are to live in ways that will heal the hurts of others, be these "others" people or the planet. It is extending our "compassion for the crowd" into our economic, political and religious decision-making. It involves resistance to the sin of consumerism and the creation of communities of compassion.

As we walk with people who have become tired of the "rat race," it is important that we promote such alternative communities of compassion to support them when they make changes. In this I think of a young man I met in Louisville. He was on the fast track at General Electric. However, as he became disillusioned with the pace and dehumanization of the workplace there, he decided to leave it and enter secondary teaching. While this found him "leaving" his friends at work, he found even deeper meaning at his local Catholic parish which was committed to the promotion of compassion in the culture.

If our culture truly is addictive and if we have become a nation of addicts, we must learn to apply the wisdom of Twelve-Step spirituality as a way of "recovery." At the heart of this process of being freed from the addiction is the role of community or support groups. At her talk in Davos, Hillary Rodham Clinton tried to offer ideas as to how the "consumer-driven culture" could be countered. She pointed to the benefit communities of care might offer when she suggested "schools, families, religious organizations, associations like scouting."

If consumerism is the unique form of our culture's capitalist model, the result will be the increase of individualism (survival of the fittest). Since this individualism undermines the possibility of community, the only effective antidote to consumerism will be viable, alternative communities of resistance and compassion. Supporting the efforts to resist the encroachments of the culture such communities will be known for

the ways they make and support life-choices that show their concern beyond their own interests to extend their care to all people and the planet itself.

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Guerric DeBona, O.S.B.

Real Presence: "Jesus Christ" and the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

What is at stake in popular representations of Jesus of Nazareth? A full-page ad appeared in *America* magazine (September 18, 1999), advertising Stanley J. Gordon's depiction of Jesus in an oil painting. "Could This Be Jesus Christ?" . . . Many Think it is," announces the ad in bold letters above the portrait. The distributors claim that the replication of the "handsome, rugged man" gazing thoughtfully at the viewer and exhibited at Rockefeller Center is believed to be the "*greatest* image of Jesus in our history . . . what Christ *really* looked like . . . Look closely into the eyes of Jesus in this painting. You'll see a trusted friend, a teacher, with amazing strength and knowledge" (their emphasis). Forty dollars (plus shipping and handling) guarantees consumers an "authentic" gallery print which measures 16 x 20 and is "the best painting of Jesus in the three millenniums since Christ walked the Earth."

The claims made in this ad for a picture of a blue-eyed, fair skinned Jesus are nothing new. The Gordon reproduction shares certain cultural codes deployed in popular reproductions of the Savior: middle-class notions of taste, the beautiful and the sublime; subjective, highly personal representations of point-of-view; and, of course, a mandate for "authenticity." I intend to argue that all of these sociological conventions (and more) surround our imaginings of Christ in the modern world, most legibly in film culture. Although my analysis here is necessarily limited, even a cursory survey of the re-deployment of Jesus and the movies discloses a great deal about popular culture, religion and their interrelationship.

"JESUS CHRIST" AND THE CULTURE INDUSTRY

From modernism to postmodernism, the history of Jesus on film is a kind of map of our economic, social and spiritual sensibility. For a number of years now, my colleagues Richard C. Stern, Clayton N. Jefford and I, have taught an elective class at Saint Meinrad School of Theology which challenged aspiring theologians to examine their *constructions* of Jesus. Why does Jesus have to look a certain way? What elements in our particular society make it possible to have this kind of Jesus? What societal codes are already in place in order to make this

Jesus more appealing than that one? The result of our scriptural, rhetorical and cultural investigation of film culture's use of Jesus resulted in a monograph, *Savior on the Silver Screen* (Paulist Press, 1999).

The age of technology has raised the stakes in representations of Jesus. In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936) Walter Benjamin famously argued that groups of people in the modern world desire to see things nearer—spatially and humanly. Technology, then, permits "the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object produced" (221). For Benjamin, film would occupy a singular place precisely because of the medium's enviable ability "to present an object for simultaneous collective experience," in other words, to bestow a kind of sacred "aura" on its subject and "change the reaction of the masses toward art" (234). Photographic reproductions absorb us collectively because of their ability to invoke real presence as they displace cult value with exhibition value (Benjamin, 225).

Representations of the Savior on the silver screen have their roots in the nineteenth century, where popular culture and devotional piety worked together to invent ways of retelling the life of Jesus. With exhibition value closely linked to cultic and religious knowledge, film culture was fascinated with representations of the Jesus story; it ultimately evolved into a discrete, though marginal, genre all its own. The first series of these early movies were simply recorded performances of Passion plays in New York City, Fontainebleau, France, and, of course, Oberammergau, Germany; these date as early as 1897. Later, longer format "Lives of Christ" were produced by early film pioneer companies Edison and Pathe. Although these films resembled something like photographed plays (one might even call them variations on "The Stations of the Cross," as Andre Bazin observed), a few marketed technical experiments which would later become a hallmark of biblical features. *The Birth of Jesus* (1909), for example, used a primitive color process to boost the film's production value, thereby anticipating the full-scale epic with its fantastic sets, trick photography and wide screen formats such as CinemaScope and Ultra-Panavision 70mm Technicolor. Additionally, production companies carefully yoked these religious films for exhibition to the European immigrant-consumer on devotional holidays. The Joliette Theater in Boston showed Gaumont's Passion Play during Holy Week from 1906–11 and drew record attendance (Bowser, 129). Historically, companies knew that exhibiting the Bible had the potential to engage a large aggregate of people into a theatrical space. Filming the story of Jesus would become cultural capital for the movie business.

Reproducing the "aura" of Jesus would bring its share of controversies within a conflicted history as well. Early films of Christ already

contained some degree of economic, sociological and ideological freight. Among these early movies about the life of Jesus, perhaps the most important contribution remains *From the Manger to the Cross* (1912), a five-reel feature produced for the Kalem Company. Now there are a number of issues that begin to surface with the release of this film that are worth noticing. Audiences were increasingly looking for more realistic formats, especially from historical and religious dramas. *From the Manger to the Cross* was shot on location in the Holy Land, thereby jettisoning the theater props used in early filmed plays of Jesus. Moreover, production houses hoped that religious material (and adaptations of classic novels) would bestow a degree of middle-class respectability on an industry that seemed more and more interested in material of questionable moral value. Indeed, a number of groups were already threatening to boycott films because of racy subject matter.

At the same time, however, *From the Manger to the Cross* raised some questions posed by the clergy about the appropriateness of exhibiting Jesus' image in the local theater at all, which probably has its roots in a longer, Puritan opposition to the legitimate theater in seventeenth-century England. Returning to Benjamin's argument, we will note that the quality of the photograph also brought Jesus' strong presence, indeed, even the aura of the sacred, into the theaters. On the other hand, not a few religious zealots were convinced that a viewing of the Passion play of Oberammergau by a few prodigals might lead them back from their wayward journey.

ENTER CECIL B. DEMILLE

Generally speaking, the public was accustomed to lowbrow, vaudeville entertainment at its theaters and was not entirely sold on highbrow fare, even purported cultural respectability. It would take Cecil B. DeMille and a more sophisticated Hollywood and post-World War I America, to make *The King of Kings* (1927) a blockbuster at the box office. The son of an Episcopalian minister, DeMille was particularly clever at combining titillating, lowbrow spectacle with the highbrow moral lessons of a Sunday school drama. Many of DeMille's breakthrough films, such as *Male and Female* (1919) and *The Ten Commandments* (1923) are crowd pleasers with a moral message. In *The Ten Commandments,* for example, retributions follow debaucheries. Similarly, in *The King of Kings,* the audience sees a scantly clad, seductive Mary Magdalene in the provocative opening sequence, only to be purged of her demons by Jesus' loving glance later in the film. After enjoying some guilty pleasures, the audience is brought back into a moral space by Jesus himself. "If Mary was associated with wild beasts, old action, and aggressive conversation before she met Christ, her encounter with him has left her utterly domesticated: she has been tamed

by Jesus . . . whose gaze has deeroticized and domesticated the spectacle of the woman into a silent, regularized space" (Stern, Jefford and DeBona, 52–53).

DeMille was able, then, to deploy the film techniques of a more advanced, standardized Hollywood to *The King of Kings.* By the late sound era, light Eyemo cameras could be used to simulate a unique point-of-view shot of Jesus (our first sight of him) when a blind child is restored to sight. Better "three-point lighting" created glamor shots of the Savior (much like a devotional painting); a rigorous, early soundtrack of hymns inspired seemingly every important event in the Gospel; and special effects, of course, (including a color version of the Resurrection) further enhanced *The King of Kings* production value for Paramount. Moreover, DeMille was certainly enabled by the strange confluence between religion, visual illustration and film production. The *vivant tableaux* in movies were made possible by the audiences familiarity with reproductions of Renaissance masters and the popular French illustrator Gustave Dore, which helped to build a bridge between sacred and the secular, painting and photography, the original and its reproduction. The "Last Supper" sequence in *The King of Kings,* with its elongated table and classic lighting, are more reminiscent of paintings found in the visual, artistic tradition than it is of any account found in the Gospels themselves.

In a certain sense, Hollywood was able to sanctify popular spectacle for its audience. Several critics have described the huge, opulent movie palaces of the 1920s, such as the Roxy, as resembling "cathedrals." What better place for a movie about Jesus than a "secular church?" Finally, we can also see how all these production values worked to blur a final distinction: between Jesus as Son of God and as movie star. The glamor shots of Jesus composed in 1927 may strike us today as sentimental, but for the 1920s audience, many of whom had claimed that they had seen "what Jesus really looked like," Jesus' aura was far from silly. As one American minister told H. B. Warner, the actor who played Jesus, sometime later: "I saw you in *The King of Kings* as a child and now, every time I speak of Jesus, it is your face I see" (quoted in Butler, 40). DeMille's version of Jesus reminds us of the power of the culture industry to restore the sacred, even to the face of God. *The King of Kings* was the third highest grossing film of the year.

"JESUS CHRIST" AND POST WORLD WAR II AMERICA

In some ways *The King of Kings* would be the zenith of the Hollywood biopics about Jesus. Although there were notable biblical epics produced in Hollywood from 1927–1960, such as *The Robe* (1953) and *Ben Hur* (1959), these narratives use Jesus and his story as background for special effects (CinemaScope's debut) and a melodrama with a

knock-out chariot race. It would not be until the 1960s before a major feature was released about Jesus himself. Taken together, Nicholas Ray's *King of Kings* (1961) and George Stevens' *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965) reveal the strain on this peculiar sub-genre. Although Ray was more comfortable with the social-problem film than the epic, he put his considerable talents to good use in *King of Kings.* Ray cast a very young Jeffrey Hunter as Jesus (in contrast to the fifty-year old H. B. Warner in DeMille's film). Hunter's Jesus typifies not only a typical, moody hero we might find in one of Ray's pictures, but seems very much like a post-World War II male—tired of big bureaucracy, hypocrisy, and violence. Ray's most important film *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) cast the sullen James Dean in the picture to draw teenage audiences into a melodrama about family fragmentation, adolescent turmoil and loss of community. Similarly, *King of Kings* shows us a political Jesus, (often in extreme close up in 70mm Technicolor) who comes to save his people from Roman oppression.

The rest of the characters which inhabit the film have their appeal as well: the Roman soldier, Lucius, who is a kind of secular humanist; a free-thinking woman, Pilate's wife, Claudia; and a group of somewhat ambivalent disciples. Ray, of course, was appealing to a much more diversified audience than DeMille. Indeed, the late 1950s film consumer was not made up of working class, European (Christian) immigrants, but composed of various age groups (among them teenagers); those who had seen the brutality of war either in person or at the movies; unchurched, secular humanists and the new, independent thinking woman. If the late 1920s American audience could rally around the visage of Jesus, there was little common ground to do so in the early 1960s. Unlike the hymn-laced sound track for DeMille's film, Miklos Rozsa's lush score for *King of Kings* barely contains a hint of any religious sensibility; it could just as well be the soundtrack for an epic love story. Unlike DeMille, Ray also uses characters (Barabbas and Jesus) in order to politicize the Gospel and even dramatizes biblical scenes which could speak to contemporary audiences. Indeed, the mass murder of the Jews in the beginning of *King of Kings* could only recall the fairly recent memory of the Holocaust itself.

Broadly speaking, the America of the 1960s could never have realistically supported a traditional period piece about Jesus. George Stevens' *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965) remains Hollywood's most bloated portrait of Christ on the screen. Facing increasing economic pressure from television and even foreign film imports, *The Greatest Story Ever Told* was filmed in Ultra-Panavision 70mm Technicolor; it cost twenty million dollars, making it the most expensive life of Jesus. United Artists seemed to be hoping that an all-star cast (including Ingmar Bergman's Swedish star, Max von Sydow as Jesus) would entice a large audience

to see their favorite biblical character come to life. It backfired. Bringing any adaptation from a book to the screen is riddled with problems.

How a film studio "matches" a literary character with a screen persona raises only the most obvious problem. An all-star cast only made the problem of "text into film" even worse in adapting the New Testament, perhaps because of the strongly personal nature of the text source itself. Von Sydow's European mystique was supposed to give Jesus a flair of the exotic, but what, precisely were audiences supposed to do with John Wayne as the Roman Centurion? As Felix Barber later wrote after seeing Shelley Winters come down with leprosy, "no one blames Hollywood stars for wanting to arrange a little personal atonement. But couldn't George Stevens the director see that this sort of casting was death to sincerity and realism" (Stern, Jefford and DeBona, 1999:151).

Neither Stevens nor anyone else could have known that the Jesus epic, which they had inherited from DeMille, was just about finished. How long could the film business keep recycling old movie stars into apostles, sinners and saviors? The collapse of the Hollywood studio system, the influence of the French New Wave, the increasing use of film stylistics borrowed from television, together with other factors all competed with the highly expensive epic form. In a way, filming the Bible simply became old fashioned, while, at the same time, a new kind of Hollywood style came to dominate American movie culture the end of the decade.

As their interests changed with the collapse of the Production Code and Studio system, American audiences attended films which addressed current issues of crime and morality. They went to a movie about two runaway criminals (*Bonnie and Clyde,* 1967); a story about an adulterous relationship between a young college graduate and an older woman (*The Graduate,* 1968); and an X-rated film about a naïve male prostitute which won an academy award for best picture (*Midnight Cowboy,* 1969). A conventional translation of the "Bible into film" would never be a possibility on the big screen after 1968, with its long days of bloody demonstrations, the Tet Offensive in Southeast Asia (reported in detail on television) and heartbreaking assassinations.

"JESUS" IN THE DECADE OF THE SIXTIES

But audiences never gave up the idea of Jesus in the movies completely; they just renegotiated him into yet another popular cultural narrative. Jesus conformed to the *Zeitgeist* of the 1960s by becoming relevant and radical. Although it was not a Hollywood movie, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew,* an Italian film by Pier Paolo Pasolini, received a lot of attention when it was released in the United States in 1966, two years after its premiere in Europe. Pasolini's film is charac-

terized by jump cuts, (an editing style, popular with the European avant-garde which contrasted with Hollywood's invisible style or "continuity editing"), an anti-epic form, and a Marxist subtext. In contrast to Hollywood style, then, new foreign imports often emphasized a neomodernist aesthetic of "defamiliarization." In other words, this arty film was not vulgar entertainment for the masses, or what Pasolini would refer to as "bourgeois history." Pasolini's film, though, represented only a small portion of the growing interest among film connoisseurs in the United States and elsewhere for a more intellectual, art house cinema. *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* seems to have succeeded, at least in part, because of its very *difference* from what some claimed to be an aura induced, glamorized apparatus—making Jesus into a spectacle just to appeal to consumers.

Thus, Pasolini's film withholds traditional "authenticity" around Jesus. Stripped of anything like a devotional gaze directed at the audience, the Savior is deglamorized for the bourgeois spectator in *The Gospel According to St. Matthew.* Pasolini catches Jesus on the radical fringes, occasionally angry, even desperate. Hollywood style previously went a long way to bolster Jesus as a personal, relevant Messiah (i.e., a devotional point-of-view shot). Pasolini's Christ, on the other hand, is small of stature and resembles a peasant rather than a Messiah (Pasolini, like the great Soviet director Sergei Eisenstein, engaged nonprofessional actors to deprive the narrative even of the aura of "star power"). Obviously, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* was destined for an increasingly college educated audience which was becoming more and more sophisticated, analytical and capable of reading the "grammar" of media; halos and glamour photography were passé, popular religious codes established in another era.

