

LITURGY/SACRAMENTS—TOPIC SESSION

Convener: Steven Rodenborn, St. Edward's University
Moderator: Jonathan Tan, Australian Catholic University
Presenters: Judith M. Kubicki, C.S.S.F., Fordham University
David N. Power, O.M.I., Catholic University of America
Andrew Skotnicki, Manhattan College
David Farina Turnbloom, Boston College

This session included three papers investigating the ethical demands of liturgy or the manner in which ethical demands might orient the formulation of liturgical norms. Presenters turned to the eucharistic prayer found in the Didache, influential developments in the liturgical theologies of 16th-century reformers, and the needs of imprisoned men and women today to illuminate the manifold relationship between ethical practice and liturgy.

David Power initiated the panel with his paper, "Service of the Poor and Worship: Ecumenical Differentiation and Convergence," which was delivered by Judith Kubicki. Power began by tracing developments in Martin Luther's and John Calvin's efforts to link poor relief with questions of justification and liturgical practice. Luther's critique of lay brotherhoods, confraternities which played a dominant role in poor relief in the 16th century, was placed in the context of his concern with works righteousness. Alternatively, Luther established theological support for service of the poor by identifying the Lord's Supper as the sacrament of royal priesthood and brotherhood in which community was extended to the poor. Calvin identified almsgiving as a part of proper worship and understood *koinonia* to entail the giving of practical help. For both of these reformers, then, the community established in liturgy was a community that sought to overcome and eliminate poverty. The brotherhoods also embedded their service to the poor in liturgical practices, particularly public processions and penances, yet the manner in which they did this sustained social distinctions between the wealthy and poor. Although Power warned against reducing the work of the brotherhoods to self-serving deeds by which lay members sought to gain salvation, he argued that Luther and Calvin provided a more solid sacramental foundation for poor relief and were better positioned to challenge class distinction. In conclusion, Power employed his findings to identify areas of possible ecumenical convergence around the care of the needy and its relation to proper worship.

In his paper, "Liturgical Norms and the Hermeneutics of Need," Andrew Skotnicki inverted the dynamic relationship between liturgy and ethical practice explored in the first paper. Drawing initially on two vignettes of prison chaplaincy set in the US, Skotnicki examined the manner in which men and women in need, particularly those imprisoned and in need of spiritual comfort and inclusion, might orient interpretations of the liturgical norms governing eucharistic reception and rubrics. He asked the question: What are the proper roles of priest and congregation during the Mass and who should be welcomed to the eucharistic meal? He responded by contending that a nexus of factors relating to human need, most notably in institutional contexts such as jail, must be allowed to inform our answer, including for men and women without proper sacramental preparation or those unable to

receive sacramental reconciliation. In making his argument, Skotnicki affirmed the Catholic Church has a legitimate interest in maintaining various guidelines which establish identity and support mission. He reviewed current theological and ecclesiastical justifications for established definitions of proper celebrant and recipient. He then proceeded, however, by arguing that current liturgical and sacramental theologies support privileging the pastoral needs of the imprisoned, and their needs require a reexamination of liturgical norms governing reception and rubrics; moreover, Skotnicki concluded, this reexamination of liturgical guidelines, sensitive to the needs of the confined, ought to be addressed by the bishops formally, rather than on an *ad hoc* basis, so that incarcerated men and women will no longer be excluded from participation in the sacraments.

David Farina Turnbloom framed his paper, “An Eaten Church: Celebrating the Eucharist as Fragments,” as an exercise in spiritual exegesis, noting the influence of Henri De Lubac. For his starting point, he turned to the use of *klasmata* (fragments) in the eucharistic prayer of the Didache in an effort to construct an ecclesiology and a theology of ministry rooted in the relationship between liturgy and ethics. The Church, in this exegesis, emerges as an eaten Church. It is a church *ad extra*; it exists to be eaten by others. The Church is fragmented bread that is a sign of Christ’s presence in the world, and its fragmented character allows for it to feed the varied particularities of today’s pluralistic world. Extending his exegesis further, Farina Turnbloom suggests that this ecclesiology establishes the primary tasks of ministers as facilitating consumption by distributing and gathering. Distribution is directed toward bringing particular fragments to particular needs. Gathering requires the pastoral care of Christians, tending to the men and women marked and broken by the teeth of the world. Taken as a whole, Farina Turnbloom gathered together the Church’s liturgy, identity, and ministry into a project that might nourish the ethical responsibility of Christians in a pluralistic world.

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