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# Reimagining Pilgrimage

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Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion  
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B.A., Whitworth College, 2006  
M.Div., University of Notre Dame, 2010

Advisor: Ted A. Smith, Ph.D., Emory University, 2004

An abstract of  
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## **Abstract**

### **Reimagining Pilgrimage**

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In this dissertation, I reimagine Christian pilgrimage as part of the liturgical tradition of the church and in so doing, show how pilgrimage can expand our theological thinking about the church and its practices. I argue that the church's current theological understanding of pilgrimage has lost content that could be supplied by attention to lived practice. This loss of content impoverishes the church's ability to think theologically not only about pilgrimage, but also about those other theological ideas for which pilgrimage serves as a metaphor.

By constituting pilgrimage as a liturgical practice, I press against definitions that confine liturgical practice to that which has been systematized, written down, and promulgated by the hierarchical authority of the church. I propose a more inclusive space for liturgical authority and liturgical practice and argue that when we expand the ways in which we think *about* liturgy, we also expand the possibilities for thinking *from* liturgy about pressing theological and pastoral concerns. I begin by examining how our theological thinking about pilgrimage became separated from lived practice and then work to retrieve this practical content. Finally, I argue that Christian pilgrimage is a sacramental, liturgical practice that renders the pilgrim church and the pilgrim God present in the world.

My theological method brings ethnographic accounts of Christian pilgrimage into conversation with a Rahnerian theology of symbol and sacrament. My attention to pilgrimage is first empirical and then theological. I make use of a rich literature of pilgrim ethnography from the social sciences to access the phenomenon of Christian pilgrimage. My use of these texts requires a disciplinary boundary crossing in which the theologian first discovers the pilgrim in these ethnographic texts and then invites that pilgrim back into the realm of theology. Separately, neither theological nor anthropological discourses offer a full account of the practice of pilgrimage. Pilgrimage exceeds the boundaries set by both. But careful study situated within these two disciplines, both transected and connected by the pilgrim, opens a space for new theological understanding.

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## Introduction

I sat on the steps in the sun, enjoying the warm rays on an otherwise cool day and listening to the stories of the pilgrim sitting next to me. She had recently returned from a six-week pilgrimage on the Camino in Spain, having walked 764 kilometers from the French town Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port to the cathedral in Santiago. As she told me about her pilgrimage, she described bodily sensations of strength and fatigue, emotional connections with pilgrims, hosts, and even herself, and the sense of a deep and abiding presence of the divine. She recalled moments of anxiety and of peace, incidents of getting lost and of finding herself again, experiences of pain and of healing. Her stories did not follow a predictable path. They jumped forward and backward in time and from topic to topic. The fragmentary nature of these stories was part of the delight of the storytelling. Her pilgrim story was more like a book of poems than a novel; each poem emerged in its own right and the collection was held together more by proximity than by any underlying pattern or common refrain. And yet these stories had little of the formality that one finds in a curated book of poems. My encounter with this pilgrim was little more than a casual conversation inspired by my revelation that I was working on a project about pilgrimage. Over the course of this project, I began to look forward to these unexpected moments when another pilgrim appeared and offered their own stories and experiences. After all, this project is about them. And yet conversations like these always felt risky. These stories always laid a claim on me: did my account of Christian pilgrimage make space for *this* pilgrim?

Inevitably, the woman turned from her stories to question me. My intentionally vague self-reveal that had elicited her stories—"I study pilgrimage"—had run its course, and she wanted to know more about my project. I told her that I was writing a theology of

pilgrimage. Without missing a beat, she replied “Oh, I’m Catholic but I’m not practicing.” I had a sense of what she meant by this comment—that I would probably not see her at mass that weekend. And yet I was struck by the irony of the statement that followed so immediately in the wake of the lively stories of her pilgrimage to Santiago. Is it possible that our efforts to expand access to the Eucharistic liturgy have also constricted our liturgical imagination? Do our ideas of what “counts” as Catholic practice or a practicing Catholic make space for *this* Catholic?

The primary purpose of this dissertation is to reimagine Christian pilgrimage as part of the liturgical tradition of the church and in so doing, show how pilgrimage can expand our theological thinking about the church and its practices. Pilgrims appear in some of the earliest Christian writings and although pilgrimage’s popularity has waxed and waned through the centuries, it has never completely died out. Today’s pilgrims walk the road to Santiago and wander the streets of Jerusalem’s old city. They bathe in the waters beneath the towering grotto of Lourdes and gather dirt at the sanctuary of Chimayo. In the metropolis of Mexico City and the small village of San Giovanni Rotondo, huge basilicas have been built to welcome the thousands of pilgrims who visit each year. Countless others trace paths we have never heard of and their journey is no less a pilgrimage than these others. And yet, despite the proliferation of pilgrimages today, our theological discourse has remained remarkably silent about this phenomenon.

This is not to suggest that pilgrims do not feature prominently in our theological imagination. Pilgrimage has shaped a variety of theological metaphors throughout our tradition. Images of journeying and wandering, strangers and guests, aliens and exiles appear often in our theological anthropologies and ecclesiologies. While pilgrim practices

certainly shaped the theological imaginations of early and medieval theologians, in the modern era the pilgrim of our theologies has become more a literary construct than a living figure. The pilgrim has endured in our theological imagination even as it has become detached from the ongoing, lived practice of Christian pilgrimage. This separation of theology from practice has not only impoverished the church's capacity to think about the practice of pilgrimage today, it has also impoverished our capacity to think theologically. The constructive goal of this project is to retrieve this lived content of pilgrimage practice and to show how it can illumine not only our understanding of the practice itself, but also our theological ideas about the church for which it has so long operated as metaphor.

While this dissertation will keep its focus on the phenomenon of pilgrimage, it also means to challenge the existing separation of popular practice from liturgical practice and to argue for a more inclusive understanding of liturgy. By constituting pilgrimage as a liturgical practice, I press against definitions, both explicit and implied, that confine liturgical practice to that which has been systematized, written down, and promulgated by the hierarchical authority of the church. My aim is not to displace these practices that we already recognize as liturgical, but rather to challenge the assumption that these are fully inclusive of the liturgical lives of contemporary Catholics. At stake in this claim are concerns about power, privilege, and authority as they emerge in both liturgical practice and liturgical theology. The distinction between liturgical practice and popular practice too often serves a clerical need to assert power and control over the public expression and presence of the people of God. Certainly, there are good and practical reasons to affirm the need for some institutional structures around the church's liturgical practice. Yet when these structures become a barrier to liturgical participation, as Susan Ross has pointed out,

liturgical life tends to grow and flourish outside of them.<sup>1</sup> A definition of liturgy that relies on these structures alone not only conceals emerging liturgical life from our theological attention, it also marginalizes or excludes these practitioners from the church's liturgical life and liturgical theologies. This exclusion is not only imagined but truly revealed in the pilgrim's words above: "I'm Catholic, but I'm not practicing." This dissertation proposes a more inclusive space for liturgical authority and liturgical practice. When we expand the ways in which we think *about* liturgy, we also expand the possibilities for thinking *from* liturgy about pressing theological and pastoral concerns in our church.

The exploration of Christian pilgrimage has occupied my attention for over ten years, since I first became a pilgrim. An effort to make sense of my own pilgrim experiences revealed the paucity of theological resources that take seriously the ongoing, lived practice of Christian pilgrimage on its own terms. In place of these theological voices, I found a great cloud of witnesses. Pilgrims past and present filled the vacuum left by theologians, and it is their stories and practices that have shaped the theological explorations of this dissertation. What has struck me most as I reflect on this journey is how much my own thinking has changed and evolved through this process. In many ways, this dissertation stands in critique of the project I initially set out to construct: a model of Christian pilgrimage akin to our other liturgical forms which could both inform the ongoing practice of Christian pilgrimage and inspire the larger projects of liturgical theology and ecclesiology. What I have discovered is that the practice of pilgrimage itself resists this kind

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<sup>1</sup> Susan A. Ross, *Extravagant Affections: A Feminist Sacramental Theology*, (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2001), 80.

of definition but rather summons our attention. Not unlike another stranger who once approached two men on a beach, these pilgrims extend an invitation: “come and see.”

In response to this invitation, this dissertation proposes a methodological approach that takes as its point of departure the investigation of pilgrimage as it is lived, rather than imagined. My attention to pilgrimage in this project is first empirical and then theological. Instead of conducting my own ethnographic research, which would limit my data to a single site or “field” (or extend this project indefinitely!), I make use of a rich literature of pilgrim ethnography that has developed in the social sciences to access the phenomenon of Christian pilgrimage across multiple communities. This project also deploys these anthropological texts in a fresh disciplinary context. That is, I work to read these ethnographic texts in the space of theology. The use of these texts requires a disciplinary boundary crossing in which the theologian must proceed into unknown territory in order to discover and meet the pilgrim whom she seeks and then invite that pilgrim back into the realm of theology. Separately, neither theological nor anthropological discourses can offer a full account of the practice of pilgrimage. Indeed, pilgrimage exceeds the boundaries set by both. But the careful study of the relationship between these two disciplines, both transected and connected by the pilgrim, opens a space for glimpses of revelation and understanding.

To propose that lived practice ought to be afforded a prominent place in theological discourse is no longer novel, and liturgical theologians have long illuminated the significance of Christian liturgical practice in the church’s theological thinking. And yet, theologians, liturgical theologians included, are still in the early stages of developing methodologies through which we can access and interpret these practices. More than a

decade ago, Siobhán Garrigan raised concerns about the inadequacy of current theological methods in accessing and interpreting Christian experience. She wrote:

Theologies of experience, while opening up the possibilities of divine revelation and undercutting the domination of the esoteric idea that doctrine is divined from texts (and therefore accessible only to experts), have nevertheless failed to pay sufficient attention to the ‘checks and balances’ that claiming experience as authorial demands if it is not to do harm; we have yet to develop anything like the same rigour in our interpretation of experience that we have come to rely upon in our interpretation of texts.<sup>2</sup>

Garrigan offers a combination of empirical observation and critical theory as one solution to this concern. Although the use of empirical data is becoming more familiar in liturgical studies, Garrigan’s critique still rings true: we have yet to develop the same kind of rigor or richness of methodologies in our study of Christian practice as that we already rely on for textual interpretation. It is my hope that this dissertation offers another contribution towards this goal.

### **A Way of Proceeding**

This study begins by clearing a space in the study of the liturgy for pilgrimage practice. Chapter 1 explores the historical relationship between popular practices and the church’s liturgies in an effort to illumine the theological and ecclesiological concerns that gave rise to the discursive separation between liturgy and popular practice. I argue that the agenda of liturgical renewal, which cultivated the idea of the Eucharistic celebration as the church’s source and summit, ultimately confined the church’s liturgical practice to the official rites of the institutional church and in some cases to the Eucharistic liturgy exclusively. While many liturgical theologians rightly reflect on what has been gained from

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<sup>2</sup> Siobhán Garrigan, *Beyond Ritual: Sacramental Theology after Habermas* (Aldershot: Routledge, 2004), ix.

a renewed zeal for and expanded participation in the Eucharist that emerged from this liturgical renewal codified in the Second Vatican Council, I ask about what (and who) may have been lost in this process. Within the theological academy, the privileging of the Eucharistic liturgy has had the effect of marginalizing popular practices of piety, practices that are often authored and presided over by those who are already relegated to the margins. This chapter presses for an expanded definition of liturgical practice. I maintain that sacramental and liturgical life can and does flourish outside of official structures and that this life on the liturgical margins can enrich both our official, sacramental liturgies and our theological understanding of church and sacrament.

A similar problem emerges when we turn to the ways pilgrimage practice has become separated from our ideas about pilgrimage in theological discourse. Chapter 2 attends to the ways in which pilgrimage has been deployed as a metaphor in the church's theological tradition. I identify and explore five different ways the pilgrimage metaphor has emerged in the Christian tradition. I argue that while the practice of pilgrimage has often shaped the church's theological reflection in the past, today our theological ideas about Christian pilgrimage have become unmoored from the ongoing, lived practices of Christian pilgrims. This separation of thought from practice has both overdetermined our ideas about the practice of pilgrimage today and impoverished our ecclesiological imagination.

The first two chapters raise two related concerns. The first is a liturgical discourse that is dominated by the practice of the Eucharist, frequently to the exclusion or overdetermination of other practices. The second finds within our theological discourse a similar marginalization of pilgrim practice that manifests as a loss of the lived content of our pilgrimage metaphors. Chapter 3 works to retrieve this content supplied by attention

to lived pilgrimage practice. Critical of attempts to construct a single model of Christian pilgrimage, I turn to three pilgrim ethnographies as points of access into the lived practice and experience of Christian pilgrims: Elaine Peña's description of Mexican all-female pilgrimages to Tepeyac, Hillary Kaell's account of American pilgrims in the Holy Land, and Nancy Frey's classic study of pilgrims on the Spanish Camino. The diversity of pilgrim practices and experiences surfaced by these accounts resists efforts to construct a single model or definition of Christian pilgrimage. Aided by the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Michel de Certeau, and Catherine Bell, I present a series of three pilgrimage itineraries to illumine the phenomenon of contemporary Christian pilgrimage.

Informed by these pilgrim itineraries, Chapter 4 presses beyond description towards a theological interpretation of Christian pilgrimage. Informed by a Rahnerian theology of symbol, I suggest that pilgrimage is both a sacramental and an ecclesial practice in which God's salvific grace is made present and tangible in historically specific ways in the practice of Christian pilgrims. Turning to the pilgrim itineraries presented in the previous chapter, this chapter explores the ways that pilgrims both constitute and are constituted by the practice of pilgrimage in ways that not only realize the Christian as a pilgrim in the world, but also constitute a living expression of the church in the world. Finally, I show how pilgrimage realizes Christ's salvific grace in the world and suggest that the pilgrim is both symbol and sacrament of the pilgrim God.

Expanding the category of liturgical practice to include practices like pilgrimage enriches our resources for responding to new theological questions and challenges in the church. Chapter 5 suggests that the ongoing crisis in the church around clergy and sexual abuse reveals failure not only in moral and pastoral practice, but also in our theological

imagination, which has failed to offer an adequate theology of a sinful church. Theologians have frequently turned to the metaphor of pilgrimage to think about the problem of sin in the church. In this final chapter, I suggest that attention to pilgrimage as liturgical practice not only illuminates the presence of sinful members within the holy church, it also confronts us with the reality that the church itself can and does sin. A richer theology that can hold together ecclesial expressions of both sanctity and sin can also resist practical responses that tend towards the denial of this sin and instead point to the possibility of hope for the church and the world.

The movement of this dissertation first examines the way that our theological thinking about pilgrimage became separated from the lived practice and then moves towards a retrieval of this practical content in a way that does not simply perpetuate those liturgical systems and methods that excluded it from our thinking in the first place. The final chapters reimagine Christian pilgrimage as a theologically generative practice through which the pilgrim church and the pilgrim God are rendered present in the world. As will quickly become apparent, this dissertation is written about Catholic pilgrimage and it is written to Catholics so much as the concerns raised here emerged largely from Catholic ecclesial thinking and practice. Yet the practice of pilgrimage is something that Catholic pilgrims in the west are increasingly holding in common with their mainline and evangelical brothers and sisters. In the limited theological literature about Christian pilgrimage, it has been primarily non-Catholic theologians who have wrestled with the phenomena of contemporary Christian pilgrimage, which appeared as a novelty within

their communities in the last 20-30 years.<sup>3</sup> The practice of Christian pilgrimage, however, has offered remarkable flexibility that has resulted in the possibility and manifestation of shared practice across denominational boundaries. While most of the pilgrimages considered in this study intentionally focus on Catholic practitioners, in the case of the Camino pilgrimage it became increasingly difficult to distinguish (and I do not attempt to do so) Catholic pilgrims from others Christians who walked the Way to Santiago. Although this project does not specifically attend to the ecumenical dimensions of Christian pilgrimage, it is my hope that readers across the Christian tradition will find value of their own in these pages and even recognize themselves in some of the descriptions and discussions of contemporary pilgrimage just as surely as pilgrims from these various traditions have helped to inform them.

My efforts in the following pages are both critical and constructive. The Catholic liturgical tradition has drawn its boundaries far too tightly around its conception of liturgical practice in ways that minimize, marginalize, and exclude the liturgical practices and experiences of countless members of the people of God. This has diminished our capacity to interpret the living phenomenon of Christian pilgrimage that continues to flourish in the church even today. The discovery of pilgrimage as a constitutive part of the

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<sup>3</sup> Craig Bartholomew and Fred Hughes introduced the question of pilgrimage in 2004 by soliciting responses from biblical scholars, historians, and theologians in their edited volume, *Explorations in a Christian Theology of Pilgrimage* and Bartholomew followed this volume by devoting a substantive portion of a later monograph on a theology of place to the practice of pilgrimage. More recently, Brett Webb-Mitchell published *Practicing Pilgrimage* in which he presents a model and theology of pilgrimage for the modern-day Christian. See Craig G. Bartholomew and Fred Hughes, *Explorations in a Christian Theology of Pilgrimage* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Craig G. Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell: A Christian View of Place for Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011); Brett Webb-Mitchell, *Practicing Pilgrimage: On Being and Becoming God's Pilgrim People* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2016).

liturgical life of the church expands both our liturgical and theological imaginations. It is my hope that this dissertation can begin to uncover the richness of this liturgical tradition.

## Chapter 1

### Beyond the Rites: Liturgy and Popular Piety

In the fourth century, a woman made her way across the European continent from her home near the Atlantic Ocean to the land she had read about for years in the Scriptures. Egeria was not the first pilgrim to come to this holy land. But she was one of only a handful of fourth-century pilgrims to leave us with vivid descriptions of the places she visited, the people she met, and the way she worshiped in this holy land. Although some pages of her manuscript have been lost over the years, her accounts of visiting Egypt, Edessa, and Mesopotamia, and her detailed descriptions of the Jerusalem liturgies remain.

Egeria's liturgical descriptions are a treasure trove for liturgists seeking to understand the worship of the early church. Accounts of weekly liturgies, daily prayers, the Jerusalem catechumenate, and the stational liturgies of Holy Week and Easter provide a rare eye-witness account recorded with the wonder of someone writing home about new and exotic forms of worship. Scholars have eagerly placed Egeria's descriptions side by side with Cyril's catechetical lectures and compared them to homilies and church orders from other fourth-century churches as a way to reconstruct the early church's liturgical practices.<sup>1</sup> In this comparative scholarship, Egeria's witness provides the rare account of a

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<sup>1</sup> For a substantive summary of this scholarship, see especially Maxwell E. Johnson, "Reconciling Cyril and Egeria on the Catechetical Process in Fourth-Century Jerusalem," in *Essays in Early Eastern Initiation*, ed. Paul Bradshaw, (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1988), 18–30. More recent efforts include explorations by John Baldovin and Donald LaSalle on the development on liturgical practice and explorations by Nicholas Denysenko and Vitaly Permiakov on the origins and development of liturgical feasts. John Baldovin, "A Lenten Sunday Lectionary in Forth Century Jerusalem," in *Time and Community: In Honor of Thomas J. Talley*, ed. J. Neil Alexander, (Washington, D.C.: Pastoral Press, 1990); John Baldovin, *Liturgy in Ancient Jerusalem* (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1989); Nicholas Denysenko, "The Hypatante Feast in Fourth to Eighth Century Jerusalem," *Studia Liturgica* 37, no. 1

lay person in a sea of texts produced by the ideas and practices of religious leaders.

Perhaps it is inevitable then that we have tended to read Egeria's text through the lens of these ecclesiastical elites. Yet in so doing, liturgical scholars have largely limited their consideration of the liturgical value of Egeria's texts to the later chapters, which document the large, urban liturgies of Jerusalem. Our modern sensibilities, so trained to distinguish between popular practices like pilgrimage and liturgical practices like the Eucharist or the Daily Office, can easily dismiss the rest of Egeria's narrative as nothing more than a travelogue. In the hands of modern liturgical scholars, Egeria's descriptions of pilgrim worship are typically reduced to marginalia, material very much secondary to her depiction of the Jerusalem liturgies.

Why is it that we liturgists have so much to say about her portrayal of worship in Jerusalem but so little to say about the rest of her text? Such treatment of Egeria is not unique; it reflects a larger trend in modern liturgical theology that prioritizes official rites by treating popular practices as devotional extracurriculars, leaving them to other theological disciplines like history or spirituality, or writing them out of the conversation altogether.

When theologians or religious scholars have considered Christian pilgrimage, they have generally regarded it as a *popular religious practice*. From the Latin *populous* (people or nations), theological discussion of popular practices of worship most often finds a home in discussions of Christian spirituality or cultural studies, not in liturgical studies. For

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(January 1, 2007): 73–97; Donald G. LaSalle, "Devotion Searching for a Place in the Liturgy: The Development of the Good Friday Veneration of the Cross in the West," *Worship* 88, no. 2 (March 1, 2014): 98–118; Vitaly Permiakov, "The Historical Origins of the Feast of Antipascha," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (January 1, 2003): 155–82.

example, preferring the label *foundational faith expressions*, Virgilio Elizondo and Timothy Matovina describe such practices as “religious traditions which the majority of people celebrate voluntarily, transmit from generation to generation, and persist in celebrating with the clergy, without them, or even in spite of them. The foundational faith expressions of a people are a ritual, symbolic response to their history and contemporary situation.”<sup>2</sup> Implicit in this definition are the very distinctions that today form the boundaries between liturgical practice and popular practice. These flexible, informal, and particular practices are easily contrasted with the fixed, clerical, and universal nature of the church’s sacramental liturgies which are conservatively regulated by a textual tradition and an ecclesial authority, presided over by ordained or appointed ministers, and/or practiced consistently across the universal church. Other functional uses of this dichotomy have focused on distinctions between communal and individual worship, between public liturgies and private devotions, and between ecclesial and domestic domains—with obvious overlap in these categorizations.

That today this distinction between liturgy and popular piety is rarely debated is further evidence of how deeply this dichotomy has informed the field of liturgical theology. While the study of liturgical practice has pressed “beyond the text” (in Lawrence Hoffman’s classic phrase) to consider the ritual, performative, and communicative characteristics of liturgical action, the field of liturgical theology is still bounded by this narrow, normative definition of liturgical practice. In the post-conciliar period, liturgical theology has attended almost exclusively to reflection on the official, sacramental celebrations of the church and

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<sup>2</sup> Virgilio P. Elizondo and Timothy M. Matovina, *Mestizo Worship: A Pastoral Approach to Liturgical Ministry* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 3.

especially to the Eucharist.<sup>3</sup> As a result, liturgical theologians have had little to say about practices like pilgrimage. The absence of any substantive discussion of pilgrimage practice in liturgical theology, as well as the potential contributions of such inclusion, must be understood within this larger context of the evolving relationship between liturgy and popular piety that first created meaningful distinctions between liturgy and popular practice and then used these distinctions to prioritize these official rites at the expense of the popular.

In constructing a historical narrative, one always risks telling a story either of laudatory progress or lamentable decline. If this chapter bends towards lament, it is merely as a means of pressing against narratives that uncritically laud the accomplishments of liturgical reform. Surely there is much to celebrate in the fruits of conciliar and post-

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<sup>3</sup> The centrality of the Eucharistic celebration has animated liturgical theology for decades. Works such as Aiden Kavanagh's *On Liturgical Theology*, David Fagerberg's *Prima Theologia*, Marie-Louis Chauvet's *Symbol and Sacrament*, and Gordon Lathrop's *Holy Things* have each presumed a tight definition of liturgy as the communal and official Eucharistic celebration. Though sacramental theologians have pressed the borders of liturgical celebration outward to include the seven sacramental liturgies of the church, these scholars still have a basic normative presumption of the liturgy as that communal prayer which is ordered by authorized ecclesiastical texts and presided over by ordained ministers. Recent moves that follow Lawrence Hoffman's exhortation to move "beyond the text" have opened the door for a practical theological reflection on the liturgy that takes seriously the lived performance of these liturgical rites in particular communities. Of particular note are Nathan Mitchell's *Meeting Mystery*, Kimberly Belcher's *Efficacious Engagement*, and Siobhán Garrigan's *Beyond Ritual*. However, while our study of these liturgical rites has pressed beyond a simple theological consideration of the liturgical texts, these ritual texts still draw the borders of the liturgical field of studies, clearly delineating which worship practices are "in" and which practices—designated by descriptors like popular piety or devotions—are "outside" the realm of liturgical practice. See Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1990). David W. Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima: What Is Liturgical Theology?* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2012). Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Madeleine M. Beaumont and Patrick Madigan SJ (Collegeville: Pueblo Books, 1994). Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things: A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993). Nathan D. Mitchell, *Meeting Mystery: Liturgy, Worship, Sacraments* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2006). Kimberly Hope Belcher, *Efficacious Engagement: Sacramental Participation in the Trinitarian Mystery* (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2011). Siobhán Garrigan, *Beyond Ritual: Sacramental Theology after Habermas* (Aldershot, UK: Routledge, 2004).

conciliar reforms of the liturgy. Those arguments, both practical and theological, have been made well elsewhere and need not be rehearsed or renewed here. Yet what was gained from this renewed zeal for the Eucharistic must now be viewed in light of what has been relativized, marginalized, or forgotten. The purpose of this chapter is not to lay out more clearly a historical argument that resists a self-evident distinction between liturgy and popular practices. Indeed, this chapter stands on the shoulders of scholars who have already made this case and to whom I point appreciatively throughout this work. My efforts here are rather to surface the ecclesiological and theological concerns that gave rise to this rhetorical division and the logic that sustains it. In this chapter, I show how implicit acceptance of this division has impoverished our liturgical thinking and excluded from our theological discussion voices, practices, and bodies that are already frequently relegated to the margins of our societies.

### **Ritual Sharing**

The early church was not particularly concerned about the differentiations that have come to define our modern discourse. Early Christians knew a plurality of worship forms, but had little need to distinguish between what was properly Christian liturgy and other forms of ritualized prayer. We see evidence for this claim not only in the diversity of baptismal and Eucharistic practices that developed across the Mediterranean, but also in the breadth of liturgical worship in the early church that was not limited to celebrations of baptism and Eucharist.

Scholars today agree that early Christian worship was marked by a diversity of forms and practices shaped by differences in language, theological and spiritual

sensibilities, and social contexts.<sup>4</sup> The invention of new rituals, symbols, and narratives supplemented the existing *bricolage* that incorporated ritual elements already available in the surrounding Mediterranean cultures. Odo Casel's classic phrase *Mysteriengegenwart* (*Mystery Presence*) theorized the influence of Greco-Roman mystery cults on the development of Christian sacramental liturgies.<sup>5</sup> More recently, scholars have continued to find evidence of ritual sharing and transmigration between early Christian liturgical rites of baptism and Eucharist and both Greco-Roman and Semitic religious rites.<sup>6</sup> Similar to the early Christians themselves, who did not completely jettison their former identities and practices when taking up Christianity, liturgical rites performed a Christianity that was already incarnated in the bodies and cultures of early Christians.

The tendency of Christians to incorporate other familiar ritual practices into their worship suggests a lack of practical distinction between the elements of Christian worship

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<sup>4</sup> Scholars have taken seriously the influence of the wider Greco-Roman and Jewish environments on the earliest patterns of Christian worship, although they disagree as to the length of time this influence extended and its impact. In *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, Paul Bradshaw argues against a uni-directional development of religious practice and suggests that Christian worship may have influenced non-Christian religious practice at the same time it was being shaped by it. Bradshaw also criticizes scholars who read into these early texts later structures and forms. This becomes especially problematic when it leads to grand narratives of liturgical form that presume a single, underlying shape of Christian worship from the beginning of the tradition. Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 47–53. See also chapters two and three in Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Casel's theory was highly controversial at the time. Many theologians saw it as a threat to the unique integrity of Catholic liturgy and read in Pope Pius XII's liturgical encyclical *Mediator Dei* a subtle critique of Casel's theory that overemphasized this objective nature of the liturgical rites. See Odo Casel, *The Mystery of Christian Worship: And Other Writings*. (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1962).

<sup>6</sup> See Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). Lamin O. Sanneh, *Whose Religion Is Christianity?: The Gospel beyond the West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*.

and elements from other religious practices. Many of the rituals and symbols used in Christian worship were in fact ritually multivalent, still recognizable to practitioners as carrying meaning and function in multiple ritual contexts. This ritual sharing also helps to account for the variations in baptismal and Eucharistic rites across the Mediterranean world. The rites reflected living interpretations of the common narratives, ideas, and symbols of Christianity. The post-baptismal offering of milk and honey to the newly baptized in some western traditions is a good example of how the Christian liturgy incorporated local symbols and rituals. The *Apostolic Tradition* interprets this symbol as a representation of the biblical image of God's promise of the land in which the newly baptized now shares. Tertullian, however, interprets this rite as the reception of a new Christian (neophyte) into the family of the church following a similar Roman domestic rite of reception for a new infant.<sup>7</sup> Here, a distinction between what is properly "liturgical" and what is "popular religion" is of little relevance to practitioners. However, contemporary historical discussions of the confluence between liturgy and popular religion that focus on the influence of Jewish, Greco-Roman, and Semitic influences in the Christian liturgy risk reading into historical practices a relevant distinction between "liturgy" and "popular religion." Reading this dichotomy into the ritual sharing that characterizes early Christian worship reinforces the presumption that "popular" necessarily describes something that is brought from outside of or beyond Christianity, while "liturgy" refers to those core and

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<sup>7</sup> Anscar J. Chupungco, *Worship: Progress and Tradition* (Beltsville: Pastoral Press, 1995), 12. Paul F. Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson, and L. Edward Phillips, *Apostolic Tradition Hermeneia* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 120. Tertullian, "De Corona," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. S. Thelwall, vol. 3 (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), 94.

universal elements of Christian worship, namely baptism and Eucharist. Already, our preconceptions of what constitutes *liturgical* practice—namely the sacramental liturgies—have determined our historiography. The imposition of this dichotomy of liturgical practices (which are Christian) and popular practices (which are non-Christian) ignores a second question: Did early Christian worship consist of more than just the sacramental liturgies and those prayers found in our written sources?

Ramsay MacMullen has provocatively challenged the historical narrative that describes an essentially urban and elite Christianity centered around Eucharistic liturgies celebrated in house churches and basilicas by positing the co-existence of a popular Christianity or a “second church,” with worshippers gathering outside of the city walls in cemeteries and catacombs for liturgies that centered around the early Christian martyrs.<sup>8</sup> Arguing that historians of early Christian worship have relied primarily on written sources produced by a small group of socially elite Christians, MacMullen suggests that our current understanding of early Christian worship is at best incomplete. What references we do find to more popular forms of worship are filtered through the eyes and pens of these elite who likely share a very different idea of what respectable Christian worship should look like. Although MacMullen’s theory of a “second” church—that is, a popular church of the masses that pulled against the normative Christianity preached and practiced by the urban bishops—is at times overstated, his insights and critiques remain prescient for our current discussion.

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<sup>8</sup> Ramsay MacMullen, *The Second Church: Popular Christianity, A.D. 200-400* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009).

First, MacMullen's work at the very least calls scholars of early liturgy to a certain hermeneutics of suspicion as to what we can say definitively about the breadth of early Christian liturgy. MacMullen has found in both the textual tradition and the archaeological record evidence of other forms of Christian ritual worship that are distinct from the baptismal and Eucharistic celebrations of the house churches and basilicas. The word *record* here is somewhat misleading as MacMullen has found not so much a *record* of these popular practices, discourses, and voices, but traces that suggest they once existed. One need not join MacMullen's work of historical imagination that theorizes a "second church" to see the importance of this insight for the question of the relationship between liturgy and popular piety. MacMullen's insight offers a new way of thinking about diversity in liturgical practice not in terms of variations in the Eucharistic or baptismal rites, but rather in terms of a plurality of worship forms that exceed these core sacramental celebrations. That is, early Christians likely participated in and practiced more than one form of public, ritualized Christian worship without concern for differentiating between *liturgy* and *popular practice*.

Within these diverse forms of Christian worship, the historical record resists a logic that distinguishes between practices that are either liturgical or popular. A closer look at early liturgical sources reveals that this plurality of forms not only co-existed, but that they were also mutually formative and informative. Evidence of ritual sharing among varieties of early Christian worship suggests that they were not only aware of one another, but that they are of the same kind. Two examples are instructive here: the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp and the writings of Egeria.

The third-century account of Polycarp's martyrdom is the oldest account of martyrdom outside of the pages of the New Testament to have come down through the tradition. It is also our earliest testimony to the cult of the martyrs, pointing to both the veneration of relics and the annual, liturgical celebration of the day of martyrdom.<sup>9</sup>

Particularly notable is Polycarp's prayer in chapter 14, which resembles the texts we have of third-century Eucharistic prayers.<sup>10</sup> Here Polycarp lifts his voice in prayer in the moments before his martyrdom:

Lord God Almighty, Father of thy beloved and blessed Servant Jesus Christ, through whom we have received full knowledge of thee, 'the God of angels and powers and all creation' and of the whole race of the righteous who live in thy presence: I bless thee, because thou hast deemed me worthy this day and hour, to take my part in the number of the martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ, for resurrection to eternal life of soul and body in the immortality of the Holy Spirit; among whom may I be received in thy presence this day as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, just as thou hast prepared and revealed beforehand and fulfilled, thou that art the true God without any falsehood. For this and for everything I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal and heavenly High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Servant, through whom be glory to thee with him and Holy Spirit both now and unto the ages to come. Amen.<sup>11</sup>

Whether this section is a later addition to the text or reflects an earlier Eucharistic prayer, it represents a clear interpretation of martyrdom through the language and patterns of the Eucharistic liturgy.

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<sup>9</sup> For a recent discussion on the date of this text, see Candida R Moss, "On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the Martyrdom of Polycarp in the History of Christianity," *Early Christianity* 1, no. 4 (2010): 539–574.

<sup>10</sup> Maxwell E Johnson, "Sharing 'the Cup of Christ': The Cessation of Martyrdom and Anaphoral Development," in *Studies on the Liturgies of the Christian East: Selected Papers of the Third International Congress of the Society of Oriental Liturgy, Volos, May 26-30, 2010*, 2013, 109–126.

<sup>11</sup> "The Martyrdom of Polycarp, as Told in the Letter of the Church of Smyrna to the Church of Philomelium," trans. Massey Hamilton Shepherd, in *Early Christian Fathers*, ed. Cyril Charles Richardson (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 154.

This text presumes an audience familiar with Eucharistic worship as it facilitates a liturgical veneration of the martyrs. Similarly, practices from the cult of the martyrs can also be found within early Eucharistic liturgies. The invocation of the martyrs by name in the Eucharistic prayer correlates with practices of offering the Eucharist on behalf of the deceased, whether at the site of burial or on the anniversary of death.<sup>12</sup> The movement of ritual elements between the Eucharistic liturgy and the liturgy of the martyrs, a bi-directional *transmigration* of ritual practices, is a ritual sharing that is internal to Christianity rather than incorporating ritual elements from outside the Christian tradition. This ritual sharing is not so much an *inculturation* of the Christian liturgy as it is evidence of a plurality of liturgical practices within the Christian tradition that, while they have in common some family characteristics, are not reducible to the Eucharistic liturgy. This ritual sharing suggests a rich liturgical life within early Christianity and that the practical liturgical canon of the early church made possible and comprehensible these ritual transmigrations.

Egeria's account of her pilgrimage offers a particularly interesting example of the way that both the martyr-cults and the urban liturgies of Jerusalem came together to shape a third form of Christian ritualized worship: pilgrimage. The origins of early Christian pilgrimage are largely lost. Our earliest textual accounts of long distance pilgrimages come from the fourth century, although both MacMullen and John Wilkinson locate the origins of

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<sup>12</sup> The book of Revelation describes altars for divine worship being placed over the resting places of the martyrs (Rev. 6:9). The associations formed between martyrdom and the Eucharist also contributed to the developing sacrificial theology of the Eucharistic rite.

Christian pilgrimage in the martyr-cults of the first three centuries.<sup>13</sup> Egeria's manuscript includes accounts of her visits to the tombs of prophets and martyrs as well as her participant-descriptions of liturgical life in Jerusalem. She explains in detail the weekly liturgies in Jerusalem, the Lenten observances, and the stational liturgies of Holy Week and Easter, but she also describes her visits to the shrines of various saints, apostles, and prophets. In one account, she is pleasantly surprised to have arrived at Charra on the martyr's feast day:

At this church where originally Abraham's house used to stand, which, as I have told you, was outside the city, there is also a martyrium. This, my ladies and reverend sisters, is the tomb of a certain holy monk called Helpidius, and things turned out very well for us, since we happened to arrive on the eve of the day when this holy Helpidius was martyred, the twenty-third of April. This is a day when all the monks of Mesopotamia have come in to Charra, including the illustrious ones called ascetics who dwell in the desert. The feast itself is kept with great solemnity...So we had the unexpected pleasure of seeing there the holy and truly dedicated monks of Mesopotamia...I certainly never thought I would actually see them, not because God would be unable to grant it—after all, he has granted me everything else!—but because I had heard that these monks never come in from the places where they live, except at Easter and at the feast of this martyr.<sup>14</sup>

Egeria's account suggests that many local Christians were drawn to two types of liturgical celebrations: one centered around the life of Christ and the other around the cult of the martyrs.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See MacMullen, *The Second Church*, 9, 89, 95–114. Wilkinson traces the roots of these pilgrimages several centuries earlier to the development of martyr cults within Judaism. See John Wilkinson, "Visits to Jewish Tombs by Early Christians," in *Akten des XII Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie*, 1995, 452–465. John Wilkinson, "Jewish Holy Places and the Origins of Christian Pilgrimage," in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, 1990, 41–53.

<sup>14</sup> John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels* (London: SPCK, 1971), 137–38.

<sup>15</sup> The fourth-century Cappadocian bishop Gregory of Nyssa cautions against pilgrimage for monks and nuns (and perhaps for all Christians), suggesting that the realities of travel and their experiences in the cities (especially Jerusalem) made it impossible to maintain their separation from the world and their moral excellence. What does pilgrimage offer, he asks, that one cannot find on every Eucharistic altar? Gregory's polemic suggests that he was arguing against what was already a popular practice. Egeria's account seems to confirm that a sizeable number of early

Yet Egeria's writings also include many examples of liturgical prayer that were not associated with the feast of a martyr or the celebration of the Eucharist. John Wilkinson introduces the modern distinction that is characteristic of the dichotomy of liturgy and popular practice when he classifies these pilgrim rites as a *private office*, contrasting them with the large *public liturgies* of Jerusalem described later in Egeria's manuscript. A careful analysis of the liturgical descriptions suggests that this division of public and private prayer is an anachronistic classification that implicitly reinforces the dichotomy between liturgy and popular practice. A comparison of the shape of Egeria's pilgrim office and the stational liturgies she describes in Jerusalem indicates that Egeria's devotions at the holy sites were actually extensions of the public rites she learned in Jerusalem. The following chart presents five of Egeria's descriptions of liturgical practice during her pilgrimage. The first three columns describe pilgrim liturgies while the final two describe liturgies of the Jerusalem church. While Egeria was living in Jerusalem, other pilgrims in the city would often describe the holy places they had visited. These pilgrim stories would occasionally inspire Egeria to seek out these places for herself while she was staying in Jerusalem. In the first two accounts below, Egeria travelled with others from the Jerusalem community out to these sacred places and then returned several weeks later to the holy city. The third account describes her visit to Jacob's well during her journey through Syria on her way home. The final two accounts come from Egeria's descriptions of the Jerusalem Easter

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Christians did not hold Gregory's dismal view of the practice! Gregory of Nyssa, "On Pilgrimages," in *Gregory of Nyssa: Selected Works, Letters*, trans. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, Second, vol. V, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 382-83.

liturgies: the first on Good Friday and the second on Pentecost. All five share a remarkably similar structure.

*Table 1*

10.7	14.1	21.1	36.1	43.9
Excursion to Mt. Nebo	Salem/Sedima	Jacob's Well	Gethsemane (Triduum)	Sion (Pentecost)
<p>"It was always our practice when we managed to reach one of the places we wanted to see to have first a prayer, then a reading from the book, then to say an appropriate psalm and another prayer. By God's grace we always followed this practice whenever we were able to reach a place we wanted to see."</p>	<p>"On hearing this we dismounted, and at once the holy presbyter and clergy of the place kindly came to meet us. They welcomed us, and took us up to the church. When we got there, we had our usual prayer, an appropriate reading from the Book of Moses, and a psalm appropriate to the place. After another prayer we came down. And when we got to the bottom, we had a talk with the holy presbyter."</p>	<p>"When we had reached the well, the bishop said a prayer, the passage was read from Genesis, we had one psalm suitable to the place, and then after another prayer the bishop gave us his blessing."</p>	<p>"The bishop and all the people go into a graceful church which has been built there, and have a prayer appropriate to the place and the day, and one suitable hymn [psalm]. Then the Gospel passage is read where he said to his disciples, "Watch, lest ye enter into temptation," and when the whole passage has been read, there is another prayer."</p>	<p>"When they get there they have hymns [psalms] (also suitable to the place and day), and again read the Gospel passage about the Lord coming on the eighth day of Easter to the place where the disciples were, and rebuking Thomas for his unbelief. When they have had the whole passage, and a prayer, the catechumens and the faithful are blessed in the usual way."</p>

The shape of all five liturgies is almost identical, save the inversion of the psalm and the scripture reading.<sup>16</sup> Given Egeria's delight at the Jerusalem practice of reading scriptures and singing psalms appropriate to the time and place of worship, it is not difficult to imagine her adaptation of the public liturgy to her pilgrim practice as a whole. The pilgrimage itself, moving from holy place to holy place, mimics the stational worship in Jerusalem described in the second half of Egeria's manuscript, making her own practice of pilgrimage into an extension of Jerusalem's liturgy rather than a distinctive practice with its own ritual logic.

While the uniqueness of Egeria's manuscript makes it difficult to infer whether this practice of celebrating a stational office at each of the holy sites was the norm for pilgrims, her witness in this manuscript presents a practice of pilgrimage that is not a private devotion essentially distinct from the public liturgical rites, but rather an extended stational liturgy celebrated in the style of the Jerusalem liturgy. Both the urban liturgy of Jerusalem and Egeria's extension of it in her own pilgrimage reveal a liturgical life that is not reducible to the Eucharistic celebration. While the celebration of the Eucharist is part of the daily liturgical life both in Jerusalem and outside of it (Egeria often makes mention of celebrating the daily offering with the local communities she visits), these stational liturgies point again to a plurality of liturgical practices in the early church that clearly include the celebration of the Eucharist but are not reducible to it.

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<sup>16</sup> Egeria's descriptions of the shape of the liturgy (both of the pilgrim office and of the stational liturgies in Jerusalem) are not always consistent. At the altar of Aaron, for example, Egeria notes the biblical reading, the psalm, and a closing prayer, but omits the opening prayer. Her descriptions of the stational liturgies in Jerusalem occasionally fail to mention a gospel reading or an opening prayer (see for example 43.7-8). This may suggest either that the liturgies are not entirely invariable or that her descriptions of the prayer were not always complete.

The distinctions that later come to mark the discussion around liturgy and popular piety are difficult to discern in the early church, yet the presumption of such distinctions has resulted in liturgical histories that are largely concerned with only those liturgical practices found in the church orders and writings of Christian elites. Even scholars who attend to historical data that exceeds this liturgical discussion reinforce the distinction between liturgy and popular piety. Wilkinson, for example, distinguishes between Egeria's participation in a private pilgrimage office and the public liturgies of the Jerusalem Church. And in arguing for the presence of a "second church" or "popular Christianity," MacMullen also assumes a practical and functional distinction between elite and popular liturgies that seems informed more by the modern dichotomy than by historical data.

Limited evidence makes it hard to reconstruct definitively liturgical practice in the early Christian churches. Still, even the traces of practices that exceed what is found in our textual descriptions introduce an important hermeneutic of suspicion into this historical task, one that suggests our data for early liturgical practices is at best incomplete. The limited texts that remain from this period are preserved not only by a coincidence of history, but also through systems of power and authority that can easily erase or obscure the lives and experiences of ordinary Christians. And while that small collection of texts provides only limited usefulness in reconstructing the liturgies of these early Christian communities, it does suggest the presence of a plurality of rituals and worship practices in early Christianity, which seem to have both co-existed and exerted influence on one another. Thus, pilgrims like Egeria could model their own prayer on urban liturgies of Jerusalem, urban liturgies could easily absorb the language and theology of the martyr-cults, and pilgrim and martyr liturgies remained connected to the Eucharistic celebration

without being reduced to or subsumed in it.<sup>17</sup> A liturgical ecology that supports both a diversity of forms and ritual sharing between them cannot easily be fit into a liturgical logic that distinguishes liturgical from popular forms of worship. Such a delineation is far more rhetorical than descriptive.

### **The Clergy and the People of God**

In the Middle Ages, a growing theological and canonical differentiation between the clergy and the laity tempts a similar narrative of differentiation between liturgical and popular forms of worship, with liturgical rites gradually becoming reduced to the domain of the clergy and popular forms emerging vigorously from among the lay faithful. Yet a word of caution is needed here. As with similar claims about the early church, any logic that posits a dual system of worship in the medieval church is easily overstated. In practice, medieval worship saw these still varied forms of Christian worship interacting in complex and creative ways, which often reinforced the growing distance between clergy and laity but also produced new practices and new theological interpretations of familiar practices.

The delineation between the clergy and the lay faithful became a particular concern in the medieval church, a concern that was easily manifested and worked out by creating meaningful distinctions within liturgical practice. The ministerial ordering of the church, that is the designation of certain members from among the baptized as leaders of the faithful, can be discerned from very early in the tradition in the designation of bishops (gk. ἐπίσκοποι, *episkopoi*), deacons (gk. διάκονοι, *diakonoi*), presbyters (gk. πρεσβύτεροι,

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<sup>17</sup> While some bishops argued for the priority of Eucharistic worship over other liturgical forms, the presence of the argument itself suggests a certain practical dissent among early Christian worshipers. See Gregory of Nyssa, "On Pilgrimages." for a clear argument for the priority of Eucharistic worship over and against pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

*presbuteroi*), and, somewhat later, priests (ln. *sacerdotes*). In his *Moralia in Iob*, the late fifth-century Pope Gregory the Great divided the church into the “order of preachers” and “the multitude of hearers.”<sup>18</sup> Yet it was the continual need to negotiate relationships between the landed, ruling class and ecclesiastical leaders that propelled much of the concern around the distinction between clergy and laity. The Carolingian era was largely marked by collaboration between lay elite and the ecclesial elite when ecclesiastical and secular powers were perceived as working together towards mutually beneficial ends. Comparing the secular and ecclesiastical governments, a ninth-century monk concluded, “Through the union of both orders and their mutual love one house of God is built, one body of Christ is made by all the members of His Office who contribute fruits for mutual benefit.”<sup>19</sup> The distinction between laity and clergy was generally a power negotiation among the social elite for rights of governance. Despite the optimistic tone struck by this particular monk, these relationships were marked as often by struggles for power and influence as they were by collaboration.

These uneven relationships between clergy and secular rulers persisted well into the eleventh century. An Exultet Roll from southern Italy produced during this time depicts a more cooperative theology of the laity and clergy. A personified *Mater Ecclesia* stands in

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<sup>18</sup> Gregory the Great, *Moral Reflections on the Book of Job*, trans. Brian Kerns (Athens, Ohio; Collegeville: Cistercian Publications; Liturgical Press, 2014), bk. 1.14.

<sup>19</sup> Walahfrid Strabo, *Libellus de Exordiis et Incrementis Quarundam in Observationibus Ecclesiasticis Rerum*, ed. V. Krause (Hannover, 1897). Cited in Sarah Hamilton, *Church and People in the Medieval West, 900-1200* (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), 16. It is important to recognize here that Strabo’s distinctions primarily concern a separation *within* the elite classes—the distinction, for example, between nobles and bishops.

the middle of the image, underneath a building edifice, with clergy gathered on her right and laity (*populus*) arranged to her left.

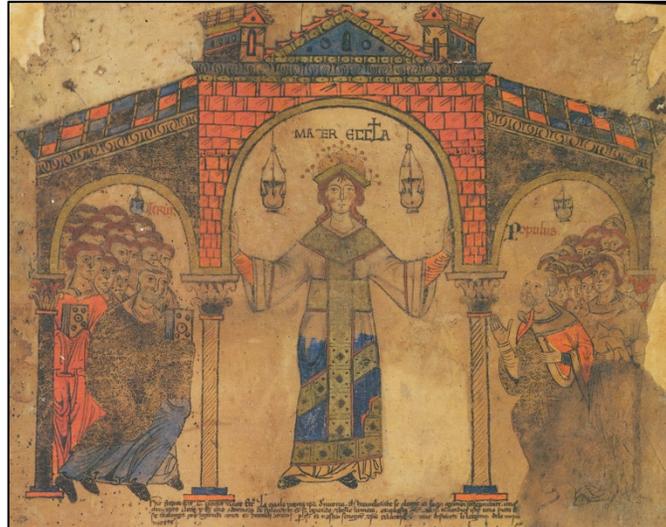


Figure 1

Despite these clear distinctions, the image resists the identification of either group with Mater Ecclesia herself. Rather, the church shelters both the clergy and the laity alike under her roof. But this same period also saw conscious efforts by the clergy to liberate themselves from the control that these lay rulers exercised over clerical appointments and ownership of church property. Writing in 1057, the French Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida advocated separation rather than cooperation between the two governing orders: “Just as secular matters are forbidden to the clergy, ecclesiastical matters are forbidden to the laity.”<sup>20</sup> In 1059, Pope Nicholas II issued an electoral decree limiting the role of secular leaders in papal elections by restricting the electors only to the body of Cardinals. The

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<sup>20</sup> In Hamilton, *Church and People in the Medieval West, 900-1200*, 16. Cardinal Humbert is also thought to be behind Nicholas II’s 1059 electoral decree.

lower clergy and the laity then had the responsibility of merely ratifying (laudatio) the election.

By the time Gratian compiled his collection of Canon Laws in the twelfth century, this distinction seems to have been in wide circulation.

There are two kinds of Christians. There is one kind which, being devoted to God's business and given up to contemplation and prayer, should refrain from all activity in worldly affairs. These are the clergy and those devoted to God, that is the *conversi*... There is also another kind of Christian, laymen. For *laos* means 'people.' These are allowed to take a wife, to till land, to judge between man and man, to conduct lawsuits, to place oblations upon the altar, to pay tithes, and thus can be saved if they avoid sin by well-doing.<sup>21</sup>

While this rhetoric of separation was clearly deployed in an effort to liberate the clergy from the influence and control of governing elites, it also promoted a theological logic in which the clergy were understood as clearly superior. This attitude can be found as early as the tenth century in this Canon from the Council of Trosly: "The Church of God resides in bishops and priests to whom the people of the Lord [*populus Domini*] are entrusted, and is recognized as distinct."<sup>22</sup> The distinction in this canon is not merely between clergy and lay, but it distinguishes between "the Church" (clergy) and the "People of God" (laity).<sup>23</sup> This "clericalization" is a distinctive ecclesiological shift that identifies the clergy exclusively with the *Mater Ecclesia*. This gradual restriction of the ecclesial boundaries around the clergy found practical expression in the liturgical life of the medieval church, which

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<sup>21</sup> Hamilton, *Church and People in the Medieval West, 900-1200*, 17.

