

Remembering who we are

Women and ritual

Lizette Larson-Miller

Introduction

WOMEN ARE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD. The expression and celebration of that fundamental belief is at the heart of rituals done for, by and in honour of women who espouse a religious faith which includes a personal monotheism. But the belief that women and men are both made in the image of God is also a fundamental understanding for most Christians, and therefore should be part of all mainstream liturgical expression. But when ritual language, images of God or images of women present an alternative understanding, the most basic liturgical equation of *lex orandi, lex credendi*¹ breaks down, namely that we potentially no longer pray what we believe, nor believe what we pray. It is in this context that much of the current practice and reflection of Christian women and ritual takes place.

The field of women and ritual has mushroomed in the last ten to fifteen years,² but it is homogeneous neither in approach nor presuppositions. It is, first and foremost, not necessarily a Christian phenomenon, let alone more narrowly Roman Catholic, Anglican or Methodist. Feminist liturgy and ritualizing women are found in all major religions, but even beyond that there are many women's groups which do not focus on a deity at all. In these gatherings the worship of a transcendent being is not as important as the lives and relationships of women, and nature, divinized or not. Even among members of a given Christian denomination there can be tremendous variety, both in degree of continuing relationship to the institutional Church and in the types of ritual activities engaged. Because of this variation in intention and practice, it would be best for the sake of clarity to begin by categorizing rituals involving women into three divisions, moving from the least restrictive to the most specific. The danger of categorization is that it can be artificial: women often belong to more than one group or, within a particular period of life, an individual may move from one group to another. A further

danger would be to presume that all the participants are women, or that feminism in general is gender-restricted. In spite of these cautions, it is still helpful to impose some order, however artificial, for the sake of understanding the complexity of the current situation. Following a presentation of the different types of rituals in which women are involved, the article moves to a theological reflection, trying to contextualize in a broader way the place and meaning of these activities and their future movement.

Women's rituals: celebrating women's bodies and relationships

Rituals are repeated actions, words or movements that have been imbued with meaning. They are not the same as unconscious habits. When done corporately, they become expressive on a number of levels. 'Communal ritualizing is an active negotiation, construction, and production of relationships that both empower and set limits.'³ Women's rituals, considered in the broadest sense, are not necessarily connected to an institutional religion. The focus of these rituals is usually women themselves, and many adapted and adopted rituals are actually ancient and traditional practices that were maintained in very gender-specific situations in patriarchal societies. The rituals about, by and for women are usually centred either on women's bodies and the stages of women's lives, or on relationships, women to women, women to men, women to nature, or women to goddess.

Rituals surrounding moments of peak physical experience or times of transition have always been part of women's rituals, especially rituals surrounding childbirth, puberty and marriage. While elements of these celebrations have been 're-found' by modern women, there is a conscious deliberateness to the structuring and reclaiming of practices which express realities of women's lives, and a discarding of those elements which are no longer perceived as liberating.

Women are creating new ceremonies that express women's spiritual experiences. We celebrate transitions in women's life cycles: menarche, reproductive choices, miscarriage, stillbirth, birthing, adoption, divorce, career change, loss of friendship, leaving a religious congregation, handfasting (commitment), menopause, croning, entering a nursing home, and death.⁴

Whether consciously in response to patriarchy, cultural and religious, or independently of that, the focus on the body is a key component

of contemporary women's rituals. 'A consistent refrain of feminist literature and scholarship is the necessity of revaluing women's bodies, sexuality and organic processes, understood to have been reified and declared taboo by Western religious culture.'⁵ If ritual is the expression and embodiment of beliefs, then a primary meaning of women's rituals is an undoing of the negative associations of the bodies of women and a celebration of what was traditionally taboo. There are many primers on women's rituals, and the examples set forth are revelatory of this positive embrace. For example, Penina Adelman designed a 'Menopause ritual' with original and traditional (Jewish, in this case) elements.

