

5-1-2009

Goodness Gracious, Athanasius

Chris Ángel

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/obsculta>



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

ISSN: 2472-2596 (print)

ISSN: 2472-260X (online)

Recommended Citation

Ángel, Chris. 2009. Goodness Gracious, Athanasius. *Obsculta* 2, (1) : 13-13.
<https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/obsculta/vol2/iss1/5>.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Obsculta* by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csbsju.edu.

Goodness Gracious, Athanasius!

Goodness gracious, Athanasius! How you fought that Arius!
“Christ’s a creature—but, he’s featured,” was his claim nefarious.
Arius yelped, “God needs no help. He’s the only source of stuff.
Christ is fine, but not divine, well, not quite fully, but enough.”

Goodness gracious, Athanasius! This, your bold, insightful stance:
“It is not odd; Christ must be God to effect deliverance.
If he’s not, then problems we’ve got; hon’ring idols ain’t our style.
Don’t start Christ’s fate with his birth date! He existed all the while.”

Goodness gracious, Athanasius! For you we’ve affinity;
Your thoughts precious: how God meshes human with divinity.
At Nicea, your ideas were the answer to the fuss.
Athanasius, so loquacious, now from heaven, pray for us.

Goodness gracious, Athanasius! So you didn’t write your creed.
All your writing, wrong indicting, gave the church the Christ we need.
You did not live to see us give your ideas their recompense;
Still we study you, good buddy: thanks for your obedience.

Chris Ángel

Note: This hymn text was inspired by Cathy Salika and was written for the hymn tune *Hymn to Joy*.

ably applied to Christ than a female Sophia. Thus, Johnson concludes the discussion of the prologue with a question:

The point is, however, that Christian reflection before John had not found it difficult to apply insights associated with the figure of Sophia to Jesus, not only to the risen and exalted Christ but even to the historical Jesus as he was being portrayed in his ministry. Could the shift to the Logos concept be associated with the broader shift in the Christian community toward more patriarchal ecclesial structures and the blocking of women from ministries in which they had earlier participated?⁷

While no conclusions on this are made by Johnson at this point, she brings the paper to a close with the fact that while Logos is used to talk about Jesus in the prologue of John it is still heavily intertwined with Sophia's roles from the Old Testament.

Finding these possibilities in Scripture, Johnson arrives at four conclusions, two of which I will focus on before moving into Origen's theology. First, one basic ontology of Jesus can be understood in terms of Wisdom personified. This connection allows the many attributes of Wisdom to be directly applied to Christ and give the most solid foundation for talking about the incarnation.⁸ Second, Johnson argues that any Logos-centered Christology should automatically make the connection to a Wisdom-centered understanding of Christ. She states, "When we read that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1,14), we can rightly think of Sophia, the creative and saving presence of God in the world, coming definitively toward us in Christ."⁹ Knowing that Sophia has had such an enormous impact on the conception of Christ, it is impossible to view Christ as fully human simply in maleness. Johnson writes, "To say then that Jesus is the image of God (Col 1,15) means not that he is the image of God as male, but that he embodies God's compassionate love, inclusive justice, and renewing power in the world. In the second place, use of wisdom categories calls into question the distorted theological use of the male-

⁷ Ibid., 288. This question absolutely needs to be asked of contemporary culture when reflecting on women's role in the church today compared with men's. While it is not necessarily going to be the case, our communities need to engage carefully in theological reflection regarding the issues raised by Wisdom Christology and questions regarding women's role in ecclesial structure.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 292.

⁹ Ibid., 293.

ness of Jesus."¹⁰ In this way Wisdom Christology offers a pathway to understanding Christ as a figure who can relate to both sexes equally and inclusively.

The theological premises of Origen similarly offer a pathway into realizing who Christ is as a being who holds within its personal ontology both the figures of Logos and Sophia. Origen's understanding of Christ finds Christ's main identity confirmed in multiple *epinoiai*, or aspects. These aspects are named as a mechanism that Origen uses to explain how "God, therefore, is altogether one and simple. Our Savior, however, because of the many things, since God 'set' him 'forth as a propitiation' and firstfruits of all creation, becomes many things, or perhaps even all these things, as the whole creation which can be made free needs him."¹¹ The foundation of these *epinoiai* "rests on Origen's understanding of the function of Christ as the mediator between God and creation."¹² The order and complete interworking of this idea is found most clearly in the second chapter of Origen's *De Principiis*. Origen says here, "Our first task therefore is to see what the only-begotten Son of God is, seeing he is called by many different names according to the circumstances and beliefs of the different writers."¹³ Recognizing that many different images are used, Origen sets out to understand Christ through them, the primary one being Wisdom.

By stating that Wisdom is the primary understanding of the Son, Origen must then go on to say exactly what this means when understanding God. Wisdom is the first born of creation, as Paul says in Colossians 1:15,¹⁴ not with a physical body but rather as a being who "makes men wise by revealing and imparting itself to the minds of such as are able to receive its influence and intelligence."¹⁵ The

¹⁰ Ibid., 294.

¹¹ Origen, *Commentary on John: Book I*, par. 119 as found in *Origen: Commentary on the Gospel According to John, Books 1-10*, trans. Robert E. Heine (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989). Following, the location as found in Origen's work will be cited.

¹² John Anthony McGuckin, ed., *The Westminster Handbook to Origen* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 93.

¹³ Origen, *First Principles: Book I*, chap. II, par. 1 as found in G. W. Butterworth and Paul Koetschau, *Origen on First Principles, Being Koetschau's Text of the De Principiis Translated into English, Together with an Introduction and Notes* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1936). Following, the location as found in Origen's work will be cited.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., par. 2. See also: footnote 4, Butterworth and Koetschau, 15. It is important here to take into account Origen's theology

incorporeal nature of God in all three forms is necessary for Origen's understanding of cosmology. While this implies that it is impossible to think of Wisdom as actually female, Origen retains the use "She" when talking about her—the same as he does when speaking about the Son and using "he"—thus, he retains her femininity despite God's incorporeal nature. Also, accepting Wisdom as the primary way of understanding the Son makes impossible the thought that the Son had a beginning. Origen states this belief in the Son as eternally begotten and thus states of Wisdom, "Wisdom, therefore, must be believed to have been begotten beyond the limits of any beginning that we can speak of or understand. . . . Solomon . . . says that she was created as a 'beginning of the ways' of God, which means that she contains within herself both beginnings and causes and species of the whole creation."¹⁶ Understanding Wisdom as the beginning of all creation, Origen equates these attributes to the Son of God as the Son is Wisdom.

of the incarnation and of preexistence. Stephen Thomas, in an article in John Anthony McGuckin, ed., *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, describes Origen's speculation of the preexistence of souls to account for their physical nature. Thomas finds that Origen implies that in order to understand the fall and the "placing in bodies" of Gen. 2, it is possible to see the souls as pre-existent—not just momentarily but with an entire life of decisions—where they would have made mistakes and fallen away from God at different levels. When a soul is placed in a body then, it is not as punishment for these sins, but rather for the possibility that the soul would be rehabilitated and returned to God (56). One can compare this to what it is like to put on extra, warm clothing in order to go outside in cold weather. The clothing itself is not harmful, though it may be encumbering to the person, but rather represents the state of the person being away from a comfortable environment. This fall created a tiered spiritual universe of demons, humans, and angels. These souls, all with their original purpose identical, find their place now in the separate dimensions of corporality and noncorporality. There was one soul, however, that did not stray from its original created intent of contemplation of God; that soul is the soul of Christ. In another article in the same anthology on Origen, Charles Kannengiesser states, "It was this soul, Jesus, preexistently chosen by the divine Logos for his own descent to earth at the decisive moment of the universal need for salvation. According to Philippians 2:7-8, the Son of God volunteered to deny himself in such a rescue mission. . . . Using the soul like a space suit (in the present case one should rather call it an 'earth suit'), the uncreated Logos of God encapsulated himself inside a created spiritual nature, a unique case of intimacy in which the creature instantly gave itself away to its creator" (76-77). This allows Origen to overcome the dualism between the spiritual and physical world. It is also important to note that Origen does not speak of the human soul being eliminated by the Logos, but rather integrating with it (77).

¹⁶ Origen, *First Principles: Book I*, par. 2.

Once Origen has established Wisdom as the Son, his next task is to incorporate Logos into the Christology. Origen's heavy incorporation allows a clear link between Logos and Sophia as he writes about the introduction to the Gospel of John. The reasoning for this link is shown in Origen's commentary on John when he states,

But it is as the beginning that Christ is creator, according to which he is wisdom. Therefore as wisdom he is called the beginning. . . . It is wisdom which is understood, on the one hand, taken in relation to the structure of the contemplation and the thoughts of all things, but it is the Word which is received, taken in relation to the communication of the things which have been contemplated to spiritual beings.¹⁷

And later, "But consider if it is possible also for us to take the statement, 'In the beginning was the Word,' in accordance with this meaning, so that all things came to be in accordance with the wisdom and plans of the system of thoughts in the Word."¹⁸ While it can be assumed that Origen makes this connection based on scriptural analysis of John—Sophia being the beginning¹⁹ and Logos being in the beginning²⁰—it is also highly likely that it is by their respective economies and their interrelated, complementary relationship to creation that Origen makes the connection. This relationship between Sophia and Logos seems to be one of "creator"/"order-er" as seen in *First Principles*: "For wisdom opens to all other beings, that is, to the whole creation, the meaning of the mysteries and secrets which are contained within the wisdom of God, and so she is called the Word, because she is as it were an interpreter of the mind's secrets."²¹

Here, Origen stops to examine his conclusions about Christ and Wisdom based on Scripture. In doing this, he makes the scriptural connection between Wisdom 7:26²² and the hymn in Colossians 1:15-20.²³ Moving from talking about Wisdom directly to this hymn, Origen, with his own preconceptions, finds that the Father and the Son are distinguishable yet one being. He states, "the Father's image is repro-

¹⁷ Origen, *Commentary on John: Book I*, par. 111.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, par. 113.

¹⁹ Cf. Prov 8:22-23.

²⁰ Cf. John 1:1.

²¹ Origen, *First Principles: Book I*, chap. II, par. 3.

²² "For she is a reflection of the eternal light, / untarnished mirror of God's active power, / and image of his goodness."

²³ Specifically Col 1:15, "He is the image of the unseen God, / the first born of all creation."

duced in the Son [just as Adam begat Seth], whose birth from the Father is as it were an act of his will proceeding from the mind,”²⁴ and later states on the unity of God, “Rather must we suppose that as an act of will proceeds from the mind without either cutting off any part of the mind or being separated or divided from it, in some similar fashion has the Father begotten the Son, who is indeed his image.”²⁵ Origen continues this line of thought in understanding the relationship between the Father and the Son as he examines more closely the attributes of Wisdom in chapter 7. He makes the distinction between why the text says Wisdom, and thus the Son, is a breath of the “power” of God²⁶ and not the “glory,” “eternal light,” “working,” and “goodness” that Solomon also mentions of Wisdom. Origen’s conclusion here is that in being the “power” of God it is proven that “there always has existed that breath of the power of God, having no beginning but God himself. Nor indeed could it have fitly had any other beginning except from whom it takes its existence and birth, that is, God.”²⁷ For Origen, it is clear that the Son cannot have been thought to have never existed and the attributes exhibited thus far prove that the Son is one with God and without beginning.

Just as Origen concludes through Wisdom that the Son is equal to the Father in power, so does Wisdom allow him to conclude that the Son necessarily represents the Father clearly. For if Wisdom is the “untarnished mirror of God’s active power” (Wis 7:26), then she works as a result of the Father working, “whether in his acts of creation, or of providence, or of judgment, or in the ordering and superintendence of every detail of the universe at his own appointed time.”²⁸ Origen’s thoughts here lead him to conclude that it is only the Father who is good. He defends this by stating that, “as if these words were to be taken as a denial that either Christ or the Holy Spirit is good; but, as we said before, the original goodness must be believed to reside in God the Father, and from him both the Son and Holy Spirit undoubtedly draw into themselves the nature of that goodness existing in the fount from which the one is born and the other proceeds.”²⁹

²⁴ Origen, *First Principles: Book I*, chap. II, par. 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Cf. Wis 7:25.

²⁷ Origen, *First Principles: Book I*, chap. II, par. 9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, par. 12.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, par. 13.

Through his incorporation of Wisdom into Christology, Origen is able to make these conclusions about Christ. What must be understood at the same time as this ontological significance of Wisdom and the Son is the soteriological significance Wisdom allows Christ to have in the world. Consequentially, this possibility stems also from the connections made in Colossians 1:15-20. In reference to John 1:29,³⁰ Origen states the following:

He [John the Baptist] does not say he who will take it away but is not already also taking it away; and he does not say he who took it away but is not also still taking it away. / For the “taking away” affects each one in the world until sin be removed from all the world and the Savior deliver to the Father a prepared kingdom which permits the Father’s rule and again admits all things of God in its whole and total self.³¹

This process is done so that God may be “all in all.” Thus Christ’s saving significance can reach to the end of creation. This is made possible because in Wisdom all creation was made and “It is because of this creation [the creation of Wisdom] that the whole creation has also been to subsist, since it has a share in the divine wisdom according to which it has been created, for according to the Prophet David, God made ‘all things in Wisdom.’”³² Thus connections, which will be explored shortly, are easily drawn between creation and salvation.

When examining the thoughts of Elizabeth Johnson on the evidence of Wisdom imagery in forming Scripture, one can quite easily see correlations between these possibilities and Origen’s theological construction of Christology. Origen’s most basic attributes of Christ—equality with the Father, begotten of the Father, creator and sustainer of creation—all come as a result of reflection on the correlation between Wisdom’s attributes and similarly built passages in the New Testament. The construction found in Origen and the reconstruction of Sophia in Johnson lead to three deeply intertwined possibilities for imagining Christology.

First, Johnson’s two conclusions mentioned earlier are reinforced by Origen’s foundation that Sophia and Logos are two necessary pieces of the

³⁰ “The next day, he saw Jesus coming towards him and said, ‘Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.’”

³¹ Origen, *Commentary on John: Book I*, par. 234–35.

³² *Ibid.*, par. 244.

ontology of Christ the Son. The combination of Logos as “order-er” and Sophia as “creator” allows in Christ what Rosemary Radford Ruether imagines for earth healing in her book, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing*. Ruether states in imagining the possibilities in healing that the “two voices of divinity from nature”³³ need to come together and remain in communion. The first imaged as “God” is the being who we find communicating in “thunderous masculine tones of ‘though shalt’ and ‘though shalt not.’ It is the voice of power and law, but speaking (at its most authentic) on behalf of the weak, as a mandate to protect the powerless and to restrain the power of the mighty.”³⁴ The other voice, imaged throughout the book in contrast to the “God” of history, “has been silenced by the masculine voice, but today is finding her own voice. This is the voice of Gaia. Her voice does not translate into laws or intellectual knowledge, but beckons us into communion.”³⁵ Ruether’s conclusions lead to the exhortation to bring the feminine voice and masculine voice back together in order to bridge the gap that causes the destruction explained through the rest of the book. Thus, as Ruether imagines God with both these masculine and feminine voices contributing to theological understanding, so Origen’s Christology shows how both Sophia and Logos are integral to Christ’s ontology and thus divine attributes.³⁶

Following this conclusion, and intertwined with it, is the possibility for a deep connection to the physical, created world. Here, both Johnson’s and Origen’s reliance on the Colossians christological hymn—itsself heavily dependent on the Wisdom tradition—is seen clearly. Through Wisdom, Christ is the creator and sustainer of the cosmos—seen clearly in Origen’s theology—and added to this nature by the Colossians hymn, Christ is also the redeemer of the entire cosmos that Christ created by becoming a part of it. The integral relationship found here al-

lows the possibilities found in Ruether’s, as well as other ecotheologians’, hopes for realizing the direct relationship between spirituality, intellectuality, and theology of the created order that has had Christ’s Gospel preached to it as well.³⁷ Not only is creation integral to our existence, but its presence suggests that God’s relationship with it is deeper than we can understand. It is to the ecotheologians and ecologists that we must look to help redefine humanity’s relationship with the rest of creation after having exploited it so long.

Finally, as Johnson finds in her conclusions and again directly linked to the previous two conclusions, the possibilities for women’s roles in the church demand at least a further look. If it is possible for Scripture as well as for some of the church’s earliest theology to envisage Christ’s basic composition to include both male and female parts, intertwined and integral to each other, then we must find what it means to be fully human as Christ revealed. Though it may have consequences on the meaning of marriage or on celibate life (not in any way saying that celibate life is unnecessary) it certainly does seem that a completely male hierarchical structure within the Catholic Church is lacking half of the conversation when making decisions that affect the whole body of the church. With only the male half of the voices speaking for the body of the church, of which Christ is the head, half the basic makeup of Christ as we understand Sophia/Logos is missing and thus Christ is underrepresented.

Elizabeth Johnson’s christological basis allows one to see the historical framework through which the feminine figure of Wisdom came to influence the writers of the New Testament. Origen’s writings show recognition of these themes as he builds a Christology that is Sophia-centered but is also dependent on Logos to understand completely who Christ is cosmologically and soteriologically. The characteristics attributed to Christ by way of Sophia allows for many interesting possibilities in the current topics of humanity’s relationship with the cosmos, Wisdom Christology, and women’s position in church hierarchical structures. By taking Sophia-centered Christology seriously, it is possible to see that many relationships are lacking half of the individuals needed to fully understand it and be in true dialogue. Seeing Christology as dependent on Sophia is integral to understanding the trinitarian reality, as well as its individual persons, correctly.

³³ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 255.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ To contrast with another current which can be found in Gerald Bostock’s article, *Origen’s Doctrine of Creation*, where he suggests a return to Logos-centered Christology. While his suggested results are agreeable, I believe the premise is inherently flawed in that it does not go far enough to correct the problem. Logos-centered Christology—being centered in Wisdom, as Bostock argues—does not have the potential that a dual-natured Christ has nor does it recognize Wisdom with the importance she finds in Origen’s Christology.

