WOMEN IN THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION NARRATIVES

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> God loves me so much that he enters into the very struggle of life. Like a potter with clay, like a mother in childbirth, or like a mighty force blowing life into dead bones, God labors to share his life and his love. His labors take him even to death on a cross in order to bring forth the life of the Resurrection. (Exx 236)[1]

THE MEANING OF JESUS' PASSION as disclosed through the pain undergone by women might be described as 'the Third Week experience' for women in particular. Jesus uses the metaphors of 'the hour' and giving birth to speak of his own suffering and death. This article explores how women's experience of giving birth and working can enlighten gospel descriptions of Jesus' passion and death. It looks at how these insights might affect the adaptation of the Exercises to the now well-accepted theme of women as witnesses to the resurrection. Resurrection, the experience of personal transformation, implies the 'getting up' and liberation of women along with Jesus.

I. Introduction: interpretive method for women exercitants

In offering women meditations from the Exercises for the Third and Fourth Weeks, it is difficult, in some adaptations, to affirm the importance of women's experience. For instance, women's post-resurrection encounters, according to the frequently used volume by Stanley, belong to those persons 'who were very close to our Lord in affection, united to him perhaps by some sort of family tie'. Stanley was referring to a then-standard, ecclesial division of labour, when he distinguished Jesus' appearances to women from 'his appearances to ''the Eleven'' who were destined to constitute the apostolic college in the primitive Christian Church'.[2] At the same time, from an epistemological viewpoint, Stanley cited a commonality of experience. Both groups, the eleven men and all the others, have difficulty recognizing Jesus who comes upon them unexpectedly and departs mysteriously.

The distinction between apostolically-oriented experience (for the eleven) and affection-oriented experience (for the women) does pose the outlines of one challenge facing directors in this decade as they guide women through the readings proposed for the Third and Fourth Weeks. This challenge, initially, is to explore women's assumptions about themselves as knowers and believers. From the outset, an assumption about women's ecclesial or ministerial status (secondary, not as important as those of 'the eleven') might get in the way of a liberating contemplation. A woman may hold an unchallenged view of herself as a person who is less important than male disciples. This perspective will darken the possibilities of the texts revealing the surprising transformation of women's roles in the passages about the post-resurrection appearances. It will cause her to personalize the transformation and emotionalize it, rather than socialize it as a vision which affects the sisterhood of all women.

In addition, a director can assume that a woman's way of encountering the presence of Jesus is no different from men's because both men and women do not recognize Jesus immediately, and he appears and disappears without notice to both. This assumption of gender-neutral knowing can blind women from attending to the specific character of 'women's ways of knowing' the resurrected Jesus.[3] The contemplation of Jesus in the passion is not designed to weigh down the spirit. It liberates the emotions by enlarging the framework of meaning within which one understands and endures suffering. A consideration of the resurrection is not proposed so that women's second-class status in the Church will be reinforced. It should aid the revitalization of women's imagination and motivational force so that they see more clearly what is their possible future. For both contemplations, a liberating grace should be sought.

Women may find inspiration in the spiritual dispositions of Mary. In terms of the Third and Fourth Weeks, however, she is absent from the passion narrative. Exceptions are the scene beneath the cross in the Fourth Gospel (Jn 19,25-27) and the non-scriptural first contemplation proposed by Ignatius for the Fourth Week when Jesus consoles his mother after the resurrection (Exx 299). In the retreat he preached at the Vatican in 1987, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach did reflect in one chapter on how Mary prayed the psalms, and how she is model of the Church and all believers. This approach typified Kolvenbach's general integration of OT and NT texts throughout the retreat. In the conference on Esther, given on the Jewish feast of Purim, he compared her to Christ in her willingness to risk death out of love for

her people. Each of Kolvenbach's conferences concludes with a prayer to Mary of his own composition.[4]

The hermeneutic which underlies an approach to the Third and Fourth Week needs specification for women. References to Mary, even the very beautiful prayers acknowledging her spiritual presence during the retreat, are not the same as a woman-oriented perspective on the texts of the bible. It might be described as a 'liberation hermeneutic' or principle of interpretation. In the case of women who have felt themselves subordinated in the Church and oppressed in society, there is all the greater reason to read the texts with a particular set of convictions. Passages chosen from the OT and NT should be contemplated, then, 1) from the specific viewpoint of women, whose spirituality is distinct from men's, 2) with an expectation that women's own lives can become better as a specific result of accessing the revelatory grace of scripture, 3) whose spiritual dynamic liberates both men and women by offering them a new self-definition which revises the previous pattern of domination by one gender and subordination of the other.