"Jesus Christ" was bound to be re-invented by the late 1960s; perhaps most notoriously, in the rock musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice *Jesus Christ Superstar.* The soundtrack for *Superstar* was a smash, with one critic saying that it was "potentially the single most important recording since Edison waxed his first cylinder" (quoted in Stern, Jefford, DeBona, 189). Adapted for the screen by director Norman Jewison and Melvyn Bragg and released in 1973, *Superstar* is, of course, less interested in a realistic translation of the traditional narrative of Jesus than it is in questions of identity. As the song goes, "Jesus Christ Superstar, do you think you're what they say you are?" Only the 1960s, with its radical left-wing politics, "death of God" movement, and America's increasing distrust of authority and politics could have produced such a question.

Certainly, the nation's youth helped to shape the future of the United States during those turbulent years, and it would be young people who made the reinvention of Jesus possible, even forcing the Son of God to

ask their kinds of questions. Surely the various Christian denominations themselves would help to redefine this new Jesus for its youth, with numerous catechetical programs in the United States beginning to emphasize a more personal relationship with the Savior.

As if born only to speak to young adults, the Jesus-as-Superstar lacks any divine origins and spends his time on screen reacting to violence and the established order in a kind of make-shift "happening" in Palestine. Seen from our perspective, Ted Neeley's Jesus appears to be constantly whining about everything from the unfortunate state of the human condition to over stress. Less God's Son than a barometer of social unrest, the Superstar seeks his identity in a world that does not understand him. Even his dear friend, Mary Magdalene, cries her heart out in a production number which would become a platinum single, "I Don't Know How to Love Him." Although the use of an African-American as Judas caused some controversy at the time, it is easy to see that casting Carl Anderson was part of the film's cultural politics towards racial integration; this Superstar wants everything "to be alright, now" in a world of war, prejudice, and hypocrisy. Predictably, perhaps, the hope the film offers is not an establishment of the Kingdom of God, or even the hope of a resurrection, but rather, the story of one man with a message to his generation. With countless revivals in small productions throughout the country, Web pages and a large cult following, *Superstar* still speaks to many in our own day.

"JESUS CHRIST" AND POSTMODERNISM

The fate of Jesus' image in the age of mechanical reproduction is nowhere more provocative than in the age of postmodernity. An amorphous, complicated term, the advent of postmodernism has been likened to a profound cultural shift from the way we understand ourselves. For many critics, technology has propelled us from a (pre-World War II) world in which our source of knowledge was a master narrative or a "metanarrative," into a more fragmented, rootless and ironic space; now there are only small stories and communities—micronarratives. Postmodernism has introduced a world which Robert Venturi and others have likened to Las Vegas: endlessly eclectic, a *bricolage* and pastiche of styles without an organic whole. The implications for the Christian community are immense since salvation history functions like a grand narrative. When the story of Jesus is told in the age of postmodernism, then, some characteristics are bound to surface, particularly in forms of allegory, intertextuality, and parody.

Jesus of Montreal (1990), a Canadian film by Denys Arcand, is a good example of allegory deployed to showcase a micro-narrative. Laced with occasional references to the gospel, *Jesus of Montreal* shows the movement of an actor, Daniel Coulombe, who is cast as Jesus in a pas-

sion play (a priest says in the film "it must be modernized") to his gradual, real-life absorption of the Christ-role. For Arcand, the Christ film must become not another (Hollywood) spectacle, but a radically personal fusion with Our Lord as the Suffering Servant. The film goes out of its way to deconstruct the notion that an "authentic" representation of Jesus could be linked to middle class spectacle, or even a master narrative. On the contrary the film suggests, Jesus' story can only be a micro-narrative, told in a world where many people live and absorb the personal story of Jesus Christ as their own.

Undoubtedly, the force of Arcand's political allegory is leveled at the culture of the Hollywood blockbuster and Jesus' absurd role in that epic form, but his critique also raises issues of intertextually. Intertextuality cannot be separated from postmodern representations of Jesus because we have been supersaturated with Christ's image through film, television and the Internet; everything has a reference to something else. Any image—even Jesus—can be manipulated and replaced with yet another, or part of another. One journal used a very traditional, familiar representation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus with the head of Elvis Presley.

In the era of cyberspace and digital manipulation, nothing is sacred because everything can be "deconstructed." No image can reproduce integrity or the aura of (divine) presence; everything photographed can be decontextualized, re-oriented, and recycled. "Remastered" is the benign term for old movies now on videotape, restored in order to recycle them to film connoisseurs. Yesterday's canonical "masterpiece, " such as the Mona Lisa or The Last Supper, becomes today's hip collage on wallpaper, lunchbox, or shower curtain.

The Last Temptation of Christ (1988), Martin Scorcese's movie about Christ's life based on the controversial novel by Nikos Kazantzakis, is ultimately an intertextual, theological response to movies about Jesus. If mass culture has made Jesus beautiful, authentic, and capable of a subjective encounter with his audience, Scorcese deconstructs these very representations of the Savior by raising a traditional, theological principle all the way back to the Council of Chalcedon—that Christ is both God and Man.

A director with an astute knowledge of film history, Scorcese uses numerous allusions or "citations" of previous movies about Jesus throughout *The Last Temptation of Christ.* The earlier Hollywood from DeMille to Stevens readily pictured a Jesus of fully divine origin. In a certain sense, the "aura" of Classical studio style, together with constructions of middle-class notions of the sublime and taste, made portraying the exclusively divine image) the only possibility. From the point of view of popular culture and religion, there is a very close relationship between glamour and the sacred. Thus it is here where *The*

Last Temptation strikes at the root of our need to make God over in our own image. The opening shot of Willem Dafoe's Jesus is vulnerable, doubting and even weak. While he does endure a last temptation, this is no Gnostic Jesus, but one who is both fully human and fully divine.

Despite what one might think about *The Last Temptation of Christ,* it remains an important film. The issues the film raises remind us of our own ideation of God and how mass culture renegotiates those needs into cultural capital. Mass media helps us to canonize the figures we admire, while parody often pokes fun at the very process of building such images. Parody (together with its first cousin, irony) is a powerful force today because of the fragmented, self-conscious intertextual world of the postmodern condition. Since Jesus is the most reproduced face in the history of the West, it stands to reason that his image would continue to circulate, even as a political weapon. Monty Python's *Life of Brian* uses the Jesus narrative less to ridicule Christ's life than to burlesque our own secular conventions, which tend to make those images possible. The real targets for the Python group are the gated suburbs, authority in the Church, and our most cherished ideals.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, representations of Jesus Christ will continue to be controversial, and postmodernism is destined to complicate all of them. It seems to me that since mid-century, the destiny of the image of Jesus on celluloid has continued towards bifurcation, split between the legacy of "aura" on the one hand, and the desire to deconstruct that middle-class appeal on the other. Mass culture will continue to bestow authenticity on the face of Jesus, as Hollywood has long demonstrated. The difference is that today folks will gather not at Radio City Music Hall to see spectacles like *The King of Kings* but around their television sets, an instrument which speaks to the small, diverse community, allows for viewing flexibility and provides endless opportunity for discussion. Consider the amazing popularity of *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977), Franco Zeffirelli's beautiful, but flawed made-for-TV film (this time the superhuman Savior not only possesses blue eyes and pale skin, but an Oxbridge accent as well).

Meanwhile, more dissonant images of Jesus will continue to invigorate the dialectic between religion and popular culture, challenging the Hollywood Dream Factory. Robbed of middle-class taste, authenticity, and the ontology of the photograph, such films can be instructive in an ongoing, cogent discussion of religious hermeneutics. What is at stake in our representations of the Savior may be our formative habits as consumers in late capitalism. We tend to like our messiahs made over in our image, and American film culture has eagerly cooperated with our fantasies, which are poised so gingerly between secular glamour and

religious devotion. And ultimately our interrogation of the history of Jesus on film must cause the Christian community of the third millennium to ask a further, more probing question: does not the Suffering Servant of Isaiah come to his people scarred to the bone and barely recognizable?

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Faith, Piety, and Non-institutional Christianity: Popular Religion among Homeless Women

CHURCH TEACHING

In a very well-known and much quoted passage, Pope Paul VI declared that "evangelization loses much of its force if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life" (*Evangelii nuntiandi,* 1975, n. 63).

A much more recent Roman document, entitled "Toward a Pastoral Approach to Culture" (*Origins,* 1999), contains a range of references to the concreteness and actuality of culture, stating that "culture is the whole of human activity, human intelligence and emotions, the human quest for meaning, human customs and ethics" (n. 2), and asserting that "the pastoral approach to culture focuses on real situations . . ." (n. 6). The text goes on to identify the "huge agglomerations of people who are socially rootless, politically powerless, economically marginalized and culturally isolated" . . ., and "people whose lives are unraveled" (n. 8).

Having thus drawn attention to the focus of this document, the authors make three interrelated points. First: "The church asserts the dignity of the human person, . . . and affirming her preferential option for the poor and excluded, the church is duty bound to promote a culture of solidarity at every level of society" (n. 21). Second: "If . . . pastoral workers, Christian communities and qualified theologians . . . are to touch people's hearts, [then] proclaiming the Gospel . . . and celebrating salvation in the liturgy demand not only a profound knowledge of the faith but also a knowledge of the cultural environment" (n. 27). And third: "Popular piety is the way a people expresses its faith and its relationship to God and [God's] Providence . . ." (n. 28).

These are noble sentiments and admirable instructions. But they are certainly not new, even though many—"pastoral workers, Christian communities and qualified theologians"—may have failed to hear or practice them. But sadly, this recent document fails to pursue the implications of its own statements. After the impressive rhetoric, we might fail to notice the assumption on which the remainder of the text ap-

pears to rest: that "culture" applies only to social reality that is homogeneous, stable, or dominant. In consequence, the document simply overlooks some of the most brute social facts of our times, and a very significant minority of the population.

The present essay attempts to sketch the features of a social reality that cries out for a deeper and more informed pastoral outreach. The Churches, through their institutional structure or through individual or community responses, are undoubtedly pivotal in responding to the needs of the people profiled here. Yet such outreach is usually excluded from conversation about evangelization; the clergy and other professional ministers are not prominently involved; and though many homeless people choose to attend churches, a significant number appear deliberately to avoid Roman Catholic churches and their liturgies. The outreach I have in mind therefore, would take the sentiments expressed by Paul VI very seriously, and respond to the even more poignant and pointed words of Jesus himself. As he articulates a kind of personal job description (one that will apply also to his followers, as Matt 25:35ff makes only too clear), Jesus first declares, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," and then he identifies the poor, captives, the blind and oppressed—the rootless, disenfranchised pariahs—as the beneficiaries of his Spirit-led, healing, restoring, humanizing ministry (Luke 4:18).

SOCIAL FACTS

The second half of the twentieth century saw human degradation and destabilization on an unprecedented scale. This is no hyperbole but stark reality: refugees and displaced people generally (whether victims of war, of political instability or of lack of hospitality) were among the most visible; but universally the growing numbers of urban poor (and for the present purposes, specifically in the United States as it experienced an unprecedented economic boom) were perhaps the least visible. If the plight of the visible (Kosovo? Sierra Leone? Turkey?) sometimes provoked a humanitarian response, the plight of the rest was simply not noticed.

We are all dulled by "facts, damn facts, and statistics." Nevertheless, a profile of the homeless poor of this country provides a context for thoughts about popular religiosity and pastoral responses. Homelessness and poverty are inextricably linked. As Jesus ruefully said, "the poor are with you always" (Matt 26:11). Indeed, "the poor" whom Jesus encountered at the beginning of the first millennium in Palestine, are with us at the beginning of the third millennium in the United States, in the faces of today's homeless people: largely invisible, easily avoidable, and virtually uncountable because they are an unstable and shifting population. It is easier to indicate trends or identify categories

than to produce incontestable statistics or irrefutable evidence: mere facts do not convince everyone. Yet for all this, "the homeless poor" is a category that comprises flesh and blood citizens, real people, a fragile culture, and the very human beings to whom Jesus was most devoted.

In 1997, 35.6 million Americans (13.3 percent of the population) lived in poverty; 41 percent of these (14.6 million) had incomes *less than half the poverty level* (National Coalition for the Homeless, June 1999). That year alone, 675,000 people lost health insurance due to welfare reform legislation. In the twenty years after 1973, two and a quarter million low-rent units disappeared, while between 1991 and 1995, low-income rents rose 21 percent. By 1995 the number of low-income renters outstripped available units by 4.4 million. Add to this the incidence of domestic violence, mental illness, and addiction disorders, and the cohort of homeless people in this country is as populous as a small nation. In every city, official estimates of the homeless population exceed the available bed space, and rural areas are relatively worse than urban centers. Homelessness results, in large measure, from people being forced to choose between food, shelter, and other basic needs.

Imagine an infra-red "snapshot" of the United States taken on a balmy spring night: it would show a count of around 700,000 men, women and children *in officially designated shelters,* but up to two million more "hidden homeless" sleeping in the open or in abandoned cars or buildings. However, perhaps twelve million Americans have been homeless at some time, and more than half of that number (6.6 million) experienced homelessness in the five years before 1994. On average, every cot in a shelter accommodates between four and six people per year; and between 1987 and 1997 shelter capacity increased between 200 percent and 300 percent. It would be bad enough if these were statistics; tragically, the figures represent real people.

REAL PEOPLE

How do actual people survive the dislocation and trauma of homelessness? How do they find, or make, or maintain some vestige of meaning in their lives? Why do so many manage to retain a modicum of dignity, humor and faith, when their daily round is so undignified, their lives so lacking in the lighter side, and the promises of organized religion so hollow? And where is, and should be, "the Church" in the shape of committed Christians and pastoral programs?

In the form of a description more than an analysis, in terms more pastoral than sociological, and by way of an attempt to identify the "inner history" rather than to expatiate about homelessness and its practitioner-victims, my remarks will apply particularly to one group of people, scattered and constantly changing, but countable in the hundreds of thousands on any given night: the homeless women of America.

As the brute statistics indicate, homeless people can be grouped in many categories. Yet categories soon become stereotypes if not social stigmas: mental defectives; substance abusers; socially unskilled; unemployable; claustrophobic; feckless; losers. But these labels are affixed to human persons with inner lives. In fact their inner lives are often their most important identifier and the most convincing explanation of their survival. So why are these inner lives so little explored, belittled, or simply not understood by the Christian community? A glimpse into the lives of the homeless poor may disclose not only extremely interesting manifestations of popular religiosity, but a form of non-institutional Christianity which serves to point an accusing finger at Churches and congregations which overlook these people and their plight (notwithstanding the excellent work and witness provided by many agencies dedicated to the homeless poor).

POPULAR RELIGION

The phrase "popular religiosity" has a rather condescending ring, and "popular religion" is not much better. This is because the connotations of "popular" and "religiosity" tend to separate it from mainstream experience and approval (for a review of the language, Parker, 1996; Bamat and Wiest, 1999). "The religion of (the) people" or "(ordinary) people's religion" may be an improvement if one intends to identify the honest—and therefore authentic—attempts of (ordinary) people to communicate in a Godly manner both with divinity and humanity. By whatever name, popular religion is often informal, not "organized," and at variance with the declared orthodoxy of a particular institutional Church.

Such religious expression actually represents the honest efforts of people who are separated from institutional religion, whether because of excommunication or feelings of worthlessness, because of personal unacceptability or the lack of encounter, or simply because of the perceived irrelevance of such organized religion. As Paul VI said, unless evangelization is addressed to real people in their concrete situations, it loses much of its force—which is partly why orthodox religion has in fact lost many adherents. Many homeless people have a profound desire to enjoy the freedom of religious practice, but either feel excluded by mainstream Christianity or are simply not able to identify with its perceived middle class, doctrinaire agendas, and hypocrisy.

Popular religion, or popular religiosity, is alive and well in our cities. It is popular—"regarded with favor or approval" by many. It is popular—"pertaining to or representing the people, especially the common people." And it is popular—"of the people as a whole; of the general masses." To many middle-class people, such dictionary definitions of popularity bespeak vulgarity, and certainly otherness. Popularity thus

understood has no social cachet. Many upwardly mobile Christians, imbued with the so-called "Protestant Ethic," seem to find it not only alien but reprehensible. The official Church, wittingly or not, is tarred with the same brush.

The "inner history" of a person or a people (a helpful phrase of H. Richard Niebuhr) represents the perspective they have as they look out on the world: a particular, concrete, bounded world. Many of us know the "outer history" so to speak, of people or groups: that is, we *know about* such people or their worlds, about whether they are the typical tax collectors, prostitutes, cripples, lepers, and sinners of the New Testament or "the homeless," "prostitutes," "AIDS sufferers" or any other category we care to name. But to *know about* something or someone may be possible without leaving one's comfortable armchair; truly *to know* someone or something demands encounter.

