

review for religious
3601 lindell boulevard
st louis missouri 63108-3393

periodical postage
paid at st louis missouri and additional mailing offices

- 342 **Evoking the Spirit: Reflections on How to Pray**
Richard Hauser
- 359 **Liturgy of the Hours: Path to Integration**
Judy Roxborough
- 364 **What Is a Spiritual Director's Authority?**
Steve R. Wigall
- 370 **Confidentiality Issues in Spiritual Direction**
Robert P. Maloney
- 378 **Psychology: An Aid to Religious Formation**
Seán D. Sammon
- 387 **Mental-Health Consultation with Religious Orders**
Alexander H. Smith Jr.
- 402 **Visiting a Scene of Election**
Janet K. Ruffing
- 412 **The Rewards of a Costly Community**
Roger Finke
- 428 **Canonical Counsel:
Levels of Legislation in an Institute**

review for religious

july-august 1997



**review
for
religious**

Christian Heritages and Contemporary Living

JULY-AUGUST 1997 • VOLUME 56 • NUMBER 4

55/A

Review for Religious is a forum for shared reflection on the lived experience of all who find that the church's rich heritages of spirituality support their personal and apostolic Christian lives.

The articles in the journal are meant to be informative, practical, or inspirational, written from a theological or spiritual or sometimes canonical point of view.

Review for Religious (ISSN 0034-639X) is published bi-monthly at Saint Louis University by the Jesuits of the Missouri Province.
Editorial Office: 3601 Lindell Boulevard • St. Louis, Missouri 63108-3393.
Telephone: 314-977-7363 • Fax: 314-977-7362
E-Mail: FOPPEMA@SLU.EDU

Manuscripts, books for review, and correspondence with the editor:
Review for Religious • 3601 Lindell Boulevard • St. Louis, MO 63108-3393.

Correspondence about the Canonical Counsel department:
Elizabeth McDonough OP
1150 Cedar Cove Road • Henderson, NC 27536

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to Review for Religious • P.O. Box 6070 • Duluth, MN 55806.
Periodical postage paid at St. Louis, Missouri, and additional mailing offices.

See inside back cover for information on subscription rates.



©1997 Review for Religious

Permission is herewith granted to copy any material (articles, poems, reviews) contained in this issue of Review for Religious for personal or internal use, or for the personal or internal use of specific library clients within the limits outlined in Sections 107 and/or 108 of the United States Copyright Law. All copies made under this permission must bear notice of the source, date, and copyright owner on the first page. This permission is NOT extended to copying for commercial distribution, advertising, institutional promotion, or for the creation of new collective works or anthologies. Such permission will only be considered on written application to the Editor, Review for Religious.

R review for religious

Editor David L. Fleming SJ

Associate Editors Philip C. Fischer SJ
Regina Siegfried ASC

Canonical Counsel Editor Elizabeth McDonough OP

Editorial Staff Mary Ann Foppe
Tracy Gramm
Jean Read

Advisory Board James and Joan Felling
Iris Ann Ledden SSND
Joel Rippinger OSB
Edmundo Rodriguez SJ
David Werthmann CSSR
Patricia Wittberg SC

Christian Heritages and Contemporary Living

JULY/AUGUST 1997 • VOLUME 56 • NUMBER 4

contents

prayer

- 342 **Evoking the Spirit: Reflections on How to Pray**
Richard Hauser SJ explores the role of the Spirit in bringing about a communion with God, the goal of all prayer methods.
- 359 **Liturgy of the Hours: Path to Integration**
Judy Roxborough STJ describes how praying the Liturgy of the Hours in community offers many ways in which we can find unity and wholeness, with ourselves, with our community, with the world, and with all of creation.

spiritual direction

- 364 **What Is a Spiritual Director's Authority?**
Steve R. Wigall refocuses the question about the spiritual director's authority by considering the role of the Holy Spirit and the director's freedom in this ministry.
- 370 **Confidentiality Issues in Spiritual Direction**
Shaun McCarty ST explores the nature and necessity of confidentiality in the ministry of spiritual direction and also some legal considerations affecting its practice.

psychology

- 378 **Psychology: An Aid to Religious Formation**
Seán D. Sammon FMS considers three specific and pressing initial and ongoing formative challenges and examines how psychology may help.
- 387 **Mental-Health Consultation with Religious Orders**
Alexander H. Smith Jr. considers elements of effective consultation from the perspective of both consultant and community in order to inform, to caution, and to encourage well-grounded principles and practices.

