

# The Church as sacrament

## Towards an ecclesial spirituality

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A NEW PHENOMENON EMERGING on the religious scene is being disclosed in the large chain bookstores throughout North America and Western Europe. Alongside the religion section is another, a new and separate section on spirituality. Often it dwarfs the old religion section. This separation of spirituality and religion reflects a cultural shift which has been taking place over the last several decades. It is reflected in a rather matter-of-fact comment by Wendy Kaminer in *The New Republic*: 'Spirituality . . . is simply religion deinstitutionalized and shorn of any exclusionary doctrines . . . You can claim to be a spiritual person without professing loyalty to a particular dogma or even understanding it.'<sup>1</sup>

While modern culture demonstrates a hunger for the transcendent, a longing for some sense of ultimate meaning, this spiritual quest has become increasingly privatized. It is no longer assumed that the pursuit of the spiritual life requires an affiliation with a formal religious tradition or a Christian community. The consequences of pursuing a spiritual quest untethered from long-standing ecclesial traditions are serious. In this essay I hope to demonstrate that Vatican II's affirmation of the sacramentality of the Church may help explain the vital relationship between spirituality and participation in Christian community.

### *The sacramentality of the Church*

To appreciate Vatican II's teaching on the sacramentality of the Church we must recall the influence of almost four centuries of Protestant-Catholic polemics on Catholic ecclesiology. In response to scandalous institutional corruption in Roman Catholicism, Martin Luther distinguished between the visible and the invisible church. The visible or external church was the church recognizable in its institutional structures: canon law, hierarchical offices and sacraments. That church included saints and sinners alike. While the institutional structures which belonged to the visible church might possess some functional value, they did not pertain to the true

church. The true church was the invisible church of believers whose membership was known only to God.

This tendency of the Reformers to play the visible off against the invisible led Catholic apologists of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to stress the unity of the visible and the invisible. Moreover, because it was the visible structures that were under attack, these theologians focused their efforts on legitimating the Church's institutional structures, often to the neglect of the Church's spiritual dimension. The Church was often presented as a *societas perfecta*, a 'perfect society'. The Church could be viewed much like a civil society in so far as it possessed all that was necessary for the achievement of this society's particular end, namely the salvation of souls. This neglect largely continued up to Vatican II. Alternative ecclesologies which presented the spiritual interiority of the Church, like that of the great nineteenth-century Tübingen theologian, Johann Adam Möhler, were often met by the magisterium with suspicion.

That Vatican II was able to go in another direction is largely due to the vital contributions made between the two Vatican Councils by both the liturgical movement and a return to biblical and patristic sources. The leading figures in the liturgical movement such as Lambert Beauduin, Romano Guardini, Odo Casel and Virgil Michel, as well as those working in historical theology to retrieve biblical and patristic theologies – Emile Mersch, Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniélou – all emphasized a vision of the Church as not just the hierarchy but the whole community of believers. They also drew attention to the fundamental connection between the sacraments of the Church. In the 1950s and early 1960s, this connection became the subject of several important systematic treatises by figures like Edward Schillebeeckx, Otto Semmelroth and Karl Rahner.<sup>2</sup>

The Flemish theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx, published a groundbreaking work on sacramentality which rooted this notion in the incarnation. For Schillebeeckx Christ is the primordial sacrament. With the glorification and ascension of Christ into heaven, the Church becomes itself a sacrament, namely 'the visible expression of Christ's grace and redemption'.<sup>3</sup> Yet Christ and Church do not stand as sacraments numerically added to the official seven; rather the seven sacraments are specific ecclesial realizations of the sacramentality of Christ and his Church. Both Rahner and Semmelroth would insist that the Church can be called the basic sacrament only

in relation to Christ. To forget this is to fall prey to a new kind of ecclesial triumphalism.