[In this ritual] we hope to convey a positive tenor to this life cycle event which has been feared and misunderstood by so many men and women in the past. Once a woman has reached the age beyond which pregnancy ceases, her gender identity is often blurred by society. She is in a transitional state, experienced by those interacting with her as being full of power and danger. During the tumultuous fourteenth century when the Black Death struck in Europe, those women who managed to survive the disease and live to old age were thought to be witches.⁶

Her ritual, as designed and experienced, was centred on a meditation that was a directed visualization on 'ending that segment of our life characterized by an active womb',⁷ which concluded with burying the womb on the Mount of Olives, protected and housed in the earth.

While most women writing and designing women's rituals agree that there is no right way or particular format to follow, there are qualities and practices which emerge as a consensus. Diann Neu's nine points represent the views of many feminist ritualists:

- feminist rituals value both the process and the product;
- feminist rituals focus on relationships that liberate and empower women, as well as supportive men and children who are moving from patriarchy to full humanity;
- feminist religious rituals share power among all participants;
- feminist religious rituals use symbols and stories, images and words, gestures and dances, along with a variety of art forms which emerge from women's ways of knowing;

- feminist religious rituals value women's bodies as vehicles of divine revelation, and honour women in all our diversity as imaging the divine and as engaging in divine activity;
- feminist religious rituals motivate and legitimate social transformation;
- feminist religious rituals allow the integration of politics, justice and inculturation as friendly companions for feminist change;
- feminist religious rituals value women's solidarity with one another and strengthen these bonds in community for overcoming violence in all its forms;
- feminist religious rituals share with children a feminist perspective that models a life-stance of love and justice.⁸

Rituals focusing on relationships also draw on these nine qualities, but here we might point out the different and diffused foci when the rituals deal with specific relationships, both positive and negative. An area of women's rituals which deals with past negative relationship consists of the communal healings that express the anger, shame and grief of rape, incest, domestic violence or addiction. The rituals give expression to the sorrow, act out through movement the setting aside or leaving behind of the old, empower new supportive relationships and bring into the open what was hidden for too long in many women's lives.⁹

Celebrations of positive relationships might be exemplified by the ritual groups which focus on women's relationship to nature,¹⁰ to the earth specifically and often joined to that, a female deity. Some groups, such as Wicca,¹¹ ground themselves specifically in nature and find in that connection to nature a magical power. A coven is a group of peers often formed around a particular charism, in which one or more members are particularly gifted in entering into the channels of energy in the earth and channelling that energy to the group. That power and energy is then used for healing, teaching, psychic or other charismatic activities. 'For a ritual to be powerful, we must start grounded, stay grounded, and end grounded, because the power that we raise comes into our bodies through the earth, and then returns to the earth.'¹² Ritual goddess groups often have a dual focus on worshipping the goddess and celebrating women's bodies, a symbiosis brought about by worshipping a divinity who looks like and is embodied by the worshippers. The strong affinities between nature celebration/worship and goddess worship are again so intertwined as to often be inseparable.¹³

Finally, a word must be said about women in relationship with the larger political community. Increasingly, whether grounded in a mainstream religious system or not, women's spirituality groups arise out of or form the basis for 'integrating politics and justice with ritual', such as incorporating 'symbol and ritual into public demonstrations, marches and protests that decry injustice and demand change'.¹⁴ The very presence of ritualizing women in the public sphere is itself an overturning of the traditional division of public and private, the public having been the sphere of men and the private the sphere of women. It is this intersection of *polis* and ritual that has become a frequent opportunity for overcoming religious and denominational boundaries in ways which form a new community based on common ideals.

Women and ritual: Christian feminist liturgy

The first category described above, women's rituals, was devoted to rituals with no association to mainstream religions in the contemporary sense, nor, in many cases, to a divinity at all. The second category, women and ritual, is far narrower in scope in that the participants are women with Christian beliefs, although the degree to which many participants continue to be involved in an institutional church varies tremendously. Many of the concerns of women and hopes for the rituals done in the first category are shared by Christian women in this category also, and in some cases, the outward appearance of original rituals may appear to be very similar. If we use the example of one feminist author, Mary Collins' listing the 'principles of feminist liturgy', this will be obvious.