³⁷ Cf. Col 1:23.

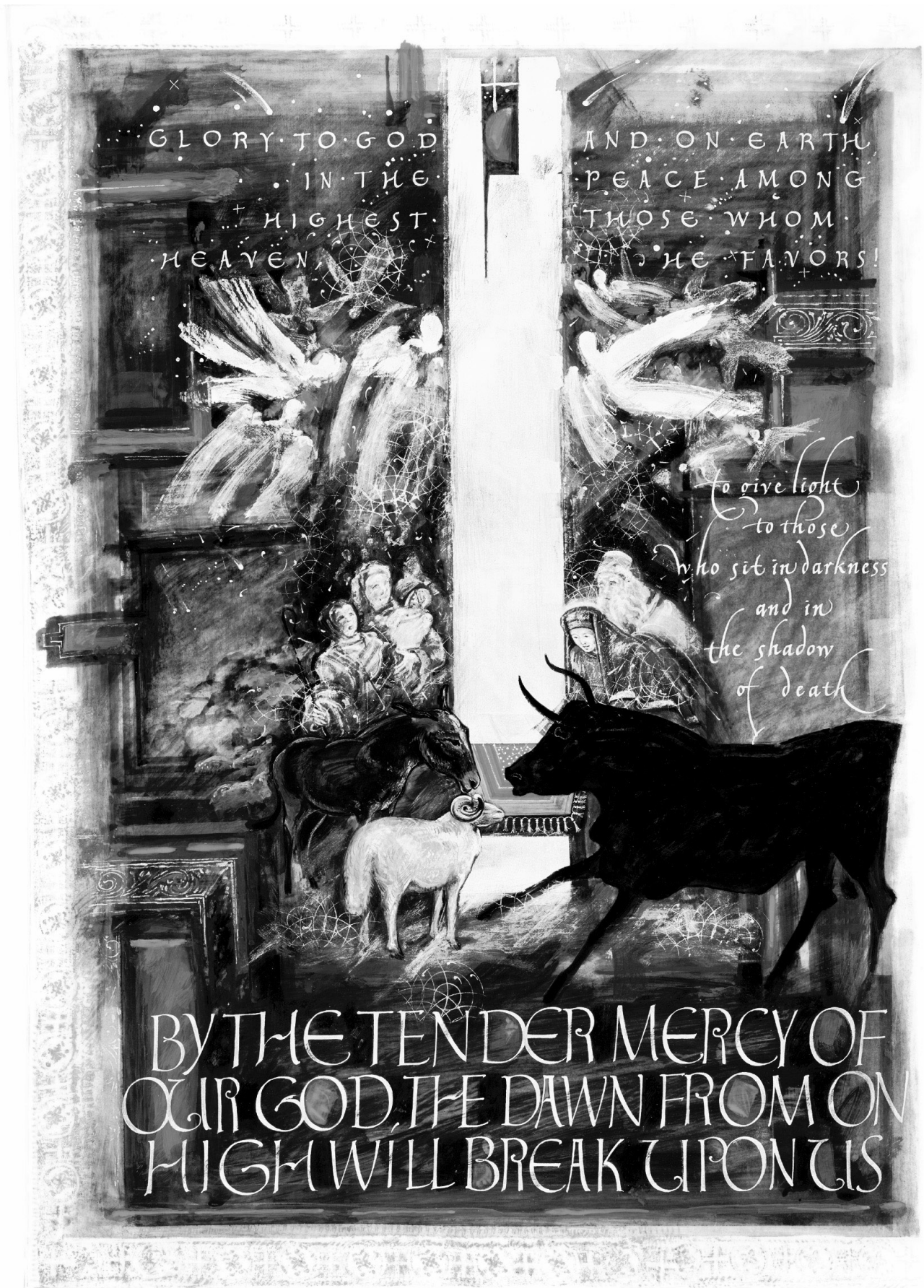
Bibliography

- Bostock, Gerald. "Origen's Doctrine of Creation." *The Expository Times*, 118, no. 5 (2007): 222–27.
- Johnson, Elizabeth A. "Jesus, the Wisdom of God." *ETL*, 61 (1985): 261–94.
- McGuckin, John Anthony, ed. *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004.
- Origen. *Commentary on John*. In *Origen: Commentary on the Gospel According to John, Books 1-10*, translated by Robert E. Heine. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989.
- Origen. *First Principles*. In *Origen on First Principles, Being Koetschau's Text of the De Principiis Translated into English, Together with an Introduction and Notes*, edited by G. W. Butterworth and Paul Koetschau. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1936.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.



Vista d'una cupola dal
cortile del doge

Ælred Senna, OSB



GLORY TO GOD
IN THE
HIGHEST
HEAVEN

AND ON EARTH
PEACE AMONG
THOSE WHOM
HE FAVORS!

*to give light
to those
who sit in darkness
and in
the shadow
of death*

BY THE TENDER MERCY OF
OUR GOD, THE DAWN FROM ON
HIGH WILL BREAK UPON US

Birth of Christ, Donald Jackson, 2002, The Saint John's Bible, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA. Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Catholic Edition, Copyright 1993, 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Variations on a Theme: Intertextuality in the Illuminations of the Gospel of Luke

Laura Kelly Fanucci

Variation in music is a technique in which aspects are altered slightly with repetition, woven through changes in melody, harmony, counterpoint, or rhythm. Variations on a theme have long played a part in classical compositions, yet the method of developing playful or serious variations to highlight or deepen aspects of a work's main theme is not a concept limited to music; numerous visual artists have also worked to portray variations on a theme. A fascinating example of such visual variation-on-a-theme methodology is found in *The Saint John's Bible*, a contemporary handwritten, illuminated manuscript. The illuminations from the Gospel of Luke in particular present a visual intertextuality that functions "musically" as variations on a theme that give an aesthetic and theological cohesion to the narrative. An examination of the four main elements of the visual intertextuality that unites the Lucan illuminations—the use of color, the presence of written text, the internal sense of movement, and the repetition of shapes, figures, or geometric patterns—reveals how the illuminations interpret the gospel text to produce an aesthetic and theological encounter to which the reader-viewer responds in a deeper manner than to the words of the biblical text alone. These four aesthetic elements are present in each Lucan illumination, and the interweaving of these aesthetic elements contributes to an overall synesthetic experience of variations on a theme.

A few elementary comments on musical composition may be enlightening before embarking on an aesthetic and theological interpretation that relies heavily on musical principles. Musical themes are the basic elements of any work, and their development can be seen as analogous to the process of writing. This comparison between musical and literary composition is especially helpful when approaching a given work synesthetically:

The theme is the first in a series of musical events, all of which must grow out of its basic idea as naturally as the plant does from the seed. . . . This process of expansion has its parallel in prose writing, where an idea stated at the beginning of a paragraph is embroidered and enlarged upon until it has been explored as

thoroughly as the author desires.¹

As in the writing of text, the creation of visual art follows an organic process: themes are proposed and then elaborated upon as they grow and weave together to produce the overall effect and depth of meaning imagined by the artist. Donald Jackson, head calligrapher of *The Saint John's Bible*, has described this process as part of his imaginative creation: "I am always looking for links, visual metaphors linking each illumination to the others."² The illuminations of *The Saint John's Bible* thus follow a pattern of development analogous to that of musical composition: themes are introduced, expounded, and interrelated to create a layered, multisensory experience of reading the images, hearing the words, and seeing the texture of the biblical narrative in a new light.

The Nativity: Presentation of Main Themes

As the title page of the Gospel of Luke, the illumination of the birth of Christ introduces the main themes of the intertextual variations to follow, both aesthetically and theologically. Through each of the four main aesthetic elements, the illumination sets the tone for the narrative. First is the use of color, through which the nativity shines in gold, blues, and reds, focusing in particular on the brilliant gold that lights the scene of Jesus' birth. In illuminated manuscripts, gold plays a central role related to the theological meaning of the illuminated text: "Strictly speaking, there can be no illumination of a manuscript without gold. . . . It is gold that reflects the light to the viewer. In this way, the light is meant to come out of the illumination, not reside in it."³ The viewer's eye is immediately drawn to the dazzling gold leaf of the solid vertical beam that seems both

¹ Joseph Machlis and Kristine Forney, *The Enjoyment of Music: An Introduction to Perceptive Listening* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 26.

² Donald Jackson, quoted in Christopher Calderhead, *Illuminating the Word: The Making of The Saint John's Bible* (Collegetown, MN: Saint John's Bible, 2005), 179.

³ Susan Sink, *The Art of The Saint John's Bible: A Reader's Guide to Pentateuch, Psalms, Gospels, and Acts* (Collegetown, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 9.

to descend from heaven and to burst forth from the manger as it illuminates the scene. This prominent gold shaft clearly forms the vertical beam of a cross, with the winged figures in gold at the top of the page creating the horizontal beam—thus hinting at the crucifixion that awaits the child in the manger. Yet the golden column that links heaven and earth is also a sign of the link between God and humanity, seen in the incarnation. The people crowded around the manger are shown in gold as well, their wondering expressions reflecting the light of Christ.⁴ The use of gold in the nativity illumination therefore functions theologically to represent not only the divinity of the newborn Christ Child but also the gospel writer's concern for the poor and his exaltation of humanity, "the coexistence of the earthly and the spiritual in this event."⁵

The second aesthetic element of the nativity illumination is the presence of written text. Three "callouts" from Luke 1:78, 1:79, and 2:14 are written in gold, proclaiming their importance; each is also written in a different script, indicating the multiplicity of voices singing out at the birth of Christ—both Zechariah whose canticle foretold the coming of the Messiah and the angels whose heavenly song trumpets out news. This visual interplay of word and image is significant; the distinction between text and illumination is transcended as "images are read, and texts are imaged."⁶

A third aesthetic element of the nativity illumination that sets the theme for later Lucan intertextuality is the internal sense of movement within the illumination. The nativity scene is structured with strong horizontal and vertical elements: the intersection of the shaft of Christ's light with the band of golden figures in the heavens creates a cruciform

shape that prefigures the death for which the child in the manger was born. The fourth aesthetic element—the repetition of shapes or geometric patterns—is related to these angelic figures that form the horizontal beam of the cross, since their presence will continue to be found in later illuminations. Susan Sink's reading of the nativity illumination notes how the repetition of such figures evokes illuminations from throughout *The Saint John's Bible* and thus contributes to the unity of the biblical narrative:

The illumination has many sections that you can "read," finding echoes to other illuminations: the angels from Jacob's ladder, the filigree from the Transfiguration, the stars from Abraham's covenant. All that has been promised is being fulfilled; God is revealed to humanity; the two worlds are bridged.⁷

The golden celestial shapes are not the only significant figures in the nativity illumination, for the animals gathered around the manger scene also prefigure central events in the Lucan narrative. In particular, the presence of the ram—a sacrificial animal—evokes the notion of Christ as paschal sacrifice and adds yet another link between the birth of Jesus and his crucifixion. The prominent black bull in the foreground also demonstrates the symbolic, and not simply illustrative, nature of the illumination. Modeled on Neolithic cave paintings from Lascaux, France, and suggestive of the ox that has traditionally been identified with the evangelist Luke, the bull can either be viewed as an ominous presence, foreshadowing the passion of Christ, or as a celebration of Jesus' strength. Donald Jackson describes the bull's symbolism thus: "The bull expresses the vitality and power of earthly life, as well as the humble circumstances of Christ's birth. It contrasts with the ethereal wonder of the flying angels and heavenly light descending into the world."⁸

Overall, the nativity illumination can be understood musically as the exposition of the main themes—setting the essential melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic lines that will be woven throughout all subsequent illuminations in Luke. Its use of gold to exalt both divinity and humanity, its blending of text and image, its internal cruciform structure, and its presentation of figures and patterns that will be repeated in later illuminations all contribute to the stately importance of this opening page of the gos-

⁴ This use of gold in the Lucan illuminations in a sense "democratizes" the use of gold in illuminated manuscripts. Christopher De Hamel describes the traditional use of gold leaf in medieval manuscripts: "Gold became a major element in defining status in the hierarchy of ornament within a manuscript. . . . Gold [also] had fundamental medieval associations with financial status and the distribution of largesse: any section of a text introduced by the actual presence of gold was endorsed as a giver of wealth" (De Hamel, *The British Library Guide to Manuscript Illumination: History and Techniques* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001], 67). Yet in *The Saint John's Bible*, gold is used not simply to designate hierarchy or wealth (either of the patron or of God whose glory is the subject) but to exalt humanity as well.

⁵ Sink, *The Art of The Saint John's Bible*, 76.

⁶ Suzanne Lewis, *Reading Images: Narrative Discourse and Reception in the Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Apocalypse* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2.

⁷ Sink, *The Art of The Saint John's Bible*, 76.

⁸ Calderhead, *Illuminating the Word*, 112.

pel. Image and text sing out the birth of Christ so that visual and auditory callouts will continue to resonate throughout the book.

The Canticles: Development of Word as Image

Immediately following the nativity illumination is a series of special treatments of texts from Luke 1–2: Mary’s Magnificat, the Canticle of Zechariah, the Gloria, and the Canticle of Simeon. Although these callouts do not contain any figurative elements like the nativity scene, they still play a significant role in the intertextuality of the Lucan illuminations. The fact that two of these texts—the Benedictus of Zechariah and the Gloria of the angels—are featured in the preceding nativity illumination illustrates the interweaving of texts throughout the narrative as variations on a theme. As with the verses in the nativity illumination, the Magnificat, the Benedictus, and the Gloria are illuminated in gold—an example of chrysography, the technique of “writing in gold” used for the elaborate treatment of texts.⁹ The use of gold to exalt the holy words of Scripture has a long history in illuminated manuscripts: “Illumination refers etymologically to light playing on gold. The gold leaf is meant, quite literally, to throw light upon the words that surround it and, in doing so, cause us to read these words more deeply.”¹⁰ Gold therefore has an inherent illuminative quality that heightens the meaning of the biblical text.

Beyond the use of gold, the presence of other colors in these callouts is also significant. Mary’s Magnificat is written against a deep blue background, the traditional hue associated with the Virgin, while the Canticle of Zechariah is proclaimed from an earthier background of brown and orange. The angels’ Gloria is illuminated with a mosaic that borrows its colors from the preceding canticles of Mary and Zechariah on the facing page, representing visually how all human songs of praise are caught up in the angels’ chorus. Finally, the Canticle of Simeon stands alone on the following page in pale blue, suggesting the fading life of the elderly man, yet it remains clear, like his vision of the savior that the infant Jesus would become.

All four of these callouts are also important for a “musical” reading of the gospel of Luke because they themselves are central liturgical hymns of the church: the Benedictus at Morning Prayer, the Mag-

nificat at Evening Prayer, the Canticle of Simeon at Compline, and the Gloria at the Eucharist. These visual callouts therefore connect text with liturgy, so that the words are heard or sung by the reader-viewer: “The ‘special treatments’ of certain texts, such as . . . the Magnificat, literally rise from the page and fill the viewer’s field of vision. . . . It is closer to liturgy, as the pages flash, and praise is almost demanded of the viewer, who sees long-loved words shining anew.”¹¹ Michael Patella, OSB, chair of the Committee on Illumination and Text that has worked with Donald Jackson in the creation of *The Saint John’s Bible*, underscores this connection between the illuminated book of Scripture and the church’s liturgical life: “No biblical book can be removed from the setting of the Liturgy of the Hours or the Eucharist.”¹² The visual representation of the relationship between Scripture and liturgy, text and song, is thus illustrated by these four Lucan callouts whose interplay between word and image offer another important musical theme for ensuing variations.

The Anointing Woman: Exposition of Sub-themes

The next illumination is the anointing of Jesus by the woman in Luke 7:36-50.¹³ Understood “musically” as both a variation on established themes and an introduction of an important sub-theme, the anointing illumination stands at the thematic center of the Lucan illuminations. The four main aesthetic elements of the use of color, presence of text, internal movement, and geometric or figural repetition are woven anew in this visual interpretation of the theologically significant episode. The first element—the use of color, primarily gold, blue, and red—is seen most strikingly in the figure of the woman herself. Dressed in vibrant colors, the woman wears a headpiece that suggests Native American beading, and the band on her brow is blue and red, evoking Mary’s headscarf in the nativity illumination. The woman’s status as “other” is designated by her dark skin, her stooping stature, and her lowered gaze: “The woman

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Michael Patella, “*The Saint John’s Bible*. Biblical Authority within the Illuminated Word,” *Word & World* 26, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 387.

¹³ See, on the following page, *Dinner at the Pharisee’s House*, Donald Jackson, 2002, *The Saint John’s Bible*, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA. Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Catholic Edition, Copyright 1993, 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

⁹ Sink, *The Art of The Saint John’s Bible*, 78.

¹⁰ Jason Byassee, “Beautiful Words: *The Saint John’s Bible* Project,” *Christian Century* 122, no. 16 (August 9, 2005), 21.

is represented as unconventional, wildly dressed, her hair in green and pink.¹⁴ The use of color thus unites this illumination with others and distinguishes it as a distinct variation on a theme.

The second element is the presence of written text, found in the first illuminated words of Jesus in this gospel, standing in gold at the center of the illumination: “Her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love” (Luke 7:47). Jesus’ declaration of great love and forgiveness stands in sharp contrast to his harsh words to the Pharisee (“You gave me no kiss,” Luke 7:45), which float in grey outside the edges of the illumination. Sink notes that this pericope was chosen by the Committee on Illumination and Text precisely “because of the themes of forgiveness and salvation, and the charge made against Jesus that he too often associated with sinners.”¹⁵ The presence of Christ’s own words thus stands as a clear witness to the importance of these themes of love, forgiveness, and compassion for the poor that are central to Lucan theology.

