

**SUBJECT TO CHANGES!!!**

**STMM 500 CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY**

**Summer 2007**

**Ron Rolheiser OMI, Ph.D., STD**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Explores the mystery of human existence from a Christian perspective. An examination of contemporary pressures on our self-understanding and a theological response in the light of that. Biblical and Christian perspectives on our origins, meaning, and destiny with special focus on our relationship to each other, nature, and Christ.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

C.S Lewis. *The Great Divorce*. Simon and Schuster  
Ron Rolheiser. *The Holy Longing*. Doubleday  
Ron Rolheiser. *Against an Infinite Horizon*. Crossroads  
Ron Rolheiser. *The Restless Heart*. Doubleday

**RECOMMENDED**

Robert Barron. *And Now I See: A Theology of Transformation* (Crossroads, 1998)  
Gil Bailie. *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads* (Crossroads, 1997)  
Jim Wallis. *God's Politics* (San Francisco, HarperPerennial, 2005)

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

- Read the required texts as listed above.
- A 1500-2000 word reflection paper on a topic that will be assigned the first day of class.
- *More instructions will be forthcoming...*

**FACULTY BIO**

**Ronald Rolheiser**, a Roman Catholic priest and member of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, is president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. He is a community-builder, lecturer, and writer. His books are popular throughout the English-speaking world and his weekly column is carried by more than 50 newspapers worldwide. For most of the 28 years of his priesthood, he taught theology and philosophy at Newman Theological College in Edmonton, Alberta. He remains an adjunct faculty member at Seattle University.

# CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY...

STMM 500 Christian Anthropology  
Seattle University  
Summer 2007  
Ron Rolheiser-instructor  
June 25-July 6

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## An Introduction to Systematic Theology and to Christian Anthropology ...

### A. MONDAY, June 25 Foundations for a critical theology

1) What is theology?

- i) A definition.
- ii) The distinction between faith and theology.
- iii) Normative and non-normative theologies.
- iv) 3 levels of normative theology.

2) What is Systematic theology?

- i) A definition.
- ii) Classical European theology and liberation
- iii) Theology versus catechesis.
- iv) Theology versus church law.
- v) What theology should be doing.

3) What is Christian Anthropology and what is its place within an overall schema of theology?

## Towards a Christian Self-Understanding ...

### A. TUESDAY, June 26 & WEDNESDAY, June 27

1) Contemporary Hermeneutics and the problem of understanding the human person - major shifts:

**i) Post-modernism**

**ii) Existentialism**

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**iii) The feminist hermeneutic**

**iv) The masculine hermeneutic**

**v) The return to a cosmological perspective from an anthropological one.**

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## Towards a more explicit Christian Understanding ...

### A. THURSDAY, June 28

The human person as understood by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin ... the perspective of Cosmic Christology.

**B. FRIDAY, June 29**

The human person as understood by Karl Rahner ... the perspective from eros and soul.

**C. MONDAY, July 2**

The human person as understood by John Shea ... the biblical perspective.

**D. TUESDAY, July 3**

- 1) Some synthetic perspectives on Christian Anthropology
- 2) Human Sexuality

**E. WEDNESDAY, JULY 4th – Holiday**

**E. THURSDAY, July 5**

- 1) The Human Person and Paschal Transformation

**F. FRIDAY, July 6**

The human person and final destiny

- \*Eschatology
- \*Heaven, hell, purgatory.

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**Course requirements:**

Do five things:

**1) Class attendance and participation.\*** (See addendum re grading)

**2) Write a reflection paper** of circa 850-1300 words on **one** of the following:

All written work to be submitted no later than class-time on Thursday evening, July 5.

**A) Do a critical review of one of the following books, on the basis of a holistic Christian Anthropology:**

- i) Germaine Greer, The Change; Gloria Steinem, Revolution from Within.
- ii) Michael Meade, Men and the Water of Life, Initiation and the Tempering of Men.
- iii) Alice Miller, The Drama of the Gifted Child.
- iv) Thomas Moore, Care of the Soul.

- v) Daniel Levinson, The Seasons of Man's Life.
- vi) Robert Bly, The Sibling Society.
- vii) James Hillman, The Soul's Code.
- viii) James Hillman, The Force of Character.
- ix) Susan Howatch, The High Flyer.
- x) Kathleen Norris, Amazing Grace.
- xi) Sue Monk Kidd, When the Heart Waits.
- X) Jim Wallis, God's Politics, Why the Right Gets it Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get it.

**B) Write an article, for publication for a popular magazine, on one of the following topics:**

- i) Today there is a double alienation from religion, women are alienated from its structure, men from its soul.
- ii) An assessment of feminism from the perspective of Christian Anthropology.
- iii) The Post-Modernism of "Seinfeld" - Comfortable Despair.
- iv) The divorce within our culture between "life" and "energy".
- v) Our culture's naivete about the imperialism of energy.

**C) Prepare, for publication, a religious ritual of passage, closure, or blessing; e.g., one of your children is leaving home, a divorce, celebrating a significant birthday, you have suffered a miscarriage, etc.**

**3) Do the required readings:**

- i) C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce.
- ii) Ronald Rolheiser, The Restless Heart.
- iii) Ronald Rolheiser, Against an Infinite Horizon
- iv) Ronald Rolheiser, The Holy Longing

**4) Consider the suggested readings:**

- i) Robert Barron, And Now I See ..A Theology of Transformation, N.Y., Crossroads, 1998.

This text is supplemental, especially on the issue of original sin and the biblical understanding of the human person as IMAGO DEI.

- ii) Gil Bailie, Violence Unveiled, Humanity at the Crossroads, N.Y., Crossroads, 1997.

This is a book based on the anthropological insights of Rene Girard and is the best analysis of the structure of culture (and the inherent violence within that structure) and how the gospel of Christ (particularly the cross) unearths the structure of violence. One of the most significant "anthropological" books published in the last fifty years.

iii) There is also a lot of good synthetic material available in the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, Vatican, 1994 sections: The Mystery of Creation, numbers 295-421; I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body, numbers 988-1065; Life in Christ, numbers 1691-1942.

