

SACRAMENTAL LIFE & LITURGY

- Topic: Sacraments and Generations in Two Parts
 Convener: Susan A. Ross, Loyola University Chicago
 Moderator: Judith M. Kubicki, Fordham University
 Presenters: 1. "Stages of Life and Human Experience," discussion of
Concilium 2007/5
 Susan A. Ross, Loyola University Chicago
 Solange Lefebvre, University of Montreal
 Timothy Brunk, Villanova University, respondent
 2. "Ritual Performativity, *Summorum Pontificum* and Catholic
 Youth"
 Stephen Sauer, Loyola Marymount University

The first part of the session was devoted to a discussion of *Concilium* 2007/5, with the theme of "Stages of Life and Christian Experience." The two co-editors, Solange Lefebvre and Susan Ross, introduced the discussion by commenting on the process of putting the issue together. Lefebvre pointed out that since the age of Descartes, the idea of religion as a personal and rational decision has been a major challenge for religious traditions, after a long period of religion more as a mass phenomenon. Even the more recent conception of developmental stages of life and of faith no longer depicts religious development adequately. In this globalized world, plural and hybrid religious identities are becoming more prevalent. Ross noted that with new developments in childhood studies and marriage as a contested issue, "stage" theories are being re-evaluated.

Timothy Brunk responded to the issue as a whole and outlined four themes that he saw present: 1) ritual and life stages; 2) rituals dealing with both aging and youth; 3) the spirituality of youth; and 4) a world scarred by tragedy. Brunk first noted that, as David Power and Louis-Marie Chauvet have pointed out, there is no necessary connection between stages of life and sacraments. Sacraments are from God and even happen when we are not aware, as in infant baptism. Second, in a world both graying and bursting with youth, the church has less experience and needs to be more attentive to older and younger people. Third, with so much time available to youth, are there better ways of addressing the spirituality of young people today? Brunk emphasized the need for better education in relating the lives of young people to the sacraments today. Fourth, Brunk asked whether, in a world suffering with so many catastrophic events, there might be ways of addressing these events sacramentally: perhaps the sacrament of anointing might be well used in relation to such events. Brunk concluded by arguing that theorists and executors of ritual need to work more closely together.

The second half of the session was devoted to Stephen Sauer's paper. The first part of his paper examined symbolic activity as the means by which we come into being. According to Sauer, this process involves symbolic labor, a symbolic matrix, and symbolic exchange. The second part of the paper examined sacraments as the means by which we come into being as Christians. Here Sauer

considered three points: 1) how sacraments facilitate faith; 2) how sacraments shape subjects as Christians within the believing community, and 3) how sacraments establish a posture of receptivity before God. A lively discussion followed both presentations.

SUSAN A. ROSS
Loyola University Chicago
Chicago, Illinois