<sup>22</sup> Hamilton, *Church and People in the Medieval West, 900-1200*, 18.

<sup>23</sup> Hamilton, *Church and People in the Medieval West, 900-1200*, 20. *Laici* could also designate persons who were married, unlearned, or of low status but in other cases, *laici* refers to the ruling elite who have the capacity to financially endow churches and monasteries.

increasingly distinguished between forms and practices proper to the clergy and to the laity.

### *Liturgical Developments*

The development of liturgical and devotional practices in the Middle Ages reflects this growing ecclesial stratification between the clergy and the people. The celebration of the official liturgies of the church, including Sunday mass, the morning and evening offices, and baptisms, marriages, and burials, increasingly became the competence and responsibility of the ordained ministers. The official rites likewise gradually became fixed in a Latin language no longer understood by the average believer, especially as the church moved north from the Mediterranean basin. While the official liturgies of the church, including the Eucharist, continued to play a role in the lives of the lay faithful, the clergy largely performed these rites *on behalf of* the people. Yet the image of a liturgy with an active clergy and a passive laity is inaccurate. Rather, the clericalization of the liturgy produced a need for new forms of prayer among the laity. Mark Francis writes of this period that “popular piety emerged as a valid means of expressing the faith alongside a liturgical tradition that became increasingly clericalized and distant from human experience.”<sup>24</sup> Francis’ claim warrants deeper analysis. An uncritical reception of Francis’ account carries the same risk as MacMullen’s: the positing of a separate and distinct “second church” or church of the people functioning alongside or parallel to official liturgical worship, a practical expression of the differences between liturgy and popular

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<sup>24</sup> Mark R. Francis, “Liturgy and Popular Piety in Historical Perspective,” in *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: A Commentary*, ed. Peter Phan (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 25.

practice that would only later be articulated. Yet the work of Francis and others shows that the application of the modern distinction between official worship and popular practice has at best a heuristic value in pointing to the growing differences between the clergy and the laity and the clericalization of certain liturgical forms. On the other hand, the use of these categories of liturgical and popular worship overlook the still diverse ways that medieval people worshipped, both through a plurality of worship forms and by making various uses of common liturgical forms.

For the lay elite, the Mass and the Daily Office provided a scaffolding for devotional prayers. Mapped out in prayer books written by the clergy and owned by the laity, these books were used to structure personal observances and individual prayer.<sup>25</sup> The Mass provided a framework for the personal devotions of the laity. The devotional prayers followed the liturgical structure of the rite being administered by the clergy and were meant to be prayed by the laity during Mass. While the laity and the clergy were in theory both present and attending the same liturgical celebration, their participation was distinct and separate. Sarah Hamilton writes that one “takes part in the Mass, but on [one’s] own terms.”<sup>26</sup> Emerging here is something more than the individualization or personalization of prayer. For the distinction between personal devotion and public liturgy is complicated by the fact that these practices were layered on top of one another, literally co-existing in the

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<sup>25</sup> With low literacy rates and the expense involved in producing bound texts, this form of lay liturgical prayer was largely limited to the social elite rather than forming a constitutive part of all lay liturgical prayer. While the growing distinction between clergy and lay is one important factor that contributed to the plurality of liturgical forms that emerged during the Middle Ages, it is not the only one. Social distinctions which included the rank of clergy but were not reducible to laity/clergy also played a role in defining the liturgical practices of medieval Christians.

<sup>26</sup> Hamilton, *Church and People in the Medieval West, 900-1200*, 226.

same physical and ritual space of a single liturgical event. While these liturgical practices on the one hand reinforce the medieval distinction between clergy and lay, they also resist a “second church” narrative of distinct and separate liturgical practices. Diana Webb argues that both clerical and lay liturgical practices emerged from a “shared spiritual culture,” using shared forms and symbols.<sup>27</sup> When we view medieval liturgy as a collection of practices of shared forms and symbols, we can once again recognize medieval worship as a plurality of liturgical practices rather than dual streams of official and popular practice.

### *The Germanization of Liturgical Practice*

The research of James Russell, Mary Collins, and Mark Francis points towards a second type of liturgical practice, one that developed in the medieval church as a result of its expansion into northern Europe.<sup>28</sup> Christianity profoundly transformed the cultures of the tribes who had taken possession of the northern areas of the former Roman empire, but the encounter with these cultures also changed the western church, giving rise to a Catholic Christianity distinct from the Eastern Churches. This encounter particularly changed the church’s theology of Eucharistic presence from one that was primarily mystical and liturgical to an objective presence associated specifically with the elements of bread and wine.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> D. Webb, “Domestic Space and Devotion in the Middle Ages,” in *Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 27–47.

<sup>28</sup> See James C. Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Socio-historical Approach to Religion Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Mary Collins, “Evangelization, Catechesis, and the Beginnings of Western Eucharistic Theology,” *Louvain Studies* 23 (1998): 124–42. Mark R. Francis, *Local Worship, Global Church: Popular Religion and the Liturgy* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014), 80–101.

<sup>29</sup> “Less able to grasp a more mystical understanding of the Eucharist, the Germanic peoples were concerned about how and when the objective presence of the Eucharist came about. Paschasius’s

This “Germanization” of the Eucharist grasped the Eucharist in concrete, personal terms rather than as an ecclesial event. It also gave rise to an instrumentalization of the holy, an idea already familiar to the peoples of northern Europe. Changes to the Eucharistic liturgy accommodated this shift in piety. The growth of votive masses to obtain special favors signals an instrumentalization of the Eucharistic liturgy itself. By the thirteenth century, the elevation of the chalice and host was prescribed. In addition to this practice of “ocular communion,” the removal of the Eucharist from its liturgical context—reserving it for private visits and public display—made the elements of the Eucharist into objects of devotion. Devotional Eucharistic practice both inside and outside of the liturgical rites—exposition and adoration, processions, and ocular communion—make it difficult to draw clear boundaries between official, liturgical rites and more popular forms of devotion. Both the use of prayer books by the elite and on a broader scale devotional adoration of the Eucharist brought into the space of the liturgical event practices that we might think of today as “popular.” This same devotion carried the Eucharist outside of the liturgical event, extending the Eucharistic liturgy in both time and space. Such instrumentalization of the holy and its extension beyond particular liturgical events is found also in the cult of the saints with its feast days, veneration of relics, and pilgrimages.

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[Radbertus] catechesis on the Eucharist emphasizes this presence and identifies those powerful words...that bring about the presence of the body and blood of the Lord: *Hoc est corpus meum* (This is my body) and *Hic est calix sanguinis mei* (This is the cup of my blood). By considering the presence apart from its liturgical context, Paschasius is able to present the sacrament as an independent object and paves the way for such popular practices as the worship of the Eucharist outside of mass.” Mark R. Francis, *Local Worship, Global Church: Popular Religion and the Liturgy*, 91.

*The Saints: Local Cults, Distant Shrines*

Distinctive from the liturgical forms already discussed, which emerged within and as extensions of official liturgical rites, worship associated with the saints largely developed within local or regional communities and incorporated the specific language, symbols, and emotions of those communities. Shrines of the saints dotted the landscape of medieval Europe. Not confined only to church buildings, natural shrines—springs, wells, and caves—also became associated with specific saints, filling out what Julia Smith calls a “landscape of intense religious particularism.”<sup>30</sup> The popularity of these local shrines occasionally drew pilgrims from great distances. By the year 900, long-distance pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Rome were a well-established part of Christian piety and the following three hundred years saw a significant increase in these long-distance pilgrimages to places on the periphery of Christendom—not only Jerusalem, but shrines like Compostela in western Galicia and Mont Apulia and Mont St-Michel off the coasts of France.

While historians have often treated medieval pilgrimage as an extraordinary act of piety, Sarah Hamilton argues instead that medieval pilgrimage was an extension of ordinary medieval devotion that emphasized a general concern for one’s own sinfulness and salvation, a sense of gratitude and devotion to the saints, and—especially in the eleventh and twelfth centuries—a focus on Christ’s suffering humanity over his divinity. The same concern for sinfulness and salvation that drove the penitential pilgrim onto the road also brought children to the baptismal font and laid the deceased in the ground for Christian burial. Christians approached the saint’s relics and sanctuaries with the same

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<sup>30</sup> Julia M. H. Smith, “Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles, and Relics in Brittany, c 850-1250,” *Speculum* 65, no. 2 (April 1990): 337.

concrete and personal concern they displayed for the Eucharistic host. And as pilgrims understood their own difficult journeys as a kind of participation in Christ's *via crucis*, so too they found in the suffering of the human body the concrete humanity recognized in the Eucharistic elements and its miraculous accounts of bread become flesh. While these forms of worship can easily be distinguished according to the nature of authority, leadership, and participation exercised by lay and ordained persons, these forms also remain intimately connected as strands in the larger fabric that constitutes the liturgical worship of the medieval church.

Like early pilgrim practices, so too medieval pilgrimage blurs the lines between liturgy and popular piety. This shared medieval spiritual culture is what allowed pilgrims continually to cross in and out of different ecclesial and liturgical spaces. Pilgrimage prayers were incorporated into the official liturgies of the church. Pilgrims were sent forth, received at shrines, and welcomed home through public, solemn blessings.<sup>31</sup> An eleventh-century pontifical from Mainz provides the earliest example of a bishop's blessing for the pilgrim's script and staff, and by the twelfth century blessing pilgrims was listed among the duties of Irish parish priests, suggesting that the popularity of pilgrimage necessitated blessings at the parochial, rather than the diocesan level.<sup>32</sup> By establishing these liturgical rites as the place from which the pilgrim was sent and received, the official liturgy constituted a frame for this practice and served as its authorization. The incorporation of

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<sup>31</sup> For a longer example, see Derek Rivard, "Pro Iter Agentibus: The Ritual Blessings of Pilgrims and Their Insignia in a Pontifical of Southern Italy," *Journal of Medieval History*, no. 27 (2001): 365–398.

<sup>32</sup> C. Vogel and R. Elze, eds., *Le Pontifical Romano-Germanique Du Dixième Siècle*, ed. C. Vogel and R. Elze (Vatican City, 1972), II.362. See also J. Fleming, *Gille of Limerick c. 1070–114: Architect of a Medieval Church* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001).

pilgrimage into the official liturgies of the church resists the modern dichotomy of liturgical and popular practices, but reflects the seeds of the concern that would eventually lead to the formulation of this dichotomy—namely the growing concern of the clergy to exercise a degree of control over all liturgical practices and not only the official rites of the church.

Further evidence of this growing clericalization of all liturgical forms can be found by turning our attention again to the nature of our historical sources. While it is likely that some saints' cults were maintained through popular oral traditions, our written record of these local cults comes almost entirely from the hands of the religious and clergy. Being mindful again of the rhetorical or functional nature of our documentary sources, we should be careful to not accept these accounts as simply raw, descriptive representations of popular practice. Rather, these documents point to occasions on which the clergy sought to exert a measure of control over these popular forms of worship by promoting them, modifying them, or both. The popularity of these local saints' cults provided a helpful tool through which priests and bishops could promote their authority in a particular region, protect the interests of the local custodial communities, and raise money for the construction of new churches. They promoted pilgrimages as a means of fostering both economic development and spiritual prominence.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> In their written accounts, the clergy also emphasize popularity as appeal. Such accounts record the crowds which attended the celebrations at the shrines and take pains to suggest a wide audience for the cult, ranging from kings to peasants to slaves, demonstrating both the universality and the voluntary nature of the cult's adherents. Here too are found the seeds of a liturgical practice that is optional as opposed to the obligatory liturgical participation that would be codified in the Council of Trent.

Medieval Christian worship was marked by a plurality of forms beyond the official rites of the church which, like worship in the early church, resists interpretive logics that distinguish between liturgical and popular forms of worship. Worship in the medieval church enjoyed a practical cohesion in which the plurality of forms nurtured one another with a shared logic made possible by the spirituality of their practitioners. A pilgrim may receive a formal blessing from a bishop or priest before departing and participate in Eucharistic liturgies during or at the conclusion of their pilgrimage. Veneration of the saints produced liturgical cults around particular shrines, and the insertion of various feast days into the liturgical calendar was often motivated by a concern to affirm devotions already popular among the people—clergy and laity alike. Ordinary Christians likely made little distinction between the official liturgies and popular forms of worship, as both existed together in the diverse and varied medieval liturgical milieu. It was precisely this “confusion” that would be severely criticized by Catholic and Protestant reformers and lead to the “purification” of the official liturgy at the Council of Trent.

At the same time, the medieval church also saw a growing distinction between the clergy and the laity which eventually prompted the concern of the clergy to exercise control over a wide range of worship practices. This was sometimes accomplished by framing liturgical forms favored by the people within the official rites of the church. In other instances, the clergy endorsed and promoted forms that enjoyed significant popularity among medieval Christians, like pilgrimage. These exercises of power by the clergy accompanied the growing canonical and theological voices that promoted the distinctiveness and superiority of the clergy, as well as their liturgical practices. These medieval concerns to distinguish between the laity and clergy formed the structural

foundation for the eventual emergence of the dichotomy between liturgy and popular practice, which would be articulated at the Council of Trent.

### **Purification and Evangelization**

As the church moved out of the Middle Ages and into the modern world, the distinction between liturgy and popular piety became more pronounced. The Council of Trent, reacting to the Protestant Reformation, addressed the question of liturgy and popular piety from a doctrinal perspective. The liturgical rites were reformed or “purified” by eliminating many of what were perceived as “popular” elements or ritual borrowing. At the same time, the distinction between liturgy and popular practices was re-asserted in a way that prioritized the official liturgies of the church. The European colonization of the Americas posed the question of popular piety and the liturgy in new terms of inculturation. Trent’s efforts to establish the Roman Rite as the liturgical norm and preserve it from outside influences found uneven purchase on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. In the Americas, new liturgies were developed and practiced alongside official forms as ways of both proclaiming the Christian faith and helping people to better understand its teachings. These popular forms drew from the symbols, rituals, and spiritual sensibilities of the evangelized peoples to create a familiar frame for the preaching of the gospel message and the celebration of the church’s official liturgies. Efforts to purify and standardize Christian worship in the wake of late medieval abuses together with the association of these popular practices with the nascent faith of those living in mission territories prompted not only a rhetorical differentiation between liturgy and popular practice, but also a steady marginalization of popular worship practices in the eyes of the institutional elite.

### *The Council of Trent and the Counter Reformation*

The first clear delineation of liturgy and popular piety was formulated at the Council of Trent. The plurality of liturgical forms that marked late medieval Catholicism was at best diverse and at worst chaotic. In response to the objections of both Catholic and Protestant reformers to liturgical and devotional abuses, the Council of Trent for the first time sought a systematic unification of the church's liturgical practice. In a strict sense, the category of popular piety or devotion emerged in contra-distinction to these newly established liturgical boundaries.<sup>34</sup>

Trent was not the first attempt to standardize liturgical practice in the western church. Pope Gregory VII mandated the adoption of the Roman Rite across Europe in the eleventh century, although most bishops did not consider the proliferation of other liturgical forms to be especially problematic. In practice, the standardization of the liturgy across the Christian world was not ever a real possibility until the fifteenth-century invention of the printing press. The availability of printed materials led increasing literacy throughout Europe, and this coincided with a spirit of reform that sought to purify both Christian belief and practice. Doctrinally, this produced a new genre of texts called "catechisms." Liturgically, this led to a revised Roman missal supposedly "cleansed of errors and superstition" and returned "to the pristine norms and rites of the ancient fathers."<sup>35</sup> Nathan Mitchell argues that these liturgical reforms introduced a thoroughly

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<sup>34</sup> According to historian Edward Muir, Trent's liturgical reforms gradually developed into two distinct strata: "one, regulations imposed from above and the other, pietistic practices expressing lay enthusiasm for Christian renewal." Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 224.

<sup>35</sup> *Missale Romanum*, cited in Francis, *Local Worship, Global Church*, 126.

modern understanding of liturgical participation that had more in common with its Protestant contemporaries than with medieval Catholicism.

The approach to reform adopted by the Council of Trent had more in common with a Protestant emphasis on “doctrinally informed lay participation” than with medieval notions of lay involvement in the mass. Both Trent and the Reformers pursued a goal that can be described as “modern”—informed, educated, well-catechized people who understand, intellectually, the significance of the Church’s public, ritual actions. At the end of the day, both Protestant and Catholic leaders of the sixteenth century found themselves agreeing that the proper solution to the liturgical “problem” was “intellectually informed participation by layfolk.” The Reformers sought to achieve this goal through the use of vernacular languages, the restoration of the word to its rightful place in public worship, and frequent evangelical preaching. Similarly, the bishops at Trent’s twenty-second session (17 September 1562)...admitted that the mass “contains much instruction for the people,” and so “the holy council commands pastors and all who have the *cura animarum* that they, either themselves or through others, explain frequently during the celebration of the mass some of the things read during the mass and that among other things they explain some mystery of this most holy sacrifice, especially on Sundays and festival days.<sup>36</sup>

Although the medieval model of lay devotional participation in the mass raises important questions for the contemporary reader about the extent to which the laity could really be said to be participating in the liturgical rite, the liturgical reforms of the Council of Trent did little to improve upon this practice in a way that fostered a more active role for the laity in the church’s official liturgies. The practical consequence of defining lay liturgical participation in cognitive rather than ritual terms was effectively to eliminate the need for lay participation in order for the mass to be validly celebrated. Although earlier missals included some rubrics for the laity, by Pius V’s missal in 1570 all references to participation

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<sup>36</sup> “Reforms, Protestant and Catholic” in Geoffrey Wainwright and Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 310. Quoting *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. Rev H. J. Schroeder (Rockford: Tan Books and Publishers, 2005), 148.

by lay people had been dropped. Liturgy was properly understood as an action of the clergy performed *on behalf of or for the benefit of* the people.

While Trent's liturgical standardization narrowed the definition of the liturgy to the official rites of the church, post-Tridentine reforms also pressed towards the universalization of more popular practices of devotion. Devotional practices were promoted that reinforced doctrinal priorities. The church encouraged those forms of lay piety that centered around universal symbols of the church rather than local cults and associations. The medieval tradition of praying private devotions during mass continued with the support of the local clergy. Forms of Eucharistic piety already present in the medieval church were further developed and promoted. Devotions to Christ or Mary were endorsed as devotions of the universal church in order to shift practice away from local cults of the saints. While some popular practices are recognizable as late medieval rituals, the post-conciliar period also saw the vigorous development of new forms of ecclesial devotionism. Edward Muir suggests that this revival of Catholic piety coincided with the Reformation, but was not entirely dependent on it.<sup>37</sup> When Protestant reformers criticized popular ritual practice, Catholics responded by insisting on the spiritual value of such rituals by embracing traditional practices and even producing new forms. Thus, Catholic identity was asserted not only through the standardization of liturgical form, but also in

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<sup>37</sup> Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 225. See also Vincent J. Miller, "A Genealogy of Presence: Elite Anxiety and the Excesses of the Popular Sacramental Imagination," in *Sacramental Presence in a Postmodern Context*, ed. L. Boeve and L. Leijssen (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), 347–57.

“the elaboration of a distinctively Catholic ritual vocabulary that contrasted with Protestant rituals,” especially in its emphasis on miracles and the Eucharist.<sup>38</sup>

The assertion of a distinction between liturgical and popular forms of prayer at the Council of Trent was rooted in a conciliar concern for promoting a universal faith consistent in both doctrine and practice in response to the shifting currents of modernity. Within this conciliar logic, both liturgical and popular forms served this same goal. The definition of this dichotomy drew borders around not one, but two types of practices. The first—official rites fixed by the authority of Rome and safeguarded through the careful presidency of the ordained—preserved the “universal” forms of the church’s liturgy. The second—popular practices of universal devotion promoted by Rome and safeguarded by popular appeal—fostered an intellectual and emotional commitment to the universal symbols and doctrines of the church. Because these practices both served the same logic, popular devotional practices could easily move with the people in and out of liturgical spaces: the laity ticked through their rosary beads during mass and at home.

In addition to the production of printed texts, the Council’s parochial renewal also promoted this liturgical conformity. The wide devotional landscape of medieval Christianity that included churches, shrines, and natural locales facilitated direct access to the divine. The Tridentine reforms emphasized not only the authority of the clergy in matters of both doctrine and worship, but also their mediating role in these same matters. By reinvigorating the local parish and constituting it as the primary setting for liturgical and spiritual life, the boundaries drawn around liturgical practice were also inscribed in

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<sup>38</sup> Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 225.

geographical space. In contrast to the broad medieval landscape of religious particularism, the reforms promoted the parish as the single local institution of legitimate ecclesiastical authority.<sup>39</sup>

The process of re-writing the religious landscape proved to be somewhat more challenging than printing and disseminating new liturgical texts. Although parish church buildings were already part of the landscape, they were merely one place among many that hosted Christian devotion and worship. For the medieval Christian, participation in religious confraternities, personal prayers and devotions, pilgrimages, and the cult of the saints was at least as important as attending the sacramental liturgies performed in the space of the parish church, especially in rural areas that had irregular access to these official liturgies.<sup>40</sup> In many places, these parish church buildings were a microcosm of the landscape of religious particularism of which they were a part. The interiors of these churches were highly segmented, with different social and familial groups laying claim to different spaces and using them in their own ways.<sup>41</sup> Side altars denoted not only a multiplicity of popular cults, but also their human benefactors. Like liturgy, these church buildings did not escape the purifying efforts of Trent.

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<sup>39</sup> Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 230.

<sup>40</sup> Muir studied 250 sixteenth-century churches in which parish priests “lacked the will or ability to perform their liturgical duties outside of the narrow confines of the church.” In the same region in the seventeenth century, over half of the churches lacked a pyx—the liturgical vessel for carrying the host outside of the church to the homebound—and a quarter of priests never ventured to isolated farms and homes. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 230. John Bossy writes, “the people of western Europe fulfilled their parochial duties in so spasmodic a manner that it is hard to believe they had any clear sense of parochial obligation at all.” John Bossy, “The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe,” *Past & Present*, no. 47 (1970): 47.

<sup>41</sup> Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 230.

By reconstituting the space and practices within the parish churches, the Council of Trent was also helping to rewrite the landscape of which these churches were a part. The most successful implementation of these parochial reforms came when priests and bishops were able to restructure popular uses of the space in conformity with the central symbols of the church. For example, they shifted the practice of praying the Rosary from private side altars and promoted it instead as a collective recitation led by the parish priest before the church's high altar. A seemingly simple change, this move shifted the prayer from the scattered peripheries of the church building to the central nave. The reforms reinterpreted Marian devotions as Christological devotions represented by the church altar. Ordained ministers replaced lay leaders and the plurality of communities and devotions were brought together into a single community. The popular practice of the people was reinscribed in a newly constituted space that framed popular devotions according to the new conciliar logic of universal symbols and truths.

Within this conciliar logic, both official liturgies and popular practices came under the authorization of hierarchical leadership and the boundaries of the official liturgies were set in part by contrasting them to approved devotional practices. By standardizing the official sacramental rites and stipulating approved forms of participation in these rites, clerical authorization came to constitute an indispensable component to classifying worship forms as official liturgies of the church.<sup>42</sup> Similar to the parochial reforms, this

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<sup>42</sup> Carl Dehne argues, "The category of popular devotions in the strictest sense arose in the Roman Catholic Church as a result of the codification of rites ordered by the Council of Trent. The limits of the official liturgy were definitely set, so that eventually specific official authorization came to be considered an indispensable element constituting a form of worship as part of the official liturgy of the Church." Carl Dehne, "Roman Catholic Popular Devotions," *Worship* 49, no. 8 (October 1975): 449.

liturgical definition reasserted the parish priest, the local bishop, and the bishop of Rome as the legitimate ecclesiastical authority for the spiritual life. Implicit in the institutional endorsement of certain popular universal devotions is the marginalization of other types of devotion deemed variously as anti-intellectual, superstitious, pre-modern, or non-Christian. Yet these popular forms did not cease. They endured on the margins, safeguarded by those who were already dwelling on the margins of the church.

### *The Evangelization of the Americas*

The implementation of the 1570 Tridentine Roman missal was largely left to the local bishops, which resulted in irregular adoption across Europe and even more so in the European colonies.<sup>43</sup> Efforts to establish the Roman Rite as the liturgical norm and to preserve it from outside influence found uneven purchase on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Primarily Spanish and Portuguese missionaries brought Catholicism to the new world in the sixteenth century.<sup>44</sup> The relative isolation of the Iberian peninsula meant that the forms of liturgy and piety these conquistadors brought with them were more medieval

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<sup>43</sup> Ricky Manalo points to France as a particular example of this uneven implementation of the Tridentine liturgical reforms. Marked by diverse liturgical practices and popular devotions, full implementation of the uniform Roman rite was not achieved until as late as 1875. Ricky Manalo, *The Liturgy of Life: The Interrelationship of Sunday Eucharist and Everyday Worship Practices* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014), 35.

<sup>44</sup> The evangelization of the new world is typically marked by the arrival of the “twelve Franciscan apostles” in Mexico in 1524. These Spanish missionaries brought with them both a medieval Catholicism and a church already in the midst of reform long before Luther nailed his theses to a door in Germany. The fall of Granada marked the definitive defeat of the Moors in 1492, and forced conversions of Jews and Muslims were a precursor to the evangelization of the new world that would follow, with new catechetical and liturgical forms emerging including a brief restoration of the fourth and fifth century catechumenate. With the support of the Spanish monarchs, the Franciscans promoted a reform of the diocesan clergy that met with only limited success. The evangelization of the new world was also motivated by millennialist theologies. The conversion of new world—an eschatological term—was understood as the spiritual inauguration of a universal and apostolic church.

than Tridentine.<sup>45</sup> Despite Pope Gregory VII's attempts to impose the Roman rite throughout Europe in the eleventh century, those on the Iberian peninsula largely preferred the Mozarabic rite and even churches who used the Roman rite often imported elements of the Mozarabic rite into their liturgies. For example, the giving of *arras* (thirteen coins), the use of the *lazo* (a cord or rope tied around the couple), and the veiling of the bride and groom's shoulders all became common elements of the marriage rite in both the Iberian peninsula and the Americas. As the clergy began to embrace the conciliar reforms and the Tridentine mass gradually replaced the Mozarabic rite in the Americas, these elements came to be perceived as "popular practices" although they originated in the official liturgical rites of medieval Spain.

This medieval Hispanic Catholicism also proved much more adaptable to the local cultures of the new world than the more unified, dogmatic Catholicism that emerged from the Council of Trent. Missionaries—Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians—treated evangelization as a work of translation, of re-presenting and embedding Christianity in the language and forms of the people. Virgilio Elizondo argues that in the initial evangelization of the Americas, Christianity was "not so much superimposed upon as implanted and naturalized *in*" the American ways of life.<sup>46</sup> The concern for doctrine that in Europe produced written catechisms in the Americas produced new forms of songs, rituals, and symbols that incorporated familiar practices of the newly encountered populations. These

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<sup>45</sup> On this, see the important work of Mexican historian Luis Weckman, *The Medieval Heritage of Mexico* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992).

<sup>46</sup> Virgilio Elizondo, *Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise*, trans. Eva Fleishner (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), 32.

popular practices offered a cultural frame in which Christian liturgies, feasts, and sacraments could be easily understood.

Recent studies in architecture, art, and liturgy during the early years of colonialization have found important similarities between Mesoamerican and Hispanic forms and practices. Missionaries made regular use of these similarities in their efforts to communicate the Christian faith to the people. For example, Jaime Lara has tracked the development of Eucharistic imagery in sixteenth-century Mexico and Peru, showing how the missionary friars re-interpreted the worship of the sun as devotion to the Eucharist.<sup>47</sup> Importantly, the similarities in practice and belief that facilitated this popular catechesis also made it possible for the Mesoamerican peoples to accept Christianity without necessarily undermining their existing core beliefs and understandings. These sunburst images carried the Christian confession, but they were not limited to it.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> In Mexico, Lara writes, the presence of solar imagery on images of the cross suggests a reinterpretation of the Aztec ritual of human sacrifices as being supplanted by the one sacrifice of Christ. For the Incas in Peru, the sun was worshiped as the source of life. Monstrances for the display of the Eucharistic host were constructed in the form of sunbursts and “Eucharistic balconies” were constructed on the east sides of churches where the Eucharist was exposed at sunrise following morning mass. Jaime Lara, “The Sacramental Sun: Solar Eucharistic Worship in Colonial Latin America,” in *El Cuerpo de Cristo: The Hispanic Presence in the US Catholic Church*, ed. Peter Casarella and Raúl Gómez (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 261–91.

<sup>48</sup> The exact relation between pre-Columbian and colonial practices and rituals in Mesoamerica is still debated. William Taylor cautions that while both old and new continuities observed by historians and anthropologists are striking, “to focus mainly on one set or the other leaves the impression that change in the colonial period was either sweeping or superficial, that the new or the old either replaced or succeeded in fending off the other, or that the two largely glided along separate tracks without much interaction.” William B. Taylor, *Theater of a Thousand Wonders: A History of Miraculous Images and Shrines in New Spain*, Cambridge Latin American Studies ; 103 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 139. Taylor’s concern and mine is that neither of these accounts attends to the formative years in which these cultures, religions, persons, symbols, and practices interacted. In addition, each approach tends towards the assumption of religious and cultural homogeneity that the historical evidence simply does not support. Although Taylor observes a growing consensus that something much more complex and varied was going on in terms of faith and devotional practice, the specifics of this narrative remain elusive. The specifics

The missionaries also brought a medieval creativity to the new world. They developed new ritual practices that communicated the core gospel narratives in a simple and enjoyable manner. One such practice, the Christmas *Posada*, Augustinian missionaries invented as a catechetical tool. In this ritual reenactment, “Mary,” “Joseph,” and a “donkey” move from house to house, seeking shelter (*posada*) and a birthplace for the infant Christ. Elizondo notes that despite the clerical origins of this practice, the *posadas* were and are “retained and transmitted from generation to generation by the *people*” without written rituals or scripts.<sup>49</sup> Similar ritual reenactments were also popular during Holy Week. These practices not only brought the gospel narratives into the neighborhoods, homes, and lives of the people, they also reinforced the intimate relationship between the believer and their God and created a domestic frame for the official liturgical celebrations of the church. Mark Francis writes, “While these customs did not usually change the liturgy itself, they “framed” the official worship of the church, offering a context in which the liturgy was to be understood by the people.”<sup>50</sup> In contrast to medieval Europe, in the Americas we find an inverse relationship between the official liturgical rites of the church and more popular forms of worship. Whereas clergy in medieval Europe used the official liturgical rites to frame practices like pilgrimage, in the new world popular practices framed the official rites of the church. Both situations point to the gradual emergence of a distinction between

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need not be settled here in order to affirm that it was these cultural similarities that made acceptance of Christianity by the indigenous populations possible. At the same time, the multivalent nature of these symbols and practices allowed for both an affirmation and reinterpretation of Christianity in this new context. That is to say, understandings of the Christian faith, both doctrinal and lived, expanded along with the numbers of the faithful.

<sup>49</sup> Elizondo and Matovina, *Mestizo Worship*, 8, 10. Emphasis in original.

<sup>50</sup> Francis, “Liturgy and Popular Piety in Historical Perspective,” 38.

official forms and popular practices, a distinction that promotes the authority of the clergy and the priority of official liturgical rites.

While the Tridentine reforms that facilitated a more definitive division between liturgy and popular practice could certainly be felt even across the ocean, the evangelization of Mesoamerica illustrates once again that this line is often blurred in practice. Even popular practices in these areas often bear the mark of clerical origins. Some of these so-called popular practices are simply a preservation of earlier liturgical diversity. A change in liturgical discipline could reframe the interpretation of some ritual actions from liturgical to popular, despite their geneses in official liturgical rites. On the other hand, the translation of the faith into vernacular symbols and forms resulted in an expansion of liturgical practice and symbolic valence. Practices like the Christmas *Posada* represent a collaboration between the missionaries and the evangelized and an inculturation of Christian narratives, symbols, and ideas in the cultures of the people. These new ritual forms and symbols are frequently incorporated into official liturgies, whether as ritual frames or as ritual elements. These new forms are also multivalent, carrying the deposit of the Christian confession, while not being limited to it.

The example of Mesoamerica also calls our attention to the way popular piety can function as a means of resisting oppression and preserving cultural identity in the face of political alienation. For centuries, only persons of Spanish descent were admitted to holy orders and thus the division between lay and clergy also served as a symbol of the distinction between conqueror and conquered. The official liturgies of the church were perceived as rites exclusive to the cultural elite. Popular religious practices were celebrated in the language of the people and presided over by their own lay leaders. These popular

liturgies usually centered on the home and the family and allowed access to God without dependence on clerical authority. They also provided indigenous communities an avenue for maintaining their own political and religious identity. Virgilio Elizondo and Timothy Matovina argue that these popular forms function as a response to the people's history of conquest.<sup>51</sup> They can function as forms of resistance—a “people's liturgy” born of the reception of Christianity by a particular people, not dependent on the same clergy who often also brought oppression.

In Europe, the church through the liturgical reforms of the Council of Trent sought to standardize the official liturgies of the church and situate Christian worship predominately within the boundaries of the parish church. Although the official liturgy of the church was promoted as the highest form of Christian worship, the reforms created little room for lay liturgical participation. As such, the liturgy itself was easily reduced to a site and object of lay devotionism. Popular devotions continued, but even these were redirected away from local objects of devotion towards universal symbols, doctrines, and practices. Situating the devotional life of the people within the confines of the parish ensured clerical authorization and control over even popular practices. These experiences reflect a shift in the religious sensibilities of a post-Tridentine church that no longer tolerated a plurality of liturgical forms. Yet as the church spread out from the European continent, a medieval attitude often prevailed as missionaries found popular liturgies useful for evangelization.

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<sup>51</sup> Elizondo and Matovina, *Mestizo Worship*, 4.

In contrast to the European context, the new world preserved liturgical diversity by keeping elements from older liturgical forms at the same time as developing new lay-led forms in the language and customs of the indigenous peoples. Where official liturgical forms closely associated with the clergy came to represent the religion of the political conqueror, popular practices also became vehicles to preserve local, cultural identities in the face of oppression. Within the context of the church's colonial evangelization efforts, the distinction between liturgy and popular piety also bespeaks a distinction between elite, European forms and popular, indigenous forms of Christian worship that perpetuated an attitude of European cultural superiority wrapped in liturgical language. From the perspective of the conquered and evangelized people of the Americas, the distinction also preserved local identities in the face of domination. Trent's universalization of the official liturgies sought to unite a disparate church through shared practice; in the Americas, the very particularity of popular practices also supported this universalization or reception of the Christian faith without destroying the local identity of a population. As the church moved further into the modern era, its efforts to impose universal liturgies as a replacement for local rituals further marginalized not only these popular forms of worship, but also those communities who already knew a history of oppression by the church and its allies.

### **Liturgical and Popular Renewal Movements**

The Tridentine logic that drew a tight, clerical boundary around liturgical practice was likewise the impetus for movements of liturgical renewal in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The changing social conditions in continental Europe in the nineteenth century left many Catholics coping with the challenges posed by industrialization and

migration, while still reeling from attacks on the church launched by modernist thinkers and political reformers. Liturgical reformers saw the renewal of the church and the renewal of liturgical practice as inexorably connected; a revival of the church could not happen without a revival of the church's prayer. In this spirit, a liturgical logic that largely excluded lay participation in the liturgy was seen as problematic. Instead of challenging the logic that limited liturgical practice to official forms presided over by the clergy, liturgical reformers advocated for greater lay involvement in the official liturgies of the church.

### *Liturgical Renewal*

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the church continued to promote popular practices centered on the universal symbols and beliefs of the church. Increasingly, efforts to regulate and promote these practices produced a popular European devotionalism that was both more clerically controlled and centered around the authority of the papacy.<sup>52</sup> The effect of these efforts was to establish the Eucharistic liturgy as the primary *object* of popular devotion. Cognizant of the boundaries that Trent had drawn around the church's worship, reformers found this form of lay "participation" in the liturgy

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<sup>52</sup> Mark Francis rightly points out that this growing European devotionalism cannot be understood apart from the growing Ultramontanism that saw centralization of ecclesial power in the papacy as a powerful response to the Enlightenment and the persecution of the church unleashed by nationalist revolutions in Europe—especially in France and Italy. The growing concern of Rome for promoting approved devotions through the granting of indulgences is a clear reflection of this trend. Ann Taves has noted that this increasing papal influence not only standardized practice, it also subordinated devotions to Mary and the saints to devotion to the Eucharist. "Saints were played down relative to Jesus and Mary; Mary was subordinated, at least in theory, to Jesus; and the sacramental were subordinated, again at least in theory, to the sacraments." Ann Taves, *The Household of Faith: Roman Catholic Devotions in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 102. Mark Francis has called this the "clericalization" of popular devotion as the focus on the sacraments and especially the Eucharist enhanced the role of the clergy who retained exclusive power for effecting the object of devotion. Francis, *Local Worship, Global Church*, 132.

insufficient and sought to incorporate the laity more fully into the liturgical event, an event that was increasingly perceived as being open only to the clergy<sup>53</sup> The various liturgical renewal movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries aimed at “popularizing” the Eucharistic liturgy in the sense that the liturgy was promoted as an act of worship in which the entire people of God could participate.

In France, the Benedictine priest Dom Prosper Guéranger was one of many Catholics who worked for the reestablishment of the church after the devastation wrought by the French Revolution. Guéranger believed the path to renewal ran through a renewal of its liturgy and he promoted the Roman Rite as the source of an ecclesial spirituality open to clergy and laity alike. In his fifteen-volume work *L'Année Liturgique*, Guéranger provides daily reflections on the mass of the day that placed liturgical texts alongside historical commentary and spiritual reflections.<sup>54</sup> The Belgian diocesan priest Dom Lambert shared Guéranger’s view that the liturgy should be at the center of every Christian’s devotion. His address to the Congress of Catholic Works at Malines in 1909 advocated for restoring the liturgy to the people by its celebration in vernacular languages. By “popularizing” the

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<sup>53</sup> There is no single consensus on the start of the liturgical movement. Rather than a single movement, it is perhaps better understood as collection of moves and movements especially within nineteenth-century Europe that gradually gained momentum. In an early prelude to these movements, the 1786 Synod of Pistoia attempted to reform the liturgy and increase lay participation by calling for the use of the vernacular masses. While seeking fuller inclusion of the laity in the official liturgies of the church, it also called for greater control over popular practices and condemned popular devotions. Because of its top-down approach to eliminating popular practices and its advocacy for a more decentralized liturgy, it was ultimately rejected by people and Pope alike. Pope Pius VI condemned the synod in 1794 in his bull *Auctorem Fidei*.

<sup>54</sup> Guéranger began this work in 1841 and produced nine volumes before his death in 1875. The remaining volumes were written by another Benedictine in his name.

Eucharistic liturgy, such reformers implied the superiority of official liturgies and delegitimized practices of popular piety.

Reformers often juxtaposed popular practices with the Eucharist. In France, Guéranger's devotional texts appealed primarily to the educated elite, who tended to look with indifference or suspicion on popular practices as a form of prayer influenced by both superstition and illiteracy.<sup>55</sup> The American liturgist William Busch, for example, was concerned that popular devotions fostered a problematic Christian individualism.

Undoubtedly there is something amiss in the present quality of Catholic spirituality. Our devotional life and hence our whole mentality as Catholics, is individualistic, and the chief reason for this is to be found in an examination of our prayer books. The individualistic character of modern prayer literature cannot fail to impress itself upon our life and dim our social vision. But the official liturgical prayers of the church, which we do not use, or which we use so privately and mechanically as not to count, are filled through and through with that very spirit for which you are so justly pleading. We have lost that sense of Christian neighborliness and the kingdom of God on earth which the liturgy teaches.<sup>56</sup>

Where the reformers rejected popular practices, they held up the liturgy as the healing balm for these same ills—if only it were celebrated with the same zeal and active participation by which Catholics approached these popular forms.

By accepting the logic that the liturgy was inherently superior to all other forms of prayer, these reformers were indeed advocates for the laity of the church. Given the centrality of the Eucharist for the Christian faith, it was clearly problematic to draw its boundaries in a way that excludes real and active participation (and not merely intellectual assent) by the majority of Catholics. In 1903, Pope Pius X affirmed this attitude when he wrote that the faithful assimilated the “true Christian spirit” by drawing from its primary

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<sup>55</sup> Francis, *Local Worship, Global Church*, 135.

<sup>56</sup> William Busch, letter to the editor, *Commonweal*, 1925. Quoted in Francis, 137.

source, which is active participation in “the most holy mysteries and from the solemn public prayer of the Church.”<sup>57</sup> To this end, Pius X also advocated for the weekly and even daily reception of the Eucharist by all of the Christian faithful.<sup>58</sup> The implications of this reform suggest first a lack of regular attendance and participation in the Eucharist by the laity. As Ricky Manalo notes, “It also constitutes a privileging of daily Eucharist over and above all other everyday practices of popular religion.”<sup>59</sup> Efforts to open the boundaries to greater liturgical participation were coming at the expense of popular practices.

Liturgical reformers’ suspicion of popular devotions became so prevalent that Pope Pius XII’s liturgical encyclical *Mediator Dei* (1947) defended these “pious practices” against those who “are deceived under the pretext of restoring the liturgy or who idly claim that only liturgical rites are of any real value and dignity” by reasserting the Tridentine logic that held both universal popular devotion and the official liturgies together as unifying practices of the church.<sup>60</sup>

From these multiple forms of piety, the inspiration and action of the Holy Spirit cannot be absent. Their purpose is, in various ways, to attract and direct our souls to God...Besides, since they develop a deeper spiritual life of the faithful, they prepare them to take part in sacred public functions with greater fruit, and they lessen the danger of liturgical prayers becoming an empty ritualism.<sup>61</sup>

In this encyclical, Pius XII insists that popular practices are both charismatic acts of worship and that they increase the efficaciousness of liturgical participation. Furthermore, while making a theoretical distinction between liturgy and popular practices, Pius XII notes

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<sup>57</sup> Pius X, “Tra Le Sollecitudini” (Motu proprio, November 22, 1903).

<sup>58</sup> Pius X, “Sacra Tridentina Synodus” (1905).

<sup>59</sup> Manalo, *The Liturgy of Life*, 40.

<sup>60</sup> Pius XII, “Mediator Dei” (1947), para. 176.

<sup>61</sup> “Mediator Dei,” para 175.

how these categories are often muddled in practice. He writes that particular exercises of piety, “while not strictly belonging to the sacred liturgy...may be considered in a certain way to be an addition to the liturgical cult.”<sup>62</sup> Keeping in mind that he almost certainly had in mind the official forms of European devotionalism that had developed in earlier centuries and not a broad concept of popular religion, Pius XII argued that these popular devotions can properly be considered “liturgical” if they nurture more fruitful participation in the Eucharistic liturgy or if they allow access to or reflection on the mysteries of redemption or the communion of saints. Put more simply, *liturgical practices* included those practices that facilitated an efficacious encounter with the universal symbols of the church.

Yet the momentum of the liturgical reformers was difficult to resist. In September 1958, only weeks before Pope Pius XII’s death, the Sacred Congregation of Rites issued an Instruction on Sacred Music and Sacred Liturgy (*De Musica Sacra et Sacra Liturgia*), which once again set forth the concept of liturgy in distinction to popular piety.<sup>63</sup> In this instruction, liturgy is limited to those rites instituted by either Jesus Christ or the church and carried out by the prescriptions of texts approved by Rome; thus, only forms of

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<sup>62</sup> “Mediator Dei,” para 182.

<sup>63</sup> “‘Liturgical ceremonies’ are sacred rites instituted by Jesus Christ or the Church; they are carried out by persons lawfully appointed, and according to the prescriptions of liturgical books approved by the Holy See; their purpose is to give due worship to God, the Saints, and the Blessed (cf. canon 1256). Any other services, whether performed inside or outside the church, are called ‘pious exercises,’ even though a priest is present or conducts them.” Sacred Congregation for Rites, “Instruction on Sacred Music and Sacred Liturgy” (1958), para. 1. While the Latin text uses “*pia exercitia*,” some more recent English translations prefer “private devotion” to “pious exercises,” a decidedly poor choice that compounds the ambiguity of the phrase and perpetuates a misunderstanding of the distinction here as one of public versus private practices, rather than a specification of universal versus local practice.

worship which are regulated in the standard liturgical books (Missal, Breviary, Pontifical, etc) may be properly considered liturgical. All other practices, whether they take place within or outside of the church, whether they are presided over by clergy or not, are called *pia exercitia*, “pious exercises.”<sup>64</sup> In practice, most bishops found this distinction insufficient and objected to a liturgical authority located only in Rome. In response to their requests for clarification, the Congregation of Rites added a further delineation of local practice.

Collective, public celebrations presided over by the local ordinary or pastor were given liturgical status. These public liturgies that were authorized at the episcopal level were

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<sup>64</sup> In context, the distinction performs a particular juridical function that limits Vatican regulation of local liturgies. Joseph Jungmann notes that a more inclusive definition of liturgy would imply that “Roman legislation intended to govern everything that we in the individual countries of Christendom have hitherto cultivated and called liturgy, including all vernacular services and the whole field of liturgical renewal and pastoral endeavor. This, however, is expressly denied by the Instruction” (616). Rather, Jungmann argues, this instruction describes two strata of public worship—*liturgy*, which falls under papal law, and *pia exercitia*, which falls under episcopal law. Jungmann holds that these linguistic distinctions between liturgy and popular piety ought not to be of primary concern. “What is important is that we see the worship which we conduct with our faithful as a living whole. We should avoid the attitude that only that which is prescribed by Rome is worth having and that everything else is but chaff which the wind may blow away and which therefore isn’t worth our serious pastoral attention. Rather in both strata of public worship the same Spirit must be at work, if in a different manner” (620). Consistently, this *Instruction* insists on the primacy of the Eucharist and other liturgical texts regulated by the Holy See, but also encourages the flowering of more creative public liturgies under the direction of local ordinaries. Josef A. Jungmann, “Pia Exercitia and Liturgy,” *Worship* 33, no. 10 (November 1959): 616–622.

In this discourse, the distinction between *liturgy* and *pious exercises* functions in a juridical sense to construct boundaries of authority for the regulation of public worship practices between the universal magisterium and the local ordinary. In this distinction, the liturgical boundary is drawn closely around those rites that emanate from Rome and which are regulated primarily through the standardized use of liturgical texts and rubrics. In limiting *the liturgy* only to these centralized rites of the church, this distinction also constructs a liturgical priority for these rites that reflects an ecclesial priority which strengthens the ecclesial authority in the Vatican. It is not an accident that the nineteenth century also saw the formal strengthening of the papacy in the First Vatican Council’s dogmatic definitions of papal primacy and papal infallibility. Jungmann’s exhortation has proven overly optimistic, at least from a theological perspective. Indeed, this move to draw the boundaries of liturgy tightly around these centralized and Romanized rites has encouraged the attitude that other forms of worship are not worth our sustained theological attention.

renamed *sacra exercitia*. Personal devotional practices continued to be referred to as *pia exercitia*. In this definition, the distinction between liturgical and popular forms gains additional criteria. First, practices are categorized according to whether they have an essentially public or private nature. Public prayer, prayer celebrated in public or ecclesial spaces, is liturgical while prayer celebrated in private spaces like the home is not. Related to this, the *Congregation* also defined liturgical prayer according to leadership, with prayer presided over by the local ordinary or pastor being properly liturgical, and prayer led by lay leaders not being so, even if in the context of a public celebration. Consistently, the distinction between liturgical and popular is defined according to ecclesial authority, whether textual, spatial, or presidential.

That these two documents, *Mediator Dei* and the *Instruction* on sacred music, appear at best inconsistent is not surprising, for they represent two logics at work in the years preceding the Second Vatican Council. Pius XII's *Mediator Dei* is consistent with a Tridentine logic that employed the dichotomy of liturgical and popular practice first to assert the primacy of the official, sacramental rites of the as ordered and celebrated by the clergy, and second to redefine popular practice as devotion to the universal symbols and doctrines of the church. In effect, Pius XII offers only a mild reformulation of this logic when he asserts that both practices, sacramental and devotional, are liturgical to the extent that they center on the universal truths and symbols of the faith. Thus, a pilgrim devotion to the Immaculate Conception and participation in the Eucharist are both oriented around the truth of Jesus' saving work of the Incarnation and can in a similar sense be affirmed as liturgical practice.

Classifying liturgical practice according to ecclesial authority and leadership has certain affinities with the Council of Trent, but it particularly resonates with the concerns of the First Vatican Council, which defined the dogmas of papal primacy and papal infallibility. The centralization and clericalization that developed in the church's treatment of both official rites and popular devotions has, in the *Instruction*, become the animating logic for distinguishing between liturgical and popular practice. Movements for liturgical renewal represent a third logic, which affirms the superiority and often the exclusivity of the sacramental rites and especially the Eucharist but advocates for the de-clericalization of the liturgy and an increased role for the laity in these rites. Advocates of this liturgical "popularization" aim not so much to collapse the distinction between liturgical and popular devotions as to render popular practices unnecessary. In this logic, popular practices, whether official or unofficial, represent an impoverishment of liturgical spirituality.

### *The Grotto of Lourdes*

In the wake of the Council of Trent, both Catholics and Protestants looked with suspicion upon certain activities like pilgrimages. The rejection of these popular practices was a direct consequence of this redefinition of devotional life towards the universal. However, the practice of pilgrimage again resists an easy categorization as either a universal devotion promoted by the church or a practice borne of superstition. Pilgrimages to the Vatican were promoted as public witnesses to the universality and authority of Rome. Increasingly, the Pope became the objective destination of Catholic pilgrims. Modern pilgrimages also developed to sites of reported Marian apparitions. These apparitions contained both medieval and modern characteristics—a mix of local particularity and universal appeal, of the miraculous and the doctrinal. Mary's appearance was often

associated with a particular place—a cave, a hill, a spring—that as a result was said to have miraculous properties of healing. These Marian cults and their accompanying pilgrimages initially drew the objection and ire of local clergy, but some were eventually embraced and used to further promote universal symbols and dogmas. The intellectual participation Nathan Mitchell noted in the Tridentine liturgies finds its parallel in the redefinition of popular practices like pilgrimage since all of these universal popular devotions were essentially doctrinal devotions that fostered both an intellectual understanding and an emotional attachment to the teachings of the Catholic Church. There is perhaps no better example of this redefinition of local devotions to universal, doctrinal devotion than the development of the Lourdes pilgrimage in France.