**5) Examine the bibliography handed out with each specific section of the course.**

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## **\*Guidelines for Grading ...**

### **I. Background Principles ...**

1) The School of Theology and Ministry, during its summer session, invites its students to "self-grade", though it reserves to the professor of each class the responsibility of assigning the final grade - **even if it does not agree with the self-assessment of the student**. Hence each student is asked, on the final day of class, July 7th, to submit a suggested grade, complete with the reasons why. However, your final grade might not be what you submitted.

2) The School of Theology and Ministry, during this summer session, is utilizing an adult-model of education within which the student is trusted. Hence it takes your word for it if you say you have done certain readings, etc. Thus, your suggested grade, and your reasons for submitting it, will be taken seriously.

3) Theological education is done within the context of community. Thus, it asks that you "participate" with others within this class, and within all other classes. Hence, class participation is part of the basis for your final grade. **Participation, however, is not scored solely or primarily on the number of or the length of your interventions within class.**

4) Theological education is about more than just academics. It includes, as well, the formational aspect. Hence, as this class goes on, and as other classes go on, it is expected that you be involved in some personal, inner work, spiritual and psychological, which is beyond the scope of the purely academic. Obviously, most of this cannot be measured in terms of grading for a mark, but it is named here as a key component for this, and other, classes.

### **II) The component parts for your final grade ...**

- 1) Class attendance and participation = 35%**
- 2) Your written work = 30%**
- 3) Doing the required readings = 25%**
- 4) Personal integration, personal reflection in the course material = 10%**

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# Outlines for each day of class ...

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## MONDAY, June 25th - FOUNDATIONS FOR A CRITICAL THEOLOGY

### A. Some foundational concepts:

#### 1) What is theology?

- Etymology: THEOS LOGOS
- A classical definition:  
FIDES QUARENS INTELLECTUM  
FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

#### 2) Key distinctions flowing from this:

- Faith and theology as separate
- Normative and non-normative theology
- Levels of normative theology

#### 3) Theology as distinct from Catechetics ...

Theology:           Critical function  
                          Pushes edges  
                          audience = the mature in the faith  
                          apologetic to the wider community

Catechetics: Nurturing function  
                          Teaches doctrine and inspires to piety  
                          audience = neophyte  
                          apologetic is within the community

#### 4) Theology as distinct from Church Law ...

Church law: conservative in function  
                          language = legal, precise, avoid ambiguity  
                          more practical in nature, deals with structure and sociology.  
                          appeal is to the will - obedience  
                          focus = duty/order

Theology:           more liberal in function  
                          language = poetic, mythical, metaphor, metaphysical, allows for ambiguity  
                          more mystical in nature, deals with soul.  
                          appeal is to the understanding/imagination.  
                          focus = meaning.

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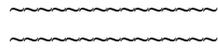
### Bibliography ...

1) Read Richard McBrien's chapter on this in his book, **Catholicism**, pp. 23-74. 2) For the official Roman Catholic position on how dogma and the magisterium relate to theology, see the **Vatican's new Catechism**, numbers, 2033-

2038.

3) For the detailed analysis of this see: Yves Congar, **A History of Theology**, N.Y., Doubleday, 1968, and Edward Schillebeeckx, **The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism**, N.Y., Seabury Press, 1974.

4) For some reading vis-a-vis Elements of a Critical Classroom, see Parker Palmer, **To Know as We are Known**, Education as a Spiritual Journey, especially chapter five, **To Teach is to Create a Space**, c1983, see Harper/Row edition, San Francisco, 1993, pp. 69-87.



**TUESDAY, June 26 and WEDNESDAY, June 27 ...**

## **Contemporary hermeneutics and the problem of understanding the human person - major shifts and a major divorce:**

### **A) Post-Modernism**

- 1) The concept of a worldview
- 2) The worldviews prior to Modernism - and the central role of divine authority within them.
- 3) What is **Modernism**? Faith in critical reason ... replaces faith in authority.
- 4) Characteristics of this:
  - i) The triumph of **ratio** (left brain) over **intellectus** (right brain).
  - ii) The triumph of the **isolated cogito** (narcissism).
  - iii) The triumph of analysis and dualism.
  - iv) The death of ritual and mysticism
  - v) The rise of meta-ideologies and meta - narratives.
  - vi) Faith and religion seen as a naivete.
  - vii) Science and the scientific method as alone normative.
  - viii) Alienation from nature.
- 5) The breakdown of this - **Post-Modernism** The loss of trust in critical reason ...
- 6) Characteristics of this ...
  - i) Meta-criticism - the naivete of critical reason itself.
  - ii) The revolt of the right brain.
  - iii) The death of meta-narratives/ideologies.
  - iv) The longing for ritual and mysticism
  - v) The desire to make a new covenant with nature.

vi) The nihilism of "Seinfeld"

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**Select bibliography: ON POST-MODERNISM ...**

- BOLEN, Jean Shinoda, **Goddesses in Everywoman: A New Psychology of Women**, N.Y., Harper and Row, 1984
- BOLEN, Jean, **Gods in Everyman: A New Psychology of Men's Lives and Loves**, New York, Harper and Row, 1989.
- BRUEGGEMANN, Walter, **Hopeful Imagination: Prophetic Voices in Exile**, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1986.
- FEENEY, Joseph, **Can a Worldview be Healed? Students and Postmodernism**, in *America*, November 15, 1997, pp. 12-16.
- GRIFFIN, David Ray, **Spirituality and Society: Postmodern Visions**, N.Y., Suny, 1988.
- McFAGUE, Sallie, **Models of God: Theology for an Ecological Nuclear Age**, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1987.
- MULDOON, Mark, **Henri Bergson and Postmodernism**, in *Philosophy Today*, Summer, 1990, pp. 179-189.
- ROLHEISER, Ronald, **Let's Look at Neo-Paganism**, in *WESTERN CATHOLIC REPORTER*, Feb., 24, 1992.
- ROLHEISER, Ronald, **Science finds without God we get inflated or go crazy**, in *WESTERN CATHOLIC REPORTER*, July 22, 1991.
- ROLHEISER, Ronald, **A Shrinking Horizon: The Deeper Reasons Underlying our Struggles to believe in God in Western Culture**, in *La Missione Senza Confine - Ambiti della missione ad gentes*, Rome, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 2000, pp. 163-190. [assessable via the website: [www.ronrolheiser.com](http://www.ronrolheiser.com)]
- Tracy, David, **On Naming the Present Moment**, Crossroad, N.Y., 1996.
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**B) Existentialism ...**