This does not mean choosing only texts which feature women characters. If texts are revelatory, they speak in a voice which affirms the experience of all women and men, especially those who feel powerless and crushed, voiceless and unacknowledged. The choice of readings for the Third and Fourth Weeks should be governed by the capacity of the texts to give voice to women's experiences of suffering and transformation.

Women enter into the 'transforming grace' of contemplation of the passion and resurrection supported by non-oppressive interpretations of scripture. Only those interpretations which affirm women's dignity and worth can be regarded as truly revelatory and expressive of God's word. Schüssler-Fiorenza has called such a project 'a feminist interpretive paradigm of emancipatory praxis'. This approach identifies and avoids biblical traditions which perpetuate violence, alienation and oppression toward women. At the same time, the approach points out the vision of freedom and salvation within the texts yet to be realized by the community of faith.[5]

II. The work of Jesus during the passion: Julian of Norwich and Ignatius

Earlier in the stream of western mystical consciousness that later emerges in the writings of Ignatius, the contemplative Julian of Norwich speaks of the suffering of Jesus as a labour or work. God's action in the soul is also a work. Wisely observing that contemplation

of suffering can burden the spirit, Julian counsels the seeker to expect release of the heart. The spirit which is dry does not 'work' or function as it should, so 'the power of our Lord's word pierceth the soul and quickeneth the heart, and bringeth it by his grace into true working, maketh it to pray most blissfully and have true joy in our Lord'.[6] According to Julian's vision, Jesus asks, 'Art thou well paid that I suffered for thee? . . . If thou art paid, I am paid. It is a joy, a bliss and an endless liking to me that ever I suffered passion for thee. And if I could suffer more, I would suffer more.'

Julian's commentary speaks of the passion of Jesus as a work which he accomplished so that we might be paid the money that he 'earned'. The image suggests a man handing his spouse a paycheque. The fact that his spouse is well compensated encourages him to work all the harder. Endurance of pain and suffering is a deed done 'through the working of love'. Suffering itself is a 'work concerning our salvation'.[7] In Julian's conception, Jesus is the labourer who works hard, and would work even harder if necessary, if that would accomplish the task.

Like the contemplative vision that dominates the *Revelations* of Julian of Norwich, Ignatius proposed a Contemplation of the Love of God. It is not certain at what point in the retreat process Ignatius intended this contemplation, but it does lend itself especially to the Third Week. Those who meditate upon the passion of Jesus find the love of God and the suffering of Jesus the inspiration for a fervent renewal of a self-sacrificial love and a generous self-donation to the service of Christ. We see what has been done out of love for us, a love willing to be obedient to death. Love, not fear or guilt, is the only viable motive for mission. The Contemplation on Divine Love, if undertaken during the Third Week, alludes to the questions of the First Week: 'What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?' (Exx 53).[8] Industrious and devout women can be blind to what they actually do. Unless prompted, they might fail to imagine that they have done much at all for Christ, since the standards for accomplishment are male-defined.

The original Ignatian question, therefore, can burden some women and seem to challenge them: 'What *haven't* I done?' Without an accommodation of the challenge for women, the original question can suggest lack of consciousness, lack of intention or lack of generosity when the opposite characterizes a woman's life. Women, instead, might be asked, 'How is Christ pleased with what you have been doing? When Christ gazes on you from the cross, what does he

see you are doing to express his love and continue his work?'[9] Like Christ, women have historically become 'obedient to death' in living with the risk of pregnancy and facing the uncertainties of childbirth. Women's biological role conforms them to the will that was in Christ to offer his physical life that others might live. The self-donation of the crucified Christ is the embodiment of women's continual self-offering to the human race as its life-giver. While modern medicine and technology reduce the danger to the mother, she has for centuries understood that life-giving means risking death. But mothers have loved the possible life of their children more than their own, enough to carry and deliver them generation after generation.