The third aesthetic element—the movement within the structure of the illumination—is a textbook illustration of a variation on a theme: it echoes previous materials and introduces a new element to subsequent illuminations. Within the anointing illumination, the reader-viewer perceives a strong vertical beam, like the shaft of light in the nativity illumination. The words of Christ himself form this column at the center of the illumination, dividing the scene between the anointing woman on the left and the angry red of the Pharisees’ reaction on the right. Sink affirms this reading of the illumination’s inner structure: “The strong black line dividing the illumination represents the chasm between the world



of the sinful woman and that of the Pharisees.”¹⁶ As in the nativity scene, the symbolic figure of Christ (here in words of gold rather than shaft of light) stands at the center, mediating between the chaos the woman has brought into the household and the resulting outcry from the Pharisees. Yet this illumination also presents a new sense of movement in the upward diagonal from the woman bending over at the lower left, through the messy chaos of the table and its bowl of oranges spilling off the table, up to the angry crimson smeared in the upper left. This diagonal movement up and to the right will become a rhythm throughout later Lucan illuminations, perhaps suggesting humanity’s movement “up” toward Christ who is the “right.”

The fourth and final aesthetic element found in the anointing illumination is the repetition of shapes or geometric patterns. An instance of each is found in this illumination, although their full meaning will not become evident until later in the Lucan narrative. The vase and cup on the table foreshadow the green and gold vessels that will be found in the illumination of the Last Supper; the presence of purple grapes and red wine likewise evoke the paschal sacrifice. Another connection is forged through the geometric pattern of brown and orange of the tablecloth’s fabric that reappears in the illumination of Mary and Martha, thus uniting the three women and the two domestic scenes. Both the Eucharistic vessels and the patterned cloth only become meaningful for the reader-viewer on later reflection, but they

¹⁴ Sink, *The Art of the Saint John’s Bible*, 80.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

stand as visual expressions of the intertextuality of the biblical narrative.

The Parable Anthology: Recapitulation of the Main Theme

Building on the anointing illumination's themes of compassion and forgiveness is the "parable anthology" of Luke 15.¹⁷ Within a single illumination that spans an entire page and a half, five parables as well as the story of Mary and Martha are united in a complex reflection on love and forgiveness. The parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, the Good Samaritan, the prodigal son, and Lazarus and the rich man thus become variations on a theme, as well as a cohesive recapitulation of the main theological and aesthetic themes in Luke: "It is the idea of God showing himself in his divine love for humanity that

the Gospel of Luke emphasizes."¹⁸

The first important aesthetic element—the use of color—is seen in the swirling reds, whites, and blues that compose the diagonal frames of the parable anthology. An attentive reader-viewer of *The Saint John's Bible* may recall glimpsing these exact colors earlier, in the menorah of the Matthean genealogy. The visual link between Matthew and Luke creates an additional layer of intertextuality that underscores the unifying message of the gospels: that Jesus Christ has come to usher in a new law of love and forgiveness. Another intertextual reference (between the Old and New Testaments) is suggested with the brightly colored robe that the father in the parable of the prodigal son pulls behind him as he runs to embrace his child. The multicolored robe

immediately evokes the garment given by Jacob to his beloved son Joseph, thus creating a visual connection between the two stories and deepening the meaning of a well-known parable.

As throughout the Lucan illuminations, gold is again a powerful and meaningful color element in the parable anthology. Three different manifestations of gold in the parable anthology offer visual variations on this theme. In the upper left corner, the same golden angels from the nativity illumination enter the parable anthology from beyond the frame. Directly opposite these angelic shapes, in the upper right corner of the panel with Mary and Martha, stands the figure of Christ, haloed and glowing in gold.

In the middle of the main parable illumination, the twin towers of the World Trade Center stand out in simple, striking gold as a powerful contemporary application of the ancient message of the parable of the prodigal son. Taken together, these three concentrated areas of gold offer an aesthetic interpretation of a central theological principle: "Each place



¹⁷ Donald Jackson describes the parable illumination with this literary analogy: "It was truly an anthology. How do you sum up Luke's Gospel? . . . There is a lot going on and the onlooker has to hunt" (quoted in Calderhead, 175). *Luke Anthology*, Donald Jackson with contribution by Aidan Hart and Sally Mae Joseph, 2002, *The Saint John's Bible*, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA. Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Catholic Edition, Copyright 1993, 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

¹⁸ Sink, *The Art of The Saint John's Bible*, 87.

that Jesus reveals his divinity, gold leaf was used [in the illumination of *The Saint John's Bible*]. In the anthology of Luke, also, where God's radical love is taught, Jesus appears in . . . dazzling gold leaf."¹⁹ Visual variations on a theme thus continue to deepen the meaning of the scriptural text by engaging the reader-viewer's senses and imagination.

The second main aesthetic element that continues to be woven throughout Luke is the presence of written text within the illumination. Two striking examples are found in the parable anthology. At the center of the entire illumination is the parable of the Good Samaritan, depicted only in text rather than figuratively. Since words are often what divide people, "these quotations draw attention to the sectarian nature of the tale."²⁰ Yet the unexpected presence of words where one expects to find images also draws attention to the visual center of the illumination and the theological center of these parables—the forgiving love of agape. Similarly, in the illumination of Mary and Martha's story, Jesus' words in gold declare, "there is need of only one thing" (Luke 10:42). This is the central message of all the parables illuminated in the anthology: that God will seek out with selfless love one lost coin, sheep, son, stranger, or poor man. The reader-viewer thus "hears" Jesus' words summarizing all that has been depicted visually.²¹

The third aesthetic element—the internal sense of movement within the illumination—is conveyed visually and rhythmically. Each parable is depicted in a successive diagonal band that leads up and to the right, thereby evoking both the strong beams of the nativity illumination and the diagonal movement of the anointing illumination. These diagonal divisions create rhythm and lend an overall compositional unity to these variations on a theme.²² It is also significant to note the unusual position of the figures of Mary and Martha in the right-hand panel: their backs are turned to the reader-viewer as they gaze at Jesus. While this positioning of figures may seem unorthodox from a traditional illustrative angle, the theologi-

cal symbolism is significant: Mary and Martha create a turn toward the figure of Jesus as they model the perspective of the reader-viewer. This turn to the real subject of the parable anthology shapes the entire visual structure as well as the internal movement of the illumination.

The fourth aesthetic element—the repetition of geometric patterns and shapes—parallels the first main element, the use of color to evoke intertextual connections with other biblical books. Broken pieces of a geometric pattern that are woven or echoed throughout the framework of the parable anthology suggest the central mandala from the Matthean genealogy: "They are meant, according to Donald Jackson, to suggest the way the mind and intelligence work to interpret and understand concepts, like teasing out the meaning of parables and applying them to our contemporary lives."²³ Another geometric pattern that reappears in the parable anthology is the fabric of Martha's dress. The brown and orange circles and squares are the exact geometric pattern found on the table of the home where the woman anointed Jesus' feet in Luke 7, illustrating "the recurring theme of textiles" which Jackson has noted as a key visual link between illuminations.²⁴ The visual and tactile unification of these important female figures through a common textile pattern offers a theological commentary on the Lucan text: the author's attention to women, his concern for the poor and marginalized, his affirmation of humanity, and the central theme of God's loving forgiveness that is woven through every illumination. As variations on a theme within the overall composition of the Lucan illuminations, the parables draw connections between seemingly unrelated scriptural stories, as well as contemporary applications, offering a rich theological and aesthetic interpretation for the reader-viewer's imagination.²⁵

¹⁹ Sink, *The Art of The Saint John's Bible*, 84.

²⁰ Jackson quoted in Calderhead, *Illuminating the Word*, 179.

²¹ As chair of the Committee on Illumination and Texts for *The Saint John's Bible*, Michael Patella, OSB, has remarked on the use of both contemporary imagery and musical compositions in the creation of the illuminations: "There are references to the Christian liturgy and its chant in the Psalms; to the music of Bach, Beethoven, Prokofiev, Vaughan Williams, and Pärt in the gospel narratives; and even to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the parables. The point is that the word of God does not exist in the sanctuary alone; it touches every part of the human condition, and every part of the human condition finds its resolution in the word of God" (Patella, "*The Saint John's Bible*," 390).

¹⁹ Ibid., 87.

²⁰ Ibid., 81.

²¹ Christopher De Hamel makes the point that "all writing is only a way of representing the sounds of human speech" (De-Hamel, *The British Museum Guide*, 21). Therefore any instance of written text within an illumination can be rightly perceived or interpreted as an oral utterance.

²² The use of diagonals to depict the parables could also be understood as a commentary on the challenging or enigmatic nature of parables, in which the goal is, to quote Emily Dickinson, to "Tell all the Truth, but tell it slant" (No. 1129).

The Last Supper: Symbolic Exposition of Central Themes

The theological and narrative center of the illuminations is the Last Supper in Luke 22. This smaller illumination is simpler in its symbolism than the complex parable anthology, but it recapitulates important themes suggested in the nativity illumination (with its sacrificial ram) and the anointing illumination (with its Eucharistic vessels). These themes are treated to full exposition in the Last Supper illumination, which functions as a structural and theological capstone for the Gospel story—linking the preceding illuminations with the impending crucifixion.

The first aesthetic element is apparent in the use of symbolic colors that have been featured in earlier illuminations, including gold for the glory of God and red for the blood of Jesus. While the second aesthetic element (written text) is not present, its absence is equally significant since it is the only illumination thus far in Luke not to incorporate the written word. Instead, the symbolic power of the eucharistic vessels is placed front and center as the visual manifestation of Jesus' words of loving sacrifice at the Last Supper. The three vessels echo each other's similar shapes, yet each stands independently. On the left is a jug filled with red wine in front of a gold cup etched with grape vines, suggesting either the food and drink of Jesus' last meal with his disciples or "the unconsecrated bread and wine . . . brought as a sacrificial offering" at the Eucharist.²⁶ In the middle, a slain lamb bleeds into a cup or chalice, while a stately gold ciborium stands on the right.

The three vessels create a clear tripartite division, following the third aesthetic element of the internal sense of movement within the illumination. The sections function visually like a triptych, a popular art form in early Christianity (as well as in the medieval era when the illuminated manuscript flourished). The clear sense of horizontal movement from left to right also mirrors the Western reader-viewer's natural inclination to scan as if reading—yet another instance of the blending of text and image in illumination. Following the lead of Jesus' own action in the Last Supper narrative, this triptych therefore acts as both word and gesture, both explanation and invitation. Suzanne Lewis's perspective on the relationship between word and image is illuminating here: "Images are readings . . . not a re-telling of the text but a use of it; not an illustration, but, ultimately, a new text. The image does not replace a text; it is one."²⁷

²⁶ Sink, *The Art of The Saint John's Bible*, 85.

²⁷ Lewis, *Reading Images*, 2.

The repetition of geometric patterns, the fourth aesthetic element, contributes to this internal sense of movement. The middle panel containing the bleeding lamb is flanked by two columns containing Stars of David on the left and Greek crosses on the right, visually representing the shift from Jewish to Christian ritual. The transformation of the Passover feast (symbolized in the sacrificed lamb) to the Christian Eucharist (represented by the ciborium) broadens the understanding of sacrifice. The presence of food and drink as seen in the anointing illumination evokes a synesthetic sense of taste that deepens the sacramental meaning of the Last Supper as encounter with the true Paschal Lamb. The reader-viewer is thus invited to enter into a profound symbolic reflection on the Last Supper. Visual connections with earlier illuminations unify this variation on a theme, while the deliberate development of sacrificial and eucharistic imagery sets the scene for the remainder of the Lucan narrative.

The Crucifixion: Recapitulation and Climax of Main Theme

While the Last Supper illumination took up only a portion of the page, the next illumination bursts forth in full-page glory, echoing the opening of the gospel both aesthetically and theologically. The crucifixion recapitulates the main themes established in the nativity scene: just as the shape of the cross was evoked by the golden shaft of Christ's light intersecting with the heavenly hosts above, so does the same brilliance of gold seen in the massive and majestic crucifix dominate the illumination. The cruciform shape of Jesus' life suggested at his birth is now set ablaze in gold at his death. The first aesthetic element—the use of color—is thus focused again on gold as a sign of Christ's glory. This is no gruesome scene of bloodied death; "the crucifixion in all its pain does not diminish the glory of God."²⁸ Theologically, the aesthetic element of gold once again defines the illumination's theme. As with the shepherds of the nativity scene whose wondering faces are lit by the gold of the manger, the crowd gathered in the distance to witness the death of Jesus is also lit in gold. Following Luke's concern for humanity, these eyewitnesses do not appear implicated in the death of Jesus but instead reflect the radiance of his glory.

As in the Last Supper illumination, there is no written word included as part of the crucifixion. Je-

²⁸ Sink, *The Art of The Saint John's Bible*, 88.

sus instead stands as the definitive expression of the gospel text, ending the Lucan illuminations as they began, in a celebration of his simple humanity and his divine glory. But there is a special treatment of the last words of Jesus at the bottom corner of the page immediately preceding the crucifixion: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). In gold lettering set against the same celestial imagery as the nativity scene and the background of the crucifixion illumination, Jesus’ words provide the only fitting introduction for the crucifixion, which is displayed in wordless majesty once the page is turned. Thus word and image still combine in the multipage exposition of the crucifixion, which recapitulates all the theological themes of previous illuminations: selfless sacrifice, loving forgiveness, tender service of humanity. Both aesthetically and theologically, the crucifixion stands as the climax of the Lucan illuminations.

The two remaining aesthetic elements of the crucifixion illumination are not as visually arresting as the first two, but still play a significant role. The internal sense of movement echoes the strong vertical beam of the nativity illumination, though now slightly askew. The off-kilter sense of the scene is felt by the reader-viewer, who will also notice how “the entire image breaks through the frame, a sign of how the crucifixion broke through the limits of the human world and of time.”²⁹ The final aesthetic element also plays off this notion of the crucifixion transcending normal human existence and time. The repetition of shapes and patterns is seen in the dark celestial imagery of golden moons and stars that made up the background of the nativity scene and in the last words of Jesus on the preceding page. This pattern of heavenly shapes has both immediate and far-reaching implications, simultaneously suggesting the passage of time during the three hours of darkness while Jesus hung on the cross and his transcendence of earthly time and space through the resurrection that is to come. As with the climax of a musical composition, the crucifixion illumination thus recapitulates the central themes of earlier Lucan illuminations and also hints at a resolution still to come—which is evident as soon as the reader-viewer perceives the resurrection illumination on the facing page, an important visual, narrative, and theological juxtaposition.

²⁹ Ibid.

The Resurrection: The Coda that Changes Everything

The final illumination of Luke’s gospel is no surprise, like the coda that concludes a musical composition. Yet its subject matter—a return from the death that destroys death itself—is no simple denouement. The resurrection recasts the entire narrative of Jesus’ life and ministry in a new light. The transformative nature of the resurrection is shown in the thematic material chosen for illumination, namely, the story of the road to Emmaus in which the disciples’ eyes are opened to the presence of the risen Christ. A fitting end for the synesthetic encounter with Scripture through the Lucan illuminations, the resurrection illumination looks back on all that has come before and sends the reader-viewer forward to Acts like the disciples sent forth in mission.

All four main aesthetic elements are present in this final illumination. The use of color highlights a shift in portrayal of the figure of Jesus following the resurrection. In the lower right of the illumination stand two cloaked disciples who gaze up at a figure shrouded in red with hints of gold. The identity of this figure remains mysterious until the gaze of the reader-viewer, like the disciples themselves, moves up to the scene of breaking bread at Emmaus in the upper left of the illumination. Here Jesus is once again arrayed in gold, the cruciform halo behind his head echoing the crucifixion on the facing page. The glory of Christ’s resurrection shines forth through this use of color, in contrast to the reds, blues, and greens that symbolize the swirling confusion of the disciples following the crucifixion.

The presence of written text is the second main element that adds to the multisensory experience of the illumination. Verses that describe Jesus’ breaking bread with the disciples at Emmaus are written in gold at the bottom of the illumination, a final instance of chrysography with the Lucan text (Luke 24:15, 30-31). The text’s eucharistic language evokes the Last Supper, but again, all prior understandings of Jesus have now been transformed with the resurrection, as evoked in the final words of the illuminated text: “and he vanished from their sight” (Luke 24:31). This unique coda to the narrative ultimately changes everything, ending on a note of mystery, wonder, and conversion.

The third aesthetic element of the internal movement within the illumination recapitulates the theme of transformation. Powerful diagonals are present throughout, especially in the golden swaths



Road to Emmaus, Donald Jackson, 2002, *The Saint John's Bible*, Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, Minnesota, USA. Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Catholic Edition, Copyright 1993, 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

that move up and to the right—the same motion from the anointing illumination and the parable anthology. Moving up from the text in gold at the bottom of the illumination, the reader-viewer is pulled by the reaching brushstrokes to be sent forth as the disciples. This upward-reaching movement of the illumination can be understood as symbolic of the entire Lucan narrative and its portrayal of humanity's movement up and towards the divine.

The final aesthetic element that contributes to the overall composition of the illumination and its theological meaning is the repetition of figures from previous illuminations. In the resurrection narrative the two figures of the disciples are shown from the back, in the exact same position as Mary and Martha in the parable anthology. The reader-viewer is invited again into the illumination, to assume the same position of looking on the figure of Christ. Ultimately, then, the biblical narrative becomes the narrative of the reader-viewer, whose encounter with the text has engaged all the senses of perception. The aesthetic encounter offered by the illuminations allows for a deeper understanding of the scriptural theology. The reader-viewer's response to the synesthetic experience of perceiving the visual and musical variations within the illuminations gives rise to a more embodied understanding of the core truths of Luke's gospel.

The Music of Word and Image as Sacramental Encounter

In the final analysis, *The Saint John's Bible* is both an aesthetic and a theological project. The sacramental nature of embodied knowing lies at the heart of the illuminated manuscript, according to Abbot John Klassen, OSB: "The Word becomes sacramental. It is not just a text. It is like the Eucharist: a visual image of the Word."³⁰ The visual gives way to a deeper vision as distinctions between image and text, reader-viewer, and illumination are ultimately transcended: "In an illuminated Bible, the art attends to the revelation in the words. Text and image both reflect God's presence, both reveal God's mystery."³¹ No longer passive, the reader-viewer is invited to engage actively with the text in dynamic, multisensory ways as an encounter with the divine.