On February 11, 1858, a young French girl found something unexpected at a grotto outside of the small village of Lourdes, near the Pyrenees mountains. Bernadette Soubirous was the only one of her three companions to see the young woman in white, but subsequent visions brought more and more people to witness her apparent ecstasy. First her family, then local women and the poor, and finally more general local crowds began to follow her to the grotto to witness her visions for themselves, despite the skepticism and concern of the local priest. Soon the apparition, known to Bernadette only as *Aquéro* (“that one” in the local dialect), began to offer directions: pray for the conversion of sinners, bring a candle, scratch the earth to uncover a spring, tell the priests to come in procession and build a chapel. We can recognize in these instructions a curious mix of what Mark Francis calls “official piety” approved by the church—praying for sinners, the establishment of processions led by the clergy, the construction of an official chapel—and elements of a

more popular piety that interacts with the natural setting and elements.<sup>65</sup> This mix of official and popular reached their climax in the interpretation of events on March 25 of that same year, the feast of the Annunciation.

By this point, Bernadette's popularity had grown and large crowds gathered regularly to witness her visions.<sup>66</sup> To Bernadette's repeated questions, the lady finally identified herself: "Que soy era Immaculada Concepciou" (*I am the Immaculate Conception*).<sup>67</sup> Bernadette's report of this name sounded odd to the ears of those gathered from the nearby village. Its linguistic awkwardness underscored the apparent novelty of the title. Ruth Harris writes, "It was as if the apparition had said she was beauty rather than that she was beautiful, for the Virgin Mary was called the *Mère immaculée*, the *Vierge immaculée*, but never the Immaculate Conception."<sup>68</sup> The unconventionality of the revelation bolstered Bernadette's credibility. Her status as a young, uneducated, and poor woman made it seem unlikely that she would have been conversant with the recent dogmatic promulgations in Rome.

Four years before Bernadette's visions began, Pope Pius IX had officially defined the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as universally held dogma.<sup>69</sup> His apostolic

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<sup>65</sup> Mark R. Francis, "Liturgy and Popular Piety in Historical Perspective," 39.

<sup>66</sup> By some accounts, as many as eight hundred people. Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age*, (New York: Viking, 1999), 8.

<sup>67</sup> This phrase holds particular import for the eventual acceptance and promotion of devotion to Lourdes and in fact distinguishes the apparitions of Lourdes from similar sightings of the Virgin in the Pyrenees mountains in previous decades.

<sup>68</sup> Harris, *Lourdes*, 8.

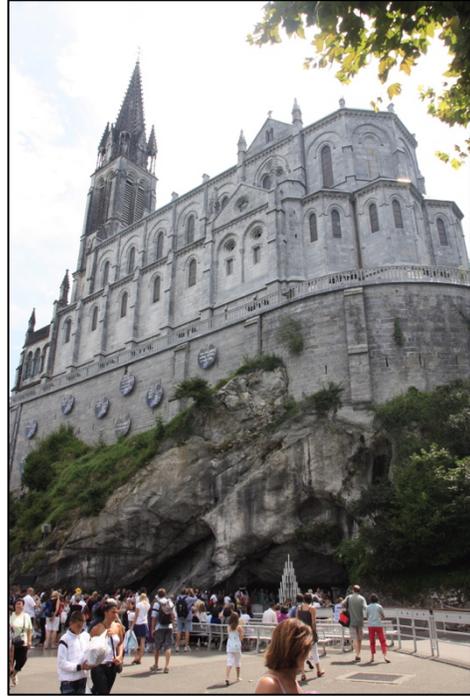
<sup>69</sup> "We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful." Pius IX, "Ineffabilis Deus" (1854).

constitution *Ineffabilis Deus* defends Pope Pius's definition of the dogma not only through doctrinal reasoning, but also by reference to the ongoing liturgical and devotional practices of the faithful. The liturgical feast of Mary's conception was celebrated in many local churches and public veneration was evident not only in individual devotions, but by various communities taking Mary as their patron saint under the title "The Immaculate Conception." In the years preceding Bernadette's visions, the Immaculate Conception had quietly grown from a scattered popular devotion to a dogmatic articulation of the church. The timing of Bernadette's report was instrumental in its reception. Bernadette's vision brought together a rural piety with the dogmatic agenda of Rome. The devotion was both "popular" in that it arose from within a local community and "doctrinal" in that it confirmed and promoted adherence to church teachings. The authority of both the popular and the official reinforced one another in Bernadette's visions at Lourdes.

Despite the coherence of the official and the popular, the local bishop met Bernadette's visions with suspicion. Locals witnessed Bernadette's final vision on July 16 only from a distance as authorities had boarded up all access to the site of the grotto. In the years immediately following the visions, church leaders regularly confiscated items left at the grotto and even sought to restrict access completely for a time, concerned about the explosion of superstition among the untrained masses. By the time the bishop officially embraced Bernadette's apparitions in 1962, the grotto was already attracting pilgrims from Paris—and then, when word of the apparitions and miracles occurring at the grotto spread, pilgrims from all over Europe and the Americas. Yet increasing marginalization of Bernadette herself accompanied this increasing official acceptance and promotion of devotion and pilgrimage to Lourdes. While the clergy transformed the Grotto into a site for

official devotions, Bernadette spent the rest of her life in a convent, hundreds of miles away from the place she had brought to life.

The official recognition of Bernadette's visions led to an immediate transformation of the Lourdes grotto in France under the care of the diocesan bishop. While a preservation of the natural quality of the landscape was understood to be significant, efforts were ultimately made to transform a wild and unruly site into one more picturesque, accessible, and aesthetically



*Figure 2*

consistent with other official shrines. Early on, the interior of the cave was excavated and used to extend the embankment so that ever-increasing crowds could gather. A tree-lined promenade was planted to create a single processional route from the forest to the cave. A metal grill was erected, creating a barrier between the pilgrims and the interior of the cave. In 1872, the massive Basilica that sits on the hill above the grotto was completed and from that point on, it was the Basilica, not the grotto, that dominated the landscape (Figure 2). In the wake of the apparitions at the grotto, the landscape itself was rewritten to promote the doctrinal devotion of Lourdes over the more popular elements of the miraculous.

Like the landscape, the narrative accounts of Lourdes also attempted to rewrite Bernadette's apparitions. It was initially eye-witnesses to her visions who passed on the narrative of Bernadette and Lourdes. These first-hand accounts by the local population did much to establish the authenticity of the visions, though they were ultimately subsumed in

the construction of official narratives of the experience.<sup>70</sup> Bernadette's retreat from Lourdes in 1866 and the transfer of the Lourdes grotto from parish to diocesan control around the same time prompted two different and competing narratives of the grotto experience. Pierre-Rémi Sempé and Jean-Marie Duboë' wrote *Petite histoire de Notre-Dame du Lourdes* to promote a careful and orthodox history of Bernadette's life and visions. Published in 1868, it presented Bernadette as little more than an example of perfected piety and lauded the bishop's role in recognizing and confirming her visions. In contrast, Henri Lasserre's *Notre-Dame de Lourdes* emphasized the miraculous and presented a romantic account of Catholic populism. Published in 1869, Lasserre's text was an instant bestseller.<sup>71</sup> Despite its harsh tone towards the religious elite, Lasserre's text won commendation by Pope Pius IX on the eve of the First Vatican Council.<sup>72</sup> However, the Garrison Fathers, including Sempré and Duboë, were largely responsible for the development of early liturgical rituals at Lourdes and it is primarily their ritual rather than their narrative that endured and preserved their intentionally doctrinal interpretation of the shrine by redirecting pilgrim devotion to the liturgical celebrations of the basilica rather than the devotional celebrations of the cave below.

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<sup>70</sup> Ruth Harris describes how early accounts of Bernadette's visions by witnesses focus not on the content of the messages received, but on descriptions of Bernadette's body in ecstasy. Harris writes, "It was not what she said, but the nature of her trance, the movement of her hands, and the quality of her tears that persuaded." Harris, *Lourdes*, 71.

<sup>71</sup> The portrayal of Bernadette as both humble and ignorant, the testing of the water by scientific experts, and even the initial objection of the clergy all serve in this narrative to emphasize the miraculous against objections of some that Lourdes was either a ruse perpetrated by Bernadette and her family to exhort gullible believers for some sort of financial gain or a stunt by the clergy to shore up their power and claim convenient evidence for their teachings. The refuting of these earthly motivations in Lasserre's discourse leaves only one possible explanation remaining—the miraculous intervention of the Mother of God.

<sup>72</sup> Pius IX, Letter of September 4, 1869, to Henri Lasserre: Vatican Secret Archives, Ep. lat. anno 1869, n. 388, f. 695.

The Canadian pilgrim William O'Connor recorded his experience at the shrine in 1874.

On arriving at Lourdes, the Pilgrims went in solemn procession to the holy Grotto, where the Blessed Virgin appeared to Bernadetta, and where she caused the miraculous spring to flow from the solid rock. At the head of the line was the magnificent Banner of Lourdes, carried by one of the pilgrims; next came the ladies of the pilgrimage walking two by two, then the American flag presented by the students of Georgetown College. The gentlemen of the Pilgrimage came behind the flag and the procession was closed by the priests and the Rt. Rev. Bishop Dwenger. The Magnificat was sung and the Holy Rosary recited by us on our way through the streets...We entered the magnificent temple which far exceeded my expectations, the organ meanwhile pealing out a joyous march. Vespers were immediately commenced by Rt. Rev. Bishop Dwenger. After the Magnificat, the bishop delivered a touching address on devotion to the Blessed Mother of God. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament closed the service at the Church. We then marched down to the Grotto, reciting the rosary, knelt, and prayed for our Pilgrimage and for those whom we left behind.<sup>73</sup>

In 1874, the liturgical rituals at the Grotto of Lourdes were still coalescing, but one can identify even here what would become the hallmarks of Lourdes devotion: approaching the shrine in procession, the singing or recitation of Marian prayers, liturgical celebrations in the church, and only after all of these things, intercessory prayers at the Grotto. The use of procession, kneeling, and the recitation of the Magnificat and the Rosary introduced official texts and movements into the experience. And yet despite the careful orchestration of an official piety, the popular could not be entirely restrained, as we see in O'Connor's description of his return to the grotto by himself that evening:

It is a sight which once seen can never be forgotten, to see them all kneeling on the ground, Bishops, priests, and people reciting the Rosary and Litany aloud before a statue of our Blessed Lady in the very Grotto where she appeared to Bernadetta, to see them kissing the rock, touching it with their beads, medals and prayer books, drinking from the fountain and lighting candles in honor of our Blessed Lady, until the whole place was a blaze of light.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> William O'Conner, *Pilgrimage to Lourdes and Rome* (Guelph, Ont.: n.p., 1993), 14–15.

<sup>74</sup> O'Conner, *Pilgrimage to Lourdes and Rome*, 15.

While we again read descriptions of recited prayers and kneeling, these are followed by practices that evoke the miraculous: insistence on direct physical contact with the rock and the water—kissing, pressing, drinking—and lighting candles. These rituals seem more informed by Lasserre’s miraculous narrative than the Garrison Fathers’ pious orthodoxy. While shaped by competing narratives, the liturgical-devotional practices together coalesce what appears in narrative and landscape as competing or even contradictory claims of official and popular devotion. The composition of devotion at Lourdes through landscape, ritual, and narrative thus holds within it competing claims of a wild, unkempt Catholic populism convinced that miracles can and do happen and an orthodox taming of the experience focused on the content of the apparitions themselves and the affirmation of the official dogma of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>75</sup>

The example of Lourdes is indicative of the nineteenth-century renewal of popular practice. Sites of popular renewal were places of the negotiation of two distinctive types of popular devotion: the official devotions concerned with promoting the universal symbols and doctrines of the church and local or popular devotions which relied on the particularity of the place, narrative, and events to convey direct access to the divine. Lourdes eventually won acceptance as a universal devotion due to its close adherence to recently defined doctrine. Thus, by promoting pilgrimage to Lourdes, the church could cultivate assent to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and confirm its own authority to define doctrine

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<sup>75</sup> These competing narratives that emerged early in the Shrine’s establishment continue today, with competing expectations of the miraculous and the spiritual. See John Eade, “Order and Power at Lourdes: Lay Helpers and the Organization of a Pilgrimage Shrine,” in *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*, ed. John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow (London; New York: Routledge, 1991), 51–76.

for the faithful worldwide. The development of the Lourdes pilgrimage, helped along by the hagiographic writing of narrative, landscape, and ritual, easily fit the logic of the modern church as a practice of popular piety or devotion. And yet Lourdes also offers evidence of the continual renewal of a popular Catholicism still present on the margins, initiated at the local level, and sustaining a logic of belief not always consistent with the logic of Rome, a belief that miracles can and still do happen.

The interpretation of the practice of pilgrimage to Lourdes in the twentieth century also offers evidence of a subtle shift, first in practice and then in interpretation, to reframe the pilgrimage in a Eucharistic key. Pius XII's encyclical *Le Pèlerinage de Lourdes*, written ten years after *Mediator Dei*, is suggestive of this shift.

Everything about Mary raises us to the praise of the adorable Trinity; and so it was that Bernadette, praying her rosary before the grotto, learned from the words and bearing of the Blessed Virgin how she should give glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are pleased in this centenary year to adopt as Our home the homage rendered by Saint Pius X: "The unique glory of the shrine of Lourdes lies in the fact that people are drawn there from everywhere by Mary to adore Jesus Christ in the august Sacrament, so that this shrine—at once a center of Marian devotion and a throne of the Eucharistic mystery—surpasses in glory, it seems, all others in the Catholic world.<sup>76</sup>

Here, the Lourdes pilgrimage is reinterpreted in a Eucharistic frame. The Grotto draws pilgrims to the Basilica and to the Eucharistic table. Indeed, Pius XII underscores this point by cautioning against a pilgrim spirituality that seeks healing and miracles apart from the sacrament of the Eucharist. "Only on condition of a return to regular reception of the sacraments...can the great crowds expected to gather at Lourdes in 1958 yield—according to the expectations of the Immaculate Virgin herself—the fruits of salvation so necessary to

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<sup>76</sup> Pius XII, "Le Pèlerinage de Lourdes" (July 2, 1957), paras. 22–24.

mankind today.”<sup>77</sup> Still unwilling to reject popular devotion as unnecessary in light of liturgical renewal that draws people to the sacraments, nevertheless we find on the eve of the Second Vatican Council the articulation of a logic that will be embedded in the upcoming liturgical reforms.

*Popular Practice and the Liturgy at Vatican II*

With the promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the focus on increasing access and participation in the Eucharistic liturgy far eclipsed any consideration of practices of popular worship. Popular practices and local liturgies were scarcely addressed in the conciliar documents and when they were, it was always in terms of their subordination to the Eucharist. Describing the Eucharist as the source of all Christian life and the summit towards which all our activities are directed, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* limited liturgical practice to the official rites of the universal church, with the Eucharist clearly held in highest esteem. Accordingly, post-conciliar attentions turned to reforms of the sacramental liturgies of the church and the promotion of “full, active, and conscious participation” by all the faithful in these rites.

One of the enduring phrases of Vatican II describes the Eucharistic liturgy as both the source (*fons*) and summit (*culmens*) of the Christian life. The language first appears in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963) and is repeated in *Lumen Gentium* (1964) and *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (1965).<sup>78</sup> This language, perhaps more than any other, has

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<sup>77</sup> Pius XII, “Le Pèlerinage de Lourdes,” para. 42.

<sup>78</sup> “Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all its power flows...From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, grace is poured forth upon us as from a fountain, and our sanctification in Christ and the glorification of God to which all other activities of the church are directed, as toward their end, are achieved with maximum effectiveness.” Vatican Council II, “Sacrosanctum Concilium,” para. 10.

supported an exclusive priority for the Eucharist as liturgy. It is not simply the official liturgies of the church in general that are to have pride of place, but the Eucharistic liturgy in particular.<sup>79</sup> By drawing the boundaries of the liturgy ever more tightly, the Council ratified Trent's hierarchy of liturgical practices with the Eucharist alone at the top. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* then treats at length the liturgical practices, beginning with the Eucharist, followed by the other sacramental liturgies, followed by the daily office. Devotional forms, even official devotions, are largely ignored.

The Council's initial instruction on popular practices is found in paragraph 13 of the liturgical constitution, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*:

The Christian people's devotions [*pia exercitia*], provided they conform to the laws and norms of the Church, are to be highly recommended, especially when they are authorized by the Apostolic See. Devotions authorized by bishops in particular churches according to lawfully approved customs or books [*sacra exercitia*] are also held in special esteem. But such devotions [*exercitia*] should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some way derived from it, and lead the people to it, since in fact the liturgy by its very nature is far superior to any of them.<sup>80</sup>

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"Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, the source and summit of the Christian life, they offer the divine victim to God and themselves along with him." Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium," para. 11. "For this reason the Eucharist appears as the source and the summit of all preaching of the Gospel." Vatican Council II, "Presbyterorum Ordinis," para. 5. In Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations* (Dublin: Costello Pub Co, 1996).

<sup>79</sup> This was not a novel declaration, but rather an affirmation of this teaching in the Council of Trent. However, there was some concern around this formulation by some of the Council Fathers. In his classic commentary on the Council, Herbert Vorgrimler describes the misgivings that several Fathers expressed about this vague language when it was first suggested in the Constitution on the Liturgy. "In the view of the opponents [of this language], one could not say even of the Eucharist that everything without exception was ordered in relation to it and proceeded from it." Despite the significance they believed the document rightly insisted on for the Liturgy, the summit and goal of the church was rather "the salvation of souls and the glory of God; the highest virtue was not religion but love." Herbert Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 1 (New York: Crossroad, 1969), 15.

<sup>80</sup> Vatican Council II, "Sacrosanctum Concilium," in *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, ed. Austin Flannery (Dublin: Costello Pub. Co., 1996), para. 13.

This paragraph retains the recently defined distinction between *pia exercitia* and *sacra exercitia*. Of collective forms or *sacra exercitia*, the Council emphasized the teaching of the prior *Instruction* that these public liturgies are to be undertaken at the approval of the bishop (rather than the Apostolic See) and that care should be taken so that these local forms of public prayer not only are in harmony with the liturgy (especially the liturgical year), but also derive from it and lead people to it. While the document commends *pia exercitia*, the only specific instruction it gives is that they accord with the laws and norms of the church, suggesting that the instruction here is not actually a reference to all forms of popular practice but specifically to those officially ordered and promoted devotions that flourished in nineteenth-century Europe.<sup>81</sup> In this, the conciliar text still allows for certain forms of official popular devotions yet the brevity of attention they receive in the document favors those agendas of liturgical renewal that render popular practices superfluous and unnecessary in light of liturgical reforms that promote the “full, active, and conscious participation” of the faithful advanced in the subsequent paragraph.<sup>82</sup>

*Lumen Gentium*, the Constitution on the Church, which was promulgated a year later after the third session of the Council, offers further evidence of the Council’s intention to reinterpret popular practice in a Eucharistic key. A draft of a document on the veneration

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<sup>81</sup> Mark Francis writes, “The kind of popular religion described by the Council, however, is the European devotionalism...It was a devotionalism approved and promoted by ecclesiastical authority that constituted a *tertium quid* between religious practices generated by the people and those controlled by the hierarchical Church. This very focused allusion to European devotionalism, with its presumption of a symbiosis between the official liturgy and popular devotions, never really encompassed all popular religious practices, since many had developed well outside of the purview of the official ecclesiastical authority. This is especially true of non-European popular religion such as the Hispanic and Filipino that maintained an independence from clerical oversight.” Francis, *Local Worship, Global Church*, 143.

<sup>82</sup> Vatican Council II, “Sacrosanctum Concilium,” para. 14.

of the saints was subsequently incorporated into *Lumen Gentium's* chapter on the eschatological nature of the church, which insists on the purification of the cult of the saints from abuses or defects. It accomplishes this goal by locating the veneration of the saints primarily within the Eucharistic celebration. "Celebrating the Eucharistic sacrifice therefore, we are most closely united to the church in heaven in communion with and venerating the memory first of all of the glorious ever-Virgin Mary, of Blessed Joseph and the blessed apostles and martyrs and of all the saints."<sup>83</sup> Although the Constitution does allow for the faithful's invocation of the saints, it is the imitation of the saints rather than their veneration that is to be chiefly valued outside of the liturgical context.

The liturgical documents and reforms of the Second Vatican Council are generally viewed as an official endorsement of the agenda and goals of the liturgical renewal movements. Its liturgical reforms opened those centralized and clericalized liturgical rites to a full and active participation by the entire assembly. Efforts towards inculturation of the liturgy, including the possibility of celebration in the vernacular languages of the people, "popularized" the liturgy, making it more accessible across cultures and contexts. Yet by producing a liturgical discourse almost exclusively focused on the official rites of the church, the Council reinforced the recent distinction between *liturgy* and *popular piety*. It also affirmed the view of some liturgical reformers that popular religious practice is at best unnecessary and at worst a detraction from the proper devotional focus of the Christian people, which is the Eucharist. The peripheral place that the Council documents give to popular practice suggests that, given the new possibilities for active participation in the

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<sup>83</sup> Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium," in *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, ed. Austin Flannery (Dublin: Costello Pub. Co., 1996), para. 50.

Eucharistic liturgy, popular practices are of value only to the extent that they engage the Eucharist as their hermeneutical source and ultimately culminate in the Eucharistic celebration. Despite efforts to create a greater role for the laity within the Eucharistic celebration, the marginalization of popular devotions was as much a de-centering of lay-centered ritual and worship as it was a re-centering of the Eucharist.

### *Post-Conciliar Developments*

The real impact of the Council's treatment of the liturgy can be discerned only in its aftermath. The reception and interpretation of the conciliar texts have continued to establish and reinforce the centrality of the Eucharistic liturgy to the exclusion of other forms of liturgical practice. Both John Paul II and Benedict XVI continued to hold up the Eucharist as the source and summit of the church's activity.<sup>84</sup> John Paul II emphasized the Eucharist as the source of the church and the center of the Christian life. He is intent on showing how both the wide constellation of worship activities as well as works of charity and justice flow from the Eucharistic liturgy. Benedict XVI argues that the Eucharist is not only our hermeneutical lens for Christian life, but that participation in the Eucharist is itself efficacious.

Christianity's new worship includes and transfigures every aspect of life....Here the intrinsically eucharistic nature of Christian life begins to take shape. The Eucharist, since it embraces the concrete, everyday existence of the believer, makes possible, day by day, the progressive transfiguration of all those called by grace to reflect the image of the Son of God. *There is nothing authentically human—our thoughts and*

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<sup>84</sup> See John Paul II, "The Lord's Day" (1998); John Paul II, "On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church" (2003). Benedict XVI, "The Sacrament of Charity" (2007). For an extended discussion of these texts, see Manalo, *The Liturgy of Life*, 66–76.. Manalo argues that these documents "not only continue describing [the Eucharist] as source and summit, and Sunday as the center of Christian life, but demonstrate a more dynamic interplay between the Eucharist and all other worship practices, particularly those that involve acts of social justice" (66).

*affections, our words and deeds—that does not find in the sacrament of the Eucharist the form it needs to be lived to the full.*<sup>85</sup>

For both men, all worship properly conducted and construed is at its heart Eucharistic.

Scholars and church leaders alike have vigorously embraced (even co-opted) the Eucharist not only as an object of theological reflection, but also as a source of theology. In the academy, the Eucharist has served as a lens through which to re-examine most major doctrines of the faith. On a practical level, parish life revolves around the Sunday masses in which everyone can participate, either as members of the congregation or as liturgical ministers. This liturgical renewal, especially of the Sunday Eucharistic liturgy, has succeeded in many ways in fostering not only a renewed appreciation, but a true participation by many, leading to a deep Eucharistic spirituality among the faithful. To say that the church has succeeded in this goal may be premature, but it seems clear that the church is succeeding at fostering a more accessible and participatory Eucharistic liturgy. Yet what was gained from this renewed zeal for the Eucharist must now be viewed in light of what has been relativized, marginalized, or forgotten.

While popular religious practices did not disappear in the excitement of the post-conciliar reforms of the Eucharist and other official liturgical texts, the attention they received in both official church teaching and from theologians was as marginal as their place in the liturgical Constitution.<sup>86</sup> It took almost forty years for the Vatican once again to

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<sup>85</sup> Benedict XVI, “The Sacrament of Charity,” para. 71. Italics mine.

<sup>86</sup> It is important to note that where popular religion has received attention from theologians, it has been in the context of intercultural theology or spirituality, both important fields of theological study, but neither able to claim the same authority for their theological sources as liturgical theologians. Perhaps it is also unsurprising that those who do write about these practices tend to come from under-represented groups in the theological academy and are often read as liberation

turn its attention to these persistent questions of popular practice. In 2001, at the request of bishops and priests around the world, the Congregation for Divine Worship issued principles and guidelines for “harmonizing” popular practices with the liturgy of the church. This document is itself a reception of Vatican II’s call to liturgical reform, indicating that it is taking up directly the call of the Council to harmonize popular practices with the church’s liturgical source and summit.

*The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* insists on the unqualified primacy of the liturgy, although here liturgy is not limited to the Eucharist but construed as the seven sacramental liturgies of the church.<sup>87</sup> Under the broad umbrella of worship, *The Directory* once again establishes an objective difference in kind between liturgical and popular practices. Drawing the border between official liturgy and popular practice ever more boldly, popular practices are to be protected from the imposition of liturgical forms just as the liturgy is to be protected from the encroachment of popular practices. The proper relationship between these two forms of worship is one of “harmonization” where the liturgy serves as a tuning fork, the standard with which all other practices must resonate.<sup>88</sup>

Notably, the *Directory* expands the boundaries of *popular practice* to include not only official devotional forms but several classifications of popular practice. *Pious exercises*

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theologians: Gustavo Guitierrez, Virgil Elizondo, Anscar Chupungco, Peter Phan, Ricky Manalo, Nancy Piñeda-Madrid, and Roberto Goizueta.

<sup>87</sup> “The faithful should be made conscious of the preeminence of the Liturgy over any other possible form of legitimate Christian prayer. While sacramental actions are *necessary* to life in Christ, the various forms of popular piety are properly *optional*.” Congregation for Divine Worship, “Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines” (2001), para. 59.

<sup>88</sup> “The Liturgy and popular piety, while not coterminous, remain two legitimate expressions of Christian worship,” Congregation for Divine Worship, “Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy,” para. 58.

refer to those official devotions established by the bishops or by Rome that are generally practiced in accordance with approved customs or books. Following Pius XII's logic in *Mediator Dei*, these *pious exercises*, while not part of the liturgy, can be considered *liturgical* as they are closely tied to the Eucharist. *Devotions* designate practices external to the liturgy, but which are animated by "an attitude of faith." These practices manifest the particular relationship of the individual Christian with the divine. They are akin to nineteenth-century Euro-American devotional practices that Peter Williams calls "cleric-popular," controlled by the clerical elite and aimed at the lower classes as a way of preserving orthodoxy.<sup>89</sup> Together, *pious exercises* and *devotions* can be understood as constituting the earlier category of "official devotions." *Popular piety* designates those practices that are inspired "not by the Sacred Liturgy, but by forms deriving from a particular nation or people or from their culture."<sup>90</sup> Here, the Council recognizes a global diversity of popular practice that emerges from the evangelistic encounter of the Christian faith with new cultures and peoples. While it acknowledges these practices, it orders them below both pious exercises and devotional practices.<sup>91</sup> Finally, *popular religiosity* refers to a universal religious sensibility present in all persons and given expression through cultic means. It does not necessarily refer to the Christian revelation. It is possible to envision these practices as sets of consecutive circles, ordered by how the Congregation perceived their proximity to the Eucharistic liturgy (figure 3).

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<sup>89</sup> Peter W. Williams, *Popular Religion in America: Symbolic Change and the Modernization Process in Historical Perspective* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1989), 75.

<sup>90</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship, "Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines," para. 9.

<sup>91</sup> The phrase "popular piety" is also used throughout the document as a general reference to all of the practices contained within these four categories.

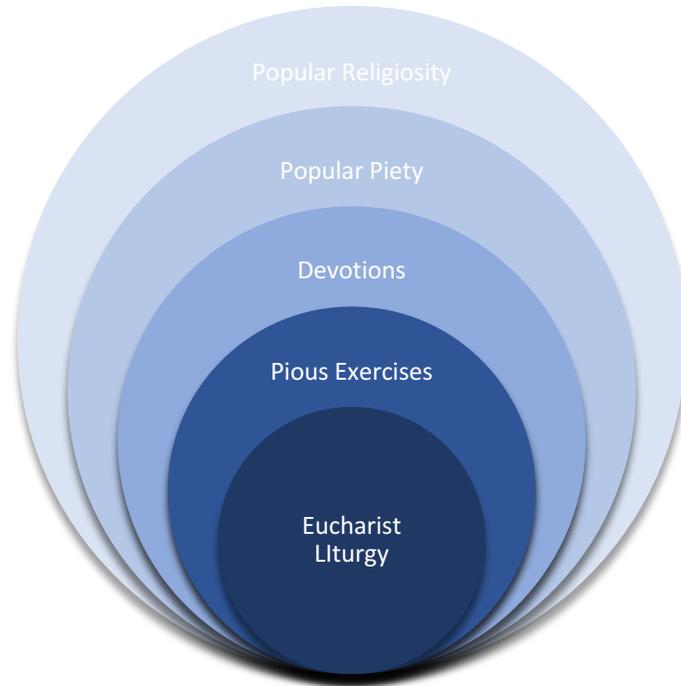


Figure 3

The promulgation of the *Directory* is the first official recognition of the continued vitality of popular religious practice since before the Second Vatican Council, and the first affirmation of inculturated forms of worship since before the Council of Trent. In truth, the *Directory* takes pains to affirm the rich diversity of popular practices, both those officially established and promoted by the church hierarchy and those established within local cultures and communities of faith. Despite these strengths, the *Directory* suffers from a major weakness. In its effort to articulate a normative framework for understanding the relationship between liturgy and popular practice, it fails to account for the continued ambiguity of these practices on the ground.<sup>92</sup> Instead, this categorization merely reinforces

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<sup>92</sup> The US Bishops prefer only two categories: liturgy and popular devotional practices, categories that draw a distinction between the universal church and the domestic church. In their document, the US bishops describe these popular devotional practices as extensions of the liturgy into

the modern centralization and clericalization of worship by prioritizing first the narrow category of the liturgy, then official popular forms said to proceed directly from liturgical worship, and finally local or particular expressions arising from the faith of the people. The value of these popular practices is measured according to their proximity to the Eucharistic liturgy.

The final chapter of the *Directory*, which is devoted specifically to pilgrimage, offers further evidence of this Eucharistic harmonization. The chapter on pilgrimage opens not with a discussion of this popular practice, but rather with a lengthy discourse on shrines, those ecclesial spaces ordered and maintained by the clergy. It not only presumes that the shrine is the pilgrim's ultimate goal, but it also describes the shrine as the place where "the relationship between the liturgy and popular piety is most evident."<sup>93</sup> Pilgrimage then is understood solely in relationship to the shrine. "Pilgrims need shrines, and shrines need pilgrims," the *Directory* quips.<sup>94</sup> The ensuing theological and practical discussions of pilgrimage are concerned almost exclusively with the pilgrim's actions at the shrine.

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everyday life, while taking pains to emphasize the subordination of these practices to the sacraments of the church, bluntly stating: "Since the liturgy is the center of the life of the Church, popular devotions should never be portrayed as equal to the liturgy, nor can they adequately substitute for the liturgy." In their efforts to distinguish between sacramental and popular practices, the US bishops go so far as to argue that sacramental liturgies can be traced back to the person of Christ while popular devotions developed gradually throughout Christian history. In their concern to construct a boundary that excludes popular forms from the official liturgies of the church, they introduce a historical argument largely debunked by liturgical historians. Though this normative concern to reassert the exclusive priority of the church's Eucharistic liturgy over any and all forms of popular practice can be justified in the abstract, it does little to deepen our understanding of particular practices. Committee on Doctrine of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Popular Devotional Practices: Basic Questions and Answers" (United States conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc., 2003), <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/popular-devotional-practices-basic-questions-and-answers.cfm>.

<sup>93</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship, "Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines," para. 261.

<sup>94</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship, "Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy," para. 279.

The shrine itself is constituted as the physical space of the Eucharistic liturgy and thus, by situating the shrine as the goal of pilgrimage, the *Directory* effectively situates the Eucharistic liturgy as the culmination of this popular practice. “The time spent in the sanctuary constitutes the most important part of the pilgrimage and should be marked by a commitment to conversion, ratified by reception of the Sacrament of Penance; by private prayer, [and] by celebration of the Holy Eucharist, which is the climax of the pilgrimage.”<sup>95</sup> In the space of the shrine, the pilgrim’s personal or communal devotion gives way and is subsumed in the official liturgy of the shrine. Accordingly, rectors are exhorted to maintain the highest quality of liturgical practice at a shrine and to ensure that popular practices are carefully regulated so as not to detract from this liturgical culmination. The harmonization between pilgrimage and the Eucharist equates the Eucharist in both practice and in type with the pilgrim’s arrival at the sacred shrine. Not only is participation in the Eucharistic liturgy posited as the high point of the pilgrim’s experience, but the *Directory* presents the pursuit of the Eucharistic table, in both earthly and heavenly manifestations, as the pilgrim’s ultimate goal. The pilgrimage’s significance is understood primarily in light of the pilgrim’s culminating participation in the shrine’s Eucharistic liturgy.

Notice the underlying theological presumption here: the spiritual and theological significance of pilgrimage is derived only from what happens within the borders of the shrine. Assuming a source and summit that orients all Christian practice around a Eucharistic pole, it is easy for liturgical theologians to begin with the assumption that a pilgrim’s goal and worship environment is entirely ensconced in the shrine. This also

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<sup>95</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship, “Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy,” para. 287.

accords with the claim that all popular practices be harmonized with the Eucharistic liturgy so that they lead to it: the pilgrims' devotion to the sacred shrine draws them forward until they arrive and discover that the place they seek is ultimately that altar which is present in every Christian church. When pilgrimage is conceived solely as devotion to a sacred shrine, the relationship between pilgrim and shrine reveals and performs the pre-established ideal relationship between popular religious practices and the liturgy. To proceed from the assumption that practices like pilgrimage emerge from and are directed towards a deeper participation in the Eucharist results in a principle of harmonization that reduces and subsumes the practice of pilgrimage to the pursuit of the Eucharistic table. Severed from concrete practice, this understanding of pilgrimage proceeds from and reinforces liturgical theologies that proceed from and culminate in the Eucharist alone. This Eucharistic logic risks over-determining our theological understanding of pilgrimage as merely an extended journey to the table at the expense of a fuller appreciation of this lived practice.

### **Consequences of a dichotomy**

While the renewal of Eucharistic worship has produced several important goods, it has also produced a narrow definition of liturgy in which the Eucharist has come to be regarded as the exclusively authoritative and valid liturgical practice. The juxtaposition of the Eucharistic liturgy with popular piety is not merely rhetorical; rather, it has real consequences in the life of the church.

The juxtaposition of liturgy and popular piety sets up a hierarchy of values within worship practices. The pre-eminence of the liturgy is set forth as the first principle of harmonization:

Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. NO other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title or to the same degree...The faithful should be made conscious of the preeminence of the Liturgy over any other possible form of legitimate Christian prayer. While sacramental actions are *necessary* to life in Christ, the various forms of popular piety are properly *optional*. Such is clearly proven by the Church's precept which obliges attendance at Sunday Mass. No such obligation, however, has obtained with regard to pious exercises, notwithstanding their worthiness or their widespread diffusion...The foregoing requires that the formation of priests and of the faithful give preeminence to liturgical prayer and to the liturgical year over any other form of devotion. However, this necessary preeminence is not to be interpreted in exclusive terms, nor in terms of opposition or marginalization.<sup>96</sup>

The clear concern of the *Directory* is to exert the superiority of the sacramental liturgies over popular devotions as a response to concerns that these popular practices have at times served as “alternatives to or substitutive of the liturgical action itself.”<sup>97</sup> The qualification at the end of this paragraph that insists this preeminence is not to be interpreted in exclusive terms seems insincere in light of what has preceded it. Within a logic of harmonization that insists all worship flow from and be directed to sacramental, Eucharistic practice, “optional” becomes “tolerated” and “necessary” becomes “superior.” Marginalizing practices that fall outside of official sacramental celebrations, rubrics, or texts have also tended to devalue the leadership, authority, and worship of the laity, especially of women and non-Europeans. Liturgical leadership is restricted to the leadership of (male) clerics. Liturgical practices and texts are subject to the approval of a predominantly European magisterium. The customs and traditions preserved in popular

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<sup>96</sup> Quoting *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the *Directory* sets forth the primacy of the liturgy as its first principle of harmonization. “Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body, which is the Church, it is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title or to the same degree.” Congregation for Divine Worship, “Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy,” para. 11.

<sup>97</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship, “Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy,” para. 11.

practices, as well as diverse leadership, are tolerated and perhaps even encouraged, but only on an individual or local level. A model of liturgy that includes practices of popular piety and popular religion that emerge from the reception of the faith by local populations can begin to take seriously the revelatory and theologically authoritative nature of worship practices developed, led, and performed by a diverse laity, as well as those led and regulated by the church hierarchy.

The top down model, that insists that popular practices must be harmonized with the official liturgies and most especially the Eucharist, also stifles the ways that other practices of worship have continued to speak back to the liturgy in affirmation, in challenge, or in extension. In as much as popular practices cultivate a sacramental spirituality and deepen the experience of the redemptive mystery of Christ contained in the official liturgies of the church, popular piety affirms the official liturgical practice of the church. On occasions in which popular piety comes to be substituted for participation in the Eucharist, it can offer an important critique of the practice itself, such as an excessive clericalism in the ministry that usurps the ritual role of the faithful or a westernized aesthetic ideal embedded in the Eucharistic rites.<sup>98</sup> Where popular practice exceeds the

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<sup>98</sup> Susan Ross raises the alarm over the “flight from ambiguity” that marks how the sacraments have been interpreted and practiced. Rather than a symbolic mode that can hold together multivalent ideas or meanings without collapse, Ross notes how the sacraments have been marked by dualistic, either/or thinking. “The dualistic categories of sacred/secular, male/female, clergy/lay, spirit/body, all see reality as divided, not as multivalent. These divisions also tend to be mutually exclusive” (78). Ross goes on to describe how these distinctions serve to pull back the curtain on the ways that questions of legitimacy or clerical power have come to inform our sacramental (and I would add our liturgical) discourses. “The fundamental dynamic of sacramental reality is that while such clear distinctions can be and often are made, they are human inventions, or, more likely, attempts to control reality. In the lived experience of life in the presence of God, sacramental presence cannot be legislated. For very real and practical purposes, it is appropriate that there be some institutional structures to govern the practice of the sacraments. But when these structures begin to act as barriers to participation by the faithful, sacramental life will grow and flourish

boundaries set by sacramental practice, these practices expand our liturgical imaginations and provide evidence for the continued work of the Spirit in the church and the world. Yet these contributions remain impossible in the context of distinctions between liturgy and popular practice motivated by a concern to consolidate liturgical authority and practice under the ordained ministries of the church rather than to promote a consistent flourishing of Christian liturgy in the lives of the faithful.

By restricting liturgical practice to those celebrations which require the presidency of an ordained minister, this dichotomy effectively restricts liturgical access for communities already located on the peripheries of our societies. Despite the successes of liturgical reform in opening Eucharistic participation, access to the Eucharist and the other sacraments is still too often a matter of privilege. In many communities, the Eucharist is celebrated regularly. Parishes offer multiple masses every Sunday as well as regular access to other sacramental celebrations—Baptism, Marriage, Penance, etc. Yet there are communities, especially rural communities, in which a priest is not assigned or available on a regular (or even irregular) basis. These Catholic communities are staffed by lay leaders and the public prayer life of the church is sustained by liturgies other than the Eucharist. Sunday communion services, communal rosaries, novenas, and other devotions nourish these communities. In zones of conflict or communities where the government is intolerant

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outside of them” (80). While calling attention to the real consequences of dichotomous thinking for sacramental theology, Ross’ book remains bound by the very dichotomy created when the Eucharistic liturgy is distinguished from other practices. Ross effectively points to places where Eucharistic practice itself overflows the bounds set for it in the practices of communion services and women- or lay-led Eucharists. In this, Ross lights the way for my own work, which disputes the dichotomy of liturgy and popular practice itself. Susan A. Ross, *Extravagant Affections: A Feminist Sacramental Theology*, (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2001).

of Christian worship, similar situations exist. Even in communities where the Eucharist is regularly available, the sick and the old often cannot attend liturgical celebrations at the local church, even if it is nearby. Brief services for the reception of the Eucharist outside of mass by lay ministers or deacons and ecumenical prayer services led by hospital chaplains often sustain our elderly in the last weeks, months, or years of their lives. To reserve in the abstract the category of liturgy to official sacramental rites is to reserve it in practice for the privileged and able-bodied. Liturgy and liturgical theology must attend seriously to liturgical acts of prayer performed by those excluded from the official liturgies of the church. Attention to these practices represents a liturgical option for the poor and marginalized.

Finally, positing the Eucharist as the source and summit of the Christian faith limits ecumenical relations in so far as our tables remain separated. If the Eucharist remains both the font and the goal of all Christian worship, this necessarily dismisses out of hand not only the worship practices of the lay faithful, but also the liturgical traditions of other Christian communities. In practice, ecumenical communion in worship is found frequently outside of the Eucharistic liturgy—in mutual affirmation of one another’s baptisms, in shared services of the Word, in shared prayer texts like the Our Father, in practices like pilgrimage. Crafting a liturgical theology that makes room for shared liturgical practices continues the important work towards ecclesial communion.

Recently, the church has begun to recover these popular practices from the margins of our lives of faith. In 2007, the Latin American Bishops’ Conference recognized this “popular spirituality” or “the people’s mysticism” as “a spirituality incarnated in the culture

of the lowly.”<sup>99</sup> Pope Francis, who participated in this gathering as a bishop, picks up on this language in his 2013 encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*, on Christian evangelization. There is not one use of source and summit language in this letter, although he treats elements of the liturgy at length. Francis does, however, reintroduce the value of popular piety to the church’s conversation. Calling popular piety “a true expression of the spontaneous missionary activity of the people of God,” Francis writes that this piety is “an ongoing and developing process, of which the Holy Spirit is the principal agent.”<sup>100</sup> Popular piety, according to Francis, is not devoid of content but indeed adds its own content to the tradition. It discovers and expresses that content more by way of symbols than by discursive reasoning. It is a legitimate way of living the faith, a way of feeling part of the church, and a manner of being missionaries.<sup>101</sup> In both of these documents, popular piety is especially associated with the poor and those on the margins and thus held up as a devotional form of the preferential option for the poor, who are privileged bearers of the Word of God. So too might liturgical theologians go to the margins of the church’s worship and discover there, often among faithful whom our dichotomy has made “the least of these,” the seeds of a new liturgical renewal that seeks to redraw the boundaries of Christian liturgy itself.

The modern dichotomy between liturgy and popular piety has quite effectively set the agenda for liturgical theology. The Eucharistic liturgy has taken its place at the center of Roman Catholic sacramental and liturgical theology, with the *theologia prima* clearly

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<sup>99</sup> CELAM, “Concluding Document” (May 13, 2007), 89.

<sup>100</sup> Francis, “*Evangelii Gaudium*,” (2013) para. 122.

<sup>101</sup> Francis, “*Evangelii Gaudium*,” para. 124.

equated with the sacramental liturgies, while other forms of worship and ritual have been dismissed to the realms of religious excess or personal piety—both of which exist on the periphery of liturgical practice. This relegation to the margins has effectively excluded them from much serious theological consideration as revelatory and efficacious signs of and for the church. It limits those theologically authoritative practices to ones that are largely European and male-centered, while typically excluding from our theological consideration practices from diverse cultures and practices that depend on lay leadership. While ecumenical and interreligious sensibilities have created a broader definition of liturgy within some academic spaces, liturgical, sacramental, and systematic Catholic theologians have rooted their liturgical reflections almost exclusively in the Eucharistic celebration.<sup>102</sup>

This dissertation is essentially an experiment in redrawing the boundaries for our liturgical theologies to include the full range and diversity of Christian practice. This expansion need not reject the privileged place of the Eucharist and the other official sacraments nor advocate that additional practices should be added to this official roster. Rather, such a vision would ask how our theological understanding of our liturgy and our church might expand if we were to take as sources for liturgical theology not only the regular celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments but also the rich diversity of Christian popular practice. The marginalization of practices like pilgrimage not only

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<sup>102</sup> Karl Rahner's 1973 essay *The Theology of Symbol* stands as a notable exception to this claim. He begins his discussion of the symbolic nature of reality with a reflection on the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Karl Rahner, "The Theology of Symbol," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4 (New York: Crossroad, 1973), 221–51. I take up Rahner's discussion of symbol extensively in Chapter 4.

impoverishes our ability to discern and encounter the presence of God in our midst; it also impoverishes our ability to think about those things for which these practices have become metaphors. It is to these metaphors that we turn next.

## Chapter 2

### Pilgrimage as Ecclesial Metaphor

Something happens once the concept of pilgrimage is separated from liturgical practice. The gradual marginalization of the practice of pilgrimage correlates with a shift in how we use the concept of pilgrimage to think theologically. Over the course of the Christian tradition, pilgrimage has provided a rich and generative source for the church's understanding of herself. That is, the church has often recognized herself and her members in the image of the pilgrim. While the practice of pilgrimage has often shaped the church's theological thinking in the past, recent metaphors of the pilgrim church have become detached from the ongoing, lived practices of Christian pilgrims. Devoid of practical content and existing only in the abstract, this metaphor too often becomes a stand-in for already familiar systematic ecclesiologies rather than giving rise to theologies generated by the practical wisdom of a faithful church. This chapter begins by exploring the ways pilgrimage has functioned as a metaphor for the church throughout the Christian tradition. After first establishing the multiple ways metaphors function hermeneutically, I trace five ecclesiologies that emerge from theological reflection on Christian pilgrimage.

The separation of metaphorical content from pilgrim practice does not only limit our ecclesiological imagination. These abstract metaphors can also overdetermine our interpretation of the phenomenon of Christian pilgrimage as it is lived and experienced today. Chapter 1 showed how an exclusively Eucharistic liturgical theology overdetermines the church's interpretation of pilgrimage practice. This chapter concludes with a similar exercise. I argue that even when church leaders and theologians recognize and reflect on

pilgrimage as it is practiced today, the interpretation of the phenomenon is shaped more by abstract metaphor than by serious attention to the practice itself.

### **The Form and Function of Metaphor**

As a linguistic construction, the force of a metaphor comes from both its content and its form. Thus, to gain a better understanding of how pilgrimage functions as a theological metaphor, attention to the content of the metaphor must necessarily be accompanied by consideration of the form and function of these metaphorical constructions. Among linguists, rhetoricians, and other scholars of language and discourse, there is a long and robust conversation about how metaphorical constructions function and create meaning. Each model or theory shares the premise that metaphors operate by the juxtaposition of two independent terms. Theories diverge, however, over the relationship between these two terms and their production of meaning. The pages that have been filled trying to understand how metaphors create meaning draw our attention to the variety of ways that authors employ and make use of metaphorical strategies in their own texts and discourses.<sup>1</sup> By observing the variety of ways in which metaphors are deployed in theological writing,

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<sup>1</sup> Much of such discussion has contested various theories of metaphorical meaning-making. In such rehearsals, these theories are typically presented as “views” of metaphor which highlight the disagreement between scholars of the hermeneutics of language itself. My choice to refer to these different functions of metaphor as “uses” rather than “views” is an intentional move that stands apart from this rhetorical debate. As a scholar of practice, my bias is evident here as I find the helpful contribution of this discussion to be how it calls attention to the many ways people make use of metaphors both as they are conceived and composed and as they are received or consumed, especially when the same metaphor is composed and consumed differently. Inasmuch as reading and writing are theological practices in and of themselves, it is appropriate to attend to the ways our metaphors of pilgrimage have been employed, received, and reinterpreted throughout the tradition and the ways they function in a particular discourse or text.

we can begin to discern and evaluate the way that pilgrimage has functioned and continues to function as a means of communicating and generating theological reflection.

The use of metaphorical language in theological discourse generally falls into two broad categories: the rhetorical and the generative. Metaphors that are deployed rhetorically typically function as carriers of pre-determined meanings. In this sense, they are primarily rhetorical or communicative. Such metaphors are frequently construed as aesthetic devices. In order to quicken the enjoyment of the reader or hearer, the author creatively replaces the literal terms with new words used in interesting ways. Rhetorical metaphors act like a code or a cipher that draws on pre-established cultural and linguistic conventions. Max Black writes, “The author substitutes M for L; it is the reader’s task to invert the substitution by using the literal meaning of M as a clue for the intended literal meaning of L.”<sup>2</sup> The metaphor creates meaning by calling the reader’s attention to concrete, pre-existing features the two terms share. Rhetorical metaphors are especially effective as carriers of information and thus they are useful tools for the communication of pre-established ideas and, as classical theories of metaphor maintain, effective tools of persuasion.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Max Black, “Metaphor,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 55 (1955): 280. Although this construction is largely attributed to the classical rhetors like Aristotle or Cicero, Lynn Huber points out that Black’s description is a simplification of this classical theory in which metaphors were considered not only in terms of meaning-making, but also as tools of persuasion. Lynn R Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned Reading Metaphor in John’s Apocalypse* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007), 71.

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle emphasized the need for clarity for effective rhetoric, but noted that excessive concern for clarity risked producing a flat or banal style of writing that failed to excite or engage the hearer. The most effective prose finds language that both clarifies and delights, a task for which he found the convention of metaphor well suited. See Aristotle, *Aristotle Poetics* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), bk. 21. See Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (New York: Modern Library, 1954), bk. 3. Similarly Augustine writes in his essays on Christian teaching that the speaker (preacher) has the responsibility to clarify or instruct and to delight and then adds a third task: to inspire. Noticing the

On the other hand, some metaphors function to produce new meanings rather than to convey previously established ones. These generative metaphors work by creating and participating in conceptual systems, rather than by simple one-to-one correspondences. *Conceptual metaphors* typically describe a relationship between the two terms in which one term (the target) is interpreted or understood in terms of the other (the source).<sup>4</sup> When we write that “life is a journey,” “life” (the target) is meant to be understood by the concept of “journey” (the source). Thus, the conceptual domain of journey helps to interpret and even provide new understandings to our idea of “life.” In this way, the metaphor is not only communicative, but also has the potential to generate new meanings.

In conceptual metaphors, each term stands not as substitution for another idea or concept, but rather as representative of an entire domain of experience that is both practical and cultural. For example, the concept of spiritual *ascent* relies on both a physical, spatial experience (*up*) and a cultural sensibility (heaven is *up*). George Lakoff and Mark Johnson suggest that because of these varieties of experience, a single metaphorical concept or domain can give rise to many different metaphors:

In actuality we feel that no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis. For example, *more is up* has a very different kind of experiential basis than *happy is up*, or *rational is up*. Though the concept of *up* is the same in all these metaphors, the experiences on which these *up* metaphors are based are very different. It is not that there are many different *ups*, rather, verticality enters our experience in many different ways and so gives rise to

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effective use of metaphor and other rhetorical ornamentations in Scripture, Augustine recommends that those who teach the Christian revelation would do well to employ the same tools. Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), bk. 4.