Jesus knew much more than the outer history of people. Not only did he *know about* categories of people ("the poor"), he *actually knew real persons: this* rich young man, *that* tax collector, *this* woman caught in adultery, *that* centurion, and so on. And as he encountered them, so he responded to their existential situation, whether they were named Bartimeus or Nicodemus, Mary or Martha, or whether their names have been lost because no one ever recorded them—like the widow, the woman who poured ointment, the Syrophoenician or the Samaritan.

It is simply unacceptable—pastorally—to *know about* people, or indeed cultures: we are called to follow the example of Jesus and to encounter cultures through people, and to know about people by actually knowing them. One of the shortcomings of "Toward a Pastoral Approach to Culture" is precisely its title: it is impossible to approach "culture" pastorally: any pastoral approach must be to flesh and blood people. The homeless poor are people before they are statistics or components of culture.

OFFICIAL RELIGION

It is certainly possible to characterize the broad lines of popular and official religion and to compare practices and practitioners. However, this is nothing more than a beginning: it may indeed help us to *know about* something or someone. A first stage toward *actually knowing* the people identified as practitioners of popular religion would be to ask: why might they respond this way, and not in other (official) ways? Or, more pointedly we might inquire how the label "popular religion" describes what its practitioners experience as popular, congenial, attractive, and indeed relevant to their actual lives.

We can identify some broad interpretive themes or categories with which to understand popular religiosity, and then compare and contrast popular and official forms of religion. Seven such categories have

been identified (Rodriguez-Holguin,1990), (see fig. 1). They are presented here as a way to compare popular and official religion.

Like most models or categories, this representation is neither perfect nor watertight. But it might help us understand the broad contours of worlds of experience and fields of relationships, in such a way as to extrapolate from, and compare, some of the "inner history" of different people. As far as homeless persons are concerned, it will need some fine-tuning. Yet it does, I hope, provide a key rather than a crowbar, for entry into other worlds of meaning.

The world of homeless people is a different world from—though it touches and sometimes overlaps with—the world of the salary-earning, job-secure, educated, insured homeowners. It is a world in which

Fig. 1

CATEGORIES	***POPULAR RELIGIOSITY***	***OFFICIAL RELIGION***
Thought structures	*Principle of participation:* everything is related and interdependent. Belief is informal or unformalized.	*Principle of contradiction:* Every person and thing is discrete and different. Belief is codified and formalized.
The sacred	Sacred and profane are distinguishable and distinguished, but not dichotomized. Utilitarian considerations govern religious action.	Religious faith and expression are often perceived as sacred, and distinct from ordinary life. Orthodoxy governs religions action.
Nature and the world	Nature itself is to be respected; is holy. Animate and inanimate creation is interrelated.	Nature is profane and minimally integrated with religious action; is used, exploited, dominated. [Bellah, 1998]
Space and time	Special places and times, but *all* are permeated by holy/sacred. *Ritualization* celebrates the holy.	Only official times and places are sacred. *Consecration* makes things/persons holy.
Social politics	Popular religion is rooted in marginalization and oppression; always different from official religion.	Official religion is for and of the centers of privilege and respectability; popular religion is abnormal.
Historical project	It looks to a better future for the poor; implies radical social change.	Progressive evolution of human history; God legitimizes people's achievements and possessions.
Social organization	"Horizontal" rather than "vertical" relationships are important; people are united by their common experiences.	Structures are perceived as "vertical" and hierarchically ordered; people are separated by their differing statuses.

they must find or create meaning, for the conventional meanings of the dominant culture do not translate very well. If they fail to engage meaningfully with others, they will either go mad or perish. But among the most impressive characteristics of many homeless people are their ingenuity and their hope. It has been estimated that in the event of a natural disaster or nuclear catastrophe, the homeless poor would be among the least traumatized and the first to survive: such an experience would be little more than an extension of their daily round. But curiously and impressively, their survival would be attributable as much to their solidarity and cooperation, their shared meanings and symbols—their culture—as to their individual initiative.

PEOPLE'S RELIGION

Popular religion is not a phrase used by those whose belief, piety and devotion it purports to describe. And popular culture is not a subject of research among most of those who study human groups and societies. But both "popular religion" and "popular culture" are signposts pointing in the direction of real people. In general, the belief, beliefs, or convictions of the homeless poor are neither formalized nor standardized, and many homeless people synthesize elements that may appear to others logically incompatible. Thus an all-loving God may be their rock in a palpably unjust and capricious world; and God will always be there, even though "there" is the abandoned car or condemned building. Oscar Wilde may have quipped that "we are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars," but those who are actually in the gutter and cannot see the stars need a different form of sustenance than the star-gazers.

Like frightened animals in a headlight's glare, some of the homeless poor freeze, or crash to their destruction. Yet many have histories—and *herstories*—which, given time, they may share with people from a more conventional world and a more "official" religious perspective. Their anti-social or unsocialized behaviors may melt away, to disclose graciousness, wit and wisdom. Given time, then—something they are rarely given by anyone (though they may be given handouts, or "services")—they are palpably able to reciprocate with respectful attention, and eye-contact in appropriate measure. Yet it may take years, and even a decade, to establish trust on the ruins of lives that have suffered the abuse of people in general and men in particular, as well as institutions in general and the Churches in particular.

Popular religion may be unorthodox but is not entirely privatized. Among homeless people it is, however, an expression of interiority, not to say withdrawal. But it is also social: many women do go to church (or churches) eclectically, and with others, as well as loyally and alone.

They are not "smorgasbord Christians" in the usual sense of the phrase: they are not looking, however unconsciously, for an easy life, but for meaning, survival, and an injection of hope. Their starting point, almost literally, is the gutter. But their hope is survival and their survival is their hope. It is quite amazing how much hope they have.

COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Recently, in these pages, Elizabeth Johnson (1999) wrote that

> 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.

The emphasis is mine; and in addition to the final phrase, could we not add ". . . and [religion's] despised, forgotten, or merely overlooked"? Because I am very much in agreement with the sentiments expressed in the paragraph quoted above, perhaps I may be permitted to elaborate on them a little, and to extend their implicit reach to cover some of the homeless poor in a more explicit way.

Johnson refers to "human cultures" as the seed bed of the communion of saints. But many people would never think of the homeless population as qualifying as a human culture. That, of course, would be "their problem"—except that to deny culture to homeless people would also be to victimize them even more! However, Johnson includes "all living persons of faith and love"; and even if the homeless poor were to be denied participation in culture, they most certainly cannot be excluded from "all living persons of faith and love": among them are many exemplars of these theological virtues. Which brings us unavoidably to the question: what are the implications for the rest of us, if the communion of saints includes homeless people? Am I my brothers' and sisters' keeper? If, as Johnson argues, the communion of saints is not only a helpful theological and ecclesial notion but a description of people of faith, does it not follow that Christian ministry should acknowledge, and respond to the needs of, those whose faith is fiercely strong, whose hope springs eternal, but whose religion is either invisible or unorthodox? The major issue here, I suggest, is not so much about how we open our doors to the lost and the strayed, as how, and when, and where we actually go forth into the "highways and byways," to encounter, embrace, and offer healing and hospitality, as Jesus did.

POPULAR PIETY

So where *is* the religion of people—or popular religion—when it is not expressed in official, orthodox forms and in our churches and canonical parishes? And in what does the challenge to ministers with a missionary heart consist? Let us briefly listen to the actual words of women of faith who are currently homeless in the United States. Let us look at their piety, from their own perspective and in their own words, as part of their "inner history." Let us note their search for the transcendent, their indomitable hope, and, perhaps surprisingly for people so abused or overlooked, their tolerance and even altruism: something very Godly is palpably part of their lives. As Pope Paul VI put it, in lines already quoted we have to pay attention to *actual people, the questions they ask,* and the impact of the gospel on *their concrete life* (*Evangelii Nuntiandi,* n.63). Here then, are half a dozen personal testimonies, taken at random from many:

- "God's been holding me up. He's been real good to me, not letting me break down and going back to drugs and alcohol, waking me up in the morning, making me close my eyes at night, keeping me where I can keep the faith, and away from drugs and alcohol. . . . I read the Bible a lot. . . . A lot of church people have done things I don't think church people should do or even think that way. That would not make me confide in them. . . . I got angry at God when he took my Mom, and I did used to blame God for my life. But I'm not against God. My faith is growing stronger. I got hope, Tony. . . . I do Bible study twice a week (at the Baptist church). We take a passage and discuss it" (Tina).

- "I believe in God, I do. I pray every night before I go to sleep. If I do good or bad, right or wrong, I pray for another day. And every day I wake up I thank God for another day. . . . Blame God for the position I'm in? Why? I can't blame God. . . . I have abandoned the Church many times, but I need God in my life, a spiritual guide and spiritual awareness" (Jeannette).

- "I cried for two days. It's really scary. But I had my faith. I kept my head up. I believe in God very seriously. And God kept me going. I just prayed and talked to God every day. There were times I wanted to give up, but God had business. . . . Sometimes I sit down in a corner by myself. . . . I read the Bible. . . . I want to die a happy death, and I know I'm going to live forever in Paradise" (Lunette).

- "I been baptized five or six times; because I'm a backslider. Different churches. I pray to God; God is in my heart; I believe in the Lord. But yesterday was the first time I've been in church for ten years. I do

think that God loves me. I know God works in mysterious ways. He's there for me; I still have faith; I choose not to give up" (Brenda).

- "God's been there all the time, even though I wasn't going to church. I would pray at home. God is the reason for my life. He's the reason for my breathing. And nothin's impossible. . . . I can't describe God, but I think He's caring, understanding, forgiving. I've read the Bible. . . . God's always been there, in everything I've done. He's helped me. He got my ID, my birth certificate. He woke me up in order to give me strength and energy to go look for them. I never give up. Not on God, no! . . . I'd go to church if someone went with me. I wouldn't go by myself. . . . church people: they say things, then they do the opposite. I never went to church for help or assistance. . . . I shouldn't have to go [to a special place] to worship. I could be here, or in the hallway. God sees everything you do, and what you do to other people, He knows" (Darla).

- "God, for me, is . . . my intuition; something eating at me. After my Mom died, I strayed from the Church. . . . I don't understand the Bible. . . . God is real! He's blessing me a lot. I used to be angry with God because I saw many people with material blessings. But one thing I have come to recognize is the blessing of my health. . . . Jesus? I don't have a term or definition for Jesus. It's as if the Spirit moves within me. God is real. Jesus is the son of God, but it's not as if he's the same. . . . The Church? Church people to me are hypocrites and phony. I would like to try a church; Church itself is OK" (Ranita).

CONCLUSION

Jesus said to his disciples, "ask, seek, knock" (Matt 7:7-8). But those who have all the answers simply do not stop to ask; those who are not lost have no reason to seek; and those secure within their own comfortable domain would never think to knock. These three imperatives then, apply to inquirers, searchers, or outsiders. An institution that believes itself to have all the answers, to have reached its goal, and to reside at the center, will tend, at best—as will its like-minded members—to invite others to the center but not to move to the margins itself. But the homeless poor actually live at the margins, and they either fail to hear, or fail to be convinced by the invitations. So they continue to struggle for survival, to fashion a world of meaning in the face of chaos and confusion, and to eke out their existence on the very edges of the institutional Church.

It is surely time, as we reflect on the meaning and challenge of the third Christian millennium, to commit ourselves to a new evangelization that begins by seeking out the invisible and excluded, not, of course, to herd them into institutional corrals and brand them, like livestock,

with baptism, but to dedicate ourselves to their service, by learning their inner history, by being open to and awed by the resilience of their spirit, and by treating the homeless poor in our land as Jesus treated the outcasts and the indigent in his.

Both *Evangelii nuntiandi* and the recent pontifical document on culture have articulated the challenge of evangelization quite well. It remains for us to incarnate a Jesus-response, in the spirit of Luke 4:18.

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David Blanchard, O.Carm.

Magic and Religion: Toward a Hermeneutic of Popular Religiosity

INTRODUCTION

The scene is not unfamiliar to many large capitals of the world on market day. The narrow lanes are overflowing with fresh fruit, produce, and hand crafts. Trucks laden with imported goods from around the world are being unloaded, and these goods too are exhibited in the outdoor stalls. The languages vary, as do the songs. Strains of Islamic chant mix with African drums and Andean wood pipes. The smells mix as well. These include the odor of rotting produce crushed under foot by a steady traffic of buyers, tourists and vendors. Richer smells can also be detected: cut flowers and herbs, pungent cheeses and fresh fish. Cooked foods are available from walking vendors and well-established shops with long lines of hungry patrons. The sounds of hissing oil, percolating coffee, and bubbling concoctions that promise health as well as to satisfy one's hunger float over it all. And finally, as the capstone, there is the dominant aroma of burning incense—a sweet-smelling copal from the mountains of Central America.

Strolling through this bedlam of languages and assorted accents are representatives of the state: police to maintain order, tax collectors to guarantee that all of the vendors have paid their fees and *baksheesh*.

At the edge of the market, in a quieter place set apart from the bustle of vendors and the press of the crowd, are two small tables laid over with brightly covered cloths and various crystals, hexagons and cards painted with signs from Jewish cabalism, Hindu mandelas, and drawings of the zodiac. Behind one table sits a woman reading the palm of an anxious client. They speak in hushed tones but the woman doing the "reading" is overheard encouraging her client to "risk moving the crystal through the next passage" depicted in the maze woven into her tablecloth. Across the small plaza, a second reader is promising happy results to her client if he throws a certain talisman into the river.

The river in this case is the Potomac and the place is Washington's Eastern Market. This is where Congress's young staff members, Capital Hill lobbyists, and assorted professionals purchase their produce on Saturday mornings and, while waiting for the fresh fish to arrive from the Chesapeake, receive enlightenment with the help of the market's resident shamans, witches, and fortune tellers.

Despite rumors to the contrary, secular America has not quite buried its belief in the supernatural. Devotions of various sorts are flourishing. Some reflect the private, individualistic character of American culture. Like Eastern Market's soothsayers, these devotions are private affairs—between believer and the "life-force" with the aid of a soothsayer that one visits only when necessary. During my walk through Eastern Market, I found myself smiling at the men and women waiting to consult the fortunetellers. Then I paused to reflect on my own experience as a priest and religious. How would these men and women waiting to see a soothsayer regard the Catholic Eucharist or my community's sponsorship of the visit of the relics of St. Thérèse of Lisieux to Washington? This Saturday stroll through Eastern Market brought me home—in a literal and figurative sense—to reexamine some of anthropology's insights on religion and magic; to look again at my experience as a priest and religious, as much involved with sacramentals as with sacraments.

THE RULES OF MAGIC ARE DISTINCT FROM THOSE OF RELIGION

In 1925 Bronislaw Malinowski published the monograph *Science, Religion and Reality* in which he distinguished magic from religion. Magic, he wrote, is "the practical art consisting of acts which are only means to a definite end. . . . (It has a) limited, circumscribed technique: spell, rite, and the condition of the performer. . . . It is always the affirmation of man's power to cause certain definite effects by a definite spell and rite." Religion, according to Malinowski, is "a body of self-contained acts being themselves the fulfillment of their purpose. Unlike magic, religion does not depend on technique and its integrity does not depend on function, but rather in the value of belief" (1954:69).

Because the practice of magic and religion includes the speaking of words in some essential ways, I have expanded here on Malinowski's distinction between these phenomena by considering the rules that govern their practice as speech events. I then look at a speech event—the invocation of a blessing in the presence of a relic—and propose a methodology for considering the varieties of popular religiosity.

My methodology is the ethnography of speaking, the study of not just what is said, but the whole speech event—the context and rules of performance. Methodologically the ethnography of speaking is derived from linguistics and anthropology and has its starting point in Ferdinand de Sausurre's *Course in General Linguistics* delivered at the University of Geneva between 1906–1911. In these lectures de Sausurre distinguished language from speech.

According to de Sausurre, speech is the use of language. Language sets the boundaries for speech, but within these boundaries speakers exercise a great deal of latitude in using words and grammar. Nobody speaks a

language as it is defined by the rules. There exist rules of use that exist within the rules of language. Speakers rely on gesture, objects in the context of the speech event, interruptions, expectations based on past performances, and rules that define the nature of the overall speech event.

John Searle characterizes the two kinds of rules that govern a speech event as *regulative* or *constitutive* (1969:33–42). According to Searle, regulative rules govern independently existing forms of behavior. He cites the rules of etiquette as an example. These regulate the accepted forms of behavior between persons, but they do not create a relationship. The relationship exists independently of the rules. Constitutive rules, on the other hand, create the activities they also describe. For example, the rules of chess create the game of chess.

Most often speech describes a state of being and is either true or false. But there are certain kinds of utterances that do something. These speech acts are neither true nor false; they perform certain acts. Examples from ordinary language include "I thank you" and "I bet you five dollars."

Shamanistic utterances are normally in the form of speech acts whose rules are predominantly constitutive. The rules of religious language are regulative and depend upon pre-existing faith and integrity between what is said and done. This distinction helps us see the difference between magic and religion.