***Vatican II on the sacramentality of the Church***

This new development in Catholic ecclesiology was taken up, albeit somewhat tentatively, by the Second Vatican Council. Already in the first document considered by the Council, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, we find this statement:

This work of human redemption and perfect glorification of God, foreshadowed by the wonders which God performed among the people of the Old Testament, Christ the Lord completed principally in the paschal mystery of his blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension, whereby 'dying, he destroyed our death and rising, restored our life'. For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.<sup>4</sup> (SC 5)

This passage highlights the paschal mystery and thus already suggests the Council's consistent emphasis on the Church as a sacrament of salvation. In article 9 of the Constitution on the Church the Council notes that God 'has, however, willed to make women and men holy and to save them, not as individuals without any bond between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge and serve him in holiness'. It is in this corporate work of salvation that the Church can be a sign to the world:

All those, who in faith look towards Jesus, the author of salvation and the source of unity and peace, God has gathered together and established as the church, that it may be for each and everyone the visible sacrament of saving unity. In order to extend to all regions of the earth, it enters into human history, though it transcends at once all time and all boundaries between peoples. (LG 9)

Later in article 48 the Church is explicitly referred to as the 'universal sacrament of salvation' (see also the Decree on Mission 1, 5). This theme would be carried forward in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. That remarkable document firmly situated the Church within the world as a sign to the world of God's redemptive love. If the world stands in need of salvation, it is nonetheless already graced. The Church stands within this tension between a world which is itself a reflection of the goodness of its

creator and yet is at the same time a world wounded by sin. The Church is a visible sign of that grace which in faith we accept as already at work throughout the world. At the same time it is also an effective instrument which brings God's saving grace to bear on humanity's often tragic history.

If the Church is a sacrament of salvation, it is also a sacrament of unity. '[T]he church, in Christ, is a kind of sacrament, that is, a sign and instrument of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race' (*LG* 1, translation my own). Earlier in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy the Council condemns any privatized understanding of the sacraments and writes: 'Liturgical services are not private functions but are celebrations of the Church, which is the "sacrament of unity", namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops' (*SC* 26).

The Council shared with both Bellarmine and Pius XII a concern for asserting the necessity of the Church's visible structures. At the same time, the visibility or materiality of the sacrament, its 'outer dimension', is placed in service of the inner dimension, God's saving grace.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the sacramentality of the Church demands that the institutional dimension of the Church – its law, offices, ritual actions – be valued not as ultimate realities but as mediations of God's saving action. Rather than simply juxtaposing the visible with the invisible, the sacramentality of the Church asserts that the Church's visible humanity opens out into God's saving presence. Moreover, it is not just the institutional dimension of the Church that participates in its sacramentality. Ultimately, the Church consists not in structures and laws but in believers. The Church is a *congregatio fidelium*. The whole Church, saints and sinners alike, shares in the sacramentality of the Church, in so far as the witness of each believer's life participates in the corporate sign value of the whole Church.

### ***Reservations regarding the understanding of the Church as sacrament***

Many in the Eastern Orthodox traditions greeted the Council's articulation of this ecclesiology with great enthusiasm; others expressed reservations. Many Protestant theologians expressed discomfort with the way in which this ecclesiology so unites the Church to Christ as to overlook the Church's human and sinful dimensions.<sup>6</sup> These critics point out Catholicism's tendency to divinize the Church, or to make the Church its own Lord. An excessive

preoccupation with the sacramental life of the Church as a mediation of grace can obscure the unique mediation of Christ who is properly the only 'fundamental' sacrament.<sup>7</sup> These commentators would remind us that if the Church is, as sacrament, a mediator of grace, it is also, as a gathering of sinners, a recipient of God's grace.

The Council itself seemed aware of these dangers and augmented its teaching on the Church as sacrament with other images. Placed alongside the Council's teaching on the Church as both body of Christ and sacrament was its teaching on the Church as people of God and, in particular, its acknowledgement of the Church's 'pilgrim' status. This last image explicitly stressed the eschatological aspect of the Church. Far from being a 'perfect society' conceived as a static reservoir of grace and truth hovering above the vicissitudes of human history, the Church itself is a pilgrim. It is on the way but 'will attain its full perfection only in the glory of heaven' (LG 48). All of this recalls that sacraments, in the end, are always created, provisional realities. They mediate God's presence, but in themselves they are always imperfect and exist in anticipation of the consummation of history. The Church, at least as an historical reality, shares in this provisionality.