- The foundational principle of any feminist liturgy is the ritualizing of relationships that emancipate and empower women.
- Feminist liturgy is effected not through élites but through the communal interaction of all the members of intentional groups.
- Feminist ritual practice engages in a quite particularly focused critique, setting out as it does to transform patriarchal schemes of redeemed and redemptive relationships.
- Feminist rituals have begun to develop a repertoire of alternative symbolic forms or relational schemes.
- Feminist liturgies are generated at the level of practice.¹⁵

Particularly the principles of empowering and celebrating women, the shared leadership and critique of patriarchy have parallels with non-Christian women's rituals. Here, however, there is a commonal-

ity of belief in God, named in different ways, and in the role of Christ as the empowering liberator, which can reshape the focus of the rituals. Worship and prayer addressed to God and, flowing from that, Christian ritual activity done by women is often called 'feminist liturgy' rather than women's ritual, for this very reason.¹⁶

The principles enumerated by Mary Collins may relate the expectations from which the rituals are put together (the 'what'), but 'how' and 'why' are also valuable questions. It seems many ritual groups emerge out of parish-based prayer groups or experiences of communal spirituality, while others, particularly in those denominations that now ordain women, emerge out of more official liturgies. More common, however, according to anecdotal evidence gathered in the United States, is the deliberate formation of groups composed of women who need something more or something other. In a wonderful collection of women's voices, Miriam Therese Winter, Adair Lummis and Allison Stokes allow us to hear what Protestant and Catholic feminists in the United States are saying for themselves. Some are women who remain in their own churches, working for justice from within, who need the support of feminist liturgy groups to feed their spirits.

Sometimes I feel on the fringes because of my theological understandings of God and my anger at the disrespect and injustice often heaped upon women by unaware men *and* women. It has been difficult for me to stay with the church at times, and yet it is one institution where much that I value is proclaimed. So I continue and hope for transforming change.¹⁷

Another group is composed of women who feel that they are called to remain true to Christ, but cannot participate on a regular basis in their parish. These are women whom Rosemary Radford Ruether describes as 'defecting in place'. While many of these women find their primary community in a feminist liturgy group on an indefinite basis, many others belong to a larger women's network like Women-Church¹⁸ on a more interim basis, perhaps leaving or going into exile for a while before returning to work for justice and inclusivity in their parishes. The original vision of Women-Church was not 'ideological separatism' in a permanent sense, but a 'stage in a process . . . in the formation of a critical culture and community of women and men in exodus from patriarchy'. Ultimately the goal would be for 'Woman-Church' to become simply 'Church: that is,

the authentic community of exodus from oppression that has been heralded by the traditions of religious and social liberation, but, until now, corrupted by reversion to new forms of the *ecclesia* of patriarchy'.¹⁹ 'I see myself and my women's group as part of a wider social movement. We are part of a transformational process as individuals outside and inside the church institution.'²⁰ 'This may be the last bastion of total male domination in the Western world. The altar has become the sepulchre for thinly veiled misogyny. Even though the church can no longer control the consciousness of its followers, it shows no inclination toward self-examination.'²¹ 'Many times I feel suffocated for spiritual nourishment and find it piecemeal. My spiritual experience is that of being "in exile".'²²

The primary reasons why these women felt alienated or excluded from their churches fell into three areas: exclusive language, images of God and spirituality. In the first (language), the power of language to shape one's self-image and one's view of the world was recognized in the anecdotes of the women themselves. Here, particularly, the issue is language about people which presumes that in the English language *men* or *brother* is inclusive and therefore normative. 'Women must *hear* that the love and grace extends to them, not just tell themselves that it extends to them through the he's and him's in their lives.'²³