Magic is a means to an end, a practical art that includes uttering certain words in certain circumstances, correctly and completely, and that does not emphasize the integrity between what is said and what is done. Magic must be performed correctly because it is an activity constituted by its rules. The cause is the doer who speaks these words in specific circumstances. The saying of magical words thus affirms man's power to cause certain definite effects by a definite spell and rite.

Religion is not a means to an end; it is the end itself. Religion does not depend on technique but rather on a pre-existing faith and the value of belief. Religious rules are regulative of that belief; they do not constitute it. Speech acts emphasize how well words describe the authentic feelings of the community of believers. In the categories for the successful completion of a speech act, religion places greatest emphasis on the consistency between what is felt, said and done. The words both do and describe.

Magical training does not include theology. The shaman's apprenticeship is spent learning the correct practice of rituals, chants, and spells. These practices reflect a general worldview—a theory of the person, a cosmology and a morality—but they are principally concerned with results. Mature shamans who have had time and experience to refine their craft may turn to theology in their old age. But more often than not, their audience is the anthropologist or ethnologist. This is so because shamans are valued in their own societies, not for what they

illuminate about the interior life or one's relationship with God, but for what they accomplish for their clients.

Religious practitioners invoke reason to attack shamanism, arguing that it does not accomplish what it claims. But magic does not depend on the success of its practice. When one invests heavily in a belief tied to a practice that is supposed to produce certain effects (such as exact knowledge of future events) and the prophecy fails, people are more likely to blame the mis-execution or mis-invocation of the practice than to discard the belief. In situations involving magic, people simply hold the practice to have been mis-executed.

Religious speech events are regulative of the collective faith of a people. Religion does not create faith; it expresses it. Religion requires a theology to reflect on the relationship of the divine to human experience. Theologians serve religion by clarifying the structural connections within a belief system and between belief and practices. In most societies, theologians make these connections through myth making. But theology is more than myth making. Its methodology includes clarifying commonly held beliefs about the nature of the human person, cosmology and the divine. Theology is not a uniquely western field. Various studies of the belief systems of "primitive" peoples indicate how religion presumes a theology and how different societies reflect on their relationship with a divine being and integrate these beliefs with how they live (Brown, 1922; Evans-Prichard, 1974 ; Radin, 1937; Nadel, 1954).

But in drawing the distinction we ought not presume religion is entirely devoid of shamanistic practices. Some religious speech events, for example, stress correct execution over interiority and focus on the practitioner as the source of power. In a similar vein, some shamanistic practices evidence a common faith. The case presented below—concerning relics—shows this blending of religious practice and shamanism. Before describing this case, however, it is necessary to distinguish three levels of interpretation: the exegetical, the operational and the structural (Turner, 1967). The exegetical level of interpretation is what the natives say something means. The operational level is how the ritual object, rite, or symbol is actually used in a society. The structural level of meaning is how this particular practice relates to the overall cultural system.

THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX COMES TO AMERICA

Relics are part of the popular religiosity of Roman Catholicism and often exhibit the dual properties of sacramental and magic talisman. This dual propensity is evident in the current tour of the relics of Thérèse of Lisieux being made throughout the United States. Thérèse was a middle-class French girl born on January 2, 1873, the ninth and last child of Zelie and Louis Martin. She entered the Carmelite convent

at Lisieux on April 9th 1888. After a painful infirmity, she died on September 30, 1897 at age 24. During her time in the Carmel of Lisieux Thérèse wrote a spiritual autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*. This work has been translated into sixty languages and became an instant success. Her message has had special appeal for her time and in 1925 Thérèse was canonized by Pope Pius XI. In 1997 Pope John Paul II declared St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Doctor of the Church.

As I write this essay an unspecified quantity of primary relics of Thérèse of Lisieux are making a pilgrimage around the United States, having already completed similar visits throughout France, most of western Europe, Russia, Brazil, and Argentina. From the United States the relics travel to Australia, Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Italy, Mexico, Ireland, and Lebanon. Not even the organizers from the five provincial communities of Discalced and Ancient Observance Carmelites know what the reliquary actually contains. The mystery has only contributed to the attraction of the visit.

The reliquary is an elaborately designed, wood coffer shaped like a basilica, decorated with gold-leaf filigree. The coffer sits on a wood paladin covered by a plexiglas hood. Together the relics, reliquary, and carrying case weigh 300 lbs. and require eight adults to carry it.

The North American tour of Thérèse's relics is costly—the initial investment of the five Carmelite provinces was $100,000. The relics are being transported from one destination to another in a van. Sites for the visit include Carmelite convents, monasteries, parishes, and other places where the Carmelites serve as well as many major cathedrals in the United States.

The form of venerating the relics will vary from place to place, but there is an underlying, official style to these events that serves to interpret the relics meaning in a way that clearly place these activities within the world of religion. The observations that follow are taken from the first days of the visit to Washington and Baltimore.

In both cities the relics were placed in diminutive positions relative to the altar and pulpit. The preaching emphasized the position of canonized saints in the communion of saints that includes all believers. Both operationally and structurally the reliquary was interpreted by the organizers as part of a complex of religious culture that depended entirely on the faith of the Church. Two homilists spoke about the human need to communicate values, ideas, and structural relationships through the senses—hence the interest in and attraction to the relics. Most of the preaching elaborated on themes that were familiar to the saint: her acceptance of God's will, her generosity of spirit, and most importantly, her "little way to perfection" based on her ministry to love.

Neither the organizers nor the rector of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington—the first major exposition of

the relics—anticipated the huge response on the part of the Catholic community of Washington to the event. The monasteries where the relics were venerated could not control the flow of visitors. Nor could the organizers control the exegetical understanding of the saint's visit to the United States.

The visitors were mixed and varied in age, gender, ethnicity, race, apparent economic status, and even religious backgrounds. Washington has a large immigrant population, and many Asians were present at the events, with smaller numbers of Latin Americans. Not content simply to sit in the presence of the reliquary and pray, these devotees of the saint insisted on touching the plexiglas cover, sometimes kissing, sometimes placing their tear-stained faces against its smooth, curved surface. At Whitefriars Hall in Washington, D.C., the Little Flower Society had made available holy cards with a drawing of the United States drawn by Thérèse in her convent in Lisieux. These were pressed against the plexiglas accompanied by prayers of intercession offered on behalf of some cause.

The behavior of the faithful needs to be considered in the context of the whole speech event of her blessing. The coffer arrived at the monasteries to be greeted by lines of white-cloaked Carmelites singing *Salve Regina*. Unaccustomed to the correct protocol for carrying a saint's relics, the seminarians assumed the funereal gazes of professional mourners. The reliquary was carried in silent procession into the chapel and placed on a slightly elevated platform draped with red velvet. The seating around the coffer allowed for ninety persons to view the relics while lines formed to permit ten to twelve "viewers" to kneel before the reliquary, to pray and to physically touch the plexiglas. Meanwhile the white cloaked Carmelites provided what can best be described as a careful vigilance over the saint's remains.

The veneration was limited to five hours and lines formed around the Carmelite property as the faithful waited to enter. Waiting in the October chill did not prove too inconvenient until the possibility arose that the doors were about to close as midnight approached. Tensions rose and the seminarians were pressured to let the crowds inside.

One conversation between a seminarian and a man who had arrived late for the viewing is worth noting. He mentioned that he had heard that the viewing was to last all night so he had come late to avoid the crowds. The seminarian tried to reason with him: "If you don't get in, St. Thérèse certainly knows of the effort you made to get here and will be appreciative." The man responded "You just don't get it, do you? I have to get inside. I have a special favor to ask, and I need the help of the Little Flower."

In fact, the seminarian did not "get it." This man needed to touch the coffer or some physical material close to the coffer. The proximity of the

pavement outside the monastery was not close enough. His faith was strong, but his need for the assurance that magic portends was stronger still. He needed to say his prayers in close proximity and in physical contact with the saint's remains. In this way, his prayers were not subject to the doubt of faith. Rather, his prayer would be presented within the magical orbit of the saint's relics.

MAGIC AND MARGINALIZATION

Some anthropologists have accounted for the difference between magic and religion in terms of the social status of the practitioners. To Joseph Campbell, magic attracts the marginal and disaffected of a society, while religion attracts the social mainstream. Campbell's characterization appears valid. To a certain degree practitioners of New Age Alchemy are persons dissatisfied with their experience of mainstream religions, especially Christianity and Judaism. Yet they experience a yearning for a spiritual experience that secular life cannot offer them. In many respects shamanism is compatible with modern American culture. It focuses on the individual; it is private; it is auto-therapeutic, emphasizing personal power and responsibility. What these practitioners of New Age Alchemy want is ritual without theology, or as Susan Sontag has written, piety without content.

Shamanistic practice flourishes among marginalized youth. His fellow students in Pearl, Mississippi have variously described Luke Woodham as "weird," "friendly," and "quiet," "lonely," and "on the edge." Woodham accounted for the murder of his family and former girlfriend as vengeance against the world for having made him suffer throughout life. "No one ever truly loved me," Woodham has said. "No one ever really cared about me." Young men like Luke Woodham can reverse these feelings of inferiority and loneliness through shamanism. They make the rules. They follow the rules. Others suffer, if not immediately, then eventually, as a result of their successful completion of these rules. And the rules are not tied to a deeper faith and anthropology. They constitute the magical event.

It will not be surprising if Woodham's lawyers enter a plea for mental impairment. More interesting will be the prosecution's case against Grant Boyette, alleged leader of Woodham's small cult. At the time of this writing, Boyette has also been charged with murder. But how did Boyette participate in murder? According to the prosecution, it was through Satanic practice that Boyette gained control over Woodham's willpower and forced him to kill.

Prison chaplains report huge interest in shamanistic cult and Catholic sacramentals in American jails and prisons. This is consistent with the general belief that religion is the spiritual practice of those in power while magic belongs to the poor and marginalized. But this observa-

tion does not account for the plethora of magico-sacramental practices in the prison population.

Prisoners who practice shamanism or act as clients of shamanistic practice protect themselves from power directed against them by other shamans or witches. But in protecting themselves, they also absolve themselves for the crimes they have committed. "I did it, but it wasn't really my fault, because someone put bad (power) against me." Shamanism offers power to the powerless. With its emphasis on practice over theology, there is no need for long and costly study. The shaman, once he or she has learned the cult, is in charge and is not dependent on God or Satan for power.

Shamanism is syncretistic. One does not hear concerns expressed for the purity of shamanistic rite. Quite the contrary, shamanism draws power from a variety of traditions. Thus, chaplains who respond to the requests of inmates for rosaries, scapulars, holy cards and other sacramentals, often contribute to the alleged power of these objects to the syncretistic complex created by the inmate-shaman.

It is not only the socially marginal, however, who are attracted to magic. It also attracts mainstream members of society who feel marginalized by lack of good fortune, a lack of control over their lives, their emotional state and the lives of those around them. Through magic—for example, the touching of St. Thérèse's reliquary—the devotee restores a sense of control over one's fortune.

CONCLUSION

Sociologists of religion like Robert Bellah have made much of the Puritan roots of American culture. American Puritanism emphasized voluntary association in the Church, the equality of all the believers and an anti-elitist priesthood. Consequently the Puritans rejected all esoteric forms of knowledge. Simply put: shamanism was undemocratic. The Puritans also emphasized the primacy of sign over symbol. Catholics, who provided the foil to Puritanism, emphasized the efficacy of symbols. Because of their characteristic "open ended" nature, symbols do not just refer to a signifier; they suggest undisclosed and future meanings. To the Catholic, symbols have the ability to do something, especially when their religious power is unlocked by speaking certain words. The Puritan reformers wanted to cast out symbols in favor of signs—where the relationship of signifier to signified exhausts all meanings.

The Puritan claimed that Catholic ritual was rooted in Satanism insofar as it was based on false claims, namely the power of the priest to say certain things in certain circumstances and transform bread into flesh, wine into blood. The Puritans also attacked sacramentals. Sacraments and sacramentals were said to be ungodly, not because they had

ungodly power, but because their claim to power was false. The eruption of witchcraft at Salem Township threatened this Puritan world-view. But more threatening to Puritan world-view was the response of the Puritans themselves to the events at Salem. Rather than dismiss the accusing children as liars and the witches as falsifiers, the Puritan judges admitted the real power of shamanism and moved to suppress it. Salem and America were left in a quandary that has not been resolved to this day: in the heart of iconoclastic New England, its most vocal opponents affirmed shamanism.

How should we confront witchcraft? Surely not the way of Salem's Puritans, and by that I do not mean just the execution of witches. Rallying communities against Halloween, forbidding schools to hang paper witches on the bulletin board, and paying excessive attention to the jewelry of rock musicians is neither appropriate nor an adequate response to this problem. The days are gone when the Congregational minister can call up the judge from Boston to rout out the witch. But the power of witchcraft to manipulate the weak and marginal members of society still remains. Before acting, pastors, parents, teachers, and chaplains need to better understand the phenomenon of shamanism as distinct from religion.

Who is the shaman and why do they practice? These men and women claim the power, without reference to a shared communal belief, by saying certain things, in the context of certain acts, to be able to induce young men like Luke Woodham to kill.

With reference to some cultural groups, Federal Law now supports shamanistic practice. American Indians have the right of access to materials that are shamanistic and the right to practice—within prison walls—shamanistic rites and sacrifice. The irony is that the practice of "Santeria" is illegal in Miami and if practitioners persist in its practice, they will be arrested. But once in prison, federal guidelines guarantee Cuban prisoners the right to practice Santeria.

Nor is seeing a satanic threat in every symbol a way to combat shamanism. A few years ago *The Washington Post* (Salmon, 1997) reported a case where a Baptist church in Virginia Beach, Va., destroyed a cross and memorial garden dedicated to a deceased Sunday school teacher. The pastor ordered this because the cross had become entwined with roses, thus making it a satanic symbol. The pastor and his assistants destroyed the cross, cut down all of the plants, upturned the paving stones and then, in an act that defies the imagination, they sprinkled the barren ground with holy water. Aside from the question, where do Baptists get holy water, how could this pastor have imagined that his act would undermine belief in shamanism in his small community?

So how should Christians confront shamanism? There are quite a few small lessons to be learned and one comprehensive solution.

We should be careful to criticize the religious practices of others. Because a religious practice is exotic, does not mean that it is shamanistic. Many Native American, Central American and African practices that appear to be shamanistic are in fact religious practices whose meaning is only evident within the whole complex of indigenous faith and culture. We should discourage extracting prayers and practices of other faiths from outside their cultural context for use in Christian ceremonies. The removal of a religious practice from one culture to be practiced in another often relegates the faith of the stranger to shamanism.

Special care should be taken when sacramentals are involved in ministry to extremely marginal groups, such as mentally ill patients, prisoners, and the very poor. Who would not respond when a prisoner asks for a rosary? But the giving of this gift requires special catechesis. Finally, the most important pastoral response to shamanism: attempt to understand the need of the practitioner and respond to that need. This requires, at times, crossing the threshold of belief in order to better understand the other, and opening the door to deeper truths shared by the larger community.

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Living and Teaching the Moral Life as a Call to Communion

Robert Bolt's play, *A Man for All Seasons,* recounts the story of St. Thomas More, in particular his courageous stance before Henry VIII, choosing death rather than accepting Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn and subsequently recognizing Henry as head of the church. More is often held up as a classic example of one who would adhere to his own judgment of conscience despite the pleadings of friends and loved ones to change his mind. In a scene with his friend, the Duke of Norfolk, More is encouraged to let go of his stubbornness and "give in." He replies:

> *More:* I can't give in, Howard. (A smile) You might as well advise a man to change the color of his eyes. I can't. Our friendship's more mutable than that.
>
> *Norfolk:* Oh, that's immutable, is it? The one fixed point in a world of changing friendships is that Thomas More will not give in!
>
> *More* (Urgent to explain): To me it has to be, for that's myself! Affection goes as deep in me as you think, but only God is love right through, Howard; and that's myself (Bolt, 1960: 70).

Later when More's own daughter encourages him to simply say, with mental reservations, the words of the oath in support of Henry's marriage, More replies:

> *More:* When a man takes an oath, Meg, he's holding his own self in his own hands. Like water. (He cups his hands) And if he opens his fingers then he needn't hope to find himself again. Some men aren't capable of this, but I'd be loathe to think your father one of them (Bolt, 1960: 81).

Bolt sums up More's character in the preface to the play.

