

# APPROACHING THE HEART OF FAITH

DIOCESE OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN

Kevin G. Thew Forrester, Bishop-Elect

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Third Sunday of Easter

Dear Friends,

One of the greatest gifts for me of this brief life is being a papa for my two children and the time we share together in reading and prayers each evening. We talk about our day and sometimes, as the lights dim, eyes seem to spontaneously pop open in fear. Anxiety is ours from conception and we develop fear so early: a thunderstorm, a nightmare, a shadow on the wall. The signs of fear are universal: we stop breathing and our mind freezes. We huddle under the covers and hope for the best.

We live in a time of much cultural change and fear. Conventional ways of understanding ourselves, God and church are in transition. It is true that as created beings, change and evolution are part and parcel to our life as creatures of God's creation. And yet, it is also true that the break of the 21<sup>st</sup> century seems to have ushered us into a teeming flow of accelerated changes that dance as shadows all about the walls of our lives. As the church, we cannot help but be affected by the cultural whirlwind. We often react by searching for some thing, some one, some institution, to which we might cling for our salvation beneath the covers. We find it easy to be afraid and on the defensive – we feel like forsaken children.

We need to be reminded and learn to remember that God is as close as our very breath. God, who is good and loving, breathed over creation and brought it into being. With each loving breath God sustains and carries us. As we surrender, like Christ, and let our soul rest in God, the freeze on our mind melts, our heart expands, the shadows become angels.

Amidst the whirlwind of election and consent God's breath is sustaining and carrying us. Let me share with you some of the discoveries of my soul as I approach the heart of faith, and discover the angels on our walls.

## **Incarnation and At-One-Ment: “God became human so that we might become god”**

I know that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, and I receive with gratitude and hope the tradition of the early Christian fathers and mothers, the Eastern Church, and the mystics, such as Meister Eckhart, Julian of Norwich and Nicolas Cusa. Here is what some of them have to say about the meaning of the Incarnation:

- St. Ephrem the Syrian says of Jesus, “He gave us divinity, we gave him humanity.” And again: “Our body was Your clothing, Your Spirit was our Robe.”
- St. Irenaeus declares: “the Word of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, who, because of his superabundant love, made himself what we are in order to make of us what he is.”
- St. Athanasius quite famously sings: “God became human so that we might become god.”
- Gregory of Nazianzus resounds the refrain: “God is made Man; man is rendered god.”
- Gregory of Nyssa teaches us that “Because our nature is mixed with the divine nature, our nature is made divine.”
- Centuries later, Meister Eckhart will remind the church that every single person is called to the mystical life, which is nothing other than the journey whereby we discover we are

blessed from the beginning by being one with God. This blessing makes our divinization in Christ possible. To follow the way of Christ is to break through the shadowy fog in order to know from our own experience that “God’s ground is my ground, and my ground is God’s ground.”

- Julian of Norwich sings out clearly that “all will be well.”
- Nicholas of Cusa links humanity’s deification with the image of the Logos: “I consider filiation of God to be reckoned as nothing else than deification, which, in Greek is also called *theosis*.”

I behold a cross which reveals the boundless depth and breadth of God’s eternal love and forgiveness, rather than being the *cause* to convince God to love and forgive us. I acknowledge the enormous contribution of St. Anselm to our tradition and the prayers and liturgies of the *BCP*. Yet our tradition has always been great enough to include a host of saints and their differing theologies. With many of them, I diverge from St. Anselm, who argued that Jesus was sent by God to be crucified in order to satisfy a debt humanity could not pay. I affirm with the more ancient Eastern Church that the Incarnation is the very reason for creation, so that God might graciously share the Divine Life with us. I’m grateful that despite the dominance of Anselm’s theology since the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the church in its wisdom has never said that there is only one way for understanding the Incarnation. The largesse of the Anglican tradition has been, is now, and will be, capable of including and affirming divergent theologies. Such largesse is a gift of our Communion.

The Incarnation is the living font from which flows the gracious capacity for our own transfiguration in Christ. Fallen and blinded by sin, the sanctifying and divinizing touch of Christ is a saving embrace as well. Listen to these amazing words by the early church father, Gregory of Nazianzus.

