

to admit that while doctrines may be impervious to correction, their formulation might be. Lively discussion developed around these issues, but was cut short by constraints of time.

CATHERINE CORNILLE
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

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EXPERIENCE AND THEOLOGICAL VOCATION

Topic: Eastern European Catholicism Emerging from Silence:
 The Role of Memory and Narrative in Theological Reflection
 Convener and Moderator: Sally Ann McReynolds, Saint Mary College in Kansas
 Presenters: Margot Patterson, Senior Writer, *The National Catholic Reporter*;
 Margaret Nacke and Mary Savoie, Sisters of Saint Joseph of
 Concordia, Kansas; NCCB/LCWR outreach to Eastern European
 Catholics; Community development facilitators, Kansas City MO

Over the last ten years each panelist has had extensive personal contact with Eastern European Catholicism, particularly in Romania and the Czech and Slovak Republics. They gathered to share compelling stories which are emerging from the oppression and silence imposed by fifty years of communist domination. These memories have the potential to become valued resources for theological reflection and inspiration. Each panelist spoke for about fifteen minutes and then the floor was open for comments and discussion.

Sally McReynolds is a member of the Omaha, Nebraska province of the Notre Dame Sisters whose motherhouse is in Hradec Kralove, The Czech Republic. On two separate occasions she spent one month in the Czech and Slovak Republics, participating in a general chapter and also researching the experiences of sisters under both Nazism and Communism. McReynolds provided a brief overview of the theological methodology necessary to draw insights, categories, and concepts from the wealth of resources available. She argued that when theology is recognized as a prophetic work of the entire believing community, the vocation of the theologian involves the vital task of bringing memories to ritual and to narrative. The theologian's professional vocation is an expression of the sacramental grace which involves each of the baptized in Jesus' prophetic ministry.

Drawing on the work of a number of contemporary theologians, notably Paul Ricoeur, D. N. Power, and J. Ruffing, McReynolds identified four aspects of theological method that contribute to this task: (1) *Hermeneutics* as the identification and critical interpretation of symbol, ritual, and narrative particularly as these are expressed by the poor and marginalized. Hermeneutics incorporates

Loneragan's first maxim and the primary role of a prophet, "Be attentive." (2) *Mysticism* as the consciousness of God's presence expressed through *berakah* and *zikkur*, the thanksgiving and memory fundamental to biblical revelation and liturgy, to personal prayer and social transformation. Of particular interest is the way in which ritualized memory can give rise to the praise and thanksgiving intrinsic to the Paschal Mystery. (3) *Tradition* as the very process of embodying in particular times and places the eschatological hope inherent in divine revelation. M. A. Zimmer's argument that theologians should be critically attentive to the "*sensus fidelium*" and facilitate its expression is especially pertinent here. (4) A *metaphoric process* operating within a *prophetic imagination* as the way to link the resources of hermeneutics, mysticism, and tradition into sets of categories and concepts. Thus, theology can remain faithful to its roots in revelation and human experience and continue to provide a systematic and thematic basis for liberating praxis.

Since 1993 Margaret Nacke and Mary Savoie have brought their previous expertise as college professors in the fields of art and nursing respectively to the task of renewing medical services and education in Romania and helping sisters in the former Soviet Union reestablish their congregations. In 2001 they gathered some participants to find ways to continue and expand the ministry. From that meeting evolved the "Forum for Sisters," which brought sisters from the Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia to weeklong retreat experiences with United States sisters during the summer of 2002.

Nacke highlighted the profound religious sensibilities evident in the lives of the Eastern European sisters. With deep faith they spoke of a variety of experiences: of enduring long days and nights of intensive interrogation; of saving a piece of breakfast bread to break, bless and give "in communion" to fellow cell mates in prison; of confessionals that were bugged; of not knowing which priests and sisters could be trusted; and of receiving instructions about religious life in the only place with some measure of privacy, a cemetery.

Margot Patterson drew upon her four and a half years of experience as a teacher and reporter in Prague and her many articles written for *The National Catholic Reporter*. She observed that the experience of an underground church and the witness of many devoted Catholics—lay, religious, and priests—has won a new respect for Roman Catholicism in a nation haunted by the Hussite Wars and Hapsburg oppression. She recalled her interview with a secret Roman Catholic priest and college professor, Thomas Halik. He was publicly named by Vaclav Havel as a possible successor for the office of president. According to Halik the problems of the Catholic church go deeper than issues of celibacy and the role of women. The church must rediscover values important in its own mystical tradition. He likened the communist era to a mystical Dark Night of the Soul from which the church as whole might emerge with deep spiritual maturity. Too often he said those within the church seem to reflect either a childish conservatism looking to authority or an adolescent progressivism struggling with it.

Savoie concluded the formal panel presentation with a stirring account of a meeting with the Romanian Catholic Rite Bishop Gutia and his Vicar General, Msgr. Longa. Both had spent fourteen years in prison rather than support the state controlled Orthodox Church. Roman Catholics are nine percent of the population, but Eastern Rite Catholics were only two percent and these received the most severe persecution. As Savoie and Nacke were leaving the bishop's residence their interpreter, Marie, revealed that Msgr. Longa was her father. During his years in prison she and her mother did not hear from him and assumed him to be dead. When she was a teenager a disheveled man approached her, showed her a piece of paper and asked for directions to the address. She said to him, "That is where my mother and I live." He responded, "Then, I am your father." Savoie quoted Msgr. Longo: "Please, we do not want you to get the impression that we think our time in prison was in vain. Truthfully, those years were a time of deep communion with God. Those years were by far the most fertile years of my life. If only one person came to God because of our faithfulness, it would mean that our years in prison won eternity."

About one hour of engaged discussion followed the panel.

SALLY ANN McREYNOLDS

*Saint Mary College
Leavenworth, Kansas*

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THEOLOGIANS IN THE ORDER OF PREACHERS

- Topic: The Dominican Vocations of Chenu, Congar, and Schillebeeckx
 Convener: Kathleen McManus, O.P., University of Portland
 Moderator: Patricia Benson, O.P., Marygrove College
 Presenters: John Markey, O.P., Barry University
 Colleen Mary Mallon, O.P., St. John's University, N.Y.
 Kathleen McManus, O.P., University of Portland

This session examined the theological contributions of Marie-Dominique Chenu, Yves Congar, and Edward Schillebeeckx from the perspective of the Dominican tradition to which each of them belongs. Each of the presenters demonstrated how the incarnational force of the Dominican charism of seeking and preaching truth is born out systematically in the nature and trajectory of the projects of these figures.

John Markey opened his presentation on Chenu with an explanation of the "double-turn" to history that he said is key to understanding the Dominicans of the twentieth century. The Modernist controversy at the beginning of the century created a climate which led Dominicans to focus their scholarly efforts on the study of history. The "double-turn" embodied most dramatically in the work of