The notion of putting word into image is already synesthetic; the intentional weaving of multiple aesthetic elements throughout the illuminations of a particular book of the Bible creates a sense of

unity in diversity that can justly be compared to musical variations on a theme: "Spinning out a theme, weaving and reweaving its lines is the essence of musical thinking."³² Analogous to music's ability to sustain multiple melodic and harmonic lines simultaneously, the Lucan illuminations create a multifaceted aesthetic and theological experience that provides a profound interpretation of the scriptural text. The visual, acoustic, and tactile sensations evoked by the illuminations invite the reader-viewer to engage both the senses and the imagination in order to understand the biblical narrative: "Sensory experience provides the raw material from which the intellect grasps the reality of universals and thus its understanding of God."³³ The intertextuality of illuminations in Luke ultimately opens up a broader meaning for the depth and inexhaustible meaning of the gospel, made fresh for yet another millennium of curious, skeptical, and faithful alike to approach the text with new eyes and consider its truth for the sights, sounds, smells, and taste of a new era.

Bibliography

- Byassee, Jason. "Beautiful Words: *The Saint John's Bible* Project." *Christian Century* 122, no. 16 (August 9, 2005): 20–23.
- Calderhead, Christopher. *Illuminating the Word: the Making of The Saint John's Bible*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005.
- De Hamel, Christopher. *The British Library Guide to Manuscript Illumination: History and Techniques*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001.
- Gospels and Acts: The Saint John's Bible*. Handwritten and illuminated by Donald Jackson, et al. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005.
- Lewis, Suzanne. *Reading Images: Narrative Discourse and Reception in the Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Apocalypse*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Machlis, Joseph, and Kristine Forney. *The Enjoyment of Music: An Introduction to Perceptive Listening*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.
- Patella, Michael. "The Saint John's Bible: Biblical Authority within the Illuminated Word." *Word & World* 26, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 383–91.
- Sink, Susan. *The Art of The Saint John's Bible: A Reader's Guide to Pentateuch, Psalms, Gospels, and Acts*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007.

³⁰ Calderhead, *Illuminating the Word*, 21.

³¹ Sink, *The Art of The Saint John's Bible*, 9.

³² Machlis and Forney, *The Enjoyment of Music*, 26.

³³ Lewis, *Reading Images*, 235–36.

You Were Chosen

That wasn't how it happened.
You're supposed to think that it
was as simple as an angel, and a yes,
a donkey ride, and a manger.
Some stars and wise men and gifts.
It wasn't. Instead, it was a fourteen year old
and tears and an angry betrothed, and more tears.
A quick visit to family in the country and
then a freezing cold, terrible night in a pile of straw.
No better than an animal.
Joseph was never sure how to act around the baby.
Instead, he made things.
He would let the little one watch him
as long as he didn't talk or ask questions.
Under other circumstances, we might have been happy.
But Joseph refused to touch me.
Maybe that's where they got ever-virgin from.
He built tables and chairs.
Cabinets and houses and chests.
They were beautiful.
People would walk from neighboring towns
and congratulate him on his work and his lovely family.
He would smile a strained smile and bend over his work.
I would take the boy into the house and make bread.
We always ended up with extra when he helped.
Joseph was never really happy
unless he was making something out of nothing.
Creating something that would be entirely his.
Something I or the boy's real father weren't
a part of. When he finished something new,
say a bench, or a cart, he might come inside
and ruffle the boy's hair and say something kind to me.
More often, he put his tools away, washed,
and sat in silence at the table.
You can get used to anything after a while.
We went along, if not happy,
civil at least, until the boy became a man,
and left his father's work for Jerusalem. We thought
he was going to be a teacher.
After an incident with Pilate and the other
occurrence a few days later,
I tried to convince Joseph that
I had been telling the truth.
But before I could explain myself,
someone came to see him about a new
kitchen table.

Kelly Marie Prosen

obscura

Gospel: Feast of the Holy Family (Luke 2:22-40)

Kathryn Janssen

I love the readings that surround our celebration of Christmas. Besides the Advent candles, wreaths, Christmas lights, and manger scenes, I revel in the beautiful and humbling reminder that our God loves us so intensely that instead of just leaving some set of instructions for us to follow, this human family receives a savior. Emmanuel. Yet, Emmanuel comes to an engaged couple, not yet living together. Amid the preparations for their marriage and the merging of families, Mary is found to be with child: impregnated by the Holy Spirit. We are familiar with this story, with this family—it is the Holy Family, of course!

Now, before I give the impression that I am going to tell you what you already know about these characters, I ask you to humor me by imagining the average family in Lakeville, Minnesota, or, if you are visiting, wherever you are from. Statistics show a decreasing number of children per family, but in general, the rule of four members per family applies; I think it might be 1.4 children, so let's just round up to 2. This, I would argue, is a broadly overgeneralized rule for family size and construction. But by what else do we “measure” ourselves, our families? Economic status? Social or civil involvement? Surely not the Holy Family!

What are our preconceived notions about the Holy Family?

Pious?

Perfect?

Unrealistic?

We celebrate Mary's immaculate conception, and thereby acknowledge her sinlessness. Joseph is a bit hesitant to join in on this venture, but with the coaxing of an angel in a dream, he is convinced that he too is called to this vocation to raise the Son of God. Add to that Jesus, the Savior of the world, and, if you are anything like me, the angelic visit eliminated any resemblance of my family about thirty seconds ago! I'll admit, the Griswold family from the movie *Christmas Vacation* seems a bit closer to my own experience. I am going out on a limb to take a guess that the “average Lakeville family” seems a far cry from this very holy bunch that we have come to identify as the Holy Family. Before today I might have agreed with you, but I've looked at it a different way this time and I invite you to do the same.

What if I told you that I think God chose this family, in this arrangement, not to intimidate us by their goodness, but to illuminate the Holy in our ordinary: to enable people to see their family reflected in what it means to be a holy family?

Most obviously, we honor this family because they lovingly agreed to raise the Christ Child. Mary conceived as a virgin and gave birth to Jesus; there were shepherds, wise men, angels, and a star—true. But there's more to it than that.

How do we read the story of the Holy Family and what questions might that raise for us? I propose that there are four approaches.

First, do we celebrate the unity and oneness of family, enhanced by the life of this child, and by Joseph's tremendous capacity to love and care for Jesus as his own Son through adoption? And as a community, how do we celebrate this vocation of love with those who choose adoption?

Second, believing that Mary and Joseph had no other children, we can ask this question: Did their hearts ever ache because together they would not be cocreators in bringing a baby into the world (*Catechism* par. 500)? I imagine it was more than enough of a shared vocation to parent the Savior of the world, don't get me wrong—but after Jesus went to bed, do you suppose Mary and Joseph ever talked about this?

Third, Mary certainly experienced the gift of life. Perhaps in a way that no other woman will fully understand; yet Mary too experienced the loss of a child. It is a scenario that nears the top of “what if” fears for any parent: the suffering of a child. How can we learn from Mary and Joseph's experience of loss to support those in our parish who have lost a child?

Finally, unlike Mary, after the finding of Jesus in the temple, Joseph is no longer mentioned. Many biblical scholars conclude that this suggests that Joseph passed away sometime after Jesus was born. Although Mary continued to be a strong and active presence in the life of her son, she appears to be doing it alone. This is a tremendous role for her to have played in a culture that saw a woman without a husband or son to be powerless. Do we take opportunities to see and affirm the work and love pro-

vided by those who are single? Do we remind them or single parents of the likeness these hard-working men and women share with Mary? Those who provide pillars of love and faith to this community and others, single-handedly?

I will admit, this was a revelation for me!

Have you ever seen the Holy Family this way; through the phases of their lives as Jesus' parents?

I am convinced that the ebb and flow in the lives of the members of the family we honor today model a much broader and more human family than we might give them credit for at first glance, certainly more than the census statistics. All at once we see:

- that at the same time Mary might celebrate the joy of motherhood through childbirth, Joseph may celebrate with you in the seamlessness and joy of adoption
- that they might ache with you and your spouse who cannot conceive
- that Mary could relate to the despair of losing a child to injustice—be that terminal illness,

gang violence, drunk driving, war, or fetal loss - that Mary was likely both widow and single mother

By the Lord's wisdom and intricate design, Jesus was welcomed into the world in a way that every person can relate to. What seemed like one specific model is actually multidimensional and very close to home.

It is understandable that for the many of us who do not fit into this "average family," or cannot relate to the traditional story of the Nativity, these times of family gatherings where dreaded questions of children and family inevitably arise can be painful. In the spirit of Luke's gospel, and at this time when family and friends gather together with nostalgia over Monopoly and eggnog or, in true Griswold fashion, snowy roads and delayed flights, it seemed a particularly fitting time to look for and acknowledge the "holy families" in our lives, including our own.



Blue Waters of the Atlantic, Watch Hill, RI
July 2008

Jeffrey P. Regan

All Creation Groans: A Comparison of Feminist and German Existential Theology of Romans 8:18-25

Jeffrey R. Reed

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to the futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

(Romans 8:18-25; NRSV)

Conventional exegetical and theological approaches to the understanding of the Pauline Epistles have been dominated by androcentric views of Paul, largely due to the fact that males have disproportionately done theology. Arguably, one of the most influential writings on New Testament theology in the last 150 years is Rudolf Bultmann's *Theology of the New Testament*. First published in 1951, Bultmann's anthropological view of New Testament writings and particularly those of the apostle Paul typify an androcentric view of Pauline theology. For nearly two thousand years, this has been the approach to virtually all exegetical reviews of Scripture. As more women have entered into theological endeavors, they have brought with them alternative ideas on how to view Scripture. There are any number of examples in Scripture where a female perspective is more than warranted, however, none more so than Romans 8:18-25, a pericope in which Paul describes "all of creation groaning with labor pains." Perhaps there is no better lens to view a pericope regarding childbirth, even if it is understood to be metaphoric, than through the eyes of a woman. In this paper I examine Bultmann's interpretation of creation with a comparison to his more traditional views to those of several feminist interpretations regarding Paul's theology of creation.

Bultmann's view of the Pauline Epistles, particularly Romans, is complex. Bultmann emphasizes the Gnostic influence on Paul and more specifically on Paul's view of creation.¹ He also makes reference to Paul's pantheism (Rom 11:36)² and his use of what would currently be termed natural theology (Rom 1:19).³ Most intriguing is Bultmann's view on how Gnostic and Old Testament traditions combined to form Paul's view of creation. Bultmann explains that according to Paul, creation is from the Creator (the use of Creator indicating the Old Testament influence) and humankind is excepted from creation but certainly belongs to it.⁴ Since humankind is no longer part of creation yet is endowed by God with "special dignity and responsibility" (1 Cor 11:37) toward it, humanity stands between God and creation and must choose between the two. The earth and its creatures are subordinate to humankind and are not influenced by the cosmic powers Paul refers to in Romans 8:38-39:

neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

As Bultmann notes, this gives creation an ambiguous character, on one hand the earth has been placed at humanity's disposal for his use and benefit by God (1 Cor 10:26), while on the other hand creation is the field of activity for evil and demonic powers. It is from here that Bultmann sees Paul's Old Testament tradition flow together with his appropriation of Gnostic mythology. It is through this Gnostic mythology that creation becomes a destructive power and humanity chooses it over God. Paul's view that all humankind is in sin (Rom 1:18-3:20) can therefore be traced to humankind basing life upon creation rather than the creator. As such, creation owes to humanity just as it owes to God. This view

¹ Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 227-32.

² *Ibid.*, 229.

³ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 230.

of Bultmann is also evident in his writing regarding “Gnostic Motifs,” where he again claims Paul to have appropriated the Gnostic myth of creation’s fall as well as that of Adam.⁵ Therefore, according to Bultmann, humanity’s plight in the world is “as a life which by its origin is destined for destruction, a life that is prone to be ruled by demonic powers.”⁶ It is particularly interesting that Bultmann continually sets humankind in opposition to creation. When Paul does hint at humankind and creation being related or at least dependent on each other (1 Cor 15:28) he commonly dismisses the pericope as either Gnostic or pantheistic. Perhaps even more telling is that Bultmann makes no mention of “all of creation groaning” (Rom 8:22). Here Paul has indicated that humankind and creation are one in their groaning in desperation for a new order, and again Bultmann makes no mention of the passage in his treatise. One can only speculate about why he does not mention this female imagery; imagery that seemingly ties humanity and creation together in such a way that creation is as dependent on Christ’s death and resurrection as is humankind. In §31 Bultmann makes no mention of creation being reconciled with humankind.⁷

The lack of attention paid to creation in Bultmann raises the question of whether Paul was at all concerned about creation and if so, in what sense. According to W. D. Davies, Paul’s concern for land and creation was based on his view that the new movement the world was experiencing—that is, Christianity—was the next step from exile to land.⁸ As a result, Davies contends the land was largely dismissed by early Christians. Combined with an immediate sense of revelation due to their apocalyptic views, early Christians found no reason to maintain balance with creation.⁹ Conversely, Walter Brueggemann contends that while creation wasn’t perhaps a central focus of Pauline theology, it was much more common and integral to Christianity than Davies is willing to acknowledge.¹⁰ Brueggemann finds land,

and creation, integral to the Pauline mission.¹¹ In particular, Brueggemann notes the importance of the apocalyptic view that land was essential to complete the cycle from exile to “rightness” with Torah and God’s will. Central to Brueggemann’s argument is Romans 8:17, which refers to “heirs” and the promise to the descendants of Abraham that they inherit the world (cosmos) not through the law but by faith. As those who gather around Christ are heirs, all will find freedom from exile and a new creation.¹² While Brueggemann fails to mention “groaning” specifically, it is very likely that those who follow Christ will be those groaning with creation for the fulfillment of prophecy. Neither Bultmann, Davies, nor Brueggemann reflect on the portion of the pericope that mentions “groaning with labor pains.” Perhaps they were deferring that exegesis to feminist theologians, several of whom we now turn our attention to.

The mere idea that Paul could be seen as an ally to feminist theology is nearly laughable. Paul lived in a decidedly androcentric culture and his writings arise from a fundamentally androcentric viewpoint.¹³ Examining the Pauline corpus from a feminist perspective is, of course, somewhat dangerous in that it is quite easy to fall into a revisionist trap. If we are to look at how the Pauline corpus will influence our current theology and spiritual lives, however, it is imperative to examine this literature from all perspectives, particularly from those who are affected by these writings.

A feminist view of Paul and creation begins with an “immersion into the apocalyptic tradition that Paul uses and a disassociation from the androcentric blueprint most often used in the interpretation of Paul.”¹⁴ Accordingly, Luzia Sutter Rehman defines her views on Paul and creation based on her interpretation of apocalyptic literature. Rehman sees such literature as that of resistance, written by people who with all their might and hope are waiting for transformation of existing conditions. She goes on to note, however, that waiting isn’t neces-

⁵ Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 174.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 230.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 235–38.

⁸ W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), 396–404.

⁹ Revealing a Gnostic influence that both Davies and Bultmann consider important in the development of Pauline theology of creation.

¹⁰ Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2002), 166.

¹¹ For the purposes of this paper, I consider land as an integral part of creation as alluded to by Brueggemann. It can also be considered a political property.

¹² Brueggemann, *The Land*, 167.

¹³ Sheila E. McGinn, “Feminists and Paul in Romans 8:18-23: Toward a Theology of Creation,” in *Gender, Tradition and Romans: Shared Ground, Uncertain Borders*, eds. Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 21.

¹⁴ Luzia Sutter Rehman, “To Turn the Groaning into Labor: Romans 8:22-23,” in *A Feminist Companion to Paul*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine (New York: T & T Clark), 74.

sarily a passive exercise; in fact, they are reaching out for redemption. She also questions the “Christian patience” for salvation, asking rhetorically if patient waiting actually brings relief in times of distress. On the contrary, Paul says to cry out loud, protest, demand abundant life and justice. Rehman demonstrates how this apocalyptic imagery shows that hope and resistance are interwoven into the metaphor of laboring creation: “Birthing, labor, is not an impotent whispering of poor female bodies, nor is it passive suffering. . . . It is above all active!” She goes on to note that when viewed metaphorically and from a feminist understanding, the laboring and groaning is working toward a whole new life, beyond the androcentric view of birth that associates it with pain and suffering and the “production of sons.”¹⁵

Contrary to Bultmann’s view of creation as being created for humanity’s disposal and use, Rehman contends that Paul does not put Christians in opposition to creation. Paul does not isolate community and creation from Christ’s death and resurrection; this event has overtaken all of creation. Humankind and creation groan together with hope for beginning and new life. Groaning binds them together.

Somewhat similar to Bultmann, Rehman does note that Paul is using mythic images from Old Testament images to develop his metaphor. Paul expands this myth in his discourse; obviously creation has no mouth from which to groan, nor a head or eyes to look out into the future. The myth, while incorporating Old Testament influences, certainly must be considered a metaphoric image of a woman in childbirth.

Rehman’s view on sin is considerably different from Bultmann’s.¹⁶ Whereas Bultmann places the cause of humankind’s sin as a choice between creation and God, Rehman claims Paul’s interpretation of sin results largely from the economic and military oppression that resulted from Roman domination in the Mediterranean region. This oppression led to sin. Consequently, with sin present, Jews could no longer uphold God’s will (Torah), resulting in a life far apart from God. Rehman also adds that all creation suffers as a result, and rather than being the source of evil as Bultmann’s theology would assert, creation is subjugated to the same cosmological powers that are hostile to God; just as is humankind.

Rehman concludes by rhetorically (or perhaps

not) questioning what this female imagery in Romans 8:22-23 would have meant to the female companions that Paul had acknowledged as coworkers. Could it be that Paul saw them as vital to our understanding that they are giving birth to a new creation in a matter that required pain and suffering but above all, active participation?