<sup>4</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson introduced the idea of the *conceptual metaphor* in their text *Metaphors We Live By*. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

many different metaphors...IS should be viewed as a shorthand for some set of experiences on which the metaphor is based and in terms of which we understand it.<sup>5</sup>

In the Christian faith, pilgrimage enters our experience in many different ways and so has given rise to vastly different metaphors. One of the difficulties pilgrimage presents as a theological metaphor today is that there is very little agreement about which set of experiences constitute the metaphorical domain. This leads to a second observation, which is the recognition that the experiences from which the conceptual domain draws may themselves be metaphorical, rather than concrete or literal.<sup>6</sup> In writing that “life is a pilgrimage,” pilgrimage itself may be functioning as a rhetorical metaphor for journey. Rather than being rooted in actual experiences of religious pilgrimage, the term “pilgrimage” here evokes the more general experience of travel.

Like conceptual metaphors, *interactive metaphors* create a relationship between the two terms or domains that is hermeneutically productive. Unlike conceptual metaphors, the two domains of the interactive metaphor are mutually interpretive and reciprocal. That is, each idea is doing its own work of interpreting the other. The result is meant not to describe or emphasize pre-existing similarities or to map one conceptual framework on to another, but instead to *create* or draw attention to similarities between the two terms in order to construct new spaces in which new knowledge can emerge and exist. Max Black writes that these metaphors “enable us to see aspects of reality that the metaphor’s production helps to constitute.”<sup>7</sup> Paul Ricoeur has these interactive metaphors in mind

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<sup>5</sup> Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 19, 20.

<sup>6</sup> Raymond W Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 217–18.

<sup>7</sup> Max Black, “More about Metaphor,” in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 35.

when he calls attention to the disruptive capacity of metaphor that results from the tension between the two independent terms or ideas. “The power of metaphor would be to break through previous categorization and to establish new logical boundaries on the ruins of the preceding ones.”<sup>8</sup>

In both creation and destruction, interactive metaphors are primarily generative; in positing or reconstructing the relationship between two terms, these metaphors bring about new knowledge or understanding. In his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est (God is Love)*, Benedict XVI uses metaphor in just this way to do his theological work.<sup>9</sup> As a conceptual metaphor, the statement “God is Love” fails, for neither term is sufficient as source for the other. We are hampered, Benedict argues, by a problem of language. *God* is sometimes “associated with vengeance or even a duty of hatred and violence.”<sup>10</sup> *Love* is equally problematic, having “become one of the most used and misused of words, a word to which we attach quite different meanings.”<sup>11</sup> Thus to interpret one concept in terms of the other risks problematic distortions of both terms. It is only when the two terms interact together that the old conceptual boundaries around both *God* and *love* are razed and new understandings of each can emerge.

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Ricoeur and Mario J Valdés, “Word, Polysemy, and Metaphor: Creativity in Language,” in *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 81.

<sup>9</sup> Years earlier, David Tracy rehearsed a similar argument of the metaphorical nature of this phrase from John’s Gospel. Tracy argued that the metaphorical tension produced by the juxtaposition of these two terms produces a resemblance between these two terms and redescribes who, for the Christian, God is. Tracy’s exercises in this text and in the parables of Jesus serve as examples of metaphor as a fundamental method of theological thinking and discourse. David W Tracy, “God Is Love: The Central Christian Metaphor,” *The Living Pulpit* 1, no. 3 (July 1992): 10–11.

<sup>10</sup> Benedict XVI, “Deus Caritas Est” (2005), para. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Benedict XVI, “Deus Caritas Est,” para. 2.

As both consumers and producers of theological discourse, theologians need to recognize the consequences of these different uses of metaphor. Rhetorical metaphors can preserve static, culturally defined meanings. Aesthetically pleasing to the eye and ear, these metaphors carry only a limited and socially pre-determined meaning. Rather than generating new understanding, rhetorical metaphors are often effective carriers for pre-established ideas and thus are of limited use for the theological project although they are of great value in some catechetical and liturgical contexts.<sup>12</sup> Conceptual metaphors rely on a

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<sup>12</sup> I am indebted in this chapter to David Tracy's ideas about the use of metaphor for theological and religious studies. Tracy has argued that the use of metaphor is one of the earliest and most fundamental modes of theological reflection. However, by analyzing both the parables and John's metaphor "God is love," Tracy has cautioned against the use of purely rhetorical or substitution metaphors in theological reflection. By raising now widely accepted critiques of scriptural interpretations that seek to replace the narrative metaphorical nature of the parables or the ambiguous nature of the word "love" with conceptual terms as a means of "uncovering" the meaning of the text or the meaning behind the text, Tracy argues forcefully for a theological use of metaphor that functions by creating a tension between two terms—what I describe above as "interactive." Inspired by Paul Ricoeur's use of metaphor, Tracy is convinced that the generativity or productiveness produced by the tension in an interactive metaphor itself has a theological justification in that it preserves the limits of our human language to talk about God while at the same time redescribing theological possibilities. While largely in agreement with Tracy's insistence that the use and the interrogation of metaphor ought to be located at the center of theological studies and not seen, as he suggests, as a luxury item in the field, I do depart from Tracy in my considerations of what constitutes the root metaphors of the faith. While leaving open space for sacramental practices, Tracy insists that Christianity, as a textual religion, finds its root metaphors in the pages of scripture and other canonical texts. The basic argument of this chapter objects to the sole normativity of Christian scripture as the source and location of Christianity's root metaphors. Indeed, the insistence of textual normativity to the exclusion of the normativity of Christian practice proves inconsistent even with the production of these theological texts and the continued renewal of metaphors in the Christian tradition. It also suggests a still limited view of metaphor as primarily a function of language. More recent metaphor theories root metaphors not in linguistic spaces, but rather in common embodied experiences. Raymond Gibbs notes that for some, linking metaphor to the body or experience seems "far too reductive and dismissive of the power of metaphoric language to reshape our imagination." Like Tracy, these critics tend to view the productivity of metaphor as a function purely of language itself. Yet it is this divorce of language from embodied practice and its privileging as a mode of theological productivity that this chapter and, indeed, this larger dissertation seeks to challenge. David Tracy, "Metaphor and Religion," in *On Metaphor*, ed. Sheldon Sacks (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 89–104. Raymond W. Gibbs, *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5.

uni-directional movement between the source of the metaphor and its target. These metaphors help us to interpret new experiences in light of Christian tradition and individual experiences in light of ecclesial ones. Yet the uni-directional movement of conceptual metaphors can also function to insulate the source's concept from either illumination or critique. The use of interactive metaphors helps to mitigate this concern by allowing each independent concept or idea to inform our understanding of the other, often generating new insights in the process. Yet this process can also be risky, as it deconstructs previous categories, boundaries, or assumptions in the effort to replace the old with something new. In all cases, metaphor, like all of our talk of God, is always incomplete. As such, metaphor is always insufficient to the theological task. Yet metaphor is among the most potent tools available to us for theological reflection.

#### *Five Conceptual Domains*

Theological discourse makes frequent use of pilgrimage as a generative metaphor where pilgrimage functions as the source, constituting the conceptual domain through which other theological ideas are understood. Yet in these metaphorical constructions, pilgrimage presents an interesting dilemma: there is little agreement about which set of experiences constitutes the conceptual domain. As we have already seen, pilgrimage practice is complex and evolving and so, predictably, there is a plurality of ideas and conclusions that emerges from the rich diversity of pilgrimage as it has been practiced over the course of centuries.

Lakoff and Johnson describe conceptual domains as mental organizations or representations of related human experiences. That is to say, what we intuitively understand as pilgrimage emerges from our experience of this pilgrimage, either

practically or abstractly. Because my experience may be different from your experience, the boundaries of these domains are fuzzy and the domains themselves, as in the case of pilgrimage, can be fluid. However, any effective metaphorical use of these domains requires at least some shared sense of which types of experiences constitute these domains. This shared agreement is not ontological, but is historically and culturally conditioned. Because of this, it is not surprising that a conceptual domain like pilgrimage is not always comprised of the same set of shared experiences. The domain itself shifts and changes.

The conciliar texts of Vatican II make frequent use of pilgrimage as a theological metaphor, but the term is not deployed consistently across documents or even within the same documents. In the corpus of writings produced by the Council, we find no fewer than five conceptual domains, each rooted in concrete historical practices and experiences of the Christian community. The five-fold list offered in this chapter by no means exhausts the ways in which the Christian theological tradition has made use of the language of pilgrimage, and other careful readers may identify additional conceptual domains even within the conciliar documents themselves. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how the historical experiences of the Christian people have informed the way we imagine pilgrimage and continue to inform the way we do theology from these experiences of pilgrimage. When we attend to the ways in which pilgrimage has been deployed theologically throughout the tradition, we discover both a rich set of reflections on the church representing the spiritual sense of the Christian people throughout the centuries *and* a method for doing theology that is connected to the lived practices of the day.

### Conceptual Domain 1: Aliens and Ascetics

Although practices of religious travel to the martyrs' tombs, to Jerusalem, and to Rome developed within the first five hundred years of the tradition, the earliest Christian uses of pilgrimage as metaphor found their conceptual source not in religious rituals of travel, but rather in Roman law and in the practices of the desert ascetics. The term pilgrim (Latin: *peregrinus*) appears in Roman law as early as the fifth century BC. In the Twelve Tables, it is used as a synonym for *hostis* (foreigner).<sup>13</sup> In designating rights and responsibilities of those living within the borders of Rome, *peregrini* were distinguished from citizens (*civis Romanus*). In the first and second centuries, Christians came to understand their own experience in the world in terms of the conceptual, experiential domain of resident aliens.

The use of this conceptual domain of resident aliens as theological metaphor appears in the New Testament, where Christians are described as strangers (*xenoi*),<sup>14</sup> foreigners (*paroikoi*),<sup>15</sup> and sojourners (*parepidēmoi*).<sup>16</sup> The second-century Letter to Diognetus offers an extended commentary on this idea.

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<sup>13</sup> According to the Roman historian, Livy, the Twelve Tables of Roman law were composed by a *decemvirati* (a council of ten men) in the years 450-449BC. This legal code eventually formed the basis for law within the Roman republic.

<sup>14</sup> Eph 2:12, 19; 1 Peter 2:11, 4:12; Heb 11:13, 13:9. In the gospels, this word is found only in Matthew, most especially in Jesus' words about the judgment of the nations (Matthew 25). Matthew also uses the word to describe the burial field purchased with Judas' thirty pieces of silver as a resting place for foreigners. (Matthew 27:7).

<sup>15</sup> Luke chooses this word for Jesus in the Emmaus story and the author of 1 Peter uses it (1 Peter 2:11), along with *parepidēmoi*, to describe Christians. It also appears in Eph 2:19 alongside *xenoi*.

<sup>16</sup> Heb 11:13; 1 Pet 1:1, 2:11. *Parepidēmoi*, literally "someone passing through" can be translated as stranger, sojourner, or foreigner. It refers to one who resides in a strange country in a temporary but personal relationship with the local residents. One sojourns *in* rather than sojourns *through* the land. Resident alien may be a more literal translation of the biblical text. In Matthew and Luke's gospels, Jesus is also portrayed as such (see Matt 18:19-20, Luke 9:57-58).

For Christians cannot be distinguished from the rest of the human race by country or language or customs. They do not live in cities of their own; they do not use a peculiar form of speech, they do not follow an eccentric manner of life...Yet although they live in Greek and barbarian cities alike, as each man's lot has been cast, and follow the customs of the country in clothing and food and other matters of daily living, at the same time they give proof of the remarkable and admittedly extraordinary constitution of their own commonwealth. They live in their own countries, but only as [resident] aliens (*paroikeis*). They have a share in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners (*xenoi*). Every foreign land is their fatherland, and yet for them every fatherland is a foreign land... They busy themselves on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven.<sup>17</sup>

Curiously, the author of this letter describes the Christian experience through the image of the immigrant. However, in most cases, it not the believer, but that which was to be believed that had come from beyond the borders to make its dwelling with the local communities. Through the evangelical proclamation of the early Christians, the Christian faith had by the second century spread across the Mediterranean world. Christian communities were springing up in many cities and regions and yet these Christians did not (yet) proceed from or represent any proper kingdom or geographic seat of power, present or past. Taking seriously the claim on Jesus' lips in John's gospel, "My kingdom is not from this world," Diognetus' interlocutor reconciles Christian experiences of social alienation through the theological metaphor of resident aliens. Although still residing in this world, Christians have annulled their citizenship in earthly societies in order to gain citizenship in the heavenly one.

Although the metaphor of alienation clearly expressed a commonly shared orthodoxy in the early church, alienation was also a primary theological metaphor for heterodox groups like the Gnostics, who interpreted this estrangement in terms of a cosmic

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<sup>17</sup> "The So-called Letter to Diognetus," trans. Eugene Fairweather, in *Early Christian Fathers*, ed. Cyril Charles Richardson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953), 216-217.

drama and carried this alienation into the realm of the deity itself. A radical reinterpretation of this early tradition, Christian Gnosticism posited a supreme God who is utterly transcendent and alien to this world. So too, the human person has a split nature, with the true self being as alien to this created world as is God. The stark dualism of Gnosticism denies the created world's potential for redemption and instead posits salvation solely as a spiritual escape from the body and return to God. A more orthodox conception of alienation is comprehensible only within a theological cosmology that denies a complete alienation of the world from God and that insists not only on the redemptive potential of creation but also on its incarnational capacity to receive and house the divine itself. The Gnostic contrast of alienation is helpful in better clarifying Christian ideas of alienation that stood the tests of orthodoxy. There is a difference between a captive and a resident alien; between a prisoner and a pilgrim; between escape from the world and consent to dwell within it. The esoteric spiritual alienation of the Gnostics finds its antithesis in the concrete practices of the early pilgrims and desert ascetics.

The early desert ascetics found in this theological image of the Roman *peregrinus* the basis for their own practices of separation. The deserts of Egypt and Palestine became host to women and men moving outside the environs of their cities and homes, seeking a holiness both symbolized and actualized by their lives as resident aliens. Their strangeness to the world was marked not only by their ascetic practices of prayer and fasting, but also in their very place and mode of residing. For these women and men, the theological ideal of alienation functioned as a practical imperative, pointing to a way of living in and interacting with this world in light of their Christian hope in the next.

Among those early Christian *peregrini* in the deserts of Palestine was the Roman scholar, Jerome. Jerome was a zealous evangelist for the pilgrim life, encouraging friends in his letters to join him in Palestine either temporarily or permanently. Yet Jerome was not only a pilgrim but also an avid scholar of the scriptural texts. He is credited with an early translation of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament writings into the Latin script. By examining Jerome's Vulgate, we can see how the biblical ideas of *xenoi*, *paroikoi*, and *parepidēmoi* moved into Latin Christianity through the experiential domain of *peregrinatio*.

Within the Gospels and Epistles, there is not a simple one-to-one correspondence between the Latin and Greek terms for "foreignness." Rather, Jerome employs *peregrinus* and its related *peregrinatio* (*pilgrimage*) broadly as a variation in his translation of several Greek terms. In most cases, the term retains the valence of a foreigner or resident alien. The word appears once in the Gospel of Matthew, to describe the Chief Priests' purchase of the potter's field as a place to bury foreigners (Gr. *xenos*, Lt. *peregrinorum*). In the epistles, *peregrinus* is regularly employed as a translation for *xeno* and is used interchangeably with *advenas* and *hospites*, both of which are also Latin designations for foreigners.<sup>18</sup> Finally, Jerome prefers *peregrinor* as the translation for *paroikos* in 1 Peter 2:11, but uses Latin synonyms for the same term in Ephesians 2:19 (*xenoi* and *paroikoi* become *hospites* and *advenae*), Acts 7:29 (*advena*) and Acts 7:6 (*aliena*).

Within the Pauline corpus, Jerome uses *peregrinor* only in 2 Corinthians: "Dum sumus in corpore, *peregrinamur* a Domino;" while we are in the body we *pilgrimage* away

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<sup>18</sup> In addition to the neutral meaning of foreigner, the term *hospites* can also carry a more positive valence of guest or stranger-friend.

from the Lord.<sup>19</sup> Already the Vulgate obscures the Pauline text, which contrasts the participle *endēmountes* (*endēmeō*: being at home) with the participle *ekdēmoumen* (*ekdēmeō*: being absent from). A similar contrast is lacking in the Latin text which contrasts *peregrinor* with the verb “to be” (*sum*). Nevertheless, a similar notion is maintained—while we are in the body, we are away or separated from the Lord and the inverse is also true—while we were away from the body, we could be with the Lord (2 Cor 5:8).<sup>20</sup> Jerome’s employment of *peregrinatio* here is itself an exegesis of this Pauline text. By employing this language of dwelling, this separation seems more of a consent to the absence of the presence of the risen Christ than an anthropological exile from God.<sup>21</sup>

Further evidence of this metaphorical consistency can be found in Jerome’s translation of the Hebrew Bible. Jerome’s use of *peregrinus* almost exclusively describes a resident alien, referring to Abraham who lived as a resident alien in the land of Canaan, to the Israelites who settled in Egypt, to those foreigners who lived alongside the Israelites in the promised land. Naomi is called a *peregrinus* while she lived in Moab and Ruth became a *peregrinus* when she settled in Israel. Notably, Jerome does not use the language of pilgrimage to describe moments of exile—neither the forced wandering in the desert nor the captivity in Babylon. In Isaiah and Jeremiah, Jerome uses *peregrinus* only to refer to

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<sup>19</sup> 2 Cor. 5:6

<sup>20</sup> For a similar idea in Paul, see also Phil 1:20-26.

<sup>21</sup> Jerome’s use of *peregrinatio* later in 2 Corinthians tempts us to imagine a second conceptual domain in Jerome’s metaphorical use of pilgrimage, but a more careful analysis reveals a metaphorical consistency. In chapter eight, Paul describes a man who has been chosen to travel (*synekdēmos*) with Titus and himself and Jerome chooses *peregrinatio* for his translation. However, in the only other occurrence of this Greek word (Acts 19:29), also describing Paul’s travel companions, Jerome chooses *conibitus* (to accompany or remain with). This suggests that for Jerome, *peregrinatio*’s referent was to be found within the conceptual domain of dwelling (to remain with Titus) rather than travel (to travel with Titus).

non-Israelites who now reside in Israel, with one significant exception in which the word appears as an adjective describing the strangeness of God's work.<sup>22</sup> In each case, the language of pilgrimage rests in a conceptual domain that is social and juridical, distinguishing among those settled and living within specific political borders those who are citizens and those who are resident foreigners. Jerome's use of *peregrinus* in the Old Testament texts establishes foreignness with regard to one's immediate context—an alienation from the world that was dependent on a sense of dwelling or making one's home in it.

Jerome's use of *peregrinatio* in translation reflects his own pilgrim experience and suggests that early Christian uses of pilgrimage as metaphor are best understood within a conceptual domain of dwelling. *Peregrinus* and the related *advenas* and *hospes* refer to the practice of dwelling as a foreigner—a practice that is at once both juridical and in the case of the desert ascetics, religious. Whether alluding to Abraham and the Israelites making their homes in foreign lands or foreigners making their homes among the Israelites, *peregrinus* takes its original referent from a legal designation of the *other* or the *outsider* who is living *inside*. Perhaps it is not at all astonishing that this same word would come to apply to the early travelers to Jerusalem who, although temporary visitors, measured their visits not as we do in terms of days and weeks, but rather in years. Egeria's journals indicate that she remained in Jerusalem for three years. Despite her temporary status, the language of dwelling as a *resident alien* is still appropriate.

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<sup>22</sup> See Isaiah 28:21.

It is difficult to find a more richly theological use of this pilgrim metaphor in the early church than in Augustine's *City of God*. Like Jerome, Augustine clearly knew of Christian practices of pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Rome and to the tombs of the martyrs, although he displayed considerably less enthusiasm for these practices.<sup>23</sup> Augustine's interpreters often read this bundle of religious practices into Augustine's metaphorical use of pilgrimage in the *City of God*, yet it is difficult to arrive at this interpretation if we take Augustine's *City of God* on its own terms. While Augustine does make use of the religious practice of journeying in some of his other spiritual writings, Augustine's theological discourse in the *City of God* depends upon the development of the pilgrimage metaphor within the conceptual domain of practices of dwelling. Like Jerome, Augustine uses pilgrimage to describe not a religious traveler but a resident alien.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> "What would be the advantage of standing in that Jerusalem which itself was unable to stand, which has fallen into ruin?" Augustine asks. "God forbid that he should think of Jerusalem, he whose heart was so ardent, so burning with love, so impatient to arrive at that [eternal] Jerusalem..." Augustine of Hippo, "Psalm 119: The Ascents of the Christian," in *Augustine of Hippo, Selected Writings*, ed. Mary T. Clark (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 233–34. See also Thomas Renna, "Zion and Jerusalem in the Psalms," in *Augustine: Biblical Exegete*, ed. Frederick Van Fleteren and Joseph C Schnaubelt (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 279–98.

<sup>24</sup> Although of North African Berber descent, Augustine himself enjoyed Roman citizenship, which allowed him easy movement within the Roman Empire from Thagaste in northern Africa to Carthage, Rome, Milan, and eventually to Hippo. Perhaps it is not surprising that Augustine would make use of one of the conceptual domains of everyday life in the Roman Empire which shaped his experience and that of his companions when describing the Christian life. But a short narrative in his *Confessions* suggests that Augustine's pilgrimage metaphor was inspired not only by the Roman legal tradition, but also by his attentiveness to the practical witness of the desert ascetics. Augustine writes of his own encounter as a young man with Ambrose's *Life of St. Antony*, whose inspiration he credits with the conversion of two young men, although it only led him to beg, "Lord, grant me chastity and continency, but not yet!" (Book VIII, cpt 6). As bishop, Augustine corresponded with some of these desert pilgrims, including women. Scholars have continued to recognize the rich influence of the desert ascetic tradition on Augustine's writings. See Andrew Jacobs, "Writing Demetrias: Ascetic Logic in Ancient Christianity," *Church History*, no. 69 (2000): 719–48; Maria Doerfler, "'Hair!': Remnants of Ascetic Exegesis in Augustine of Hippo's *De Opere Monachorum*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22, no. 1 (2014): 79–111; Henry Chadwick, "The Ascetic Ideal in the History of the Church," in *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, 1985, 1–23.

In the *City of God*, Augustine expands and deepens this theological metaphor by contrasting the human experiences of pilgrimage and exile. The metaphor of Christian pilgrimage as alienation is embedded in the larger narrative of God's salvation begun in Genesis. Necessitated by that great Fall at the beginning of history which alienated the universe from the order and vocation for which it was created, and established by the redeeming work of Christ, the concept of Christian pilgrimage becomes for Augustine the foundation of the theological virtue of hope. Were it not for the Fall, no one would have been separated or exiled from the kingdom of God. Yet as it stands, in the final moments between Christ's victory and the consummation of that redemption in creation, Christians are made citizens of an eschatological city that is not yet accessible. Christians are considered aliens in this world because of their citizenship in the next. For Augustine, election fundamentally alters Christians' relationship both to the Garden from which humanity was exiled and to the present context in which they now live:

When those two cities started on their course through the succession of birth and death, the first to be born was a citizen of this world and later appeared one who was a pilgrim and stranger in the world, belonging as he did to the City of God. *He was predestined by grace, and chosen by grace, by grace a pilgrim below and by grace a citizen above*<sup>25</sup>

Citizenship in the world is a consequence of human sin and exile. In light of this reality, salvation is conceived as a fundamental transformation of human identity. In the waters of baptism, a person is washed clean of the earthly citizenship gained as a consequence of that original sin and incorporated anew as a citizen of the City of God; in that same moment, the

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<sup>25</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009), 596. Italics mine.

Christian becomes a resident alien, a *peregrinus* in the City of Man in which the Christian continues to reside.

To understand Augustine's *City of God* only as a temporal accounting of salvation history, moving from creation and the Fall through the redemptive work of Christ in this present age towards the consummation of this work at the end of time, is to grasp only a portion of the contribution of this text and in fact, inclines towards an anachronistic misinterpreting of his pilgrimage metaphor as that of a journey through time towards an eschatological destination. As we will see below, the contemporary Christian can be forgiven this reading to some extent, informed as we are by this domain of journey that largely replaced Augustine's concept of alienation in the medieval church. Lost in this interpretation, however, is Augustine's rich eschatology that has not only a delayed but also an immanent frame.<sup>26</sup> Like the Garden in Eden from which the earliest humans were exiled, the City of God is not cosmologically elsewhere, in a place other than the created world in which we live. Rather, the City of God is springing up here and now in the midst of the City of Man, growing among the earthly City like the grasses in Matthew's parable of the wheat and the tares.

In these two metaphors—the Christian as *peregrinus* and the City of God as *peregrinus*—we find the easy tendency of Augustine to move fluidly between the individual

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<sup>26</sup> "I undertook...to write about the origin, the development, and the destined ends of the two cities. One of these is the City of God, the other the city of this world; and God's City lives in this world's city, as far as its human element is concerned; but it lives there as an alien sojourner (*peregrina*)...And yet this City did not proceed on its course in this world in isolation; in fact, as we will know, just as both the cities started together, as they exist together among mankind, so in human history they have together experienced in their progress the vicissitudes of time." Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, chap. 18.11.1,3.

and the corporate. The distinction is of little concern, for his anthropology and ecclesiology are one and the same. What can be said of the Christian can be said of the church and vice versa.<sup>27</sup> Analogous to the baptized Christian, the corporate body of the church also has an eschatological character that is the in-breaking of the City of God in the world. Both the Christian and the church, individual and corporate bodies, dwell in this world as resident aliens, already the recipients of God's salvation and therefore sacramental signs of God's redemption of the world awaited only in its completion.<sup>28</sup>

By casting redemption in terms of the restoration of citizenship in the Kingdom of God, Augustine juxtaposes the two experiential domains and posits the pilgrim as the exile redeemed. The estrangement from God that resulted from the Fall is reinterpreted through the metaphor of pilgrimage as an eschatological hope. The Christian experience, both individually and ecclesially, is not one of exile or excommunication from the Garden of God, but rather the experience of dwelling abroad as resident aliens. Through the redeeming work of God, Christian alienation is no longer the consequence of our disobedience, no longer an exile from the Garden. Rather, our pilgrim alienation is among the first fruits of the Kingdom of God. By the grace of God, Christians become the seeds and stones for the city whose gardens are slowly reclaiming this fallen world.

While deeply rooted in the scriptural texts, this metaphor of pilgrimage as alienation is also rooted in the lived experiences and practices of the Christian faithful. The earliest

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<sup>27</sup> We can find evidence of this especially in his homilies on the Psalms of Ascent, but this remains a consistent characteristic of Augustine's thought. See especially Adam Ployd, *Augustine, the Trinity, and the Church: A Reading of the Anti-Donatist Sermons*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2015), 55–73.

<sup>28</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, chaps. 19.27.9. 19.17.47; 18.51.20; 18.54.83.

Christian writers identified their own experiences as Christians with the experience of legal resident aliens, pulling a metaphor for their own communities from the social environments in which they lived. As Christians moved to the deserts, pilgrimage became not only a legal status, but a distinctively Christian practice of residential alienation which added further content to this conceptual domain. In deploying the language of pilgrimage in theological reflection, thinkers like Augustine took seriously the early church's experiences and practices of Christian pilgrimage. When placed alongside other practices, like baptism, the practices offer further illumination of one another: the experience of pilgrimage, through the waters of baptism, becomes the experience of salvation. And baptism, seen as the constitution of our heavenly citizenship and earthly alienation becomes the promise of the Kingdom.

### **Conceptual Domain 2: Penitents and Exiles**

As the experience and practice of the church changed, conceptual domains by which the church understood the metaphor of pilgrimage also began to shift. By the end of the Middle Ages, pilgrimage no longer represented the Christian's redemption from exile, but rather the experience of exile itself. This shift in conceptual frames situated the alienation of pilgrimage not as an effect of our baptism, but rather as the consequence of sin and disobedience. This metaphorical shift facilitated a different ecclesiology from that of Augustine; it distinguished the institution of the church from its members. The development of new practices of Christian pilgrimage in the medieval church helps account for this shift in metaphorical domains.

In the early Middle Ages, Celtic Christianity was largely responsible for the spread of new notions of pilgrimage connected with both voluntary and involuntary notions of exile.

Although we have scattered accounts from the fourth and fifth centuries of Christians “exiling” themselves to Jerusalem on account of their sins, the Irish tradition of *peregrinatio* was distinctive. Unlike the continental pilgrimages of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, which were largely oriented around shrines, martyria, or other holy places, early Christian pilgrimage in Ireland more closely resembled the practices of those early desert ascetics who, leaving their own countries, became aliens and strangers in the deserts of Egypt and Palestine. But there was one important difference: temporary or permanent wandering rather than stable dwelling marked this Irish form of asceticism.<sup>29</sup>

On the west coast of Ireland, some pilgrims sailed into the Atlantic Ocean in a sea pilgrimage called *navigatio*. These pilgrimages tested one’s faith in God to guide the pilgrim

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<sup>29</sup> Maribel Dietz has made a compelling case for distinguishing Christian pilgrimage from monastic travel. She raises a similar concern to my own in noticing that the title “pilgrim” has been widely applied to a variety of religious travelers with very little attention to either the meaning of the term itself or the diversity of motivations and structures tempered by historical-cultural contexts in which the practices take place. “Indeed,” she writes, “the word “pilgrimage” has taken on such a variety of powerful connotations that it has often distorted the actual practices it purports to describe” (6). Dietz places the cause of these distortions in the assumption by theologians and historians of pilgrimage as “a relatively unbroken and unchanging tradition, isolated from temporal, geographic, and cultural contexts. Even the study of Christian liturgy, by its nature a conservative and defiantly unchanging topic, has not been accorded the static uniformity in practice and function that the study of pilgrimage has” (6-7). In her monograph, Dietz distinguishes late antiquity monastic travel from pilgrimage by arguing for a difference in both motivation and form. She defines pilgrimage as “goal-centered religious travel for efficacious purposes” while spiritual itineracy is better understood as a form of monastic asceticism. Provocatively, she includes travelers like Egeria in her category of monastic travel and suggests that the practice of pilgrimage (as she defines it) does not emerge until the Middle Ages with the establishment of pilgrimage centers like Santiago de Compostela that were aimed at lay rather than monastic travel and monastic reforms that emphasized a cloistered existence. Dietz’s study makes an important contribution to historical studies of pilgrimage and religious travel by offering a more nuanced account of the varieties of Christian practice within early Christianity. One need not accede to her efforts to separate the term “pilgrimage” from early forms of religious travel to affirm her conclusion that pilgrimage is far too often assumed to be a single practice, category, or concept rather than appreciating the many Christian practices throughout the tradition that have borne the title “pilgrimage.” Maribel Dietz, *Wandering Monks, Virgins, and Pilgrims: Ascetic Travel in the Mediterranean World, A.D. 300-800* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005).

to a destination of God's own choosing. Others, like the monk Columbanus, sailed east to the continent and wandered on land, rather than through the waves. His seventh-century hagiographer, Jonas, described Columbanus's *peregrinatio* as the highest form of asceticism.<sup>30</sup> Like those who settled in the deserts in earlier centuries, these wandering monks found their own practice to be a metaphor of the Christian life on earth. But this metaphor was rooted not in the political experience of living as resident aliens, but rather in their own experiences of wandering. Columbanus, for example, conceived of the earthly life as the roadway upon which the pilgrim journeyed:

Since we are travelers (*viatores*) and pilgrims (*peregrini*) in the world, let us consider the idea that at the end of the road, that is of our life, at the end of the road is our home...Let us not value the road more than the homeland, lest we lose our eternal home; for we have so great a homeland which we ought to love. Therefore, let this principle endure among us, that while we are on this journey, we live as travelers (*viatores*), as pilgrims (*peregrini*), as guests of the world (*hospites mundi*).<sup>31</sup>

The wandering Columbanus ups the ante on earlier notions of the Christian as resident alien. Rooted in the monastic asceticism of the Irish *peregrini*, he depicts the Christian life not as a manner of dwelling in a foreign land, but as a manner of wandering through one. While the resident alien can expect certain limited legal rights and protections, the wanderer, like the exile, has none. Indeed, it was as exiles rather than pilgrims that these

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<sup>30</sup> Columbanus was known to have founded several monasteries in Europe, including Jonas' monastery in northern Italy, and to have served as both spiritual guide and evangelist to those on the continent.

<sup>31</sup> "...et ideo quia sumus mundi viatores et peregrini, de fine viae, id est, vitae nostrae semper cogitemus; viae enim finis nostrae, patria nostra est...Duret igitur apud nos ista definitio, ut hic vivamus in via; ut viatores, ut peregrini, ut hospites mundi..." Columbanus Hibernus, "Instructio VIII," ed. Emer Purcell (Cork, Ireland: CELT, 2004), <https://celt.ucc.ie//published/T201053/index.html>.

*peregrini* were often perceived on the continent and it is likely that the Irish *peregrini* were comprised of both voluntary exiles and those compelled to leave.<sup>32</sup>

Irish Christianity also offers some of the earliest examples of penitential or exilic pilgrimage. The practice of temporarily or permanently excluding a sinner or criminal from the community was not unique to Christianity. Old Irish law included the expulsion from one's local territory or even the county as punishment for severe public crimes. Indeed, Peter Harbison suggests that the wandering Irish *peregrini* on the continent were likely a mix of those monastics who voluntarily undertook this wandering as a form of asceticism and those who were forcibly exiled from the island on account of their crimes or sins.<sup>33</sup>

Unlike voluntary practices of pilgrimage either monastic or popular, penitential or exilic pilgrimages functioned as a part of the discipline of the institutional church. In the early church, the ritual of penance developed as a response to those baptized Christians who had broken the rules of the community and failed to live according to the moral norms

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<sup>32</sup> The Council of Châlon-sur-Saône in 813 objected to the practice of these Irish bishops ordaining priests and deacons with no authorization from the lords or magistrates of the region in which the ordinations took place. In questioning the validity of the bishops' own ordinations and the legality with which they ordained others on the continent, the ordinations performed by these bishops were declared null. The same Council also legislated against pilgrimage as penance for sins, since it was most often assigned by these wandering confessors rather than by the priest or bishop to whose parish the sinner belonged. Here we can already see a struggle among the clergy between those with landed stability and those wandering, foreign clerics. As a result, Harbison notes the decline of these wandering monks and clerics by the ninth century. Irish pilgrimage was instead replaced by pilgrimages to local sites on the island or by longer pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem. Irish monks and clerics who did establish themselves on the continent did so as scholars in the royal courts or settled at already established monasteries. See Peter Harbison, *Pilgrimage in Ireland: The Monuments and the People*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 35–36; Kathleen Hughes, "The Changing Theory and Practice of Irish Pilgrimage," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 11 (October 1, 1960): 143–151; Rob Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe, 600-1200* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 121–22.

<sup>33</sup> McNeill and Gamer make a similar argument. John McNeill and Helena Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 34.

that their new life in Christ demanded. Before imposing permanent exclusion from the Christian community, the third-century bishop Tertullian advocated that sinners be given a second chance through a public process of penance, confession, and reconciliation called in Greek *exomologesis*.<sup>34</sup> Key to this process is the temporary separation of the sinner from the Christian community. The period of separation as well as the process by which the sinner completes his or her penance and is reincorporated into the Christian communion was occasionally legislated by conciliar canons, but more frequently it fell to the discretion of the bishop to oversee this discipline.<sup>35</sup> Within later penitential systems, pilgrimage functioned similarly to these earlier penitential disciplines as a temporary or permanent exclusion of the sinner from the Christian community.

In Ireland, exile was prescribed as a penance for murder as early as the sixth century.<sup>36</sup> The most frequent application of pilgrimage as penance in the canons and penitentials of the sixth and seventh centuries was for public or egregious sexual sins.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Tertullian, "On Repentance," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. S. Thelwall, vol. 3 (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing, 1885), chap. 9.

<sup>35</sup> Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe, 600-1200*, 18.

<sup>36</sup> "If a cleric commits homicide and slays his neighbor, he shall do penance for ten years in exile. Thereafter he shall be admitted to his own country if he has well performed his penance on bread and water and is approved by the testimony of the bishop or priest with whom he has done his penance and to whom he was committed, that he may make satisfaction of the parents of him whom he slew, offering himself in place of their son and saying, "Whatever you wish I will do unto you." But if he does not make satisfaction to the man's parents he shall never be admitted into his own country, but shall be like Cain a vagabond and a fugitive upon the earth." The penitential of Columban was compiled on the continent by an Irish monk in the early seventh century. In this passage as in many others, the language appears to reflect the early sixth-century Irish Penitential of Finnian. "Penitential of Columban," in McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, 252. See also "Penitential of Finnian" in McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, 89.

<sup>37</sup> "He who defiles his mother shall do penance for three years with perpetual pilgrimage." "Penitential of Cummean," in McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, 103. See also "Canons of the Synod of the Grove of Victory," and "Penitential of Theodore," in McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, 172, 186.

Pilgrimages were also prescribed for those who stole from or desecrated a church or shrine, as noted in this eighth-century canon from Hibernenis:

He who has stolen treasure either from a holy church or within the city where martyrs and the bodies of the saints sleep—the lot shall be cast on three things: either his hand or his foot shall be cut off; or he shall be committed to prison to fast for such time as the seniors shall determine and restore entire what he carried off; or he shall be sent forth on pilgrimage and restore double, and shall swear that he will not return until he has completed the penance and that after the penance he will be a monk<sup>38</sup>

Far from being a light penance, this canon suggests that pilgrimage was among the most severe penalties, akin to dismemberment or imprisonment. As such, pilgrimage was usually only levied on those frequently in public view—monks, clerics, and nobles—rather than the everyday lay Christian. Because these penitential pilgrimages resembled the wandering exile of the Irish monks rather than the destination pilgrimages popular on the continent, the completion of the pilgrim's penance was determined not by distance traveled or by destination reached, but rather by a temporal measure. Like the public penitential rites of earlier centuries, Irish penitential pilgrimage separated the sinner from the community for a period of time, with absolution and reconciliation granted at the conclusion of the prescribed period of penance.

The connection between the practice of penitential pilgrimage and the more popular practice of pilgrimages made to specific shrines or locales was virtually unknown until the ninth century, and it was not widely documented until the eleventh. In 1035, Robert le

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<sup>38</sup> From the eighth-century "Collectio Canonum Hibernenis," in McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, McNeill and Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*, 141. Similarly, "Of a decree of Irishmen on the Violation of Relics. Whoever violates the relics of bishops or martyrs by murder shall do penance for seven years as a pilgrim. If by theft, for three years. But if he slays on the bounds of a holy place in which laymen are given hospitality, one year." "Collectio Canonum Hibernenis," in McNeill and Gamer, 141.

Diable of Normandy was sent barefoot to Jerusalem in penance for poisoning his brother, and Count Thierry was sent to Jerusalem after he murdered the archbishop-elect of Trier in 1066. Both died before returning. Archbishop Thomas Beckett's assassins were excommunicated and only reconciled on the condition that they travel to Jerusalem as Crusaders, which itself was often preached as a pilgrimage. In reconciling a group of irregular clerics from Milan, Peter Damian required the men to make a pilgrimage to either Rome or Tours and sent their leader on the long and dangerous journey to Compostella. Clearly, the shift from a temporal to a spatial measure of penitential pilgrimage did not seem to decrease the severity of the penance, at least initially.

By the thirteenth century, however, penitential pilgrimage was no longer only associated with these long and dangerous exiles. During the French inquisition, pilgrimages were among the most commonly imposed penances for minor offenses against the faith. Resembling popular pilgrimages already in place at this time, these penitential pilgrimages were considered "light" penances. Penitents could be sent on a series of minor pilgrimages to local shrines, major pilgrimages to Canterbury, Santiago, Cologne, and Rome, and overseas pilgrimages to Jerusalem, depending on the severity of their offense. Pilgrimages became common penances for groups suspected of heresy, especially when no definite evidence could be found against individuals. Jonathan Sumption suggests that this practice of assigning popular pilgrimages as penance gave rise to the widespread belief in the automatic remission of sins gained by pilgrims upon reaching the shrine or coming into contact with relics.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Jonathan Sumption, *The Age of Pilgrimage: The Medieval Journey to God* (Mahwah: Hidden Spring, 2003), 144.

Critiques of the fifteenth-century reformers' superstitions that promised redemption in return for money or deeds mingled with concerns that penitential pilgrimages were exporting the most dangerous heretics and sinners to sacred lands and endangering other travelers on the road. Together, these dampened the practice of both popular and penitential pilgrimage in the early modern period. In effect, penitential pilgrimages were rarely imposed by religious authorities after the fourteenth century.<sup>40</sup> Still, the memory of these penitential pilgrimages remained a potent referent for the pilgrimage metaphor.

By the time of the Council of Trent in 1545, the conceptual domain of pilgrimage had shifted definitively to the experience of sin and exile. The Roman Catechism, promulgated by Pope Pius V in the year following the Council of Trent, describes a stark dualism between the church and the world which reinterprets Augustine's pilgrimage as a penitential exile.

The faithful should next be taught that God suffered the Hebrew Patriarchs to wander for so long a time and their posterity to be oppressed and harassed by a galling servitude, in order to teach us that none are friends of God except those who are enemies (*inimicos*) of the world and pilgrims (*peregrinos*) on earth, and that an entire detachment from the world gives us an easier access to the friendship of God.<sup>41</sup>

We compress, therefore, within the small compass of this Petition for God's kingdom all that we stand in need of in our present pilgrimage (*peregrinatione*), or rather our exile (*exsilio*), and all this God graciously promises to grant us...As long as we are clothed with this frail mortal flesh, as long as we wander in this gloomy pilgrimage and exile (*peregrinatione et exsilio*), weak and far away from God, we often stumble

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<sup>40</sup> However, judicial pilgrimages were preserved for another two hundred years in the criminal courts in Europe as penalties for violent crimes.

<sup>41</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, trans. J. Donovan, (Dublin: James Duffey & Co, Ltd., 1914), chap. III.I.13.

and fall, because we rejected the aid of the kingdom of grace, by which we were supported.<sup>42</sup>

Trent still relied on the metaphor of pilgrimage for the Christian's present, earthly condition, but the experiential source of pilgrimage is clearly the penitential pilgrimages of the Middle Ages, rather than Augustine's Roman *peregrinus*.<sup>43</sup> While both types of medieval pilgrimage, penitential and popular, were largely marginalized in the wake of the Council of Trent, the experience the metaphor preserves is that of penitential pilgrimage.

When the element of pilgrimage that is extolled as most meaningful and efficacious is the penitential experience of discipline and misery, then pilgrimage becomes an apt metaphor for the condition of quotidian earthly suffering. In shifting the referent and the conceptual frame of the metaphor, Christian alienation is now understood as the consequence of sin, rather than a consequence of our redemption. The pilgrim identity or metaphor refers not to the character of our citizenship in heaven, but rather to our exile from the kingdom as sinners. It is associated with Adam and Eve's exile from the Garden and the Israelite's desert wanderings, both prompted by sin and disobedience against God. In this new conceptual domain, the new Eve, Mary the mother of God and image of the church, is constituted as the hope and help of all pilgrims in exile: "We, therefore, exiled children of Eve, who dwell in this vale of tears, should constantly beseech the Mother of

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<sup>42</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, chap. IV.XI.2, 11.

<sup>43</sup> Evidence of this can be found in the only reference in this Catechism to the practice of pilgrimage, in which it is recommended as a practice of purity to guard against the temptation of adultery: "But the body is to be mortified and the sensual appetites to be repressed not only by fasting, and particularly, by the fasts instituted by the Church, but also by watching, pious pilgrimages, and other works of austerity. By these and similar observances is the virtue of temperance chiefly manifested." Its inclusion under discussion of the sixth commandment reflects its common recommendation in medieval canons and penitentials as a penance for breaking this same commandment. *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, chap. III.XII.13.

mercy, the advocate of the faithful, to pray for us sinners.”<sup>44</sup> Here, Mary represents the image and promise of humanity’s redemption. While earthly Christians may look to Mary for help, they are not yet associated with this new Eve, Queen of Heaven, but still with the first Eve. Like Eve, our trials and sufferings are a consequence of sin and the world is presented as not only alien but dangerous. The pilgrim has become an enemy of the world, rather than its guest.

The shift in metaphor from dwelling to wandering, from resident alien to exile, finds a close companion in the ecclesiological shift from Augustine’s notion of the City of God to Trent’s idea of the Perfect Society. In this new frame, the pilgrim becomes the new symbol of the order of penitents, a group separated from the church for a period of time with the hope of reconciliation at some point in the future. The pilgrim as penitent is exiled outside of the boundaries of the ecclesial community or at least to its margins and the relationship between the pilgrim and the confessor is one of sinner and reconciler. We find a similar relationship established between the laity and the clergy of the church in the triumphalist ecclesiologies that emerged in the modern era that distinguished the church from its members. The lay Christian is the wandering and exiled pilgrim, while the church is understood as a hospital or inn, the clergy heralds and hosts of the heavenly kingdom who guide Christians on their way. Augustine’s language of eschatological hope already realized in its nascent form in the Christian community is here reduced to “consolations” from our present exile. The church is no longer discerned in the baptized Christian, but rather represents the image of the Kingdom *for* these Christians. In so doing, the church is

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<sup>44</sup> *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, chap. IV.IV.VIII.

understood primarily in terms of its institutions and clergy, rather than as the baptized community. The Christian's earthly pilgrimage is presented as both punishment for sin and purification from it, rather than the first fruits of Christ's kingdom.

### **Conceptual Domain 3: Faithful Travelers**

It would be a mistake to construe pilgrimage in the medieval church exclusively in penitential terms. Although concern for the expiation of sins permeated the sensibilities and practices of medieval Christians, not all religious practice can be reduced to this single common denominator. Rich and diverse pilgrim practices during the Middle Ages were undertaken for a variety of reasons: expiation, gratitude, devotion, holiday, and even civil and religious patriotism. Despite the motivation for undertaking the practice and the distinctiveness of individual routes and traditions, medieval pilgrims shared a common experience: journeying. Pilgrimage as faithful journeying or traveling emerges in the medieval church as a third conceptual domain for the metaphor. More than any other writer, Thomas Aquinas has crystalized in the church the enduring metaphor of the Christian life as the pilgrim's continual progress towards the heavenly Jerusalem. In his *Summa Theologicæ*, Thomas follows Augustine's use of *peregrinatio* in his discussion of the scriptural texts, but reinterprets Augustine's anthropology by reading the *peregrinus* in light of the medieval practice of pilgrimage. In Thomas, the *peregrinus* becomes the *homo viator*.

Thomas makes regular use of the Latin *peregrinus* and its derivations in the *Summa*, but the language rarely functions as a generative metaphor. When using it as a verb, Thomas seems to have in mind Paul's concept in 2 Cor. 5:6 in which *peregrinor* means

simply to be separated from the presence of the risen Christ.<sup>45</sup> As a noun, *peregrinus* retains the Latin scriptural referent for the resident alien or stranger whose protection is so frequently dictated in the books of the Torah.<sup>46</sup> The term also refers in separate sections to the religious practice of pilgrimage, both popular and penitential. In fact, medieval pilgrim practice often forms a practical basis for Thomas' *disputatio*, especially with regard to religious vows and spiritual disciplines. Although employing a variety of meanings—alien, absence, and religious practice—Thomas' use of *peregrinatio* is rarely metaphorical, but instead indicates that he knew several pre-established meanings for the word. The language is rhetorical or communicative, rather than generative. He does not, however, follow Augustine and select this word to describe the state of the Christian life on earth. Thomas' shift in experiential domains is marked by a shift in the very term that is serving as a metaphor.

Thomas' Christian is not a *peregrinus*, but rather a *viator*—a distinction often overlooked by his English translators. *Peregrinus* has a placed quality: a resident alien, although an outsider or a stranger by virtue of status, is nevertheless known by nature in which they dwell in a place. The *viator*, by contrast, has a transient character. Commonly translated into English as *pilgrim* or *wayfarer*, the *viator* is a traveler or, more precisely, one who passes through a place rather than making their dwelling there. Literally “one on the way,” Thomas' *viator* is a traveler making his way through the earthly life on his way to heavenly rest.

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<sup>45</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (The Aquinas Institute, 2012), bk. I.II.4.5, I.II.67.3, II.II.28.1, II.II.174.5, II.II.175.5, III.8.4, III.59.5.

<sup>46</sup> See S.T. I.II.98.5 (Exodus 12:48), I.II.105.2 (Deut. 1:16-17, 14:28-29), I.II.105.3 (Exodus 22:9, 12:8), II.II.87.1 (Deut 14:28). For an example of Thomas' direct use of Augustine, see S.T. II.II.169.1.

Jerome's Vulgate deploys the language of *viator* only in the Hebrew Bible and never in the New Testament. In Jerome's translation, the *viator*, like the *peregrinus*, is a stranger. *Peregrinus* designates the permanent stranger who dwells with or among the Israelites, while the *viator* is the transient stranger, who may stay only a short amount of time before continuing on their way.<sup>47</sup> Notably for Jerome, *peregrinus* is contextual, always naming the outsider relative to the established community. Abraham is a *peregrinus* in the land of Canaan and his descendants are *peregrini* in the land of Egypt, but when Israel gains possession of the land, the foreigners living among them now become the *peregrini*. Naomi becomes a *peregrinus* when she moves to Moab and her Moabite daughter Ruth is a *peregrinus* upon their return to Israel. By contrast, Jerome uses *viator* only in reference to non-Israelites. In Genesis, the nomadic Ishmaelites are called *viatores* and Ezekiel calls the burial place set aside for Israel's enemies beyond its borders the *vallem Viatorum*.<sup>48</sup> Thomas's use of *peregrinus* in the *Summa* does not have Jerome's same situational flexibility; it always designates something strange or foreign to Israel. For Thomas, it is the *viator* that retains the functional flexibility of a generative metaphor. Thomas' *viator* evokes the experience of the medieval pilgrim, including travel, change, growth, and progress. For Jerome and for Augustine, the pilgrim metaphor described a conditional spatial reality of a citizen living or dwelling in a foreign place. Thus, Christians are simultaneously citizens (*cives*) of heaven and pilgrims (*peregrini*) on earth. For Thomas, on the other hand, the distinction created by the metaphor rooted in the domain of pilgrimage is between

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<sup>47</sup> See Ezekiel 36:34 and Jeremiah 14:8.

<sup>48</sup> Genesis 37:25 and Ezekiel 39:11.

movement and rest, traveling and dwelling, growth and completeness, becoming and beatitude.