***The sacramentality of the Church and the ecclesial dimension of spirituality***

To these reservations regarding the sacramentality of the Church we might add one more. The term 'sacrament' is itself a very ecclesiastical term associated with the institutional structures of the Church. Consequently, it risks reinforcing the separation that I alluded to in my introduction, namely that between spirituality and ecclesiology. The difficulty lies, in large part, with the late Baroque mechanistic notion of sacrament suggesting a view of the Church as 'ecclesial grace dispenser'. This understanding of both the sacraments and the Church which administers them reinforced a dualism between the Church as a depository of grace and the world as fundamentally profane. It raises the question whether it is possible to overcome the dualism which at least certain notions of sacrament seem to support. To overcome this difficulty we must go beyond the tentative approach of the Council to consider Karl Rahner's theology of the Church as sacrament situated within his larger theology of grace.<sup>8</sup>

Rahner reverses the traditional understanding of sacramentality.<sup>9</sup> Rather than following the descending schema of Neoscholasticism

in which grace comes as if through a spiritual conduit from Christ through the Church and its seven sacraments to the world, Rahner starts with the graced character of the human person in the world established through God's self-communication. The encounter with God is not relegated to the 'practice of religion' but is realized in the very process of being human. In our capacity for wonder, love, hope and freedom we encounter God. In the experiences of suffering and loneliness, laughter and play we discover ourselves to be graced. Not surprisingly, Rahner is often called the theologian or mystic of everyday life. He writes:

The world is permeated by the grace of God . . . The world is constantly and ceaselessly processed by grace from its innermost roots, from the innermost personal centre of the spiritual subject . . . Whether the world gives the impression, so far as our superficial everyday experience is concerned, of being imbued with grace in this way, or whether it constantly seems to give the lie to this state of being permeated by God's grace which it has, this in no sense alters the fact that it is so.<sup>10</sup>

This theology of the abundance and universality of divine grace demands a reinterpretation of sacrament. The sacrament can no longer be a 'spiritual syringe' which injects grace into graceless people. Existentially one must give a certain priority, not to the liturgy and sacraments of the Church but to 'the liturgy of the world',<sup>11</sup> for it is the world, not the walls of the Church, which defines the primary arena for God's grace.

Rahner's theology of grace has transformed the field of spirituality. Religious bookstores are now filled with books championing a spirituality of daily life. The authors of these books are sometimes unaware of the debt they owe to the German Jesuit who creatively developed a central insight of St Ignatius Loyola: God must be discovered through immersion in the world and not in escape from it. The application of this insight has transformed popular Catholic spirituality from warmed-over adaptations of devotional literature to a theological literature dedicated to the discovery of the graced dimension of work, family life, play, suffering, art, etc. As we shall see, it is a theme that has gone beyond Catholic spirituality to influence popular spiritual literature not explicitly associated with a particular religious tradition.

Yet this insight is only one part of Rahner's theology of grace. If there is a danger in contemporary spirituality, it is that it too often ends at the importance of encountering God in daily life, and fails to consider the transformative demands of such an encounter.

*The dangers of consumerist spirituality*

It is impossible to treat in detail the broad range of contemporary writings that fall under the generic category of spirituality. Almost all of this literature must be applauded for its attempt to respond to the spiritual yearnings of the contemporary man or woman. More often than not, whether written from within an established Christian tradition or part of the growing body of works on spiritual growth which go beyond traditional religious affiliations, these books successfully explore the desire for a spirituality which speaks to ordinary human experience. It is this basic human desire that, remarkably, is often overlooked by the Christian churches' liturgical preachers and religious leaders.

Too often, however, contemporary popular spirituality is prone to present the spiritual journey as an individual quest tailored to the unique contours of the individual's needs and desires. The individual is invited to discover the sacred in their midst, but often in ways that reduce spirituality to some 'vague, self-referential religiosity'. L. Gregory Jones has offered a scathing critique of popular spiritual works 'shaped by consumer impulses and captive to a therapeutic culture'.<sup>12</sup> This literature, he contends, says much about God's presence but little about the absence of God and the need for repentance, conversion and community. Neither does it address the demands which the spiritual life must make on our social and political commitments. As an illustration of his point, Jones contrasts the works of two popular American writers, Thomas Moore and M. Scott Peck, with a classic Christian spiritual writer, St Bernard of Clairvaux. For Bernard, as for many of the great spiritual writers of the Christian tradition, the encounter with God was both the fulfilment of the heart's longing and a profoundly sobering recognition of human sinfulness and unworthiness. We discover both the meaning of our being created in the image of God and our humble recognition of our 'unlikeness' to God because of sin. The spiritual life for Bernard and others is 'shaped by both the absence and the presence of God'.<sup>13</sup> In the spiritual life we are called to repentance and conversion, and are invited into an alternative set of attitudes and practices proper to followers of Christ. Some of these attitudes and

practices may bring us into conflict with those of the larger society in which we live.