III. Women during the passion

How are women present in the passion? They are the wordless anointers of the feet or head of Jesus at the end of his ministry just before the forces which engineer his death overtake him (Mk 14, 3–9, Mt 26, 6–13, Jn 12, 1–8). Helpless to avert the disaster, they cluster around the edges of Jesus' consciousness and almost disappear from the narrative. When the wife of Pilate intrudes via a messenger, her troubled dream is communicated only to her husband. Her intuition claims attention for only one verse (Mt 27,9), and makes no difference in the outcome which the mob-dynamic controls. Jesus endures the violence of an all-male world which crushes him. In the 'criminal justice system' which swallows up Jesus, women are absent and powerless. They are gate-tenders, servants familiar with a Galilean accent, on-lookers, veil-holders and weepers. The passion of Jesus, refocused in light of this gender factor, allows women to see Jesus as a partaker in their own humiliation. Jesus is like women: counted by society of lesser worth, done physical and emotional violence by men, judged innocent of wrongdoing, but offered little recourse by a judicial system which shames them into silence, making justice an illusory hope.[10] Their impoverishment and helplessness is a public spectacle which does not always move onlookers to compassion, but only inspires continued victimization and even a spiralling of violence against them.

Though women are nearly absent from the passion narrative, their activities mirror the response of the ideal Ignatian contemplative. Luke typically refers to the compassion of women for Jesus in his narrative. Luke uses the donation of all a widow possesses to the Temple as a metaphor of the death of Jesus (Lk 21, 1–4).[11] He connects the suffering of Jesus with the disaster that strikes the most

vulnerable members of society, mothers of infants, when war or natural disaster overtakes them. 'Alas for those who are with child and for those who give suck in those days' (Lk 19,43-44; 21, 23). Citing the OT prophetic image of a mother weeping for the death of her children (e.g. Lamentations), Jesus tells the women, as the guardians of the whole community, 'Do not weep for me, but for your children' (Lk 23,27-31).

In John, the breaking of Jesus' silence in his conversation with Pilate (18, 33-19:16) underlines the fact that Jesus speaks a different language than his judge, about a different reality. Pilate's question, 'What is truth?', suggests it is not possible to have a genuine conversation with him, only to endure the interrogation by a man in power. The scene of Jesus before Pilate pits the might of the legal system against the helplessness of Jesus, who has no advocate.

Women understand well enough the inequities of a judicial system constructed on solid male blocks of legal tradition which easily overpowers the fragile language world of women trying to give voice to the violence they have suffered. Women may identify with the voicelessness of Jesus whose self-defence cannot guarantee a judgement of innocence, only further enmeshment. It makes no difference, ultimately, whether Jesus speaks or not. Words have ceased to be an effective vehicle of communication. The breakdown of communication is dramatized by Jesus' silence in the synoptic accounts of the interrogations before civil authorities and his badgering by a succession of witnesses. Jesus cannot disengage himself from the process, but he can disengage from a conversation which is not a real dialogue.

The mute women who stand at the foot of the cross or look on from afar identify with Jesus, because Jesus has become identified with them. There is truth in the crucifixion for women: Jesus has taken on the suffering that women normally identify as their own. In the passion, Jesus shares the vulnerability women feel in society. They cannot prevent the violence visited on them physically and emotionally simply because they are women and cannot defend themselves. Jesus' death is a share in women's vulnerability. The crucifixion does not portray him as a hero, but as a victim.[12]

IV. Women as witnesses to the resurrection through a change of work

Women's knowledge of the resurrection is intimately tied to the nature of their work. The gospels suggest that women's work was devalued before the passion. Men want to dismiss the work as

unimportant, even though the women are expressing their care for Jesus. Jesus defends this 'women's work' of anointing as a privileged place in which a woman performs for him personal service (Mk 14, 3-9; Lk 7, 36-50; Mt 26,6-13; Jn 12,1-8). In a society which still denigrates the work of women, Jesus is on record as having defended them and ennobled their activity.

The labour of women is typically expressed in 'entropic' work, i.e. that which shows no product and, after the effort, disorder increases again. Women's work is a cycle of ceaseless toil at tasks which must be repeated again and again.[13] But women's work in the passion narrative assumes a kind of finality. Women stand along the route where Jesus drags his cross; some weep; one wipes his face; they stand nearby at the crucifixion. They are ready with spices to anoint his dead body in the tomb. Anointing the body for burial is a work which is the 'last service' and last work women will do for someone they love.

