

## SEMINAR ON SPIRITUALITY

At the first session of the seminar on spirituality, Michael Cooper of Loyola University, Chicago, and James Wiseman of the Catholic University of America, spoke on "Understanding and Use of Method in the Study of Spirituality." During the second session, in keeping with the CTSA convention theme for 1988, "Sources of Theology," the seminar addressed "Sources for Theology and Spirituality" through the discussion of presentations by Annice Callahan of Regis College, Toronto, Michael Downey of Loyola Marymount University, and Janet Ruffing of Fordham University.

Michael Cooper reflected on "Christian Spirituality—Its Meaning and Method." He began by observing that several definitions of spirituality reflect an anti-world and anti-body prejudice by concentrating on the inner dimension. He contrasted this approach with event-centered spirituality which in his definition involves "attending to the presence and labors of Spirit in both *inner events* (prayer and interiority) and *outer events* (people, places, situations)." He cited biblical spirituality and Ignatian spirituality which view the outer world as revelatory of God. He distinguished three moments of a methodology of attending to the experience: 1) listening to the experience with contemplative openness; 2) inviting the experience to speak by naming and discerning; and 3) reflecting on the experience in dialogue with Christian tradition and theology. After Cooper's presentation, we discussed different levels or environments of faith, the role of image and imagination, and the need of many people to engage in some regular practice of authentic interiority in order to see God in the outer world.

James Wiseman discussed method in terms of teaching the history of Christian spirituality. Rather than a former view that restricted spirituality to a narrow range of possibilities such as prayer, discernment, spiritual direction, asceticism, and levels of growth in Christian virtues, he prefers the broader view described by Jean Leclercq and Walter Principe.<sup>1</sup> He asked us a question we discussed afterwards: "What has best worked for you as you teach the history of Christian spirituality?" He gave examples of how he uses Joseph Cahill's schema of teaching theology mediated by the following: 1) scripture; 2) theological formulations, as well as story, song, and legend; 3) visual arts; 4) aural arts including music; and 5) popular devotion.<sup>2</sup> For Wiseman, the spirituality of the Reformation is in the treatises of Luther and Calvin, but also in the music of Bach. He suggested we present

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<sup>1</sup>See Jean Leclercq, Introduction to *The Spirituality of Western Christendom*, ed. Rozanne Elder (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1976); and Walter Principe, "Toward Defining Spirituality," *SR: Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 12 (1983) 127-41.

<sup>2</sup>See Joseph Cahill, "Theological Education: Its Fragmentation and Unity," *TS* 45 (1984) 334-42.

changing devotion to Christ seen not just in the writings of Augustine, Bernard, Catherine, and Teresa, but also in the paintings of Gruenewald. He reminded us that spirituality can be taught through the fictional work of Graham Greene, Flannery O'Connor, Shisaku Endo, and T. S. Eliot.

In the second session, Annice Callahan developed the notion of "Spirituality as a Source for Theology" by using two examples of how Karl Rahner uses spirituality as the point of departure for his theology: 1) his theological anthropology; and 2) his theological reflections on the heart of Christ. The basic premise of his theological anthropology, to speak of the human is to speak of the divine and vice versa, reflects his insistence on the primacy of religious experience. Callahan showed how her experiences and images of herself as embodied life-partner with God and others and as receptive person reflect her experiences and images of God as creator and revealer. In addition, she indicated that her lived experience validates some of Rahner's insights, since these images correspond with Rahner's description of the human person as spirit in the world and hearer of the word. She went on to propose that Rahner's theological rethinking of devotion to the Sacred Heart springs from his spirituality of the pierced heart, that is, a lived experience of Christ giving life out of death. She observed how Rahner not only approaches Christ's heart as a symbol of love, but also situates it in its christological underpinnings, as a symbol of the center of the person of Christ, the center of his freedom, the place where Jesus surrenders to the human condition and to God. During her presentation, Callahan raised questions which we discussed afterwards on the following topics: 1) the cultural conditioning of religious experience; 2) the articulation of religious experience; 3) the contribution of spirituality to theology today; and 4) the contribution of theology to spirituality today.

Michael Downey spoke on "Liturgical Praxis as Source for Spirituality." Using a model of reciprocity and critical correlation, he asserted that liturgy forms spirituality and gives rise to a variety of forms of symbolic behavior. He observed that neither the method nor the content of spirituality are clear, and that it needs an appropriate methodology. Defining spirituality as the Spirit at work in persons, Downey enumerated seven aspects of how the study of spirituality attends to the Spirit at work: 1) within a culture; 2) in relation to a tradition; 3) in memory of Jesus Christ; 4) in light of contemporary events, hopes, sufferings, and promises; 5) in efforts to combine elements of action and contemplation; 6) with respect to charism and community; and 7) as expressed and authenticated in praxis. For example, Dominic, Francis of Assisi, and Ignatius Loyola remembered Jesus differently and these differences point to differences in their charisms and spiritualities. He concluded by indicating that women's consciousness regarding language is challenging liturgical forms to change. After Downey's presentation, we discussed distinctions that may need to be made, for example, between religious experience and spiritual experience, between religion and piety, and between spirituality and piety. Downey clarified that his list is not one of criteria but rather one of points of interpretation in a larger hermeneutical repertoire that views personal gifts as paradigmatic and respects changing cultural contexts.

Janet Ruffing discussed "Psychology as Resource for Spirituality." She enumerated four areas of psychology which can serve as resources for spirituality: 1) depth- psychology; 2) developmental psychology; 3) psychoanalytic theory and

object-relations theory; and 4) transpersonal psychologies. She asked the group several questions: "1) How has psychology influenced your study and teaching of spirituality? 2) What did you find you had to take into account? 3) How has it contributed positively to your study of spirituality? 4) How has it hindered your study of spirituality?" She cautioned that psychology needs to know its limits since it tends toward reductionism. Ruffing observed that even though it is very easy for spirituality to be co-opted by the language of psychology, spirituality needs to enter into dialogue with psychology and to use it as a resource. During the discussion, Ruffing responded to a question by showing how the object relations theory can be corrected by theological anthropology. She asserted that individuation may lead to God but it may not; it has to do with intrapsychic development, and full human development is graced by God.

Next year, the group will discuss papers on the theme of the 1989 convention in one session, and will continue to discuss method in spirituality in the other session.

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