The second category was imaging and naming God, which is usually a type of second-level issue with regard to inclusive language, but which is intimately related because one's image of God influences one's image of self and others. 'I changed when my image of God changed . . . I became like the God I adored.'²⁴

Because of an experience with sexual molestation at age fourteen, my concept of God became very muddled and polluted. That God was very male, judgmental, vindictive and blaming. While dealing with that rape experience, I rejected God completely. Only recently have I been able to experience God as female, positive and nurturing.²⁵

The issue of how to name God (particularly the trinitarian God of Christianity who is in essence relationship and community) is difficult. If God is neither male nor female, how can the desire for non-gendered attributes be used which still maintain the relationality of the Christian God? It is that difficulty on both the theological and pastoral levels that needs to be evaluated again and again in feminist

(and other) theology. A workable solution on the pastoral level seems to be to follow biblical practice and the liturgical tradition of the early Church, namely using a great variety of titles to show a multitude of attributes and relationships.

The third category seen as exclusive and alienating was spirituality, closely aligned with the issues of language mentioned above. 'I am pulled between the idea that the parish should be the center of my worshipping life and the fact that the most spiritually enriching experiences that I have had have not occurred in the parish.'²⁶

I see many good spirits sucked dry by trying to make changes in an institution that neither respects them nor wants their involvement in the fullness of who we are. When women wait until their spirit has been wiped out before stepping out of the male-run church, we often have trouble resuscitating our spiritual lives and need to celebrate them in community.²⁷

Spirituality for many of the respondents seemed to be both a methodology and practice of maintaining a personal relationship with God and a communal affirmation of women before God.

The women whose voices are included above belonged to a national survey of self-named Christian feminists. Beneath surveys like this, however, are the experiences of many women at the local level who may not even label themselves as feminists or as participants in feminist liturgies, but who are drawn to alternative or women-presided liturgies that many others would consider mainstream. This hybrid situation may be a more common experience: faithful attendance at a cursus of parish liturgies in addition to participation in labyrinth prayer, women's spirituality groups, alternative Holy Thursday foot-washing rites, women's retreats and evening prayer with women preaching and presiding, many of which are actually sponsored by the institutional Church. These parallel tracks can and usually do coexist, both from the perspective of the individual woman involved and from the perspective of the larger church community. It is when the style and type of liturgy itself is removed from a restricted status and done as an alternative that a conflict may arise. It is this situation, particularly present in the Roman Catholic Church, to which we now turn.

WomenEucharist: Roman Catholic women and the eucharist

Many Roman Catholic women perceive themselves as caught between two realities: the first is that all their lives they have been shaped by liturgy and feel a strong pull toward ritual and particularly the eucharist. The second is that they belong to a community which does not ordain women and they are therefore unwelcome as presiders.²⁸ This faithfulness to a eucharistic-centred spirituality joined to the inability to celebrate with a woman presider or even often with feminist sensitivity has given rise to alternative celebrations of the eucharist by Roman Catholic women. The concerns and hopes of women doing ritual described in the two sections above ('Women's rituals' and 'Women and ritual') are present in these rituals also, but the theological, ecclesiological and political stakes are more focused and more anxiously urgent in this milieu of women and ritual. A strong backlash by the Vatican against women's ordination and related issues²⁹ has resulted in varied local responses to the reality of these eucharistic celebrations. In some places in the United States they are viewed by institutional officials as irrelevant, because they are not considered eucharist. In other dioceses, the reaction has been a harsh condemnation, particularly by way of related organizations such as Call to Action.³⁰ Regardless of the official reactions, the participants themselves see what they are doing as important, relevant and real. A recent national study of the phenomenon³¹ reveals a widespread and growing movement with a common desire for meaningful and inclusive eucharistic celebrations and a sense that these eucharistic celebrations may eventually have an impact on the whole Church. 'I think we are on the path that Jesus gave us in celebrating the Eucharist. It doesn't have to be in total conflict with the established church, rather an augmentation of spiritual growth.'³²