Similarly to Rehman, Sheila McGinn begins her analysis of Romans 8:18-23 from an apocalyptic understanding of Paul, also claiming this leads one to discern gender relations in a new creation or eschatological perspective.¹⁷ McGinn takes great issue with the tradition surrounding the Pauline corpus and chastises female exegetes for being slow to analyze Paul’s letters for the various theological themes and questions their male counterparts have been doing since antiquity. Still, while not approving of the tradition, McGinn notes that neither the androcentrism present in Paul’s writings nor the misogyny that has resulted are enough to reject them entirely.

According to McGinn, Paul’s theology of creation begins with the assumption that it is a result of a divine act and therefore creation is a divine object. Unlike the previously mentioned authors, McGinn notes that Paul is greatly interested in the nature of creation. Because he views it as a divine act, he is particularly interested in the role creation will play in God’s plan for salvation. In her view, however, Paul’s view of creation has been misappropriated by a “malestream theology” that at its very best has viewed creation as subordinate to humankind. From this platform nature has been denigrated and viewed in dualistic fashion in opposition to a spiritual reality, that is, nature is evil, corrupt, and a source of temptation for the “spiritual man.” Although not mentioned specifically, Bultmann’s legacy and view on creation certainly does come very close to McGinn’s description. She goes on to argue that because women are so closely tied to nature (e.g., Rehman’s claim that creation giving birth to a new creation is a metaphor for a woman in labor) through their roles in gestation, childbirth, and lactation, women have similarly been denigrated; the earth and women have both been relegated to subordinate roles. For example, she notes that imagery often associates women and nature and that they are both capricious and irrational. This is contrary to man and spirit, which are seen as trustworthy and rational. Interestingly, Wendell Berry has made a similar observation on the re-

¹⁵ Rehman, “To Turn the Groaning into Labor,” 75.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁷ McGinn, “Feminists and Paul in Romans 8:18-23,” 22.

relationship between how women and land have been treated. He writes:

I do not know how exact a case might be made, but it seems to me that there is an historical parallel . . . between the treatment of the land the treatment of women . . . interested in both mainly for what they could produce, crops and dollars, labor and sons.¹⁸

Berry's words give life to McGinn's argument and even more reason to seriously consider the feminist viewpoint.

From her exegetical work and apocalyptic understanding of Paul's theology, McGinn constructs a feminist theology of Romans 8:18-23. Accordingly, the universe is a creation of God and as a creature it has a purpose. Creation is not static, but rather a dynamic entity that is continually seeking fulfillment. As a dynamic entity with purpose, creation is meant to work with humanity and God. Through the web of life, McGinn notes that creation, humanity, and Creator are intimately bound with each other. From that bond, creation is eager for human salvation and human and creation fulfillment are dependent on each other. She goes on to say that the fulfillment of creation will reveal a nature that is connected to what currently exists but is qualitatively different. McGinn contends that she and Paul begin at the same place, with a loving deity who generated the universe. Yet she also notes that Paul's encomium on creation goes even further than her feminist model. In the spirit of Rehman, McGinn notes that Romans 8:18-23 depicts creation as an active, live force that is seeking to achieve a goal it shares with humanity. Paul's theology of creation is therefore intertwined with his view of the eschaton; creation, like humankind, is actively pursuing the goal of eternal salvation. McGinn notes that the eschatological view is troublesome for feminists in that it more often than not requires "redemptive violence" and the acceptance of the annihilation of the earth, disdain for the human body, and human salvation through cosmic holocaust.

These observations are particularly striking, as they are supportive of Bultmann's claim of Gnostic influences in Paul's theology of creation. Paul, however, never mentions a cosmic holocaust or anything being destroyed in his eschatological vision. Rather, he envisions a liberation of creation so that it may achieve its full potential. When human salvation is

complete, creation likewise will find its fulfillment in God's glory. When humanity's deficiency is overcome and humans are adopted as heirs to God's freedom and glory, creation will also find its fulfillment. In light of this, McGinn closes by suggesting feminist theologians would be well served to reconsider the role of eschatology in their theology. Feminist theologians embrace humanity's relationship with creation. Ironically, that same embrace is what has kept them subordinate since antiquity.¹⁹ It is appropriate for feminist theologians to examine, perhaps even embrace Paul's theology of creation. They stand in stark contrast to Bultmann and those he influenced who have made faith existential to the point that nature and community are left out of the equation.²⁰

Christianity, similarly theology, can be seen as a closed system with well-defined boundaries, established ways of examining Scripture and strict dogma. Conversely, it can be fluid, boundless, and understood, as creation can be, as a dynamic reality. As Bultmann's work was likely seen as pushing boundaries when it was first published, feminist theologians are doing likewise; pushing boundaries and creating new vantage points from which we can examine the theological landscape of Scripture and how it, and consequently we, affect creation.

Bibliography

- Anderson, Bernhard W. *From Creation to New Creation: Old Testament Perspectives*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994.
- Berry, Wendell. *Recollected Essays, 1965-1980*. San Francisco, CA: North Point, 1981.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002.
- Bultmann, Rudolph. *Theology of the New Testament*. Reprint. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007.
- Davies, W. D. *The Gospel and the Land*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974.
- McGinn, Sheila E. "Feminists and Paul in Romans 8:18-23: Toward a Theology of Creation." In *Gender, Tradition and Romans: Shared Ground, Uncertain Borders*, edited by Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte, 22-38. New York: T & T Clark, 2005.
- Rehman, Luzia Sutter. "To Turn the Groaning into Labor: Romans 8:22-23." In *A Feminist Companion to Paul*, edited by Amy-Jill Levine, 74-84. New York: T & T Clark, 2004.

¹⁸ Wendell Berry, *Recollected Essays, 1965-1980* (San Francisco, CA: North Point, 1981), 215.

¹⁹ McGinn, "Feminists and Paul in Romans 8:18-23," 34.

²⁰ Bernhard W. Anderson, *From Creation to New Creation: Old Testament Perspectives* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 115.

All the World is Church: The Christian Call in Henri de Lubac

Benjamin M. Durheim

Introduction

For Henri de Lubac, the fundamental problem with humankind is its disunity; the original state of humankind was one in which each person was in unity with his or her neighbors and the entire race.¹ Sin disrupted that unity, however, and the current ruptured state is irreparable by human means. The only way humans may reenter that original unity with one another—the only way they may be *saved* from their present disunity—it to allow themselves to be aided by the one who entered history from without in order to effect just such a salvation. For de Lubac, salvation—which is the restoration of the unity of all with God and each other—comes from Jesus Christ and through his church.²

This essay explores the meaning and social implications of de Lubac's theology. Beginning with his notions of the natural and supernatural, this essay briefly surveys de Lubac's anthropology, followed by the social aspects of his ecclesiology.³ Finally, this paper draws some social and political implications from de Lubac's theology and argues that in light of his work, Christians are called to view the entire world as church.

De Lubac's Anthropology

De Lubac begins his work *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* by citing the views of the church fathers, in which the restoration of the primordial unity between the human race and God and the unity among its members was a central eschatological hope.⁴ To understand de Lubac's view of human unity, however, one must first understand his view of the human. For de Lubac, the human per-

son is a synthesis, or more correctly, a *paradox*—a joining of the natural and supernatural.⁵ The natural aspect is easily apparent; humans live in a natural, physical world, and can manipulate their surroundings and themselves. They depend on natural things for life, they reproduce by a natural process, and they perish away through natural courses. De Lubac, however, standing squarely on the shoulders of the Christian tradition, argues that the entirety of human existence is also connected to a supernatural order.⁶ Humans were *made* in unity with God their creator, and though through sin that unity has been disrupted, the call to that unity remains, and the way back to that unity has been restored in Christ. The supernatural, according to de Lubac, is not simply an aspect of our humanity; it is rather the very “mystery of our divine destiny.”⁷

De Lubac is very careful to avoid any definition of the supernatural that would suggest that it is merely out-of-the-ordinary experiences, like miracles.⁸ The supernatural is not simply a force, an event, or some unexplainable phenomenon. Instead, the supernatural is an order of existence, which is offered to humankind gratuitously through a *relationship*.⁹ In fact, this relationship cannot be said to have a definite beginning or end; rather, the human is *always* in relationship with the supernatural. The problem is that, unaided, the relationship can only be one of opposition and disunity between the natural and supernatural.¹⁰ The nature of humans is not utterly separated from their call to unity with the supernatural. Rather, the natural-supernatural relationship has been corrupted into one of opposition and disunity, which no human can rectify on his or her own.

This disunity with the supernatural—with God the Creator—can then only translate into the disunity of humans with one another. The one who

¹ Dana L. Dillon, “Public Order, the Common Good, and Our Supernatural Destiny,” Samford University, Birmingham, AL, http://www.samford.edu/lillyhumanrights/papers/Dillon_Public.pdf (accessed July 9, 2008): 7.

² Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard and Elizabeth Englund. (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1988), 223.

³ A wealth of literature has been produced both by de Lubac and commentators on his sacramental theology and its interplay with his ecclesiology. For the most part, however, this subject matter is beyond the scope of this paper, and so deliberately receives little attention.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁵ See Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998), 101–18.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁸ Henri de Lubac, *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace*, trans. Richard Arnandez. (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1984), 22–24.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

created human nature must be the ultimate source of the unity of human nature, so to be in a relationship of opposition to the supernatural (as all humans are as a result of sin), necessarily allows opposition to flood into the natural realm of humankind. In de Lubac's words, "any breach with God, is at the same time a disruption of human unity."¹¹ In this way, human unity is tied inseparably to the human race's unity with God. True human unity is impossible apart from the reconciliation (or reunification) of the natural and supernatural.

Another way de Lubac speaks of the human condition is in the language of image seeking likeness. Humans were created in the image of God, that they might also bear God's likeness.¹² As humans sinned and corrupted the image, however, they were no longer able to attain the likeness of God that is the fullness of the image, which means that though they are still *called* to bear the likeness, they can only be moved toward the likeness of God through Christ. For de Lubac, Christ reveals the likeness of God to which humans are called, and that call echoes to the very foundations of human nature.¹³ As the human race was created—in unity with God and with unity among its members, and as an image of God bearing God's likeness—to such an end it is destined. The healing of God's image, the bearing of God's likeness, and the reunification of the natural and supernatural—these are different ways of speaking about the same salvation, but de Lubac's point with all of them is that the entire human race is oriented toward this one common end.¹⁴ As de Lubac articulates, "The whole universe cries out for its delivery and it is sure to obtain it. Its groaning is begotten by hope."¹⁵

It is important to note that for de Lubac, Christ alone provides this hope and effects any true reunification. Only Christ, as a sharer in the substance of both the supernatural *and* natural orders, can bring the two out of opposition and into unity. In de Lubac's words:

Whether humanity knows it or not, it needs Christ. Emerging with difficulty from the cosmos that gave it birth, the human spirit, an irreversible force, needs the irreversible victory of Christ to achieve its divine destiny. His mys-

tical body must be the incarnation of humanity, thus allowing humanity to enter into God. Humanity has been adopted by the Father in the person of Jesus, the Son. Its purification and transfiguration must be accomplished by modeling itself on him and receiving his life. It must 'take the form of Christ.'¹⁶

Here de Lubac makes the point that humankind needs Christ for two main reasons. First, Christ heals the broken unity between God and the human race. Second, Christ both shows humans (by his example) how to model themselves in a way that reflects true unity, and provides humans (by his self-gift) with the means of "receiving his life"¹⁷: the church and the sacraments. This is the beginning of de Lubac's ecclesiology. If Christ restores unity between God and humans in any real way, then a human community must be the expression and proclamation of that unity, or at least of the earthly pilgrimage toward that final unity. In a sense, the church is the community of humans that is striving to become more fully that which it already is, though imperfectly: a comm-unity of humans. Both to be "adopted by the Father"¹⁸ and to receive Christ's life entail living to the greatest degree possible in the unity that was originally meant for humankind—that is, living in such a way as *to become more fully human*. As Susan Wood has pointed out, "Christ is not a particular instance of humanity, but . . . to be fully human is somehow to be related to Christ, as at once the cause of humanity and the restorer of human unity."¹⁹ Unity between the natural and supernatural is constitutive of unity between humans, and more fundamentally, of authentic humanity. Because Christ wrought this unity, and because it is through Christ that one may access this unity, the human is dependent on Christ for his or her humanity. For de Lubac, anthropology really is, in this sense, Christology.

De Lubac's Social Ecclesiology

Though humans rely completely on Christ for any true unity with God and each other, this reliance for de Lubac is never in an individualistic context. Unity between humans makes no sense if the ulti-

¹¹ De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 33.

¹² David Grumett, *De Lubac: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 16.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁴ De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 232.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁶ Henri de Lubac, *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*, trans. James R. Dunne (Staten Island, NY: Ecclesia Press, 1969), 7.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Susan Karaus Wood, "The Church as the Social Embodiment of Grace in the Ecclesiology of Henri de Lubac" (PhD diss., Marquette University, 1986), 271.

mate category is the individual rather than the human race, and since it is the *human race* that was created in unity with God, and it is the *human race* that is destined to return to that unity through Christ, de Lubac finds it exceedingly important to realize that the context for salvation (reunification) is not the individual but the *church*.²⁰ For de Lubac, since his theological springboard was the original unity of humankind and the problem of its current disunity, and since his notion of salvation is the restored unity of the human race with God and between its members, the pilgrimage to that salvation can only take place in history as a communal trek. Unity cannot be restored if there is no one with whom to be unified; the church provides the matrix in which Christ's saving action occurs.

Just as one cannot understand de Lubac's theology in an individualistic manner, neither can one understand his vision of unity as melting away difference and distinction between humans. For de Lubac, the unity of the church does not connote an objective ideology separated from the reality of the persons who make it up.²¹ Instead the church, as the place that fosters authentic human unity, also fosters authentic human diversity. In his words, "the distinction between the different parts of a being stands out the more clearly as the union of these parts is closer."²² For de Lubac, the unity of humankind is a result of the shared image of God, which is expressed in a diversity of ways and relationships.²³ This unity is still only achievable in its fullness through Christ, but unity in and through Christ does not mean *uniformity* in and through Christ.

In addition to a rejection of individualism and an affirmation of human diversity, de Lubac is also careful to emphasize that the church does not already contain the final unity that is its goal in Christ. As Wood explains, "the unity of the human race is *analogous* to the unity of the Church,"²⁴ but the complete unity of the human race is not produced fully in the church. For de Lubac, the mystery of salvation "expresses itself in historical forms and . . . always tran-

scends these forms."²⁵ The most concrete historical forms in which Christ's saving action is present are the community and sacraments of the church. The church is in this light a powerful spiritual entity and even necessary for salvation,²⁶ but Christians must never confuse the church itself with the kingdom of God toward which the church is oriented.²⁷

This pilgrimage of the church leads to the importance of history in de Lubac's theology. For him, "the stages of history . . . are in reality stages of an essentially collective salvation."²⁸ History provides the stage for the drama of salvation, and consequently for de Lubac the church, as the temporal vehicle by which humans travel to that final reunification with God and each other, is also extremely important as the channel to salvation.²⁹ Without the church, salvation would be impossible.³⁰ De Lubac does not explicitly affirm Cyprian's famous axiom that "outside the church there is no salvation," but neither does he deny it.³¹ Instead, he takes great pains to nuance that claim, by identifying the universal human yearning for the lost original unity, and exploring how that yearning may unfold in light of Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

De Lubac acknowledges that "outside Christianity . . . humanity tries to collect its members into unity"³² on its own. Humans attempt, socially and sometimes even spiritually (e.g., through non-Christian religions), to restore the lost unity among themselves. The debilitating effects of sin are easily discernable, but mere human agency cannot correct those effects. Therefore, it is only Christ through the church that can bring one to salvation. But what may happen to those outside the visible church on earth? De Lubac's answer to this question may not be paraphrased as either "they will not be saved" or "they may be saved." Instead, de Lubac rejects the foundations of the question itself. Salvation is communal—it is the restoration of unity of the human race with God and among its members—so if the church is that community that is consciously on a pilgrimage

²⁰ Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizjoulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 14–15.

²¹ See Henri de Lubac, *The Motherhood of the Church*, trans. Sergia Englund. (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1982), 153–68.

²² De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 328.

²³ McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church*, 19.

²⁴ Wood, "The Church as the Social Embodiment," 274. Italics mine.

²⁵ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac*, trans. Joseph Fessio and Michael M. Waldstein (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1991), 102.

²⁶ See discussion below.

²⁷ Henri de Lubac, *The Catholic and His Church*, trans. Michael Mason (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 72.

²⁸ De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 148.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 236.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, 234.

³² *Ibid.*, 225.

to Christ who makes salvation possible, the church is therefore necessary for the very possibility of salvation itself.³³ The necessity of the church for salvation is not about which humans are saved and which humans are not; it is about the fact that the church rightly sees the goal of salvation and cooperates in history with the saving initiative of Christ. Put simply, if there is no community to cooperate with Christ, then Christ's work reaches no one.

Implications of de Lubac's Theology

This paper is now in a position to answer the following questions: If the church is the vehicle of salvation traveling through history, how should its members interact with their human surroundings? What social implications may one draw from this theology? For de Lubac, the answer to these questions can only effectively be given by someone within the context of Christianity to Christians living within that same context.³⁴ The question of Christianity's relationship with and to the world has relevance only if the answer is given to those whose actions put the answer into practice. Since the question is posed from a Christian context (the *church's* relationship to the world), Christians are the ones who must be concerned with the answer. De Lubac's explanations, though they may be coherent to the world outside Christianity, are meant to be effective specifically in and through the lives of Christians.

For de Lubac, the question of Christians' roles in the world ultimately hinges on the drama of the lost unity of humankind seeking reunification, and thereby the drama of the relationship of the natural and supernatural. If the natural and supernatural are always in this relationship—even a relationship of opposition—then one's actions in the natural order necessarily affect one's relationship with the supernatural order.³⁵ What this essentially means is that for de Lubac, social/political matters and spiritual matters should never be separated from each other, even if the social/political situation were to be nearly perfect: "The happiest and most perfect form of social existence would be the most inhuman of conditions if it were not ordered to the spiritual life."³⁶

³³ Wood, "The Church as the Social Embodiment," 248.