But resurrection signifies, for women, that these sorts of tasks never need to be done again for Jesus. Their relationship to him has radically changed, and therefore the kinds of service they will offer him. This is part of a larger gospel picture in which the relationships of women to the male world are re-imagined. The new metaphor for women's work is no longer the cook-pot or water-jug. Nor is it crying babies, attention to a husband or even the status of belonging to one man rather than another (Lk 20,27-40). The resurrection involves the transformation of women into autonomous witnesses whose testimony is ultimately reliable before the community of men. The new work is their struggle to 'get through' to the male disciples. The men are slow to believe not only the claim that Jesus is alive, but the transformed status of the women who bear the message. The new work of women involves the work of engaging the eleven in a revelatory conversation. Their status has changed. They have done labour, related to biological needs of human beings and physical necessities. Now they are truly engaged in work, which involves action (praxis) directed toward social interactions and the creative shaping of events as history.[14]

The work of overcoming inner resistance

Different gospels, with the focus on the women, represent various approaches to women's appropriation of the resurrection. After the resurrection women are judged not by domestic roles, but in terms of gender-inclusive norms for discipleship: personal encounter with the

risen Jesus, and their redefinition as evangelizers, i.e. communicators of what they have personally experienced to other believers. The redefinition of women's social status within the community constitutes a vision of women's liberation through their immediate association with the passion and resurrection of Jesus.[15]

In Mark, the women are afraid, overcome by their experience, but their story is re-written by a later hand after 16,8, the original ending of the gospel. Perhaps best mirrored in Mark is the progressive struggle by women to assert their spiritual experience in spite of internal and external forms of resistance. 'And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid' (Mk 16,8). Mark suggests that the sadness of facing the cruel death of Jesus has arrested the women's emotional life. They are 'looking on from afar' at the crucifixion (Mk 15,40), and they 'saw where he was laid' in the tomb (Mk 15,47). This establishes the witness given by the women at two crucial moments in the passion: the fact of Jesus' death and the fact of his entombment. Mark describes the women's presence in these two scenes in a non-emotional style. They could be too stunned by shock and grief to express any emotion.

However, the experience of the empty tomb and the revelatory announcement by the white-robed young man evokes an explosion of expressive emotion among them all. The women as a company are amazed, they flee in terror, they tremble, they are astonished, and they are too afraid to say anything, even though they have been told to tell the disciples and Peter. This rush of emotion signals the reawakening of their own inner life. They are not mere 'seers' or spectators to the tragedy happening to Jesus. They are now full participants in the cycle of events because they are personally and passionately engaged. The possibility of a reality other than death acts as a 'jump-start' inside them, charging them with an eruption of emotional energy.

Overcoming external resistance

Later editing adds various revisions to the Markan account that affect the presentation of women. Now it is Mary Magdalen alone who is the first to encounter the risen Jesus (Mk 16,9). She is a self-possessed woman who achieved personal integrity before the death of Jesus. Her self-possession seems to be one of the 'conditions for the possibility' of seeing the risen Jesus. The vision empowers her to tell his other followers that he is alive and to share her personal

experience with them. This self-possessed, initiative-taking and communicative approach contrasts with the other disciples who mourn and weep, hear Mary Magdalen's words, but do not believe her. Their emotions block their receptivity and their ability to respond to Magdalen. Perhaps, the narrative implies, the intensity of emotions evoked in the women at the tomb in Mk 16,1-8 would be too much for the men to endure at this point.

In the first story, women at the tomb are overcome by a tidal wave of their own responses and this blocks their communication to the disciples. As their problem can be seen as primarily internal, Magdalen's problems are largely external. She has no difficulty finding words for her experience, but she is disbelieved (Mk 16,11). 'They would not believe it' does not refer merely to an intellectual assent. Their lack of faith and hardness of heart imply a disengagement from any relationship with Magdalen which would involve them in emotions other than sadness and grief about Jesus. She does not succeed in drawing them toward the possibility of another frame of reference for their grief.