> *Bolt:* Thomas More, as I wrote about him, became for me a man with an adamantine sense of his own self. He knew where he began and left off, what area of himself he could yield to the encroachments of his enemies, and what to the encroachments of those he loved. It was a substantial area in both cases, for he had a proper sense of fear and was a busy lover. Since he was a clever man and a great lawyer he was able to retire from those areas in wonderfully good order, but at length he was asked to retreat from

> that final area where he located his self. And there this supple, humorous, unassuming and sophisticated person set like metal, was overtaken by an absolutely primitive rigor, and could no more be budged than a cliff (Bolt, 1960: xi).

When we reflect on More's decision and the consequences of it, we might tend to focus on his courage in refusing to take the oath. Knowing that he faced death, he "could no more be budged than a cliff." I would like to call attention, however, to the dynamics of the decision, the human struggle for integrity that Bolt displays so poignantly in his drama. Indeed taking an oath falsely is wrong. Supporting an illicit marriage is wrong. However, Bolt has captured even in these brief scenes the multiple dimensions in More's decision, something which is instructive for us as we reflect on moral theology and its role in promoting the authentic human good of persons, particularly the call to communion.

More's decision indicates a clear sense of who he is and the effect that a wrong action would have on him, both in this life and eternally. More knows what is congruent with his identity, and what actions are appropriate or inappropriate. Perhaps we could address the dimensions of his decision in terms of identity, vocation, and action. One could read the Second Vatican Council's call for the renewal of moral theology in light of these three issues as well, a call to link our moral theological reflection and guidance in moral action with our identity and vocation.

The *Decree on Priestly Formation* speaks of moral theology being renewed under three rubrics. "Its scientific exposition should be more thoroughly nourished by scriptural teaching. It should show the nobility of the Christian vocation of the faithful, and their obligation to bring forth fruit in charity for the life of the world" (Second Vatican Council, *Optatam Totius,* 1965: #16). I read these rubrics in terms of identity, vocation, and action. Who are we? Scripture as the story of the community—identity; Who are we to become? The nobility of the Christian vocation; What must we do to get there? Action—to bring forth fruit in charity for the life of the world (MacIntyre, 1984).

This call for renewal, however, was driven in part by a conviction that who we were as believers had had little impact on our moral theological reflection. Roman Catholic moral theology was known to be based on Natural Law arguments, for the most part divorced from faith convictions. In addition, post-Trent moral theology was largely defined by attention to confessional practice with a consequent excessive focus on individual acts (Mahoney, 1987). So, the challenge for moral theology to be more deeply informed by sacred scripture and its interpretation by the community over the centuries was a call to be rooted in our identity as believers.

COMMUNION AND THE RENEWAL OF MORAL THEOLOGY

Convinced that action flows from being and that our moral theological reflection needs to be more deeply rooted in our identity, I would like to reflect on our identity and its implications for moral theological reflection. I take as a starting point, however, that dimension of our identity and vocation which is communion. What would it mean to have our identity as a *communio* as our starting point?

Attention to *communio* is widespread today in theology. Communion ecclesiology, for example, recognizes God and human beings as a communion of persons. The Trinity expresses the relational dimension of our God, three equal persons, loving one another in community, a Trinity revealed to and experienced by us in Christ, the one sent by the Father who remains with us in His Spirit. Human beings, made in the image and likeness of God are intrinsically relational, called to communion with one another and with God (Doyle, 1999). John Paul II has written in *Ecclesia in America:*

> God is communion, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, unity in distinction, and . . . he calls all people to share in that same Trinitarian communion. We must proclaim that this communion is the magnificent plan of God the Father; that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Lord, is the heart of this communion, and that the Holy Spirit works ceaselessly to create communion and to restore it when it is broken (John Paul II, 1999: #33).

From the standpoint of our faith, we are brought into this communion with God and with one another through the sacraments of initiation of the community. "Baptism is 'the doorway to the spiritual life'. . . . In confirmation, the baptized 'are joined more completely to the church'. . . . The journey of Christian initiation comes to completion and reaches its summit in the eucharist, which fully incorporates the baptized into the body of Christ" (John Paul II, 1999: #34). Communion is experienced most fully, then, when we "do" Church, when we celebrate our faith together. There, although imperfectly, we strive to be in complete communion with one another and with God. We are Church; we are communion; even as we strive to reflect it with greater integrity as a pilgrim Church on journey.

These reflections on *communio* as embodied in communion ecclesiology, describe both our identity and our vocation and have profound implications for the project of moral theology. The German moral theologian Klaus Demmer has written:

> Moral truth is, by its very nature, the truth of one's life project. It demands from the person a dedicated life of commitment. The goals of one's life and the objectives of one's actions are outlined

> and presented through it. This sheds light on the peculiarity of moral reason. Moral reason is not primarily a predetermined and standardized form of reason; rather, it is dynamic in that it continually probes and discovers new possibilities. In this way, the goals and objectives for life and action are uncovered and evaluated in light of freedom. There is a dialectical mediation between theory and praxis (Demmer, 104).

Moral theology is the science and art which offers wisdom to the community and individual members in the quest for human fulfillment. As Demmer notes, however, the very description or notion of human fulfillment arises from a particular understanding of the human person. Demmer says in another place: "The moral reason of the Christian operates within an anthropological system of coordinates. It is not presuppositionless" (Demmer, 109). Our presuppositions as we examine the implications of *communio* for moral theology are that we are made in the image and likeness of a God who is communion and has made us for communion with one another and with God.

I will consider briefly three sub-disciplines of moral theology in light of this call to communion: sexual ethics, social ethics, and bioethics. In each case, I would like to focus on how the understanding of the human person as intrinsically relational and called to communion informs or should inform the reasoning process in these distinct disciplines.

Sexual Ethics

There is a humorous line which attempted to summarize sexual ethics in the Church. When the old manuals treated sexual morality, it was always in the context of the sixth and ninth commandments. Since the material was covered in Latin, it was the treatise entitled "De sexto et nono." Translation: "Concerning sex and the answer is 'No! No!'." The statement is comical and has a ring of truth to it. But how many people knew why the Church taught that specific sexual acts were wrong? What reasons were given to justify the moral evaluation?

In fact, the reason for the rightness or wrongness of sexual expression and even the understanding of sexuality itself was very limited in moral theology prior to its renewal in this century. One tended to speak of the "faculty" or purpose of sexual organs as if they existed apart from people. Their primary purpose was for procreation with little attention paid to what today we refer to as the unitive meaning of sexuality, its interpersonal dimension. Critical in the revisioning of sexual ethics has been a more comprehensive view of the role of sexuality in the lives of people. The vocabulary itself has changed in that we now speak of sexuality as well as sex.

In their 1991 document, "Human Sexuality: Education for Lifelong Learning," the United States Bishops describe sexuality as:

> a dimension of one's restless heart, which continually yearns for interpersonal communion, glimpsed and experienced to varying degrees in this life, ultimately finding full oneness only in God, here and hereafter. . . . [Sexuality is] a fundamental component of personality in and through which we, as male or female, experience our relatedness to self, others, the world, and even God (NCCB, 1991: 9).

The bishops recognize sexuality for what it really is: the drive for communion placed in us by God; communion with one another and, ultimately, with God. Any approach to sexual ethics which fails to take into account this fundamental view of the human person as relational is inadequate.

In the writings of John Paul II this view of sexuality is most evident in his theology of marriage where he understands the married couple as a communion of persons whose total gift of self to each other enriches their own relationship and may well bear fruit in children, the embodiment of married love. This broadens the communion of persons from the married couple alone to the family unity which John Paul II views as the seed of society. His words to the family in *Familiaris Consortio* highlight in particular the identity, vocation, and call to action of the family: "Become who you are," he says simply. That is, become a communion of persons (John Paul II, 1981: #17).

Social Ethics

Figuring out appropriate social relationships especially in terms of obligation and duties has always been difficult. Some claim that justice is primarily about giving to persons their due on the basis of merit; others, on the basis of need; still others argue that it entails equal distribution of goods to all. The Christian tradition recalls the biblical notion of justice as "right relationships" with everyone, surely a more vague notion of justice in terms of explicit demands, but more sweeping in its obligation to discern whether one is genuinely in right relationship with others or not. When one recalls the fourfold dimension of relationality, i.e. self, others, God, and all creation, the domain of social ethics expands even more.

My focus will be on social ethics as articulated in the social teaching of the Church. Michael J. Schuck has argued that all the social teaching of the Church, which he traces back not to Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, but to Benedict XIV in 1740, is grounded in what he calls a communitarian ethic (Schuck, especially 173–93). If this is true, and it seems so to me, it has only been reaffirmed in the writings of John Paul II. His emphasis on the virtue of solidarity echoes through his social encyclicals as when he writes that solidarity is the proper response to the human community's "awareness of interdependence."

Solidarity is "not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all" (John Paul II, 1987: #38).

Noteworthy in the Pope's words here is the call for a public virtue of solidarity. Kenneth Himes notes that our tradition has always spoken of the virtuous life but on the personal level. Here, John Paul pays "attention to the role of virtue in the development of social life" (Himes, 167). This communitarian ethic may seem perfectly obvious in terms of social ethics. But a word of caution is in order. We live in a society in which great emphasis is placed on individual rights. The Church and moral theologians themselves have emphasized the importance of human rights, and correctly so. However, we must be careful about what ultimately grounds our moral reasoning. When pushed to the extreme, where do we stand? Rights language tends to be adversarial whereas the ecclesiology of communion and a communitarian ethic remind us of our essential relationship with one another. As Himes points out, "Belonging, respect, friendship, forgiveness, love are essential to human well-being, but they are not easily addressed by the language and concept of rights" (Himes, 166).

Thus in social ethics, as well as sexual ethics, the anthropological presuppositions of our intrinsic relatedness play themselves out, affirming again our identity, calling for the fulfillment of our vocation, and bringing forth fruit in charity for the life of the world.

Bioethics

What of bioethics? When I was studying for my licentiate degree in Madrid a fellow student from Colombia criticized the bourgeois ethical concerns of the First World, the United States in particular, claiming we rack our brains over reproductive technologies, withholding and withdrawing treatment in healthcare and similar issues, while people in the Third World are deprived of the necessities of life. I responded that the plight of the Third World does not erase the ethical concerns of the First World, but I knew that my answer was inadequate. His point was made. More attention must be paid to the wider community and to questions of justice in bioethics.

Bioethics has, from the beginning, often been viewed as a discipline with a fierce defense of the rights of the individual, in reaction, understandably, to abuses during the second World War in Nazi concentration camps where people suffered experimentation without their knowledge or consent. The result, at least at the beginning of bioethics, was a strong emphasis on autonomy as the overriding principle to guide right behavior. Concern for the wishes of the patient was primary.

However, this was soon found to be wanting. What of obligations to family? To the larger society? Is any use of scarce resources ethical as long as the patient has the economic wherewithal? What of the physician's own sense of what ought or ought not be done? Ruth Macklin once captured the development in methods of bioethics in a clever parody of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." She begins: "In the first wave of ethics, the method sent to me: respect for auto-ho-no-my." By the time the twelfth wave of ethics comes around, interestingly enough, she is singing: "In the twelfth wave of ethics, the method sent to me: twelve communitarians. . . ." We are back to a communitarian ethic.

Recognizing the web of human relations, there are those who, while still fiercely guarding the principle of autonomy, attend more carefully to the complex of issues and relationships. They recognize that health and well-being are much more than curing and that often the deeper healing that needs to occur for those who suffer is in terms of relationships. An old medieval adage about the role of medicine says it all: Cure sometimes, relieve often, comfort always. At times, insufficient reflection on the reality and experience of suffering, when human life is threatened, leads to inadequate and superficial responses.

An ethics arising from our relationality places issues of bioethics within the context of the call to communion as the essence of human life and fulfillment. John Paul II says in *Evangelium Vitae:* "The meaning of life is to be found in giving and receiving love" (John Paul II, 1995: #81). This fundamental truth about our lives together as human beings must play a critical role in dealing with issues in bioethics.

In all three specializations of moral theology one can identify the underlying concern for communion among moral agents, not just within a faith community but among all human beings. This concern reflects our identity and vocation as human beings, in particular as believers, and guides our moral action whether in sexual, social, or biomedical ethics.

CONSCIENCE AND THE CALL TO COMMUNION

Having examined the various sub-disciplines of moral theology in light of communion, I would like to focus on one area in particular, the formation and exercise of conscience, and address the significance of our identity as relational beings and how the Christian community, the Roman Catholic community in particular, plays a critical role in the development and exercise of conscience.

Contemporary moral theology describes conscience under three dimensions: conscience as a capacity to know the good *(synderesis)*; conscience as a process of gathering information and hearing wisdom in order to discern what the good is in a particular dilemma (moral science); and conscience as a moral judgment which impels one to act

(Gula; O'Connell). The advantage of this description of conscience is that it encompasses its complexity. Former inadequate descriptions of conscience limited to judgment alone were insufficient; descriptions which portrayed conscience primarily as simply "following the laws or rules" or doing one's duty were also incomplete.

This more comprehensive view of conscience begins not with the specific judgment that a person makes about a particular moral crisis in his or her life, but rather with Christian optimism that human beings are made by God with a desire for the good and a capacity to know what the good is. This is a "given" about us as human beings before we even begin to address moments of judgment in our moral lives. If the whole moral enterprise is about seeking authentic human good it is conscience which ultimately directs the moral agent toward that end.

Without forcing these categories too much, one could draw attention again to identity, vocation, and action regarding these dimensions of conscience. The call to communion as well as the interdependence and relationality of humanity are operative at each moment in the formation and exercise of conscience. This is immensely important to recall since one often gets the impression that one stands alone in exercising one's conscience. Granted the moral agent is ultimately responsible for her action, yet when she acts it is always as a relational subject.

So, the first dimension harks back to the identity question because it addresses who we are as human beings—people created with a desire for and a capacity to know the good. Yet, as we have said, the human good always involves communion, no matter what dimension of humanity is being addressed.

The communal dimension of this first aspect of conscience does not lie simply in a description of the good, however. Rather one learns the good within the context of community. The extent to which the desire and capacity for the good are realized depends not simply on the disposition of the moral agent but also on those entrusted with his formation and care. How has the community nurtured or stifled this desire? How does it name the good? How has it helped the moral agent to recognize who she is and how constitutive the call to communion is to goodness itself? The degree to which goodness is desired and understood affects the quality of the exercise of conscience in the second and third instances.

The second dimension of conscience, the "information-gathering" stage, refers to one's attempt to learn all that one can about a particular moral dilemma one is facing and the appropriateness of contemplated responses to the issue. Here, too, the call to communion and the interdependence and relationality of the person are operative. Conscience at this stage presumes that we need others to discover truth. *Gaudium et spes* #16 states that "Christians are joined with the rest of [humanity] in

the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals and from social relationships." The narrower the search for truth, the weaker, morally, one approaches the judgment stage. The less dependent one is on the community—as broadly as that is interpreted in this instance—the greater the threat of moral myopia and self-deception.

Finally, one makes a judgment of conscience. It is particularly here that one could "privatize" conscience assuming that the judgment made is of concern to the moral agent alone. Yet the call to communion enters here as well—at least in a couple of ways. First of all, we are responsible for our judgments not simply to ourselves, but to others as well. Sidney Callahan captures this well when she writes

> In the process of moral decision making, we can, through critical self-reflection, assess our reasons and intuitions, our own past and present actions, our personal emotions, our motives, our aspirations, our remembered images, our mentors and teachers, and so on. Many have noted that the inner self-self moral dialogue is to a great extent based upon past experiences of interpersonal dialogues, from either actual experience or vicarious experiences through literature, Scripture, or cultural stories. The inner, self-assessing dialogue can be engaged in, not only to work things out for ourselves, but also to prepare us to morally justify to others what, why, and how we are deciding. If we are going to stand upon our own decisions, we must convince ourselves and be prepared to convince others if challenged (Callahan, 20).

So the community and our relationship to the community are at work here as well.

A second way that the call to communion is evident regards not the individual's responsibility or accountability to the community, but the community's to the moral agent. Who will support people in their choice for good? Where will they find the wherewithal to carry on knowing that a right judgment of conscience may well bring suffering? They must know that they are not alone in their choice and that the community which shaped them to know goodness and assisted them in discerning it, will stand with them as they judge in favor of it. We need the community on all levels to remind us who we are, who we are to become, and to support us as we judge in favor of those actions consistent with the above two.

CONCLUSION

We are a people of *communio,* called to communion with ourselves, with others, with God, and with all of creation. In freedom and in community we are to shape ourselves as a communion of persons.

One could argue that Thomas More broke communion with his friends and with his family by choosing as he did. Yet in the end his choice found him in communion with himself, with his Church, and with his God. He realized that any other choice would have disfigured him and he willingly went to death rather than to compromise his self. He simply would not budge, not out of stubbornness, but out of firm conviction and love. Drawing on his communion with God and the Church, and indeed with his communion with his true self, he acted as only he could.