³⁴ See Henri de Lubac, "The Light of Christ," in *Theology in History*, trans. Anne Englund Nash (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1996), 201–20.

³⁵ Henri de Lubac, *Theological Fragments*, trans. Rebecca Howell Balinski (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1989), 214–15.

³⁶ De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 360.

One must be careful about de Lubac's claim here that the matters of the world should be "ordered to the spiritual life,"³⁷ however. By this he does not mean that the church should in any way exercise temporal power over or even in conjunction with the state.³⁸ The purpose of the church is not to attempt to establish the kingdom of God on earth. The church's purpose is instead to work for the kingdom of God in heaven, which entails fostering, through and by Christ, unity among humans and between humans and God. The task of the church, however, does carry *into* the affairs of temporal powers. Unity among humans is not merely a supernatural hope; it has a natural aspect, and where that aspect is absent, there also is the unity with the supernatural absent.

One of the best examples of de Lubac's prescription for the interplay of the spiritual and social realms is his concept of "spiritual resistance." Faced with the horrific events resulting from the rise of the Nazi regime, de Lubac claimed that the social crisis was not simply one relegated to the social realm, but one that was essentially spiritual.³⁹ By this he meant that though the Nazi party was a political entity, its actions were directly contrary to the *spirit* of Christianity, and so resistance to the Nazis was not a mere social choice, but rather was a moral mandate. Nevertheless, de Lubac adamantly refused to allow his work on that specific issue to become a political tool.⁴⁰ He did not want Christianity to become an instrument of the state, any more than he would have wanted the state to become a tool of the church. Instead, he claimed that Christians must stay true to the spirit of Christianity,⁴¹ which included resisting the Nazi regime and helping those whom it oppressed.

This example suggests that for de Lubac, while the church should not directly—or even indirectly⁴²—exert any formal political power, the church as a community must act in the political and social arena according to its salvific, reunifying goal. The common destiny of humans that is reunification with

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Grumett, *De Lubac*, 29.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴¹ Henri de Lubac, "Spiritual Warfare," in *Theology in History*, trans. Anne Englund Nash (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1996), 500–501.

⁴² This is a technical term taken from Robert Bellarmine, the concept of which de Lubac ultimately rejects as incorrect to describe the church's proper role in society (de Lubac, *Theological Fragments*, 199–233).

God and each other is not simply a religious hope. It is additionally a social directive, because the unity of humans with one another and their unity with God are inseparable.⁴³ Since the church is on a pilgrimage through history, the actions of its pilgrims take on a “special dignity and an awful gravity,”⁴⁴ in that the historical, social actions of Christians are *always* done within the context of the drama of salvation.⁴⁵ This means that one’s Christian identity necessarily shapes and is shaped by one’s actions in the public realm. To argue otherwise would be to drive a wedge between the natural and supernatural, because one would assume one’s actions in the natural order do not affect one’s relationship with the supernatural. In this way, the church must shape not just the religious actions of a human, but must instead shape *all* actions of a human, insofar as they affect unity between humans and God, *and among humans themselves*. Put another way, *all* public actions are *religious* actions because all public actions in some way or another affect the unity of humankind among its members themselves and of its members with God.

Finally, if all public actions are religious actions, and the church is the pilgrim community striving to live in and after the example of Christ, then from a Christian perspective that affirms the fundamental unity and common destiny of the human race, all the world is, in effect, church. This should not be misinterpreted to suggest that the entire world is confessionally or sacramentally Christian. Of course it isn’t. Instead, the entire world is church in the sense that all of creation is part of the same story, and that is the Christian story of reunification—of salvation. Every action the Christian takes is done in the context of church. There is no place where the relationship of natural and supernatural is unreal or irrelevant. All the world is church, insofar as no action occurs outside the drama of salvation.

This paper, after briefly exploring Henri de Lubac’s anthropology and the social aspects of the ecclesiology, argues that the relationship of the natural and supernatural ultimately bears on every action

humans take. Humankind is in a broken state of disunity, and trapped in an oppositional relationship between their nature and the supernatural, but in Christ that disunity is healed and that opposition relieved. The church, as the presence on earth through which Christ and his salvific acts are accessed, is necessary for the communal salvation of the human race. Humankind shares a common destiny in Christ, and because all of creation is part of this drama of salvation, no human action is outside the Christian story. In this way the entire natural order is in relationship with the supernatural, and so as the locus of the Christian pilgrimage (of which the whole human race is more or less a part), all the world is church.

Works Cited

- de Lubac, Henri. *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace*. Translated by Richard Arnandez. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1984.
- . *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*. Translated by Lancelot C. Sheppard and Elizabeth Englund. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1988.
- . “Spiritual Warfare.” In *Theology in History*, 488–501. Translated by Anne Englund Nash. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1996.
- . *The Catholic and His Church*. Translated by Michael Mason. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956.
- . *The Church: Paradox and Mystery*. Translated by James R. Dunne. Staten Island, NY: Ecclesia Press, 1969.
- . “The Light of Christ.” In *Theology in History*, 201–20. Translated by Anne Englund Nash. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1996.
- . *The Motherhood of the Church*. Translated by Sergia Englund. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1982.
- . *The Mystery of the Supernatural*. Translated by Rosemary Sheed. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998.
- . *Theological Fragments*. Translated by Rebecca Howell Balinski. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1989.
- Dillon, Dana L. “Public Order, the Common Good, and Our Supernatural Destiny.” Samford University. Birmingham, AL. http://www.samford.edu/lillyhumanrights/papers/Dillon_Public.pdf. Accessed July 9, 2008.
- Grumett, David. *De Lubac: A Guide for the Perplexed*. New York: T & T Clark, 2007.
- McPartlan, Paul. *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizoulas in Dialogue*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993.
- von Balthasar, Hans Urs. *The Theology of Henri de Lubac*. Translated by Joseph Fessio and Michael M. Waldstein. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1991.
- Wood, Susan Karas. “The Church as the Social Embodiment of Grace in the Ecclesiology of Henri de Lubac.” PhD diss., Marquette University, 1986.

⁴³ See n. 10 above.

⁴⁴ De Lubac, *Catholicism*, 332.

⁴⁵ Of course, all actions of all people are always done within the context of the drama of salvation, because by virtue of humans’ common origin and common destiny, all humans are part of the same story. This paper simply wishes to make the point here specifically that Christians’ actions never occur outside their relationship to the supernatural, or outside the context of their Christian identity. Recall that de Lubac’s discussion is primarily aimed *from* the context of Christianity *to* Christians themselves.

Evening Prayer at the Chapel of Holy Wisdom

Everything for evening prayer is set. Candles are lit, musicians playing, lectors in place, hospitality greeters at the chapel doors. Everything except me. I try on an alb—too big; I am swimming in white folds. I try on another—too small; it pulls at my neck. I feel like Goldilocks in the sacristy. I go for the mid-sized one, which is not just right but it will do. I find a cord to cinch at the waist. I look in the full-length mirror attached to the door, jutting out diagonally from the closet. My alb is pouffy, bunchy, a white potato sack that flows over the tops of my shoes. If it weren't for the lipstick, they might not even notice I am a woman, which, in all actuality, would not be terrible. But I am a woman indeed; it is important for me to do well tonight. It is gift for me to be here, in this giant pillowcase, held together by an oddly knotted cord. I look myself in the eye, at this odd angle, and take a deep breath. What the hell am I doing here, again? It's an odd feeling—out of place, out of character, out, really, of context. Now it is time. I move out of the sacristy to the presider's chair and sit down in the moments before the prayer begins. I concentrate on avoiding the eyes of my sarcastic friend, one of the many seminarians in habit tonight, ever attempting to evoke a face or laugh from me. I look up toward the high ceiling across from me. It is dark outside, a deep, dark blue through the tall and narrow window slats that pierce the high walls of the chapel. And in this darkness, the half moon shines through one of the slats like a pearl, glowing, reminding me of my center. It takes me beyond the mirror and reminds me into whose face I need to be looking this evening. And I know that I am exactly where I am supposed to be.

Natalie Perl Regan

Our Lord speaks to us in Matthew's gospel of love: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39).¹ As spiritual caregivers to neighbors, we offer a safe place to fall, an ear that receives with nonjudgmental confidence, and an active advocacy toward healing, all while working in endless, health-giving creative ways.

To be able to give we must have. In the challenging and rewarding world of a female spiritual caregiver, how do we care for ourselves? In what ways can we offer ourselves the spiritual care we need so we can continue to care for others? It is a most important task, for if we do not take good care of ourselves, we do a great disservice to our spirits, minds, and bodies. This disservice can easily lead to burnout. Psychologist Christina Maslach defines burnout as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind."²

Spiritual care is not only "people work," but is also God's work. If we do not offer ourselves proper self-care, this can accentuate a deeper level to the burnout experienced. I know firsthand the work it takes to find that necessary self-care. When I was training to become a chaplain, I thought I was doing "just fine" day after day witnessing loss, pain, and suffering. I thought the cases that turned out well were enough to balance the residual hurt I felt from the others. Well, after gaining ten pounds, discovering my hair was falling out, and experiencing bouts of insomnia, I frequently began to isolate myself. Eventually, I found myself on my knees asking God to strengthen me so I could continue to do his work. The problem with my request was that I did not realize that I played a huge part in strengthening myself. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "Action springs not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility."³ God is there as my partner in self-care, offering many tools, but just as I must be willing to receive his grace to do spiritual care, I have to be willing

to receive his tools. In other words, he asked me to pitch in—and I did!

Returning to Matthew's gospel, we can find the first step toward self-care. When I take these words into myself, my integrated self, and reflect further on them using *lectio divina*, a message of loving kindness comes through. *Lectio divina* can be a conduit through which scriptural passages can become truly one's own. For me, thoughts of equality also come up, equality of honor and need between the love I offer others and the love I offer myself. What I heard was that I needed to offer myself loving kindness. *Lectio divina* is a practice we can all use in spiritual care for ourselves. Inviting *lectio divina* into our self-care can help shape the mind as it offers food for prayer.

Let's Feast!

As Christian women, we base our practice of spiritual care on our faith in and love for Christ and his teachings. Basing our work in spiritual care on Christ and the belief in his promise of his kingdom, we can turn to him with our questions of self-care. If we feel called to imitate Christ in our service to others, it only makes sense to try to imitate him in our self-care. What spiritual care did Christ offer himself during his ministry? One thing I know is Christ feasted during his mission—Christ was a feaster! Jesus went to parties, weddings, feasts, and celebrations—even graciously turning water into wine, ensuring the feast could continue. This may seem a too literal or simple version of this miracle, but Christ enjoying himself while sipping the superior wine is a token of loving kindness, not only for the guests, but also for himself. A feast can be a wonderful way to rejuvenate our mind, body, and spirit after we feel taxed from work and giving. Feasting allows us to "take in," to enjoy a healthy indulgence of the gifts of food, wine, fellowship, and pleasure. There is a spiritual significance to food. At the Lord's table, the joyful feast nourishes us, and it is a meal of renewal. Saint Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food" (1 Cor 6:13). In our feasting, when we enjoy and relish how our food and drink taste and how they nourish us, we say "yum" with gratitude for the God-given gift of the senses, all while being present to our humanness.

¹ All Scripture references are taken from the NAB.

² Christina Maslach, *Burnout: The Cost of Caring* (Mahwah, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982), 3.

³ Geoffrey B. Kelly and Nelson F. Burton, *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1990).

Feasting is not simply what we take into our bodies but also what we take into our minds, hearts, eyes, ears, and the entirety of our beings. Feasting on the arts is a wonderful feast for healing and self-care. The art to which I refer is both art of the created world and art humans create. Using *visio divina*—focusing our eyes on art to see God—is a piece of self care, a piece of feasting that can slow us down, calm our spirits, and bring the compassion of Christ we dearly need in front of us, whether our focus is on a sunset or a sculpture. One of my favorite pieces of art to feast on while using *visio divina* is an oil painting by Thomas Carey, OSB, titled “Mary Magdalen Washing the Feet.” This piece depicts the ease and truth of Mary’s choice to love Christ, giving what she had of herself to let him know how much she loved him. She has a serene look on her face and places a gentle touch to his feet. We only see Christ’s feet; this tells me that just this much of him, just a foot is enough for her to remain in his love. For me, being a woman in service to Christ, this piece has been of great comfort to me. I encourage you to welcome feasts into your self-care plan. Mother Teresa believed, “We must feed ourselves. We can die from spiritual starvation. We must be filled continually like a machine. When one little thing in the machine is not working, then the whole machine is not working properly.”⁴ Christ encouraged all to come to the feast; he excluded no one. The only time we are excluded is when we choose to exclude ourselves, when we do not feel worthy and grateful to accept God’s generosity. Graciously accepting this generosity imitates Christ and brings us closer to him as we care for ourselves.

Honoring Our Bodies

The female body is a wonderfully complicated gift, sometimes overutilized in our service of spiritual care. Being a true listener is part of our work as spiritual caregivers. Our bodies try to talk to us all the time: “I’m thirsty. I need a bite. I am wiped out. My feet hurt, etc.” These simple physical needs, if not met can aid burnout’s arrival. There are serious physical side effects of burnout: migraines, muscle tension, belly problems, sleeplessness. Psalm 127:2 gives us some direction on how to honor the holy mystery that is our bodies: “It is vain for you to rise early / and put off your rest at night, / To eat bread

⁴ Mother Teresa, *Everything Starts with Prayer: Mother Teresa’s Meditations on Spiritual Life for People of All Faiths* (Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 1998), 14.

earned by hard toil— / all this God gives to his beloved in sleep.” Jesus in Mark’s gospel, after his apostles tell him about all the work they have done for him, instructs them to rest, go somewhere quiet, and rest. Jesus recognized the burden of physical stress and its need to be lightened so that our bodies can begin to recover.

Psychology and Spiritual Direction

Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, “To endure the cross is not tragedy; it is the suffering which is the fruit of an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ.”⁵ There are times when experiences in our ministry can be profoundly painful and gruesome to witness on many levels. Walking with God in the moment of these painful experiences offers great strength and support, but we may need to take a second walk so we are able to process the pain we witness. Sitting at the foot of the cross of suffering and death is a privilege that language cannot express. When we walk with those being brought home to Christ, witness them seeing Christ, it can leave us in complete humility, landing us completely in our true self, which can be haunting. This haunting can be beautiful and terrifying all at once, affecting our entire being. These experiences can be self-transcending. Dr. Don Saliers has said that “a sense of transcendence in and through the finitude of the world will appear, if at all, precisely amid the contrasts and the connections between terror and beauty.”⁶

Self-transcendence is the raw material through which the Holy Spirit works. The beginning of our spiritual self-care requires us to attend to the rawness of what we were present to. Profound moments in my own ministry have called me, not only to marinate in the grace of them, but also to share them, to tell my story, to transcend them. The more we walk and share what we witness with Christ and others, we can rejuvenate our work with hope and make peace with a memory that haunts us.

The combination of psychology and spiritual direction in our self-care plan can be wonderfully complimentary, addressing the whole that we are. It offers us a chance to look both ways at our human journey; our secular side and our base of faith come together in this dual care to be served.

⁵ Kelly and Burton, *A Testament to Freedom*.

⁶ Don E. Saliers, “Where beauty and terror lie: the poetics of everyday life,” class lecture, Saint John’s University, Colleagueville, MN (November 13, 2008).

This combo approach to self-care addresses the apophatic and cataphatic pieces of our work. Apophatically we dig in and learn to accept and embrace what we are not, what our limits are as caregivers. Then there are also moments of cataphatic knowing, learning what the team of God and us can do. Ultimately, this leads to the realization and the comfort that God is in charge.

We receive spiritual care in hopes to know and be known. Integrating psychology and theology, by seeing them as two complementary interpretations of this hope (which is a radical drive of the human spirit), they become a collective care approach, not a dual one. By moving beyond ourselves in creative understanding, realistic judgment, responsible decisions, and generous loving kindness, we both realize our authentic being (true self) and our ability to respond to Matthew's gospel call to loving service of the neighbor. If you find a psychologist who understands therapy (self-realization) as self-transcendence and a spiritual director who recognizes the gospel as also a call to self-transcendence, your care will not require a connecting bridge. The only requirement needed will be *our* discovery and acceptance of their intrinsic unity as our same fundamental human drive (hope) for self-transcendence.

Embracing the Wisdom in our Anger

Sophia Wisdom is the personification of the divine feminine and has been depicted as sister, mother, lover, chef and hostess, preacher, judge, liberator, and establisher of justice. This is a very strong list of what female spiritual caregivers are called to be and this list is by no means exhaustive. Sophia brings power to women when we invite her symbolism into ourselves and experience affirmation of every aspect of our being. Through Sophia, we can claim power as our right, exercise it creatively, share it, and be sustained by its growth. As creator, as respected nurturer, as a strong, angry, assertive, and sometimes prophetic woman, Sophia provides us with an alternative to the traditional behaviors into which many of us have been socialized.

I am sure I am not alone in the telling of a piece of my story. When I was a girl, I was told that anger was not okay to feel and the expression of it was not an okay behavior because anger was the opposite of love. Working in spiritual care, we are witnesses to much injustice and abuse. If we suppress the legitimate feeling of anger that arises when we are present to injustice and wrongdoing, it can lead to

compassion burnout. Detachment and cynicism are symptoms that present themselves when we begin to move toward this state.

I believe we need to relearn our views on anger. Anger can be a gift. If we learn how to use it in a healthy way, it can be a form of self-healing and healing for others. Jesus was a healer, but he spoke up when he witnessed injustice. Jesus did not withdraw or make false peace; he pushed to be heard and to bring justice to people who suffered. Jesus has shown us that anger is not the opposite of love, but anger may be required of us to love our neighbors and ourselves. It can also be a conduit to get to that love.

To use anger constructively, we need to be able to utilize other aspects of self-care. Feasting can give us a break from anger. Therapy and spiritual care can be a safe place to bring and sit with anger. Trusting we have the strength of Sophia Wisdom, we can take action that is productive. Anger reveals to us that something is wrong in our world and it needs to be examined. Anger calls for change—social and individual.