**The Essential versus the Existential ...**

- 1) What are essence and existence?
  - 2) Essentialism ...
    - i) Essence precedes existence.
    - ii) Essence is "substantially" unchanging.
    - iii) Distinction between agere and esse.
    - iv) Inherent meaning within natures and acts.
  - 3) Existentialism ...
    - i) Existence precedes essence.
    - ii) No essence is substantially unchanging.
    - iii) Things are defined functionally.
    - iv) Meaning is created thru choices and action.
  - 4) **A note** - Biblical (Existential Anthropology) versus Greek (Essential Anthropology)
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**Bibliography on EXISTENTIALISM ...**

- COLLINS, James, **The Existentialists**, Chicago, Henry Regnery, 1952.
- COPELSTON, Frederick, 4 articles on Existentialism, in **Contemporary European Philosophy**, Newman Press, 1966, pp. 125-201.
- LESCOE, Francis, **Existentialism**, N.Y., Alba House, 1974.
- LIVINGSTON, James, **Christian Existentialism**, in *MODERN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT*, N.Y., MacMillan, 1971, pp. 345-385.

PADOVANO, Anthony, **The Estranged God**, N.Y., Sheed and Ward, 1966. See especially the section **Existentialism and Religious Belief: The Mood of the Age is Set**, pp. 5-59.

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## **C) The Feminist Hermeneutic ... "in another voice"**

### **1) A generic definition of feminism -**

FEMINISM IS A COMPREHENSIVE IDEOLOGY ROOTED IN WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF GENDER OPPRESSION WHICH BELIEVES THAT PERSONAL PROBLEMS ARE POLITICAL AND WHICH OFFERS A CRITIQUE OF PATRIARCHY WHICH IT SEES AT THE BASE OF THIS OPPRESSION. (Sandra Schneiders)

### **2) Various kinds of feminism:**

A) Major species of feminism:

- i) Liberal feminism**
- ii) Romantic feminism**
- iii) Liberationist/Radical**

B) Christian feminism and Neo-pagan feminism

### **3) Some common denominators of feminism ...**

- i) It is an epistemological rupture within Western History ... "another voice".
- ii) It is a challenge to dualism of all kinds.
- iii) It is an attempt to view things from the point of view of intimacy rather than from the point of view of ruptured intimacy.
- iv) It is an emphasis on the bodily, the incarnational, the embodied, the physical.
- v) It is a challenge to unbridled individualism.
- vi) It is a challenge to unbridled pragmatism and efficiency.
- vii) It is a challenge to understand the "political" dimension within personal problems.
- viii) In its more radical expressions, it is a positive challenge to re-integrate the insights of mythology and "paganism" into the Western mindset.

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### **Key Bibliography ...**

- 1) Susan Faludi, **Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women**, Crown, 1991. Good secular analysis, a laying out of the feminist agenda and the pinpointing of its resistance by many parts of the culture.
- 2) Susan Faludi, **Stiffed, The Betrayal of the American Man**, N.Y., William Morrow and Company, 1999,
- 3) Carol Gilligan, **In Different Voice**, Harvard University Press, 1982. Excellent on the idea of feminism is "another voice" and on the particular male struggle for intimacy.
- 4) Germaine Greer, **The Change**, Alfred Knopf, 1991. Excellent on the problem of women and aging.
- 5) Jesuit General Congregation Document, Chapter, 1995, Section on **The Situation of Women in the Church and Civil Society**, can be found in National Jesuit News, April, 1995, pp. 30-31. (Text available upon request)
- 6) Pope John Paul II, **A Letter Addressed to Women**, released July 10, 1995.
- 7) Rome's statement of October 28th, 1995 - Doctrinal Congregation/**Response to Dubium-Inadmissibility of**

**Women to Ministerial Priesthood**, can be found in **ORIGINS**. (For a good commentary on this text, vis-a-vis its doctrinal weight, I recommend two articles: **Ladislas Orsy, The Congregation's `Response': Its Authority and Meaning**, and **Francis Sullivan, Guideposts From Catholic Traditions**, in **AMERICA, 1994-1995**.)

8) Ron Rolheiser, **The Feminist Call to Hear Other Voices**, in, **THE WESTERN CATHOLIC REPORTER**, March 20, 1995.

9) Sandra Schneiders, **Beyond Patching**, Faith and Feminism in the Catholic Church, Paulist Press, 1991. Best comprehensive book on feminism from a Catholic perspective. Also, the best in terms of laying out the foundations of feminism.

10) Gloria Steinem, **Revolution from Within**, Little, Brown & Company, 1992. Good and clear example of secular feminism and its agenda.

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## **D) The Masculine Hermeneutic ... "a dominant, but grieving, voice"**

### **1) Pre-amble ... Some points of introduction:**

i) What masculine spirituality is not!

ii) Some brief notes re the origins of the men's movement and masculine spirituality - dealing with gender depression

iii) What it is ...

Masculine spirituality is an attempt to put men into deeper touch with their peculiarly masculine energies in such a way as to help free them from a certain constriction of the heart so as to put them in better relationship with women, each other, children, and God.

### **2) Male Gender depression:**

i) "Normal" depression

ii) Gender depression:

a) The concept

b) Men as gender depressed:

- Confusion of, and bad feelings about, being male
- Grieving male history
- A spiritual inferiority complex
- A constricted heart
- Lack of blessing from the father and father-hunger
- Struggles with intimacy and being outside of its circle
- Fear of the feminine/feminist anger

### **3) Moving towards wholeness:**

1) Grieving male woundedness

2) Accessing male archetypal\* energies

- As King
- As Warrior
- As Magus
- As Lover

**\*The concept of Archetypes.**

What is an archetype?

- A psychic blueprint/imprint
- Configured energy
- Constellated energy
- Instinctual patterns of energy/feeling/thought
- Our collective unconscious
- Our "hard-wiring"

On the effects of archetypal energy in us: We are doomed to act out unconsciously all the archetypal configurations which we do not access and control through conscious ritual. We will either act out for Godliness or for grandiosity. What is deepest within us will act ... either as positive life-giving energy or in its destructive shadow.