At the beginning I remarked that the primary place where the faith community encounters God and is called into communion with God and others is in the sacramental life of the Church, particularly in the Eucharist. At Eucharist we are Church; we are nurtured in communion; action flows from being as we mirror, imperfectly, the communion we seek. The American bishops addressed this call to communion, to attend to the other in their pastoral on the economy from 1986 when they wrote:

> As people of a new covenant, the faithful hear God's challenging word proclaimed to them—a message of hope to the poor and oppressed—and they call upon the Holy Spirit to unite all into one body of Christ. For the Eucharist to be a living promise of the fullness of God's Kingdom, the faithful must commit themselves to living as redeemed people with the same care and love for all people that Jesus showed. The body of Christ which worshipers receive in Communion is also a reminder of the reconciling power of his death on the Cross. It empowers them to work to heal the brokenhearted of society and human relationships and to grow in a spirit of self-giving for others (NCCB, #330).

It reminds us again of John Paul II's "We are all responsible for all." Christ's words "Do this in memory of me," heard Eucharist after Eucharist, bring together identity, vocation, and action. A contemporary song captures it as well: "We are the body of Christ, broken and poured out, . . . we are the Body of Christ." But it is not just our identity; it is who we are to become, our vocation. "Become who you are," says John Paul II, referring to the nobility of the Christian vocation. And it is a call to action: "Do this in memory of me." In the doing we affirm our identity and fulfill our vocation. For this reason Paul could say to the community at Corinth: "As often as you do this you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes" (1 Cor 11: 26). Unless the body of the community and its members is being broken and their blood poured out the Lord is not proclaimed. Our communion is achieved ultimately in the gift of self, the total gift of self which is in turn life-giving for self and for others. Thomas More's life was such a gift.

A moral theology which draws upon this understanding of the human person and attends to it in all aspects of the discipline will not only draw from the community in the formation of its members but nourish the community in turn with people who truly are a communion of persons, the Body of Christ, doing all in memory of Him.

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Joseph Donders, M.Afr.

The Thin and Thick of Interreligious Dialogue

Dialogue is no luxury; peace depends on it. The question most simply put is: How shall we live our lives together?

Years ago Pierre Teilhard de Chardin retold a story we find in Genesis. According to him, Homo Sapiens—the kind of human beings we are—originated somewhere in East Africa and swarmed from there all over the world, like the seventy or seventy-two grandsons of Noah did when he asked them to move out of his homestead. Without realizing that they were walking on a globe, they walked further and further away from each other, passed the equator and met again. It is that meeting we call in our day and age "globalization."

Each community—Christian and Muslim, Jewish and Hindu, and all the others—had its own history, its own unique religion, and its own perspective on the shape and future of the world. Yet, while living in those different worlds, they all live nevertheless in the same world with a future that has still to be determined.

Those separate histories find their full meaning only if seen in the perspective of God's healing with the whole of God's people. God's mission takes place all over the world. If so, dialogue is essential to discern the focus and shape of God's mission.

A dialogue based on this insight participates in God's mission. It will respect how the Spirit is at work "from within" the other, just like the Spirit is at work "from within" myself.

This dialogue is not a discussion or debate. There will be no winners and losers, though there might be conversions. There will be a mutual enrichment, an approach to God as not experienced before. "If to be human is to live in community, then to alienate ourselves from community, in monologue, is to cut ourselves from our own humanity" (Lochhead: 79). Interreligious dialogue is an imperative.

Dialogue is not only a question of listening. There is also the aspect of "speaking," of witnessing. We would not be fair either to ourselves or to the other if we would not mention Jesus.

We, Christians have to make it clear to ourselves and to others that what we do is because we discovered in Jesus the reason for our dialogical approach.

Witness is not so much a technique to convince as an opportunity to open ourselves to the other on the reality of God in our lives. It is not so

much a question of "conversion" but one of convergence progressing together toward a full understanding of what it means to be the one family of God. It is in this context that it might be good to indicate two examples of this development. When at Vatican II the council fathers attempted to heal the Christian disunity, a shift took place from the model of a "return" to obedience to the Catholic Church to that of "cooperation" which sees the churches as communities where Christ and God's Spirit are present.

An even more striking relationship occurred with the Jewish community. In 1982 Pope John Paul II stated, "Our common heritage is considerable. Help in understanding certain aspects of the Church's life can be gained by taking an inventory of that heritage, but also by taking into account the faith and religious life of the Jewish people as professed and lived now as well" (as quoted in Fischer, 162). No wonder that a document of 1977, the so-called Venice Statement, widely recognized as official Vatican thinking, rejects "any action aimed at changing the religious faith of Jews" (as quoted in Schreiter, 123).

As Douglas Sturm noted in his article "Crossing the Boundaries: On the Idea of Interreligious Dialogue and the Political Question," interreligious dialogue should be much more about bringing members of religious communities into discussion with each other. He calls that a thin version of the idea. "In its thick version the idea of interreligious dialogue bears its own philosophical understanding and displays its implications for the broader political life of humankind" (19).

It is an aspect we find especially stressed in the Indian interreligious context, but in fact it is an exigency all over our world. The Federation of Asian Bishops Conference (FABC) constantly stresses that a serious interreligious dialogue can only be done through solidarity and sharing with the poor.

As regard to the dialogue with the Hindu people, especially the poor, its goal is "total human development." "We need to strive for a new society, so that all men *[sic]* may reach full human development. Our world has to be for the development of the whole person and of every person. This wholeness of the person includes not only the individual personal development, but the growth and blossoming of the whole reality on earth" (as quoted in Phan, 206).

We have still lots to talk about! And that would only be a beginning!

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LITURGICAL PREACHING

Edward Foley, Capuchin

Preaching Feasts of Ideas: Fresh Thinking for Familiar Seasons

Because Lent begins so late in 2000, the May issue of *New Theology Review* does not arrive, as usual, on the cusp of Ordinary Time. Rather, it comes to you early in the Easter Season. This delayed calendar provides a welcomed opportunity to focus this column on the Easter season and that doublet of feasts which serve as the transition after Easter back into Ordinary Time. Although it may seem a little backwards, it could even be useful to begin this reflection with a consideration of this small festal cluster at the end of the Easter season. This might enable us not only to ponder how to preach these precious feasts but, even more importantly, to consider how they help us to think afresh about preaching through Easter and through the whole of the liturgical year.

Before Ordinary Time resumes with the Thirteenth Sunday of the Year [July 2], the Church will celebrate the Feast of the Holy Trinity [June 18], and the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ [June 25]. These two solemnities—coming right on the heels of Easter, its six Sundays, Ascension and Pentecost—could prove daunting if not overwhelming for preachers who may feel they have nothing left to say at the end of the liturgically exhausting fifty days. Reflecting upon the unique nature of these feasts, however, could both inspire our preaching for those feasts and maybe even allow for a broader reconceptualizing of our preaching.

The Feasts of the Trinity and the Body and Blood of Christ are sometimes called feasts of "ideas." Adolf Adam provides a useful introduction to this genre of feasts. He writes:

> These do not focus on particular events of salvation but have as their object truths of faith, special aspects of Christian teaching and piety or various titles of the Lord, his mother or a saint. Idea-feasts are also called devotional feasts or dogmatic, thematic and statis feasts (in contrasts to the "dynamic" feasts which have the redemptive actions of Christ for their object). Among the idea feasts are, e.g., the feasts of the Trinity, Corpus Christi, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Christ the King, the Precious Blood, the Holy Name, the Holy Family and feasts of Mary (Adam, 25).

Adam's characterization of feasts of ideas as "static" rather than "dynamic" might sound a little off-putting—for who wants to devote energy to preaching a "static feast"? On the other hand, he does get to the heart of the matter by emphasizing the dogmatic- and faith-centered nature of such feasts. This characteristic of feasts of ideas is highlighted when we recognize that such feasts are not directly related to any past *event* in salvation history (such as the Ascension) nor historically identified with any past *event* in the life of the Church (such as the death of a martyr or the dedication of a church).

This is not to deny that such feasts have an historical origin in the Church. The preacher needs to distinguish, however, between the development of a feast and the mystery that such a feast is celebrating. This point is illustrated by a brief consideration of the Feast of the Trinity. The trinitarian interplay of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit did not have its origins in human history. Christians believe that this Trinity of love existed before the dawn of human history and will continue in impassioned self-giving when human history is only a divine memory. Yet, while the Trinity has existed for all time, the Christian community did not always have language to express this mystery. Actually it was not until the writings of the North African theologian Tertullian (died c. 225) that the language of "Trinity" appears to have entered Christian discourse.

The centuries following Tertullian saw many dogmatic controversies within the Christian community. The First Council of Constantinople (381) and then the Council of Chalcedon (451) provided and then affirmed a belief in the Trinity which has become the center of orthodox faith: God is one substance in three distinct persons. While there were immediate liturgical ramifications for this belief, these were not first manifested in the calendar of the church year. Rather, this developing dogma of the Trinity had its first and immediate impact on Christian prayer formulas. In particular, what was until then the "traditional" doxology ("Glory be *to* the Father, *through* the Son, *in* the Holy Spirit"), which could be used to argue against the equality of the three persons of the Trinity, was replaced by what St. Basil and others considered a more orthodox form ("Glory be *to* the Father, *with* the Son *and* the Holy Spirit"). Today we inherit this doctrinal development every time we use our form of the doxology ("Glory be *to* the Father, *and to* the Son, *and to* the Holy Spirit).

Apart from this doxological change, liturgical devotion to the Trinity developed slowly. A preface to the Trinity does appear around the middle of the eighth century, and in the next century a votive Mass of the Trinity emerges. In some Benedictine monasteries a Feast of the Trinity on the Sunday after Pentecost could have been celebrated before the year 1000. This feast, however, was opposed for a very long

time by Rome. One pope, for example, is reported to have said that no special day should be devoted to a feast of the Trinity because that mystery is celebrated daily by the Church. Eventually, however, the popularity of the feast could not be denied, and John XXII approved it for the universal Church in 1334.

Similar histories could be told of feasts of the Body and Blood of Christ, the Sacred Heart and the other feasts of ideas which populate the calendar. The great contribution of such feasts to our praying and preaching is that while these feasts *have* a history, they are not essentially *about* history. Thus, the Feast of the Trinity reminds us that every moment in the liturgical year is not about the past, but about now. This is clear when we immerse ourselves in the readings for the Feast of the Trinity.

The present tense proclamation from Deuteronomy 4, for example, asserts "This is why you must now know and fix in your heart that the Lord is God." Yes, there were revelations of God in the past; yes, there were signs and wonders which God had performed before. The gist of the Word, however, is not about *then* but about *now;* the true covenant moment is not when the commandments and statutes were first given, but the present community's embrace of those commandments and statutes. Similarly, the Matthean announcement (Matt 28:19) to make disciples of all nations through baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not the invocation of a memory about the early Church's mission. Rather, Matthew is for us a present-tense proclamation of the Church's mission today, and the daily reckoning with our own baptismal call to discipleship.

If preachers can grapple credibly with the non-historical heart of feasts of ideas, and engage the community with the ever-present reality that undergirds a feast like that of the Trinity, then we will have acquired an important prism for preaching the whole of the Easter mystery and the liturgical year. Sometimes there is a tendency among us—especially in seasons such as Triduum, Easter or Christmas which relate key moments in salvation history—to preach them as though they were a kind of liturgical memoire or salvation-history timeline. So Holy Thursday becomes the day we recall the Last Supper, Good Friday is a kind of annual funeral for Jesus after his execution, Holy Saturday a day in waiting, and Easter Sunday the annual celebration recalling the grateful resolution of this "holy tragedy" in resurrection.

What feasts of ideas like that of the Trinity teach us, however, is that the essence of *every* feast is not then, not past, not history and not simple recollection. Rather, every feast, Sunday, Eucharist and liturgy of the church year is about now: about God's selfless proffering of salvation to us in the present moment. Thus, every feast, Sunday, Eucharist and liturgy are summons to reckoning with a relentless God whose

almost stubborn pursuit of human response invades our consciousness only occasionally.

Confronting a feast like that of the Trinity might bring us to admit that, in truth, every feast, every Sunday, every season of the church year is ultimately one of "ideas." This is not to suggest that our preaching should be "heady" or somehow idealized. Never! On the contrary, admitting the validity of "feasts of ideas" for every preaching moment inevitably lodges us in the self-convicting present. God is not about the past; God doesn't even have a past. There is only the eternal present, where the Trinity is, as it ever shall be, in an eternal dance of pouring out and filling up, begetting and embracing, loving beyond all measure. What an idea! What a feast!

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KEEPING CURRENT

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

William A. Durbin

Religion and Science in the Context of Church History: Recent Developments

"Science-religion studies" appear to be growing with great rapidity. Over the past few years, a significant infusion of funds from the John Templeton Foundation, in particular, has fostered the growth of college courses, regional centers of study, and a body of literature—all suggesting the emergence of a new interdisciplinary field. Yet there remains some uncertainty about how this field of study might fit established programs of *theological* education, despite the explicit aim of Sir John Templeton to foster "progress in theology." With these developments in mind, this review examines some of the recent literature in the field with an eye toward assessing its relevance for church history.

HOW AND WHY CHURCH HISTORY?

Arguably, the science-religion field originated as an exercise in church history. Indispensable historiographic essays on the subject are in James R. Moore's exemplary monograph *The Post-Darwinian Controversies: A Study of the Protestant Struggle to Come to Terms with Darwin in Great Britain and America, 1870–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers' extremely useful anthology *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

The seminal texts are two, each written by Anglo-Americans of the Victorian age: John William Draper, *History of the Conflict between Reli-*

gion and Science (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1874) and Andrew Dickson White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom,* 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1896). Draper and White described a historic relationship between science and religion as a battle between free thought and dogmatic faith. In Draper's view, Roman Catholicism epitomized repressive religion while the Protestant Reformation set the groundwork for open-minded inquiry. White extended the critique of dogmatism to encompass the sectarian Protestantism he saw impeding the progress of higher education. In sum, historical discourse about science and religion emerged as part of a polemical tradition, and much of the historical work since Draper and White has been a response, in one form or another, to a story line of warfare.

Admittedly Draper and White are not current works; however, the recent republication of White's text (by both Prometheus Books in its Great Minds Series in 1993 and by Thoemmes Press in 1997) indicates the ongoing appeal of the "Conflict Thesis." More pointedly, one recent version of the thesis has added a forceful if controversial feminist perspective to the historiography. Margaret Wertheim's *Pythagoras' Trousers: God, Physics and the Gender Wars* (New York: Random House/Time Books, 1995) describes the discipline of physics, in particular, as "the Catholic church of science" because it has historically excluded women from positions of "epistemological power."

HISTORY OF SCIENCE AND HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Most of the recent revisions of the conflict thesis (and its complement of harmony) have come from the pens of historians of science intent upon freeing their discipline from polemics. Preeminent among these is British historian John Hedley Brooke. His *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) reviews several major themes in the science-Christianity relation, describing multiple ways these two complex social systems have interacted in different contexts. Although generally confined to Anglo-American Protestantism, the book does raise issues of general interest in church history, including the role of natural theology, the connection between reform in religion and reform in science, and the emergence of alternative, secular forms of piety among the educated classes.

More recently, Brooke has teamed up with fellow historian Geoffrey Cantor to offer further "historical commentary" on specific areas of debate in the science-religion field. Their 1995–6 Gifford Lectures (a typical, initial forum for works in this field) appeared as *Reconstructing Nature: The Engagement of Science and Religion* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, Ltd., 1998). The authors criticize "master narratives" that presume to tell how abstract, timeless entities of "science" and "religion" interrelate.

They suggest, instead, that the ongoing cultural task of "reconstructing nature" occurs in many ways over time, involves a multifaceted "engagement" between scientific and religious discourse, and can be studied by different approaches. For the church historian, the book provides additional keys and tools for understanding how social context shapes public discourse about God.

Several recent works have done a similar service for the history of the Church in America—with a similar suggestion of significant themes for the church historian and a predominantly Protestant focus. The works of Ronald L. Numbers, in particular, have carefully explored the depths of conservative Protestant response to evolution. His definitive treatment of twentieth-century creationism, *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), highlights the influence of Christian millennialism in this characteristically American movement. His more recent book, *Darwinism Comes to America* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), follows the complexity theme of historians of science, analyzing the varieties of anti-evolutionism since Darwin. Once again, little attention is paid to the Catholic response. For that, one should consult R. Scott Appleby, "Exposing Darwin's 'Hidden Agenda': Roman Catholic Responses to Evolution, 1875–1925," in *Darwin's Reception: The Role of Place, Race, Religion, and Gender,* ed. Ronald Numbers and John Stenhouse (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Additional, recent works on science and religion in the American context offer the possibility of developing a rather full case study of Church and society in the twentieth century. Two particular books stand out: Edward J. Larson *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997) and James Gilbert, *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997). Larson analyzes the cultural meanings of the Scopes Trial of 1925 while Gilbert looks in greater detail at public discourse about science and religion in the decades following. Together, they move the discussion beyond intellectual history and paint a complex picture of Christianity in American culture perhaps more useful for the minister.