The suggestion that Thomas' metaphor of the *viator* is rooted in the experiential domain of medieval pilgrimage rather than simply a generic domain of travel bears further scrutiny. In the *Summa*, Thomas expands and deepens the theological metaphor of pilgrimage by contrasting the human experiences of travel and dwelling. Like Augustine, Thomas embeds the metaphor of Christian pilgrimage in the larger narrative of God's salvation begun in Genesis, in which humanity failed at their garden task and destroyed God's creation. However, Thomas does not conceive of the Christian life in terms of exile. As with Augustine, Thomas' anthropology is constructed in light of the gospel events. In the incarnation, Christ not only comes among humanity as friend and cooperator to help humanity salvage and recreate the garden once destroyed; Christ also transforms the goal and inaugurates the journey or pilgrimage of the Christian towards friendship and fellowship with God—*beatitude*. In these final moments between Christ's victory and the consummation of redemption in creation, through the grace of God Christians become pilgrims in time, journeying from this life to the next, from the chaos of a fallen creation to the peace of the Father's house, moving from separation to fellowship, from alienation to friendship with God. The *peregrinatio* or journey of life is contrasted with the beatitude of dwelling in heaven.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Timothy McDermott suggests that *beatitude* is best understood as a *state* of happiness of blessedness, an eschatological vision that is clearly contrasted with the changeability and tumult of the human life. Later, Thomas argues that religious pilgrimage is not in fact a religious state (like that of a priest or a monk) but rather a deed or practice. See introductory note in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: A Concise Translation*, ed. Timothy McDermott, (Allen, Tex.: Thomas More Publishing, 1997), 169.

The angels and saints already dwelling with God in heaven, the first by nature and the second by grace, are called *comprehensors*.<sup>50</sup> On earth, we are called *viators*, as we pursue this beatific state by a journey of steps or stages over the course of our lives.<sup>51</sup> “The activity of the *viator* is to be moving towards the end of beatitude, while the activity of the *comprehensor* to rest at the end...One is called a *viator* because of one’s pursuit of beatitude and *comprehensor* from having already obtained it.”<sup>52</sup> Thus in Thomas, both *viator* and *comprehensor* indicate our creaturely character but in fact distinguish between the earthly experience of becoming and the heavenly experience of being that awaits each at the end of their pilgrimage.<sup>53</sup> Here then we find the consequence of the shift in metaphorical domain for Thomas from dwelling to journey, whereas for Augustine the ontological shift that took

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<sup>50</sup> “Angels were created happy...for what men [sic] acquire in stages by processes of learning angels were perfect enough to possess from the start.” I.I.62, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: A Concise Translation*, ed. Timothy McDermott, New edition (Allen: Thomas More Publishing, 1997), 101.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas’ *viator* pursues this goal by acting voluntarily although the medieval Latin *voluntas* (will) has proved difficult to translate into our modern sensibilities. In Thomas, the concept of will does not suggest a power exercised autonomously, but rather the ability to be drawn forward by the objective goodness of a thing which is both a natural state created in us and the result of grace. While there is, arguably, an aspect of freedom in the Thomistic *voluntas* in that other determining factors can affect our pursuit of the good like the mind’s withdrawal in ignorance or inattention or strong emotions like fear or desire, when confronted with an all-encompassing Good like God, the will cannot help but consent to it. Human agency, then, takes the form of *how* to pursue the good rather than whether or not to pursue it. For an succinct summary of Thomas’ concept of *voluntas*, see McDermott’s introductory note in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: A Concise Translation*, ed. Timothy McDermott, (Allen, Tex.: Thomas More Publishing, 1997), 169-171.

<sup>52</sup> S.T. III.15.10. Translation mine. See also *Ex hoc enim dicimur esse viatores quod in Deum tendimus, qui est ultimus finis nostrae beatitudinis*. S.T. II.II.24.4

<sup>53</sup> While angels are created as *comprehensors*, having never traveled along the journey of earthly life and human beings are first *viatores* and subsequently *comprehensors* as saints in heaven, the incarnated Christ alone is simultaneously called *comprehensor* and *viator*. In his humanity, Christ matured, growing in knowledge and understanding in his journey towards the cross and back to God. In this, Christ was truly *viator*. (II.II.174.5, II.II. 175.4, III.7.8). At the same time, Christ already enjoyed the true vision of and friendship with God. In this, Christ’s created nature was like the angels and saints and he could truly be called *comprehensor*. The risen Christ, seated in heaven, has like the saints, left his *viator* nature behind, having arrived at the eternal dwelling and final happiness with God. (Summa III.56.1). See also S.T. II.II.24.8.

place in Christian baptism was best expressed through a metaphor of the spatial practice of dwelling. The Christian's relationship to the spaces in which they lived and existed on earth was fundamentally different from that of a non-Christian. Thomas translates the spatial practice of pilgrimage to the temporal arena of the human life. Baptism reorients the destination of the Christian life in a way that produces the possibility of becoming a friend to God, a possibility that is worked out in increments and stages over the course of the Christian life which is itself a drawing closer to God. Here then we find in the medieval practice of *peregrinatio* the experiential domain for Thomas' *homo viator*.

The clearest evidence that Thomas' idea of the *viator* is inspired by the medieval practice of pilgrimage can be found in the rare moments in which the term *peregrinatio* functions as a metaphor for travel, rather than dwelling. Thomas' discussion of pilgrimage vows indicates that he knows well and considers legitimate medieval practices of pilgrimage, both popular and penitential, towards a particular shrine or locale that serves as the pilgrim's goal: Jerusalem's Holy Sepulchre, Santiago's Basilica of St. James, and Canterbury's Cathedral, to name only a few. Indeed, it is in these discussions that we find examples in Thomas of a practical, liturgical theology that searches the canon of Christian ritual for resources to answer theological questions.<sup>54</sup> And yet, as we have seen above,

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<sup>54</sup> Thomas often looks to pilgrimage practices as a foil to find an answer for what to do when practices or obligations conflict. Take for example the practice of fasting. Thomas wonders if fasting might occasionally be omitted or if it is to be always observed, being stipulated as "necessary" by the law of the church. Since pilgrimage is undertaken voluntarily, might the law then imply that fasting must not be omitted even on account of being on pilgrimage? No, Thomas concludes, fasting is not intended to prevent other necessary (the need to eat when one is very poor) or pious (pilgrimage) works. Another question explores the variety of vows one might make beyond those concerning ordination or the monastic life (ie a vow to make a pilgrimage). On fasting, see S.T. II.II.147; On vows see S.T. II.II.88. See also S.T. II.II.147.

Thomas largely resists the metaphorical application of pilgrimage to the journey of faith in which the Christian travels towards the ultimate goal of fellowship with God, preferring instead the less ambiguous *viator*. In light of this pattern in Thomas, the rare occasions on which pilgrimage does function as a metaphor for the journey of Christian life are especially instructive. In both instances, the practical experiential domain is also liturgical.

In the first book of the *Summa*, Thomas discusses the connection between the liturgies found in the pages of the Hebrew Bible and their significance for the Christian people:

The feast of “Scenopegia” or of “Tents” ...was kept for seven days, to commemorate the blessing of being protected and led by God through the desert, where they lived in tents. Hence during this feast they had to take “the fruits of the fairest tree,” i.e. the citron, “and the trees of dense foliage,” i.e. the myrtle, which is fragrant, “and the branches of palm-trees, and willows of the brook,” which retain their greenness a long time; and these are to be found in the Land of promise; to signify that God had brought them through the arid land of the wilderness to a land of delights...The feast of Tabernacles signified [the Christian people’s] pilgrimage (*peregrinatio*) in this world, wherein they walk by advancing in virtue.<sup>55</sup>

Here in Thomas is a clear connection between the Exodus journey in the desert, its liturgical commemoration in the feat of Tabernacles (including the ritual journey to the Jerusalem temple), and the Christian’s journey in this world—a journey in which the ritual, liturgical practice of pilgrimage serves as a metaphor for the Christian who walks not in space, but in time; not by physical steps, but by virtuous ones.

In Thomas, the virtues of faith, hope, and love are intricately connected to this human anthropology of journeying. While the angels and saints know God by seeing God for who God is, the earthly traveler’s sight is veiled. Thus, the *viator* can know God only by

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<sup>55</sup> S.T. I.II.102.4

faith. Christian hope lies in the eternal and final goal of dwelling with God in friendship. This is, indeed, Thomas' eschatological vision: *hope reaches even beyond the veil*, since the goal of life's journey lies beyond this life.<sup>56</sup> Faith he understands as *knowledge* of the truth of God while hope is the *desire* to dwell with God. Both faith and hope embrace God as a benefit to ourselves, while the third virtue, charity, unites our affections with God so that we no longer live and journey for ourselves, but for God. But to hope for anything, we must believe it is possible, and therefore faith precedes hope on our journey and hope then precedes love, that perfect love or friendship with God that is the goal of our journey. Thus, each of these virtues precede one another and each inclines and propels us on our journey towards God. For the saints and angels in heaven, the virtues of hope and faith disappear. Faith is not necessary, for they can see God clearly. Hope is not necessary, for their goal no longer lies ahead of them, but is already present. The hope that remains in the saints is hope for others still on their way, but directed outward as it is, this is not hope, Thomas writes, but rather perfect charity. Hope and faith are not virtues of dwelling or of rest; these are the virtues of those on their way. Faith and hope belong to the *viator*.

In the third book of the *Summa*, Thomas' pilgrimage metaphor once again arises out of liturgical reflection—this time on the Christian Eucharist. All of the sacraments, Thomas writes, bring us help on our journey through life towards heaven and because sacraments belong to *viatores* alone, they are called *viaticum*.<sup>57</sup> As help for the journey through life, the

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<sup>56</sup> S.T. II.II.17.2

<sup>57</sup> The language of *viaticum* appears twice in the Vulgate. In Deuteronomy 15:14, when an Israelite frees a slave, they must not send them forth empty handed, but they are exhorted to supply them with plenty of food (*viaticum*) for their journey. The book of Joshua records a story of the cunning Gibeonites who, when the other kings gathered armies to fight the advancing Israelites, chose a different strategy. Packing dry and moldy bread and spoiled wine (*viaticum*—traveling food), they

structure of the sacraments resembles the structure of the human life, the sacraments marking the spiritual life as bodily practices mark the physical life.

Our spiritual life resembles our bodily life in needing to be strengthened in us...Individually we are born (cf *baptism*), we mature (cf *confirmation*) and we must feed (cf *the Eucharist*); and since we also suffer disease and sin we need cure (cf *penitence*) and recuperation (cf *last anointing*). In the community as a whole, men [sic] share in government (cf *holy order*) and engage in propagation of the species (cf *marriage*).<sup>58</sup>

Within this schema, the Eucharist holds pride of place. While the Eucharist is help for the journey, this sacrament also signifies the culmination of our journey and therefore serves as a foretaste of heaven. Thomas' liturgical theology relies on the metaphorical domain of the pilgrimage of life to interpret the sacramental liturgies. Each sacrament makes possible the celebration of the Eucharist: Holy Orders prepares for its consecration, baptism and confirmation prepare for its reception, penance and anointing ensure it is received worthily, and marriage reveals the Eucharist to us as a union between Christ and the church. Thus the pilgrimage of life which the sacraments sustain is performed in the microcosm of the individual sacramental liturgies, Thomas notes, as nearly all of them culminate in the Eucharistic celebration. Thus, the sacraments have both a metaphorical logic that correlates with one's natural progression through life and an internal logic in which each sacrament marks a spiritual journey culminated in the Eucharist—both foretaste and sign of that true fellowship of love between a person and God, which is the

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posed as travelers from a faraway land and tricked Joshua into making a treaty with them to spare their lives (Joshua 9:5). Thomas, however, selects as his biblical referent 1 Kings 19:8 where Elijah, having partaken of food and drink from the angel, journeyed for forty days on the strength of that food to Mt. Horeb, where he spoke with God. This heavenly food given to strengthen Elijah for his journey to God is truly the Eucharistic viaticum.

<sup>58</sup> S.T. III.65.1

goal of the *viator*.<sup>59</sup> It is especially in the celebration of the Eucharist that it becomes possible for Thomas to name the lifelong journey of the *viator* through the ritual/liturgical practice of pilgrimage.

While we await his bodily presence in heaven, [Christ] does not deprive us of his bodily companionship in our pilgrimage (*peregrinatione*), joining us to his very body and blood in this sacrament: *He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells in me and I in him*. It joins Christ to us in such friendly unity that it is our greatest sign of his love, and the raising of our hope.<sup>60</sup>

It is within this metaphorical domain of pilgrimage as journey that the Eucharist is understood as the companionship of the risen Christ who accompanies us on the journey and at the same time provides a foretaste of that perfect charity that awaits us in heaven.

Medieval practices of *peregrinatio* formed the metaphorical domain for many medieval writers beyond systematic theological inquiries. Frequently, the medieval *homo viator* was portrayed as an allegorical pilgrim journey depicting the Christian's earthly life and its continuation by the soul after death. The beginning of Guillaume de Deguileville's *Le Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine* is an apt example of this genre.

To those of this country, who have no home here, but are all pilgrims (*pèlerins et pèlerines*), as St. Paul says—men and women, rich and poor, wise and foolish, kings and queens—I want to recount a vision that came to me the other night as I was sleeping...This vision concerns the mighty and the humble, without exception. I have put it all in [French], so that the laymen can understand it. Everyone can learn from it which path to take and which to leave and abandon. This is something very necessary to those who are pilgrims in this wild world...

As I was sleeping, I dreamed I was a pilgrim eager to go to the city of Jerusalem. I saw this city from afar in a mirror that seemed to me large beyond measure. The city was richly decorated inside and out...It had many houses, squares, and mansions. Inside,

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<sup>59</sup> Also S.T. III.73.4.

<sup>60</sup> S.T. III.75.1

all was gladness and joy without sorrow. To be brief, all those within it had, in general, more of all good things than they could ever think of or ask for.<sup>61</sup>

Guillaume's poem offers in allegory a theology similar to that found in Thomas' systematics. Guillaume's allegory begins with a vision of the city of Jerusalem in a mirror and an ardent desire to travel there as a pilgrim. This image that impels the pilgrim forward is that of the highest good, this image of Jerusalem that the pilgrim carries with him in a mirror set atop the staff of Hope that he receives from Grace at the beginning of the journey, along with the script of Faith.

The journey begins with a washing and anointing by Grace, which is described as both a baptism and a pilgrim's blessing and ends at the moment of death, by which the pilgrim will enter the gates of Jerusalem. On his journey, the Pilgrim finds strength and healing from the personified sacraments, hospitality and care from the virtues, and faces temptations and false paths from the deadly sins and their companions. The pilgrim also encounters the stages of life personified—Youth who is able to soar on feathered feet and Old Age with her feet of lead. In subsequent manuscripts, Guillaume extends this earthly journey by describing the journey of the soul after death, an allegory similar to that of his better known fourteenth-century contemporary, Dante. For both poets, the Christian life is depicted as the soul's journey to God. The medieval allegories of the *homo viator* most certainly reflect the influence of the institutionalization of pilgrimage as a practice in the medieval church. Dante's familiarity with both medieval Holy Land pilgrimage and the

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<sup>61</sup> Guillaume de Deguileville, *Le Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine*, trans. Eugene Clasby (New York: Garland Pub., 1992), 3.

Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome in 1300 is well documented, as are his depictions of these throughout the *Divine Comedy*.<sup>62</sup>

The conflation of *peregrinatio* and *viator* in the medieval church was perhaps an inevitable consequence of the shift in the Christian's relationship to civil society. The sense of estrangement from the world, that is from the non-Christian *civitas* in which Paul and Augustine resided, was simply unfamiliar to a medieval society who knew varying degrees of collaboration among ecclesial and civic governance. On the other hand, medieval Christians did share a variety of experiences of pilgrimage practice. If not pilgrims themselves, then certainly they knew of friends or heard stories of those who journeyed. The medieval pilgrim was not the resident alien making a home in a foreign land, but rather the traveler, the transient, the wanderer, and the wayfarer. For penitential pilgrims, the shrine marked their salvation. For devotional pilgrims, they found at their goal friendship with the saints and with God. For penitents and devotees alike, the practice of pilgrimage was marked by the journey. Like life, the pilgrim's journey could be punctuated with joy and hope, grief and anguish. The ubiquitous presence of both penitential and devotional

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<sup>62</sup> John Demaray shows how Dante's *Purgatorio* drew upon both oral and written accounts of medieval Holy Land pilgrimage, "infusing this part of the *Commedia* with a body of "real" experience recognizable to readers of his period" (3). Jo Ann H. Moran Cruz situates the entire *Commedia* within the context of the Roman Jubilee. Cruz suggests that, having been excluded from the plenary indulgence, Dante's *Commedia* puts forward an alternate path to salvation that does not depend on the institutions of the church. Mary Alexander Watt argues at length that "the poem is typologically linked to progress within a medieval church and/or progress toward Jerusalem, either as pilgrim or as crusader" (3). The structure, Watt argues, is not meant to imitate the pilgrim's practice but rather to remind the reader of commonalities between these concrete practices and the way to salvation. John G. Demaray, "Pilgrim Text Models for Dante's 'Purgatorio,'" *Studies in Philology* 66, no. 1 (1969): 1-24. Jo Ann Heppner Moran Cruz, "Dante, Purgatorio 2, and the Jubilee of Boniface VIII," *Dante Studies, with the Annual Report of the Dante Society*, no. 122 (2004): 1-26. Mary Alexandra Watt, *The Cross That Dante Bears: Pilgrimage, Crusade, and the Cruciform Church in the Divine Comedy* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005).

pilgrimage in the medieval church modified and renegotiated the theological concept of pilgrimage received from earlier centuries by shifting the metaphor's practical, experiential domain. The Christian life is here conceived as each individual's journey to the heavenly Jerusalem

#### **Conceptual Domain 4: Spiritual Exercise**

The metaphor of spiritual ascent finds its experiential domain in the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which incorporates both the experience of the journey to the city from the peripheries of Israel or Christendom and the experience of the final ascent by which the pilgrim comes to enter the city on a hill. One of the earliest designations for Christians was "followers of the Way." The Acts of the Apostles refers to Christianity as *the Way* in several instances and the second-century *Didache* describes two ways (*hodoi, viae*) a person might choose to follow—a way that leads to life and a way that leads to death.<sup>63</sup> This notion of the way and its accompanying spiritual *itineraries* or guidebooks have been fundamental to the development of Christian spirituality. Distinctive from the dwelling of resident aliens above, this usage emphasizes the itinerant pilgrim or traveler as the conceptual domain for the Christian spiritual life. The Christian soul ascends through works of faith and charity. Like the *homo viator*, these spiritual pilgrims are on their way to greater and more intimate union with God.

Like previous metaphors, this metaphor of spiritual progress or spiritual ascent developed early in the tradition. Origen and Augustine offer clear examples of this

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<sup>63</sup> Acts 9:2, 19:9, 19:23, 22:4, 24:14.

conceptual domain, although they are by no means the only ones.<sup>64</sup> Here again, the conceptual domain includes narrative experiences that emerge from the biblical texts as well as the practice of Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The biblical images that find purchase in this conceptual domain are ones of travel: the exodus journey from Egypt to the promised land and the festal journeys from the peripheries of Israel to the heart of Jerusalem. These images from the Hebrew Bible in the Christian tradition quickly become associated with the soul's movement towards God.

Origen's homilies on Numbers show an early application of the pilgrimage metaphor to the biblical narrative of the desert wandering that preceded Israel's possession of the God's promised land. Drawing a parallel between the genealogy of Christ and the states of the Exodus from Egypt to the promised land, Origen intertwines language of both dwelling and travel in describing the Christian's spiritual life of faith.<sup>65</sup> He depicts Christ's descent as clearing or opening a path between humanity and the divine. With the route already

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<sup>64</sup> Gregory of Nyssa's exegetical writings had an enduring influence on the development of the mystical tradition. In addition to his well-known *Life of Moses*, we can also include his commentaries on Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs and his homilies *On the Lord's Prayer*, *On the Beatitudes*, and *One the Titles of the Psalms* as excellent explications of spiritual ascent. In these works, Gregory has roughly three consistent stages of the ascent of the soul to God: apathy or liberty by which he means most frequently liberty from the bodily passions, gnosis or mystical knowledge, and theoria or an apophatic contemplation. For Gregory, the essence of the spiritual life is this perpetual mystical ascent of the soul, always aflame with desire for God but never fully quenched. Benedict of Nursia wrote in his *Rule* that the monk ascends the ladder to heaven through the twelve steps or rungs of humility. John Climacus's thirty-step ladder (*Scala Paradisi* or *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*) continues to be read and celebrated as a classic of Eastern spirituality even today. In the West, Pseudo-Dionysius' *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* describes a hierarchical worldview through which humanity may ascend to God through participation in the sacramental/liturgical life of the church.

<sup>65</sup> Origen's homilies on Numbers were written between 244 and 249 at Caesarea. Our only text of these homilies is Rufinus' late fourth-century Latin translation.

established, the Christian's spiritual life then retraces the itinerary of the Incarnation.<sup>66</sup>

Whereas Christ descended into creation, the Christian ascends to God along the same path.

Reading Numbers 33 as an *itinerarium* of the soul, Origen unpacks the Israelites' pilgrimage to the Promised Land a type of the Christian soul's journey to God.

Let us strive to go forward and to ascend one by one each of the steps of faith and the virtues. If we persist in them until we come to perfection, we shall be said to have made a stage at each of the steps of the virtues until, when we attain the height of our instruction and the summit of our progress, the promised inheritance is fulfilled.<sup>67</sup>

In describing the Christian's spiritual life as one of ascent, *peregrinatio* evokes the experience of travel from place to place towards a promised land in which the physical land of Israel prefigures the promised destination of heaven for the Christian.<sup>68</sup>

"My soul has long been on pilgrimage" (*peregrinations anima mea*, quoting Ps. 119:6 LXX). Understand then, if you can, what the pilgrimages of the soul are in which it laments with groaning and grief that it has been on pilgrimage so long. We understand these pilgrimages only dully and darkly so long as the pilgrimage still lasts...For the time being the soul is on pilgrimage; it journeys on (*iter*) and makes

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<sup>66</sup> "In descending to the Egypt of this world Christ passed those forty-two generations as stages; and those who ascend from Egypt pass by the same number, forty-two stages." Origen, "Homily XXVII on Numbers" in *Origen: An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer First Principles: Book VI: Prologue to the Commentary on the Song of Songs, Homily XXVII on Numbers*, trans. Rowan A. Greer (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 249. Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-214) drew on both Christian scripture and neoplatonic traditions to produce an early formulation of the stages of mystical progress. In *Stromateis 5*, Clement understands the goal of the Christian life as the *theoria* or vision of God. The way to *theoria* is marked by growth in knowledge (*gnosis*) and love through ethical practice (*ethike*). In his commentary on the Song of Songs, Origen describes the three Wisdom books (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs) as corresponding to the three stages of spiritual development: *ethike* (a right way of living), *physike* (a right understanding of the natural world), and *enoptike* (contemplation of divine things). The soul is first purified through ethical practice, it learns to contemplate creation as the work of God, and finally it comes to a vision of Godself, which is union with the divine.

<sup>67</sup> Origen, "Homily XXVII on Numbers," 250.

<sup>68</sup> A contemporary and friend of Jerome until deep disagreements over Origen's theology drove a wedge between them, there is often close resemblance between Rufinus's rendering of biblical quotations and Jerome's Vulgate translation. Nevertheless, the Latin phrases offered in parentheses in this section are Rufinus' translations and should not assume Jerome's Vulgate as their source. Rufinus' use of *peregrinatio* clearly evokes ideas of journeying and thus constitutes a conceptual domain somewhat distinct from Jerome's *peregrinatio*.

stages (*mansiones*) doubtless because God has ordained them in His promises for the sake of some kind of profit...Therefore, the stages are those by which the soul journeys from earth to heaven.<sup>69</sup>

For Origen, the biblical image of the Christian life is not that of Abraham or the Israelites living as strangers or aliens in a foreign land, but rather that of the Israelites, led triumphantly out of Egypt by their God, making their way through the wilderness, a wandering that is nevertheless purposeful as they advance on their pilgrimage towards the promised land—an advance that is not so much temporal as it is moral and spiritual.

Origen's work suggests that this metaphor of pilgrimage is dynamic and meant to describe the active nature of the Christian life as the pursuit of the divine. Although this metaphor, like that of alienation, relies on the action of God to make it possible, the conceptual domain of spiritual journeying emphasizes human agency in the work of deification. Yet, these two pilgrimage domains—alienation and spiritual journeying—should not be construed as mutually exclusive. Augustine offers an interesting example of the way that these two conceptual domains exist together in thought and writings of a single author.

In his *Ennarations on the Psalms*, Augustine was commenting on the Psalms of Ascent during the period in which he was giving the first homilies on the Gospel of St. John. In those homilies, we find a similar theme of ascent developed around the incarnation of Christ: "He descended because of us, we ascend because of him."<sup>70</sup> Like his homilies on John, Augustine's commentaries on the Psalms of Ascent were directed towards baptized

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<sup>69</sup> Origen, "Homily XXVII on Numbers," 250-251.

<sup>70</sup> Augustine of Hippo, "Twelfth Homily on the Gospel of St. John," in *Augustine of Hippo, Selected Writings*, ed. Mary T. Clark (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 287.

Christians: those pilgrims on earth and citizens of God's kingdom. His concern in these texts is primarily pastoral: how are Christians to conduct themselves in this life? Augustine finds in the practices of Israel's regular convergence on the temple in Jerusalem depicted in these Psalms of Ascent the image or type of the ascent of the Christian soul to the heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>71</sup>

In these commentaries, Augustine makes a curious distinction between the pilgrimage of the body and the pilgrimage of the soul. When referring to the Christian's bodily experience on earth, Augustine's use of *peregrinatio* in these homilies is consistent with its use in *City of God*, describing the experience of dwelling far from God's own city, of which Christians are made citizens by baptism. The meaning is reinforced with the use of the synonym *incolatus*, meaning residence or dwelling.

He exclaims to the Lord: "Alas, that my dwelling (*incolatus*) has become far off (Matt. 13:5). I am very far from you (*multum a te recessi*), O my God: My pilgrimage (*peregrinatio*) is indeed prolonged. I have not yet come to that country where I will see no wicked ones. I have not yet come to that society of angels where I will fear no snares. Why am I not there yet? Because my dwelling (*incolatus*) is indeed far from you. Pilgrimage is dwelling far from you (*incolatus peregrinatio est*).<sup>72</sup>

And yet, while the Christian dwells as a resident alien in this life, separated from God, the soul may yet journey towards the Lord.

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<sup>71</sup> Klaus Seybold and Loren Crow have both argued that these fifteen psalms, known by their common superscript "A psalm of ascents," were redacted and brought together under this single title in the post-exilic period. Seybold argues that the Psalms of Ascents sprung partly from the circles of pilgrims coming to Jerusalem and were redacted by an official author into a song or prayer book intended to serve the pilgrims coming to Jerusalem. Agreeing with Seybold, Crow argues for a second, rhetorical motivation. He suggests that this collection not only served as a devotional handbook, but also extolled the merits of pilgrimages from outlying areas to the newly rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. Loren D Crow, *The Songs of Ascents: (Psalms 120-134): Their Place in the Israelite History and Religion* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996); Klaus Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990).

<sup>72</sup> Augustine, "In Psalmum CXIX," in Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos 119-133*, vol. XCV/3 (Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2001). Translation mine.

For the body pilgrimages in place, the soul pilgrimages by affections. If you love the earth, you pilgrimage away from God (*peregrinarius a deo*). If you love God, you ascend towards God (*ascendis ad deo*). Let us exercise ourselves in the love of God and of neighbor so as to return to love. If we fall into sin on earth, we decay and rot. But one descended to this one who had fallen, that she might ascend. Yet in that time of the psalmist's pilgrimage, he said that he dwelled in the tents of Kedar. Why? Because my soul has pilgrimaged far. Where you pilgrimage, you also ascend (*ibi peregrinatur, ubi ascendit*). Since you do not pilgrimage in your body, you do not ascend in your body." So where does he ascend? He ascends in his heart, the psalmist says. If then one ascends in heart—only the pilgrimaging soul ascends through the ascent of the heart.<sup>73</sup>

The body's separation from God is cosmological; it is a matter of place. Yet the soul's separation (or union) with God is a matter of affections, or more specifically a matter of the soul's orientation.<sup>74</sup> If one's affections are oriented towards the world, that is, if one loves the world, then the soul is separated from God (*peregrinarius a Deo*). Yet a soul properly oriented toward God, a soul that loves God above all, is drawn to God in a way that closes this gap. Augustine's ascent of the soul is bound up with the Christian's progress in virtue. The love of God is intimately intertwined with the love of neighbor. Thus, Augustine's homilies on the pilgrimage psalms trace an upward itinerary that proceeds to God through concrete acts of love for others.

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<sup>73</sup> Augustine, "In Psalmum CXIX." Translation mine.

<sup>74</sup> Augustine's notion of affection has to do with how one's love is oriented, whether towards worldly things or towards God. Here, he describes the proper orientation of Christian affection. "The person who lives a just and holy life is one who is a sound judge of these things. He is also a person who has ordered his love, so that he does not love what is wrong to love, or fail to love what should be loved, or love too much what should be loved less (or love too little what should be loved more), or love two things equally if one of them should be loved either less or more than the other, or love things either more or less if they should be loved equally. No sinner, *qua* sinner, should be loved; every human being, *qua* human being, should be loved on God's account; and God should be loved for himself. And if God is to be loved more than any human being, each person should love God more than he loves himself." Augustine, *On Christian Teaching*, trans. R.P.H. Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 21.

Whereas for Origen pilgrimage was a synonym for ascent, for Augustine pilgrimage is the *opposite* of ascent: we pilgrimage *away from* God while we ascend *towards* God. Although Augustine's use of *peregrinatio* remains consistently within the conceptual domain of alienation, his language of ascent is located within the practical domain of Jerusalem pilgrimage, which forms the liturgical context for these psalms of ascent. Augustine's theological anthropology and ecclesiology of dwelling in the *City of God* is complemented by this dynamic journey of the soul, ascending step by step through charity and love to union with God.

This contrast between pilgrimage and ascent effectively spiritualizes the practice of Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem and privileges this spiritual pilgrimage of love over the practice of pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

“What would be the advantage of standing in that Jerusalem which itself was unable to stand, which has fallen into ruin?...God forbid that he should think of that Jerusalem, he whose heart was so ardent, so burning with love, so impatient to arrive at that [eternal] Jerusalem.”<sup>75</sup>

Although Augustine does not reject the practice of pilgrimage entirely, these commentaries suggest that the religious practice of coming to Jerusalem found in the Psalms of Ascent has a typological relationship to the spiritual ascent to which Christians are now invited.

Practices of pilgrimage, Augustine contends, are at best to be subordinated to practices of the moral and spiritual life. For Augustine, the heart of Christian pilgrimage as a practice lies not in one's journey to an earthly city or shrine, but rather in the inner journey of one's heart and soul towards perfect love and union with God.

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<sup>75</sup> Augustine, “Psalm 122: God Is True Wealth,” in *Augustine of Hippo, Selected Writings*, ed. Mary T. Clark (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 248–61.

In the twelfth century, while Thomas Aquinas was busy working out his metaphor of the *homo viator* as the every-Christian, his Franciscan counterpart, Bonaventure, furthered the development of the spiritual journey as the conceptual domain for understanding the soul's ascent to God. Just as Thomas's work offers the opportunity to reinterpret Augustine's *peregrinus* as *viator*, so too does Bonaventure come to equate the metaphors of *peregrinatio* and spiritual ascent. Bonaventure is perhaps best known for his theological treatises, more recent work has also drawn attention to his spiritual writings, directed most often towards the audience of his own Franciscan community.<sup>76</sup> These spiritual texts demonstrate the vertical dimension of this journey metaphor as they continue to develop earlier itineraries of ascent.

Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* ("Itinerary of the Soul to God") was written during his own pilgrimage to Mount Alverna in Italy.<sup>77</sup> In this work, he charts six levels of "elevating illuminations through which the soul is disposed, as it were by certain steps or paths (*gradibus vel itineribus*), to pass over to peace through the great ecstasy of Christian wisdom."<sup>78</sup> In light of both this context for the production of this text and the influence of the itinerant preacher Saint Francis on Bonaventure's own spirituality and

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<sup>76</sup> The work of Zachary Hayes has been especially important here. In addition to his introduction and translation to Bonaventure's *Itinerarium*, his monograph on Bonaventure's mystical corpus is especially illuminating. See Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, trans. Zachary Hayes (Saint Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2002); Zachary Hayes, *Bonaventure: Mystical Writings* (New York: Crossroad, 1999).

<sup>77</sup> *La Verna* in Italian, this isolated mountain in the center of the Tuscan Apennines is home to a major Franciscan monastery, built over the remains of a small monastery and church at which St. Francis received the stigmata in 1224. The site was soon taken under papal protection and in 1260, Bonaventure attended the consecration of a new church built on the site.

<sup>78</sup> Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, (Saint Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2002), Prologue 2-3. Translation mine.

theology, scholars have been quick to assign the language of pilgrimage to Bonaventure's *Itinerarium*. In English translations of Bonaventure's work, the term *itinerarium* is frequently translated as "pilgrimage," although a more direct translation would suggest "itinerary" or "guide."<sup>79</sup>

To understand this impulse further, it is helpful to situate Bonaventure's spiritual writings in the context of his larger theological corpus.<sup>80</sup> In his *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure uses the verb *peregrinamur* to indicate the earthly state of separation from God while he calls humans by the more common medieval phrase *homini viatori*, those who live in a state of "being on the way" (*statui viae*).<sup>81</sup> Informed by Bonaventure's medieval anthropology of the *homo viator*, the spiritual life is then easily depicted as a journey as well.

Whoever wishes to be purged must turn to the sting of conscience as outlined. In the course of these exercises, however, your meditation can begin with any one of the aforesaid points. The soul must go from one to the other and then rest there until tranquility and serenity are attained and from which arises spiritual happiness. Once

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<sup>79</sup> "Saint Francis wandered through the world like a pilgrim and a stranger. When the Lord had called him to live in accord with the form and pattern of the Holy Gospel his body found no permanent dwelling place anywhere, and his mind felt no longer at home here upon the earth. He became an itinerant, both in the literal and in the spiritual sense... His whole life as a pilgrim and stranger impelled him to the heights of religious experiences in which the longing of the heart transcends the body, and the soul rests in that peace which the world does not know. It became almost natural to Saint Francis to live in the Heavenly City, not in body, but in the fervor of his spirit, which anticipated the sweetness and the joy of things to come... The Seraphic Doctor, Saint Bonaventure, follows, in his *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, the model of his Master and Father in religion. What Saint Francis lived, the Seraphic Doctor transforms into thoughts and ideas, analyzing them, clarifying them, and formulating them into a system and method... The result is the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, the pilgrimage of the soul to God, or rather, a plan of pilgrimage which the mind of an intellectual Franciscan must follow if he wishes to reach the high goal of Saint Francis, peace and rest in the foretaste of the things to come in mystical experiences." Philotheus Boehner, "Introduction," in *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* (Saint Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2002), 13–15.

<sup>80</sup> Peter Fehlner describes Bonaventure's spiritual writings as the "spiritual application" of his doctrinal analysis in his *Breviloquim*. Peter Damian Fehlner, "Introduction," in *The Triple Way: Or, The Kindling of Love* (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 2012), 8.

<sup>81</sup> Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, trans. Dominic V. Monti (Saint Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005), prologue 6.9.

this is acquired, the soul is ready to climb to the heights. Therefore, this way begins with the sting of conscience and ends with the affection of spiritual joy. While the exercise is painful, it is consummated in love.<sup>82</sup>

In chapter three of this same work, *De Triplici Via*, we find in Bonaventure the clearest allusion to the medieval practice of pilgrimage when he compares the way of contemplation to the mind's arrival in the heavenly Jerusalem. It is necessary, he writes, that the church on earth conform to the church in heaven, that merits correspond to rewards, and that *viatores* reflect the saints as much as possible.<sup>83</sup> Bonaventure contends that one must form the soul into a mirror of the celestial hierarchy and in so doing ascend step by step to perfection, that is, to perfect love and rest with God.

In interpreting these texts, it is imperative that we exercise caution when introducing the pilgrimage motif to describe Bonaventure's spirituality. Bonaventure never uses the Latin *peregrinatio* in either his *Itinerarium* or *De Triplici Via* (a commentary of Chapter four of the *Itinerarium*, sometimes called his spiritual *summa*) and makes use of the term *viator* only once. As with Augustine, it is not his language but rather the genre of the *Itinerary* that suggests the closest connection between pilgrim practice and the inner practice of the soul's progress or journey. In the medieval church, the popular practice of pilgrimage existed side by side with the development of spiritual exercises in the monasteries, one practice drawing people outward, the other propelling them inward. By the thirteenth century, spiritual *itineraria* had emerged as a genre of writing in its own

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<sup>82</sup> Bonaventure, "The Threefold Way (De Triplici Via)," in *Writings on the Spiritual Life*, ed. F. Edward Coughlin, trans. Girard Etzkorn (Saint Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), I.9.

<sup>83</sup> Bonaventure, "The Threefold Way (De Triplici Via)," in *Writings on the Spiritual Life*, ed. F. Edward Coughlin, trans. Girard Etzkorn (Saint Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2006), III.1.

right, with its referent being more closely informed by other itineraries of spiritual progress and ascent, rather than the popular practice of pilgrimage. We can posit in these spiritual itineraries an independent literary and practical lineage quite apart from a simple metaphorical application of the popular medieval practice of pilgrimage. On the other hand, it would be problematic to assume there is no connection between these spiritual or interior itineraries and popular religious practices of pilgrimage, as Bonaventure's allusion to the heavenly Jerusalem cannot be thought of as insulated from the medieval preoccupation with the earthly city. However, this lineage of spiritual itineraries suggests a widening gap between these practices of spiritual writing and practices of pilgrimage. Practices of pilgrim journeying which had earlier informed the spiritual itineraries of Origen, Augustine, and Bonaventure were gradually replaced by literary practices of devotional journeying.

Although this widening gap between contemplative practices of ascent and active practices of pilgrimage persisted into the modern era, it is by no means absolute. The *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola provide a clear example of the intersection between pilgrim practice and a spiritual itinerary, in which the practical experience of the pilgrim becomes the foundation for these contemplative spiritual exercises. A long pilgrimage to Jerusalem deeply informed Ignatius' own spirituality. In his *Autobiography*, dictated to and transcribed by a brother Jesuit, Ignatius begins his life's narration not in childhood but at a crucial moment of conversion when, recovering from injuries sustained as a soldier in battle, he resolved to become a mendicant pilgrim to Jerusalem. It was this pilgrimage from Loyola to Jerusalem that consumed the first years of his new life (1522–1524) and

eventually became the conceptual paradigm through which he narrated his own life, referring to himself in his autobiography only as “The Pilgrim.”<sup>84</sup>

Ignatius’ pilgrimage took him through northern Spain, where he spent ten months living an ascetic life in the town of Manresa. It was here, in the midst of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem that Ignatius began to write the notes which would become his *Spiritual Exercises*.<sup>85</sup> Given the context of their genesis and Ignatius’ favored use of the pilgrim metaphor in describing his own life, the temptation to interpret Ignatius’ famous itinerary through the metaphor of pilgrimage is all but inevitable. Indeed, clues in the text itself suggest a connection as well. Ignatius himself describes the *Exercises* as a help for spiritual progress and uses the metaphor of walking to introduce the exercises:

By the term Spiritual Exercises we mean every method of examination of conscience, meditation, contemplation, vocal or mental prayer, and other spiritual activities, such as will be mentioned later. For just as taking a walk, traveling on foot, and running are all physical exercises, so is the name of spiritual exercises given to any means of preparing and disposing our soul to rid itself of all its disordered affections and then, after their removal, of seeking and finding God’s will in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> John Olin is among the most eager to read Ignatius’ *Autobiography* as a pilgrimage of faith. In addition to the literal and allegorical meanings of pilgrimage, Olin describes a third, extended notion of the word: “A pilgrimage can be a search, that is, an essentially interior journey toward some goal or ideal. It can involve the pursuit of meaning or a mission for one’s life, and it may effect inward growth or transformation.” John C. Olin, “The Idea of Pilgrimage in the Experience of Ignatius Loyola,” *Church History* 48, no. 4 (December 1979): 387. This essential idea of persons as travelers is one that Ignatius seemed apply to himself at the end of his life, as he reflected on the path that brought him to Rome. Olin sees in his narrative an evolving understanding of Ignatius’ notion of himself as The Pilgrim. The pilgrim remains a popular metaphor for the individual Christian today, as in the past. Whereas previous texts frequently used the language of pilgrimage to distinguish between the clergy and laity, this metaphorical pilgrim is a universal and even idealized image of the Christian life.

<sup>85</sup> Annotations in both Italian and Latin on the original Castilian manuscript suggest that Ignatius revised these exercises frequently throughout his later studies and ministry.

<sup>86</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, “The Spiritual Exercises,” in *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, trans. George Ganss (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 121.

More fundamentally, Ignatius's exercises chart a path for the exercitant (a person making the *Exercises*) that follows his own pilgrimage to the Holy Land described in his *Autobiography*. Key to Ignatian spirituality is the use of the imagination to create spaces in the mind in which to dwell for periods of time. Thus, each exercise begins with a prelude or a *composición*, an exercise of imagination that helps to put the mind in the right disposition for prayer.

The first prelude is a *composición* made by imagining the place. Here we should take notice of the following. When a contemplation or meditation is about something that can be gazed on, for example, a contemplation of Christ our Lord, who is visible, the *composición* consists of seeing in imagination the physical place where that which I want to contemplate is taking place. By physical place I mean, for instance, a temple or a mountain where Jesus Christ or Our Lady happens to be, in accordance with the topic I desire to contemplate.<sup>87</sup>

Most often, these *composiciones* ask the exercitant to imagine themselves in a particular place (the first prelude) and once there to ask for what they desire (the second prelude).

The first week, the exercitant examines the self—evaluating, asking for forgiveness, and purifying the soul for what is to come. This detachment, examen, and repentance are reminiscent of Ignatius' own path to Jerusalem through Montserrat and Manresa, where he gave up his riches, took the staff of the pilgrim (Montserrat), and attended to his own sin and weakness (Manresa). The second week, where the exercitant contemplates Christ and strives to imitate his virtues, asks the participant to place themselves at specific places in the Holy Land where Ignatius visited, moving between a cosmic view of the place and a local one.<sup>88</sup> She places herself with the Triune God gazing down at the world at the moment

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<sup>87</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, "The Spiritual Exercises," 136.

<sup>88</sup> "The first prelude is a *composición* by imagining the place. Here it will be to see with the eyes of the imagination the synagogues, villages, and castles through which Christ our Lord passed as he preached." Ignatius of Loyola, "The Spiritual Exercises," 136. His use of "castles" here is

the decision is made for the Incarnation and then moving to the house and the rooms of Nazareth where Mary became the first human to learn of this plan. She finds herself on the road between Nazareth and Bethlehem, seated on a donkey next to the very pregnant Mother of God.<sup>89</sup> Soon, she is instructed to broaden her gaze and imagine a “great plain in the region of Jerusalem, where the supreme commander of the good people is Christ our Lord; then another plain in the region of Babylon, where the leader of the enemy is Lucifer.”<sup>90</sup> She soon finds herself standing before God and all the saints and then moving back down to stand next to the River Jordan and witness Christ’s baptism. The pilgrimage continues in the third week as the exercitant follows Christ through his passion and death: walking the road from Bethany to Jerusalem, seated at the table with the disciples, waiting with Christ in the Garden, walking with Christ between his judges’ houses, standing at the cross, and weeping at the tomb; tracing the route not only of the gospels but also of Ignatius’ own pilgrimage. In the fourth week, the exercitant places herself with the resurrected Christ, both on earth and then in heaven before the throne of God.

In Ignatius’ exercises, the outward pilgrimage is turned inward and the holy sites so compelling and inspiring to Ignatius are truly rediscovered within one’s own soul and made available to all who seek these holy places without the physical journey to Jerusalem. As we learn from his *Autobiography*, Ignatius repeatedly attempted to return to Jerusalem later in his life, but political unrest made this impossible. In the *Exercises*, the Pilgrim did not bring others to the Holy Land, he brought the Holy Land to them. And yet, to

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anachronistic but representative of the Holy Land Ignatius would have visited in 1523, with Crusader castles still dotting the landscape.

<sup>89</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, “The Spiritual Exercises,” 150.

<sup>90</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, “The Spiritual Exercises,” 154.

understand the exercises purely as a spiritualization of his Jerusalem pilgrimage ignores the clear influence of other spiritual itineraries on this work. As George Ganss helpfully documents, Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* also follow the traditional three-fold path of Purgation (Week 1), Illumination (Week 2), and Perfection (Weeks 3 and 4).<sup>91</sup> In the *Spiritual Exercises*, we find an unusual wedding of pilgrim practice and spiritual itineraries. It is telling that this union between pilgrim practice and spiritual progress is preserved today in the Jesuit program of novice formation, where novices are sent out as mendicant pilgrims, in imitation of Ignatius, for a period of time and later in formation, each Jesuit makes the *Spiritual Exercises* during a thirty-day retreat. As the *Exercises* have been received into wider practice in the church, however, it is the spiritual itinerary that is canonized rather than the physical one, perpetuating a hierarchy in which the inner life is associated with spiritual elites while pilgrimage is dismissed as a popular practice of the uneducated masses. Where the practical experience of pilgrimage is retained as part of the conceptual domain, the experience is typological rather than living, not unlike the narrative experiences of the Israelites in the Hebrew Bible.

This unmooring of pilgrimage practice from these spiritual itineraries effected not only a separation of the two practices—interior *from* exterior—but also an ordering of practice—interior *over* exterior. The use of pilgrimage as a metaphor for the inner life effectively subordinates the outward practice of pilgrimage to the inward journey of the soul. This privileging of the contemplative devotional life over the active devotional life is made explicit at the start of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy:

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<sup>91</sup> "General Introduction" in Ignatius of Loyola, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 51–53.

For the church is both human and divine, visible but endowed with invisible realities, zealous in action and dedicated to contemplation, present in the world, yet a pilgrim, so constituted that in it the human is directed toward and subordinated to the divine, the visible to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come, the object of our quest.<sup>92</sup>

Curiously, the metaphor of pilgrimage appears multifaceted in this passage. The initial contrast—present in the world, yet a pilgrim—evokes Augustine’s metaphor of alienation and in fact, some English translations of this text prefer the term “migrant” instead of “pilgrim” for the Latin *peregrinam*, arguably a more precise rendition of the Augustinian phrase.<sup>93</sup> The paired structure of this sentence, however, suggests an additional layer of interpretation that first distinguishes and then subordinates the human to the divine not only in essence but also in practice: action is directed toward and subordinated to contemplation. In this structure, the pilgrim is associated with the divine, contemplative side of the analogy. The heavenly citizen is recognized in the contemplative pilgrim, rather than the active one. The final phrase rounds out a tripecta of pilgrimage referents: *quam inquirimus*, that city which we seek, the object of our quest. In each of these uses, the metaphorical referent of pilgrim is itself metaphorical: the heavenly citizen, the spiritual ascent, and the lifelong journey towards God.

As pilgrimage language comes unmoored from pilgrimage practice in our theological thought, so too do our theologies risk an unmooring from the *sensus fidei*, the ongoing lived, practical wisdom of the people of God. The practice of the people is gradually replaced by discursive practices that seek the tradition in the writings of the past while overlooking the

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<sup>92</sup> Vatican Council II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, para. 2.

<sup>93</sup> See Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations* (Dublin: Costello Pub. Co, 1996), 117.

deposit of faith that continues to be preserved and handed down in the unwritten traditions and practices of the baptized. There is nothing inherently wrong with a theological tradition that stands on the shoulders of great thinkers; it is certainly difficult to conceive of the “tradition” without this. Yet, it is most ironic that systematic thinking often preserves and expands on the logic of theological content without also appealing to the practical logic of these thinkers for whom the practices of the faithful were themselves authentic carriers of the deposit of faith.

### **Conceptual Domain 5: The Pilgrim with a Human Face**

The *ressourcement* that so stimulated the theological imagination of the Second Vatican Council can be seen even in the way the conciliar texts make use of pilgrimage language as a metaphor for the Christian people and the church as a whole. The incorporation of multiple conceptual domains into the conciliar texts allowed the bishops to hold together a plurality of ecclesiologies without having to reconcile them fully. This is only made possible by a shift in the way that the pilgrimage metaphor functions in the texts themselves. There is little indication that the language of pilgrimage remains rooted in practices of pilgrimage in any significant way. Rather, by this point the metaphor is more rhetorical than generative, carrying with it varying ecclesiological agendas of those bishops gathered for the Council. The unmooring of the metaphor of pilgrimage from practical experience allows it to function ambiguously in these conciliar texts as a carrier of multiple theologies of the church, and in *Lumen Gentium* the experience of pilgrimage as imagined rather than lived gave rise to a new and distinctive conceptual domain.

*Lumen Gentium* made a clear and decided shift away from the triumphalist ecclesiologies that the First Vatican Council favored and that imagined the church as an

institution distinct from the faithful, a church *for* pilgrims in exile.<sup>94</sup> Instead, the Constitution on the church promoted an ecclesiology that recognized the church as the communion of the entire People of God, both clergy and lay. Using the biblical image of Israel as the people of God, constituted as such especially in Exodus and the wilderness on their way to the promised land, the ecclesial body is no longer a church *for* pilgrims, but now a church *of* pilgrims, moving through the currents of history towards the promised land.

The church, therefore, faithful to the truth of the Gospel, follows in the path of Christ and the apostles when it recognizes the principle that religious liberty is in keeping with human dignity and divine revelation...Although in the life of the people of God in its pilgrimage, though the vicissitudes of human history there have at times appeared patterns of behavior which was not in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel and even opposed to it, it has always remained the teaching of the church that on one is to be coerced into believing.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> The first draft of the Constitution on the Church presented during the first session of the Council reflected a continuation of what Ed Hahnenberg has called the church's "defensive driving" of the nineteenth century. Beginning with discussions of the nature of the church on earth and its necessity for salvation, the draft then proceeded in an orderly fashion to address the episcopacy and the priesthood, the religious state, and the lay state before concluding with a discussion of authority and obedience in the church and the church's relationship to the state. The bishops at the council largely rejected the document, the criticisms of Belgium bishop Emil Josef de Smedt standing as the most pointed evaluation of this text. De Smedt accused the writers of the draft of excessive triumphalism, clericalism, and juridicalism. The second draft showed a more theological shift in the way the bishops were wanting to think about and write about the church. They began with a chapter on the mystery of the church and followed it with chapters on the hierarchy, on the laity, and on religious life (characterized as the call to holiness). During a discussion of this second draft, one Cardinal suggested that chapter 3 be split into two and that all the material on the People of God form a new chapter inserted *before* the chapter on the hierarchy; the idea was received warmly by the other bishops on the drafting committee. The final draft of the document performed a similar move with the chapter on the Call to Holiness, casting it as a universal call incumbent on all baptized Christians and then situating a discussion of religious life within this universal call rather than as the church's outsourcing of this call. The document concludes with Congar's famous eschatological chapter on the Pilgrim Church and a chapter on Mary. See Richard R. Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making: Lumen Gentium, Christus Dominus, Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, Rediscovering Vatican II (New York: Paulist Press, 2006); Edward P. Hahnenberg, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of Vatican II* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007), 37–55; Yves Congar, *My Journal of the Council* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012).