The perennial problem of access and containment.

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### Select Bibliography ...

- 1) Robert Bly, **Iron John, A Book About Men**, N.Y., Addison-Wesley, 1990.
  - 2) Robert Bly, (editor), **The Rag and Bone Shop of the Heart, Poems for Men**, N.Y., Harper/Collins, 1992.
  - 3) Sam Keen, **Fire in the Belly**, 1990.
  - 4) Michael Meade - various series of tapes on Gender issues - see Limbus, P.O. Box 364, Vashon Island, Washington, 98070, phone: 206-463-9387.
  - 5) Robert Moore, **King, Warrior, Magician, Lover**, N.Y., Harper and Row, 1990. Also, Moore has many hours of tape expanding on this: See ... Limbus (as above).
  - 6) Richard Rohr, **The Wildman's Journey**, 1991.
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### E) The return from an anthropological perspective to a cosmological one.

(Will be treated when we do Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.)

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**THURSDAY, June 28**

### **The Human Person as understood by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin ... the cosmological perspective**

THE HUMAN PERSON IS THAT PLACE IN GOD'S EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS WHERE THE PROCESS BECOMES CONSCIOUS OF ITSELF AND GOD CAN START DIALOGUING WITH IT - AND IT, THE HUMAN PERSON, CAN TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN HELPING TO BRING THE PROCESS TO ITS COMPLETION.

#### **1) Teilhard's life and its impact on his thought**

- i) A basic chronology of the events of his life.
- ii) Three key influences on his thought.
- iii) Comments on his temperament and mysticism.

#### **2) His phenomenology of history and the place of the human person within that schema ...**

A) The basic underpinnings to his system:

- i) **Change** ... as the central phenomenon.
- ii) **Evolution** ... as the central paradigm for change.
- iii) A new conception of the **relationship between spirit and matter**.

B) His synthesis in caption ... "From the atom to the kingdom of God"

### 3) His theological synthesis in caption ... "Bringing all things together in and through Christ"

### 4) Some further comments on his system vis-a-vis the question of World Religions ... "Christianity and Christ-ianity"

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\*"But some sort of essential instinct makes me guess at the joy, as the only worthwhile joy, of cooperating as one individual atom in the final establishment of a world; and ultimately nothing else can mean anything to me. To release some infinitesimal quantity of the absolute, to free one fragment of being, for me - everything else is but intolerable futility. ... The time is close at hand when mankind will see that, precisely in virtue of its position in cosmic evolution which it has become capable of discovering and criticizing, it now stands biologically between the alternatives of suicide and worship."

"The emergence of consciousness is the birth of life from the heart of matter. It is also the direction of all evolutionary processes. ... The passing wave that we can feel is not formed in ourselves. It comes to us from far away. ... and ... It reaches us after creating everything on its way.

The person is pure ... who, in accord with his or her place in the world, seeks to give Christ's desire to consummate all things precedence over his/her own immediate and momentary advantage.

"Your brother in the building up and consummation of Christ's body." Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. (His "signature" signing)

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How to get into reading **Teilhard de Chardin** on your own ... a suggestion:

1) Begin by reading a good biography.

The best is the recent one by Ursula King - **Teilhard de Chardin**

I also recommend: Mary & Ellen Lukas, **Teilhard, The Man, the priest, the scientist**, Doubleday, 1977. This is a fairly complete biography.

If you wish something quite brief, but excellent, I recommend: The introduction to the Fontana Collins edition of **LE MILIEU DIVIN**, by Pierre Leroy.

2) After reading a biography, I recommend one, or both, of the following introductions to his thought:

i) Norbert Max Wildiers, *An Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin*, Collins, 1966. This, to my mind, is the best English introduction written on Teilhard.

ii) Henri de Lubac, *Teilhard Explained*, Paulist Press, 1966. De Lubac's introduction is not as systematically done as is Wildiers' ... but he includes, at the end of this book, a mini-dictionary of Teilhard's terms. This can be very valuable for the neophyte reader.

3) After a good introduction, then proceed to tackle Teilhard's own works. I recommend the following:

i) If you are more interested in his scientific synthesis, read **THE PHENOMENON OF MAN**, Collins, 1955.

ii) If you are more interested in his spiritual synthesis, read **LE MILIEU DIVIN**, Collins, 1960.

iii) **HYMN OF THE UNIVERSE**, Harper Torchbooks, 1961.

4) He also has a number of short treatises on various topics, i.e., love, sex, etc. If you can find these in a library, they are an easier, though excellent, read. I especially recommend: **Building the Earth**, Dimension Books, 1965. It is a popular, poetry-like, expose of many of his key ideas. Full of key quotable lines.

See: Ursula King, editor, **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Selected Writings**, N.Y., Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1999.

5) Annie Dillard's new book, **For the Time Being** (Toronto, Penguin Books, 1999) is very much about Teilhard and his unique insights into nature.

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**FRIDAY, June 29**

## **The Human Person as understood by Karl Rahner - the perspective of eros and soul**

THE HUMAN PERSON IS A CREATURE POSITED BY GOD TO AS A POSSIBLE PARTNER IN A DIALOGICAL-LOVE RELATIONSHIP. THE HUMAN PERSON IS *OBEDIENTIAL POTENCY* LIVING IN THE *SUPERNATURAL EXISTENTIAL*

1) Rahner's starting point

2) His anthropology - Obediential potency within the supernatural existential.

### **3) Some elaborations vis-a-vis our self-understanding:**

i) A note on the restlessness of the human heart.

ii) The "Anonymous Christian".

### **DESIDERIUM NATURALE ...**

#### **7 interpenetrating levels of human "eros"/longing/aching**

**SPIRITUALLY ...** we ache for **transcendence**

**INTELLECTUALLY ...** we ache for **experience/truth**

**PSYCHOLOGICALLY ...** we ache **to love** and **be loved**

**EMOTIONALLY ...** we ache **to affirm** and **be affirmed**

**AESTHETICALLY ...** we ache **for beauty, to admire** and **to be admired**

**SEXUALLY ...** we ache **for consummation, to be made whole** and **to be made whole**

**PHYSICALLY ...** we ache with many appetites.

In the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable we learn that here, in this life, all symphonies remain unfinished. (Karl Rahner)

### **Bibliography:**

- 1) Philip Endean, Karl Rahner, *Spiritual Writings*, N.Y., Orbis Press, 2004. (Rahner's key thoughts rendered accessible)
- 2) Karl Rahner, *Prayers for a Lifetime – His last and most personal work*, N.Y., Crossroad, 1989.