- Gregory says that when Jesus is baptized by John, he “sanctifies the Jordan.”
- What the Incarnate One touches, he sanctifies and saves. Gregory declares that “Jesus comes up out of the water and he makes the cosmos, which he carries, to ascend [out of the water] with him.”
- For Gregory, the Incarnation has the power to sanctify all the cosmos. Jacob of Serugh (another early church father from Syria) speaks poetically of Jesus consecrating all waters: “The entire nature of the waters perceived that you had visited them – seas, deeps, rivers, springs and pools all thronged together to receive the blessing from your footsteps.”

### **Trinity, Community, and Ministry: Created in the Image of the Triune God**

I believe that because we are created in the image of God, we are created in the image of the Trinity. As with the Incarnation, the church, in its wisdom, has never said that there is only one way to understand this mystery. Two marvelous examples of distinct, yet complementary, visions of the Trinity, which I find compelling, are those of St. Ephrem the Syrian and Rublev.

For St. Ephrem, says Kilian McDonnell, “The Sun corresponds to the Father, the light to the Son, and the heat to the Spirit: ‘Behold the image! Son and Father, light and sun, the Holy Spirit, heat.’ . . . The heat of the Spirit informs the whole of God and the whole of creation: ‘The power of the Spirit’s heat resides in everything (the whole of the created universe), with everything [the Spirit] is whole, yet entirely [whole] with the One (God), and is not cut off from the Radiance (Son), being mixed with it, [nor is the Spirit divided] from the Sun (Father), being mingled with it.’” St. Ephrem’s metaphor of light and heat foreshadows the medieval hymns, mandalas, and theology of St. Hildegard of Bingen.



In the 15<sup>th</sup> century Andrei Rublev painted *The Old Testament Trinity*, an icon of God which has become quite famous. As you gaze into the icon, you are drawn to an open place about a low table, around which sit three relaxed figures. Upon the table sits a cup easily reached by any of the three. Each figure rests peacefully and at ease in the presence of the other two. With heads inclined gently, yet deliberately, toward one another, there is a distinct air of mutual regard. A desire to drink in the presence of the others permeates the icon. These are figures ready to receive what the other has to give. Around this table each is utterly aware of the presence of the other, and each listens to the other with inclined ear and ready heart. One table, one cup, one mutual desire to listen to the other – born of eternal loving recognition of the holy present in all. Competition is as wholly absent as compassion is utterly present. Domination dissolves into equality. These three are one: one in open heart, one in listening mind, one in mutual love.

Rublev's icon is a vision for community life (an ecclesiology) as well as an understanding of divine life (a theology). Mutual ministry begins with the inclined ear and open heart ready to receive in love the holy which is the other. Mutual ministry endeavors to embody in community life the same mutual respect eternally present in the life of God. The Trinity is a symbolic way of affirming the hope expressed in John's gospel that *all may be one, as you, Abba, are in me and I in you* (17.21) This is in no sense an exclusive oneness. Whenever and wherever we accept the Spirit's invitation to live into the river of love which sustains all creation, we dwell in one another. There is no love not of God, and so there is no unity born of love not of God.

The open and embracing character of Trinitarian love in the icon is revealed also through the warm space between the two figures in the icon's foreground. Here there is forever a place at the table for another within the life of God. In a sense, God draws back to make space and then embraces. All of which might be a description of how God relates to creation. Drawing upon the ancient Jewish doctrine of the Shekinah, we can think of the creation of the universe as involving a withdrawal of God to make space for creatures. God makes space for the emergence of a universe and for the evolution of life and then embraces it. Contemporary scholar Elizabeth Johnson draws comparison here with the pregnant mother: "To be so structured that you have room inside yourself for another to dwell is quintessentially a female experience. Every human being has lived and moved and had their being inside a woman, for the better part of the year it took them to be knit together." Theologian Denis Edwards says he finds "this experience of a mother making space in the womb for another a wonderfully rich and evocative image for the divine generativity by which the universe is brought forth within God."