The testimony of two other disciples walking in the country is the third in a sequence of Jesus' appearances (Mk 16,12). This reinforces the previous testimony of Mary Magdalen alone and validates the claim of a group of women. However, the male disciples do not respond to anyone outside their immediate circle who might claim to have seen Jesus. The women as a group have something in common with Mary Magdalen and with the two companions in the country. They have all taken leave of their homes, or we might say on another level, they have 'gone out of themselves'. Their 'movability' and being in transit contrasts with the eleven who sit inside a room. The eleven maintain their immovability, both of location and mind. Nothing moves them until Jesus himself comes to them.

In this sense, the eleven are the last, not the first, to encounter Jesus because they have 'stayed put' and not moved from the room where they sequestered themselves. The narrative suggests that Jesus discloses himself very readily to people who are on the move, notably the women who have left their accustomed domestic positions which provide them a measure of protection and safety, and also social invisibility. Yet Jesus is ultimately not distanced either by the geographical fixity or the unbelief of the eleven who were the invisible 'stay-at-homes'. They receive their mission anyway, all the while nagged by Jesus for their disbelief, hardness of heart and refusal to take seriously the testimony of their companions (Mk 16,14-16).

They have failed to act like the women, whose leave-taking from their homes is normative for others who will encounter Jesus on the open road and away from home.[16]

Resurrection: women's work of reclaiming memory

Women's memory is honoured after the resurrection because it is a reliable depository, confirming of Jesus' words before his death.[17] Luke is especially interested in the power of women's memory. This resource distinguishes the women at the tomb from the companions who meet Jesus along the road to Emmaus. At the prompting of the angels, the sisterhood of women remembers (Lk 24,6-9), and their memory is the basis of their proclamation to the community that Jesus is alive. In the Emmaus story (Lk 24, 13-35), the two must undergo a lengthy re-education in scripture directly from Jesus.[18] A thorough catechesis precedes their ability to make connections among listening to scripture passages, their realization that their hearts were burning, and their recognition of Jesus at table.[19] Women's faith in the resurrection is spontaneous and immediate. They need only one question and a single prompting from the angels (Lk 24,6-7). Then they turn into evangelists.

Women's memory is evidently the touchstone for the community's faith. They are in effect the archivists who hold in living memory the record both of Jesus' words and of their correct theological interpretation. The women's faith in Jesus' resurrection is identified with what lies in their memory. Their remembering involves several dimensions, anticipating the transformation which will happen in the entire community. Their consciousness is turned from resignation to the finality of death to anticipating the endlessness of life. 'Why do you look for the living among the dead?' This suggests that the resurrection involves, experientially, a profound change of perspective affecting their orientation toward the future. Confronting the starkness of death is one sobering frame within which to consider the meaning of life. But the reality of death gives way to an altered and expanded perspective. Death is not the final chapter in the life of Jesus. 'He is not here, but has risen.'

Their imaginations awaken and enlarge as they confront the destiny of Jesus. Memories about their conversations with Jesus during his earthly ministry come alive. Resurrection, as experienced by the women, involves not only a redirection to the future, but a reclaimed and integrated memory of historical events. 'Remember how he told you . . . ' The women's intellectual grasp of the meaning

of the angels' words affirms their intelligence and the immediacy of their insight.

In Luke, the women's emotions at the empty tomb undergo a redirection and become normative for the rest of the followers of Jesus. Luke softens the mention of the women being afraid, as reported by Mark. Luke, like Matthew, omits the women's uncertainty and sense of helplessness in Mark's 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' (Mk 16,3).[20] In Mark, fear paralyses the women. In Matthew, they are joyful, and even though afraid, they run to tell the disciples (Mt 28,8). In Luke, they are afraid at the beginning of the encounter with angels, but when they remember Jesus' words, they are no longer afraid as they run to tell the disciples (Lk 24,5.9). For post-resurrection women in all the gospels, relationships with the male disciples are problematic. The disbelief of the men represents not only a hesitancy to believe the women, but a conflict between men's culture and women's reality.[21]

Luke's implication might be that a calmed heart, even though it questions, is one of the 'conditions for the possibility' of experiencing the resurrection.[22] The women stand near the frontier between life and death—at the very entrance to the tomb. At the frontier, where death crosses into life, the entrance turns out to have become an exit. The very door by which Jesus enters the tomb becomes his exit-way from death to life. The way out for Jesus signifies the way out for women. Leaving the tomb, they do not go back to it. The resurrection of Jesus means a change in the status of women. Those who continue to struggle for justice in society and Church share the turnaround of women in the gospel against their previous subordinate status, in Soelle's words, 'uprisings of life against the many forms of death; which is to say, resurrection'.[23]