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**MONDAY, July 2**

## The human person as understood by John Shea ... the biblical perspective

THE HUMAN PERSON IS A BEING WHO IS INESCAPABLY RELATED TO MYSTERY, TO A MYSTERY THAT IS LARGER THAN THE PERSON AND WHICH OFFERS HIM/HER INCREDIBLE RICHNESS, IF IT IS RELATED TO AUTHENTICALLY, BUT WHICH, CONVERSELY, THREATENS TO DESTROY THE PERSON IF HE/SHE DOES NOT RELATE TO IT AUTHENTICALLY. THE HUMAN PERSON IS INVITED BY GOD TO RELATE TO THIS MYSTERY:

- As a being who is God's TRUSTED and BLESSED ONE
- As a being who is invited to UNDERGO GOD
- As a being who is CHALLENGED TO CELEBRATE EXISTENCE
- As a being who is invited to LIVE IN HOPE

### 1) Introduction

- i) A brief biographical note.
- ii) Shea's method of doing theology

### 2) Understanding the human person

- i) Our relationship to mystery.
- ii) Configuring ourselves correctly
- iii) The value of the stories of God and the stories of faith in the process of configuring ourselves correctly.
  - a) They are pedagogical.
  - b) They are transubstantiatory.
  - c) They make God present.

### 3) Examination of the stories vis-a-vis our self-understanding:

- i) Stories that invite us to live as God's **TRUSTED/BLESSED ONE**
  - \*image of God stories
  - \*"sabbatical" stories
  - \*kingship/queenship stories
  - \*Jesus as "blessed" stories
  - Jesus' baptism
  - Jesus' temptations
  - Jesus' consciousness

\*Trusting in God stories - "lilies of the field"

\*Stories that teach us what to do when we fall from grace

  - King David stories
  - Stories of the cross
    - =the fellow-suffering of God
    - =God's presence in our twistedness
    - =the cost of genuine love
    - =vulnerability at the route to community
    - =the non-violence of God
    - =the inner flow of life in the Trinity
- ii) Stories that invite us to ponder rather than to be amazed.

iii) Stories that invite us to **UNDERGO GOD**

\*The parables of Jesus

iv) Stories that invite us to **CELEBRATE THE KINGDOM**

\*stories that compare Jesus to John the Baptist

\*the anointing of Jesus at Bethany

v) Stories that invite us to **LIVE IN HOPE**

\*rainbow - tearing of veils stories

\*Jonah stories

\*resurrection stories

\*being sent back to "Galilee" and "Jerusalem"

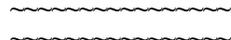
\*God is not a law to be obeyed, but a presence to be seized and acted under. (John Shea)

\*"The cock will crow at the breaking of your ego. There are many ways to wake up!"

#### 4) Key bibliography

**Shea's own works:**

- 1) Spiritmaster
- 2) Stories of Faith
- 3) Stories of God
- 4) Starlight
- 5) An Experience Called Spirit
- 6) Gospel Light



**TUESDAY, July 3**

### Part one: Some Synthetic Perspectives on Christian Anthropology

#### 1) We are "Creatures"

\*philosophically we are "contingent" and "not-necessary" being

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-God as "necessary" - "ipsum esse subsistans"

-Humans as "non-ipsum esse subsistans" as dependent and interdependent.

\*implications

-

metaphysically - as "being created"

-

spiritually - as "dependent"

#### 2) Other features to highlight

-Made in the Image and Likeness of God.

-

A being flawed by sin.

-

A composite being - body and soul.

- A free being.
- A social being.
- A personal being - a center of self-awareness with emotions and intellect.
- A being of conscience.
- A being who has been given a vocation by God.
- A being whose existence is not ended in death.
- A being who ultimately takes meaning from Christ.
- A being who lives in a world which itself will be transformed and redeemed.

**C) The critical value of this perspective ... the anthropological prongs for discernment:**

**ANTHROPOLOGICAL TENSIONS ...**

Good	Bad
Free	Determined
Rational	Emotional
Head	Heart
Spirit	Body
Social	Individual
Conscience	Subject to law
Left-brain	Right brain
Present-oriented	Future-oriented
"In valley of tears"	Joy in having been redeemed
"Good Friday"	"Easter Sunday"

**Part two - Human Sexuality**

**A) An Anthropology of Sexuality**

1) Sexuality as "fire"

\***SECARE** - Sexuality as a dimension of self-awareness, the sense of having been cut off, pervasive at every level of our being.

\*The distinction between **SEXUALITY** and **GENITALITY** ("having sex")

- **Sexuality - "It is not good to be alone!"**

The drive for community, friendship, wholeness, family, creativity, play, meaning that is trans-personal, altruism, immortality, enjoyment, consummation and everything that takes us beyond aloneness.

**-Genitality - "The hunger for the two becoming one flesh!"**

Having sex. Particularized consummation.

2) Towards a definition of a mature sexuality.

3) Sexuality - its developmental stages

- \*Pre-puberty ... containable curiosity
- \*Puberty ... bewildering heat with a genital focus
- \*Initial maturity ... the desire for intimacy
- \*Growing maturity ... the desire for children
- \*Full maturity ... the desire to share in God's creativity and blessing

4) The Greek idea of EROS as containing six interpenetrating elements: **eros; mania, ludens, pragma, philia, and agape** - and the idea of integration

5) Sexuality, the human personality and integration

- Our "moral" centre, the place that is "home"
- Genitality as taking its home there
- Sex that cannot be part of a full commitment - as causing a necessary "splitting off"
- The function of this: protect the personality from corruption.
- Our innate goodness remains intact, though within danger
- The inchoate desire for a soulmate - "to bring us home"
- Sexuality as re-integrating when "brought home"

## **B) Sexuality as "divine fire" - towards a theology and spirituality of sexuality**

1) Some non-negotiable Christian points about sexuality

- \*it is good
- \*it is sacred
- \*it is powerful (and often unfriendly)
- \*it needs a certain "chastity" to protect it
- \*it is a perpetual "dis-ease"

2) Sexuality - As exclusive to a marriage relationship within Christian thought

3) Sexuality as non-negotiably related to a certain fertility, non-barrenness within Judea-Christian thought

4) The Christian notion of Chastity - as nurturing and protecting Sexuality

- \*Our naivete about the power of sacred fire
- \*Allan Bloom on chastity ... and "eros has gone lame!"