<sup>95</sup> Vatican Council II, "Dignitatis Humanae," para. 12

Through this biblical imagery, the metaphor of the church on pilgrimage preserves a certain continuity with pre-conciliar metaphors, locating the church as the People of God within the later conceptual domains of pilgrimage as exile and journey even as it identifies itself with the individual Christian experience: “

While still on earth, the church pilgrimages apart from the Lord; it sees itself as an exile... Just as the people of Israel in the flesh, who pilgrimaged in the desert, were already the church of God, so too, the new Israel, which advances in this present era in search of a future and permanent city is also called the church of Christ.<sup>96</sup>

By adding the annotation “as if it were in exile,” the Council is clearly interpreting Jerome’s pilgrimage metaphor within the conceptual domain of penitential exile. Following the gloss in *Lumen Gentium* 6, the English translator saw fit to include a similar gloss for this text, although it is absent in the Latin: Israel, according to the flesh, *which wandered as an exile in the desert*, was already called the church of God. Mary too is regularly evoked as comfort, help, and hope for those pilgrims surrounded by the dangers and difficulties of this life.<sup>97</sup> Thus, especially in *Lumen Gentium*, the pilgrimage metaphor constitutes the church’s relationship to the world within the same domain that individual “pilgrims”—that is, the lay faithful—were perceived during the Council of Trent. In short, the world is depicted as hostile rather than hospitable. It is now the church itself that is in exile.

And yet, the Second Constitution on the church, drafted towards the end of the Council, relies more heavily on the conceptual domain of journeying to facilitate a more

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<sup>96</sup> Dum vero his in terris Ecclesia peregrinatur a Domino, tamquam exsulem se habet... Sicut vero Israel secundum carnem, qui in deserto peregrinabatur, Dei Ecclesia iam appellatur (Vatican Council II, “Lumen Gentium,” 6, 9).

<sup>97</sup> Vatican Council II, “Lumen Gentium,” paras. 62, 68; Vatican Council II, “Apostolicam Actuositatem,” para. 4.

optimistic understanding of the church in the modern world. Here, the relationship between church and world is perceived as more amicable than antagonistic.

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a human community. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their pilgrimage to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for everyone. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with humanity and its history by the deepest of bonds.<sup>98</sup>

*Gaudium et Spes* recasts the church as the guest who brings gifts for the world, rather than the exile who is at odds with it. It couples the humanity of the church with the humanity of the world in a way that is reminiscent of Augustine's two cities, but with the added missionary zeal of the Irish *peregrini*: "Every benefit the people of God can confer on humanity during its earthly pilgrimage is rooted in the church's being "the universal sacrament of salvation," at once manifesting and actualizing the mystery of God's love for humanity."<sup>99</sup> Thus, in the conciliar constitutions on the church, the pilgrimage metaphor carries the insular ecclesiology of the church *opposed to* the world, the *hospites mundi* ecclesiology of the church *in* the world, and an evangelical ecclesiology of the church *for* the world. While the three are not exclusive of one another, neither do they easily fit together.

While the ecclesial metaphor of the People of God at times assists in the shift from a church *for* pilgrims to a church *of* pilgrims, the two metaphors can also work against one another in these texts. The presence of the pilgrimage metaphor, as well as its absence, is especially notable in the conciliar language specifically attending to either the laity or the

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<sup>98</sup> Vatican Council II, "Gaudium et Spes," para. 1.

<sup>99</sup> Vatican Council II, "Gaudium et Spes," para. 45. See also Vatican Council II, "Ad Gentes Divinitus," para. 2 and Vatican Council II, "Sacrosanctum Concilium," para. 2.

hierarchy: “Therefore, this Sacred Council first turns to the Catholic faithful. Relying by scripture and tradition, it teaches that this *pilgrimage church* is necessary for salvation.”<sup>100</sup> Situated as it is within *Lumen Gentium’s* discussion of the People of God, this metaphor evokes the penitential metaphor of exile so prevalent in the biblical image of Israel wandering in the desert, in which this chapter is rooted. And yet, in addressing “the faithful” as distinguished from the ordained members of the People of God, the pilgrimage metaphor is also evocative of a triumphalist ecclesiology that considers the church to be an institution that is distinct from the faithful and on which the faithful must rely as help and means for salvation, much as a penitent relies on their confessor. Only a few paragraphs later, in *Lumen Gentium’s* discussion of the hierarchy, bishops and priests are not counted among the pilgrim people on their journey to God, but rather act as their guides.

In the bishops, therefore, for whom priests are assistants, Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Supreme High Priest, is present in the midst of those who believe. For sitting at the right hand of God the Father, He is not absent from the gathering of His high priests, but above all through their excellent service. He is preaching the word of God to all nations and constantly administering the sacraments of faith to those who believe, by their paternal functioning. He incorporates new members in His Body by a heavenly regeneration, and finally by their wisdom and prudence He directs and guides the People of the New Testament in their pilgrimage toward eternal happiness. These pastors, chosen to shepherd the Lord’s flock of the elect, are servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.<sup>101</sup>

These triumphalist echoes grow more persistent in the decrees on the laity and the bishops. While the pilgrim is offered as an ecclesial image several times in the Council’s Decree on the Laity, pilgrimage language is entirely absent from the degrees regarding the

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<sup>100</sup> Ad fideles ergo catholicos imprimis Sancta Synodus animum vertit. Docet autem, Sacra Scriptura et Traditione innixa, Ecclesiam hanc peregrinantem necessariam esse ad salutem. (Vatican Council II, “Lumen Gentium,” para. 14)

<sup>101</sup> Vatican Council II, “Lumen Gentium,” para. 21.

office of the bishop and the ministry and training of priests. Through the use of the pilgrimage metaphor, this distinctly clerical and hierarchical ecclesiology remains embedded in the conciliar texts even as the Council as a whole moved away from this ecclesial bifurcation.

The multifaceted function of these pilgrimage metaphors in conciliar texts is made possible only through a discursive process that replaces the practical conceptual referents of the pilgrimage metaphor—desert asceticism, penitential journeys, devotional quests—with literary referents. The conceptual domains through which these metaphors become meaningful are themselves metaphorical. Replacing pilgrimage's practical referent with a literary one can open the potential for the development of new conceptual domains rooted not in practical developments, but in a systematic development of the theological ideas for which pilgrimage has traditionally inspired.

In addition to drawing on the multiplicity of pilgrim metaphors already available in the theological tradition, *Lumen Gentium* also makes novel use of the metaphor that constitutes a fifth metaphorical domain. Chapter VII of the *Constitution on the Church*, titled “De indole eschatologica Ecclesiae peregrinantis eiusque unione cum Ecclesia coelesti” (The eschatological character of the pilgrim church and her union with the heavenly church) was not originally included in schema on the church, but its genesis can be found in two explicit concerns of the initial schema, *De Ecclesia*. First, several of the bishops complained that the original text on the church did not include an explicit statement on heaven and the last things. A treatment only of the earthly institution was, they argued, theologically incomplete. Additionally, before his death Pope John XXIII requested that a separate text be prepared on the veneration of the saints. In light of the passing treatment

popular practices received in the liturgical constitution, Pope John's insistence on the preparation of a draft that attends specifically to these devotions is notable. Cardinal Larraona and a small committee prepared this text on the saints, a text which also lent itself well to the concerns of the Council fathers on eschatology. However, the incorporation of this text into *Lumen Gentium* brought its own concerns. Some of the bishops argued that the chapter attended only to individual Christians rather than to the eschatological nature of the church itself. To remedy these concerns, the bishops requested yet another revision of this text and this time put the task in the hands of the French *peritus*, Yves Congar. Favoring language of the pilgrim church over the more common "church militant," Congar used the image of the pilgrim to express an ecclesial eschatology meant to temper and resist the triumphalist ecclesiologies of the previous centuries. To do so, he used the already familiar pilgrimage metaphor, but shifted its conceptual domain.

The conciliar texts had already envisioned the church not only as the People of God—as a collection of pilgrims on a journey together—but also as the singular Body of Christ.<sup>102</sup> Like the People of God, the metaphor of the Body of Christ facilitated a more inclusive ecclesiology that is rooted in the sacrament of baptism rather than of ordination. And yet, the metaphor does not quite return to a patristic theology that easily interchanges the individual and ecclesial Christian. Christians are baptized *into* the Body of Christ and made one with him in life by following "in trial and oppression the paths he trod."<sup>103</sup> As a corporate metaphor, *Lumen Gentium* has, to this point, largely preferred to identify the

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<sup>102</sup> See especially Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium," para. 7-8.

<sup>103</sup> Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium," para. 7.

church with the Body of Christ while the metaphor of pilgrimage describes the activity of the church *in via* and its experience of the world *in exile*.

In chapter seven, Congar identifies the corporate body of the church not with Christ, but with the pilgrim. This shifts the conceptual domain of the metaphor from an activity or an experience (pilgrimage) to a subject (pilgrim). Instead of a triumphalist ecclesiology which posited the church as the perfect society or the Kingdom come on earth, in the image of the pilgrim the Council gave the church a human face. In using the Augustinian metaphor of the *peregrinus*, Congar was retrieving Augustine's synthesis of anthropology and ecclesiology: What can be said of the individual Christian, here represented in the figure of the pilgrim, can be said of the church. Like the pilgrim, "the promised and hoped for restoration...has already begun in Christ. It is carried forward in the sending of the holy Spirit and through him continues in the church."<sup>104</sup> Like the pilgrim, the church "is endowed already with a sanctity that is true though imperfect."<sup>105</sup> Like the pilgrim, it will "receive its perfection only in the glory of heaven, when the time for the renewal of all things will have come." Like the pilgrim, the church "in its sacraments and institutions, belong[s] to this present age, carries the mark of this world which will pass, and...takes its place among the creatures which groan and until now suffer the pains of childbirth and await the revelation of the children of God."<sup>106</sup> The implications of this metaphorical shift are indeed significant. By shifting the conceptual domain back to practicing subject, rather than the practice itself, Congar retrieved a patristic theology in which the Christian is not only fully found in the

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<sup>104</sup> Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium," para. 48.

<sup>105</sup> Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium," para. 48.

<sup>106</sup> Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium," para. 48.

church, but the church is fully found in the Christian. When the church *of* pilgrims becomes a *pilgrim church*, eschatology becomes both deeply human and deeply ecclesial. No longer conceived as the full, triumphal revelation of God, the church is present instead as a partial, imperfect, and incomplete in-breaking of the Kingdom. Like individual Christians themselves, the church is a sign that the “renewal of the world is irrevocably underway” and stands as a real anticipation of the Kingdom coming.<sup>107</sup> In this, the conceptual domain of the pilgrim is best understood as Augustine’s eschatological vision expressed especially in the *City of God*.

Without a doubt, *Lumen Gentium* has also preserved the Catholic tradition of the veneration of saints and their images and offered these practices as concrete expressions of the eschatological hope of the church. While retaining a place for these popular devotions, this chapter also makes clear that their place is on the margins. It is not merely their veneration, but their veneration in the context of the Eucharistic celebration that the council Fathers advocate. They downplay the veneration of the saints through popular practices like pilgrimages even as they both employ and expand the pilgrim metaphor in this section, creating further separation between the church’s pilgrim practice and its theological imagination of pilgrimage. This retrieval of the real and abiding relationship between the Christian and the church, worked out here within the realm of eschatology, must surely be a central ecclesiological claim of the Council. The pilgrim metaphor effectively reconstitutes the relationship between the institutions of the church—its ministers, sacraments, and structures—and the laity in important and enduring ways over

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<sup>107</sup> Vatican Council II, “Lumen Gentium,” para. 48.

and against triumphalist ecclesiologies. No longer is the church presented as the *societas perfecta*, protected and bulwarked against the trials and tribulations of this present age. The church is not just a church *for* pilgrims or even a church *of* pilgrims. Rather, it is a *pilgrim church*, a social body that shares the same present experience and the same eschatological hope as those living stones of which it is comprised.

Like other conciliar pilgrim metaphors, here too the metaphor of the pilgrim church has multiple referents. Despite its clear retrieval of an Augustinian theology, *Lumen Gentium's* eschatological pilgrim metaphor also evokes a Thomistic sense of the *homo viator* traveling through history towards the heavenly Jerusalem. By offering the ecclesial body a historical consciousness that proceeds metaphorically from the changeability and progress of the human life that is at the core of Thomas' metaphor of the *homo viator*, the new conceptual domain designated by the pilgrim metaphor found particular purchase in both the Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*) and the Decree on Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*). Both of these decrees proposed to reshape the way that the Catholic Church perceived and engaged those outside of its communion. The new forms of ecumenical and interreligious engagement advocated in these documents presented a particular challenge to the Council in that they appeared to break or depart from previous practice. Because of this, the church was forced to confront the critical moments in its past when it actively deviated from the norms now proposed in these documents. How could the church insist on the principle of religious liberty without confronting its own history of violence and forced conversions? How can the church advocate for Christian unity without rejecting the *Syllabus of Errors*? The Council Fathers were wrestling with these questions while the chapter on eschatology was also being prepared. Congar's revision of the

eschatological text for *Lumen Gentium* provided both the ecclesiology and the metaphor with which to advance this view in the documents on ecumenism and religious liberty.

During its pilgrimage on earth, this people, though still in its members liable to sin, is growing in Christ and is guided by God's gentle wisdom, according to God's hidden designs, until it shall happily arrive at the fullness of eternal glory in the heavenly Jerusalem.<sup>108</sup>

Every renewal of the church essentially consists in an increase of fidelity to her own calling...Christ summons the church, as she goes on her pilgrim way, to that continual reformation of which she always has need insofar as she is a human institution here on earth. Consequently, if, in various times and circumstances, there have been deficiencies in moral conduct or in church disciplines, or even in the way that church teaching has been formulated—to be carefully distinguished from the deposit of faith itself—these should be set right at the opportune moment and in the proper way.<sup>109</sup>

Although in the life of the people of God in its pilgrimage, through the vicissitudes of human history, there have at times appeared patterns of behavior which was not in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel and were even opposed to it, it has always remained the teaching of the church that no one is to be coerced into believing.<sup>110</sup>

Situating the church in the metaphorical domain of Thomas's pilgrim allowed the council Fathers to distinguish between the deposit of faith and the church's conduct, discipline, or formulation of these truths.<sup>111</sup>

The use of these two metaphorical domains—Augustine's resident alien and Thomas' *homo viator*—to describe not only the individual pilgrim but the church itself proved quite generative, even dangerously so, according to some! Associating the ecclesial body with the penitent pilgrim suggested to some the idea that the church itself could err and even sin.<sup>112</sup> Although the council Fathers were hesitant to ascribe the possibility of sin

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<sup>108</sup> Vatican Council II, "Unitatis Redintegratio," para. 3.

<sup>109</sup> Vatican Council II, "Unitatis Redintegratio," para. 5.

<sup>110</sup> Vatican Council II, "Dignitatis Humanae," para. 12.

<sup>111</sup> Vatican Council II, "Unitatis Redintegratio," para. 5.

<sup>112</sup> During the debate on Religious Liberty, Monsignor Garrone introduced this concern for consideration by the bishops. Giovanni Miccoli, "Two Sensitive Issues: Religious Freedom and the Jews," in *The History of Vatican II, Vol. 4: Church as Communion: Third Period and Intersession*,

to the social body of the church, the idea that the institutional church more closely resembles those pilgrims on earth rather than the saints in heaven became, Richard Gaillardetz has suggested, a popular interpretation of this metaphor in the post-conciliar church. Although this idea lacked an official doctrinal affirmation, Gaillardetz points especially to Pope John Paul II's singular commitment to confessing and seeking forgiveness for the failings of Christians throughout history as a practice that confirmed this view.<sup>113</sup> Today we might also include Pope Francis' apologies for clerical abuse and the mass resignation of the Chilean bishops as an act of public confession and repentance for their failure of leadership and care for the Body of Christ. These actions have led to concerns by some that the church was being too closely identified with the individual sinner rather than the holy church of the apostles. What are we to make of this rhetoric and reform? Were the popes simply apologizing for the actions of individual Christians or were they implying that the church itself could sin and had sinned?

At stake here is not whether a theological metaphor like pilgrimage, divorced from practice, has the potential to generate new and powerful theological insights. In fact, this example is suggestive of the power of metaphorical thinking to produce new insights that exceed, challenge, and potentially even replace the theological domains out of which they were produced. Indeed, the church needs this kind of theological inquiry and creativity! But a theology that takes as its sources only those learned voices in the tradition is, by the very definitions of the Council and the thinkers upon whom they rely, an incomplete theology of

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*September 1964-September 1965*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004), 130.

<sup>113</sup> Carefully documenting these moments, Luigi Accattoli finds over ninety occasions in which JPII asked for forgiveness on behalf of Christians. Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 101.

the church, for it silences or ignores those voices that express the faith they have received through practice rather than through discourse. Worse, it assumes that practices like pilgrimage are themselves in need of a theology when in fact, we have failed to recognize these practices as the theological enunciations of faithful believers.

### **Thinking about Practice**

In exploring the relationship between the sacramental liturgies and popular practice, the first chapter highlighted the consequences of separating popular practice from the domain of the liturgy, including the possibility of misinterpreting pilgrim practice by reading it through the lens of a solely Eucharistic theology. A similar problem is created when the theological metaphor of pilgrimage becomes unmoored from living practice. Even though the word pilgrimage and its cognates appear over thirty times in the conciliar documents, the Second Vatican Council is completely silent on pilgrimage as a practice. While Eucharistic theologies rely on the ongoing practice and experience of the Eucharist celebrated in time and space by the people of God, the documents employ the theological use of pilgrimage only in the abstract. The term stands in for particular doctrinal ecclesiologies rather than continuing to generate theological reflection from the practical wisdom of faithful people. This metaphorical language risks over-determining our theological understanding of pilgrim practice. In effect, the source and target of the metaphor are flipped: pilgrim practice is read and interpreted through the discursive domain of metaphorical pilgrimage. Instead of lived practice informing our theological concept of pilgrimage, these pilgrimage metaphors are read not as generative but as rhetorical. The pre-established ideas for which the language of pilgrimage stands also become presumptions about the practice itself.

In its interpretation of pilgrimage, the *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, draws particularly from the conceptual domains of spiritual journey and spiritual ascent. When pilgrimage is presumed to be a one-way trip, even an ascent, to the heavenly kingdom and union with God, it is easy for liturgical theologians to begin with the assumption that a pilgrim's goal and worship environment is limited to the controlled space of the shrine. This conceptual domain understands pilgrimage as a ritualization of the theological *homo viator*, and the ecclesial space of the shrine represents not only the place of mountaintop meeting between the human and divine but also the heavenly kingdom that lies at the end of the temporal journey. Note how this also helpfully accords with a Eucharistic interpretation of pilgrimage. Such an interpretation understands a pilgrimage as a devotion to a sacred space—a devotion which draws the pilgrim forward until they arrive and discover that the place they seek is ultimately that altar present in every Christian church. Thus, the relationship between pilgrim and shrine reveals and performs the pre-established ecclesiology, distinguishing and privileging the church, affiliated with the clergy, from the lay faithful.

Episcopal discourses emerging from the churches in Latin America illustrate this claim quite clearly. Because of the popularity of pilgrimage practice among members of their local churches, the Bishops of Latin America have made ample use in their own teaching documents of the pilgrimage metaphor and have likewise considered the practice of pilgrimage in the course of their theological reflection. The teaching documents produced by the four gatherings of the Latin America Conference of Catholic Bishops (*Consejo Episcopal latinoamericano*, hereafter CELAM) reveal the consequences of the liturgical marginalization of popular practices that has resulted in a theological use of

pilgrimage that produces a confusing ecclesiology and moreover results in an over-interpretation of the practice of pilgrimage through these metaphors.

There is a tension embedded in these CELAM documents with regard to the popular religiosity and popular piety in Latin America. In their gathering at Medellin (1968), convened in the years just following the Second Vatican Council, pilgrimage as an ecclesial metaphor functioned much as it had before the Council, expressing an ecclesiology that distinguishes between the faithful and the church. “On his pilgrimage toward God, contemporary man finds himself in a variety of situations which demand from the church an adaptation of its message and a diversity of ways in presenting the same.”<sup>114</sup> Popular practices are presented as “the fruit of an evangelization carried on since the time of the conquest,” distinguishing too between practices of the evangelized and the liturgical practices of the evangelizer.<sup>115</sup> The distinction between the church and the faithful in the context of the evangelization of the Americas carries with it a colonial mentality, which perceives popular practices, that is those practices seen as practices of the indigenous peoples, with a certain amount of tolerant disdain.

Men [sic] adhere to the faith and participate in the Church at different levels. And while one may not presume on the existence of the faith behind all apparently Christian religious expressions, neither may one arbitrarily deny the character of true belief and of real ecclesial participation, no matter how weak...As a matter of fact, faith as an act of humanity in pilgrimage through time is seen to be blended with the imperfection of mixed motives.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM), *The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council: Conclusions*, (Washington: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1979), 92.

<sup>115</sup> CELAM, *The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America*, 90.

<sup>116</sup> CELAM, *The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America*, 93.

In the Medellin document, the metaphor of pilgrimage as a journey or growth in the faith combines with the idea that popular practices like pilgrimage are practices of the faithfully immature.

Predictably, the bishops found popular practices to be an appropriate “occasion or point of departure for the proclamation of the faith.”<sup>117</sup> They understood evangelization or catechesis to proceed with the goal of moving the faithful from lower, popular forms of religion to higher and increasingly mature forms of participation in the liturgies of the church.<sup>118</sup> “Excluding thus all dichotomy or dualism in the Christian, catechetical teaching prepares for the progressive movement of the People of God toward their eschatological fulfillment, now expressed in the liturgy.”<sup>119</sup> Although we find in the documents of Medellin a genuine effort to reserve a place for popular practices like pilgrimage, the entirety of this discussion is colored by a pilgrim ecclesiology that first identifies the pilgrim people with the masses, that is the laity or “common” people of the church, those who are not clergy. In so doing, popular practices like pilgrimage also become practices of the laity, of the commoners, of the uneducated, of the poor, distinguished from participation in the official liturgies that are the domain of the ecclesial elite. Furthermore, the document then conceives of the journey or ascent of faith as being achieved through an ecclesial deepening, an evangelization and catechesis that produces a move away from these lower,

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<sup>117</sup> CELAM, *The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America*, 108.

<sup>118</sup> “The Latin American Church proposes the following program of pastoral care...B. To promote constantly a re-conversion and education of our people in the faith to even higher and increasingly mature levels.” CELAM, *The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America*, 93.

<sup>119</sup> CELAM, *The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America*, 109.

popular forms of piety and towards greater participation in and devotion to the sacramental (read: higher, clergy-led) liturgies of the church.

Subsequent CELAM documents continued to conceive of popular practices as opportunities for evangelization, while moving away from such colonial constructions that distinguished between the church and the people. The Puebla document (1979) nevertheless retains a pilgrim ecclesiology that separates the church from the people writing that “The Latin American people must continue to be evangelized as...pilgrims (*peregrinos*) journeying towards the definitive kingdom” and a few paragraphs later: “As pastors, we journey (*peregrinamos*) with the people of Latin America through our history.”<sup>120</sup> The Puebla document notes that despite the distortions and ambiguities present in popular practices, these traditional Latin American devotions are not only an essential feature of Latin American Catholicism, they are also “expressions of the Catholic faith” and “signs of membership in the Church.”<sup>121</sup> On the one hand, this popular piety is embraced as the “people’s Catholicism,” a preferential way of living out the faith that is the domain of the “poor and simple,” that contains the wisdom of the common people.<sup>122</sup> No longer expressed in the language of “lower” and “higher,” the bishops find in these popular practices authentic and legitimate expressions of the faith. Furthermore, they claim them as practices of the church.

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<sup>120</sup> Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM), “Evangelization in Latin America’s Present and Future,” in *Puebla and Beyond: Documentation and Commentary*, ed. John Eagleson and Philip Scharper (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1979), 124, 126.

<sup>121</sup> CELAM, “Evangelization in Latin America’s Present and Future,” 184, 137.

<sup>122</sup> CELAM, “Evangelization in Latin America’s Present and Future,” 184–85. See also Paul VI, “*Evangelii Nuntiandi*,” (1975), para. 48.

The bishops' efforts to take seriously the pilgrim practices of the Latin American faithful runs up against a pilgrim ecclesiology that still essentially sees pilgrimage in light of the eschatological journey to the kingdom and the Eucharistic journey to the table. Part of the tension derives from the bishops' suspicion of the development of base communities in Latin America: a "People's Church" (*Iglesia popular*) that they perceive as being in competition with the official or institutional church. While the bishops acknowledge that these base communities offer a critique of an institutional church that has alienated the common people, they place the blame for these attitudes on an "unacceptable denial of the hierarchy's function." Rather than legitimate theological reflection, they suggest it is "familiar ideological forms of conditioning" that inspires such views, an allusion to the concern by John Paul II and many of the bishops of a creeping Marxism in liberation theology.<sup>123</sup> In light of this reality, the bishops are cautious about claiming popular practices as ecclesial practices. Thus, reading pilgrimage through the metaphorical triumphalistic pilgrim ecclesiology affirms popular practice while also subordinating it to the authority of the church.

In the Puebla document, we find that the image of the pilgrim church is still distinctly associated with journeying, with the familiar verb *caminar* (to walk, to journey) being used frequently as a synonym for more unusual *peregrinar*. Narratively, the metaphor draws on the theological imagery of exile much more than any lived experience of pilgrim practice among the people.<sup>124</sup> Like the Medellin documents, this idea of the earthly life as a journey in which one progresses in faith still retains the idea that popular

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<sup>123</sup> CELAM, "Evangelization in Latin America's Present and Future," 157.

<sup>124</sup> CELAM, "Evangelization in Latin America's Present and Future," 158, 163.

piety, while a legitimate way of participating in the church, is nevertheless both imperfect (in need of purification) and a starting point for evangelization. In fact, the profusion of popular practices in Latin America, including pilgrimages, is offered as evidence that the peoples remain insufficiently evangelized.<sup>125</sup>

Finally, notable in the Puebla document is the attention it gives to the practice of pilgrimage itself, interpreting the practice in light of these theological metaphors of journeying towards the kingdom.

Our people love pilgrimages. In them, the simple Christian celebrates the joy of feeling immersed in a multitude of brothers and sisters journeying (*caminando*) together toward the God who is waiting for them. This action is a splendid sign and sacramental of the great vision of the Church offered to us by Vatican II: i.e. the family of God, pictured as the People of God on pilgrimage (*peregrino*) through history and journeying toward the Lord.<sup>126</sup>

While this is a beautiful and captivating image, the practice of pilgrimage is conceived not through the bodies and sensibilities of the Latin American pilgrims, but rather through the lens of these theological metaphors. The practice of pilgrimage is imagined, rather than contemplated. The text romanticizes pilgrimage practice rather than wrestles with it. And the theology of pilgrims hovers above the pilgrims, without ever touching the ground where their feet trod.

In the document from Santo Domingo (1993), there is a clear shift in the conceptual domain of the pilgrim metaphor away from the experience of journeying and towards a recovery of the idea of the pilgrim as a resident alien, or in the language of the bishops in

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<sup>125</sup> CELAM, "Evangelization in Latin America's Present and Future," 241.

<sup>126</sup> CELAM, "Evangelization in Latin America's Present and Future," 153.

this document, the migrant. Here, they conceive of both Christ and the church as resident aliens:

The Word of God becomes flesh in order to unite in a single people those who were wandering dispersed and to make them citizens of heaven. Thus, God's son becomes a pilgrim (*peregrino*) and undergoes the experience of the displaced as a migrant living in an insignificant village. He trains his disciples to be missionaries by having them undergo the experience of migrants so that they will put their trust only in the love of God, whose good news they bear.<sup>127</sup>

Rooting an ecclesiology in the metaphorical domain of the Christian as resident alien on earth, the bishops describe the church itself as a pilgrim on the American continent.<sup>128</sup> Held in the Caribbean nation of the Dominican Republic on the fifth centenary of the arrival of Columbus and Christianity on the North American continent, tensions and debate about legacy of the original evangelization of the Americas marked this gathering of bishops. In addition, the Latin American bishops were exceedingly aware of the great northward migrations of many of their brothers and sisters. The retrieval of the Augustinian idea of the pilgrim as a migrant was therefore especially relevant to the experience, both historical and contemporary, of this conference. At the same time, the Santo Domingo documents represent yet another moment of the ongoing divorce of pilgrimage practice from its metaphorical domains. The documents of Santo Domingo continue to affirm the practices of the common people as privileged expressions of the faith, but emphasize the need to purify these "practices of their limitations and distortions so that they may come to find their proper place in the local church."<sup>129</sup> Despite the shift in the metaphorical domain of

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<sup>127</sup> CELAM, "Conclusions: New Evangelization, Human Development, Christian Culture," in *Santo Domingo & Beyond: Documents & Commentaries from the Historic Meeting of the Latin American Bishops' Conference*, ed. Alfred T. Hennelly (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1993), 125.

<sup>128</sup> CELAM, "Conclusions," 75.

<sup>129</sup> CELAM, "Conclusions," 87.

pilgrimage in this document, the basic ecclesiology remains that relegates popular practices to the margins while upholding the liturgy beyond critique and positing it as the destination or fulfilment of the Christian's journey of faith. Writing in response to Santo Domingo's characterization of popular practice, Virgil Elizondo criticizes the colonial mentality that this document continues to perpetuate:

The problem was not with the evangelization of the natives...Their aboriginal values were much more in conformity with the values of the gospel than those of the European culture at the time. Santo Domingo speaks about the positive traits—seeds of the word—present in the pre-Columbian cultures, but it fails to make any critique of the very negative, superstitious, and even antievangelical traits of the European culture of that period of history. The great failure was the total lack of evangelization of the multitudes of baptized nonevangelized Europeans and their descendants who were more keen in pursuing the gods of gold than in following Jesus...Today, it is the baptized, evangelized, and converted among the poor of the Americas—God's beloved children—who are uttering the call and inviting all to the radical conformity to Jesus of Nazareth, which they have been living since the beginning of Christianity in the Americas...We do not know all the dogmas, in fact we usually do not know any of them, but we do know Jesus quite well.<sup>130</sup>

By rooting their pilgrimage metaphor in the literary, theological tradition rather than in the practical experiences of the people, the bishops produced a theology that purports to take seriously the experiences of the people as migrants while failing to honor the theological voices of these migrant peoples. In this failure, the promise of the pilgrimage metaphor ultimately fails to overcome its colonizing effects.

Finally, at the most recent gathering of the Latin American bishops in Aparecida (2007), the concluding document once again made ample use of pilgrimage language, pulling from its multivalent metaphorical domains and reflecting on the practice of

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<sup>130</sup> Virgilio Elizondo, "Evangelization in the Americas: Santo Domingo from the Perspective of U.S. Hispanics," in *Santo Domingo & Beyond: Documents & Commentaries from the Historic Meeting of the Latin American Bishops' Conference*, ed. Alfred T. Hennelly, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993), 203-205.

pilgrimage itself.<sup>131</sup> Aparecida returns to the journey metaphor, favoring the more common *caminar* over *peregrinar*. The text retrieves the language of the *Didache*, framing its comments within the choice of two ways (*caminos*), one that leads to life and the other to death.<sup>132</sup> It depicts the church both as walking the path itself and accompanying Christians on their pilgrimage in order to inspire and comfort them.<sup>133</sup> The document also makes use of the pilgrim as migrant metaphor, depicting both the individual Christian and the church in Latin America as migrants dwelling in strange lands.<sup>134</sup>

The Aparecida document retrieves from Medellin the distinction between mature faith, rooted in the Eucharistic liturgy and the universal symbols of the church, and popular piety, which it identifies with personal or individual practices, as opposed to a “mass spirituality.”<sup>135</sup> Popular practices continue to distinguish the “simple and poor” from the ecclesial elites, granting to those common people who perform these acts a practical wisdom that only the simple and poor can know.<sup>136</sup> And yet, the document carries forward the idea of spiritual progress from the previous conferences; it privileges the universal over the local and the institutional over the popular as forms of “more mature” faith.

Popular piety is an indispensable starting point in deepening the faith and in bringing it to maturity. When we say that popular piety has to be evangelized or purified, we do not mean that it is devoid of gospel wealth. We simply want all members, recognizing the testimony of Mary and the saints, to try to imitate them more. Thus they will strive for a more direct contact with the Bible and greater participation in

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<sup>131</sup> The final document committee was chaired by Bishop Jorge Bergoglio, who five years later became Pope Francis.

<sup>132</sup> CELAM, “Concluding Document” (May 13, 2007), 13.

<sup>133</sup> CELAM, “Concluding Document,” 16, 20

<sup>134</sup> CELAM, “Concluding Document,” 51, 55.

<sup>135</sup> CELAM, “Concluding Document,” 88.

<sup>136</sup> CELAM, “Concluding Document,” 88.

the sacraments, come to enjoy the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist, and express even better the service of love in solidarity in their lives.<sup>137</sup>

A colonial and triumphal ecclesiology frustrates efforts to find in these practices a spiritual preferential option for the poor, an ecclesiology that perceives the people, by virtue of their preferred religious practices, as insufficiently evangelized and less spirituality mature than those educated elites who find their faith in the universal symbols of the church and its official liturgies. Such an ecclesiology takes for granted that pilgrimage is practiced only by these common people, and even this assumption deserves interrogation. It is equally possible that this claim comes not from any real sense of who the Latin American pilgrims are, but rather from the conceptual metaphor that identifies only the lay faithful as pilgrims. In this way, the metaphor overwhelms the practice.

Recognizing the importance of pilgrimage for the Christians of Latin America, the bishops highlight these practices once again when discussing *popular piety*:

We highlight pilgrimages, where the People of God can be recognized in their journey. There the believer celebrates the joy of feeling surrounded by myriad brothers and sisters, journeying together toward God who awaits them. Christ himself becomes pilgrim and walks arisen among the poor. The decision to set out toward the shrine is already a confession of faith, walking is a true song of hope and arrival is the encounter of love. The pilgrim's gaze rests on an image that symbolizes God's affection and closeness. Love pauses, contemplates mystery, and enjoys it in silence. It is also moved, pouring out the full load of its pain and its dreams. The confident prayer, flowing sincerely, is the best expression of a heart that has relinquished self-sufficiency, recognizing that alone it can do nothing. A living spiritual experience is compressed into a brief moment.

In it, pilgrims undergo the experience of a mystery that goes beyond them, the transcendence not only of God, but also of the Church, which transcends their family and neighborhood. At shrines many pilgrims make decisions that mark their lives.

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<sup>137</sup> CELAM, "Concluding Document," 89.

These walls contain many stories that millions could tell of conversion, forgiveness, and gifts received.<sup>138</sup>

While the description of pilgrimage practice the bishops offer here is quite beautiful, I cannot help but wonder if it is also accurate. The very fact that this depiction of pilgrimage arises not from careful attention to the practices as they are actually performed but rather from reflection on discursive metaphorical domains of pilgrimage should at the very least raise the question: Is there something we've missed?

The work of Chapters 1 and 2 suggest distinctive expressions of the same problem: we have a liturgical discourse that is dominated by the practice of the Eucharist, frequently to the exclusion or over-determination of other practices. Because presidency at the Eucharist is restricted at least at this current time in the Roman Catholic Church to ordained men, this also results in a privileged place in our theological discourses for clericalized, male, and elite voices over and above the voices (and bodies) of women, lay persons, and other marginalized groups. Within ecclesiological discourses, a similar marginalization of practice has developed. While the practice of pilgrimage and its practitioners have remained important ecclesiological symbols for the church, these doctrinal concepts tend to be quite fixed and are no longer informed by ongoing faithful practice. Again, this risks doctrinal theologies over-determining the practice rather than there being a true appreciation for the practical theological wisdom that arises from within the church.

Pilgrimage has been used as a metaphor to depict a variety of ecclesiologies over the years. In the moments in which the metaphor emerged from lived experience and praxis, it

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<sup>138</sup> CELAM, "Concluding Document," 88.

reflected the church back to itself as it was being lived out and performed in history. The shifting nature of the metaphor is not necessarily a problem, although it does reflect the power of interpretation the church has always exercised and continues to exercise today. Yet today the language of pilgrimage has become unmoored from practice. This impoverishes the way the church thinks about the practice (when we do think about it) but it also impoverishes the way we think theologically about the church itself. Pilgrims are those the church thinks about, rather than thinks with or through. In retrieving the image of the pilgrim church, the Council has opened the door to thinking theologically about the church through practices beyond the sacramental liturgies of the church. The retrieval of this practice and its authors is itself a methodological *ressourcement* that opens a way to ongoing reflection and development from a non-Eucharistic, but no less ecclesial, practice. As in times past, it is possible that today's pilgrims are "doing" and "being" church in ways that liturgical theologians and ecclesialologists have not fully considered. The work of the remaining chapters of this dissertation are to retrieve the practical content of pilgrimage for theological reflection about and through this practice. The wager of this dissertation is that pilgrims today have something important to offer to the church's theological reflection about its liturgies and thus about itself.

## Chapter 3

### The Practice of Pilgrimage

The call to take seriously Christian practices of prayer and worship has long been the rallying cry of liturgical theologians, and it is no longer novel or extraordinary for systematic theologians, moral theologians, and other theological thinkers to incorporate liturgical and especially Eucharistic practices as authoritative sources for constructive theologies. This theological turn to liturgical practice has produced rich and varied theologies of and from the Eucharist. The same cannot be said of practices like pilgrimage, even though theologians are becoming increasingly attentive to wider forms of Christian experience and practice. Theological work that takes practice as its starting point and not simply as added evidence for systematic conclusions is admittedly less common. As theological metaphors detached from lived practices of pilgrimage, our theological understanding of pilgrimage has lost the content that could be supplied by attention to lived practice. This loss of content has two consequences: First, pilgrimage has become a practice in search of a theology. While pilgrimage language has gained a certain prominence in theological discourse over the past sixty years, theologians have contributed very little to the study of pilgrimage practice.<sup>1</sup> This loss of content not only impoverishes

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<sup>1</sup> Both Protestants and Catholics in the wake of the fifteenth- and sixteenth- century reformations considered pilgrimages superstitious and childish and post-Vatican II cerebral Catholicism has largely ignored them. The bulk of recent theological attention to pilgrimage practice exists in exploratory essays or embedded in accounts of sacred space or mystical journeys. Craig Bartholomew and John Inge both discuss pilgrimage briefly in their theologies of place. Lawrence Cunningham points to pilgrimage in his introduction to Christian spirituality under the heading “journeying.” Exploratory essays on pilgrimage practice are easy to spot as their titles or subtitles are often prefaced with the preposition “Towards.” These essays follow a predictable form: the author observes that pilgrimage is once again becoming a popular religious practice, reviews the limited theological resources available for making sense of it including traditions of saintly

our ability to think theologically about pilgrimage, it also diminishes our capacity to think about those other theological ideas for which pilgrimage serves as metaphor. This chapter retrieves some of this content of pilgrimage as it is practiced today.

## A Theology of Pilgrim Practice

A turn to practice in the theological exploration of pilgrimage is unusual, but it is not unique. At the forefront among the handful of theologians who have thought seriously about the practice of pilgrimage stands Virgilio Elizondo.<sup>2</sup> The problem of pilgrimage was captured and explored in a 1996 volume of *Concilium*, edited by Elizondo and Sean Freyne.<sup>3</sup>

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veneration, sacred space, and spiritual metaphors of journeying, and concludes that insufficient attention had been given to the topic by theologians thus far. See John Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place*, Explorations in Practical, Pastoral, and Empirical Theology (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003). Craig G. Bartholomew, *Where Mortals Dwell: A Christian View of Place for Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011). Craig G. Bartholomew and Fred Hughes, *Explorations in a Christian Theology of Pilgrimage* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). Lawrence Cunningham and Keith J. Egan, *Christian Spirituality: Themes from the Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Pilgrimage has long caught the attention of scholars in the Netherlands. In the 1990s, a decade-long research study by Paul Post, Jos Pieper, and Marinus van Uden explored the question, “To what extent can we speak of a new type of pilgrim today?” The study brought together two disciplinary approaches, liturgical studies and psychology of religion, to examine the practices of Dutch pilgrims in western Europe. The study ultimately lamented the loss of traditional religious content and described the modern pilgrimage as an emptied ritual instead of an essentially religious (let alone liturgical) practice. Post writes, “Perhaps it is their concern with the old tradition that differentiates these pilgrims from other pilgrims. In motive and function, present-day pilgrimages along old traditional paths towards old cultural historical regions, deeply rooted in Europe’s history, are fundamentally different from traditional pilgrimages. Or perhaps, rather, it is not the pilgrimages but the pilgrims themselves who are so different. A single type of pilgrimage can be appropriated by different people in completely divergent ways. The accounts by pilgrims constantly show how important this appropriation is felt to be. The past is used, invoked and deployed as a kind of vessel which can be filled depending on individual necessities, a ritual framework offered by the possibilities of contrasting experience which pilgrims can fill individually according to their own insights and most of all their own needs...The quest can possess a clear religious component, but need not.” Paul Post, “The Modern Pilgrim: A Christian Ritual between Tradition and Post-Modernity,” in *Pilgrimage* (London: SCM Press; Orbis, 1996), 7. For a full report of the study’s findings, see Paul Post, Jos Pieper, and Marinus van Uden, *The Modern Pilgrim: Multidisciplinary Explorations of Christian Pilgrimage* (Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> The volume also represents one of the first contemporary theological volumes on pilgrimage. It collects interdisciplinary perspectives that range from historical to literary and contains very limited material on contemporary pilgrimage. Virgilio Elizondo’s essays stand out in this aspect.

The multidisciplinary contributions presented a variety of interpretations for the practice of pilgrimage, but the essays contributed by Virgilio Elizondo stood out. Elizondo turned to pilgrimage practice as a source for theological reflection rather than rendering it a victim of theological interpretation. Though beautifully written, Elizondo's introduction to the 1996 issue of *Concilium* on the topic of pilgrimage and his essay on the pastoral opportunities of pilgrimage published later in that same volume are ultimately inadequate theological accounts of the practice of pilgrimage.

The title of Elizondo's introduction, "Pilgrimage: An Enduring Ritual of Humanity," frames his conceptual understanding of pilgrimage from the outset as an anthropological phenomenon. Elizondo explicitly contends that the phenomenon of pilgrimage appears consistently across human history and civilizations such that "it almost appears to be grounded on the very biological genes which make us human!"<sup>4</sup> With this anthropological essentialism comes a certain ahistorical quality that allows for some change and variation to the practice of pilgrimage across time, space, and religious tradition while also identifying several essential components of authentic pilgrimage practice. Elizondo's essay organizes these components around two poles: pilgrimage practice and pilgrimage sites.<sup>5</sup>

Elizondo begins his introduction by framing the practice of pilgrimage as a human reaction against the ills of modernity. He reasons that while pilgrimage has always functioned as a reaction to the constraints of everyday life, he explains the growing

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<sup>4</sup> Virgilio P. Elizondo, "Pilgrimage: An Enduring Ritual of Humanity," in *Pilgrimage*, *Concilium* 1996/4 (London: SCM Press, 1966), viii.

<sup>5</sup> See also in this same volume, Virgilio P. Elizondo, "Pastoral Opportunities of Pilgrimage," in *Pilgrimage*, *Concilium*; 1996/4 (London: SCM Press, 1966), 107ff.

popularity of pilgrimage today through appeals to the litany of social ills that the turns to modernism and secularism produced.

In the midst of growing secularism and modernity, technology and electronics, mobility and rapid travel, space exploration and information super-highways, people are seeking the stable and unchanging rootedness of sacred earth...The more knowledge, science, and information we have, the greater the quest of the soul for ultimate meaning; the more psychological analysis and psychotherapy we undergo, the greater the quest of the soul for penance and purification; the more medical science accomplishes, the greater the search for miracles; and the more families break apart while churches become more rule-orientated, the greater the quest for an unconditional human community. People go on pilgrimage seeking and hoping to find what their present world—modern or ancient—has not been able to offer them.<sup>6</sup>

Elizondo frames familiar Christian critiques of modernity in antithetical pairs: information and meaning, therapy and purification, science and miracles, the fracturing of families or churches and unconditional community. Here, the reader is meant to add another pairing: everyday life and pilgrimage.

Second, Elizondo takes for granted that pilgrims constitute an egalitarian community of the faithful in which social divisions give way to a communion of pilgrims that, despite its diversity, achieves a radical social unity that approximates both the ecclesial ideal of the People of God and the eschatological communion of saints. Later in this volume, Elizondo likens this pilgrim community to the post-resurrection story of the disciples on their way to Emmaus, who heard the word of God through the lips of a stranger they met on the road. He contrasts this spirit-led, dialogical, and story-telling language of pilgrimage with the programmatic, moralistic, and doctrinal “jargon” that typifies the official evangelization efforts of the institutional church.<sup>7</sup> Elizondo’s description

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<sup>6</sup> Elizondo, “Pilgrimage,” vii–viii.

<sup>7</sup> Elizondo, “Pastoral Opportunities of Pilgrimage,” 108.

presents pilgrimage as the antithesis of quotidian life in both its secular and religious dimensions.

These anti-structural qualities that resist both the ills and social divisions of everyday life are mediated in and through the space of pilgrimage sites.<sup>8</sup> These sites, Elizondo contends, are “privileged places of encounter with the ultimate” that both recall and make present the great interventions of God in history through the wonders of creation and the human beings through whom God has spoken and acted.<sup>9</sup> These sites are typically located on peripheries of organized religious geography and ecclesial control. Read through the lens of Christian theology, Elizondo writes that this presence on the peripheries, while not opposing the legitimate authority and practice of more official forms of religion, injects a certain humility into the religious project that “keeps legitimate authority—whether ecclesial or academic—from taking itself so seriously that it confuses itself with God.”<sup>10</sup> Theologically, the peripheral location of pilgrimage sites points to the particular manifestation of God in those persons on the margins of our world. “They [pilgrimage sites] witness to the limits of any official religion or theology which tries to corral and imprison the mysterious infinity of God’s love as it continues to be made manifest amongst us through the poor, the needy, the lowly and the unauthorized of society.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Elizondo avoids the word “shrine” in his essay, preferring the more general term “pilgrimage site.”  
<sup>9</sup> Elizondo, “Pilgrimage,” x, viii. Elizondo crafts a carefully transreligious definition of the pilgrimage site that can include the intervention of any deity or divine actor in the created world, while making explicit the Christian revelation of this anthropological dimension by pointing to the natural events at Sinai, the human nature of Christ, and Christian saints.

<sup>10</sup> Elizondo, “Pilgrimage,” ix.

<sup>11</sup> Elizondo, “Pilgrimage,” ix.

The popularity of pilgrimage among Christians is especially significant to Elizondo precisely because of the lack of any institutionalized compulsion . The Catholic Church neither mandates nor prescribes pilgrimages for the faithful, and yet people continue to go. Although the active agency of the pilgrim is certainly granted and celebrated by Elizondo, he largely frames pilgrimage as an experience or place that *acts upon* the pilgrim even as the pilgrim chooses to take up the practice. In Elizondo's essay, pilgrimage sites are portrayed as active agents: "breaking away" from centers of organized religion, "witnessing" to the Good News of God's love for the poor, and "attracting" people like "a biological-spiritual magnet."<sup>12</sup> Not only beckoning the pilgrim to come, pilgrimage sites function as "thresholds" of transformation. They are places through which people pass, but do not stay. For Elizondo, the practice of pilgrimage is not perpetual; the pilgrim is not an immigrant. Passing through the space of the shrine like a door, the pilgrim then returns home to resume his or her everyday life, now changed and transformed in unanticipated and uncontrolled ways.<sup>13</sup> From these essays, we can summarize Elizondo's account of pilgrim practice: pilgrimage is a journey of the faithful to a particular holy place or places where pilgrims experience God's revelation and through the physical mediums of time, space, and people, encounter God in ways that transform the pilgrims so completely that on arriving home, the pilgrims once again may resume the life they left, but never in quite the same way.

Elizondo's instinct to view Christian pilgrimage practice as potential rather than problem is unsurprising. Often called the father of US Hispanic theology, Elizondo's

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<sup>12</sup> Elizondo, "Pilgrimage," ix.

<sup>13</sup> Elizondo, "Pilgrimage," ix.

theological method places the poor and the marginalized at the center of his theological project as privileged interpreters of God's word in scripture and tradition.<sup>14</sup> And the people's theology is rarely discursive; it is lived. Elizondo's turn to the people—especially people living on the margins—requires a turn to practice. While these essays represent one of the best attempts to take seriously the practice of pilgrimage, there is little evidence to suggest that his conceptualization of pilgrim practice emerges from sustained attention to the ongoing, lived practice of Christian pilgrims. As I will show, Elizondo ultimately fails to overcome the metaphorical logic that informs the theological treatment of pilgrimage in both the Vatican's *Directory of Liturgy and Popular Piety* and the *CELAM* texts.<sup>15</sup>

### **Mapping Pilgrimage Practice**

Despite his instinct to turn to practice, Elizondo's theological method fails to overcome the same limitations discussed in previous chapters: our *ideas about* pilgrimage over-determine our *understanding of* the lived practice either by normatively shaping new prescriptions for pilgrim practice through appeals to an essential underlying form or by determining the types of practices and activities that we recognize as belonging to the practice of pilgrimage. Although Elizondo gives a decidedly different account of pilgrimage practice from that which we find in Vatican and episcopal documents, his theological reflections on pilgrimage still emerge from a pre-conceived set of generalized

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<sup>14</sup> See especially Virgilio P. Elizondo, *Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise*, trans. Eva Fleischner, (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2005) and Virgilio P. Elizondo, *A God of Incredible Surprises: Jesus of Galilee*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion of the normative account of pilgrim practice offered by the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship, see Chapter 1 of this dissertation. For a discussion of the ways the Latin American Bishops have imagined pilgrimage practice as a Eucharistic metaphor, see Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

characteristics: a fundamental human reaction against modernity, a genuine sense of community, an inversion of institutional religious language and practice, devotion and orientations towards the peripheries, and the transformational power of the experience for both the individual Christian and through them the church. Notable in this account is the absence of any concrete description of Christian practice; instead, Elizondo proceeds from a concept or model of pilgrimage.