The Johannine gospel declares that love is the Spirit which weaves our seemingly separate lives into a common fabric of community. Love draws a couple together to unite in partnership and family – united around birth and death, meal and story. These concrete and mundane activities are the very

flesh of divine love lived. And love lived is Spirit weaving wholeness and communion. If we attend closely to how it is we not only survive but thrive, such wholeness is never realized in isolation but in community. Even if we are alone, our hearts are ever inhabited by others – they dwell in our memories, our stories, our hopes and sorrows, and we abide also in them. To live is to dwell in others as they dwell in us. *How* we dwell, well that is the question. God bids us dwell in love. For God is love and we who abide in love abide in God and God in us.

### **Episcopal Leadership: Guarding a Pilgrim Faith of Love Surrendered**

I affirm that it is my duty to guard and protect our faith, which is a *pilgrim journey of love*. In the Biblical sense, faith is the complete surrendering of our heart to God, who as John declares, is Love.

From the Prophetic books' reform of the Torah and the Wisdom books' reform of the Prophets, ours is a faith-pilgrimage of continual unfolding into the loving heart of God in Christ. Jesus was a reformer of 1st century Judaism, and throughout the centuries Christians have continually guarded the faith by seeking to reform its cultural expressions so as to be more authentic to the Divine Will. As Bishop I believe it would be my duty to continue to explore ways of reforming our church, our liturgy, and our polity, so that our lives and prayer become ever more congruent with the gospel command to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves. In these two commands of self-surrender (*kenosis*) lies the heart of faith.

Only God is absolute, which means the *BCP* in all its beauty and authority is not, and never can be, an end itself. The question before our church is not *whether* we reform our liturgy, prayers and polity. The pivotal matter is *how* we engage in responsible reform accountable to the wider church (which Louis Weil has spoken to so well). In the Diocese of Northern Michigan, all trial liturgical reform is done openly and in conversation with the wider church (and, of course, the conversation needs to ever expand). St. Paul's is the recognized leader, if you will, for our diocese. With the consent of the bishop and the congregation, we educate ourselves. We develop trial prayers and liturgies and alternate them with Rite II. We share the fruits of our labor with other scholars, the wider church, and receive feedback. We worship with the liturgy and then reflect on it together and look for ways to share our learnings.

I embrace and uphold the rites of *The Book of Common Prayer* as they are the principal form of worship of The Episcopal Church and our diocese. Our limited-use trial prayers and liturgies retain the form of the *BCP* and reflect the spiritual history particularly of the church fathers and mothers and the mystics.

I understand Episcopal oversight (guardianship) as a constant interplay between guarding the faith as a holy inheritance (tradition received) and guarding the faith as holy inquiry (tradition unfolding). I, without question or hesitancy, affirm both. Since faith is the unfolding and surrendering of the human heart to God, the Beloved, we would do our tradition an injustice to treat our living journey as if it were a static and inert "deposit". As we say in our Commissioning Liturgy, used when commissioning a new Ministry Support Team, we need to hold in trust the questioning mind, the searching heart, and the thirsting soul. Our unfolding faith emerges from the tradition received, for what has been received was itself once dynamically unfolding – indeed, it still is.

My sense is that as the bishop called forth in this place I embrace our living tradition as both received and unfolding. A pilgrim faith in a continually Creating God can do no less.

## Liturgy and *The BCP*: Recovering At-One-Ment & Resurrection Paradise

I believe that the liturgy is essentially our communal act of gratitude and praise to the Creator for our gracious and salvific At-one-ment with God in Christ Resurrected.

We have an awesome responsibility to continually explore how our common liturgy can better embody the truth of the Incarnation and the Trinitarian God. We also have a responsibility to do this exploration through collaboration with the wider church and to create with others avenues within The Episcopal Church for accountable liturgical renewal. In this effort, our past has much to teach us.

For the first 1000 years of the church's history our prayer and liturgy reflected our faith of being people rooted in the experience and knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth as the Resurrected One. Our living liturgy, reflected in the continual evolution of *The Book of Common Prayer*, needs to move forward by recovering this ancient tradition. Recovery is inclusive, however, for it neither discards nor dismisses.