\*The concept of Chastity

- i) Chastity is not celibacy
- ii) Chastity is not frigidity
- iii) Chastity is not an exclusively sexual concept, but pertains to an entire attitude and way of experiencing ... as "having our shoes off before the burning bush".

\*Chastity as proper reverence and respect

\*Chastity as waiting, as patience

\*Chastity as sublimation in view of the sublime

\*Chastity as "pondering"

\*Chastity as "carrying solitude at a high level

\*Chastity as heightening the joy and goodness of sexuality by surrounding it with high symbol

\*Chastity as a constrictive & privileged opportunity to be in solidarity with the

poor.

3) Christian Theology and Spirituality as struggling with current cultural myths about sexuality

### **The myths ...**

- i) "I cannot be a happy, wholesome human being unless I am having sex!"
- ii) "Heterosexual friendships are existentially impossible."
- iii) "I can have detached, recreational, casual sex."

- iv) "I am having safe and responsible sex if I am responsible regarding contraception and sexually transmitted diseases."
- v) "Our sexual instinct is at odds with our religious instinct!"
- vi) "We become ever more free sexually and humanly as we shed the old taboos of chastity and restraint! Passion and chastity oppose each other!"
- vii) "Sex is ultimately about orgasms, not about glue in the soul!"

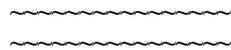
4) Our struggles to produce a healthy theology and spirituality of Sexuality ...

#### **The Obstacles ...**

- i) The power of sexuality itself and our non-easy capacity to make peace with it
- ii) Our celibate and monastic tradition within spirituality
- iii) Our theology of God - as "a male, celibate"
- iv) A culture focused on one aspect of sexuality - romance and having sex

#### **The path ahead ... searching for a new health**

- i) Befriending, enjoying, and celebrating sexuality, even as we properly protect it and ourselves.
- ii) Linking sexuality properly to love and life at all its levels
  - \*re-integrating "energy" and "wisdom"
  - \*re-establishing a link to life and fertility, beyond romance and recreation.
  - \*understanding and responding to the inner call of sexuality
- iii) A healthier theology of God - as the principle of sexuality and fertility
- iv) The acceptance of the "unfinished symphony"
  - \*"accepting and mourning our virginity"
  - \*"feeling the goodness of its power"



**THURSDAY, July 5**

### **The Human Person and Paschal Transformation**

**A) The pattern of transformation as modelled by Jesus ...** see THE HOLY LONGING, chapter 7.

#### **B) A VISION FROM THE MYSTICS : THE SIX STAGES OF TRANSFORMATION**

The Six Stages of Sanctity as outlined by John of the Cross

*Stages of prayer, love, and service*

##### **1) Pre-conversion ... "unhealthy indifference"**

- unhealthy indifference
- the pleasure principle as one's basic motivation
- unhealthy complacency

##### **2) Conversion ... "falling in love"**

- loss of indifference
- initial transformation re the pleasure principle as the principle for motivation.

- obsession
- new energy fuels the personality

### 3) First Fervour ... "the honeymoon"

*"The active night of the senses"*

- high levels of passion
- excess
- public display
- endless energy
- discursive abilities (to and about the beloved)
- desire for heroism/uniqueness
- loss of balance
- sense that "this" is enough for you
- "main-lining" of archetypal energy
- but ... a "taste" of ultimate reality

### 4) The Waning of First Fervour ... "death of the honeymoon"

*"The passive night of the senses"*

- the waning of fervour
- boredom
- loss of the discursive abilities
- the move from tasting the archetypal to seeing the real
- growth in genuine solicitousness (healthy anxiety)

### 5) Proficiency ... "life and love as adult decision"

-love is a decision

*i) First stage - dryness*

*ii) Second stage - ease*

- maturity
- sense of being "at home"
- a different kind of "gnawing" begins underneath

### 6) The Night of the Spirit ... "purgatory on earth"

i) First stage - sufficient fidelity and maturity

- fidelity builds strength for a more radical setting out
- desire for deeper union

ii) Second stage - radical gospel decision

-radical decision, against common sense, on basis of the gospel - setting out for "Rwanda"

iii) Third stage - radical "dryness"

-terrible pain and doubt even within a dark security

iv) Fourth stage - "the living flame" - ecstasy

- God breaks through
- occasional bursts of ecstasy
- longing for death and full consummation

Paschal Transformation and Final Destiny

### **C) Some reflections on theology, spirituality, and the two-halves of life.**

### **D) Some thoughts on C. S. Lewis' - The Great Divorce**

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**FRIDAY, July 6**

#### **The Human Person and Human Destiny**

- 1) The Concept of Eschatology
- 2) Some speculations re ... Hell, Purgatory, Heaven.

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#### **Supplemental - Seminar Outline for C.S. Lewis' - The Great Divorce ...**

##### **A) Discuss the central metaphors within the book:**

- i) How does Lewis see "heaven", "hell", "purgatory"?
- ii) Why these images: "ghost" - "solid person" ?

##### **B) Discuss the ten meetings between "ghosts" and "solid persons" that he describes ...**

###### **1) The ghost meets his former employee (pp. 30-35)**

- i) What is the obstacle blocking this man from going towards the mountain?
- ii) Why might Lewis have put this interview first in the book?

###### **2) The intellectually dishonest ghost (pp. 35-43)**

- i) What within intellectual dishonesty particularly blocks one off from the kingdom?
- ii) What leads to intellectual dishonesty?
- iii) Can there be "sins of the intellect"?
- iv) What is Lewis' particular recipe for recovering from intellectual dishonesty?