The Little and the Fun

I end my encouragements for self-care with “the little and the fun.” There is no such thing as a small gesture that does not have meaning. So many little things we do in our lives can be forms of self-care when done with loving kindness. Being a spiritual caregiver asks much from us and often gives more than what is asked. Remembering these gifts can be a wonderful way to care for our souls. I frequently write down memories from my ministry, little moments in time I want to remember. I write down quotes from patients, friends, a cashier at the grocery store, and the words I want to remember.

Loving the little things in our lives includes loving the child inside us, that little one that walks with us even as we walk home to God. Mother Teresa has a wonderful view of the power of little children: “You should go to God like a little child. A child has no difficulty expressing his/her mind in simple words that say so much.”⁷ Letting the child in you become a part of your self-care means seeing God in all little things, from a french fry to a sunset. It also means letting “the fun” be a big part of your life. Laughter and silliness can only serve you, lift you, and heal you in the challenging work of spiritual care. The Old Testament reveals, “A cheerful glance brings joy to

⁷ Mother Teresa, *Everything Starts with Prayer*, 38.

the heart; good news invigorates the bones” (Prov 15:30). Welcoming the child in your heart to laugh and be silly means welcoming the child too young to self-judge, the child that is so rawly present that pure joy feels free to surround her. Honor that little girl that chased butterflies for a second look because they were too pretty to look at only once. Welcome back the little girl that looked in the mirror dreaming about how beautiful she would be someday, because now you are that dream.

Offering ourselves self-care based in loving kindness is a core need in our work as spiritual caregivers. Many factors of our work may lead to burnout when we do not address the needs of our whole integrated selves, bodies, souls, and hearts. We are creative and gifted daughters of God, lifting ourselves up to the light of grace, so it illuminates every part of our being, imitating Christ’s life and mission. We choose to serve God because we love him; honoring ourselves is a beautiful healing way to show that love in action. We cannot give if we do not have, so allow yourself to indulge, feast, and love!

Bibliography

- Dumm, Demetrius. *Cherish Christ Above All: The Bible in the Rule of Benedict*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1996.
- Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Pacifist, Nazi Resistor*, DVD. Journey Films, 2003.
- Kelly, Geoffrey B., and Nelson F. Burton. *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1990.
- Maslach, Christina. *Burnout: The Cost of Caring*. Mahwah, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982.
- McMinn, Mark R., and Timothy R. Phillips, eds. *Care for the Soul: Exploring the Intersection of Psychology and Theology*. Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
- Paulsell, Stephanie, and Lani Wright. *Honoring the Body: Meditations on a Christian Practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jose-Bass, 2001.
- Saliers, Don E. “Where beauty and terror lie: the poetics of everyday life,” class lecture. Saint John’s University, Colledgeville, MN (November 13, 2008).
- Stevenson Moessner, Jeanne, ed. *Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1996.
- Teresa, Mother. *Everything Starts with Prayer: Mother Teresa’s Meditations on Spiritual Life for People of All Faiths*. Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 1998.



Companions

Ælred Senna, OSB

Forgetful but Not Forgotten: Parish Pastoral Care of Dementia Sufferers

Annette Kestel, PBVM, '06

During May of 2005, I participated in a field education practicum in parish ministry in a rural parish community. My supervisor was the parish pastoral associate. Part of her ministry includes pastoral care of the sick and elderly. She regularly takes Holy Communion to homebound parishioners, as well as those residing in assisted living and care centers. In my first week of practicum, I accompanied my supervisor in visiting a few of the homebound parishioners, the three care centers, and the two assisted living centers in the community. I went unaccompanied the second week. One of my first solo care center visits included leading a Communion service for a small group of residents able to come to the activity room, going to the rooms of residents unable to attend the group service, and going to the Alzheimer's unit to visit three other residents.

The group service went well. I was grateful to see two residents I had visited the previous week with my supervisor. Next I went to the rooms of two other residents physically unable to come to the service. I enjoyed the opportunity to visit and get acquainted with them. Both women were very alert and eager to chat. My last stop was the Alzheimer's unit. I felt a little uneasy as I walked down the corridor to the unit. I was not quite sure where to go, so I asked for help from a staff person I met in the hall. She took me to the door of the unit. I was accustomed to the concept of a unit for residents suffering from dementia because my father had lived in one in northwest Iowa for four years before his death. A key difference now was that I was entering the unit for the first time as a minister and not as a family member. I was nervous because I was not sure how to minister to persons suffering from dementia. I did not know exactly what I would do if they were not aware enough to receive Communion.

As I entered the unit I noticed the keypad just inside the door. I knew I would need assistance when I was ready to leave because the doors automatically locked to prevent residents from wandering and being injured. As I walked down the hall of the unit, I came to a nurse's desk located in what appeared to be the activity and dining center. I identified myself as being from the local Catholic Church and that I had brought Communion for three resident

parishioners. The nurse directed me to another nurse nearby working with residents sitting in a circle. Two of the women I needed to see were seated in the circle. I was told that the third woman was in her room because she was not feeling well but that I could certainly visit her. The nurse took me to the two women. I introduced myself and asked them if they would like to receive Communion. Thankfully they said they did, so the nurse took us to a nearby table. I used the Rite for Communion in a Hospital or Institution. They participated and prayed with me when appropriate. After I concluded the prayers, I gave the two women artwork created by their first- and second-grade buddies from the parish Catholic school. They were delighted and read aloud the notes written by each student on the back of the artwork. Since they were occupied, it seemed like a good time to excuse myself and to find the room of the other woman.

The nurse directed me to the room of Marian. Marian's room was one of the first two-occupant bedrooms inside the door of the unit. Her bed was closest to the window, so I had to walk through another resident's area to see Marian. The curtain between the beds was pulled. I could not see Marian until I walked past the curtain. Her roommate was not in the room at the time, and the room was darkened except for the light from the open door and the small amount of light coming from the shade-drawn window. When I reached the curtain I could see that Marian was in bed and her eyes were closed. I spoke her name softly, and she opened her eyes rather startled. I introduced myself and asked her how she was feeling. Marian said that she was not having a very good day and that her arthritis was bothering her. I asked her if she wished to receive Communion. She said she did. I asked her if she wanted me to help her sit up, and I turned on a small lamp by her bed so I could read the prayers of the rite. With more light in the room, I could see the bruised right side of her face. I surmised that Marian had fallen recently. The fall would also explain her complaints of feeling stiff and sore. I helped her sit up, and I prayed with her. When I gave her Communion she struggled a little chewing and swallowing the host, so I offered her some water. I read the concluding prayers, gave her

the student artwork, and helped her back into bed. At that point I did not know what else to say or do. She was not talkative, and I felt at a loss for words. She seemed fairly lucid, but I knew from experience with my father that the lucidity could come and go quickly. I told her I hoped she felt better soon, and I excused myself. I walked back to the nurse's desk and asked for help to leave the unit. As I walked out the door of the unit I felt a wave of relief that I was leaving, but I also felt a nagging sense that something was lacking in my interaction with these three women.

Personal and Spiritual Maturity

As I have reflected on my experience of last summer, I have considered the impact my personal and spiritual maturity had on this pastoral setting. In general, I felt comfortable visiting with the elderly when they could communicate verbally, but my experiences of my father's dementia were both a benefit and a detriment. I knew from personal experience the need for and the operation of an Alzheimer's unit, and I felt relatively comfortable walking into the unit. I had an idea of what to expect from the perspective of someone visiting. But I was also concerned, knowing that a resident suffering from Alzheimer's disease or another condition that causes dementia could exhibit behavior anywhere from pleasant and lucid to agitated or completely unresponsive. I knew from experience with my father that a person suffering from dementia could be calm one moment and very upset the next moment. My anxiety level was heightened wondering how the three residents of the Alzheimer's unit would respond to me.

As I remembered my father's experience of living in an Alzheimer's unit I was saddened to think that he did not have access to more pastoral care from his parish. Ecumenical worship services were offered at the care center on a weekly basis. A non-ordained pastoral minister on staff at the care center did offer other forms of individual or small group pastoral care services at the facility. The local parish pastor came once a week to celebrate Mass with the Catholic residents who wished to attend. Catholic residents also received the sacrament of anointing of the sick twice a year. During my father's last two years in the care center, he was not considered alert enough to attend the Mass. To my knowledge Communion and anointing were the only forms of pastoral care offered to my father in his years of residency

in this care center. Until my experience with these women, I never questioned whether there were other Catholic pastoral care services available to my father. I hate the thought of him having been isolated from the parish community and pastoral care in the same way that these three women are.

I felt helpless being in the presence of these three vulnerable women and with my attempts to minister to them. They became a mirror reflecting my own fear of isolation. I did not know how to respond to them in their need, but I realized that these women deserved competent, compassionate pastoral care from the parish. I did not know what this care should include, but I knew that as a pastoral minister I should have something more to offer them. Concern for the vulnerable is one of the foundational themes of Catholic social teaching.¹ Respect for life and human dignity and concern for the poor and vulnerable are foundational to parish pastoral care of the elderly, especially those suffering from dementia. Moving from this church teaching to actual practices is a major challenge. I was not prepared spiritually to meet the pastoral care needs of these women. I did not even have a sense of what their needs were. This realization moved me to reflect on my religious congregation's history of care for the elderly and vulnerable.

Nano Nagle, the Irish foundress of my religious congregation, the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, lived during penal times in eighteenth-century Ireland. During the day she risked imprisonment and death by teaching Irish children, and in the evening by lantern light she visited and cared for the elderly and sick in Cork City. Her concern for the poor and vulnerable sparked into flame the ministry of a small group of women that grew over time and spread throughout the world. The history of Nano Nagle's desire and efforts to minister to the elderly has recently inspired me to view the pastoral care of people suffering from dementia as an aspect of my religious vocation to vowed membership in her community and to my own pastoral ministry to the poor and vulnerable. Nano discerned the needs present in her situation and generously used her gifts in service to the poor. In my field education experience I discerned a need, but I did not yet know how to use my gifts to address the pastoral care needs of the women in the Alzheimer's unit.

¹ Catholic Social Teaching; available from <http://www.mncc.org/Catholic%20%Teaching.htm/>; internet (accessed February 4, 2006).

Part of what was missing was prayer. I thought I knew how to pray with these women because I knew the proper Communion rites for the sick, but I needed to be able to do more to reach them in their personal and spiritual isolation. Bringing Eucharist to them was one good way to reunite them spiritually with the parish faith community, but I also felt the need and desire to do more. During my visit with them I could have been more conscious about praying for and with them as I visited them. In doing so I may have been more open to the Spirit's guidance and may have been better able to be more present to these women and less conscious of my discomfort with the situation.

Lay Ecclesial Ministry Identity

I have experienced my religious vocation as a call from God to ministry in the church, a call rooted in my baptism. I had no difficulty considering my former position as a Catholic elementary school teacher as ministry within the church. My summer field education practicum was my first concrete experience of offering parish pastoral ministry. I did not have anywhere near the same amount of training and experience in pastoral ministry. Since this type of ministry was a new venture for me, I was just beginning to consider myself as called by God to pastoral ministry. Due to my lack of experience I did not feel like a minister. At the time of this pastoral visit, the only physical proof I had was a plastic name tag identifying me as a staff member of the parish. My experience of ministry to these women moved me to consider more deeply my vocation as pastoral minister and made me aware of my need for this call to be confirmed by the parish community I represented.

Before my arrival in the parish, my supervisor had prepared a written introduction for the parish bulletin to make parishioners aware of my presence and work in the parish. Each week I wrote a general summary of my ministry experiences for the bulletin. The pastor also introduced me at all of the weekend Masses my first weekend in the parish. I felt an attachment to the parish as well as a sense that I had been temporarily commissioned by the pastor to do this ministry. The parish community could recognize me as a pastoral minister through these means.

Catholic Theology

Scripturally, ministry to the vulnerable and in particular those suffering from dementia could be

grounded on several passages, but one particular passage stands out. In Luke 5:12-16, a man suffering from a serious skin disease approaches Jesus seeking healing from his suffering. Jesus willingly listens to the needs of this man and heals him of the skin disease. In New Testament times people suffering from skin diseases were labeled as lepers and were ostracized to the point of being required to live apart from the community so as to avoid infecting others. People suffering from these skin diseases also were prohibited from participating in public worship. Jesus breaks through these cultural and societal barriers and heals the man by his listening, his words, and his touch.² Jesus' healing ministry brings the man back into the community. Once again the man is recognized and included in the worshiping community.

This gospel story of Jesus' healing offers a poignant image for the pastoral care of people suffering from dementia. Whether they are residing in care centers or living at home, dementia sufferers, like lepers, become increasingly isolated from the parish community. As they sink further into memory loss, interaction with family, friends, and particularly the parish community become more difficult. At some point the individual is no longer able to attend the parish Sunday eucharistic celebration. Memory loss and decreased ability to communicate make it difficult for family and friends to spend time with and talk to the person. Like the leper, the dementia sufferer gradually becomes out of sight and out of the mind of the parish community.

When the leper approaches Jesus and asks for help Jesus listens and responds with comforting words and human touch. These same gestures can become important aspects of ministry to people suffering from dementia. Parish pastoral care for these individuals needs to include the desire to listen to the person being visited and the desire to meet the person's needs to the best of the pastoral caregiver's abilities. Comforting words will include conversation as well as words of prayer with and for the dementia sufferer. In the middle to later stages of dementia, conversation can range from very difficult to impossible, but it is important to recognize the dignity of the individual with kind words and physical presence. Words of prayer spoken silently as well as aloud are always appropriate and necessary. Spontaneous prayer for the individual and her or his family

² Robert J. Karris, ed., *The Collegeville Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 947.

are a source of comfort and strength. Human touch is another key component of this pastoral care. A gentle touch of the hand or shoulder can often communicate more to the dementia sufferer than the spoken word.

In the gospel story Jesus heals the man of his skin disease. He is relieved of his physical and spiritual infirmity. Regretfully, there is no cure for the mental or physical diminishment of dementia, but ensuring good pastoral care can help to make the parish community more present to the dementia sufferer as well as make the dementia sufferer more present to the parish community. I believe this presence of the community and presence to the community can bring the healing word and touch of Jesus to the person suffering from dementia.

Another source of the Catholic Church's care for and ministry to the elderly is found in *Blessings of Age: A Pastoral Message on Growing Older Within the Faith Community*. This document published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops addresses all age groups of the faith community and expresses the great dignity of and the importance of respect for the elderly. In this regard the document states:

We are all growing older, not just as individuals but as members of a faith community. The spiritual growth of the aging person is affected by the community and affects the community. Aging demands the attention of the entire Church. How the faith community relates to older members—recognizing their presence, encouraging their contributions, responding to their needs, and providing appropriate opportunities for spiritual growth—is a sign of the community's spiritual health and maturity.³

The bishops' document wisely notes that recognizing and responding to the needs of the older members of the faith community are extremely important, as well as an indication of the spiritual health of the entire community. This document encourages the faith community to recognize the presence of the elderly, respond to their needs, and provide opportunities for their spiritual growth. Even though it is difficult, good parish pastoral care of people suffering from dementia, one of the

groups of elderly needing care, can help to achieve these goals.

Pope John Paul II provides another ethical source for ministry to aging parishioners in his Letter to the Elderly written in 1999. He recognizes through his own experiences of age and failing health the experiences of other aging members of the church. John Paul II notes the witness of elderly people suffering with patient acceptance.⁴ Their witness is a powerful example for the rest of the faith community and deserves to be recognized and valued. Their suffering is redemptive and can be united with the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus does not escape his suffering—neither do dementia sufferers. They will bear this cross to death. They should not be abandoned. These sources state clearly the need for the parish community to take responsibility for the spiritual care of the elderly.

Pastoral Praxis

My coursework over the last year had given me a good knowledge base for taking Communion to the sick, as well as visiting with people. Last spring, in Pastoral Liturgy II, we studied the various rites for taking Communion to the sick and homebound. After taking the course and receiving instruction and modeling from my supervisor regarding the use of the rites, I knew I could use the appropriate rites at the appropriate times. During my fall semester I had also taken a course in pastoral care that focused more on the skills of nondirective pastoral counseling and specifically reflective listening. The listening required for pastoral care of dementia sufferers is different from that needed in other forms of pastoral care. In the earlier stages of dementia the individual would likely still be able to talk, but in the later stages the dementia sufferer loses the ability to communicate verbally. The listening needed for this type of pastoral care may range from listening to actual speech to listening in the silent presence of one no longer able to speak. Although I had a good introduction into the area of pastoral care of the sick, I was not prepared for using my skills to minister to persons suffering from dementia. The topic of pastoral care of persons suffering from dementia was not addressed specifically in my pastoral coursework.

A general definition of dementia is needed before moving further into the discussion of pastoral

³ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Blessings of Age: A Pastoral Message on Growing Older Within the Faith Community* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1999), available at <http://www.usccb.org/laity/blessings/English.shtml/>; internet (accessed February 10, 2006).