Conclusion

Women's memory at the tomb in Luke 24 is a kind of reprise of Mary's recitation of God's past deeds of mercy in the Magnificat (Lk 2,46–35). Mary's prayer is a proclamation to the community which recalls God's goodness to past generations. Both Mary and the women at the tomb experience liberation through their accurate recall of the past. What they remember becomes the content of their proclamation to the community. It is no accident that there is no report in the gospel of the women going back home after the resurrection. The only destination ever described for them is the ecclesial community. They attempt to enter the place where the male disciples are gathered. They initiate the proclamation.

We know that their efforts eventually succeeded in some measure, because each of the gospels ends with all the male disciples going forth and preaching. The resurrection accounts suggest that a new mythic story about women is being generated. No longer is their story that of the Handless Maiden, caught in a cycle of dependencies. Like Briar Rose, they have awakened to a sense of empowerment. Having become healed and autonomous, they say to other women, 'We can ''re-enter our community and history, offering our gifts to benefit all and taking our place as cocreators of our personal and communal destinies'''.[24]

The end of Mark, nevertheless, is perhaps the most honest reflection about the unresolved status of women in the community of faith today. The women are too afraid to say anything about their experience (16,8). One likely interpretation is that they are intimidated by the closed ranks of the men—indicated by the men's reaction to Magdalen's forthright communication and their dismissal of her and her message (16,11). Jesus himself eventually convinces the eleven that he is alive, and they go out to preach. However, the 'unfinished business' of Mark's Gospel is the conversation the women of 16,8 never have with the male disciples. Such an acceptance of the women's testimony by the men would 'close the circle' and include them definitively in the company of the eleven. In the canonical gospels, there is no report of the men confirming the testimony of the women in an actual conversation with them. Today that conversation remains the 'unfinished business' of the resurrection, an inclusion of women's testimony yet to be realized in the Church of Peter.[25]

NOTES

[1] David L. Fleming S. J.: *A contemporary reading of the Spiritual Exercises: a companion to St Ignatius' text* (St Louis, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1987), p 57.

[2] David M. Stanley S. J.: *A modern scriptural approach to the Spiritual Exercises* (Institute of Jesuit Sources, Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1967), p 278.

[3] 'Gender-neutral knowing' is related to the assumption that men and women may differ in body, but are the same in spirit. I challenged this assumption about 'gender-neutral spirituality' in an earlier article for this journal, 'Women and the Exercises: sin, standards and New Testament texts', *The Way Supplement* 70 (Spring 1991), pp 16–32. For the specific developmental tasks women negotiate in expressing themselves, see Mary F. Belenky, Blythe M. Clinchy, Nancy R. Goldberger, Jill M. Tarule: *Women's way of knowing: the development of self, voice, and mind* (New York, Basic Books, 1986).

[4] Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S. J.: *Le Chemin de Pâques: exercices spirituels pour changer de vie*, traduit de l'allemand par Michel Guerve S. J. (Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1990); titre original: *Der Österliche Weg* (Verlag Herder, Fribourg-en-Brisgau), 1988.

[5] Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza: 'The function of scripture in the liberation struggle: a critical feminist hermeneutics and liberation theology', in *Bread not stone: the challenge of feminist biblical interpretation* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1984), pp 43–63.

[6] Julian of Norwich: *The revelations of divine love*, trans by James Walsh S. J., Religious Experience Series 3 (St Meinrad, Indiana, Abbey Press, 1975), chap 41, pp 115–16.

[7] *Ibid.*, chap 22, pp 83–85.

[8] David L. Fleming S. J.: *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius: a literal translation and a contemporary reading* (St Louis, Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1978), p 36.

[9] '. . . the theory of the moral exemplarity of the love shown in the death of Jesus, the love of God and the love of Jesus, can be recast in a way that stresses precisely the transformative character of that divine and human love in the lives of the followers of Jesus.' See Anne E. Carr: 'The salvation of women: Christ, Mary and the Church' in *Transforming grace: Christian tradition and women's experience* (San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1988), p 185.