###### **3) Lewis' conversation with a fellow ghost (pp. 49-53)**

- i) What is blocking this particular ghost from the kingdom?

###### **4) The woman ghost (pp. 55-58)**

- i) What is her issue?
- ii) What causes "shame"?

iii) How can shame be handled?

**5) C.S. Lewis' conversation with George MacDonald (pp. 59 ff.)**

(George MacDonald was a spiritual writer who Lewis much admired and who had been influential in Lewis' own conversion to Christ.)

- i) What are some of the key things that MacDonald tell us about heaven, hell, and purgatory?
- ii) According to MacDonald, is our decision at the moment of death (for heaven or hell) eternally definitive?

**6) The famous artist (pp. 72-76)**

- i) What is his blockage?
- ii) What are the dangers of being a gifted person?

**7) The woman married to Robert (pp. 77-81)**

- i) What blocks her from the kingdom?
- ii) What makes love manipulative?

**8) The woman who wants to meet her deceased son, Michael (pp. 82-87)**

- i) What is her blockage?
- ii) Discuss the role of "natural love" (both positive and negative) ... pp. 84, 88-89, 96.

**9) The ghost with the red lizard (pp. 89-94)**

- i) What is his problem?
- ii) Why did the lizard have to be killed so violently? Why was no gradual transformation possible?
- iii) What is symbolized by the stallion?
- iv) What is to be noted, given the fact that this is the only really "successful" encounter in the whole book?

**10) The lady in white and the dwarf (pp. 97-109)**

- i) What is the symbol of the dwarf having a "tragedian" on a leash?
- ii) What is the dwarf's blockage?
- iii) Discuss the expression: "Heaven blackmailing earth"
- iv) Why cannot hell blackmail heaven in the next life? (pp. 107-111)

**C) Discuss the description of hell that is given (pp. 112-113).**

**D) How might Lewis understand Christ's "descent into hell".**

**E) Discuss the meaning of the image (analogue) given on pp. 116-118.**



## **C.S. Lewis ... The Great Divorce**

**Some response regarding the 10 interviews between the ghosts and the solid people ...**

**1) The Ghost who meets his former employee**

What is his blockage? **The inability to accept gift.** He wants to earn everything. Most everything else that

is not right with him (his pride, self-righteousness, and his inability to forgive) stems from that fact that he cannot receive anything as gift. He needs to earn everything ... he "only wants his due". Well, heaven is never anyone's due, it is gift. The same is true of forgiveness, love, community, and even of life itself. They are not our due. They are gift!

It is not accident that Lewis puts this interview first. Why? Because the single condition for entry into heaven, as can be seen in the Adam and Eve story, is that one receive everything as gift, that one not seize the apple or think it is owed to him or her. Life can only be received, never taken. What Lewis is highlighting in this interview is the single condition for entry into heaven.

Notice how many more times in the course of the book, a solid person will tell a ghost: *"You don't have to do anything; just give me your hand and I will take you there."*

## **2) The intellectually dishonest ghost**

What is his blockage? **Idolatry**. He has made learning an end in itself. He no longer wants answers. Rather questioning itself has become the absolute.

Note Lewis' strong challenge to him: *"Once you were a child. Once you knew what inquiry was for. There was a time when you asked questions because you wanted answers, and you were glad when you found them. Become that child again, even now. ... Thirst is made for water; inquiry for truth. What you call the free play of inquiry has neither more nor less to do with the ends for which intelligence was given than masturbation has to do with marriage."* (p. 41)

What leads to intellectual dishonesty of this kind? *"At College, you know, we just started automatically writing the kind of things that got good marks ... p. 38-39)*

## **3) Lewis' conversation with a fellow ghost**

What is blocking this ghost from the kingdom? DISTRUST and its child, CYNICISM. In all these interviews we see that the condition for entry into love and community is LETTING ONESELF BE LED. This ghost is so distrusting, paranoid, and life-smart, that it is impossible to trust anyone and it is impossible for him to let himself be led.

In John 21, when Jesus calls Peter he says: *"When you were young you gird your belt about you and walked wherever you wanted, now, if you wish to follow me, others will put a belt about you and lead you where you would rather not go."* Entry in heaven is contingent upon letting ourselves be led. Distrust and cynicism are the greatest hinderance to that.

## **4) The woman ghost who suffer from shame**

What blocks her? Shame ... pathological self-consciousness. But the real blockage is NARCISSISM, i.e., excessive self-preoccupation. She is too focused on herself and that is why she is so self-conscious. The solution: *"Friend, could you, only for a moment, fix your mind on something not yourself."* (p.57)

## **5) Lewis' conversation with George Macdonald**

(Geo Macdonald was a famous spiritual writer during Lewis' time, a writer Lewis much admired.)

Macdonald seems to imply that our choice at the time of death is not definitive, we can change our minds after death still and choose, at any time, to go to heaven ("we can always go on the bus"). Key quote - p. 61ff.

He warns Lewis that "the contempt of joy" is the most dangerous thing and is "hell itself", as well as a way of "extending hell".

## **6) The famous artist**

What is his blockage? IDOLATRY. Much like the intellectually dishonest ghost, he has made ART AN END IN ITSELF. He has lost interest in reality itself and is only interested in painting it: *"Every poet and musician and artist, but for Grace, is drawn away from love of the thing he tells, to love of the telling till, down in deep hell, they cannot be interested in God at all but only in what they say about him."* (p.74)

### **7) The woman married to Robert**

What blocks her from the kingdom? MANIPULATIVE LOVE, the martyr-complex, carrying someone's cross and sending him the bill! She cannot let her love transform and it is fixated at the level where her need to be needed is overpowering.