consecrated life

- 402 **Visiting a Scene of Election**
Janet K. Ruffing RSM focuses within congregational elections on the ongoing partnership and collaboration of each assembly member and the entire body with those who are elected.
- 412 **The Rewards of a Costly Community**
Roger Finke uses sociological data to demonstrate that new members are attracted to religious congregations that have a distinctive community and mission.

departments

- 340 **Prisms**
- 428 **Canonical Counsel:
Levels of Legislation in an Institute**
- 433 **Book Reviews**

Visiting a Scene of Election

God, wonderful in power,
has used that strength for me.
—Magnificat

For purposes of reflection on the dance of power among members and leaders within the midst of an election chapter or assembly, I want to evoke a picture of two women which might epitomize the relationships of power, of sisterhood, and of liberating freedom. I have in mind the joyful and ecstatic meeting between Mary and Elizabeth before the birth of their divinely conceived children. In this scene, which takes place in the home of Elizabeth, both women are filled with God's spirit; both women prophesy; both women dare to name, to proclaim, to honor the divine power working in each; both women later act in such ways that the promise made to them may be fully realized.

A patriarchal reading of this text might place one woman above the other. It might suggest that it is from conceiving and giving birth to their prophetic male children that they derive their status. It might even suggest that they ought to disappear once their sons can get along without them and perform the real work of prophecy and redemption. But to so interpret these texts is to miss the full agency of these women, to neglect their ongoing roles in the life of their communities, and to fail to notice what

Janet K. Ruffing RSM is associate professor in spirituality and spiritual direction in the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University. Her address remains GSRRE, Fordham University; 441 East Fordham Road; Bronx, New York 10458.

they actually know and say. Instead, women might interpret this scene as one of the "dangerous memories" of community, awakening them to the full possibilities of women's community.

As I searched for an image to capture the reciprocal relationship between leaders (those who agree to render this service to the community in an ongoing and focused way) and those who authorize them as leaders, I was struck by the new ICEL (International Commission on English in the Liturgy) translation of the Magnificat: "For God, wonderful in power, has used that strength for me. . . . Holy the name of the Lord! whose mercy embraces the faithful, one generation to the next."¹

Mary's Magnificat first praises the activity, the empowering action, of God's Spirit, whom she knows as savior and who rescues her name, so that she who is now humiliated by this out-of-wedlock pregnancy will be called blessed by future generations. Then she amazingly claims God's power and strength for herself. She does not pretend that she is nothing, but that God has used "that strength" *for her*. She, after all, as Elizabeth said, "trusted that God's words to her would be fulfilled." In her confusion and ambiguity, she trusted in the outcome which God could bring forth in and through her.

The two women alternate their lines in poetic bursts of prophecy. They both experience the divine life, now no longer in isolation, but as something shared. The visit, initiated by the younger woman, enables them to speak their truth to one another in trust and in love. There is both the power of speech and the power of action.

A number of founders of apostolic women's communities have so interpreted this event. Mary travels by herself to be with her much older cousin so close to delivery. These communities claimed Mary as the one who journeys, who carries the Christ with her, who reaches out to help another in need. Yet the meeting between these women is entirely reciprocal. Just as Elizabeth needs Mary, so too does Mary need Elizabeth. What God has done within each of them can be fully understood only as they contemplate the mystery together. They speak in turn; they build on each other's revelation, perception, interpretation. They seek the meaning for what has happened together and in dialogue. In this freedom and trust to speak their partial insights and erupt in praise at the mystery, the meaning builds reciprocally. Third-world women, thoroughly marginalized and oppressed women,

R
consecrated
life

recognize in Mary's Magnificat "revolutionary speech."² They recognize that she claims a reversal of power relationships as they know them. Clearly, in their speech these women, speaking in the power of the Spirit, claim the promise and hope that God will address and right the wrongs suffered by the humble, starving, and lowly, namely, poor women. Poignantly the text says, "Mary remained with Elizabeth three months." These few measured phrases tongued by the Spirit's exuberant passion were only the beginning of the conversation and of their actions in response. This new life within each cannot come to maturity without constant action in its behalf. So, too, the life of a community gathered in assembly!

