

all prepared the way for the kind of interpersonal understanding of Christ's relationship to the human family that was affirmed at Vatican II.

The discussion and exchange of views was spirited throughout the presentation, and helped the group to move beyond Krieg's prepared remarks into an exploration of how the christological themes of the council are still being developed in the church, particularly in the work of Jacques Dupuis and in ecumenical relations with the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Assyrian Church of the East.

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SACRAMENTAL AND LITURGICAL THEOLOGY

Topic: The Communion Rite as Ecclesial Act
Convener: Bruce T. Morrill, Boston College
Presenters: Jill Raitt, University of Missouri at Columbia
Thomas J. Scirghi, Fordham University

The objective for this year's session was to explore something of the theological history and contemporary pastoral circumstances of eucharistic communion as an action engaging all participants as members of body of Christ. Jill Raitt began by presenting her paper, "Sacramental Transformation and Eucharistic Communion: Pursuing Augustine's Insight in History," and Thomas Scirghi followed with his "One Body, Two Churches: Sharing the Eucharist in an Interchurch Marriage."

Raitt pursued the following theses: (1) Inattention to what happens to the recipients of the eucharist and too much attention on what happens to the bread and wine have been major reasons why this sacrament of unity has been a primary sign of disunity among western Christians. (2) Augustine and the mystagogues who preceded him were primarily concerned with the formation of Christians, that is, their entrance into the mystery of Christ and their life as Christians. Subsequently, however, Augustine's teachings on the eucharist were mined to provide authority for conflicting doctrines regarding the manner of Christ's presence after the consecration of the Mass. Hence, the contrary "augustinianisms" of the Catholics in the Middle Ages and the Reformers in the sixteenth century. (3) The Reformers of the sixteenth century turned their attention to the recipients of the Lord's Supper, but soon fell into the same disputes as their predecessors, and Protestantism divided viciously over the manner of Christ's presence during the Lord's Supper. (4) Hope for ecumenical unity and pastoral integrity lies in a return to a primary concern for the recipients of the sacraments.

From Augustine's sermons and other works Raitt abstracted a dozen principles regarding the recipients of the Eucharist, comparing them with major Reformation and Tridentine theologies. She argued that the key principle to be exploited in Augustine's theology is that the recipients of the sacraments are the focus; the baptized and gathered people are the body of Christ, the church. Thus Augustine teaches that the entire ritual process of the eucharist constitutes the sacrament. Raitt finds this Augustinian principle encapsulated in his statements that the recipients are what they are about to receive (the body and blood of Christ) and that they are on the altar, they are in the chalice. She concluded by noting the contemporary emphasis on the eucharist as liturgical action in the work of such figures as David Power and Mary Collins, as well as Susan Ross's recent notable book. Doctrinal statements about the eucharist, Raitt assessed, should help the church to understand its self-constituting actions in the liturgies of baptism and eucharist, when those formed by the Holy Spirit and informed by faith, hope, and charity are conformed to Christ, becoming what they celebrate, the body of Christ.

At the outset of his paper, "One Body, Two Churches," Scirghi asserted that in an interchurch marriage, in which one spouse is Catholic and the other is a non-Catholic Christian, both spouses should be allowed to share the Eucharist in Roman Catholic worship. He outlined the twofold purpose of his paper as (1) demonstrating the need for allowing a non-Catholic spouse to share the eucharist with the Catholic spouse and (2) exploiting the legal concepts of *epikeia* and *oikonomia* to justify such a practice.

Scirghi arrived at the problem of communion for interchurch marriages by asserting the sacred quality of the marriage vocation. This sacramental union serves as a sign to the church community, with the wife and husband representing the covenantal relationship of God and humanity. The problem arises in the couple's being prohibited from receiving the eucharist together. The family, a domestic church, is a divided church. The fault, Scirghi argues, lies not with the couple but with the ecclesial division into which they were baptized. At the same time, the integrity of the eucharist as the sign of unity for the church must be respected. Scirghi finds the church to be at odds with itself, promoting on the one hand a strong marital and family bond yet, on the other, preventing a couple from receiving the sacrament of unity together.

Scirghi sees promise for a solution in church law. After arguing for the need for balance between legalism and prudence and the shift from classicism to historical consciousness, he followed Charles Curran in relating these methodological points to marriage as a means for strengthening a couple's baptismal promises and providing a sign of the unity witnessed in eucharistic worship. His argument led him to conclude that an interchurch marriage would seem to present a special circumstance warranting an exception to the laws which regulate the sharing of communion in the Catholic church. A thorough understanding of the law, however, shows that such a policy is not really an exception at all, but one that serves to fulfill the intention of the law. Through the principles of

epikeia (Roman Catholic) and *oikonomia* (Greek Orthodox) the church may interpret a fundamental law in a way that will advance its mission toward unity. Thus, allowing interchurch couples to share eucharistic communion is neither a general plea to admit all Christians to the Roman Catholic table, nor a call for new legislation, nor a mere compromise but, rather, reverence for the marital sacrament and promotion of ecclesial unity.

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SPIRITUALITY

- Topic: Religious Experience and the Development of Spiritual Teaching:
Thérèse of Lisieux and Dorothy Day
- Convener: Joan M. Nuth, John Carroll University
- Moderator: Stephen T. Krupa, John Carroll University
- Presenters: Mary E. Frohlich, Catholic Theological Union
Leon Hooper, Woodstock Theological Center

Professor Frohlich began the session with a discussion of postmodern cultural desolation and various modern interpretations of Thérèse of Lisieux's "trial of faith," experienced at the end of her life. Frohlich attempted to draw parallels between both types of experience, in the interest of uncovering levels of meaning in Thérèse's life with resonance for postmodern culture.

The most obvious difference between the two is that Thérèse understood her own desolation within the context of the Christian meaning-giving narrative. Yet there are similarities. Both Thérèse and the postmodern philosopher Bataille described being swallowed up by a void that is destabilizing but also fruitful. Frohlich wondered what might be the theological implications of such experience. For Thérèse, her desolation issued into an abandonment of the desire for heaven as another world, replaced by a sense of heaven as "love in the present moment." Frohlich finds similarity here to postmodernity's rejection of "essences" in favor of ever-shifting events or "traces" of experience.

Frohlich next mentioned the work of Denys Turner and Mark McIntosh, both of whom criticize the modern tendency to overemphasize experience in interpreting mysticism, stressing instead the theological implications of mystical experience. Yet, in agreement with Bernard McGinn, Frohlich thinks that these two writers may move too blithely from the "negativity of experience" to the specificity of revelation as available to human intentional consciousness. Surely, Thérèse is a saint because she was faithful to Christian revelation. Yet she is also a saint because she committed herself to loving when the meaningfulness of that revelation fell away and she found herself instead in the depths of what McGinn