We find ourselves in a gracious moment where it is possible to transcend the bounds of St. Anselm's atonement theology, by recovering the fullness of our tradition. It is utterly fascinating and crucially important for us to realize that Resurrection Paradise and not dehumanizing crucifixion drew the Christians of the first millennium into worship. The first crucifix, which makes Roman death central to Christianity, is found for the first time only in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Here are some sobering words from *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire*, by Brock and Parker.

With Anselm's theology of atonement, the Incarnation's sole purpose was to drive relentlessly to the act of dying. . . Though he forbade his own monks from joining the Crusades, Anselm's doctrine of the atonement gave support for holy war. Christians were exhorted to imitate Christ's self-offering in the cause of God's justice. When authorities in the church called for vengeance, they did so on God's behalf. As Anselm wrote, "When earthly rulers exercise vengeance justifiably, the one who is really exercising it is the One who established them in authority for this very purpose."

Anselm even fails to mention it [the resurrection] in [his book] *Why God Became Man*.

[B]y the eleventh century, the church's rituals had virtually reversed the traditions of Cyril's fourth-century Jerusalem. Instead of mourning the Crucifixion once a year and marking the Resurrection daily, the Resurrection slowly receded in importance."

Anselm's theology and piety crystallized the religious foundation of the Crusades. "Peace by the blood of the Cross". . .

If we can remember that Trinitarian unity is neither enforced conformity nor simple uniformity. Perhaps we can develop the gracious room within The Episcopal Church to continue to develop trial prayers and liturgies (particularly baptismal liturgies) in such a way that the process embodies respect for both tradition received and tradition unfolding. For example:

- As we continue to uphold the *BCP*, we need to develop prayers and liturgies which tell anew the ancient wisdom of Paradise and empower us to move beyond "Peace by the blood of the Cross." Unfortunately, to say the least, Anselm's theology helped to provide justification for Christendom

to embark on in its first pogroms against the Jews of Europe. Soon after, the church turned the brunt of the crucifixion on the Muslims of the holy land. The memory of the reign of God as Paradise seemed lost. The memory of the Resurrected Christ as the heart and soul of Christian prayer and liturgy seemed lost. Just as Jesus had to be killed in order to satisfy God's need for atonement, so too others had to pay with their lives for the affront of being judged "infidels."

- As we continue to uphold the *BCP*, we need to develop prayers and liturgies which tell anew the ancient wisdom of why Jesus is the Christ – because as God's love incarnate, death can neither contain nor destroy him. Even in the face of Roman crucifixion, Jesus remains constant to the loving God who is eternally faithful to him. For the first Christians, who do not even speak of original sin, Jesus is killed not because God demands it; not because God needs it; not because God delights in it. Jesus is killed because Rome cannot tolerate the uncompromising love of the Incarnate One, manifested in healing and in table fellowship that is radically open to all. The Resurrection reveals that we are one in life with God. The Resurrection reveals that death, even one as horrific as crucifixion, cannot defeat God. Early Eucharistic prayers never mention the crucifixion, because of its inhuman brutality.
- As we continue to uphold the *BCP*, we need to develop prayers and liturgies which tell anew the divine revelation to Julian of Norwich: "All will be well." All will indeed be well for Julian because all are saved by God whose love and forgiveness are truly infinite. As Maggie Ross writes, "Julian of Norwich sums up the entire tradition. She repeatedly asks Christ, 'what is sin?' But Christ tells her that he cannot even see sin; he can only see what is like himself, which is us, and all that is needed is to 'seek into the beholding.'" Julian's theology of redemption echoes that of Gregory of Nyssa, who in his *Life of Moses* "emphasizes universal and infinite resurrection as part of 'the very necessity of things.'" Nancy J. Hudson points out in *Becoming God: The Doctrine of Theosis in Nicholas of Cusa*:

One of Gregory of Nyssa's contributions to the developing doctrine of *theosis* is his positive understanding of the created, material world. A similar notion would later appear in the Cusan corpus. The ultimate destiny of humanity is *theosis*, rather than merely *redemption*, because it is directed by an original divine intentionality instead of the retrieval of a fallen spiritual universe. Humankind is not just restored to an original condition but is exalted to the point of deification.