Although elections tend to emphasize the role of the elected leaders, I want to focus more on the ongoing partnership and collaboration of each assembly member and the entire body with those who are elected. What happens in a chapter or assembly as it chooses some among them to serve the group in leadership is often more about the collective whole than it is about the particular women who have agreed to stand for election and upon whom the body projects communal hopes and fears. Election, leadership discernment, is a complex political, spiritual, psychological, and emotional process. Religious communities of women often deny one or more aspects of it. And, after the elections, the members go home and leave the new team to sweep up, put the chairs away, and attempt to help the community implement an impossible agenda and carry its projections of authority in a particular constellation for the next four or six years.

I believe that assembly *members* need to really probe and claim their own leadership role in this process of transferring positional power. They need to claim all the ways they exercise power during the assembly itself and after they file their papers or empty them into recycling bins. There is an authentic, desirous wisdom in the group, and it operates consciously and openly; but an unconscious resistance also operating in it may disempower the elected leaders even while the assembly empowers them. An apostolic community is called together as a result of God's entrusting its members with a particular mission.

The assembly members' participation in self-governance, their authorizing women to act on their behalf and with them, is neither about some in their midst "lording it" over the others nor even about their setting out across some unmapped territory and

inviting the rest to follow docilely; it is about ordering and organizing individual and communal life toward mission.³ Governance in religious life is for the sake of mission. Some govern, administer, organize, nurture, analyze, consult, and decide so that the community as a whole and every member in it can be about the mission. Governance that acknowledges and builds on the gifts of all, enabling each one to place her gifts at the service of the community and its mission, continues the dialogue begun in the assembly. If the women elected to governance are to do what the assembly asks, its members will need to continue to confer authority upon them in exchange for the service they render the group.⁴

Contemporary studies on power and leadership, especially feminist ones, examine leadership and power as essentially reciprocal processes. One can lead from a position of formal authority or from a position without such formal authority.⁵ In elections the group decides who will have the "right to exercise power in a formal way in relationship to the goals and values of the group."⁶ There are implications for each assembly member. Her own history with authority and power causes her to look for the kind of person she is most comfortable interacting with in this role. Hence, if a sister does not want anyone to make claims on her, question her, or change anything, she will gravitate to someone who is relatively weak and nice and thus will not bother her. If a sister wants someone upon whom to be dependent or someone she perceives will be nurturing and compassionate if she should need help, then she will gravitate to someone who appears very strong or totally compassionate. If a sister wants someone to inspire her, articulate the charism, motivate her, she might choose a poet or playwright. If a sister is concerned about specific administrative functions such as the financial health of the group or the sponsorship of particular institutions, she may gravitate toward a strong and competent administrator. Sometimes communities choose one person on the team to represent each of these desires for action or nonaction from formal authority so that they will simply cancel each other out and thus preserve the status quo. Now, it is

*Election,
leadership discernment,
is a complex
political, spiritual,
psychological,
and emotional process.*

true that community administration probably needs all of these functions to be exercised on behalf of the group; by choosing all, however, the community might produce a team that would have great difficulty calling the community to the “nonroutine” work of conversion, renewal, refounding, reanimation, or even dying with dignity.

Power is quite a different matter. I have already described how the group may seem to confer on someone the right to exercise power and then take it away. Cross-cultural research suggests that there are three universal powers present in human groups: the power of presence, the power of communication, and the power of position.⁷ If anyone embodies all three of these powers, her exercise of power cannot be ignored regardless of whether or not she leads from a position of formal authority.

The power of presence means a person brings all four intelligences forward: mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical. Persons with such power are often identified as charismatic. They draw others to themselves and exert considerable influence on any group. For them to exert the power of presence, they must show up and be fully present and visible. There are, though, many ways of not showing up even when they are in the room. One person can let her mind drift. Another can appear to go along with the proceedings, but in fact withhold her assent and intent to implement outcomes. Anyone can withdraw her presence at any time in the deciding or the implementing stages of decisions.

A person with the power of communication speaks to the group congruently—from the wholeness of her attentive, personal presence—her personal truth or even the prophetic truth given her for the group. Assembly members need to say what they mean and mean what they say.

