**Acknowledgments**

The conception and completion of this dissertation would have been beyond my wildest imagination without so many encounters, travels, challenges, adversities, friendships, experiences, and conversations in many places and in many languages. Indeed, while writing these pages, again and again I was tempted to muse on – rather presumptuously perhaps – the opening sentences of Thomas Mann’s *Joseph and His Brothers*: “Very deep is the well of the past. Should we not call it bottomless?” Historical memories, cultural memories, and personal memories are all woven together to shape the fabric of this dissertation. The insights and the pitfalls of this project did not originate *ex nihilo*. While the depth of the pitfalls remains my sole responsibility, deeper still is my gratitude to those who have accompanied me during my life of incurable addiction to the delight of thinking.

As I look into the deep well of the past, my gratitude goes to the Very Reverend Dean of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sweden Ieva Graufelde, my mentor, colleague, and dear friend from Stockholm. She opened up the liturgical universe for me to realize that I had lived, breathed and had my being there long before I fully appreciated and understood it.

On this side of the Atlantic, it has been my joy, honor, and privilege to have learned so much from the two greatest English-speaking Protestant liturgical theologians of our time. My abiding respect and gratitude goes to Prof. Gordon W. Lathrop at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia for not only inciting me to explore the depths and breadths of liturgical theology but also demonstrating what it means to teach and theologize with pedagogical and personal integrity. But I could not have come this far without the wisdom, encouragement, and mentorship of Prof. Don E. Saliers, my academic advisor at Emory University. Thank you for your trust, graciousness, and your truly bottomless art of bringing out the best in my thinking, questioning, imagining, and writing. Your invigorating influence in this project is so pervasive that the scarce references to your work can only obscure the full stretch of your thought being the inspiration for this project and my theological temperament.

My profound gratitude goes to Prof. Mark D. Jordan for his intellectual generosity and perseverance from the very beginning of this project, in person and over the distance, in praise and in critique, with acuity of theological discernment in the class of its own. I am grateful to Prof. Deepika Bahri for her erudite and patient encouragement of my interdisciplinary pursuits over the years as I navigated through the intricacies and lures of postcolonialism and to Prof. Dianne Diakité for encouraging me to continue to focus on theological method exactly when I was entertaining the deepest doubts about its relevance in the present theological environment. I am also grateful to Prof. Jill Robbins for rousing my interest in the thought of Emmanuel Levinas as never before and to Prof. Wendy Farley for her wisdom and guidance, academically, collegially, and pedagogically, in the early stages of my doctoral studies as well as for her enduring support as the Chair of Theological Studies in the Graduate Division of Religion throughout these five years.

Last but not least, I thank my husband Philip for his love in too many ways to mention here, for his bottomless and gentle patience, and for his unshakable confidence in me that this project will be accomplished. *Mille grazie!*