- As we continue to uphold the *BCP*, we need to develop prayers and liturgies which tell anew the theology of the Eastern Church that God became human so that we might become god. Jesus embodies the Divine Paradise which is the reign of God begun here and now and which reaches utter fullness beyond death. Themes of Paradise grace the walls of the churches of the first millennium because all Christians are saints who exist solely for the purpose of the pilgrim journey of faith: created in the image of God, we are to become God's very likeness. The church fathers and mothers, East and West, describe our journey of faith as a *theosis*: a human divinization.

*The Book of Common Prayer* guides the Eucharistic worship of our diocese. We have also accepted the responsibility to create prayers and trial liturgies which more fully embody the millennium old Christian tradition of at-one-ment with God in the Resurrected Christ. It is our hope that many other dioceses and the wider church would also accept this invitation and develop *appropriate* ways to explore prayers and liturgies consistent with the first 1000 years of Christianity. I believe these new prayers and trial liturgies, embodying the theology of the church fathers and mothers, can stand beside St. Anselm. *Might it be that*

our hope lies in transcending an “either/or” *cul de sac* and living into the traditional Anglican wisdom of “both/and”?

## God and “Satan”: Christian Reconciliation

My soul cannot help but affirm, with many of the church fathers and mothers, and especially Dame Julian, that “all will be well.” All will be well because no principality can thwart the omnipotent power of Divine Love, which saves us all. Julian’s theology can help us understand anew the symbolic words of the scriptures.

As early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century St. Ephrem the Syrian already demonstrated a deep appreciation for scriptures’ symbolism. His words remain instructive for us today.

If there existed a single sense for the words of Scripture, then the first commentator who came along would discover it, and other hearers would experience neither the labour of searching, nor the joy of finding. Rather, each word of our Lord has its own form, and each form has its own members, and each member has its own character. Each individual understands according to his capacity and interprets as it is granted to him (*The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian*, by Sebastian Brock).

If we keep in mind the wisdom distilled from St. Ephrem that “error enters in when one person claims that his spiritual interpretation is the only one possible . . .,” then The Episcopal Church might look for ways to encourage ongoing liturgical renewal.

- As we continue to uphold the *BCP*, we need to develop prayers and liturgies which tell anew the spiritual meaning of God’s grace and sin. Just as I recognize the symbolic and spiritual meaning of the Genesis myths of creation, so too I recognize the symbolic and spiritual meaning in the language of Satan and Sin. I search for ways to move beyond the inadequacy of literalism, be it with the Scriptures or *The Book of Common Prayer*. I seek to discover anew ways to speak clearly, meaningfully, and truthfully, about the enormously destructive power of evil in our lives.
- Our trial baptismal liturgy reflects this exploration. We have rediscovered the traditional language of the passions/vices which the early fathers and mothers, East and West, used to name sin with powerful specificity. Avarice (greed), sloth, gluttony, anger, pride, envy, fear, lust – these are the passions identified by the early church as our experience of the blinding force of sin. Ignorance of being created in the image of God is common to them all. From these passions emerged what our tradition would later identify as the “seven deadly sins” (see Dante and Chaucer). Our transfiguration in Christ in baptism is the conversion (*metanoia*) of these sinful passions into their gracious virtues. Could it not be possible that such a trial baptismal rite, rather than compete with the rites of the *BCP*, complement and enrich our tradition?
- As we continue to uphold the *BCP*, we need to develop prayers and liturgies which tell anew the ancient truth of Genesis that all are created in the image and likeness of God. These prayers and liturgies must bear us as Christians beyond the ego’s tendency, when afraid, to demonize others. I find that Elaine Pagels, in her book, *The Origin of Satan*, helps point a way forward.

Conflict between groups, is of course, nothing new. What may be new in Western Christian tradition . . . is how the use of Satan to represent one’s enemies lends to conflict a specific kind of moral and religious interpretation, in which “we” are God’s people and “they” are

God's enemies, and ours as well. . . Such moral interpretation of conflict has proven extraordinarily effective throughout Western history in consolidating the identity of Christian groups; the same history also shows that it can justify hatred, even mass slaughter.