Many of the voices are angry voices who feel excluded from the eucharist which is still the heart of their faith. They feel that their celebrations of eucharist are very real, perhaps more so, because eucharist has everything to do with being a community and continuing to reach deeper and deeper communion through the action of the eucharist, something inconceivable in many large urban parishes today. Another refrain which is heard is the unwillingness to give up: authentic participation in the eucharist is central to the nourishing of faith for many of the women in the survey. 'WomenEucharist chooses to affirm our deep connection with Jesus through the cel-

eboration of Eucharist together, it is the native tongue of our spirituality.³³

Eucharist is supposed to be transforming, and many participants spoke of understanding for the first time social justice as the well-spring from which one gains the strength to practise Christianity in their WomenEucharist celebrations.

I am so angry sometimes, as are many members of our group. Liturgy helps me not to feed on that anger but to transform it. Good liturgy gets our feet moving, gets us involved against injustice. The energy of our anger gives us energy to act. This is a gift of Jesus.³⁴

Another common reflection on the experience of WomenEucharist had to do with the intimate community. Again and again voices reflected a feeling that eucharist belonged not just in a small setting but in a domestic setting. The liturgy was a different experience altogether when removed to a large, formal and distant setting, and its origin in a domestic setting was honoured most faithfully in these gatherings. 'Small Church in the living room encourages sharing on the issues of empowerment and the identification of charisms, and the need for forgiveness and the call to justice. Intimate Church in the kitchen encourages mutuality and participation.'³⁵

The survey study noted that Roman Catholic women celebrating eucharist is not a new phenomenon, but has been around since the 1970s. What seems new is that it is a growing movement, or that it is beginning (at least in the United States) to have a consciousness of itself as a movement, rather than isolated and autonomous groups.

Present reflection: remembering the past and imagining the future

Liturgy is about remembering and imagining, *anamnesis* and *epiclesis*. All of the rituals associated with women described above also remember and express hope. For Christian women, the remembering is often approached with a 'hermeneutic of suspicion': normative patterns of writing history are to be regarded as suspect and as lacking in women's voices, so that remembering includes reclaiming lost or distant voices. But interpreting history is not really about the past. The '*present*' encounter is the point of it all. In memorial we do not take a mythic trip into the past, nor do we drag the past into the present by repeating the primordial event in mythic

drama.³⁶ Robert Taft's axiom was not written about feminist liturgy, but its aptness serves as a reminder that much of Christian feminist liturgy is simply good liturgy: remembering a future that is always more inclusive, more just and more transformative should be the imaginative invocation of the Holy Spirit in all liturgy. So the future dimension of these rituals is a prayer for what can and will be as well as a ritual presentation of the ideal, even if this is limited to the course of a liturgy.

Ritual also reminds the participants who they are as well as functioning as an ongoing formation for who they are always becoming. Two very strong themes running through all of the women's rituals, including the eucharistic celebrations, are actually related: the goodness and rightness of women's bodies and the goodness and holiness of nature or creation. The emphasis on women's bodies in non-Christian rituals is a counter to patriarchal views of the inferior position of women due to their bodies and a celebration of the very dimensions of women's lives which were once feared and labelled as polluting. In Christian women's liturgies, the same issues are there plus a celebration that women in their human totality are made in the image of God, so that from both creation and the incarnation women's bodies are holy and the potential vehicles of holiness. The other strong current running through all the rituals and liturgies is the respect for and closeness to nature. Especially in Christian thinking, this represents an important and prophetic reversal of thinking. For too long Christian theology has been complicit in a view that all of creation is under human rule and to be considered merely as a tool for human gain.