The power of position means, in this instance, the capacity to take a stand and to let others know the position. It seems to me that many religious women lack this last power in significant ways. Religious often so overvalue consensus in the assembly or chapter that they refrain from taking a stand that may seem opposed to the majority. If many are unable to stand in their own position before they work out differences, the assembly often fails to deal with the real conflicts among them or merely achieves a pseudoconsensus about nothing of consequence. In times such as ours, in which every institution in society and all societies themselves are undergoing major paradigm change, it is clearly a function

of formal leadership to bring conflict and differing perspectives into dialogue with one another in such a way that an entirely new and unexpected resolution might emerge. If individuals refuse to take initial positions while retaining their freedom to change them in the light of new information or changed understandings, the creative breakthrough cannot occur. Nor can these breakthroughs occur if leadership is fearful of negotiating conflict and diversity.

It seems to me that, if women’s communities are truly to engage in participative governance, each member must exercise these three universal powers to the greatest of her ability. Mary and Elizabeth each exercised all three of them within their interchange, and through them God’s liberating power broke through. It could be like this also among chapter members.

Another common definition of power is simply the ability to effect a change.⁸ Such power “is always present in interpersonal relationships. It is every way of exercising influence over another. One person is always subject to the power of another and no one is completely without power. Power refers to the interactions among us.” The Whiteheads say that power might best be perceived “as those interactions that both create and threaten human community.”⁹

Brian McDermott suggests that “any individual or subgroup can exercise leadership in a group, even without authorization. They do so when they help the group define its task, help it overcome resistance to the needed work, connect the task at hand to the purpose of the group, or simply take initiative in doing pieces of the group’s work.”¹⁰

Thus, all members of a religious community are implicated in the tasks of leadership either by their position of formal authority and the power so conferred or by positions of informal authority, that is, positions from which sisters use their personal power either to further the work of the group or to subvert it.

What are the processes of subversion? Typically there are three: rebellion, unconscious projection of personal authority onto the designated leader, and invisibility.¹¹ A person can adopt

There are three universal powers present in human groups: the power of presence, the power of communication, and the power of position.

one or all of these ways of blocking the communal project or the initiatives of the designated leader. In rebellion, one honors one's own needs or comfort at the expense of everyone else's. One withdraws from the larger project in favor of an exaggerated independence and need for personal space. The rebel resists accepting or honoring the limits and needs of others or of the group itself. Since it is a major function of authority to maintain the limits and boundaries of the group, to hold the structure firm so that the group can function when it is in disequilibrium, the rebel often pits herself against the designated leader.

In authority projections people feel weak and victimized by authority and so project impossible expectations onto the ones in authority. On the other hand, those who responsibly, and thus really, claim their own personal authority and power must also assume actual responsibility for the use of that power and its consequences.

Finally, in patterns of invisibility a person rides on someone else's coattails, thus concealing her exercise of power either from herself (by her not seeming to be exercising any power) or from others (by her attempting to influence deliberations from behind the scenes instead of openly). In this pattern the sister either avoids full responsibility for her exercise of power or enjoys exercising power vicariously rather than directly. By aligning with someone more powerful, a sister may be operating under the illusion that she is more powerful than she is. These invisibilities in the exercise of power may indicate fears of either accountability or accountability-and-exposure.

Exercising personal power on behalf of the group in open and interactive ways requires considerable courage. The group itself may have to change some of its own norms about power to enable its members to claim their personal power. It is often dangerous for women to exercise power directly and in their own interest. Many women have been socialized into patterns of invisibility, covert rebellion, and projection onto authority by their personal and communal histories as marginalized women. Many women religious see these patterns documented in the lives of the women who are the focus of their ministries. They may, however, not have noticed how they themselves have been punished in some context or other that was not receptive to women simply because, as human persons, they exercised one or more of these three powers of presence, communication, and position.

That is why Mary's Magnificat is revolutionary. It proclaims the liberating and even revolutionary consequences of full empowerment: "God, wonderful in power, has used that strength" *for her*. It points to dramatic social change as well as a new spiritual reality. It points to a community gathered around an entirely new principle of coherence.

Women religious gathered in assembly might want to reflect on what they may discover about their own fears and their own dreams within the election process. What do they individually and collectively really want? And, if they do know what they really want, are they ready to do both themselves and their newly elected leaders a favor? the favor of *not* projecting those fears and dreams on them, but rather of committing themselves to exercising their own authority toward the realization of those dreams in concert with those they have elected?

