

growing minority in the U.S. Catholic Church; (2) the lack of proportional presence of Latinos/as in ecclesial leadership; (3) the recent cooption of the Encuentro process into a multicultural celebration only when Latinos/as threaten to become the majority of the U.S. Catholic population.

These new contexts, Nanko insists, call for U.S. Hispanic theologians to ask new questions. As examples she raises up the work of Benjamín Valentín, Miguel Mejido, Michelle González, Raúl Gómez and Jean-Pierre Ruiz who probe such areas as whether current U.S. Latino/a theology: (1) has restricted its reflections primarily to issues internal to the institutional church; (2) has adequately captured the reality of *lo cotidiano* as beyond reflections on common religious beliefs and practices; (3) has homogenized the voices of Latina theologians; (4) has intentionally overlooked the Iberian influences present in U.S. Hispanic popular religious practices; (5) has given short shrift to the use of solid biblical exegesis.

For Nanko, these new questions of U.S. Latino/a theologians highlight a series of areas which call for deeper and more thorough theological reflection. For example, she holds that our work on *mestizaje/mulataje* could benefit from greater use of postcolonial discourse on hybridity. We should resist the temptation to "pan-Latinize" popular religious practices. We should more actively engage popular culture in our theological reflections. And lastly, we should do explicit theological reflection on the reality of our community's growing affluence and influence and the issues of class that these conditions raise.

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ECCLESIOLOGY

- Topic: What Does the Scandal in the Church Teach Us?
 Convener: Susan K. Wood, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota
 Presenter: Susan K. Wood, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota
 Respondents: Nicholas Healy, Saint John's University, Jamaica, New York
 James Coriden, Washington Theological Union

Susan Wood developed the thesis that the present crisis in the church is a crisis of symbols in addition to being a moral crisis and a crisis in governance. In this crisis we have experienced the shattering of icons, images of the holy, in the misdeeds of some priests and bishops. The icons shattered correspond to the special graces invoked in the prayer of ordination. The offenses of priests shatter the icon of holiness of the clergy, while the abdication of responsibility in this by certain bishops shatters the icon of governance. This shattering is related first,

to the sacramentality of the church. Second, it intrinsically impacts how we relate to the holy and on the relationship between clergy and laity. Finally, this shattering impels the laity into a new stage of maturity in the church.

Priests have functioned as icons of Christ by acting *in persona Christi* within the liturgy. They are exhorted to strive after perfection. *Prebyterorum ordinis* teaches that "through grace the weakness of human frailty is healed by the holiness of the one who became for us a priest 'holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners' " (PO, 12). Even though the laity are also exhorted to be perfect and to be holy, the holiness of the laity is often presented as a more incarnated holiness, while the priest's is more cultic, more spiritualized, within a dichotomy of the sacred and the profane. Yet the best of our theology acknowledges that the priesthood is a ministry within the people of God, not apart from it or above it. John Paul II identifies the priest as one of the "faithful," as a "brother among brothers, a member of the people of God who has a 'specific' vocation to holiness" (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 20). There may be some discrepancy between the actual lived reality of holiness incarnated in the life of ministry and its iconic representation.

Wood proposed an alternative icon of holiness in the concept of *kenosis* as revelatory of the image of God as revealed in Jesus Christ (Phil 2:5-6). Wood suggested that perhaps if we balanced our image of the holy with a more incarnate image, we would not be as prone to put the clergy on pedestals and scandal would lose its power to deconstruct icons. There would not be two different standards of holiness, one for clergy and the other for the laity. There would be less temptation for denial and cover-up. Scandal invites us to be less triumphalistic as a church. It invites us into the way of the cross through repentance and humility. It invites us to accept our humanity and the humanity of our clergy. A spirituality of perfection can lead to denial or secrecy when the cognitive dissonance between public image and the sad reality of sin becomes too great. Finally, we need to realize that holiness is fully realized only eschatologically.

The present crisis witnesses to an unhealthy separation between the clergy and the laity. This is exacerbated by arrogance that comes with unchecked power and by clericalism, the assumption that solely by virtue of ordination a priest is spiritually and morally superior to the laity.

The dangers of envisioning the priest as iconic of Christ include: (1) The personal relationship between Christ and the priest seems to be independent of the relationship between the priest and the church; (2) The special representative role of the priest seems to be independent of his actions in the liturgy; and (3) The iconic argument runs the risk of absorbing baptismal identity into priestly identity. Wood suggested that an ontology of relationship avoids the pitfalls both of essentialism and functionalism. Ordination repositions a priest with respect to the ecclesial community. Within a relational ontology a priest is always a member of the baptismal community at the same time he occupies a specific position within it.

The experience of the shattering of icons may be the catalytic force that propels the laity into a new level of maturity. It is time for adult children to take care of "mother church." This means relinquishing our romanticized icons and replacing them with realistic ones. Adults do not have to be protected from scandal. They take responsibility for their church and are not simply passive receivers of the ministrations of the hierarchy. The principle of liturgical reform also articulates the life of the church: "the full, active participation of all God's holy people" (SC, 41).

Nicolas Healy questioned the premise of the paper in his response. He wondered whether the laity consider priests to be icons of the holy and whether, in fact, there has been a shattering of icons in the present crisis. In his opinion the laity have not put priests on pedestals and have acknowledged their humanity and limitations. He does see a serious lack of accountability of priests and bishops to the laity in the present crisis.

James Coriden pointed out that Canon 276 of the new code emphasizes that clerics are to pursue holiness first and foremost in the fulfillment of the duties of pastoral ministry. He observed that one result of the crisis is that church tribunals will be used for more than just marriage cases. He identified roots of the present crisis in the culture loyalty to the group on the part of clerics, in an inadequate role for the laity in governance, and the in lack of checks and balances within the governance of the church.

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