Theology is an 'earthly' affair in the best sense of that word: it helps people to live rightly, appropriately, on the earth, in our home. It is, as the Jewish and Christian traditions have always insisted, concerned with 'right relations', relations with God, neighbor, and self, but now the context has broadened to include what has dropped out of the picture in the past few hundred years – the oppressed neighbors, the other creatures, and the earth that supports us all.³⁷

The liturgical and theological context for this in a Christian setting is sacramentality. The recapturing of a sense of sacrament as dynamic encounter between God and the people of God, and the goodness and holiness of all creation as the vehicle by which the

Other is encountered, has been a crowning triumph of Vatican II. One of the hallmarks of feminist ritual and reflection has been to celebrate this belief in very concrete ways. 'Sacramentality grows out of human embodiment and its connection to the natural world, not in contrast to it.'³⁸ How can we symbolize the presence of God or express the inexpressible except through material things? Sacramental then 'applies to any finite reality through which the divine is perceived to be disclosed and communicated, and through which our human response to the divine assumes some measure of shape, form and structure'.³⁹ The age-old association of women's bodies with nature has come full circle: the physicality of the eucharist itself, central to faith and practice for many Christians, has by its sacrality assisted in recognizing the sacrality of all of creation. Again, feminist theology and ritual, with its determination to reduce dualisms and divisions, has been prophetic in developing further the return to sacramentality which owes so much to theologians like Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx.

What will the future hold? One could hope for more of the creative and prophetic theological scholarship of women involved in feminist rituals and liturgy. One could also hope for less of the divisions and rancour which mark conversations in many churches today, especially in the Roman Catholic communion. Much theological work remains to be done. Even the best of feminist liturgies beg the question of ecclesiology: what, where and who is the Church? Much care needs to be practised in observing what has happened in Christian denominations when women were ordained. What will happen in the Roman Catholic Church when women are ordained? What will be lost, what will be gained? While we wait for the final perfection, women will continue to ritualize their deepest memories and hopes, circling in an energizing and inclusive dance which continues to have the ability to create communion where there has been discord and to embody corporately the image of God.

Lizette Larson-Miller is assistant professor of liturgy and sacramental theology at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. She previously taught at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley. She is the editor of *Medieval liturgy: a book of essays* (Garland, 1997) and numerous articles on liturgy and theology.

NOTES

- 1 The tag *lex orandi, lex credendi* is a modern shorthand version of a phrase in the so-called *Capitula Coelestini* attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine between 435 and 442. Prosper's original phrase was *legem credendi les statuat supplicandi* which is far more specific than the deliberately ambiguous *lex orandi, lex credendi*. See Paul DeClerck, "'Lex orandi, lex credendi'", *sens originel et avatar historiques d'un adage équivoque*, *Questions Liturgiques* 59 (1978), pp 194–196.
- 2 See, for example, the bibliographies on 'Women and worship' by Teresa Berger in *Studia Liturgica* 19 (1989), pp 96–110 and *Studia Liturgica* 25 (1995), pp 103–117.
- 3 Mary Collins, 'Principles of feminist liturgy' in Marjorie Proctor-Smith and Janet Walton (eds), *Women at worship: interpretations of North American diversity* (Louisville: Westminster/Knox, 1993), p 22. Collins is summarizing the work of Catherine Bell, *Ritual theory, ritual practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), in this section.
- 4 Diann Neu, 'Women revisioning religious rituals' in Lesley Northrup (ed), *Women and religious ritual* (Washington DC: The Pastoral Press, 1993), p 158.
- 5 Lesley Northrup, 'Claiming horizontal space: women's religious rituals', *Studia Liturgica* 25 (1995), p 96.
- 6 Penina Adelman, 'Iyyar: a menopause ritual' in Diane Stein (ed), *The goddess celebrates: an anthology of women's rituals* (Freedom CA: The Crossing Press, 1991), p 234.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p 239.
- 8 Diann Neu, 'Women revisioning religious rituals', pp 158–167.
- 9 See the examples in Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women-Church: theology and practice of feminist liturgical communities* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), pp 150–163.
- 10 Most women's rituals have some reference to the earth, either linking women's bodies directly with nature or seeing the earth as the source of healing and empowerment. This category is, therefore, a bit artificial for the sake of clarity.
- 11 See, for example, Starhawk, *Spiral dance: a rebirth of the ancient religion of the Great Goddess*, 2nd edn (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1989).
- 12 Starhawk, 'Ritual as bonding, action as ritual' in Judith Plaskow and Carol P. Christ (eds), *Weaving the visions: new patterns in feminist spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), p 326.
- 13 For a description of Goddess (including different historical titles and attributes), see 'Remembering her' by Marion Weinstein in *The Goddess celebrates: an anthology of women's rituals*, pp 24–36.
- 14 Diann Neu, 'Women revisioning religious rituals', pp 162–165.
- 15 Mary Collins, 'Principles of feminist liturgy' in *Women at worship: interpretations of North American diversity*, pp 11–17.
- 16 For a discussion on the difficulties of discerning the descriptive reality and the advantages/disadvantages of using 'ritual' or 'liturgy', see the discussion in Mary Collins, 'Principles of feminist liturgy', pp 17–24.
- 17 Miriam Therese Winter, Adair Lummis and Allison Stokes, voice of a Protestant woman quoted in *Defecting in place* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), p 58.
- 18 'Women-Church represents the first time that women collectively have claimed to be church and have claimed the tradition of the exodus community as a community of liberation from patriarchy. This means that patriarchy is rejected as God's will. It is rejected as the order of creation or as a reflection of biological nature.' The first national meeting in the United States of Women-Church took place in 1983. See Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women-Church: theology and practice of feminist liturgical communities*, p 57.
- 19 *Ibid.*, pp 60–61.
- 20 Voice of a Protestant woman quoted in *Defecting in place*, p 63.

