

SPIRITUALITY—TOPIC SESSION

Topic: Aspects of Christian Spirituality
Convener: Thomas J. McElligott, Saint Mary's College of California
Moderator: Si Hendry, S.J., University of Detroit Mercy
Presenters: Colleen Carpenter, Saint Catherine University
Elizabeth Antus, Notre Dame University
Daniel Dion, Rivier University

The field of Christian Spirituality studies lived human experience that engages human beings in an ongoing quest for wholeness that addresses our deepest human longings, which ultimately are for God as revealed through Jesus Christ. Colleen Carpenter's paper, "Knowing the Ground Beneath our Feet: A Spirituality of Placemaking," argued that we need deliberate, analytic attention to what we look at every day. A spirituality of placemaking means that when we build on the part of earth we inhabit we need to ask how our edifices enhance their environment. Placemaking spirituality requires that we ask what will sustain and protect the life of the place where we live, and what will heal and restore that environment in an ongoing way. By illustrating these aspects of placemaking, the paper argued that in this way we cooperate with the Creator in the ongoing unfolding of creation.

Elizabeth Antus examined the problem of toxic self-hatred as an ongoing condition that Anglican feminist theologian Sarah Coakley, in her "promotion of wordless, dizzying, self-effacing vulnerability in contemplative prayer," does not sufficiently address. "Why Batter My Worthless Heart? How Toxic Shame Disrupts Sarah Coakley's Account of Spiritual Vulnerability" argued that, for people who are emotionally poisoned by self-hatred, we need to call them into that kind of contemplative prayer that understands, first and foremost, that God embraces us as we are, with unconditional love and completely accepts our question, *why* batter my worthless heart, three-personed God? The paper suggested several approaches to this kind of prayer.

Daniel Dion's "The 'Nones': Options for Unity of Spirituality and Secularity" argued that "research on the intersection of spirituality and secularity reveals that the fragmentation of religiosity that is perpetuated by the dominant narrative of secularity verses spirituality is inadequate for understanding the situation of religious adherents in the United States." Using philosopher Richard Kearney's *Anatheism*, Dion offers a "path forward through the secular/spiritual divide in an effort to come to a new unity that can benefit the 'Nones' of the 21st century."

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