Perhaps what some of this new spirituality lacks is the connection, so clear for Karl Rahner, between the hidden encounters with God's grace that mark our daily life, and the life of the Church as a visible sign which discloses and brings to fulfilment these hidden encounters by placing them within the explicit Christian understanding of the paschal character of divine love.

*The Church is a sacrament of God's love*

Michael Skelley, in a helpful book on the theology of Karl Rahner, notes a seeming paradox in our experience of God:

... the fact that we continually experience God makes it very difficult for us to be explicitly conscious of experiencing God. We take our experience of the absolute mystery for granted and overlook it, precisely because it is the most pervasive and unavoidable human experience. Our chronic inability to see God in the midst of ordinary daily life is not a confirmation of God's absence but a consequence of God's radical presence ... The one experience of life that should, theoretically, be the most apparent to us is in fact the most hidden.<sup>14</sup>

The hiddenness of God's presence in the daily lives of men and women demands a visible sign which reveals the reality of that which is experienced. This is one of the ways in which the Church functions as sacrament. The Church is a visible, communal sign of God's redemptive love for humanity. This must be developed further.

If the grace encountered in the midst of daily life is likely to go without note, the grace encountered in the Church is manifested much more explicitly through religious symbols and ecclesial actions which correlate Christian meanings and interpretations with the experience of grace. That which is hidden but nonetheless experienced is, under God's subtle direction, ceaselessly struggling to become visible and concrete. One of Rahner's important contributions is to explain the necessarily unexpressed, but real presence of God's grace as seeking concrete expression. Participation in the life of the Church becomes a means of opening our eyes to that divine presence in the world. In the reconciling ministry of the Church, for example, the grace of the sacraments disposes us to discover the



ways in which God invites us to reconciliation in our homes, workplaces, civic communities, etc. Far from presenting the Church as an oasis of grace, the sacramentality of the Church breaks open our daily lives and offers us a new vision of its graced character.

As sacrament the Church is not just an 'emblem' of what is experienced in daily life. While participation in the life of the Church plays a vital role in an authentic Christian spirituality by helping us 'name the grace' encountered in ordinary life, it cannot be limited to this.<sup>15</sup> The life of the Church offers a deepening of our experience of grace. In the witness of holy men and women, the proclamation of Scripture, the celebration of the liturgy and sacraments, we find in concrete and visible form that which has lain hidden in the routine of daily living. In this discovery, the encounter with God takes on a greater texture and depth.

Recall Rahner's claim that the Church is a sign of God's redemptive love. In the context of the present discussion, the key word here is 'redemptive' for it reminds us that God's love takes a distinctive form or pattern. As an efficacious sign to the world of God's redemptive love, the Church, in its life and mission, speaks a prophetic word to all that stands in opposition to the paschal rhythm of life-death-life.<sup>16</sup> Here the sacramentality of the Church does more than effect a movement from the hidden to the visible. It also reveals the peculiar shape of divine love. For if the love of God was revealed in the one primordial sacrament, Jesus Christ, as a love realized in the pattern of dying and rising, then the Church as the historical event of this redemptive love becomes the place in which we hear the invitation to take on this paschal rhythm as the necessary rhythm of the life of grace. This is evident in two distinctive sets of ecclesial practices: the liturgy of the Church and the work of *diakonia* or service.

### *Liturgy as the source of the Church's life*

In the Church as sacrament it is the liturgy which is 'the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; it is also the source from which all its power flows' (SC 10). The eucharistic liturgy is, above all, the Church's sacramental participation in the paschal mystery, the self-offering of Christ for humanity. The eucharist is, after all, a ritual of thanksgiving. We gather as a community to offer God praise and thanksgiving for what God has done for us. But let us consider further the act of praise. Praise exhibits the peculiar logic of overflow, of giving without measure. What happens

when I praise another person or express my love for them? I might think that this expression or act of praise serves as mere gloss adding something additional to the relationship. But in fact my love for my wife cannot be separated so easily from my *expression* of my love to her in words and affectionate gestures. The actual expression of love does not just add something to a pre-existing relationship, it actually constitutes a new relationship. Our relationship is new and different because of the expression of my love. So it is with praise of God. The act of giving praise itself places us in a new relationship with God.<sup>17</sup>