To pray for one's enemies suggests that one believes that whatever harm they have done, they are capable of being reconciled to God and to oneself.

The reason that such reconciliation is possible is boldly described by Meister Eckhart, who saw everyone as the sacred word of God, in whom Christ the Word lives. This vision of a thoroughly blessed creation led him to understand the reason for the Incarnation in a new way:

People think God has only become a human being there – in his historical incarnation – but that is not so; for God is here – in this very place – just as much incarnate as in a human being long ago. And this is why he has become a human being: that he might give birth to you as his only begotten Son, and as no less.

### **One God and Many Sacred Traditions: “The Way” of Jesus Christ**

Because the one Triune God is the Alpha and Omega, the Source and the End, of all creation; and because we live, move, and have our being in a God of boundless love; I believe we live in a world in which every manifestation of truth, beauty, and goodness comes from God and leads to God and is thus sacred and holy.

This truth, I believe, is the basis for the engagement of The Episcopal Church in interfaith dialogue. We must guard as sacred the many different paths into God, the Font of all Life. We need hearts as ready to hear the good news from God's people of faiths, as we are to proclaim the Gospel. We are called to become those who heal false divisions, celebrate our diversity, and pursue our common mission.

And once again, with respect to our prayers and liturgies, we need to recognize and affirm that “the way” of Christ spoken of in the gospel of John is the *universal* path of death and resurrection. (Our trial liturgies have drawn upon “the way”.) I am convinced with Paul, in his letter to the community at Philippi, that the God of Jesus is no Caesar of the universe. Coercion and force are not “the way” of Christ. We are not ruled by the power of a kingly god jealous about status. Paul glimpses a very different God revealed in Christ Jesus. One author describes the revelation this way:

A God [who is] . . . the beating heart of the universe and does not need to threaten, to intervene, to punish, or to control. A God whose presence is justice and life, but whose absence is injustice and death...

Self-surrender (*kenosis*) is the message of the cross Paul is speaking to the Philippians and to us. Surrender and receive the life that only God can give. Marcus Borg offers a marvelous description of “the way” of Jesus spoken of in John's gospel, but it captures Paul's theology of self-emptying as well.

... ‘the way’ that John speaks of is not about believing doctrines about Jesus. Rather, ‘the way’ is what we see incarnate in Jesus: the path of death and resurrection as the way to rebirth in God. According to John, this is the only way – . . . it is ‘the way’ spoken of by all the major religions of the world. Dying and rising is the way. Thus Jesus is ‘the Way’ – the way become flesh. Rather than being the unique revelation of a way known only in him, his life and death are the incarnation of a universal way known in all of the enduring religions.

I have become aware that self-emptying is the decisive authority of our hearts and of the universe. The way of Jesus reveals the invitation of God to all of humanity. All of humanity is capable of discovering this invitation. Let me quote the words of Borg once more. He describes the way of self-emptying (*kenosis*) as the heart of Christianity, which is also the heart of the world.

This process is at the heart not only of Christianity, but of the other enduring religions of the world. The image of following ‘the way’ is common in Judaism, and ‘the way’ involves a new heart, a new self centered in God. One of the meanings of the word ‘Islam’ is ‘surrender’: to surrender one’s life to God by radically centering in God. And Muhammad is reported to have said, ‘Die before you die.’ Die spiritually before you die physically, die metaphorically (and really) before you die literally. At the heart of the Buddhist path is ‘letting go’ . . . According to the *Tao te Ching*, . . . : ‘If you want to become full, let yourself be empty; if you want to be reborn, let yourself die.’

And the Resurrected Christ does just that. Out of an uncompromising love he dies and yet lives and thereby reveals to us the saving path of life eternally offered in the life of God.

