

WORKSHOP: SPIRITUALITY AND THE WORLD CHURCH

The workshop on spirituality focused on the relationship between mysticism and the actualization of the world Church. The moderator, Mary Ann Fatula, O.P., developed the thesis that the Holy Spirit, love at the heart of mysticism, is the principle of the world Church's diversity precisely in being the principle of its unity. Rahner names as mysticism the experience of God in the Holy Spirit which founds the faith of the Church. Whether reflexively known or anonymously experienced in entrusting oneself to the mystery at the core of one's life, this grace is intended for all. Further, because believers can no longer rely on a homogeneously Christian milieu to support their existence, mysticism will be in a radical way constitutive of the Church of the future.

With Aquinas, John of the Cross, and modern authors such as Lonergan, William Johnston identifies mysticism as the experience of the love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit given from the risen Lord. Mysticism effects an inner conversion and transformation which expand the psyche's capacity to love in a way that is increasingly universal and cosmic in scope. In detaching persons from egoism, mystical love effects a union with others precisely in their own otherness. Because this is so, Johnston views mysticism, at whose heart is unrestricted love, as the reality which offers the deepest possibility of uniting peoples of divergent cultures and beliefs.

The question is carried a step further in reflecting on insights of the Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky. Lossky embodies an ecclesiological tradition for which mystical experience of the divine realities is constitutive of the life of the Church. In stressing the Holy Spirit as goal of the redemptive work of Christ, Lossky brings into relief the centrality precisely of the Spirit in accomplishing the diversity in unity which establishes the Church as icon of the Trinity.

According to Lossky, if ecclesiology is viewed primarily or only in Christological terms, the economy of the Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life, is reduced to that of an assistant in a redemption accomplished only by Christ. Yet on the contrary, Pentecost is the very purpose of Incarnation and its final goal: the Holy Spirit is given by the risen Lord to anoint his members with the same *pleroma* which fills their head. This, finally, is what spirituality is about: the acquiring of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. It is Pentecost which is both the beginning, and end, of the spiritual life. The grace of baptism confers upon the members of Christ the presence of the Holy Spirit who is the kingdom of God within us. In giving himself to the plurality of persons in the Church, the Spirit marks each one with his or her own unique experience of and relation to the triune God. In this way, the Spirit forms the Church into the living icon of the Trinity, the supreme mystery of irreducible distinction in absolute oneness.

Lossky rejected what he understood to be western pneumatology. However, a careful reading of Aquinas shows that he is far more akin to eastern intuitions about the centrality of the Spirit in the economy than Lossky allowed. Aquinas' reflections on the nature of love and on the person of the Spirit can prove helpful in clarifying why it is precisely the Holy Spirit at the heart of mysticism who is the principle of the diversity in unity consitutive of the world Church. His insights are to be understood in the light of his central intuition that God is sheer *Esse*, infinite plenitude of Be-ing. Created reality's perfection thus is in proportion to its own actuality in existing. The increasing actualization of human persons occurs through the processes of knowing and loving. Since love is the movement of the will toward what is known — the impulse out toward union with the other precisely as *other* — the activity of loving what one knows effects an inner transformation which enlarges, so to speak, one's limited being by uniting it with reality beyond itself.

As the person of love issuing from the mutual loving of Father and Son, the Spirit is the union of the Father and the Son, and therefore, the union of the adoptive children of God both with the Father *in* the Son, and with one another. As William J. Hill notes, in a way analogous to the Word's personification of Jesus' humanity — an actualization which is in the order not of efficient causality but of "personal being" — the "Holy Spirit's gathering of believers is not an agent causality but the *very relating in love* which constitutes his distinctive personhood" (*The Three-Personed God* [CUA Press, 1982], pp.287-88).

The Spirit, therefore, is not only the source of union with God and one another, but is, in some sense, the very union itself. In this union one's own individuality is enriched precisely because one's being is enlarged by the actuality of both the divine and the human other. In this way, the Spirit, precisely as the principle of union, is the principle of the increasing actualization of the diversity of the world Church. Furthermore, in the kind of love-knowing which mysticism effects, the Holy Spirit himself becomes the source of discerning what is essential both to the unity and to the authentic diversity consitutive of the world Church.

In the discussion period after the presentation, the following questions and issues were among those raised by participants. 1) Are all people called to explicit mystical prayer beyond the "anonymous" mysticism of every day life? 2) If so, is there not a need for initiation of Christians into the mystery of this gift as their heritage, and for education about the central place of mysticism as a source for uniting not only Christians but peoples of East and West? 3) The presentation focused on an "apophatic" mysticism devoid of concepts and images. Is there ultimately only one kind of mysticism, both phenomenologically and ontologically, so to speak, or are there different kinds of mysticism, including a "cataphatic" mysticism employing concepts and images? 4) Some participants stressed the importance of referring to the Spirit in feminine terms, while others pointed out the inadequacy of this kind of language also, and called attention to the need to reconceptualize the Trinity in