Elizondo's model of pilgrimage is not unlike a pilgrim's map of Jerusalem. Outlines in red mark the old Herodian walls of a city highlighted in yellow against a dark blue backdrop that indicates in muted text the surrounding landmarks: Gethsemane, Absalom's tomb, the Hinnom Valley. In the bright yellow of the old city, the map depicts familiar gospel landmarks: the Sanhedrin Temple, Mt Sion, the Pool of Siloe, the Holy Sepulchre, the Cenacle. White roads trace the popular trajectories of pilgrims beyond the city: the road to Bethlehem, the road to Jericho, the road to Samaria. The map is titled simply "Jerusalem;" the attribution reads *PP Assomptionistes Jerusalem, 1967*. The folded creases of the map still visible even under the glass suggest that the map is not only an artifact, but a souvenir of a pilgrim who visited the Holy Land many years ago. After her death, this map and others like it were found among her belongings—the trace of a journey she had once taken.<sup>16</sup> And yet the map reveals little about routes, trajectories, and activities of the pilgrim who carried it. It cannot tell us which of these places she visited and which she passed by. It cannot tell us whether her itinerary followed the chronology of the gospel or a different organization. It

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<sup>16</sup> This map belonged to Sr. Jean Lenz, OSF (d. 2012). I am grateful to Elizabeth Moriarity for entrusting to my care the map and the memory of the pilgrim who kept it among her personal belongings.

cannot tell us where she lingered a bit longer, where a wrong turn extended her path, or who she encountered along the way. It cannot tell us how she walked—alone and unhurried, following a guide, part of a procession. It does not even tell us when she went to this place. This map so obviously intended for Christian pilgrims flattens out the discrete textures of her pilgrimage in order to represent not only her pilgrimage but the entirety of Christian pilgrims who have come and gone from this space.<sup>17</sup> Models, or conceptual maps like the one that Elizondo produces, suffer the from same fundamental limitation. By transforming the plurality of practices to a series of conceptual points, the temporality of the practices—that is the very itineraries, trajectories, and actualizations of the practice are lost.

The Jesuit historian Michel de Certeau laments the poverty of representational graphs, maps, or transcriptions of practice that obscure, flatten-out, or eliminate the varieties of practice they claim to represent. Even when these abstract models are imposed as the normative forms of practice, they do little to show and much to obscure the practitioners' many and diverse *ways of proceeding* within the very spaces the maps or models represent. Elizondo's essays suffer from a similar limitation. The process of making sense of a plurality of lived practices and experiences through the articulation of a conceptual model necessarily creates a gap between these often fragmented and disparate pilgrim practices discovered through careful attention to descriptive accounts of the practice and the singular concept of pilgrimage that Elizondo presents.

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<sup>17</sup> The map is also a projection of a Christian utopian Jerusalem frozen in the fifth century, taking no account of the ways that historical events have shaped and reshaped the landscape of the old city in ways that pilgrims may ignore but cannot avoid.

The genre of Elizondo's initial essay accounts at least in part for this flattening out of pilgrimage practice. As the introduction to a larger edited volume, the essay is meant to establish the discursive space for the volume simply titled *Pilgrimage* by presenting a conceptual map of the practice under discussion:

People go on pilgrimage seeking and hoping to find what their present world—modern or ancient—has not been able to offer them.

The very nature of pilgrimage allows ordinary social divisions to fade out as the great diversity of pilgrims experience a common bond based on the unifying experience of the pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage sites [are] privileged earth-places where one can recall and thus make present in one's own life the great interventions of God on earth and within human history.<sup>18</sup>

Elizondo's account of pilgrimage proceeds from an ideal, even utopian vision of Christian pilgrimage and lack any substantive accounts of specific pilgrim practices or experience. Moreover, Elizondo's model presumes a single, shared experience of Christian pilgrimage across time and place. He implies that pilgrims to Tepeyac, to Lourdes, to Santiago, and to Jerusalem (to whom he occasionally refers throughout the essay) all participate in and perform a singular ritual/devotional pattern of practice upon which the theologian can reflect, but he offers little evidence that this model exists in any recognizable form within the practices of particular Christian pilgrims, let alone as a universal form across Christian pilgrimages. Absent attention to the lived practice of pilgrimage, theologians risk reflecting on practice as imagined or idealized rather than practices that are incarnated in the bodies and practices of the faithful. These idealized practices are as likely (if not more so!) to perform our prior theological commitments and agendas than to speak independently of

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<sup>18</sup> Elizondo, "Pilgrimage," viii.

them. It is not surprising that Elizondo's model of pilgrimage depicts a practice that liberates the poor and marginalized from the oppressive structures of both the modern world and the institutional church in an eschatological vision of communion. In constructing the concept of pilgrimage in this way, Elizondo makes a prophetic statement about the place of the poor in our church and in our world. Yet it offers little to expand our understanding of the ongoing lived experiences and practices of Christian pilgrims.

This conceptual construction of pilgrimage as the starting point for theological reflection risks what Alfred Whitehead called the fallacy of misplaced concreteness in which the observer mistakes the abstract for the concrete. In these essays, Elizondo mistakes a model of pilgrimage for the practice of pilgrimage. Working from a model allows for the assumption that the practice is not only uniform, but also universal. A practical theological method that begins with a model of pilgrimage has very little reason to turn back to the study of lived practices except to determine whether or not a particular practice is in fact pilgrimage. The conceptual domain that establishes a definition of *pilgrimage* also represses any practices that would challenge or compromise this definition. The theory becomes the measure of the practice. This is seen most clearly in Elizondo's later essay on the pastoral opportunities of pilgrimage where the conceptual domain of pilgrimage established in the introduction takes on a normative quality expressed through the novel inclusion of adjectives. "A *true* pilgrimage can certainly help to advance one's personal faith-journey." "An *authentic* pilgrimage will be a privileged time and space for discovery, discernment, healing and illumination." That Elizondo directs these normative statements at ecclesial leaders rather than pilgrims is certainly refreshing, but it is nevertheless only made possible by the transfiguration of pilgrim practices into a broad conceptual system.

The establishment of a proper conceptual place affords one a particular triumph over the temporal in the ability to both document and predict. Elizondo begins his essay in the present: “20,000 pilgrims each day go to Lourdes or Tepeyac.” Immediately, he moves to the recent past: “70,000 pilgrims were issued compostelas in Santiago last year,” and finally he notes the striking consistency of pilgrimage throughout the history of humanity such that “it almost appears to be grounded on the very biological genes that make us human.” This panoptic historical gaze which flattens out the temporal by substituting the conceptual also allows Elizondo to conclude his essay by predicting both the endurance of Christian pilgrimage and an increase in popularity in the years to come. This gaze that suggests a mastery over time in the form of prediction is made possible by transformation of the temporal actualizations of pilgrimage practices into a single, synchronous conceptual map of pilgrimage.

Through this conceptual map of Christian pilgrimage, Elizondo transforms the plurality of disparate practices into a singular, universal, and anonymous subject: the pilgrim. The plurality of pilgrimages mentioned at the start of the essay (Tepeyac, Lourdes, Santiago) becomes the singular “pilgrimage” by the start of the third paragraph. Similarly, the plural pilgrims in the first sentence of the essay (“pilgrims from all walks of life flock to pilgrimage sites”) becomes the singular pilgrim by the end of the essay (“one does not go as a pilgrim to stay”). Curiously, pilgrimage sites remain in the plural throughout the essay but each shares the same definition of “a privileged place of encounter with the ultimate” and each is easily anonymized (“Pilgrimage sites break away from the recognized centers of organized religion and from the control of their authorities”). By doing this, Elizondo is able to attribute to the figure of the pilgrim, to the space of the pilgrimage site, to the concept of

pilgrimage all of the characteristics that were previously scattered across many pilgrims, places, and traditions. This operation transforms the pilgrim from an active agent into a passive subject of our studious attention. Collapsed into the anonymous singular concept, the pilgrim no longer speaks but rather is spoken about.

Despite Elizondo's genuine efforts to offer a theology of pilgrimage that remains connected to the ongoing lived practice, his essays are still predicated on a separation from pilgrim practices. Elizondo's account of pilgrimage collapses the plurality of practices into the anonymity of the universal, obscures and misunderstands the ways that pilgrims appropriate and make use of pilgrimage traditions, and replaces the disparate, fragmented, and infinite practices made possible only when users take advantage of potentiality and opportunity available in the moment with a static account of the practices that are rendered both universal and unchanging. To put it another way, the very conditions that allow for a theoretical construction of pilgrimage as a concept necessarily obscure and misunderstand the practices that give it shape. Against the idealized model of pilgrimage, pilgrim practices when they are recognized can occasionally appear foreign or even strange. This not only impoverishes our ability to understand the ongoing practice of Christian pilgrimage, it also renders mute the ongoing creative and revelatory initiative of God incarnated in history in the bodies and communities of those who bear Christ's name. What is needed is not a better model of pilgrimage but rather a better account of the practice itself. In the remainder of this chapter, I suggest and then demonstrate three ways of leaning in to this task.

## Don't Think, Look!

### *Conceptualizing Pilgrimage*

The construction of the concept of pilgrimage as a process of both writing and knowledge production is predicated on the creation of a gap between practice and writing. Such a gap between lived practice and its written representation is to some degree unavoidable.<sup>19</sup> While writing about practices is not possible without the prior event of the lived practice, the written account should not be confused with or for the practice itself.<sup>20</sup> One of the ways this confusion can happen is by using an essence to define a complex and plural set of phenomena. Although Elizondo's conceptual construction of pilgrimage practice collapses the plurality of lived practices into a singular subject or essence, the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein suggests that this collapse is not the inevitable outcome of conceptual systems of thought and writing. Wittgenstein, in rejecting the philosopher's "craving for generality," points instead to a logic in which different phenomena are related

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<sup>19</sup> Helpful explications of the limits of writing practice can be found throughout Certeau's body of writings, especially in the initial chapters of *The Writing of History*, chapter IX "Spatial Stories" and chapter X "The Scriptural Economy," in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, and chapter VI, "The Institution of Speech," in *The Mystic Fable*. Perhaps the most vivid explorations of this idea in Certeau come as he considers how bodies are written and inscribed only through their literal or literary death. See especially his discussion on the creation of the "savage" body explored in chapter 5, "Ethno-graphy" and the production of hagiography in chapter 7, "A Variant: Hagio-Graphical Edification" in *The Writing of History*. See also chapter 5, "Montaigne's 'Of Cannibals': The Savage 'I,'" chapter 9 "The Beauty of the Dead," and chapter 11 "The Arts of Dying" in *Heterologies*, and chapter XIV, "The Unnamable" in *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

Michel de de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 19–113, 209–43, 269–83. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 115–30, 131–53, 190–98. Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, trans. Michael B. Smith, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 177–200. Michel De Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986), 67–79, 119–36, 156–67.

<sup>20</sup> The next chapter takes up Rahner's account of symbol as the concrete embodiment of an acting subject that proceeds from the subject without being confused with it. An analogy can be drawn here between written representations of practice and the practices which authorize and produce these accounts.

to one another (and thus meaningfully named using the same word) not through a single set of shared characteristics, but rather through complicated networks of overlapping and criss-crossing similarities that he likens to family resemblances.<sup>21</sup> The example of the family is apt. Members of the same extended family share a variety of characteristics: many members of a family may have a common shape to their nose, eyes, or smile. And yet if a member of the family has a different nose or eyes or smile, they can still be easily recognized as belonging to the family by other features they share. The Karst family is recognizable not through a single quality or set of shared characteristics, but by a system of particular but overlapping similarities.

The lack of exactness in definition, and therefore the lack of concretely defined boundaries, may suggest a nominative relativism where language becomes entirely unregulated but this is only true in our abstract and theoretical thought experiments rather than in our lived practices of thought, speech, and action. It is possible—and indeed we do it all the time in our everyday language—to think conceptually without the necessity of a closed definition. We do this, Wittgenstein argues, not by thinking, but by seeing.

Consider for example the proceedings that we call “games.” I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all?—Don’t say: “There *must* be something common or they would not be called ‘games’”—but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all.—For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don’t think, but look!<sup>22</sup>

The same advice is apt for the concept of Christian pilgrimage. The presumption that pilgrimages must share something in common in order rightly to be called by a single name

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<sup>21</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), 65–83.

<sup>22</sup> Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigation*, 66. Italics in original.

assumes an essentialism that may or may not be borne out in the practice itself. To determine what pilgrimages have in common, Wittgenstein suggests that we look at those proceedings which are called pilgrimage to discover *whether* there are things common to all. The inability to discover a set of shared universal traits is not a failure of observation but rather a failure of our conceptual imagination to understand a concept as a system of shared relationships rather than a set of universal characteristics.

The discovery of these components or shared characteristics that form conceptual systems requires a turn to the empirical rather than the theoretical. What we are seeking is not a better model of pilgrimage, but better descriptions of pilgrimage as practiced. Theological inquiry that takes seriously the practice of Christian pilgrims must begin by attending to the practice as lived as a means of discovering those networks of overlapping similarities that help us understand the practice of pilgrimage without the need to establish fixed, arbitrary, and artificial definitions and boundaries. Wittgenstein's charge becomes our own: don't think, but (first) look!

Theologians are becoming increasingly attuned to methodologies developed in the social sciences as a way of attending carefully to lived religious practices and communities. The use of ethnographic observation and interviews is opening new directions for theological reflection that exceeds the bounds set by more systematic discourses.<sup>23</sup> The

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<sup>23</sup> In a recent collection exploring the promise and fruitfulness of ethnographic methods for theologians, editor Pete Ward argues that the determination to speak simultaneously about the theological and social/culture realities of the church and the world rests on a Christological foundation that perceives both Christ and the church as meeting places and encounters of the human and the divine. The method of ethnographic inquiry is a deeply theological move. Similarly, attention to the socio-cultural context has also brought to light the way that all theology is socially and culturally situated. Pete Ward, ed., *Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ethnography* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 2–3. And yet the real measure of any methodology can be found in its fruits.

particularity inherent in a single ethnographic study reflects already a theological commitment to seek out the fulfillment of God's promises and grace concretely in history, open to the unexpected and unpredictable nature of this Good News. Ethnographic work also honors and lifts up for theological consideration the voices, practices, and bodies of those that rarely find a place in our academic communities and discourses. Ethnography takes seriously the living body of Christ, in the ecclesia and in those on the margins, as a privileged site of revelation. Bodies, both individual and social, have become in the eyes of theological ethnographers, loci for theological reflection.<sup>24</sup>

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Theologians who have pioneered this work with great success and whose work has inspired my own include Ada María Isasi-Díaz, Nicholas Healy, Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Marla Frederick, Nancy Piñeda Madrid, Ricky Manalo, and Brett Hoover. Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996). Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Marla Frederick, *Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). Nancy Pineda-Madrid, *Suffering and Salvation in Ciudad Juarez* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011). Ricky Manalo, *The Liturgy of Life: The Interrelationship of Sunday Eucharist and Everyday Worship Practices* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014). Brett C. Hoover, *The Shared Parish: Latinos, Anglos, and the Future of U.S. Catholicism* (New York: NYU Press, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> A host of recent dissertations has continued to show the potential for theological ethnography that brings forward voices and bodies that are easily hidden or ignored by other theological discourses. Lorraine Cuddeback and Rebecca Spurrier have provoked challenging theological questions arising from faithful communities of persons with intellectual disabilities. Jaisy Joseph has brought the voices of eastern Catholics to challenge too easy discourses of ecclesial universalism within both the global and US Catholic churches. Susan Reynolds' recent dissertation on multi-cultural parishes raises similar questions for the church. Lorraine V. Cuddeback, "Liberation, Resistance, and Agency in Intellectual Disability: An Ethnographic Study for Christian Ethics" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2017). Rebecca Spurrier, "Works of Love: Beauty and Fragility in a Community of Difference" (Doctoral Dissertation, Emory University, 2016). Jaisy Joseph, "The Decentered Vision of Diaspora Space: Theological Ethnography, Migration, and the Pilgrim Church," *Practical Matters Journal*, no. 11 (2018), <http://practicalmattersjournal.org/2018/06/09/decentered-vision-of-diaspora-space/> (dissertation forthcoming). Susan Bigelow Reynolds, "Becoming Borderland Communities: Ritual Practice and Solidarity in Shared Parishes" (Doctoral Dissertation, Boston College, 2018).

In as much as careful study of lived faith communities can expand our capacities and resources for theological inquiry, ethnographic study also comes with its own set of limitations and trade-offs. The time and expense of conducting ethnographic research can be prohibitive to many scholars. More importantly, undertaking an ethnographic study requires a scholar to limit their inquiry by arbitrary and entirely necessary parameters: I will study this community and not that one, I will study the practices during this time period but not that one, I will observe people in these places but not those people in those places. The gift of particularity is obtained at the expense of a wider view of transnational and transhistorical Christian practice, and in its more problematic manifestations replaces the normativity generated by the production of utopian representations of practice with a normativity generated by the promotion of a single, model community. A desire to understand pilgrimage as a phenomenon in its plurality is not reasonably served by a single ethnographic study. Happily, the excellent work of anthropologists and other scholars of lived practice has already produced an alternative space for practical theological inquiry.

Over the last forty years, pilgrimage has become a popular object of study for social scientists. These scholars have undertaken a series of ethnographic studies of Christian pilgrims around the globe that continually add new data and insights to our understanding of pilgrim practice. By utilizing the excellent work of these scholars, theologians can already access a plurality of Christian pilgrimage practices and communities. The work of this chapter is to deploy these ethnographic studies in a fresh disciplinary context—that is to read these ethnographic texts in the space of theology in a form of academic *bricolage*. In addition to providing valuable data about contemporary pilgrims and their practices, these

ethnographic texts represent a literary practice of telling about and interpreting the pilgrim experience within a separate disciplinary context. As such, these accounts do not fit neatly with our own theological agendas and within our theological categories. They are often uncomfortable and disruptive to prevailing theological discourses about pilgrimage. And precisely in this is found the potential to see something new and unexpected. The use of these texts requires a disciplinary boundary crossing in which the theologian becomes, in a sense, a pilgrim in unfamiliar disciplinary spaces.

This entrance into the unfamiliar space of pilgrim ethnography is a response to Wittgenstein's invitation to discover in these accounts of lived pilgrim practice the systems, networks, and patterns of overlapping traits that make pilgrimage thinkable as a phenomenon. From a wealth of quality ethnographic literature on Christian pilgrimage, I have selected three accounts to consider here: Hillary Kaell's study of US pilgrims in the Holy Land, Elaine Peña's study of two all-women pilgrimages to Mexico's Tepeyac, and Nancy Frey's study of pilgrims on the Spanish Camino.<sup>25</sup> I have selected these

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<sup>25</sup> Ethnographic monographs like the ones considered here are relatively rare. Robert Orsi's *The Madonna of 115<sup>th</sup> Street*, Jill Dubish's *In a Different Place*, and Anna Fedele's *Looking for Mary Magdalene* are also excellent example of this genre. More common are edited volumes that bring together ethnographic essays from a variety of scholars that provide a collection of descriptive and analytical essays from a variety of times and places. Eade and Sallnow's *Contesting the Sacred*, Coleman and Eade's *Reframing Pilgrimage*, Badone and Roseman's *Intersecting Journeys*, and Hermkens, Jansen and Notermans's *Moved by Mary* are particularly effective in bringing together essays in a way that highlights the diversity of Christian pilgrim practice. In 2015, John Eade and Dionigi Albera edited the volume *International Perspectives in Pilgrimage Studies: Itineraries, Gaps, and Obstacles*, which invited essays on important ethnographic work being produced outside of the English language academies. While works in German and French are accessible to many scholars, the volume calls attention to important studies of Christian pilgrimage in Russian, Polish, Italian, and Hungarian. The volume continues to remind us of the diversity of pilgrimage practice and scholarship. It also points to the ways pilgrimage studies has continued to be informed by western scholarship and approaches and the need for more diverse perspectives to animate our understanding of these practices. For the theologian, both the richness and paucity of the canon of pilgrimage studies should caution against attempts to create or ascribe to a single interpretive or

ethnographies on account of their shared scholarly excellence and the thick descriptions of practice that they offer. Additionally, I've chosen these three accounts because of the diversity of practices that give rise to each monograph. The three monographs span a timeframe of twenty years, with Frey's being the earliest account and Kaell's the most recent. The pilgrimages recounted in these texts take place on three different continents and follow pilgrims from different communities. Both Kaell and Peña follow groups of pilgrims formed through regional proximity at home while Frey describes groups that form by virtue of their proximity during the pilgrimage itself. The pilgrims in Kaell's account are older, while Peña and Frey both describe pilgrims that come from multiple generations. Kaell and Frey follow pilgrims from middle- or upper-class backgrounds, most of whom are also of white, European descent. Peña's pilgrims predominantly come from poorer communities in Mexico and descend from both European and indigenous roots. The pilgrimages that Peña and Kaell accompany are organized and led by parish or diocesan staff. Frey's pilgrims go in small, self-organized groups or by themselves. The diversity of these accounts resists easy essentializing of pilgrimage practice and invites a thoughtful consideration of the practices as presented. While these three ethnographies serve well to

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normative model of the practice. Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988). Jill Dubisch, *In a Different Place* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). Anna Fedele, *Looking for Mary Magdalene: Alternative Pilgrimage and Ritual Creativity at Catholic Shrines in France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow, *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (London: Routledge, 1991). Simon Coleman and John Eade, eds., *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion*, (London: Routledge, 2004). Ellen Badone and Sharon R. Roseman, *Intersecting Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage and Tourism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004). Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans, *Moved by Mary* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009). John Eade and Dionigi Albera, *International Perspectives on Pilgrimage Studies: Itineraries, Gaps, and Obstacles* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

represent the method of inquiry I am proposing here, they represent only pieces of the larger phenomenon of Christian pilgrimage.

In the pages below, I interrogate these three accounts in the attempt to identify some of the family resemblances of Christian pilgrimage as an effort to begin a larger project of theological inquiry rather than to conclude it. As new accounts of practice are added to the pilgrimage canon and further examined, new similarities, networks, and patterns may announce themselves as significant and patterns initially identified here may recede into the background of the theological discussions as theological anomalies rather than as true family resemblances. Instead of proposing a better model, a theological inquiry driven by attention to family resemblances both proceeds from the discovery of these resemblances in these accounts and also invites further looking.

### *Pedestrian Enunciations*

If discourses about pilgrimage have ultimately produced a totalizing image of the pilgrim, the very idea or concept of pilgrimage also permits the re-emergence of those pilgrim practices or operations that the theological project has thus far excluded. Unraveling the totalizing concept of the pilgrim and recapturing the plurality of pilgrimage necessarily means becoming attentive in both our looking and our writing to the ways practitioners appropriate, actualize, and utilize the concept of pilgrimage. Pilgrims give shape and content to the concept of pilgrimage by the way that they live out and live into the practice. Michel de Certeau's notion of *pedestrian enunciations* can inform such an account.

In his essay “Walking in the City,” Certeau identifies both the possibilities and the limitations of two vantage points from which we can observe a particular space.<sup>26</sup> Perched at the top of the city’s skyscraper, the observer is lifted out of the grasp of the city. In the perspective afforded by such a lofty view, the observer can look down on the cityscape and appreciate the care with which the city is laid out. In discovering this lay of the land, the viewer believes she can see the whole. Patterns emerge that are not visible from the ground, and quickly the city is transformed into a text that can be read and represented and reproduced in the form of a map. From this vantage, the chaotic motion of the city is suspended and flattened out into trajectories that transform the motion of time into static space. “Surveys of routes miss what was: the act itself of passing by.”<sup>27</sup> The walkers on the streets below are indistinguishable, perceptible only in their anonymity and by their ubiquitous presence.

Far below, these walkers have an entirely different experience of the city. If the conceptual map of the city begins with a vision, then the story of the city-dweller, the practitioner, begins with footsteps:

They are myriad, but do not compose a series. They cannot be counted because each unit has a qualitative character: a style of tactile apprehension and kinesthetic appropriation. Their swarming mass is an innumerable collection of singularities. Their intertwine paths give shape to spaces. They weave places together.<sup>28</sup>

Walkers in the city respond to their environment rather than controlling it. They play in a space imposed upon them by someone or something else. And yet walkers are not determined or repressed by the totalizing gaze of the city’s architect. Their footsteps

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<sup>26</sup> Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 91–110.

<sup>27</sup> Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 97.

<sup>28</sup> Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 97.

“compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces.”<sup>29</sup> To the voyeur, so familiar with the city from above, these operations have the quality of strangeness that stand out against the backdrop of their urban imagination. When presented with the voyeur’s map of their city, the walkers may find the representation equally unfamiliar.

The city’s construction is not foreign to the walker; she cannot escape it and indeed her pedestrian enunciations can only take place within it. And yet the walkers are not conformed to this urban concept. Through the act of walking, walkers affirm the utopian vision of the city when they, for example, follow the paths laid out for them through the construction of sidewalks and crosswalks. And yet the walker who sees a break in traffic and darts across the street between blocks transgresses the rules of the city. The walker who creates her own shortcut through an alleyway or shopping mall has invented a new possibility that the city’s planners and builders did not anticipate. In the act of walking, walkers appropriate for their own use the topography of the city in which they move; they identify and then actualize opportunities and possibilities of the city through their own intentional choices to act in this way or that; and they create relationships between discrete components of the city.<sup>30</sup> Although walkers are dependent upon the space of the city in which they move, the city is at the same time dependent on the walkers, whose plurality of discrete, fragmented, unpredictable and infinitely diverse practices in fact realize the city itself. These pedestrian enunciations speak the city into being.

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<sup>29</sup> Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 93.

<sup>30</sup> Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 97–98.

Certeau's project calls attention to those quotidian practices—everyday ways of moving in and through our environments—that comprise the vast majority of lived practice and experience. It is a conscientious turn from the study of the elite to the study of the popular, from the study of production to the study of consumption or use, from the study of the power of the strong to the study of the power of the weak. As such, Certeau helpfully shifts our analytical gaze from discourses produced by ecclesial and academic elites to the practical operations that speak or perform pilgrimage into being.

The act of walking is to the urban system what the act of going on pilgrimage is to pilgrimage systems and traditions. Attention to a plurality of pilgrimage systems is akin to trying to understand the concept of the city by studying not just New York, but also Washington, Mumbai, Tokyo, Mexico City, etc. The three pilgrimage systems singled out below—the pilgrimage to Tepeyac, the pilgrimage to Santiago, and the pilgrimage to the Holy Land—are systems or traditions that have been constructed by someone other than the pilgrims of today. Like walkers, pilgrims manipulate spaces and practices that they did not produce both on a universal, conceptual level by appropriating the language of pilgrimage to describe their activities and on the local level in the way that they make use of discrete pilgrimage systems into which they enter.

### *Ritual Practices*

Certeau reorients our perception of practice by calling for attention to the ways that pilgrims move and make use of spaces they did not themselves construct and it presses towards a richer description of practice that can hold both the plurality of pilgrim improvisations and their discrete, fragmentary nature. However, the pilgrim seems to undertake her practice with a level of intentionality that cannot be accounted for by

Certeau's distinction between seeing and walking. Not all walking shares a distinctly quotidian quality. Key to Certeau's description of the quotidian practices of ordinary walkers is their obliviousness to the way that they participate in and reconstruct the city through their actions. He writes,

They are walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poems in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility. It is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness.<sup>31</sup>

Unlike Certeau's blind walkers, Christian pilgrims often enter into spaces of pilgrimage with the intention of taking up a particular practice that is distinctive from other, everyday activities.<sup>32</sup> The concern to distinguish between quotidian practice and pilgrimage is not only an academic one; it is shared by pilgrims themselves. The category of ritual can help sharpen our understanding of pilgrim practice.

Catherine Bell introduces the category of ritual as a practical operation that distinguishes an act from its quotidian counterpart. Ritual practices, Bell explains, are not a clear and closed category of behavior, but rather ways of acting in and on the world. Preferring the nominative of ritualizing—ritualization—to emphasize the action or practice

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<sup>31</sup> Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 93.

<sup>32</sup> Bell's theory of ritual practice also acknowledges the practitioner's fundamental misrecognition of what they are doing. In this, Bell is inspired especially by Bourdieu's writing on gift exchange that describes a misrecognition of a "fake circulation of a fake coin" as a practice of immense value, a value that emerges in and only within the immediate context of the act itself (Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 82.) Both Certeau and Bell point to the consequences of theoretical or conceptual reconstructions that abstract the acts themselves from their temporal situation. Alas, this points to both the possibility of writing about the practice as well as its limitations, both of which we must accept if we are to think and write about the practice of pilgrimage at all.

rather than the objective sense of the word, Bell describes “ritualization” as an intentional way of acting that is designed and performed to privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually quotidian, activities.<sup>33</sup> At its most basic level, ritualization is the production of this differentiation between activities.<sup>34</sup> More specifically, ritual is always “contingent, provisional, and defined by difference.”<sup>35</sup>

While there are no formal and universal features that distinguish ritual practice other than the use of ritual to distinguish and prioritize itself as an action, Bell has identified some strategies that are regularly employed as strategic ritual actions: formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism, performance, repetition, and fixity.<sup>36</sup> For example, the distinctions between eating a regular meal and participating in the Eucharist are drawn in a variety of ways: the gathering of a large community to participate in it, establishing a distinctive period of repetition for the celebration of the rite, highlighting the insufficiency of the food for physical nourishment, the use of formalized language distinctive from quotidian vernaculars, the establishment of rules for both leadership and participation, and so on. On the other hand, a different set of strategies is employed to differentiate the celebration of Baptism from a regular bath:

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<sup>33</sup> Bell prefers the term “strategic” instead of “intentional” in her writing, by which she means instrumental: “a ceaseless play of situationally effective schemes, tactics, and strategies.” Although not identical, Bell’s notion of strategic practice is closer to Certeau’s notion of tactical (pedestrian) operations, rather than his characterization of strategic panoptical practice. I’ve opted for the words intentional and instrumental in place of strategic here to avoid confusion between the two very different ways these theorists use the term “strategic.” Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 82.

<sup>34</sup> Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 74.

<sup>35</sup> Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 91.

<sup>36</sup> Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 91–93. For a richer explication of these characteristics, see Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions--Revised Edition*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 138–69.

participating in the bath only once in a lifetime, the public setting for the washing, highlighting either the insufficiency of water for physical washing (as with practices of sprinkling or pouring) or the overabundance of water for physical washing (as with the practice of a triple immersion). Indeed, these ritual strategies for baptism and Eucharist have varied among communities separated by time and ecclesial communion. Even within Roman Catholicism, variety is not only tolerated but explicitly allowed in the approved baptismal rites.

Since ritual is always situational for Bell, the practice cannot be observed or abstracted from its context without losing something essential to it. Both the nature of this differentiation and its goals are contingent on context.<sup>37</sup> The discovery of this ritualization requires a turn to the empirical rather than to the theoretical. By conceiving of ritual first and foremost as a *practice*, Bell's orientation allows us to attend to the actions of pilgrims—in their own contexts—not as objects to be interpreted, but as activities to be described. It also offers another tool for describing *ways of operating* that differentiate between quotidian practices and practices that are purposefully distinguished from other practices. Attention to ritualized practices helps us understand not only how pilgrims make use of pilgrimage systems and ideas, but also the specific ways that they differentiate their practices of pilgrimage from similar, more quotidian activities like travel.

### **Reading and Writing Pilgrimage Practice**

The act of walking is to the urban system what the act of reading is to a written text. Just as the act of walking affords the possibility of affirmation, transgression, extension, and

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<sup>37</sup> Bell, *Ritual*, 81–82.

invention, so too does the act of reading. The reader enters the space produced by another and in so doing manipulates and makes use of that space for a purpose often not initially intended by the author. Indeed, entire articles, books, and dissertations—like this one—are predicated on this reading operation. However, Certeau’s description of reading as “poaching” offers a helpful transparency to the task undertaken in this chapter specifically in my use of these ethnographic texts. In addition to providing valuable data about contemporary pilgrims and their practices, these ethnographies are specific spaces of interpretation that emerge from attention to lived practices and the disciplinary conventions of anthropology. As such, these accounts do not fit neatly into the spaces and agendas of theology. As a reader, I often found myself wishing the author had lingered a bit longer on certain points of theological interest. In these discursive spaces, the author may dwell at length on topics of little concern to the theologian.

The use of these texts requires both an individual and a disciplinary boundary crossing in which the theologian becomes a walker and a pilgrim in disciplinary spaces they did not themselves help to construct. These texts both make possible the discovery of lived pilgrim practices across pilgrimage traditions and also constrain the reader within structures and corridors of the ethnographic project. It is precisely because of the new possibilities that these texts introduce to the theological reader that they become generative to this theological project. My aim in drawing upon these texts is not to summarize the observations and conclusions of the authors, but rather to walk through their texts in the hope of discovering the practices and operations of pilgrimage that lie beneath these texts and that have in fact authorized their production. While the phenomenon of pilgrimage is certainly present in these texts, this presence is predicated on

an absence, a distance, a gap from the pilgrim events which made these texts possible. This reality also constrains the reader who must be vigilant that she does not confuse or equate these descriptions of practice with the practice itself. Such an interdisciplinary project not only opens new opportunities for the theological reader, it also makes visible the limitations of any discourse, theological or anthropological, in representing lived practice. Indeed, pilgrimage exceeds the boundaries set by both disciplines. But the careful study of the relationship between these two disciplines, both transected and connected by the pilgrim, opens a space for glimpses of revelation and understanding.

The English language uses the gerund to represent activity: walking, ritualizing, pilgrimaging, writing. In offering the noun in the form of a verb, gerunds are a form of linguistic resistance to the static effect produced by the act of writing something down. They point to both the motion and the temporality inherent in the activity being represented. Attentiveness to lived practice seeks a similar mode of creative resistance in an effort to make transparent the temporality of lived practices. It is possible, Certeau notes, to transcribe operations of walking on maps by tracing trajectories. In Peña's book, a map traces the trajectories of the two women's pilgrimages in central Mexico with thick grey lines that connect each evening's resting place.<sup>38</sup> We might represent more or less popular routes with thick or thin or dotted lines (most people follow this route, others follow that one). But these trajectories cannot represent what was "the act itself of passing by." Those activities of pilgrimaging—walking, singing, praying, chatting, resting, eating, and so many others—are forgotten and replaced by conceptualizations. Communion,

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<sup>38</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred with the Virgin of Guadalupe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 52.

devotion, and transformation are merely depictions of what has passed by. In the act of forgetting, Certeau writes, the traces left behind are quickly substituted for the practice itself.<sup>39</sup> The act of transcribing these trajectories has the effect of obscuring the practices which they depict. Ever the historian, Certeau points to the possibilities the medieval pilgrim itinerary presents over the modern map. The itinerary, Certeau writes, is a spatial story. Medieval pilgrim itineraries marked out the places through which one should pass or stay or pray and calculated distances between them in terms of the time it would take to cross them on foot. These itineraries were “memorandum prescribing actions” rather than cartographic representations of place. Itineraries can also take the shape of travelogues. We might think of the written *Itinerarium* of Egeria, Felix Fabri, and Mark Twain, which each described their travels in the Holy Land. Unlike representational maps of pilgrimage routes from the fourth or fifteenth or twentieth centuries, these itineraries are fragmentary stories “whose gaps mesh with the social practices [they] symbolize.”<sup>40</sup>

Because these practical operations of enunciation are by nature fragmentary, I work to maintain this quality in the presentation of these practices below. Instead of detailed descriptions of the practice summarized from the careful work of the authors of the texts, I offer a series of snapshots. Snapshots—a favorite medium of tourist and pilgrim alike—are aptly named. They capture singular moments in time and place. They represent the view from a particular perspective. They are produced by one who remains invisible, standing behind the camera, framing the photo, clicking the shutter. And yet the photographer, while invisible, offers silent witness to the larger event that allows the photograph to come into

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<sup>39</sup> Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 97.

<sup>40</sup> Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 102.

being. This activity is both contained within the photograph and exceeds the photographic frame. Snapshots are fragments whose conditions of possibility are the very operations and practices that they depict. Taken discretely however, even snapshots lose an essential quality of the practice they attempt to capture: the movement that bound them to the temporal quality of the pedestrian enunciations they would represent. A photograph has the same limitation as a map that freezes a moment in time and thus becomes a mere trace of a movement that can only be known by its absence.

The structure of the itinerary offers a way of writing pilgrimage that honors the temporality of the practice. We organize snapshots into albums, the time stamp on each photo both reminding us that it is only a trace of a moment now past and helping us to order the album so that moving through the photographs is also a way of moving through time. The following “snapshots” are organized in a similar way. I have made little effort to weave them together except to order them in a way that approximates the pilgrim’s temporal movement from the beginning of the pilgrimage to its end.

### **“As Long as She Gives Me Life”**

Elaine Peña’s *Performing Piety: Making Space Sacred with the Virgin of Guadalupe* (2011) documents pilgrimages to the Modern Basilica at Tepeyac in Mexico City and to the Second Tepeyac shrine in Des Plaines, IL. Situating her study within the fields of Cultural Anthropology and Performance Studies, Peña’s primary task in this monograph is to trace lines of transmigrational practices in the cult of Guadalupe. By studying both regional all-female pilgrimages in Mexico and transnational pilgrimages by Latin American immigrants in Chicago, Peña is attentive to the performative practices that help pilgrims produce sacred space in collaboration with official ecclesial and civic institutions—and often in

spite of them. Peña methodology of “co-performative witnessing” allows her to describe the pilgrimages through her observations and conversations with others as well as her own embodied experience of the pilgrimages. Although the entire study provides fruitful space for theological reflection and wandering, I offer here just one itinerary of all-female, Mexican pilgrimages: a nine-day pilgrimage from Querétaro to Tepeyac in July of 2005.

### *Itinerary 1*

“Ask the Virgin. Ask the Virgin,” she recalled. “I asked her repeatedly, and she gave me my daughter. Healthy and alive. She is now sixteen years old, and that is why I come, to repay the favor.” The walk to Tepeyac is Christina’s annual tradition. But this year her daughters were worried. They didn’t think she should go. “What if you fall down?” they asked. She responded to them as she did every year: “Mientras ella me de vida” (As long as she [The Virgin] gives me life).<sup>41</sup>



Women gathered at the square in the historic center of the city of Querétaro with skirts pulled over their pants and wide-brimmed sombreros adorned with ribbons and flowers. The air was festive. Women waved to one another as they made their way towards familiar faces. Some pushed strollers or walked with their daughters beside them. More than a few were seniors, women for whom this pilgrimage has been an annual life-long commitment.<sup>42</sup> Many came from urban centers while others left their small towns or isolated villages. For some the annual pilgrimage is the one time during the year they can justify leaving their

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<sup>41</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 70.

<sup>42</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 62. Peña writes that most of the *peregrinas* on this pilgrimage were adults, but about 10 percent were girls or young boys under age ten and 20 percent were seniors.

families and communities.<sup>43</sup> Conversations rang through the air, mostly in Spanish, although the attentive ear could occasionally catch the distinctive tonal sounds of the indigenous Otomí language. The women came from all walks of life; they were teachers and students, lawyers and artisans, secretaries and agricultural workers, vendors and domestic servants, homemakers and religious sisters. Before long, the square had filled with pilgrims come to join their sisters and to trace the footsteps of Herculana who, along with her brother, secretly followed the all-male pilgrimage to Tepeyac in 1936. Thereafter, Herculana and her circle of fellow *peregrinas* continued to make the annual pilgrimage, openly defying a church decree prohibiting the practice, until the church officially recognized and affirmed the all-female pilgrimage in 1958. Today, the women lead the way to Tepeyac; the men's pilgrimage commences several days later.<sup>44</sup> The pilgrims gathered in the square were not only excited; they were proud. The narrative of the pilgrimage's founder lifted them up in the face of friends and coworkers who openly taunted them, skeptical that they could make such a journey. "We are better than men in everything," one pilgrim declared. "We are smarter, more prepared...This pilgrimage gives us the chance to show that we are equal to them [men] and even better. That we can take as much as they do!"<sup>45</sup>



When mass concluded, the procession began. The *carro de sonido* went out front to prepare the way. On this particular year, a Coca-Cola truck played herald, announcing at once the

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<sup>43</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 69–70.

<sup>44</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 62.

<sup>45</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 62–63.

pilgrims' approach and its own sponsorship of the event. At the front of the line of pilgrims, members of the lay organizing committee marched alongside the *consejo spiritual*—those priests who serve as official spiritual advisors to the pilgrims. Following them were more priests and lay volunteers, security personnel and *vanguardia* (traffic monitors), medical assistants, and finally 16,000 *peregrinas* organized into 150 groups. Soon a column four kilometers long wound along the highway towards Mexico City, towards Tepeyac.<sup>46</sup>



*Peregrinas* must obtain and visibly display their pilgrimage badge and walk with the group to which it corresponds; no one is allowed to walk ahead of her place in line. *Peregrinas* must dress with appropriate female modesty by wearing skirts over their pants; pants alone are not permitted. *Peregrinas* must comport themselves with dignity and respect; avoid loud conversations, profane language, and provocative gestures or attitudes. *Peregrinas* must participate reverently and joyfully in all official activities during the pilgrimage; pray the rosary and the angelus, sing praise, participate fully, consciously, and actively in the celebration of the daily mass. *Peregrinas* must conduct themselves according to the rule of sisterly love; each and every one must cultivate this virtue in mutual solidarity with one another and with true Christian spirit.<sup>47</sup> This, says the booklet the *peregrina* clutches in her hand, is how a woman makes a pilgrimage to Tepeyac. This, said the priest at mass, is how a woman makes a pilgrimage to Tepeyac.<sup>48</sup>




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<sup>46</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 60, 78.

<sup>47</sup> Adapted from *Sin Siembra No Hay Cosecha, Sin Palabra No Hay Eucaristía* (Querétaro: Directiva Seglar de la 47a Peregrinación Ferminina a pie de Querétaro al Tepeyac, 2005), 4–5. In Peña, *Performing Piety*, 67–68.

<sup>48</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 66–69.

The outskirts of the town were buzzing with women. While the more affluent *peregrinas* made their way to hotels in the center of town, most of the women made their way to the *maleteros*, large shipping trucks that carry their luggage by day and double as barracks at night. Four *peregrinas* slowly wove their way in and out of this modernized version of a tent city. Fifteen hours of walking followed by an hour of waiting in line for a shower made the search for their evening accommodations all the more unbearable. Row after row of freight trailers made finding one's assigned space its own challenge at the end of a long day. When at last they discovered their accommodations, they climbed up into the "penthouse" and wedged themselves in with sixteen other *peregrinas* for the night. Another twenty slept on the deck below them and those without the 300 pesos to reserve a spot in the *maltero* made their beds on the ground underneath. Despite the cramped conditions, sleep came quickly. And it was disturbed all too quickly as a bright light and a woman singing over a loud speaker "¡Buenos dias hermanitas!" shattered the early morning stillness and darkness.<sup>49</sup>



Step, step, step. "Santa María Madre de Dios." The peregrina glanced to the right and found a familiar tree that, along with a priest, once listened to her confession. "Ruegue Señora por nosotros los pecadores." Her gaze shifted to the left as a string of cars sped by next to her. "Ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte, Amén." The call and response of the rosary helped take her mind off tired feet and legs. The line of women continued to wind its way along the highway. A couple of women in front of her slipped under the barbed wire fence that lined

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<sup>49</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 65–66.

the road, in search of a brief space of privacy. It couldn't be found. No matter. A woman's skirt at least created a circle of semi-privacy as she crouched by the road. "Santa María Madre de Dios." They marched uphill once more. What goes up must come down. "Ruegue Señora por nosotros los pecadores." She glanced out across the hill. The mobile chapel was visible below, inviting her to prayer. "Ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte, Amén."<sup>50</sup>



*Descanso.* Break. Time for mass. Hired workers had already assembled the *capilla móvil*, the mobile chapel and it was there to greet the *peregrinas'* arrival. The chapel contained the necessary elements for the celebration of mass found in any Catholic Church: altar and ambo, vessels and linens, a lectionary and sacramentary, bread and wine.<sup>51</sup> But the simple roadside chapel became truly spectacular when adorned with balloons, flowers, and enormous portraits of John Paul II and Benedict XVI towering over smaller images of the Virgin.<sup>52</sup> From this space, officiating priests and *edecanes* (lay liturgical ministers) led the *peregrinas* in chants affirming Pope Benedict's authority and promising to carry on Pope John Paul II's support and devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe before beginning mass.<sup>53</sup> The celebration of the Eucharist each day sanctified the pilgrimage and sanctioned it as practice officially recognized by the institutional church. In the eyes of the clergy, pilgrimage is not an alternative or additional liturgy, but an opportunity for more frequent immersion in the institutional church gathered around the Eucharistic altar. In the homily, the priest

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<sup>50</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 60–61.

<sup>51</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 66–67.

<sup>52</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 67.

<sup>53</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 67.

reminded the *peregrinas* that the goal of the pilgrimage is not meeting the Virgin at Tepeyac, but meeting her son in the Eucharist each day.<sup>54</sup>



The women were gathering their belongings. The break was almost over. A woman's voice rang out from the loud speakers: "Attention *peregrinas*, if you accidentally picked up a wallet, please return the property to its rightful owner." The women glanced meaningfully at one another. This likely wasn't an accident. Each knew that she should keep her valuables tucked away, touching her skin.<sup>55</sup>



"We invite the women to walk together, to sing, pray, reflect, and most of all to hear the Word of God. This is our goal," the president of the pilgrimage explained. "I also want the women to be happy, to sing, and dance, to enjoy themselves. I have been a *peregrina* for more than ten years, and I love to lead prayer and chants. It is [the executive committee's] job to organize all elements of the journey to make the women as safe as possible and to ensure that they have opportunities to receive the Word of God. This means involving the Red Cross and state officials to care for and protect the women. We must also have the full support of the church to offer the women confession and daily mass. My favorite part of the pilgrimage is leading chants and dancing that lift the spirit."<sup>56</sup>



The hot black pavement soon became a colorful patchwork. Red, yellow, lavender, and baby blue *útiles*—plastic blankets—provided protection from the hot road as *peregrinas* sank

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<sup>54</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 66–67.

<sup>55</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 69.

<sup>56</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 74–75.

onto them, welcoming the midday break. Some women chatted quietly, breaking the silence. Most sat quietly, the flowers and ribbons and wide brims of their hats soaking up the sun while their tired faces bowed beneath them. Some found the break a good opportunity for a nap. Others used their cell phones to check in with husbands, children, and friends at home. The end of the brief pause was soon marked by movement as the women rose from their mats. Some made their way towards the chapel for daily mass. Others explored the stalls of vendors that had sprung up along the road in their honor, often returning with shirt, a necklace, or earrings—and the satisfaction of having acquired these items on her own terms.<sup>57</sup>



Seated on her bedding in the back of the *maletero*, an indigenous woman slowly peeled off her shoe. A new blister had joined the two from the day before. Tenderly she wiped her feet and smiled, reminding herself that each *ampoya* is a rose given by the Virgin and a promise of forgiveness for sins committed over the previous year. She whispered a quiet prayer of gratitude to the Virgin.<sup>58</sup>



“*Santa María Madre de Dios.*” The familiar repetition of the rosary sounded behind them. Normally the leaders would join in, but this time they are distracted by the sound and movement to their right. “*Ruegue Señora por nosotoros los pecadores.*” A line of women plods alongside the pilgrim column. “*Ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte, Amén,*” echo the voices from the periphery. Their steps and their voices seem as one, but these women are

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<sup>57</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 75.

<sup>58</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 78–79.

different to those who walk in formation behind them. None of these women wears the *distintivo* or pilgrim badge. They are not paying to participate in the pilgrimage. Step by step, they matched pace with the leaders, having been given no place in the formation behind them. These women walk in the fields; they are not welcome on the road. And still they go. “You are pilgrims! Not sheep!” one member of the organizing committee shouts towards the fields.<sup>59</sup> They had heard this before. Ignoring the taunt, the women continue forward, sharing stories and conversation not so unlike those *peregrinas* who walk and talk in the main column on the road.<sup>60</sup>



A *peregrina* towed herself off. The ten pesos to wash several days of road dust from her body and hair was well spent. Setting her dirty walking clothes aside, she welcomed the feel of a clean shirt, pants, and skirt. She was in a hurry. No matter that she had been up and walking since 3am, she wanted to explore the *poblado* (town) before dark. Her *compañeras* (walking partners) from group 104 joined her now as they wandered the stalls of the local market. Pooling their money, they bought dozens of small mesh bags at 10 pesos each. When they returned home, they imagined, they could embroider them and give them as gifts or sell them in their local market for a little extra income.<sup>61</sup>



The dust clouds kicked up by thousands of feet settled once again onto the road. The pilgrims and their feet were gone but traces remained. Plastic water bottles, soiled toilet

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<sup>59</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 74.

<sup>60</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 74.

<sup>61</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 75.

paper, food wrappers, and an occasional sanitary napkin were strewn along the side of the road. Most peregrinas preferred not to carry their rubbish with them to Tepeyac. They simply left it behind.<sup>62</sup>



It is 4:00am; the seventh day. A group of sleepy-eyed women huddle around a television screen that seemed suspended in the early-morning darkness. Some women cradle their breakfast—hot chocolate and a roll—while they watch the official videographer screen footage from the previous day. “¿Me ven? ¿Me ven!” shouts one woman excitedly as her likeness marches across the screen. “We will be selling this beautiful souvenir for 200 pesos,” the videographer announced.<sup>63</sup>



It is quiet now. After hours of walking alongside the paved highway, the column of pilgrims turned down an isolated dirt road. Dust rose in the air as the afternoon sun dried the road and dragging feet stirred up clouds that settle in the thin film of sweat that coated the thousands of pilgrim bodies. The Sancta Marias and playful songs of earlier in the day were now silenced. The *peregrinas* plodded along, the once orderly column strung out along the road. “Back in formation!” the *jefes*—bosses—called out. Voices of hope that promised the destination was near. Thousands of eyes rose to see the hill looming ahead. Anticipation began to seep in; the voices of the pilgrims picked up again; singing with their voices the

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<sup>62</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 65.

<sup>63</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 55.

hope not evident in their tired bodies. “HA, HA, HA! he he he! HAA, HAA, HAA! hee, hee, hee! Que Risa me da!” ES-ta jorradita! Y otras veinte mas!”<sup>64</sup>



HA, HA, HA! The pilgrims’ singing preceded the column of marching bodies. Members of the nearby town waited to welcome the *peregrinas* with banners, yellow and white balloons, and clear plastic bags filled with tamarind or melon flavored water. The pilgrims have become the honored guests. Children pointed and parents explained to them that these are the *peregrinas* to the Virgin. Exhaustion gave way to pride in the journey they have made and anticipation of what is to come. “Qué ri-sa me da!” the pilgrims sang joyfully as they made their way through the streets to their final *descanso*.<sup>65</sup>



The *acueducto de Guadalupe* was the last resting place before they reached Tepeyac. Here, the *peregrinas* spent their down time preparing for arrival at the Virgin’s house. Skirts and shirts streaked with dust from the road were packed away and clean yellow skirts and white blouses emerged. They brushed their hair and highlighted their faces with make-up. They wanted to approach the basilica not as weary travelers but as festive devotees. Some women draped white veils over their floppy hats to symbolize the purity obtained through careful fulfillment of the ritual prescription, including frequent reception of the sacraments of Confession and Eucharist. Members of the executive committee distributed large posters of the Virgin of Guadalupe embracing Pope John Paul II. Some of the women raised their

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<sup>64</sup> “HA, HA, HA! he he he! HAA, HAA, HAA! hee, hee, hee! O, how it makes me laugh! This itty-bitty walk, and another twenty more!” Translated by Peña, 55.