SURVEYS

At this point, theologians making use of the revised history (and of changing paradigms in scientific explanation plus sociological and philosophical critiques of scientific rationality) are providing the basic textbooks for science-religion studies. As a theological enterprise, this study generally aims toward the fashioning of "theologies of nature" in light of the new sciences. The historical dimension of this project has

tended toward portraying the complexity of the relationship so as to clear away obstacles to dialogue created by any sense of inherent conflict.

Ian G. Barbour's own Gifford Lectures epitomize this theological project. Recently revised and published as *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997), Barbour's book has become something of a standard text in the field. His rich and rather challenging analysis of the relationship now contains a few chapters of historical background. Beginning with a sketch of medieval cosmology, Barbour shows how developments in scientific explanation in succeeding centuries compromised that worldview. The historical contingency of the sciences-theology relation is then used to support his principal aim: to reformulate Christian doctrine in light of current scientific knowledge. Barbour argues for a theology of nature that is true to the tradition, informed by evolutionary science and by Alfred North Whitehead's process metaphysics. While Barbour's conception of "natural theology" seems too tightly confined to a nineteenth-century Victorian version of the design argument, his text, on the whole, can be taken as a worthy test case in the new theology.

With somewhat less investment in process thought, and more indebtedness to Catholic sources, John F. Haught's *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1995), nevertheless voices a similar interest in moving from conflict to creative engagement. His description of "contact" and "confirmation" emphasizes present-day opportunities to move beyond antagonisms that are historically conditioned and philosophically rooted. His most recent book, *God After Darwin: A Theology of Evolution* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 2000), is a more fully developed exercise in the theology of nature. In it, he acknowledges the problems for an argument from design created by the theory of evolution. In general, Haught, like Barbour, highlights eschatology and hope as Christian themes of central value in the current dialogue. His works contain an historical dimension that could be developed in history courses.

Creating texts to facilitate the framing of a theology of nature is most recently exemplified by Christopher Southgate, et. al., *God, Humanity and the Cosmos: A Textbook in Science and Religion* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1999). The book is the result of a collaboration of several British scholars from different disciplines who themselves embody a characteristic drive for "consonance" between theology and science that motivates individuals in this field. Written explicitly for undergraduates, though certainly useful and challenging for graduate students engaged in theological studies, the book examines a range of fundamental issues at the nexus of science and theology. These include cosmology, evolution, psychology (views of human nature), ecology,

and bioethics (cast in uniquely theological terms as a matter of wisdom). Though focused on the present, the book does contain an historical perspective. It attends first to the obligatory cases of tension (Galileo and Darwin) but also communicates an historical sense throughout, noting that "relations between different sciences and any one religion—even any one branch of any religion—will be different at any give time, and will alter through history" (11). As a whole, the text points to ways historical study can contribute to an essentially theological project.

A similar contribution is suggested in two additional surveys, each written by noted scholars with backgrounds in both the sciences and theology and each raising issues that call for further historical study. John Polkinghorne's readable and concise survey, *Science and Theology: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), points to avenues of historical investigation that include but go beyond the archetypal causes célebrès. His examination of human nature—of reductionist vs. holistic accounts, of understandings of consciousness and of soul and spirit—points, for example, to the relevance of Aquinas and Irenaeus. In a similar but more conscious fashion, Alister D. McGrath's *Science and Religion: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999) conveys an historical dimension throughout his survey of the theological and philosophical issues in the science-religion relation. His concluding chapter offers vignettes of twentieth-century writers, including Teilhard de Chardin, thereby suggesting the value of biographical approaches.

ONE LEGENDARY EPISODE AND ONE CENTRAL ISSUE

Historical accounts of a modern sciences-Christian theology relation typically revolve around episodes that have gained legendary status. The historian of early modern Catholicism, especially, can hardly avoid examining the "Galileo Affair." The resource material here is overwhelming with classic studies still relevant and new works continually emerging. Particular mention should be made of *Galileo's Daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith and Love* by Dava Sobel (New York: Walker & Company, 1999). The book offers an intimate view of the "trials" of Galileo from the perspective of one of his illegitimate daughters, Suor Maria Celeste, who entered the convent at age thirteen and remained a faithful correspondent with her father until her death at age thirty-three.

In addition, a useful compendium has recently appeared called *The Cambridge Companion to Galileo* edited by Peter Machamer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Like the other works in this Cambridge series, the book brings together established scholars of the subject to create a collection of rather specialized studies of the many dimensions of the Galileo case. Ernan McMullin, for example, offers his

careful examination of the central issue of biblical interpretation. His treatment is nicely complemented by Pietro Redondi's discussion of Galileo's theology and its importance to his physics, noting the relevance of the Church Fathers and especially of Augustine to the mindset of the mathematician.

One additional note on the pivotal topic of biblical interpretation and, in particular, on the persistent analogy of the Book of God's Works to the Book of God's Words can be found in *The Bible, Protestantism and the Rise of Modern Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Peter Harrison advances the interesting thesis (interesting in light of ongoing conflicts between Bible-believing Protestants and evolutionary scientists) that the Protestant way of reading the Bible affected the way people in seventeenth-century England read the book of Nature in a way which encouraged the development of the natural sciences. Harrison reaches back to the Patristic period to trace the transformation of the medieval fourfold sense of Scripture to the modern, more literal and historical reading preferred by the Reformers and argues how this development of biblical exegesis provided a congenial context for scientific explanation. Along the way, Harrison also raises a related and often ignored issue of the demise of the medieval-sacramental worldview.

CONCLUSION

This selective review of an emerging literature in science-religion studies suggests a place for church history that goes beyond a study of the celebrated cases. Recent survey texts, in particular, indicate critical and fruitful topics for historical study with the context of a fairly clear theological enterprise—topics such as changing conceptions of revelation and public images of God. At the same time, the tendency toward intellectual history, the predominant Anglo-American focus and the lacunae of Catholic material suggest areas for further research. In general, the current state of scholarship has moved a powerful story line away from conflict, harmony and apologetics, directing church history toward reflection on the complexity of and possibilities for the interaction of faith and culture.

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GETTING DOWN TO CASES

Dawn Nothwehr

Friendship and the Moral Life: A Letter to My Dying Mother

October, 1999

Dear Mom,

I know you will never read this letter, but I want to write it anyway.

The other day I was doing some reading on friendship and the moral life, and it struck me how our relationship is really a wonderful experience of a "friendship of character" and even a "spiritual friendship." The point the author was making is that we can't become morally good without our friends. How grateful I am that not only are you my biological mother, but over these forty-eight years we have become best friends.

I make my living teaching ethics, thinking, reading, and writing—rather like you did. You were a teacher for about twenty years in the Lutheran elementary school system, an administrative assistant to an admiral during WWII, a proofreader for a small rural Minnesota county newspaper, and a foster grandparent to several physically handicapped children.

More importantly, you loved music—singing alto in the church choir, playing the piano, listening to Dad's violin or to your stereo. Some of our greatest "family times" were Sunday afternoons when we made music together—you on piano, Dad on violin, Joan on clarinet, and me on cornet. Along with music, you treasured hybrid roses that you loved into prize-winning life each Spring. And yet, it was incomprehensible to you that people killed dandelions!

You *savored* being outside! If one can walk somewhere, even in the sub-zero Minnesota winters, why would one bother to ride? I remember so clearly how you showed me a reverence for all of creation as we gardened or hiked—especially the trails in Superior National Forests, the Colorado Rockies, the Olympic Crest trail, the paths around Niagara Falls, and the rural country roads of Minnesota. You never ceased to amaze and delight me with your childlike wonder and the delicate caress your gaze presented to everything and everyone. In the light of your smile, there was never a doubt that I (and others) were unconditionally valued and accepted.

Today, your creative vitality that defied any child not to learn, your sharp eye that spotted the misspelled word or the wrongly placed semicolon, and your strong legs that walked hundreds of miles are still and silent. Articulate linguistic expression has given way to the babbling of aphasia. Your childlike wonder is lost in lonely cries of confusion, and your flurried engagement with life in all of its forms has been replaced by dependence on others—including bowel and bladder care. You are a victim of Alzheimer's Disease.

How vividly I remember eight years ago when I heard for the first time that my Mom, my best friend, really had Alzheimer's! I will never forget the horror in your pale blue eyes when those dreaded words were uttered. Reflecting back on what followed, I now am beginning to see what a gift our friendship has been and how love has enabled us to sustain that friendship through this "long good-bye."

There you stood before me, my best friend, my Mom . . . horrified like a little child. I instinctively reassured you: "Mom, you taught me that 'we love, no matter what,' and I will always love you, no matter what. I will make sure you are always safe and cared for, and I will stick with you all the way." With that, only hugs and tears could communicate anything meaningful. Miraculously, I can't really say I've ever blamed or hated God for our predicament. Rather, I have often recalled a Pauline statement you taught me to cherish: "My strength is made perfect in weakness" and *that* has proven to be a marvelous gift during the subsequent years.

Our relationship deepened as we anticipated the diminishment your illness would bring. We established little routines that provided a means of recognition and familiarity for you. What fun we had on those walks in the park and "thieving" one red rose from the public rose garden every June! We'd read, and later, just look at beautiful nature pictures. We'd listen and dance to classical music tapes in the privacy of your room at the nursing home. In short, together, we maximized the abilities you had. The moments of real bonding came when we sat and cried together, grieving what had been lost, and comforting one another over the fears of losses to come.

Our communication has become quite basic: the tone of my voice, the way I hug you, and our little routines now tell you: "I love you, no matter what!" Instead of walks in the park, we take wheelchair rides around the hospice grounds. Buying red carnations at the hospice gift shop has replaced "thieving" red roses. We sometimes "dance" by rolling the wheelchair to the rhythm of the music. Occasionally, we "sing" hymns—especially your favorite one, "What A Friend We Have in Jesus." Though the words are lost to you, the melodies are still there. Most of the time, however, we just sit and hold hands. I will give you a gentle back rub and watch your face light up with a huge smile.

Increasingly though, you gradually drift off into sleep and doze away until it's time to eat or use the bathroom.

Early on, together, we made the decision that your medical chart should read, "Do Not Resuscitate." You also made it clear that you do not want to have a feeding tube. You believe that "Jesus would not want me to suffer." Though it will be hard, I plan to honor your wishes in this regard.

During one of our last verbal conversations, you expressed your fear that you might "forget Jesus." Providentially prompted, I began to sing a song I had taught you—Carey Landry's "I will never forget you. . . ." You, with tears welling up in your eyes, "sang" it with me and then relaxed into a deep sleep. Well, Mom, I have no doubt that you have "re-membered Jesus." In fact, whenever I see you, you truly re-present in the flesh, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus to me. Of anyone I have known, you are a model of faith for me.

The last trip we took together was an excursion to go walking in an apple orchard at apple blossom time. But when driving up a hill, you noticed that on both sides of the road there was gold bespeckled lawn. Yes, the ground was filled with dandelions! Of course we stopped so you could pick a bouquet! While you were picking dandelions, I got out my camera and took a series of five photographs, gradually zooming in on the bouquet of flowers you held in your hands. There you stood, resplendently communicating the full meaning of your powerful name: Beata—"the blessed one." Seeing you stand there, I was reminded of a poem we came across when reading a magazine together:

"The Madonna of the Dandelions," by Pollyanna Sedzoil

For a few days
she stood resplendent
with a carpet of gold
at her feet.
Now she ponders
a brief fragile cloud.

Does she see
youth become age
health become illness
wealth become poverty
life become death?

Or does she see
these delicate puffs
for what they are—
seeds of tomorrow's gold?

You never said much in words about those dandelions, but seeing the way you cradled them, I'm sure you knew you were holding gold! Mom, today I have that series of photographs from that day with the dandelions and this poem mounted in a frame, and it sits on my coffee table at home.

As I have reflected on this, I realize what a gift our friendship is. I really believe that without this friendship I could never have endured these days of the "long good-bye." Our friendship is built on mutual goodness and virtue. We inspire each other to seek the good. Especially after Dad died, we discovered how similar we are—our interests, likes and dislikes, and our sense about what is *really* significant in life. Our

agreement on the good and the virtuous has enabled our friendship to be deep and enduring. Each of us loves the other for her own sake because we each love the good. We each also embody the good because we are virtuous.

For you, the standard of goodness was always "our gracious, loving God." Jesus was truly your friend with whom you walked through each day. Prayer, Christian service, generosity, compassion—in short, "the love of Jesus and the love of neighbor" was a natural for you. In this milieu of friendship, I too came to know a friendship with God.

Friendship with God is classically marked by benevolence, mutual love, and conversion for the sake of another self. Through your daily communing with God in the ordinary events of life, purposeful participation in worship and religious education, and service to others in the civic and church community, you sought God's good for God's own sake and endeavored to make God's will your own—even in these years of your diminishing health. In the love of God, which is charity, you were without a doubt formed in the Spirit and "changed *unto* God." Through the love that bonds your friendship with God, you and God (who is also a person) become self for another. Your gentleness and knowing vulnerability clearly demonstrated this transformation. All those who ever knew you often remark about how you never seemed to be able to fully express yourself without some matter-of-fact mention of God.

So you see, Mom, in light of all of this, it is rather humbling for me to hear people say, "You are just like your mother." While we both know neither of us is perfect, it is through knowing the likenesses of God in each of us and through each of us seeing herself mirrored in one another that we both have come to know our own true self. For the many ways your love and friendship made me a moral person, all I can offer is my continued love, thanks, and friendship.

Your daughter,

Dawn

[Editor's note: Dawn's mother died on the same day she submitted this letter for publication.]

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BOOK REVIEWS

Bioethics: A Christian Approach in a Pluralistic Age. By Scott B. Rae and Paul M. Cox. Critical Issues in Bioethics Series. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999. Pages, x + 326. Paper, $24.00.

This volume launches the Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity's (Bannockburn, Ill.) second series of bioethics books. Both authors, Scott Rae and Paul Cox, are professors of biblical studies and Christian ethics at the Talbot School of Theology, Biola University in La Mirada, California. Their focus is different from what one finds in most other volumes in bioethics in that the authors intend to concentrate not on specific topics that are controverted but rather to address the field of bioethics broadly from a distinctively Christian perspective. Thus, method and methodological questions are the principal concerns of this work.

The book is divided into three unequal parts. Part one seeks to review both the religious and secular approaches to bioethics. The second and most substantial part lays out the authors' six pillars of a Christian approach to this field: medical technology in a theological perspective, the image of God, the personhood of the patient, autonomy and the common good, death as a conquered enemy, and distributive justice in our health care system. The final part addresses two important issues: the form that Christian bioethics might take in a secular culture and a model for bioethical decision making from a Christian perspective.

Though the authors are principally concerned with methodological issues and with developing their Christian approach to bioethics, the book regularly addresses concrete topics such as physician-assisted suicide and abortion. When discussing these concrete topics in the second part, the authors routinely proceed by describing the current situation, then turn to the Scriptures to uncover biblical perspectives that might help illuminate the issue, and finally apply these distinctive perspectives to the topic and conclude with a moral judgment. They also make frequent use of case studies to set up the topics and to illustrate their Christian approach. At the end of the volume, the authors make clear that any moral position taken on these complex topics must be identifiably Christian, though the means of persuasion do not need to be limited to either theological or biblical notions. Philosophically-informed public discourse is important and necessary in their approach, even if this is not the central vehicle by which Christians arrive at their moral judgments on complex bioethical topics and convey them to the Christian community.

This book should be helpful to a wide audience: health care professionals, educators, upper-division undergraduates and graduate students. Though some sections might delve too deeply into material that is not essential to the overall purpose of the volume, the book has many positive features. To be applauded are the authors' attempts to focus primarily on method, not on concrete topics, and to address the distinctively Christian contributions to bioethi-

cal reflection. The authors are informed and knowledgeable about the developments in this field, and they are fair to positions that they themselves do not adopt. They offer definite positions on both methodology and concrete topics, but recognize that others will almost certainly disagree. One looks forward to many more volumes from this new series on bioethics.

James J. Walter
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Parables for Preachers: The Gospel of Mark, Year B. By Barbara E. Reid, O.P. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1999. Pages, 131. Paper, $11.95.