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My children are quite young and early on in life’s journey. And yet, from within the 15 billion years of creation’s evolution, humanity is fairly young itself, and the church younger still. Fear can still freeze our minds and constrict our hearts as if we were children. But, of course, we are not. We are people “robed in glory” with Christ in our baptism and told to take on “the mind of Christ.” Who knows where we might be in another 10,000 years, if we learn to rest in God, listen to one another and learn?

I pray that we may have the courage to open our hearts and remain receptive to the transfiguring presence of Christ in our lives. I pray that we may each have the humility to realize that the Spirit of God has much to teach us, and that no one theology of Christ, Trinity, church, or liturgy, can ever define us or God.

## **SOME HELPFUL CRITICAL SOURCES:**

### Incarnation and At-One-Ment; God, Satan, and Many Sacred Traditions

Robert Aitken and Brother David Steindl-Rast, *The Ground We Share: Everyday Practice, Buddhist and Christian*; Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled*; Bruno Barnhart, *The Future of Wisdom: Toward a Rebirth of Sapiential Christianity*; Marcus Borg, *Meeting Jesus again for the First Time; The God We Never Knew and Jesus: A New Vision*; Cynthia Bourgeault, *The Wisdom Way of Knowing and The Wisdom Jesus*; Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of this World for Crucifixion and Empire*; Sebastian Brock, *The Luminous Eye: The Spiritual World Vision of Saint Ephrem the Syrian and The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life*; Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah; The Death of the Messiah*; Bruce Chilton, *Rabbi Jesus: An Intimate Biography*; Oliver Clement, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism: Texts from the Patristic Era with Commentary*; John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus and Who Killed Jesus?*; James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith; From Glory to Glory: Texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings*; Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred and Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*; William Harmless, S.J., *Mystics and Desert Christians*; Nancy J. Hudson, *Becoming God: The Doctrine of Theosis in Nicholas of Cusa*; Thomas Keating, *Intimacy with God*; Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*; Colm Luibheid, translator, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*; Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*; Kilian McDonnell, *The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan: The Trinitarian and Cosmic Order of Salvation*; Bernard McGinn, *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart: The Man From Whom God Hid Nothing and The Presence of God, Volumes 1, 2, 3,4*; John P. Meier, *Rethinking the Historical Jesus, Volumes I, II and III*; Julian of Norwich: *Showings*; Elaine Pagels, *The Origin of Satan*; Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*; Sandra M. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*; Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*; William Skudlarek, editor, *The Continuing Quest for God: Monastic Spirituality in Tradition and Transition*; Huston Smith, *The Soul of Christianity; Forgotten Truth: The Common Vision of the World's Religion and The World's Religion*; Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: The Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness*; Benedicta Ward, translator, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*; Ken Wilber, *Integral Spirituality*; Walter Wink, *The Human Being; Naming the Powers; Unmasking the Powers and Engaging the Powers*.

### Trinity, Community, Ministry; Liturgy and The Book of Common Prayer

William Seth Adams, *Shaped by Images*; Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist*; Anscar J. Chupungco, *Liturgies of the Future and Liturgical Inculturation*; David S. Cunningham, *These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology*; Denis Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology*; James E. Griffiss, *The Anglican Vision*; Ronald L. Grimes, *Deeply into the Bone: Re-Inventing Rites of Passage*; Roger Haight, *Jesus: Symbol of God*; David R. Holeton, editor, *Growing in Newness of Life: Christian initiation in Anglicanism today and Our Thanks and Praise: The Eucharist in Anglicanism Today*; Gordon Lathrop, *Holy Things and Holy People*; Ruth A. Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation: Re-Visioning Baptism in the Episcopal Church*; Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*; Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God For Us: The Trinity & Christian Life*; David N. Power, *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalizing the Tradition*; Marjorie Procter-Smith, *In Her Own Rite and Women at Worship*; Arthur Peacocke, *Paths from Science towards God and Theology for a Scientific Age*; Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*; Gail Ramshaw, *God beyond Gender: Feminist Christian God-Language*; Kevin Sealsoltz, editor, *Living Bread, Saving Cup*; Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*; Louis Weil, *A Theology of Worship*; Brian Wren, *What Language Shall I Borrow: God-Talk in Worship: A Male Response to Feminist Theology*; John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*.