- 21 Roman Catholic woman in her forties (Hispanic/Latina) from the Southwestern part of the United States, quoted in *Defecting in place*, p 65.
- 22 Roman Catholic nun in her forties (Hispanic/Latina) from the Midwest, quoted in *Defecting in place*, p 70.
- 23 Voice of a woman in her forties (Caucasian), United Methodist, quoted in *Defecting in place*, p 155.
- 24 Voice of a man interviewed in the WomenEucharist survey, Sheila Durkin Dierks, *WomenEucharist* (Boulder CO: WovenWord Press, 1997), pp 192–193.
- 25 Voice of a Catholic woman (Caucasian), *ibid.*, p 160.
- 26 Voice of a woman in her fifties (Caucasian), Episcopal/Anglican, *ibid.*, p 172.
- 27 Voice of a woman in her thirties (Caucasian), Quaker, *ibid.*, p 167.
- 28 This is potentially a conflict for Eastern Orthodox and other Eastern Christian women also, but their voices are missing from almost every survey done in the United States. Roman Catholic and Eastern Christians are the only eucharist-centred churches left that do not ordain women as priests.
- 29 Most recently and most clearly in *Ordinatio sacerdotalis*, 22 May 1994, a papal document reiterating the ban on women's ordination, and by the Vatican document, *Some questions regarding collaboration of non-ordained faithful in priests' sacred ministry*, published on 15 August 1997.
- 30 The most prominent American example which comes to mind is the ban on Catholic membership in twelve organizations put out by Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska. The order to withdraw from membership was accompanied with a threat of excommunication (19 March 1996).
- 31 Sheila Durkin Dierks, *WomenEucharist*.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p 230.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p 16.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p 284.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p 274.
- 36 Robert Taft, 'Toward a theology of the Christian feast' in *Beyond East and West: problems in liturgical understanding* (Washington DC: The Pastoral Press, 1984), p 2. Taft calls his readers' attention at this point to an earlier work by B. S. Childs, *Memory and tradition in Israel* (Studies in Biblical Theology 37, Naperville IL).
- 37 Sallie McFague, 'An earthly theological agenda' in Carol J. Adams (ed), *Ecofeminism and the sacred* (New York: Continuum, 1993), p 89.
- 38 Susan A. Ross, 'God's embodiment and women' in Catherine Mowry LaCugna (ed), *Freeing theology: the essentials of theology in feminist perspective* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), p 195.
- 39 Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994), p 788.