The liturgy, as itself an action of grace, is a transformative 'practice' of the Church.<sup>18</sup> Consider the principal symbols of bread and cup. It is important for their effective functioning as ritual symbols that bread and cup resemble the bread and cup of daily life. Christian liturgical practice however, has generally resisted presenting them in the full ordinariness of their daily usage. Of course, this has sometimes been taken to such an extreme that flat, tasteless hosts resemble cardboard more than bread and gaudy chalices lose any connection to the cup from which we would drink. Nevertheless, we seem to recognize the need for a kind of 'otherness' to characterize the holy things of the liturgy. Here Louise-Marie Chauvet speaks of the necessity of a kind of 'symbolic rupture'.<sup>19</sup>

Without losing their vital connection to daily life, the materials which will be put to ritual use take forms which distinguish them from their more utilitarian purposes. The chalice becomes itself a fine work of art thrown by a master potter. The bread is both familiar and yet takes a form which distinguishes it from table bread. What results is a symbolic distancing in which our engagement with these sacred objects draws us out of the world of daily discourse in order that we might see that world anew. The eucharistic banquet is reminiscent of a meal, yet it is celebrated with a sufficient formality to remind us of the eschatological banquet which is not yet ours to celebrate in its fullness. In the celebration of this meal, with bread that is not quite like ordinary bread (but for all that is still recognizable as *bread* for us) with a chalice which is no mere dinner tumbler but the cup of eternal salvation, we are drawn into a kind of social disorientation. We are able to confront, as from the outside, precisely the character of our everyday world which otherwise, by its very ordinariness, might escape examination. This is the meaning of the 'sacred' from an anthropological point of view – being set apart

in order to see one's life in a new way. As the great Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann put it, the liturgy 'is not an escape from the world, rather it is the arrival at a vantage point from which we can see more deeply into the reality of the world'.<sup>20</sup>

In the whole pattern of the liturgy, in its overall shape, we are formed by the paschal pattern of life–death–life which was revealed to us by Christ in his life and teaching as the only way to human fulfilment.<sup>21</sup> As Nathan Mitchell once observed, 'At its deepest root, Christian liturgy is *parable* – a provocative assault on our customary way of viewing life, world, and others'.<sup>22</sup> In the gifts of bread and wine, 'which earth has given and human hands have made', it is the substance of our lives that is placed on the altar. It is we who, by joining ourselves to Christ, become broken and offered for others. This 'ritual engagement' changes us. It re-configures the way we view our world, giving us 'new eyes to see'. Mitchell observes that '[w]e become hospitable, for instance, not by analyzing hospitality but by greeting guests, offering them the kiss of peace, washing their feet, serving them food, adoring Christ's presence in them'.<sup>23</sup> Eucharistic communion opens up the possibility of living communion in our daily lives.

### *The ministry of service*

Much of what I have said above applies as well to that set of ecclesial practices which might be described as *diakonia*, or Christian service. This ministry of *diakonia* can take many forms, but all of its manifestations share a concern for attending to the needs of others. And yet, what is distinctive about Christian *diakonia* is that service to others is not undertaken merely for the sake of the other, but because of the conversion it effects in the one who serves. We do not give to others simply because it will make the recipient of our service better. This may seem odd, but upon further reflection we can see the importance of this Christian insight. If our exercise of service focuses exclusively on the improvement of the welfare of others, this *diakonia* can fall prey to the calculus of cost-benefit analysis in which we only give when we can foresee the fruitfulness, the effectiveness of our giving. The great figures in our tradition from St Francis of Assisi to Mother Teresa and Dorothy Day, along with the countless thousands who minister to the homeless, abandoned and dying, all remind us that service to others carries within it its own logic, the logic of the paschal mystery in

which the power of Christian service is disclosed not by its social effectiveness but by what it accomplishes in us.

One could consider many other dimensions of the life of the Church but I hope that this brief reflection on both liturgy and the work of *diakonia* helps exhibit concretely a way in which we can understand the sacramentality of the Church. As a communal sign of God's redemptive love, the whole life of the Church helps us name the experience of grace in daily life even as it provides a set of ecclesial practices which allow that grace to transform us.