[10] A USA government-financed survey, the National Women's Study, says that in 1990, 683,000 adult women were raped. The study from the National Victim Center estimates that at least 12.1 million USA women, about one in eight, have been victims of forcible rape at least once in their lives and that 61% of victims were raped as minors. This study reports results five times as high as another survey, the National Crime Victimization Survey sponsored by the Justice Department, which estimated that 130,260 women were raped in 1990. Cf *San Francisco Chronicle,* April 24, pp A1–2.

[11] See Elizabeth Struthers Malbon: 'The poor widow in Mark and her poor rich readers', *Catholic biblical quarterly* 53 (October, 1991), pp 589–604.

[12] See Rita Nakashima Brock: *Journeys by heart: a christology of erotic power* (New York, Crossroad, 1988). Her treatment of the passion focuses on Mark. Social vulnerability, emotionality and compassion for those needing healing are the dynamics characterizing Jesus' love-energy (*erōs*).

[13] See Anne Primavesi: *From apocalypse to genesis: ecology, feminism and Christianity* (Minneapolis, Fortress, 1991), p 50–51. The context deals with the devaluation of women's work because there is so little to show for it, and yet the arguably 'throw-away' character of 'men's work' in finance, technology and advertising.

[14] Letty M. Russell: *Human liberation in a feminist perspective: a theology* (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1974), p 148.

[15] I would therefore argue against Stevan Davies' 'anti-feminist' reading, and his position that Luke does not seem intent on presenting Jesus as particularly sympathetic to women or to have encouraged the liberation of women in any significant sense. Davies maintains that women's presence in Luke only serves to capture the attention of the female audience. See 'Women in the Third Gospel and the New Testament Apocrypha' in *Women like this: new perspectives on Jewish women in the Greco-Roman world,* ed by Amy-Jill Levine (Atlanta, Georgia, Scholar's Press, 1991), pp 185–197.

[16] On the theme of being homeless and landless as a condition for discipleship, see Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt: 'Landless and homeless: a spirituality for the road in Luke', *The bible today* (Nov–Dec 1991), pp 346–350.

[17] See Pheme Perkins: *Resurrection: New Testament witness and contemporary reflection* (New York, Doubleday, 1984), pp 152–155.

[18] The re-education of the memory by reading the lives of the saints, and a new, studious love for scripture characterized the period when Ignatius underwent his conversion. See Philip Caraman S. J.: *Ignatius of Loyola: a biography of the founder of the Jesuits* (New York, Harper and Row, 1990), pp 26–31.

[19] See Joseph Grassi: *Healing the heart: the power of biblical heart imagery* (New York/Mahwah, Paulist, 1987), 'Remembrance, memory and "burning hearts"', pp 89–92, and 'God, the womb and the heart', pp 10–19. Also by Grassi, 'Heart imagery: some new directions in healing and psychotherapeutic applications', *Journal of mental imagery* 9 (1985), pp 17–32.

[20] For the insight about the sense of the women's helplessness in Mark, I am grateful to one of my students at Santa Clara University, Christopher Ranch.

[21] See 'The female system and the white male system: new ways of looking at our culture' in Anne Wilson Schaef: *Women's reality: an emerging female system in a white male society* (San

Francisco, Harper and Row, 1981, 1985), pp 99–145. For the perspective of a black woman theologian, see Diana L. Hayes: 'Church and culture: a black Catholic womanist perspective' in *The labor of God: an Ignatian view of church and culture*, ed by William U. J. O'Brien (Washington, D.C., Georgetown University Press, 1991), pp 67–87.

[22] This phrase is used by Karl Rahner S. J., when he speaks of the capacity of the human being to experience mystery, and therefore communication with the unseen and transcendent God.

[23] Dorothee Soelle: *The strength of the weak: toward a Christian feminist identity*, trans by Robert and Rita Kimber (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1984), p 76.

[24] Gertrud Mueller Nelson: *Here all dwell free: stories to heal the wounded feminine* (New York, Doubleday, 1991), p 302.

[25] That this conversation continues in the USA Catholic Church is evidenced by the publication of a third draft of the pastoral on women in Church and society, 'Called to be one in Christ Jesus', in mid-April, 1992, by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. This draft will be voted upon in November, 1992.