### **8) The woman, Pam, who wants her son, Michael**

What is her blockage? She will not LET LOVE BE TRANSFORMED. ... *"You cannot truly love a fellow creature until you love God."* She will not let natural love *"fall into the ground and die, so that it can bring forth the new plant. ... But someone must say in general what's been unsaid among you this many a year: that love, as mortals understand the word, isn't enough. Every natural love will rise again and live forever in this country; but none will rise again until it has been buried. ... The saying is almost too hard for us. ... Ah, but it's cruel not to say it. ... You and I must be clear. There is but one good; that is God. Everything else is good when it looks to Him and bad when it turns from Him. And the higher and mightier it is in the natural order, the more demoniac it will be if it rebels. It's not out of bad mice or bad fleas you make demons, but out of bad archangels. The false religion of lust is baser than the false religion of mother-love or patriotism or art: but lust is less likely to be made into a religion. (pp. 88-89) [and] ... Ye must draw another lesson. You must ask, if the risen body even of appetite is as grand a horse as you saw, what would the risen body of maternal love of friendship be?"* (p. 96) (Read: Sheldon Vanauken, **A Severe Mercy**, for Lewis' developed views on this.)

### **9) The Ghost with the Red Lizard**

What was his problem? LUST, the inability to check sensual appetite.

Why did the lizard have to be killed so violently? Why was not gradual transformation possible? For the same reason that an alcoholic cannot stop drinking gradually and for the same reason that the Israelites had to "kill" the Canaanites when they took the promised land and for the same reason that you cannot, as Jesus warned, put new wine into old wineskins, i.e., if the old is not completely purged it will invariably rise up and recapture the new.

What is symbolized by the stallion? The fact that our worst faults and weaknesses, if transformed, become our greatest strengths.

### **10) The Lady in white and the dwarf**

What was the dwarf's blockage? He could only give and receive love IF HE WAS NEEDED. He needed his wife to need him and could not love her otherwise. Also, he was hiding behind a facade.

Key to this interview is Lewis' idea of hell as the total fixing of ourselves on ourselves so that we become so small that we can disappear into a crack. Also, hinted at here, is the idea of THE DESCENT INTO HELL, i.e., how our love cannot, at a point, penetrate someone's private hell, but perhaps Christ's love can.



## **Part three - Some notes on Ritual ...**

### **I. Basic kinds of rituals and some spin-off implications**

A) Rituals are of three basic types:

- 1) Initiation rituals
- 2) Sustaining rituals
- 3) Closure rituals

B) Hence, they divide naturally into two kinds:

- i) Rituals that are done only once (e.g., baptism, some kinds of blessings, confirmation, closure rites, etc.)
- ii) Rituals that are done regularly, over and over again; e.g., eucharist, birthday celebrations, some kinds of blessings, etc.

C. Different rituals draw upon a different kinds of energy

- i) One-time rituals (initiation, closure, etc.) draw energy from "heating up the psyche", i.e., by, of themselves, trying to emotionally-charge-up the psyche.
- ii) Sustaining rituals often work in the reverse fashion, i.e., they draw their power off of rhythm, regularity, i.e., they work off of commitment and presence beyond the heating up and cooling off of the individual psyche. (*"Monks have secrets worth knowing."*)

D) Some examples of rituals:

**i) Initiation ...**

- Baptism
- Other forms of "Christ-in-ing", welcome into a family
- major moments of blessing

**ii) Closure (grieving)**

- funeral
  - ritualizing the acceptance of any form of "death"
- (divorce, barrenness, miscarriage, abortion, aging, etc.)

**iii) Sustaining ...**

- Eucharist
- A blessing
- Birthdays
- friendship rituals (among a group of friends)
- ritual language within a marriage or family

**II. Elements to a good ritual ...**

A) Rituals are, most properly, a public, community-based thing - one however can celebrate any number of "private" rituals which can be very helpful in both anchoring life and giving it new impetus.

B) Elements to designing a "public" ritual:

**1) For whom and why?**

Name clearly the reason for the ritual ... For whom? For What? What do you hope to achieve? (E.g., bless a son or daughter that is leaving home).

**2) The "audience"**

Who will be present, besides yourself and the person the ritual is designed for? Your immediate family? Extended family? Close friends? The parish? etc.

### **3) Sacred space**

Where will it take place? In a church? In your living room? In the woods?

This also includes dress - How will everyone be dressed?

### **4) Who will preside as "elder" and who will have important auxiliary roles?**

Who presides the ritual? You? A minister of the church? Some important "symbolic figure"? Why this person?

Who will have other "more important parts"? (E.g., the bridesmaids and groomsmen at a wedding, the readers at a worship service, etc.)

### **5) Preparation before the ritual ceremony**

- How will you prepare the person for this ritual?
- How will you prepare the other "audience" for this ritual?

This part is key. Good ritual follows upon good preparation, both intellectually and emotionally.

### **6) The ritual ceremony itself**

Has three parts:

#### **Preparation for the "heart" ritual**

#### **The "heart" ceremony itself**

#### **"Coming back down to earth"**

A) **The Preparation** should contain these elements:

- i) A gathering ritual (e.g., a hymn or prayer) followed by the greeting by the presider.
- ii) Some "readings" - which can be scripture, letters, poetry, etc.
- iii) Some communal prayer for the "desired effect"
- iv) A reflection ("homily") by some "elder" who tries to "capture the moment" and name it - like a good "toast" should do!
- v) Some "response" (to questioning) by the person undergoing the ritual (e.g., like the questions prior to the marriage vows).

#### **B) The heart of the ritual**

Has three elements:

i) Words - which should be brief (in terms of words). Don't be wordy, "current", etc. Be brief and archetypal.

ii) Gesture - a silent touch of some kind; e.g., laying on of hands, tracing of a cross on the forehead, anointing with perfumed oil, etc.

(This is done first, ritually, by the presiding elder but can also then be done by everyone present ... who is already "an elder" in that area.)

iii) A "ritual scar" ... some permanent sign (like a wedding ring) that remains always with the person as a reminder of this event.

### **C) The "wind-down"**

Has a double function:

\*Final touches

\*Ease things back to normal - return from the sacred space.

That is:

i) Final touches - you should add some "accessories" ; e.g., a song, a sign of peace, the Lord's Prayer together, the symbolic lighting of a candle, a special blessing, the invitation to return to this sacred space at some regular interval, etc. - though don't overdo this part so as to take away from the centre of the ritual.

ii) Ease things back to "normal"

- Concluding remarks by the elder
- Some form of "dismissal", e.g., a hymn

But this section could include some remarks from the one who underwent the ritual.

### **7) Follow-up celebration**

Follow the "ceremony" up with some kind of gathering - a meal, a social, etc.

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