

LIVING JUSTICE AND MERCY IN THE DOMINICAN TRADITION:
SELECTED REFLECTIONS IN HONOR OF THE 800th YEAR
OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS—SELECTED SESSION

Topic: Living Justice and Mercy in the Dominican Tradition
Convener: Colleen Mary Mallon, O.P., Aquinas Institute of Theology
Moderator: Mary Catherine Hilkert, O.P., University of Notre Dame
Presenters: Kathleen McManus, O.P., University of Portland
Colleen Mary Mallon, O.P., Aquinas Institute of Theology

Colleen Mallon began this session in honor of the 800th anniversary of the Dominican Order with a presentation on the ecclesiological potential of the life and ministry of Pierre Claverie, O.P., bishop of Oran, Algeria, who was assassinated in August 1996.

“*Humanité plurielle*: exploring the Witness Ecclesiology of Pierre Claverie, O.P.” offered an initial exploration into Claverie’s anthropological assertion that all human beings belong to “humanity in the plural.” This notion served to distinguish his leadership as bishop within a Muslim country where Christians were treated as suspect aliens and ultimately unwelcomed proselytizers. Exploring the complexities of Claverie’s social location as a *pied noir* turned earnest, even patriotic, Algerian helps to get at his understanding of “the Other” and the grassroots framework that supported his notion of humanity in the plural. Key elements of that framework are commitments to encounter, dialogue, friendship, and the willingness to forego all fundamentalisms. Mallon concluded the exploration of Claverie’s humanity in the plural by asking if there might be seeds of such an understanding, however inchoately, in the contemporary church. She suggested that Catholic healthcare ministry with its commitment to serve all people and its broad inclusion of caregivers from diverse religious traditions might be an important place to start investigating such a seed in the church today.

Kathleen McManus, in her presentation, “A Cross-Grained Praxis of Mysticism: The Global Suffering of Woman as an Ethical Imperative for the Church,” turned to the work of Edward Schillebeeckx to explore how the cross-grained nature of women’s experiences of suffering in the church and the world holds a transformational proclamation of the Living Word. Working with the reflection of different groups of women on “the bent over woman of Luke’s gospel,” McManus challenged the contemporary experience of women’s “bent-over-ness,” a condition of oppression that is reinforced by reigning patriarchal epistemologies that order the way the Church functions in the world. Contrasting patriarchal and ecofeminist epistemologies, McManus outlined how the act of knowing differs and, more importantly, is fraught with ethical consequences. These consequences are lived out in the suffering and the resistance to that suffering, as evidenced in the missing women of Ciudad Juarez as well as the Dominican Sisters in Iraq who continue to provide spaces for education, health, and pastoral care despite their utter powerlessness over their own future. Herein lies the mysticism of resistance that

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McManus maintains is emerging from the depths of suffering: a spirituality and a praxis that is both a critique of what is and a proclamation of what should be, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Moderator, Mary Catherine Hilbert, facilitated a lively discussion among the presenters and session attendees.

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