

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS – TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Another World is Possible: Violence, Resistance and Transformation
Convener: James G. Sabak, O.F.M., Diocese of Raleigh
Moderator: Sebastian Madathummuriyil, Duquesne University
Presenters: Min-Ah Cho, Manhattan College
Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., Vanderbilt University
David F. Turnbloom, University of Portland

Three papers were presented this year at the Liturgy and Sacraments Topic Session of the Catholic Theological Society of America.

Min-Ah Cho, adjunct professor at Manhattan College presented a paper entitled, “The Body of Christ Given Up for the Ashamed: Rethinking Shame after the Sinking of the Ferry Sewol with Edward Schillebeeckx’s Sacramental Theology.” Her paper focused on shame as a collective emotion experienced by many Koreans after the 2014 Sewol ferry disaster. While the tragedy triggered shame and additional traumas it also pushed Koreans to recognize that all were responsible for society’s failed leadership and the suffering of the victims’ families. Cho’s conclusion, based on Edward Schillebeeckx’s account of how Eucharistic fellowship of Jesus led the ashamed disciples into conversion, suggested that the Eucharist might serve as a symbol for a constructive process of transforming shame into remembrance of one’s own suffering in order to engage in solidarity with the suffering of others.

Next, Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., professor at Vanderbilt University presented on, “Clericalism in the Liturgy: False Sacrality, Clerical Hegemony, and Lay Passivity.” The paper assessed that in recent years charges of clericalism have been leveled against understandings and practices of not only ordained but also lay ministries. Complicating the rhetoric of clericalism, the ordinary magisterium has employed the language of abuse concerning improper execution of the church’s rites, most specifically, the Mass. Such perspectives, Morrill countered, subvert ordered ministries’ early origins of service to the liturgy and to ecclesial life. The charged rhetoric of abuse, a powerful symbol in contemporary church and society, which clericalism exacerbates, furthers the crisis in the church. Morrill’s conclusion was that *mystery* and not *mystique* must be retrieved as foundational in ecclesial life.

David F. Turnbloom, assistant professor at the University of Portland, offered, “*Intra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus*: A Liturgical Analysis of “Leaving the Church,” wherein Turnbloom argues that, in the context of moral injury inflicted by Roman Catholic hierarchy, “leaving the Church” is a salvific ritual action. He asserted that by inflicting physical trauma and moral injury on people, our clerics have (1) corrupted the predisposition necessary to receive the sacraments effectively, and (2) corrupted their own ability to embody the sacraments effectively, because as symbol, ordained ministry is effectively impaired by the trauma of abuse. Within this context of moral injury, the sacramental life of the Church is not only made ineffective; it becomes a form of violence that jeopardizes those it touches. As such, insofar as “the Church” is identified with the sacramental life of the community, there is a real experience of *intra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Hence, “leaving the Church” is a salvific ritual action (i.e.

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refusing to assemble) that at once is the salvation of the injured individual and of the injuring Church.

An engaged discussion followed the presentations. Among concerns raised was the problem of lay passivity in light the abuse crisis. Does robbing the assembly's voice in some places of assembly by an authoritarian clerical model keep the laity "in their place," incapable of speaking out against clericalism and clerical abuse? Another attendee mentioned that one of the "false sacralities" that works against the purpose of faith and liturgy is an "aura of holiness" around the clergy, which transforms them into a humanity on different scale.

A series of questions were raised on the idea of liturgically "leaving" the church. Was an "exodus" from the Eucharist an "exodus" from the Church? What impact does such a departure have upon the sacramental life of a believer? Does leaving the Catholic tradition and entering another Christian tradition mean that one has left "the Church?" How is it possible to practice civil disobedience at all in an authoritarian church?

In the end it was suggested that soteriological priority is what is at stake and to take care not to throw out all offices or functions associated with ordained ministry. Taking a page from Cho's presentation, the church finds itself in a Holy Saturday moment – death and not yet resurrection. Can we embrace a true hope, which may not realize yet that resurrection is apparent?

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