⁴ Pope John Paul II, Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Elderly (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1999), no. 13; available at <http://www.vatican.va/>; internet (accessed February 10, 2006).

care of persons suffering from dementia. Nancy L. Mace and Peter V. Rabins, authors of a family guide to care for dementia sufferers, offer this salient definition:

Dementia is the medical term for a group of symptoms. It indicates a decline in several areas of intellectual ability sufficiently severe to interfere with daily functioning in a person who is awake and alert. . . . This decline in intellectual functioning means a loss of several kinds of mental processes, which may include mathematical ability, vocabulary, abstract thinking, judgment, speaking, or physical coordination. It may include changes in personality.⁵

Dementia is the symptom or effect of a number of possible diseases or causes. Exploring all of the known diseases or causes of dementia is beyond the scope of this case study. Here I will address the two most common causes of dementia in adults. It is important to note that some of the less common causes of dementia can be reversed with proper medical diagnosis and treatment. The two most common are irreversible,⁶ but at times the progression of dementia may be slowed with proper medical care.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia. The late onset form of this disease commonly affects individuals sixty-five or older. Younger people may develop the disease, but this early-onset form is less common. Scientists believe genetic as well as environmental factors may increase the likelihood of someone developing Alzheimer's disease.⁷ The disease progresses through the destruction of neurons; these nerve cells are a basic element of the structure of the brain.⁸ Gradually the loss of neurons progresses throughout the brain, causing increased loss of memory, intellectual abilities, and eventually physical abilities.⁹ A person suffering from Alzheimer's disease may survive anywhere from two to twenty years after the first signs of the disease become apparent.¹⁰

Some physicians categorize the progression of

Alzheimer's disease, the most common cause, into three stages. The first stage is described as mild and may include some short-term memory problems, disorientation, and sudden mood changes.¹¹ The second stage of moderate Alzheimer's disease includes more noticeable changes in memory loss and behavior.¹² The severe stage is characterized by the inability to think and reason. An individual at this final stage needs help with all aspects of personal care. He or she is susceptible to other illnesses that may cause death in the person already weakened by Alzheimer's disease.¹³

Multi-infarct or vascular dementia is the second most common cause of dementia. It causes "repeated strokes that destroy small areas of the brain."¹⁴ The continuation of the strokes will eventually lead to dementia symptoms. These symptoms can vary according to the areas of the brain affected. If the cause of the strokes is diagnosed and treated, further damage to the brain may be prevented. Someone suffering from multi-infarct dementia often experiences the progression of the disease in a step-like manner.¹⁵ Knowledge of these common diseases and their progressions can assist pastoral caregivers in offering appropriate and meaningful spiritual care to dementia sufferers.

Knowledge of the staged progression of the most common causes of dementia offers a framework for providing appropriate parish pastoral care. Ministry to someone experiencing the mild stage of Alzheimer's disease requires a sensitivity to and understanding of the memory problems and disorientation the person may be experiencing. One at this stage would likely be able to talk about her or his diagnosis and the accompanying emotions related to grief and acceptance. She or he is probably still attending Mass, and a spouse or family member is caring for her or him at home. Often people are not diagnosed until the moderate stage. Ministry to someone at the moderate stage would require more flexibility in being present to the person. At times she or he may be quite alert and able to talk, and at other times she or he may be disoriented and agitated. She or he may or may not be in a care facility. Ministering to someone at the severe stage requires the most experience and comfort with sitting in prayer with

⁵ Nancy L. Mace and Peter V. Rabins, *The 36-Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for Persons with Alzheimer Disease, Related Dementing Illnesses, and Memory Loss in Later Life* (New York: Warner Books, 1999), 410–11.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁷ Ronald Peterson, ed., *Mayo Clinic On Alzheimer's Disease: Practical Answers On Memory Loss, Aging, Research, Treatment, and Caregiving* (New York: Mayo Clinic Health Information, 2002), 41–42.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 32–33.

¹² *Ibid.*, 35.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 36–37.

¹⁴ Mace and Rabins, *The 36-Hour Day*, 415.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 415–16.

the person. Both silent and vocalized spontaneous prayers for and with the individual are needed. One at this stage is most likely in a care facility and is experiencing the most isolation.

Through my experience, reading, and reflection I have learned that isolation is a key issue for dementia sufferers living in care centers as well as for those still living at home. The local parish community can easily forget about or be unaware of fellow parishioners residing in care centers or at home and unable to go out any longer. This isolation prevents parishioners from being physically and emotionally present to these individuals by visiting them, remembering them, and supporting them in prayer. Often people stop visiting dementia sufferers when they no longer recognize the visitor. If the parish community is unaware of the unmet pastoral care needs of the dementia sufferers, they cannot help to meet these needs. Their geographical isolation contributes to their spiritual isolation from the community.

I believe these forms of isolation contribute to three main areas of need for dementia sufferers. The first area of need is a pastoral presence to address the problem of physical isolation, someone from the parish community who regularly visits the person at home or in the care center. The pastoral caregiver needs a basic knowledge of the common diseases that cause dementia as well as the progression of dementia. This knowledge will help the pastoral minister to be more sensitive to the needs of the person suffering from dementia and will help the minister to feel more at ease visiting.

A second area of need for those suffering from dementia is the spiritual support of prayer to address the problem of spiritual isolation. The pastoral caregiver needs to pray before, during, and after the visit. Prayer may take whatever form is most helpful to the dementia sufferer and aids the minister in being attentive. It may be silent prayer, vocal spontaneous prayer, or traditional memorized prayer. Prayerful remembrance at parish eucharistic celebrations is another aspect of prayerful support of the larger parish community.

The third area of need to be met is that of ecclesial isolation, isolation from the sacraments of the church. People suffering from dementia deserve to have access to the sacraments most helpful to them. Reception of the Eucharist may be very important to one who has received this sacrament weekly or more frequently throughout life. The sacraments of reconciliation and anointing of the sick can bring a

sense of healing and peace to the dementia sufferer. These sacraments can be very consoling to one in the earlier stages of dementia.

The fourth area of need comes from the isolation from self that one experiences gradually through the stages of dementia. The dementia sufferer progressively forgets who she or he is. Parish pastoral care can assist the dementia sufferer in being able to retain her or his self-identity longer. Once the person can no longer remember, the pastoral caregiver and faith community remember for the person and keep the memory of the person alive in the faith community.

Family caregivers are another group needing and deserving good parish pastoral care, but I have chosen to limit my focus to the pastoral care of people experiencing dementia.

Professional Practice

I now believe that local parish communities have a responsibility to make efforts to better meet these four areas of need of the elderly and in particular those suffering from dementia. First, the parish needs to be aware of parishioners experiencing dementia and their caregivers. A sensitive way of doing this is to regularly include general prayers of intercession for the elderly members of the parish in the prayer of the faithful at the parish eucharistic liturgies. Second, all of the parish committees need to consider how their individual committees might be of service to the elderly members of the parish. It is not just one committee's responsibility to minister to their needs. For example, the liturgy committee can minister to this particular group by making sure there are trained and commissioned eucharistic ministers regularly taking Communion to them. The social concerns committee might be able assist by finding volunteers who could help with transportation difficulties of family caregivers or respite care. Third, the parish staff needs to know how to contact local agencies that may offer aging services in the event that a parishioner comes seeking help or to be able to suggest these services in a pastorally sensitive manner. It would be helpful to have a duplicated list of resources and/or organizations, their addresses, phone contact numbers, and web site addresses available for individuals seeking this type of assistance. Some examples of these organizations are the Administration on Aging (AOA), the Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center (ADEAR), and local area agencies on aging.¹⁶

¹⁶ Peterson, *Mayo Clinic: On Alzheimer's Disease*, 199–200.

These suggestions are all relatively easy to accomplish, but they lead to a more challenging priority and task. Parishioners suffering from dementia need and deserve good personalized pastoral care. This challenge is a clear call to acknowledge the human dignity and worth of this easily isolated parish population.

One possible way to help meet the pastoral needs of dementia sufferers would be to seek the help of interested parishioners who could be trained to visit parishioners suffering from dementia living in local care centers as well as those living at home with family caregivers. They would be assigned to visit particular individuals on an ongoing basis to facilitate developing significant relationships. Once parishioners are trained they would go with a parish staff member for the first four visits, allowing the staff member to model good pastoral care and mentor the parish visitor. Continued individual supervision by the staff member would facilitate growth in each visitor's pastoral skills and also offer the visitors the opportunity to process their experiences of offering pastoral care to others. There are many helpful areas and techniques in which they could be trained, but I will focus on three areas and some corresponding techniques.

The first area of training would include general education about the staged progression of the most common causes of dementia and the engagement of religious memory in people suffering from dementia. Parish pastoral care of dementia sufferers would most often be for those in the moderate or severe stage of dementia, so the training would focus on these stages. Typically, people are in the moderate stage by the time they are diagnosed.

Author Jolene Brackey describes practical ideas for dementia caregivers that can easily be adapted for use by parish pastoral caregivers. Many of her suggestions would be helpful in visiting with someone in the moderate stage who is still able to speak. In her book Brackey urges the caregiver to capitalize on the dementia sufferer's long-term memory to find a memory that gives the person a moment of happiness or joy.¹⁷ People suffering from dementia lose access to short-term memory first, and generally communication can be facilitated more easily through the use of long-term memory. The treasured memories of joy may be related to childhood, family, hobbies,

¹⁷ Jolene Brackey, *Creating Moments of Joy for the Person with Alzheimer's or Dementia* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2003), 13.

or a former work profession. They are moments because the dementia sufferer at this stage only knows the present moment. Once a favorite story or topic is discovered, it is likely to be repeated over and over. The caregiver can use this story to trigger the memory and joyful moments during future visits.¹⁸

Trained parishioners offering pastoral care can make use of this knowledge to creatively engage long-term religious memory. One technique to do so is through the use of a Catholic reminiscence packet. It can include all or a combination of the following articles: a crucifix, a Bible, a rosary, a booklet of traditional prayers, prayer cards of individual prayers, small religious statues, a scapular, or a Sacred Heart badge.¹⁹ The packet of materials could be taken by the person offering pastoral care to the dementia sufferer and allow her or him to look at and talk about the contents of the packet. Seeing these familiar religious articles can stimulate the religious memory and imagination of the one being visited. A pastoral caregiver should keep a list of the memory triggers of the dementia sufferer. These can be used during future visits to bring joy to the one being visited.

At the severe stage there will be fewer moments of recognition. The list of memory triggers can still be used. The dementia sufferer may not be able to talk about the memory any longer, but it still may cause some form of recognition and an experience of joy. The person may still be able to talk, but the caregiver might not be able to understand. The caregiver can still patiently listen and affirm the dignity of the person struggling to communicate.²⁰

The second area of training is learning the importance of and techniques for being physically present to the person suffering from dementia. Brackey notes that being silent with the person can still bring great comfort and joy to the dementia sufferer.²¹ The challenge for the pastoral visitor is to learn to be comfortable with sitting in silence and prayer. The pastoral visit does not need to be filled with continual conversation.

Touch is an important aspect of physical presence and a technique of ministry to dementia sufferers at all stages. A gentle touch of the hand, arm, or

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁹ David P. Wentroble, "Pastoral Care of Problematic Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Affected Residents in a Long-Term Care Setting," *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 8, no. 1/2 (1999): 70.

²⁰ Brackey, *Creating Moments of Joy*, 81.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 227.

shoulder can make the person aware of God's caring presence through the minister. Brackey notes:

Touch can reach through the fog, confusion, and fear of dementia. Reassuring touch grounds those who are spatially disoriented, brings people back to their bodies, and increases their awareness in present time and space. One touch can affirm that they are not alone and they are valued by the person who is beside them.²²

Jesus was not afraid to touch the man with the skin disease. This kind of touch can be a way for the minister or pastoral caregiver to communicate the compassionate, healing ministry of Jesus. People suffering from dementia deserve pastoral visits even if they are unable to respond or seem unaware of the presence of others. Knowing their loved one is receiving this type of care can provide a great consolation to the caregiver and other family members.

The third area of pastoral care training would include providing helpful listening opportunities for the person suffering from dementia. The use of music can be comforting and helpful for dementia sufferers, but music can be especially helpful for reaching someone in either the moderate or severe stages of dementia. Traditional religious hymns can be used to connect with someone struggling to remember and sometimes even speak.²³ Simply singing a favorite hymn can offer a few moments of peace and joy to one who struggles to remember. Praying the traditional Catholic prayers or reading familiar Scripture passages can also be comforting experiences of listening. If the person has a devotion to praying the rosary, she or he might appreciate listening to someone pray this prayer form even if she or he is no longer able to speak the prayers aloud.

Reading Scripture and offering Communion during a pastoral visit are another aspect of providing opportunities for listening. Training in the Catholic rites for pastoral care of the elderly and sick would be required of the parish visitors, so even when people suffering from dementia are no longer able to speak, they are still given the opportunity to listen to the Word and receive Communion as they are able. Thus they are included in the parish eucharistic celebration.

Pastoral care of persons suffering from dementia is an important but often unrecognized and unmet need in local parish communities. Pastors and

parish staff members have the responsibility of providing spiritual care and discovering new ways to offer this care with the help of the parish faith community. From my experience of my father's lack of pastoral care and my experience of trying to minister to the three women in the Alzheimer's unit, I have learned and believe very strongly that people suffering from all stages of dementia still deserve good parish pastoral care. They deserve to have the parish community listen and respond to their needs. They deserve to have the spiritual and physical presence of the parish community touch them. Although they become forgetful, they do not deserve to be forgotten by the parish community.

Bibliography

- Brackey, Jolene. *Creating Moments of Joy for the Person with Alzheimer's or Dementia*. 3rd ed. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2003.
- Catholic Social Teaching. <<http://www.mncc.org/Catholic%20%Teaching.htm/>>.
- Karris, Robert J., ed. *The Collegeville Bible Commentary: New Testament*. 946–47. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992.
- Mace, Nancy L., and Peter V. Rabins. *The 36-Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for Persons with Alzheimer Disease, Related Dementing Illnesses, and Memory Loss in Later Life*. New York, NY: Warner Books, 1999.
- Peterson, Ronald, ed. *Mayo Clinic On Alzheimer's Disease: Practical Answers On Memory Loss, Aging, Research, Treatment, and Caregiving*. New York, NY: Mayo Clinic Health Information, 2002.
- Pope John Paul II. "Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Elderly." Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1999. <<http://www.vatican.va/>>.
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Blessings of Age: A Pastoral Message on Growing Older Within the Faith Community*. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1999. <<http://www.usccb.org/laity/blessings/english.shtml/>>.
- Wentroble, David P. "Pastoral Care of Problematic Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Affected Residents in a Long-Term Care Setting." *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*. 8, no. 1/2 (1999): 59–76.

²² Ibid., 101.

²³ Wentroble, "Pastoral Care," 65.

List of Contributors

Chris Ángel, a native of San Luis Obispo, CA, has served as a church musician for over twenty years. He holds degrees in mathematical and computational science and music from Stanford University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and is currently a student in the master of arts in theology (liturgy) program.

Joel Cassady is pursuing a master's degree in theology (church history). He is from Arvada, CO, and graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in political science.

Benjamin M. Durham is a current systematics student at Saint John's SOT•Sem. In 2007 he graduated from Saint John's University with a bachelor's degree in chemistry and theology. Following graduation this May, he plans to pursue a PhD in systematic theology at Boston College.

Laura Kelly Fanucci will graduate from the SOT•Sem in May 2009 with a master of divinity degree. She is a 2003 graduate of the University of Notre Dame where she studied French and art history. She currently resides with her husband in Elk River, MN.

Kathryn Janssen graduated from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota with a major in human services and minor in theology. She is from Apple Valley, MN, and will graduate with a master's in pastoral ministry.

Peggy Kelly is originally from Bloomington, MN, and is an oblate of St. Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, MN. She spent last seven years in LA pursuing acting and CPE and is now pursuing a master of divinity degree at the SOT•Sem. She is a pediatric chaplain and hopes to use her degree to make children feel safe, loved, and heard.

Annette Kestel, PBVM, received an undergraduate degree in elementary education from Clarke College in Dubuque, IA, an MS in education from the University of Dayton in Dayton, OH, and an MA (pastoral ministry) from Saint John's SOT•Sem in 2006. She taught in Catholic elementary schools in the archdiocese of Dubuque, IA, for nineteen years before attending Saint John's. Currently she is the associate director of faith formation/pastoral associate at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Hiawatha, IA.

Victor Klimoski graduated from the SOT•Sem in 1976 and is director of *Comersatio* Lifelong Learning at the School of Theology and former dean of the Saint Paul School of Divinity at the University of Saint Thomas.

Adam Paul Koester grew up in the Minocqua, WI, area. His undergraduate degree was in religious studies and philosophy from Viterbo University in La Crosse, WI, in 2008. He is pursuing an MA in theology (Scripture) at the SOT•Sem.

Dale Launderville, OSB, graduated from the SOT•Sem in 1979 and received his PhD from The Catholic University of America in 1987. From 1989–1999 he served as dean of the SOT•Sem and currently is chair of the Department of Theology for Saint John's University. Fr. Dale is also the chaplain of the SOT•Sem and an associate professor of theology.

John Meoska, OSB, is from Bloomington, WI. He is a graduate of Saint John's University ('78) and SOT•Sem ('82). He is currently in the novitiate at Saint John's Abbey and has been writing icons since 1999 in both the Russian and Greek traditions.

Kelly Marie Prosen graduated from the College of Saint Benedict in 2007 with a dual BA in English and theology. She is pursuing an MA in theology (systematics) at the SOT•Sem. Interested in the intersection between theology and poetry, her writing reflects themes of doubt, the sanctity of the ordinary, and the untold stories of New Testament women. She looks forward to continuing to explore her passion for theological aesthetics in her academic and creative writing.

Jeffrey R. Reed lives in Alexandria, MN, and works for the Minnesota DNR as a Fisheries Research Biologist. He has degrees in ecology (BS) from the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh and Fisheries Biology (MS) from Auburn University. He is in his second year at the SOT•Sem and is a candidate for ordination as a deacon in the United Methodist Church.

Jeffrey P. Regan is a first-year MA candidate in liturgy and systematic theology. A native of Newington, CT, he received his BA in history and music from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA. Before enrolling at the SOT•Sem, he spent eight years as a policy aide in the United States Senate specializing in transportation, homeland security, appropriations, and health care issues.

Natalie Perl Regan transferred from Washington Theological Union to complete her master of divinity degree. She graduates from WTU in May, and hopes to continue studying Scripture at the SOT•Sem. She graduated with an English major and religious studies minor from the University of San Diego (her hometown), and lived in Washington DC for eight years prior to moving to Collegeville with her husband, Jeffrey.

Ælred Senna, OSB, professed his first monastic vows in September 2008. Currently, his assigned work is at Liturgical Press. His pastimes include cooking, baking, knitting and, occasionally, photography. He looks forward to participating in the Holy Land Study Tour program in May–June 2009, and he may be quoted as follows: "I LOVE monastic life . . . I'm just sayin'!"