I have suggested in this article a way of considering the relationship between a spirituality of everyday life and participation in the life of the Church. As sacrament, the life of the Church has much to contribute to a spirituality of the everyday. While it is in the midst of our daily lives that we are invited to find God, it is the distinctive practices which constitute the Christian community which transform us and give us 'the eyes to see' the possibilities for authentic discipleship in our world. Contemporary spirituality may need to be 'de-institutionalized', but its flourishing still benefits from the Christian's participation in a living community of faith.

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#### NOTES

1 As quoted in Louis J. Cameli, 'Ecclesial asceticism: disciplines for the family of faith', *America* (28 December 1996), p 21.

2 Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christus, Sacrament van de Godsonthoening* (Bilthoven: H. Nelissen, 1960); trans: *Christ the sacrament of the encounter with God* (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1963); Otto Semmelroth, *Die Kirche als Ursakrament* (Frankfurt, 1953); trans: *Church and sacrament* (Notre Dame: Fides, 1965); Karl Rahner, *Kirche und Sakramente* (Frieburg: Herder, 1963); trans: *The Church and the sacraments* (New York: Crossroad, 1963).

3 Schillebeeckx, *Christ, the sacrament of the encounter with God*, p 48.

4 Unless otherwise noted, quotations from the Vatican II documents are taken from Austin Flannery (ed), *Vatican Council II: constitutions, decrees, declarations* (Northport: Costello, 1996). Abbreviations used in the text: LG=*Lumen Gentium*; SC=*Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

5 Michael G. Lawler and Thomas J. Shanahan, *Church: a spirited communion* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1995), pp 38ff.

- 6 For a summary of these reservations see Miguel M. Garijo-Guembe, *Communion of the saints: foundation, nature and structure of the Church* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1994), pp 88–92.
- 7 This concern has been raised by Catholic theologians as well. Cf Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), pp 121ff.
- 8 Cf. Rahner, *The Church and the sacraments*, and especially, ‘Considerations on the active role of the person in the sacramental event’ in *Theological investigations* vol 14 (New York: Seabury, 1976), pp 161–184; *idem*, ‘On the theology of worship’ in *Theological investigations* vol 19 (New York: Crossroad, 1983), pp 141–149.
- 9 Kasper, *Theology and Church*, p 125.
- 10 Rahner, ‘Considerations on the active role of the person in the sacramental event’, pp 166–167.
- 11 Rahner, *op. cit.*, p 169.
- 12 L. Gregory Jones, ‘A thirst for God or consumer spirituality? Cultivating disciplined practices of being engaged by God’, *Modern Theology* 13 (January 1997), pp 3–28 at p 4.
- 13 Jones, ‘A thirst’, p 6.
- 14 Michael Skelley, *The liturgy of the world; Karl Rahner’s theology of worship* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991), p 72.
- 15 For a very perceptive theology of preaching as the practice of ‘naming grace’ in the lives of believers see Mary Catherine Hilker, *Naming grace: preaching and the sacramental imagination* (New York: Continuum, 1997).
- 16 Hilker, *Naming grace*, pp 8ff. See also Richard R. Gaillardetz, ‘In service of communion: a trinitarian foundation for Christian ministry’, *Worship* 67 (September 1993), pp 418–433.
- 17 For a reflection of the logic of praise as overflow see Daniel W. Hardy and David F. Ford, *Praising and knowing God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), pp 6ff.
- 18 For a theological reflection on the character of transformative ecclesial practices, see L. Gregory Jones, *Transformed judgement* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990). While I find Jones’ analysis of transformative ecclesial practices to be helpful, it should be evident that I take issue with his implicit assumptions that such an ecclesiology stands in opposition to a more Rahnerian theology of grace.
- 19 Louise-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and sacrament: a sacramental reinterpretation of Christian existence* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995), pp 330–339.
- <sup>20</sup>Alexander Schmemmann, *For the life of the world* (Crestwood: St Vladimir’s Press, 1973), p 27.
- 21 Irmgard Pahl, ‘The paschal mystery in its central meaning for the shape of Christian liturgy’, *Studia Liturgica* 26 (1996), pp 16–38.
- 22 Nathan Mitchell, ‘The sense of the sacred’ in Mark Searle (ed), *Parish: a place for worship* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1981), p 80.
- 23 Nathan Mitchell, ‘Liturgical correctness’, *Worship* 71 (January 1997), pp 62–71 at p 71.