Can the chapter members offer their leaders tolerance and compassion when they fail to live up to the group's impossible expectations? Can they either let those disappointments reveal to the group the power that members are failing to exercise themselves or else renegotiate what the group wants or needs when it finds itself in a new place once again? When initiatives or changes resulting from an election begin to affect the members, can the members refrain from disempowering their leaders for the not very good reason that they themselves are afraid? Can they, instead, discover what they value which their fear or their anger might be revealing to them? Can they find ways within the community to confront those feelings and honor the values they are protecting? In other words, can the chapter members continue to authorize their leaders as the sisters learn how to move back and forth between the formal authority and tasks of those leaders and their own partnering with them? Can they continue to authorize them instead of finding overt or covert ways of withdrawing that authority?

We used to call this kind of response obedience. But we live

Women religious gathered in assembly might want to reflect on what they may discover about their own fears and their own dreams within the election process.

in chaotic times, times of dramatic change. At such times we are both skeptical of all authority and at the same time secretly full of yearning for some impossible form of security. Perhaps, instead of the word obedience, we might describe the ongoing role of the members as one of creative fidelity. It is fidelity to one's personal authenticity and experience of God, fidelity to one another in an interdependent community of adult disciples, fidelity to the shared mission and charism which is the primary reason for joining together in community.

I am, of course, presuming that the women a chapter elects know how to consult, know they need to keep orienting the group to its primary tasks, need to analyze and reflect enough so they can provide the kind of information and ask the kind of questions that help the group to remain empowered. I am presuming these leaders have the courage to embrace the ambiguity and diversity that exists among their members and bring those elements into fruitful dialogue. I am not suggesting that there will be no need for constructive criticism. No leader is perfect, nor are her initiatives or policies. But there are adult-adult ways of members and leadership being in partnership with one another, and I encourage communities to foster, after the chapter, personal and communal growth toward truly reciprocal relationship.

Just as Mary and Elizabeth's journeys, together and separately, took them into unknown and unanticipated places, so too, will the journey in community. The developmental task of learning to negotiate power and continue to authorize leadership so that it can effectively serve the community's needs is a more arduous task than most of us imagine. Each bears wounds of authority, wounds which continue for women within the present ecclesial experience. This is no romantic or necessarily ecstatic journey despite the ecstatic moments we enjoy in prayer, in discernment, in ministry, in profound and meaningful connections with one another in a community bonded for mission. Often this journey toward genuinely participative governance is like Jessica Powers's image of Mary traveling toward Elizabeth—the process of becoming present, communicating, and taking a position. She says, I see

a girl riding upon a jolting donkey
and riding further and further into the truth.¹²

I think chapters challenge their members, for the sake of their own mission, to ride further and further into the truth together

despite the jolting donkey on the way. If communities gathered in assembly engage in this particular journey in partnership with the God who is the source of their call, of their life together, and of their new learnings about the nonabusive exercise of authority, they can trust as Mary did that "God, wonderful in power, will continue to use that strength" for them.

Notes

¹ *Psalms for Morning and Evening Prayer* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1995).

² Tina Pippin, "The Politics of Meeting: Women and Power in the New Testament," in *That They Might Live: Power, Empowerment, and Leadership in the Church*, ed. Michael Downey (New York: Crossroad, 1991), p. 22.

³ Janet Ruffing, "Leadership a New Way: Women, Power, and Authority," *Review for Religious* 53, no. 3 (May-June 1994): 326-337.

⁴ Beatrice M. Eichten, "Religious Life Governance: Personal and Organizational Experiences of Power," *Review for Religious* 54, no. 6 (November-December 1995): 868-881.

⁵ Fran Peavey, "Everyone Can Do Something," in *Women of Power* 24 (Summer 1995): 8-14.

⁶ Evelyn and James Whitehead, *Emerging Laity: Returning Leadership to the Community of Faith* (New York: Doubleday Image, 1988), p. 10.

⁷ Angeles Arrien, *The Four-Fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer and Visionary* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), pp. 22-25.

⁸ Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (Boston: Beacon, 1986).

⁹ Whitehead, *Emerging Laity*, p. 36.

¹⁰ Brian McDermott, "The Relationship among Authority, Leadership, and Spirituality in Ministry," in *A Handbook of Spirituality for Ministers*, ed. Robert Wicks (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1995), p. 386.

¹¹ Arrien, *Four-Fold Way*, pp. 33-36.

¹² *Selected Poetry of Jessica Powers*, ed. Regina Siegfried and Robert Morneau (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1989), p. 67.

John 20:23

"Whose sins you shall forgive . . ."

Lord, God, let it never be
that another's sin remain
because there is in me
an unforgiving strain.

Janet Benish OCV