Parables are often roadblocks to preachers gliding along the homiletic highway. Their utter simplicity, seemingly singular moral message, and homespun images suddenly catch the preacher off guard since parables turn out to be terribly complex, pluralistic in meaning, and provocative in imagery. Seasoned preachers eventually learn that the parable as roadblock can turn out to be a wondrous gift if they have at hand skillfull biblicists to guide them. Barbara E. Reid, O.P., is professor of New Testament at Catholic Theological Union and one of those skillful biblicists who not only opens up the treasure box of scholarly insights but offers preachers honest-to-God help in seeing the possibilities of parables in preaching. Her goal is to make scholarly research on the parables create sparks for preachers' creativity. Her new work is a solid help for preachers in this B cycle of the liturgical year.

Chapter 1 explores the dynamics of Jesus' parables and how they "work." In future editions of *Parables for Preachers* in the C and A cycles, I would hope the author would draw upon the fine insights on preaching the parables found in Thomas G. Long's classic work, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (1988). Chapter 2 presents contemporary trends in biblical interpretation of the parables. Reid does not tip her hat to any one particular method but, like the 1993 Pontifical Biblical document, "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church," she demonstrates the wisdom of seeking out a plethora of biblical methods. In chapter 2, the author gives an overview of the Gospel of Mark, its author, historical context, and major theological themes. This reviewer missed here a poetic appreciation of Mark for preaching. For example, no mention is given of how Mark is a man out of breath rushing to the story of the cross of Jesus and how "immediately" is one of his favorite words. Mark is in a hurry but still takes time to see that Jesus naps in the stern with a pillow under his head (4:38). Such a literary appreciation of Mark's texts opens up practical and wondrous possibilities for the preacher.

The remaining chapters focus on the parables of the Gospel of Mark as they appear in the Lectionary for Cycle B both on Sunday and weekday celebrations. Most helpful here is that after an exploration of the meanings of each parable, Reid concludes with two headings: "Preaching Possibilities" in which she offers precious insights for contemporary preachers to use the exegetical material she has presented and "Lectionary Context" in which she attempts to show

possible connections of the parable of the gospel reading with the other liturgical readings. The author's "Preaching Possibilities" is a rich contribution to the homiletic task. She rightly recognizes that the preacher's vocation is not to explain the Scriptures but to interpret people's lives in light of the Scriptures. She values the assembly and thus writes, "One of the hardest tasks of the preacher is to discern which of these is the message that most needs to be preached at this particular time and place" (46). One detects the approach found in the United States Catholic Bishops' document *Fulfilled In Your Hearing: The Homily in the Sunday Assembly* (1982) when Reid states that biblical interpretation is "only one of the many tasks of the preacher" (23) since "[I]t is God's word that a preacher speaks" (6). As a homiletician, I am frequently distressed that such contemporary homiletic insights are often not found in the work of biblical scholars. Barbara Reid obviously takes seriously not just the Ph.D. after her name, but the O.P.

This reviewer found the author's section "Lectionary Context" less helpful. She states that the gospel reading is set in dialogue with "three other readings from the Scriptures" (48). While it is wise for homilists to be aware that they should be in dialogue with the responsorial psalm, they must also acknowledge that in the liturgy it does not serve as a reading but as a response to the first reading. The Introduction to the Lectionary clearly states: "Each Mass has *three* readings" #66 (emphasis mine). Reid is correct to point out that preachers "would be hard pressed to make cogent connections" between the first and gospel reading of the weekday lectionary (102). Why then does she attempt to make these connections between the gospel reading and the second reading and also with the responsorial psalm in the Sunday lectionary? That is why she admits finding only a "loose connection" between Mark 4:26-34 of the Eleventh Sunday of Ordinary Time and the second reading of the day, 2 Cor 5:6-10 (72).

This reviewer sincerely hopes that Barbara Reid will also pen *Parables for Preaching* for Cycle C and A. She is right on target when she insists that preaching first of all comes from an encounter with the Holy in study, prayer, in other people, and in all creation. The way her book reads indicates that she practices what she preaches. Barbara Reid's *Parables for Preachers* is not just a clearly written study of the parables but a fresh and first-class contribution to homiletics.

Robert P. Waznak, S.S.
Washington Theological Union

Education for Reflective Ministry. By Johannes A. van der Ven. Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs, 24. Louvain: Peeters Press, 1998. Pages, x + 256. Paper, $30.00.

Pastoral ministry is a demanding challenge in any age, and training for ministry is equally daunting. Both have become even more so in today's complex, pluralistic world. Johannes van der Ven faces these challenges directly and offers a comprehensive, well-grounded, and stimulating response.

The author describes the complexity of today's situation in terms of the macrolevel of religion in society, the mesolevel of religion in the Church, and the microlevel of religion among individuals. This threefold division, though familiar, is a helpful way of setting the context and he uses it throughout the book when presenting recommendations for more effective ministry and education.

In the face of today's complexity, van der Ven judges the prevailing models of education for ministry to be inadequate. These are the therapeutic model, based on individual-oriented clinical training, and the managerial model, based on the means-to-end technical rationality of empirical science. In their place he persuasively calls for a more self-directed, holistic, and reflective model of ministry.

Reflective ministry operates in the domain of religion (rather than social service or individual therapy) and in the context of church. Its general function is hermeneutic communication, the effective correlating of the faith tradition with contemporary experience. This is channeled through the seven specific functions of ministry: pastoral counseling and spiritual direction at the microlevel of individuals, liturgy/preaching, catechetics, and church development at the mesolevel of the Church, and social ministry and mission at the macrolevel of society.

The author is most original when he discusses the nature of reflective ministry as a form of reflection on practice, analyzed so perceptively by American pragmatic philosophers Charles Peirce and John Dewey. Drawing on these sources, he presents reflective ministry from three viewpoints: an experiential reflection *in* ministry, highlighting the evaluations, actions, and general tendencies which one's practice of ministry reveals; an experimental reflection *on* ministry, focusing on the problems arising within ministry and their potential solutions; and a teleological reflection *from* ministry, aiming at the integration of ideals and their spatio-temporal constraints.

The competencies required for this type of reflective ministry are four: knowledge (the reproduction of information), insight (the production of information in narrative form), skill (methods and techniques to apply information), and attitudes (affective orientations to the tasks of ministry). Each is discussed in terms of the general function of reflective ministry (hermeneutic communication) and the seven specific functions. The result is an impressive description of ministry today.

Only when van der Ven discusses how to impart these competencies does he directly address the title of the book. Assuming an educational anthropology that is holistic and aimed at self-direction, and an educational psychology that values many different ways of learning (by experience, by doing, by reinforcement, etc.), van der Ven discusses seven components in the education for reflective ministry.

Courses and seminars aim at cognitive competence (knowledge and insight) while practica aim at attitudinal competence and skill. Internships can take several forms ranging from membership in a parish to specialized pastoral functions. Supervision may be oriented to the profession itself, the person of the professional, or the institutional/societal context of the profession. Coaching overcomes some of the dependency relationship of supervision by substituting colleague equality.

Theological reflection, the sixth component, includes experiential reflection in ministry, experimental reflection on ministry, and teleological reflection from ministry, while action research tries to determine if intended changes have actually occurred as a result of one's ministerial interventions.

The author's perspective reflects an impressive breadth of experience and research spanning both Europe and the U.S. The material is of primary interest for those in professional ministerial education; it has limited usefulness for the actual practitioner of ministry. As a contribution to the ongoing discussion of education for ministry, it is a timely and well-thought out alternative model.

Robert L. Kinast
Center for Theological Reflection

Theology of Ministry. By Thomas F. O'Meara, O.P. Completely revised edition. New York: Paulist Press, 1999. Pages, iv + 300. Paper, $21.95.

The author, the William K. Warren Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, modestly describes the first edition of his book on the theology of ministry as having enjoyed "a certain success in the United States, Canada, and abroad" (1). It has, in fact, been a standard reference for many courses on ministry and for many people engaged in ministry. In few ways has the Church shown so much vitality in the last decades of the twentieth century as in the explosion of new ministries and the enormous expansion of the number of its members who understand themselves as ministers. When one considers how many new forms of ministry have developed with and without official recognition in parishes and institutions, a new edition of O'Meara's book is most welcome. His revision is much more than an updating or even a clarification of his previous work. Rather, it is a completely rearranged and considerably expanded rethinking of the earlier edition.

The new edition is designed for the same audience who profited from the first edition: those engaged in ministry, both lay and ordained, and those teaching courses in the theology of ministry. In combination with Kenan Osborne's *Ministry: Lay Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church: Its History and Theology,* I think that O'Meara's book would be almost indispensable for such courses. O'Meara grounds his theology of ministry in ecclesiology which he in turn roots in Christology and in Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God. So the book moves from its introductory chapter on the pressing questions concerning ministry today and the resources for responding to them in the theology of grace and ecclesiology through a consideration of the New Testament understandings of ministry and charism and a brief history of the concept of ministry in the Catholic Church. The author then offers a kind of phenomenology of ministry in which he includes his definition of ministry which has often been quoted since the first edition: "the public activity of a baptized follower of Jesus Christ flowing from the Spirit's charism and an individual personality on behalf of a Christian community to proclaim, serve, and realize the kingdom of God" (150). The next two chapters are a detailed examination of the implica-

tions of this definition. The final chapter is a fine treatment of ministerial spirituality which refreshingly treats that topic as intrinsic to a fundamental theology of ministry and not simply a pious addendum.

Readers of O'Meara's writings know that he is deeply influenced by Karl Rahner. This is clearly evident in his theology of ministry. His treatment of grace and of church is strongly marked by Rahner's notion of grace at the roots of the world. The engraced character of human existence, present even in secular forms which ignore or deny it, is the context in which O'Meara treats the Church's mission and so the shapes of its ministries. Both church and ministry are uncoverings of grace already present rather than the channels by which grace enters where it was previously absent. Since this theology of grace has been so central to so much of Catholic systematic theology in the last seventy-five years, O'Meara's placing of ministry within this context allows him to offer a truly *fundamental theology* of ministry. That was the strength of the first edition of his excellent book. This new edition builds on and furthers that welcome contribution to a very important development in contemporary Catholic life.

Michael J. Himes
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Jewish-Christian Debates: God, Kingdom, Messiah. By Jacob Neusner and Bruce Chilton. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998. Pages, xiv + 240. Paper, $24.00.

This volume continues the ongoing, published dialogues of Jacob Neusner, a prolific Jewish scholar, and Bruce Chilton, a leading New Testament scholar from the Episcopal tradition. Their previous three collaborative volumes compared the theological structures of Judaism and Christianity with special attention given to the formative categories. In this fourth volume they take up three principal issues: (1) how their respective faith tradition brings about communion with God; (2) how each understands life in the world under divine dominion; and (3) how each confronts the question of teleology through the medium of eschatology. In pursuit of the dialogue the authors intentionally remain within the framework of classical texts which they regard as paramount.

The title of the volume can be misleading. This is not a book that takes into account (by intention) other scholarly assessments of the three issues within Judaism and Christianity. The dialogue present in this book is essentially between Neusner's and Chilton's personal appropriation of the material. Autocitation is especially prevalent in Chilton's contributions. While their views are interesting and enriching, the book suffers from the lack of any connections with other scholarly interpretations of the same material. If the book is to serve as an introduction to the late twentieth-century Christian-Jewish dialogue, this omission limits its value considerably. Good scholarship, which should be the basis of good dialogue, requires engaging other serious scholarly studies.

The volume is characterized on the whole by a fairly traditional interpretation of both faith perspectives, one that tries to maintain a clear sense of distinction

between Israel and the Church. Other scholars in recent years, both Jewish and Christian, have emphasized some possible points of convergence far more than Neusner and Chilton seem willing to do.

The most creative section of the volume comes towards the end. Here Chilton explores the "Messianic Virtues and the Pleasure of God" and "Christ: The Bodily Presence of God." These two chapters are followed by a closing reflection on the Incarnation by Neusner which makes some important points from the Jewish side, but again makes no reference to other Jewish authors such as Michael Wyschograd who have interpreted some of the same classical texts along other lines.

The most striking omission from the volume, particularly in terms of the section on God, is the absence of any reference to the Holocaust. There exists a considerable body of literature today both in the Christian and Jewish communities that reflects on the experience of the Holocaust and its impact on the understanding of classical texts. This is especially true of the God question. Even if the authors choose to argue that the Holocaust is not especially significant in terms of contemporary theological perspective as some scholars such as David Hartman do, a volume claiming to propose a model for Jewish-Christian debate today needs to make reference to this central dimension of Jewish life. Otherwise it is positing a truncated perspective on contemporary Judaism in particular.

In sum, Neusner and Chilton offer the reader a concise, readable introduction to Jewish and Christian theology about God, Kingdom and Messiah. Much profit can be gained not only from the content but also from the style of intellectual interaction they employ. It could serve as an introductory volume for undergraduate college courses and more sophisticated adult study groups. But it would need to be supplemented with readings from other authors if students are to gain a developed insight into where the overall Christian-Jewish conversation stands on the three issues highlighted in this volume. Only the closing section on Messiah/Incarnation will provide new perspectives for those already well conversant with the Christian-Jewish dialogue.

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The Normal Alcoholic. By William F. Kraft. New York: Alba House, 1999. Pages, x + 149. Paper, $9.95.

If asked to describe what an alcoholic looks like, most people including pastoral ministers might describe one as a person who is unable to hold down a job, support a family, or may seem overtly intoxicated most of the time. Alcoholics do not behave like "normal" people. Alcoholism is understood by many to be a disorder that produces extreme and visible dysfunctional behavior. Indeed, most substance abuse/addiction literature tends to describe the symptoms of alcoholism in florid details.

At first glance, the title of Kraft's book seems to be an oxymoron. How can someone be both alcoholic and normal? According to Kraft, the majority of people who are alcoholic appear quite normal. In fact it is only the minority of alcoholics who exhibit what is commonly understood to be "typical" alcoholic characteristics. Most alcoholics appear normal, i.e., non-alcoholic, because they manage to work and communicate effectively, cope with life's demands, and achieve success. They may drink heavily but because they do not appear to lose control, they may fool themselves and others into believing that they are normal drinkers. Normal alcoholics do well in the task-oriented reality valued by society and may even be able to give up alcohol for periods of time. This tends to foster the belief that their drinking is not a problem. However, many people who never manifest overt symptoms of alcoholism are quietly killing their relationships, spirituality and themselves with each drink they take.

The Normal Alcoholic makes an important contribution to the field of pastoral care of those who suffer from addiction because it helps shatter popular myths about who is and who is not an alcoholic. Pastoral ministers are not immune from assuming that because a person can externally function in what appears to be a normal manner, he or she cannot possibly have a problem with alcohol. This can feed into denial that a person has a problem with alcohol. A central concept of the book is that the way pastoral ministers, the family, and the alcoholic construe alcoholism will either help or hinder recovery by increasing or decreasing denial of an alcohol problem. In fact, membership in Alcoholics Anonymous can be difficult for a normal alcoholic if the stories he or she hears at AA meetings are only of so-called "low bottom" alcoholics. Admission of negative consequences and powerlessness over alcohol is difficult if a person's life appears more normal than abnormal.

The key to helping a normal alcoholic is to look to his or her inner world to see how things are not working. It is Kraft's contention that someone is alcoholic if he or she needs to rely on alcohol to help relate to non-task oriented experiences such as interpersonal intimacy or if he or she tends to look forward to drinking and uses alcohol to change mood. In other words, normal alcoholics "listen to alcohol" far too much and too often; it plays a primary and central role in their lives rather than a secondary and peripheral role. A normal alcoholic's love affair with alcohol is more "subtle, silent, smoother and more sneaky" than that of a heavy drinker. "But it is still an affair."

The Normal Alcoholic is easily readable, interesting and useful for pastoral ministry. Kraft copiously sprinkles the book with stories of normal alcoholics to illustrate what a normal alcoholic can look like. He also clarifies the concept of the normal alcoholic by categorizing different types of normal alcoholics.

An important contribution of Kraft's book to the study of the pastoral care of alcoholics is that he focuses on the internal world of a normal alcoholic to help illustrate that his or her reasons for using alcohol are not normal. Dysfunction in the inner rather than outer world is usually the key of the admission of powerlessness over alcohol for the normal alcoholic. Kraft's description of the inner world of normal alcoholics may be a vehicle for them to accept the reality of their situation.

Another important contribution of the book is that it positions itself in the growing appreciation among caregivers of the importance of the interpersonal

and spiritual dimensions of the person. Normal alcoholics usually find that their spiritual life dissipates as alcohol begins to replace God. Interpersonal intimacy also suffers when people seek solace in alcohol rather than relationships. Kraft notes that since we are not isolated individuals but live in an interpersonal network, we impact each other positively or negatively. The tragedy he points out is that impairments in intimacy are sometimes just as damaging as impairments in external functioning. *The Normal Alcoholic* is more in the realm of a psycho-spiritual rather than a pastoral theological book but can be still quite useful to those in pastoral ministry to alcoholics.

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