<sup>65</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 56.

posters and their voices high over their heads. Singing, the long line of *peregrinas* made their way past the shuttered shops and quiet residential streets of Mexico City. Their voices roused sleepy Sunday morning residents. Many came out of their homes and lined the street, shouting their congratulations and encouragement. Joyfully, the four-kilometer line approached the massive Modern Basilica.<sup>66</sup>



Most pilgrims approach the shrine from the Calzada de Guadalupe, but the Queretanas were welcomed by a banner in their honor through a side entrance which allowed them immediate access to the inner sanctum and the veil of Juan Diego bearing the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe. In total, 16,000 *peregrinas* crowded into the basilica, but this basilica was built for crowds! A moving walkway carried the *peregrinas* to the veil, giving them each their own ten seconds face to face with their beloved image, each offering an unrepeatably reaction.<sup>67</sup> Some *peregrinas* found their hands shaking so much they could not keep hold of their cameras. Others wept openly. Still others collapsed to their knees in a diffusion of devotion and exhaustion. “These cathartic moments are unlike any other during the pilgrimage. It is not *communitas*; there is little interaction to speak of. That we completed the journey as a collective hangs solemnly in the air, but this fact quickly becomes part of the backdrop. A sense of personal connection dominates the environment.”<sup>68</sup> The Virgin who had sent these women forth on their journey now welcomed them home.

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<sup>66</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 81–82.

<sup>67</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 82.

<sup>68</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 82.



The *peregrinas* gathered in the main sanctuary of the basilica for the Eucharistic celebration that would formally conclude the pilgrimage, but for many, their journey was already complete. Before mass began, the *peregrinas* joined their voices together in their own prayer:

*Venimos de Querétaro Virgen bendita  
María de Guadalupe fiel madrecita  
Dejamos nuestras tierras y nuestras familias  
Y vamos a tu casa, hogar de nuestra raza*

We came from Querétaro blessed Virgin  
Mary of Guadalupe, loyal mother  
We leave our land and our families  
And we journey to your house,  
the place of our race

*Que es tu basilica (se repite)  
Cuando nos despertamos de madrugada  
Sentimos tu presencia Virgen bendita  
Y cuando ya iniciamos nuestra jornada  
Delante de nosotros sentimos que caminas  
¡Oh bella Indita!*

That is your basilica (repeat)  
When we awake in the early hours of the  
morning  
We feel your presence blessed Virgin  
And when we commence our walking day  
We feel that you walk in front of us  
Oh beautiful little Indian!

*Desde distintos ranchos y poblaciones  
Venimos como hermanas en romería  
Escucha nuestros cantos y nuestras  
Oraciones de cada día.  
Oh Virgencita linda, Reyna del cielo  
Escucha como madre oye nuestros ruegos  
Atiéndenos benigna y danos Consuelo  
Pues eres forjadora y ardiente defensora  
De nuestros pueblos.*

From distinct ranches and towns  
We came as sisters on a pilgrimage  
Listen to our songs and our  
Daily prayers  
Oh lovely Virgin, Queen of heaven  
Listen like a mother, hear our requests  
Look after us merciful [Virgin] and give us  
solace  
Well you are a protector and a passionate  
defender  
Of our towns.

*¡Oh Virgen linda tus peregrinas!  
venimos fatigadas por el camino  
unimos nuestras voces y te pedimos  
nos des un buen gobierno que lleve  
a nuestros pueblos un buen destino.*

Oh lovely Virgin, your pilgrims  
we come weary on the path  
we unite our voices and we ask you  
to give us a good government that leads

our towns to a good destiny.<sup>69</sup>

### “Living the Gospel”

Hillary Kaell’s ethnographic study *Walking Where Jesus Walked: American Christians and Holy Land Pilgrimage* (2014) documents the practices and interpretations of Catholic and evangelical American pilgrims in the Holy Land.<sup>70</sup> Situating itself within the disciplinary borders of Cultural Anthropology and specifically Pilgrimage Studies, Kaell’s account offers the latest in a series of studies of Protestant Christians in the Holy Land, but

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<sup>69</sup> Quoted and translated in Peña, *Performing Piety*, 83–84.

<sup>70</sup> The geographic region that Christians call the “Holy Land” has held many names, each of which marks an effort to claim or reclaim the space for a particular community. The modern state of Israel takes its name from the biblical monarchy of the same name and marks a reclamation of the space as the homeland of the Jewish people. Alternatively, Arab residents of the region know the space as Palestine. The Romans, Ottomans, and British each knew the region as Palestine. Under the British Mandate, Jew and Arab alike living in the region shared the title of Palestinian. After the formation of the modern state of Israel in 1948, the moniker of Palestine became a protest against Arab dispossession of the land by which Arab residents continue to stake their claim to ownership and political self-determination in the land. While the designation of the region as “the Holy Land” has occasionally referred to the shared religious significance of the region for a number of faiths, my choice of the term throughout this dissertation denotes an idea closer to the practice of naming described above. The designation of the region as the “Holy Land” is a practice by which Christians make their own claim to the region. Christian ascetics and pilgrims who came from around the Roman Empire to settle in the desert outside of Jerusalem and Bethlehem in the fourth century spoke of themselves as “inhabitants of this Holy Land,” and were the first to use the term in a way that was distinctively Christian. During the Crusades, especially in the twelfth century, the term *terra sancta* took on a political connotation as western crusaders imagined a territorial kingdom whose borders could be defended by a Christian monarch. For an excellent explication of the development of the idea of the Christian Holy Land, see Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). The construction of the idea of a Christian Holy Land in American Protestantism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is detailed by Stephanie Rogers. See Stephanie Stidham Rogers, *Inventing the Holy Land: American Protestant Pilgrimage to Palestine, 1865-1941* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011). The construction of the idea of a Christian Holy Land today represents the shared concern Christians have for the region, although the nature of these concerns are far from monolithic. Despite the many ideas, claims, and concerns the term “Holy Land” holds for Christians today, its use here is especially appropriate given simply that it is the title the pilgrims in Kaell’s account as well as Kaell herself uses to designate the land through which they travel. Rather than moving towards a particular landmark, Christian pilgrims move within a large regional space, the entirety of which has been marked as sacred by the historical presence of Jesus Christ and endures through the practical imagination of Christian pilgrims.

stands out for providing the first richly descriptive study of American Catholics in the Holy Land. It is on Kaell's excellent descriptions of Catholic pilgrims that I focus my attention. Kaell accompanied a group of Catholic pilgrims from the Diocese of Boston to the Holy Land in 2009. In addition, her account also includes data from interviews with pilgrim groups from St. Cecilia Parish in Maryland (2008) and the Diocese of Raleigh, NC (2012). The pilgrims traveled as part of pre-paid package tours, with logistics organized by American tour companies. The pilgrims were led in each case by a priest from the parish or diocese and accompanied by a local guide. These groups, Kaell contends, are representative of the "typical" American Catholic Holy Land pilgrim, although she notes that she intentionally avoided what she calls "specialty tours," for example, groups run by/for college ministries or Hispanic ministries. Although I remain suspicious of Kaell's claim that these three groups—parish or diocesan organized events, all from cities in the eastern United States, white, middle-class, and "middle-old"—are representative of American Catholic pilgrims in the Holy Land, her contention is of little consequence in our task of seeking access to lived practices of pilgrimage. Kaell's study does indeed provide a rich description of pilgrims' practices and discourses from a distinctive generation of American Catholics: those whose lives straddle the juncture between the pre-conciliar and post-conciliar church.

### *Itinerary 2*

For Jeanine and her husband Frank, their pilgrimage to the Holy Land was a long time coming. "We started a Bible study [group] twelve years ago," Janine says, "It's something our parents never would have done...Now I think I'm ready to be in the Holy Land because

we've been doing Bible study for so long."<sup>71</sup> In the context of their own faith community and practice which encouraged a thoughtful and liturgically active laity, a pilgrimage to the Holy Land was simply an extension of their everyday religious life. Minds made up, they signed up for the Holy Land pilgrimage sponsored by their Diocese of Boston, paid the fees that would cover their food, lodging, and travel expenses, and prepared for the journey.



A woman walks from house to house up and down her street. Some of these neighbors she has met before. Others she is meeting for the first time. At each house, she introduces herself and explains that she will soon leave on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Then she asks if her neighbors have any prayers they would like her to take with her. Soon, she carries a collection. Prayers from Catholics, Jews, AMEs, Presbyterians, and "some kind of Baptists" were gratefully received, carefully written down, and packed in her bag along with her clothing and other essentials.<sup>72</sup>



The pilgrims duck out of the dark cave and emerge back into the sunlight and sparse surroundings of the Judean desert. The cave had provoked mixed feelings for these pilgrims, most of whom had grown up before the Second Vatican Council and raised their children in the post-conciliar church. This cave outside of Bethlehem was where Jerome had translated the scriptures into the Latin Vulgate. Jerome's vernacular was for these pilgrims the familiar and yet incomprehensible language of the liturgy they remembered

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<sup>71</sup> Hillary Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked: American Christians and Holy Land Pilgrimage* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 101.

<sup>72</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 63.

from their childhood. They gathered around Fr. Mike as he remembered this experience in the first speech he gave to this group of pilgrims: “We were not a biblical church. Most of us did not learn the Bible. But this is a renewal for us to learn the Bible...They say that in the Reformation, we kept the Eucharist and gave the Protestants the Bible. Imagine if that were reversed! If we took the Bible back and gave the Protestants the Eucharist?”<sup>73</sup>



Waiting. Next to them, Mount Tabor stretches into the sky. The pilgrims look down the curving road that half of their group had just begun to traverse, seated in a small bus. The second bus, which would carry the rest of the pilgrims to the summit in time to celebrate mass, had not yet arrived. Paula watched the hands on her watch inch closer to the start of mass. It was looking less and less likely that they would arrive in time. A minivan slowed at the outstretched hand of Father Brian who quickly explained to the driver his desire to get to the top. Waving at the group still standing by the side of the road, Fr. Brian climbed into the van and began the winding ascent. “Tears were just streaming down my face. I just couldn’t believe it. How did I miss communion in the *Holy Land*? What did I do, God, to deserve this?”<sup>74</sup> Distraught and more than a little angry at Fr. Brian for abandoning the group, Paula resigned herself to a trip inevitably marked not by the experience of Christ in the Eucharist but rather by its absence. While she sat waiting, with the Eucharist being celebrated high above and out of reach, another priest approached her. Learning the cause of her miserable mood, he taught her a prayer of spiritual communion and promised it would confer the same spiritual benefits of the Eucharist in the absence of a priest. “I

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<sup>73</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 106.

<sup>74</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 110.

couldn't believe it!" Paula explained. "It's this *beautiful* prayer! And I was instantly at peace."<sup>75</sup>



"We want to live and survive with dignity!" Father Raed Abu Sahliya told the pilgrims as he welcomed them to his local community of Taybeh, a village of 1300 people that bills itself as the 'last Christian village in the Holy Land.' "We have good [olive] products and we want to live on our own without charity. It will keep Christians in the Holy Land...The Church cannot remain silent in front of injustice and poverty!"<sup>76</sup> "Yes!" cried the pilgrims and clapped their hands. Many of them purchased large bottles of olive oil from the village before they left, only to abandon them at the hotel the next day. "I just bought it to support the Christians," one pilgrim shrugs.<sup>77</sup>



Evening. The pilgrims sat in a circle, reflecting on the events of the day. Greta shared with the group how much she enjoyed the sermon early that day at Tabgha, the small chapel on the shore of the Sea of Galilee that commemorates Jesus' multiplication of loaves and fish. Fr. Mike had downplayed the miraculous element of the narrative and asked the group to think about the gospel story as one of justice and sharing. Greta found this helpful. She had never believed in miracles much anyway. "[I've] thought about [miracles]," she said, "and I must say that I worked with women with eighth-grade education and I agreed to all sorts of miracles. You cannot take that away from them. So miracles do offer something for those

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<sup>75</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 110.

<sup>76</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 126.

<sup>77</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 127.

with little education.”<sup>78</sup> Kathy didn’t seem at all insulted by Greta’s comments but she was not about to let them go unchallenged either. “Several of us [from St. John’s Parish] were praying for our good friend Keith [who has cancer]...We found out today that he had a miraculous recovery. You know I told you about my miracle when I was a child and everyone always says, ‘Oh, it was just because you were loaded up with penicillin.’ But after [I told this group], Gwen came and told me about her miracle and then Eleanor came and told me about a miracle and Connie told me about a miracle in her family. So in a group of what? Forty people, five miracles? So I would say anyone who doesn’t believe in miracles is crazy! They do happen and not so infrequently as people think.”<sup>79</sup> Janine agreed by pointing to a miracle she and the group had witnessed together: “And another miracle, the [Palestinian] people in Taybeh. Talk about living the radical message of Jesus. You can really feel the grace of God. I really felt that I was living the Gospel.”<sup>80</sup>



The pilgrims stand together in the center of St. Anne’s Church. The white plaster walls are unusually austere. The lack of ornamentation has the advantage of amplifying the voices of those within it. Hesitantly at first and then more boldly, the group starts to sing, delighting in the sound of their voices bouncing off the walls around them. This church was especially significant to Kathy, who carried with her a deep devotion to St. Anne from her childhood when her mother’s prayers to the mother of Mary saw an unexpected cure to her infant daughter sick with polio. “To go to St. Anne’s,” Kathy shared, “with that wonderful singing

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<sup>78</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 113.

<sup>79</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 113–14.

<sup>80</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 114.

reverberating off the walls was like an affirmation of a miracle that I'd always heard about."<sup>81</sup>



The bus pulled up to manicured lawns of Yardenit. The pilgrims made their way inside but their real goal lay beyond: the waters of the Jordan River. Photos of famous evangelical leaders lined the walls of the gift shop where pilgrims could purchase, among other souvenirs, white baptismal robes. Beyond the gift shop, changing rooms headed the paved paths that lead down to the water's edge. For some, this Israeli site built to cater to evangelical Christians was a disappointment.

“The Jordan River was like Disney World. When I went many years ago there was just a little group of us and we went in and got out and nobody was there.”

“Now it's like Disney World on crack! It's like a trailer park Disney World!”

“There are all these crazy Christians there.”

“They were all Americans and as soon as you approach it you go through the gift shop *of course*...We were late, so I was afraid we'd miss seeing [an evangelical baptism].”

“Miss the show!”<sup>82</sup>

Ella, who was raised Methodist and joined the Catholic Church as an adult, had a different reaction. “I didn't expect people's attitudes to the Jordan River. I just *loved* it...And maybe it was a Protestant thing, but I just couldn't wait to put my foot in it...And I know it was commercialized but all that stuff faded away and you could just think, this is the *Jordan River*. This is it!”<sup>83</sup>




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<sup>81</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 112.

<sup>82</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 129–30.

<sup>83</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 130.

The group ascended the stairs of the Church of the Sepulchre of Mary at the Mount of Olives and made for the bus, walking past a large, dented car with an open trunk out of which a seller was enthusiastically peddling his wares. Phil laughed. “There you have it! God and mammon!”<sup>84</sup> The irony did not deter other pilgrims from the group who began to bargain for olive-wood carvings and scarves.<sup>85</sup>



“Ever been to a more unholy place in your entire life?” Ester laughed as the group exited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which shelters both the hill of Golgotha and the Tomb of the Resurrection. “Oh my God! It was dark and it’s all—all very Eastern, the decorations, which is not my taste whatsoever [sic]. There’s nowhere to rest your eye...When you go there for the first time you think, “Oh my god! What is wrong with these people?” and everyone has their hand out...[The Orthodox priests want tips] just to look at something, I mean, sheesh!...It was very apparent the difference in how they sell—or celebrate—their religion. It’s commercialized in that regard.”<sup>86</sup>



The sun had barely risen and the Old city was quiet. The normally bustling shops and stalls had not yet opened and the smell of fresh pita was still a few hours off. Slowly the pilgrims made their way down to the court of Pilate, the start of the Via Dolorosa. Each clutched a pamphlet—printed by the Jesuits at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska and brought to this place to accompany the pilgrims on their procession through the still Jerusalem

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<sup>84</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 122.

<sup>85</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 123.

<sup>86</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 127.

streets. The lack of activity allowed their minds to fill in the gaps, letting the pilgrims picture themselves on the road that faithful day two thousand years ago, walking with Mary and with the women and with Jesus on his way to the cross.<sup>87</sup> They paused before small numbers, each in order, that were not immediately noticeable on the walls of the city or the arch of a doorway and repeated a familiar prayer: “We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, for by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.” None of the pilgrims was surprised to find the familiar fourteen stations of the cross inside their pamphlets. Only upon later reflection did it seem odd that they were not praying the scriptural stations that JPII had introduced recently—those that traced the biblical narrative of the Bible but that also eliminated the women who so prominently attend to Christ in the extra-textual tradition. Familiar caveats from their guides—that’s not authentic, Catholics don’t believe this, miracles don’t get things done—faded away as the pilgrims traced the already familiar devotion, now prayed not through the images or icons displayed in their home parishes, but on these very cobblestones that one could imagine Jesus trod. Step by step. The methodical clip clop of shoes on stone heightened the meditative spirit—bouncing and echoing off the empty streets. This form of walking was unusual for the group. It had a rhythm, a tempo. Steps were shorter, slower, and taken together. No one had to set the pace, to give instructions. This in itself was odd. For once, no one was chided for lagging behind. On this morning, bodies achieved what mouths had previously carried responsibility for—each was herself, and yet they were one. The rhythm was occasionally broken by a stumble. The group caught its collective breath. Was she alright? Yes, she was

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<sup>87</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 115–20.

always fine. But each stumble provoked that catch in the body that releases a gasp, an anxious tensing that recalled those moments when the savior fell to the ground in front of the watching crowds. On this day, the humiliation was felt by both fallen and witnesses alike. As they arrived at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the city was finally coming to life around them, but it didn't matter. They walked through the low doors and into that dark, gaudy, sacred space where the last stations are found. Yusef's whispered scoff, "That's not authentic" barely resonated as many of the pilgrims dropped to their knees and ran their hands across the smooth Stone of Anointing. The thirteenth station.



"You cannot know the Bible without us," Fr. Elias Chacour told the pilgrims gathered at Bir'am.<sup>88</sup> Few Christians stop here, but their local guide Yusef wanted them to see this place and meet this man before they left. The pilgrims spread out and slowly walked amidst the rubble of stone houses in what is today an Israeli national park but what, Yusef told them, had been a town peopled by Maronite Palestinians until being forced out by the Israeli army in 1948. In fact, it was Yusef's town. He had grown up just over there. So had Fr. Chacour. Wandering a few paces away from the group, two pilgrims stood in the sunshine and questioned their own assumptions about the conflict in this land that had left the rubble now at their feet. "You can say 'us'[American Catholics] or 'them'[Arab Christians] like we're separate. Yusef said Americans interfere. But it's all of us, not 'them.' I was in the [army] service—you were too, right?—when it was segregated and you just do what, you

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<sup>88</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 149.

know, you are told it's 'them.' We say the Eucharist is for *all* of us...You wonder what it would be like if *we* were better."<sup>89</sup>

### **“Day by Day”**

Nancy Frey's *Pilgrim Stories* (1998) examines modern pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago in Spain using a multi-site approach to study. Her ethnography weaves together participant observations from two distinct perspectives. She began her study by making the pilgrimage accompanying a group of American professors and students (1993). The following year, she returned to the Camino as a *hospitelero*—a volunteer host—in six different pilgrim *refugios*. Frey's primary task within this text is to make sense of the great diversity of practices and motivations she encountered among pilgrims on the Camino. She writes that within the “complexity of the contemporary Camino, the categories ‘pilgrimage’ and ‘pilgrim’ seem to lose meaning...The glue that holds these disparate elements together seems to be the shared journey, the Camino de Santiago.”<sup>90</sup> The following itinerary tells a story not of one pilgrim or pilgrim group, but of many.

#### *Itinerary 3*

A man stepped off the boat at Bilbao. Hoisting his backpack onto his shoulders, he began his journey towards Santiago. A man on the dock, upon seeing his backpack, made the sign of the cross as he passed.<sup>91</sup>




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<sup>89</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 149.

<sup>90</sup> Nancy Louise Frey, *Pilgrim Stories: On and off the Road to Santiago* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1998), 4–5.

<sup>91</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 61.

Roncesvalles a pilgrim kneeled to receive the Abbot's blessing, an 800-year old prayer that sends pilgrims on their way to Santiago. Afterwards, he walked next door to request his Credential, the folded piece of paper that identifies him as a pilgrim and opens the doors of the pilgrim infrastructure where he can eat, sleep, and receive medical care for nothing more than a voluntary donation. He stared at the form the Abbot had handed him. "Are you Catholic or Protestant?" the form asked. "Both," he whispered to his companion. "Are you making this pilgrimage for religious, spiritual, or cultural reasons?" the form asked. "All three," he wrote. The Abbot stamped his new passport with the Abbey stamp, charting the first stop on his long journey. The blank pages of the passport stared back in anticipation, as if longing to be filled with stamps, future traces of the pilgrim's way.



Two men walked side by side down a dirt trail, chatting amicably. The experience was unusual for the man. He could not remember the last time he had talked so openly about himself to another person. A sense of relief washed over him. Here he was first a person and a pilgrim. His fellow pilgrim didn't know he was also a priest.<sup>92</sup>



A pilgrim sat resting her legs outside the distinctive eight-sided church. In this distance, a red figure slowly approached. Slow gait, large pack, red rain suit; the person was familiar. The two pilgrims had met on the road the day before. Exchanging smiles in place of greetings, they left their packs next to the door and entered the cool sanctuary chatting in hushed voices about the various legends associated with this strange church. They had just

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<sup>92</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 86.

selected one of the wooden pews against the wall of the church to lower themselves onto when a group of about twenty-five men and women in their late fifties rumbled into the church, their voices and movements echoing loudly, transforming the sleepy sanctuary into a mini-amphitheater. The noisy crowd took their seats and their leader rose to give a lecture about the church. After the lesson, the group blended their once cacophonous voices into hymns of praise. While all of this was going on, the once hushed red-suited pilgrim suddenly found his voice and kept up a running commentary on the group seated in the center of the church: these people may think they are pilgrims, but they aren't; because they travel by bus, they don't really understand the Camino pilgrimage; their religious practices are disrespectful and hypocritical; these people are only playing at being pilgrims, they are not real pilgrims. Ending their time in the church with a prayer, the group cast curious glances at the two shabby pilgrims seated along the wall before passing back through the open door of the church and climbing on to their bus. When the coast was clear, the two pilgrims also ducked back out into the light. They warmed themselves for a while in the sun before once again slinging their packs onto their backs and continuing together down the dirt road.<sup>93</sup>



The first rays of light streak the horizon. Sunrise was still far off, but inside the refuge quiet shuffling could already be heard as pilgrims stuffed sleeping bags into their backpacks and pulled on their boots. Some had already gone. Time is different here. Some pilgrims wanted to avoid the heat of the late afternoon sun while they walk. Others were anxious to arrive at

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<sup>93</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 17–18.

their next stop early enough to secure a bed for the night. Still others had given up on sleep after an evening punctuated by snores from the bed above them. And more than a few simply wanted to greet the sun as it rose behind them, slowly extinguishing the trail of stars overhead and lighting the way westward to Santiago. Swinging their newly repacked bags onto their backs, the pilgrims set off, sometimes in groups, sometimes in pairs, sometimes alone, the early morning stillness broken only by the softened patter of boots on an old dirt road.<sup>94</sup>



“Hail Mary, full of grace.” Lee walked along the road, watching the fields around him slowly come into focus as the sun rose higher in the sky. A rosary dangled from his fingers, swinging back and forth in time with his step. “Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners,” he chants. The tempo of the Rosary syncs with the tempo of his feet as he repeats over and over the prayers he learned as a child. Lee walks on, “praying with his feet.”<sup>95</sup>



A pilgrim from Navarre entered a church in Estella. There were several churches in this town and it was only chance that he chose this one. Thinking at first that he was alone in the space, he suddenly heard a muffled sound coming from the front of the sanctuary. Walking down the aisle, he found a French woman on her knees before the altar, weeping quietly. Although he did not know her, he joined her at the foot of the altar and she wept for a time in his arms. He never learned what loss she mourned.<sup>96</sup>




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<sup>94</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 94–98.

<sup>95</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 120.

<sup>96</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 83.

The sun shone brightly as the pilgrim approached the town. The local population seemed to be enjoying the warm sunlight as much as she was. Sitting outside their homes, they waved as she passed by. One couple called out *Peregrina!* As she approached, the woman held out a glass of water. In broken Spanish, the pilgrim attempted to answer the older couple's questions. Where did you begin? Are you walking? All the way?! As she handed the glass back to the woman, the man asked if she would carry a prayer to the apostle for them. The pilgrim paused. She was not particularly religious and was uncertain what this might entail. The woman interjected, "Please just give a hug to the apostle for us." Smiling with relief, the pilgrim agreed. As she returned to the road, the couple watched their spiritual messenger walk away towards Santiago.<sup>97</sup>



Walking. Not only a way of getting from one place to another, walking becomes the essence of the road itself. As feet press towards Santiago, time seems to turn in on itself. "Time and distance are no longer relevant things," one pilgrim reflects. You just continue, day after day after day and mile after mile and that brings you somewhere. Back home time is an essential thing, and it was great to feel that I had all the time in the world. I could live day by day for an almost endless period."<sup>98</sup> Another explained, "There's time for everything: to pray, to visit churches, monuments, convents, to speak with the village priest, with the farmers and the shepherds who tell you their problems, with the old folks...and the children."<sup>99</sup> On the road, the quotidian world seems a world away. Instead of datebooks,

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<sup>97</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 68.

<sup>98</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 72–73.

<sup>99</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 73.

schedules, and meetings, pilgrim time is marked by the position of the pilgrim's shadow, the tiredness in the pilgrim's limbs, the rumbling in the pilgrim's stomach.<sup>100</sup> The pilgrim quickly establishes a predictable rhythm: get up, pack, walk, rest, eat, walk, rest, eat, walk, rest, eat, and sleep. Time became circular even as the pilgrim's feet moved forward, towards her destination.<sup>101</sup>



Stepping through the doorway into the dim, cool sanctuary, the pilgrim glanced around. Never much one for churches at home, he found himself increasingly stopping for a moment at these small churches that dot the Spanish landscape. It just seemed like the pilgrim thing to do. Now, the churches started to feel familiar. Two other pilgrims with bright backpacks stood off to the side, their faces illuminated by flickering votive candles. One woman dangled a small stick over one of the candles until it caught the flame. Soon a new candle flickered to life by her touch. The pilgrim watched carefully. He still didn't know why Catholics light candles. Looking up at the windows, some towering figures smiled down at him. He didn't know their names. Except for Santiago. The pilgrim saint with his staff and purse, gazes down. Santiago appears in so many churches it is like he is walking the road with him. Now alone in the church, the pilgrim approached the votive candles. Silently he gave thanks for those he had met on the road that day. And lit a candle. And stepped back into the sunlight.<sup>102</sup>




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<sup>100</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 72.

<sup>101</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 72.

<sup>102</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 123.

A priest and his companion arrived in a small village in the *mesata* late one evening. The men had made the pilgrimage several times before and were accustomed to the welcome they often received as pilgrims. Stopping at the local establishment, they asked the woman tending the bar to prepare dinner for them. She responded that it was late and that she had nothing to give them. The priest insisted on explaining their difficult day and their need for a good meal. Again the woman answered that she had nothing to offer. The priest commented loudly to his companion that it was obvious they would be going to bed without dinner and, what's more, because they had arrived late, their beds would also be less than desirable. His companion took out his phone to call his family and complained loudly about their poor treatment. They made promises to one another they would write in a pilgrim's book about how badly the people of this village treat pilgrims. Overhearing this, the women quickly prepared two tortillas with chorizo and asked her husband to drive them to the next village where they could find more comfortable accommodations.<sup>103</sup>



An English pilgrim arrived in Villafranca del Bierzo just in time for mass. Entering the church, he found himself the only man in a church full of older women. The priest entered. Now there were two men. The mass felt rushed, an odd sensation for the pilgrim who was by now used to the more expansive time created by the road. The familiar call and response of the mass seemed rote. The absence of any perceptible emotion or feelings was disappointing. Despite the familiarity of the liturgy, the man had never felt more a stranger at the Eucharist.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 135.

<sup>104</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 123.



A large pile of rocks sits atop Monte Irago, a *milladorio* constructed long ago to mark the boundary between Maragatería and the Bierzo and the way between them. From the crest of the pile, an impressive oak beam stretches a further twenty feet into the sky, topped by a small iron cross, *La Cruz de Ferro*. Some of the rocks have journeyed with their pilgrims since they left their homes, the weight of the rock representing the burden or sin of its carrier of which they were freed by their journey. Others match the stones that litter the roads and fields of northern Spain. These stones pilgrims gathered as they walked and deposited them here at this spot. Most rocks bear no evidence of those who once brought them up the hill, silently bearing the hopes and burdens of those who carried them for a brief time. Others are painted with bright colors or etched with names, dates, or messages. The rocks are not alone. Other items adorn the base of the cross: flowers, shells, messages, *ex votos*. The cross has become an informal shrine. A pilgrim approached the cross. Reaching into his backpack, he retrieved a large stone that he carried on his long walk. Relieving himself of his burden, both literally and symbolically, he tossed the rock onto the already large pile and then sat down a few feet away, resting his legs which were burning from the trek up to the summit. Soon a car pulled up next to the pile of rocks. The doors opened, spilling several people out at the base of the cross, each clutching a small rock in their hands. They were there only a few minutes—enough time to toss their rocks onto the pile before returning to their car and continuing their journey west. Before long, another group approached on foot, carrying rocks they had collected further down the road. They too tossed their rocks on the pile, but instead of continuing down the other side of the summit, they returned the way they had come. Before long, their familiar faces could be

seen peering out the windows of a van as it drove slowly by the spot to which they had walked only a short while ago. The pilgrim picked himself up off the ground, swung his pack over his shoulders, and started down the mountain, ever west. Later that night at a pilgrim refuge, he laughed as he recounted his story on the mountaintop and the tourists who thought themselves pilgrims. At a town further down the road, a man from the van also told of his stop at the cross at the cafe next to the inexpensive hotel where he would spend the night. Although his group travelled the 750km route by van, they stopped at certain intervals throughout the day to walk small stretches of the road and to participate in some of the pilgrim rituals along the way. These small practices, he said, really made him feel connected to the pilgrimage and to the road. In Santiago, the third group laughed as they parked their car. Why would anyone bother with such a long, dirty, and dangerous walk when there were quicker, safer, and more comfortable ways to reach the tomb of the apostle?<sup>105</sup>



A pilgrim sat by the side of the road and began to cry. Setting out on his pilgrimage, he had given little thought to the trials of the road. But the road is unforgiving, even to the strong. With feet full of blisters, he traversed the hills of the Pyrenees. As he began to cross the long *meseta*, the pain moved up into his legs. At last he could take no more, sinking to the side of the road in tears, believing his journey to be over. With no one else nearby, he began to pray aloud to Saint James, begging the saint for help to continue the journey, longing to wrap his arms around him in a hug at the Cathedral in Santiago. It was not long before two

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<sup>105</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 18.

pilgrims came walking up the road towards him. Helping him to his feet, they walked with him to the next village, where one of the women lived. As she rubbed the cramps from his legs, the pilgrim whispered quietly, “Chapeau, señor Santiago, esto sí es atender rápido una petición” (I take my hat off to you Saint James, this certainly is rapid attention to a petition).<sup>106</sup> When, a few days later, the pilgrim reached Monte del Gozo, the last high point before Santiago, he once again found tears streaming down his face and he began to sing: “What a joy when they said unto me, let us go to the house of the Lord! Our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem.”<sup>107</sup> Then he started down the hill to Santiago where the Saint waited for his embrace. Unable to pray, he wept instead. “Or is this also praying?” he asked.<sup>108</sup>



Feet connect pilgrims to the road and to one another. With each step, the foot marks the dust with a shallow imprint that is soon erased by wind, water, or the tread of another pilgrim’s boot. With each step, the road marks the foot with a gentle rub, a point of friction, that will well up over the day in a blistering reminder to the pilgrim that the road too can write itself on them. “In the contemporary pilgrimage feet leave their normally cloistered space and become part of the public domain. They are touched, inspected, discussed, massaged, and pierced with needles to relieve blisters; they become signs of a journey well-travelled and symbols of power: ‘I did it all on foot!’ In this way pilgrims elevate feet,

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<sup>106</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 109–10. The story Frey recounts comes from a short article titled “Pilgrims’ Tears.” Victor, “Lágrimas de Peregrino,” *Peregrino*, no. 37–38 (1994): 10–11.

<sup>107</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 110.

<sup>108</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 110.

removing them from the category of hidden objects.”<sup>109</sup> Now near the end of her journey, a pilgrim sat chatting with her bare feet propped up on the table in front of her, proudly displaying their worn, but now blisterless, condition.<sup>110</sup> The rub of the road was gone. Had they successfully learned to resist the road or had they conformed to it?



The storm clouds loomed close as the three pilgrims descended into Santiago. This is not unusual in the city locals describe as “*donde la lluvia es arte*” (where the rain is art).<sup>111</sup> The first steady drizzle began as they reached the outer edges of the city. Without warning, the clouds burst open in a downpour and the pilgrims began to run. It wasn’t only their desire to get out of the rain that propelled them forward. It was almost noon. They were running to make it in time to celebrate the pilgrim’s Mass. “We arrive in time! We were very happy. In the Mass we met pilgrim friends from the Netherlands, France, Spain, and so on—beloved *peregrinas* and *peregrinos*. The Mass was (for us) very essential, it was good to be together. We were also sad because we had to part; the tie that had bound us together was to be undone.”<sup>112</sup>



The *Oficina del Peregrino* is in a small building adjacent to the Cathedral’s south side. The pilgrim entered and presented his credential one last time to the man seated behind the desk. The credential was marked on both sides with stamps, traces of the places through which he had passed over the last month. The attendant verified his starting place and his

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<sup>109</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 113.

<sup>110</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 114.

<sup>111</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 156.

<sup>112</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 155–56.

mode of travel before asking whether he had a religious or spiritual motive for making the pilgrimage. Without this affirmation, the pilgrim knew he would not receive a Compostela, a beautiful Latin document certifying one's completion of the pilgrimage. He acknowledged that he did not make the journey from any sort of religious motivation or belief in God, but that he had walked in memory of his son who had died from cancer the year before.

"Without hesitating, [the canon in charge] declared me an authentic pilgrim with the right to receive a compostela. I hadn't foreseen the strength and emotion of this deed and, in this moment, I cried. Then, I explained that in every step of the way I had felt the presence of my son Guy, in whose name I had made the pilgrimage...I asked him to write the name of Guy on the compostela in front of me. When Don Jaime agreed to this petition, I began to cry again."<sup>113</sup>



At the end of the road lies the Cathedral of Saint James (or Santiago), that great church and shrine that was constructed to receive pilgrims to the Apostle. Approaching from the east, up a double staircase, the pilgrim is greeted by the *Pórtico de la Gloria*, the Doorway of Glory. In the central arch, the four evangelists gather around Christ seated on the throne. Twenty-four heavenly hosts float above, encircling the arch. The prophets and apostles gather around the columns to either side. Saint James graces the top of the central column. Below him, a trace of the countless pilgrims who have come to greet him—a handprint worn into the marble. One by one, pilgrims press their fingers into the grooves before entering the church, their presence filling the imprint for only a moment and then it is gone

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<sup>113</sup> Frank Taylor, "Pasos Hasta La Compostela," *Estafeta Jacobea*, no. 34 (1996): 11–12. Quoted in Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 162.

as they pass through the doors, the impression giving witness to both the absence of pilgrims who have passed by and the ever-present pilgrims of Santiago.<sup>114</sup>



The Hostal de los Reyes Católicos, a five-star hotel in Santiago, has a tradition. The first ten pilgrims who present their Compostela are treated to a free, simple meal in a small, private dining room off the hotel's underground parking lot. Pilgrims expecting five-star fare are bound to be disappointed.<sup>115</sup> "It seemed the loneliest, most derelict moment of the entire journey. I tried the bean stew and it tasted repulsive, the chicken was exactly as it looked; even the apple was flaccid and flavourless. It was strange that in a country where the food was so good and inexpensive, the first uneatable meal I was offered was the one that should have been a celebration. It left just the bread and the wine, and it was as I broke the roll in half that I suddenly knew that this was the moment that had brought the completion of the pilgrimage. Like the unnamed disciples on the road to Emmaus, I too had needed to encounter the reality of the Risen Christ. He had been there in every meeting I had along the way, and perhaps I had known this in a remote corner of my mind. But to realise it fully required this ordinary, everyday action in which the symbol could suddenly break free and be recognised for what it was. 'They recognised him in the breaking of the bread.' Of course."<sup>116</sup>




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<sup>114</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 156.

<sup>115</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 168.

<sup>116</sup> Betina Selby, *Pilgrim's Road: A Journey to Santiago de Compostela* (London: Little, Brown, 1994), 211–12. Quoted in Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 168–69.

The pilgrim gently ran his fingers over his intricately carved staff. “It is a story,” he explained, “beginning with Santiago.” The Saint rested prominently at the top of the staff and below, in English, the words “I am the Way.” The fine carvings continued down the staff, each marking a moment, a place, and experience known only to him—an itinerary of the Camino. Examining the staff with awe, another asked if he is a professional carver. “No,” he responded, “I’m just a Christian and it comes from my faith.”<sup>117</sup>

### **Thinking Pilgrimage**

The distinctive and fragmentary nature of these itineraries resists the effort to discern some set of shared characteristics from which we can construct an essential definition of Christian pilgrimage. And yet, upon reflection, similarities and relationships begin to appear that illumine the phenomena of Christian pilgrimage without defining it. I conclude this chapter by exploring some of these family resemblances in these snapshots and itineraries. The placement of this discussion in the conclusion of this chapter should not be mistaken for an exhaustive or conclusive cataloguing of pilgrimage characteristics. Rather, it articulates the consistencies and relationships that bind these distinctive events together under the same term “pilgrimage.” By identifying these shared traits, this list also serves to highlight differences between the pilgrimages rather than their similarities. Some traits do not appear in all three pilgrimages. Others illumine the differences between these practices rather than their resemblances. These traits define the phenomenon of pilgrimage in the same way an artist might define the lines of a painting or a musician

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<sup>117</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 60.

defines a melody. The following traits begin to trace and highlight the contours of a phenomenon we call pilgrimage.

### *Walking*

Practices of walking feature prominently in all three itineraries. In the pilgrimages to Santiago and Mexico City, walking was taken up with much greater frequency than it was used in daily life. It also served as an antithesis to more modern forms of transportation. Walking along roadways and highways on which cars, buses, and other vehicles also passed provided a regular contrast between the pilgrim's chosen mode of travel and the quotidian default. In both accounts, the practice of walking also changed the tempo of the journey—slowing it down and creating, as the pilgrim from Santiago observed, an almost cyclical sense of time within a linear journey to the shrine. For these pilgrims, walking served as a strategy for distinguishing themselves as pilgrims and separating their pilgrimage from other, everyday activities.

Walking also brought a rhythm to prayer. The *peregrinas* matched prayers and songs to their footsteps on their way to Tepeyac. A pilgrim to Santiago found his footsteps giving new tempo and rhythm to his rosary beads. In the Holy Land, the familiar stations of the cross were embodied as the pilgrims used their feet to trace the contours of the stational prayer. In this practice, the walking distinguished itself not only from an everyday tempo and pace, but also other forms of walking on the pilgrimage itself—the pace slowed and the walking became a shared experience among the group. Moving from station to station, walkers wove together the narrative of the gospel.

The practice of walking served not only as a ritual practice that helped to distinguish pilgrim travel and prayer from everyday practices, but also a phatic one that silently

established the pilgrims' connection to one another, to those who had gone before, and those who would follow. Walking connected the Mexican women to one another, but also to the woman who had first walked the pilgrimage in secret behind the trail of men. The Via Delorosa in the Holy Land traced the way forged by Christ and trod by those who follow him—Mary, the apostles, and pilgrims through the ages. In Santiago, the act of walking admitted one to the community of pilgrims. Pilgrims to Santiago recognized one another in the act of walking and other recognized them too. For some, the act of walking established a connection between themselves and those pilgrims who had walked to Santiago days, months, years, centuries before them. Walking created relationships between and among pilgrims where before none had existed. A pilgrim from Santiago turns these phatic enunciations into poetry:

At a small chapel, on a crest  
 Where two pilgrim roads meet,  
 And where thousands once came—  
 Utter silence.  
 But rest, and cool water,  
 Bread, and cheese, and fruit in season,  
 Simple sacramental things,  
 Which link us to our forebearers,  
 And to others for whom we too,  
 One day, will be among those  
 Who have gone before.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 82.

*Paying*

Practices of exchange also emerge in all three itineraries. The Santiago pilgrim's use of the pilgrimage infrastructure of *refugios* is perhaps the most striking example of this. Also called *donativos*, these pilgrim hostels operate outside of ordinary systems of commercial exchange. Pilgrims bearing a credential are offered lodging, food, and even medical care free of charge and they in turn are expected to make a small donation to support the ongoing work of the hostel. This system of exchange transforms a transaction between service provider and their customer to a gift exchange between host and guest.<sup>119</sup> Pilgrims to the Holy Land traveled on pre-paid trips which allowed them to avoid personal transactions like paying for hotel rooms, entrance fees, or bus tickets. Instead, commercial activity became a way of connecting oneself to Christian communities in the Holy Land. The activity of commercial exchange was transformed into a form of Christian charity; money was spent not to acquire particular goods or services but rather to support communities or

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<sup>119</sup> This practice emerges ever more strongly as a ritualized practice between *hospitalero* and pilgrim when considered alongside other practices of use along the Camino. In her 2017 address to the annual gathering of American Pilgrims on the Camino, Rebekah Scott described recent challenges to this ritualized infrastructure of pilgrim lodging on the Camino. Donations at the hostels were decreasing as more and more "tourists" (as she described them) used the hostels as "free" places to stay as they walked the Camino. Displaying a transactional, capitalist logic rather than the ritual logic of host and guest, these travelers rarely contributed the small requested donation, and consequently the hostels simply closed their doors to all pilgrims on those days that they did not have enough money to offer a meal. In a related situation, several hotels that have established themselves as alternative lodging options along the route have objected to the unfair trade practices of the *donativos* who provide lodging at a much lower cost than the hotels can manage. Hotel owners are pressing for local legislation that would require these *donativos* to charge a minimum fee for lodging. In light of these challenges, the ritual gift exchange between host and guest at these *refugios* becomes an important way of distinguishing oneself as an "authentic" pilgrim and an "authentic" host. Rebekah Scott, "Camino Hospitality in the 21st Century" (Annual Gathering of the American Pilgrims on the Camino, Hampton, GA, 2017).

causes that the pilgrims valued. Within the pilgrim environment, money changed from capital to gift.

The ritual distinctiveness that marked practices of commercial exchange for the pilgrims in the Holy Land and the pilgrims to Santiago did not emerge in the same way for the women walking to Tepeyac. In this pilgrimage, practices of exchange were not absent. Women paid for access to the procession, for lodging, for food, and for transportation home. Many also took advantage of opportunities to shop for personal items, for family essentials and gifts, even for business purposes. And yet, these exchanges did not seem to take on any significance beyond their normal quotidian operations, nor did they seem to pose any tension or barrier to the *peregrinas'* understanding of themselves as pilgrims or their spiritual undertaking. Here, quotidian practices mingle with ritualized ones in ways that are more problematic to the cartographer of practice than to its practitioner.

### *Suffering*

The experience of suffering emerges in two of these itineraries as a significant component of the pilgrimage. The experience of suffering connected these pilgrims powerfully to the divine. On the walk to Tepeyac, the penitential value of physical suffering and sacrifice was acknowledged by the clergy who accompany the women to Tepeyac. For at least some of these pilgrims, their painful blisters also helped connect them to the Virgin of Guadalupe. Whereas some pilgrims sought the suffering inevitably imposed by undertaking ritual practices like walking, for others the inevitable experience of suffering is the situational context that presents new opportunities for interactions that connect pilgrims to the divine, to one another, and to the local communities through which they pass.

The pilgrim to Santiago held a different interpretation of suffering. Physical suffering was an obstacle that interrupted and even threatened his pilgrimage. It was its alleviation rather than its persistence that brought him closer to St. James and to other pilgrims on the Camino. Like walking, physical suffering often possessed a phatic quality that produced relationships of rescue, care, and hospitality where before none existed. Pilgrim hospitality was often in response to physical suffering and needs of the pilgrims. Both the permanent infrastructure that lined the roads to Santiago and the temporary infrastructure put in place by the executive committee of the Tepeyac pilgrimage included trained medical volunteers to care for the suffering pilgrims.

The significance of suffering was by no means universal in these itineraries. For pilgrims in the Holy Land, experiences of physical suffering held little significance. Pilgrims did not seek out practices or experiences that produce the experience of suffering and Kaell notes that pilgrims often made efforts to maintain amicable relationships rather than risk the discomfort of social conflict within the group.

### *Badges and Shells*

Each of the 16,000 *peregrinas* who marched in the column to Tepeyac wore pinned on her shirt a pilgrim badge, a formal designation of her status as a pilgrim and a souvenir of her participation in that particular annual pilgrimage. Pilgrims to Santiago carried scallop shells. They wore them around the neck, tied or sewn onto their backpacks, looped around the handlebars of their bikes, or pinned to their hats. The pilgrimage badge and the scallop shell were such important marks of the pilgrim that to be without put one's status as pilgrim into jeopardy. Women who could not afford to purchase a badge or who did not live in a region where the badges were available were not permitted to join the line of

pilgrims to Tepeyac. But they still went, walking off the road in the fields, often enduring derision from *peregrinas* in the formal pilgrimage. When a pilgrim set out without a shell on the Camino, local residents soon adorned her with one. A pilgrim without a shell? Unthinkable. These formal symbols served as recognizable designations for pilgrims in these itineraries, but they were not the only ways pilgrims ritually designated themselves as such. Pilgrims to Tepeyac adorned their floppy hats with ribbons and flowers on the road and pulled on white blouses with yellow skirts before their final walk to the basilica. On the Camino, a staff and backpack also served as ritual symbols of authentic pilgrims, as did the Camino passport the pilgrims carried.

### *Destinations*

Pilgrims to Tepeyac were overwhelmingly drawn to the pilgrimage by their devotion to the Virgen of Guadalupe and arrival at her basilica was the high point of the pilgrimage. Despite institutional efforts to redirect the pilgrims' zeal into a nine-day Eucharistic devotion, devotion to the Virgin remained both the overwhelming source and summit of the pilgrimage. This pilgrimage followed a movement from the peripheries to an urban and ecclesial center. The mobile nature of much of the pilgrimage infrastructure, from the chapel to the vendors to the lodging facilities, established only a thin link between the pilgrims and the spaces through which they passed. The pilgrims were merely passing through in anticipation of their arrival at Tepeyac, a shrine that was constructed to house the massive number of pilgrims who visit each day. The other pilgrim itineraries cannot be said to share such a clear and defined spatial center and goal. For pilgrims to Santiago and in the Holy Land, the holy shrine was pluriform.

Although pilgrims set Santiago as their goal, the journey remained for many as significant as the pilgrimage itself. Church buildings provide a helpful if not exclusive example of this pilgrim experience. Pilgrims frequently entered parish churches and local shrines they passed on the way. Some joined the local community for mass. Others found in these buildings a space for prayer, sometimes privately and sometimes with companions both expected and unexpected. Some entered out of a sense of pilgrim duty. They lit a candle or greeted the saints, because that's what pilgrims do. And still others were simply looking for a place to escape the rain or the sun. Arrival at the basilica was a mixed blessing for many in that it marked both their journey's success as well as their departure from the sacred space of the road. For the pilgrims to Santiago, sacred space was something created in and by the journey rather than that which awaited them at the end. It is in fact the pilgrims' pedestrian enunciations, their movement and passage in and out of churches as well as *refugios* and restaurants and homes that knit together the northern Spanish countryside of disparate villages into a singular place: *The Camino*. Similarly, the Holy Land pilgrimage was marked by movement within a sacred space rather than the journey to it. The idea of a "Holy Land" is an imagined place that is instantiated by the pedestrian enunciations of Christian pilgrims whose varied trajectories weave these holy places together into a single "land" projected on top of other constructed places: the state of Israel or Palestine, the Promised Land, Al Quds, etc. The experience of feeling like a stranger in a liturgical or ecclesial space one perceives as one's own does not deter pilgrims from entering into these spaces and making use of them in their own way. What the map cut up, the pilgrim cut across.

### *Ecclesial Presence*

The presence of the institutional church played a distinctive part in shaping the pilgrimage experience in all three itineraries. The Holy Land pilgrims were led by a priest who served as both spiritual and physical guide. Himself a member of the pilgrims' home diocese, Fr. Mike was both part of the pilgrim community with which he traveled and a host on behalf of the universal church which maintains custody of many of the sites in the Holy Land. While in the Holy Land, Fr. Mike shared the role of leading with Yusef, a local (lay) Palestinian Christian. While Fr. Mike played host in in the Christian churches and shrines they entered, Yusef assumed the role of host when they were in local Christian communities.

The pilgrimage to Tepeyac was organized by an executive committee comprised of lay women. In addition to coordinating the different components of the pilgrimage, including the presence of clergy with the group, they were also ritual and liturgical leaders, intoning the prayers, chants, and songs that echo throughout the march. The pilgrims were also accompanied by local clergy who maintained the presence of the institution in the midst of the pilgrimage community, especially through the regular celebration of the Eucharist which marked the beginning of the pilgrimage, the end of the pilgrimage, and each day the women were on the road.

In Santiago, representatives of the Catholic Church controlled the distribution of pilgrim credentials and Compostelas and maintained a significant portion of the formal infrastructure of *refugios*. Whether through their custody of the holy places (Holy Land), their establishment of the pilgrimage infrastructure (Santiago), or the maintenance of the *capilla móvil* or mobile chapel (Tepeyac), the institutional church exercised a certain

control over the space and practice of pilgrimage through their ministerial presence and control over the spaces in and through which the pilgrims moved. Unlike the pilgrimages in Mexico and the Holy Land, the Camino pilgrimage was largely “self-led.” Pilgrims learned how to be pilgrims largely from watching and listening to other pilgrims. In some cases, the identity of pilgrim superseded a clerical identity when on the road. At least one priest was relieved by the opportunity not to be recognized as such. Alternatively, some pilgrims are frustrated by the local Spanish clergy’s apparent lack of concern for them, making them feel like strangers rather than guests in a foreign land. These feelings were brought into sharper relief by the actions of lay volunteers and local residents, who often greeted pilgrims with warm words and a bit of sustenance.

### *Praying*

In these itineraries, the Eucharistic liturgy also emerges as an important pilgrim ritual especially through the pilgrim’s more frequent participation in the rite. Pilgrims in the Holy Land and to Tepeyac celebrated mass on a daily basis instead of the regular weekly rhythm they enjoyed at home. In all three itineraries, significant sites were often marked through the celebration of the Eucharist: Tepeyac, Santiago, Tabgha, Mount Tabor, etc. For the pilgrims in the Holy Land and to Tepeyac, the daily celebration of the Eucharist wove a familiar and regular liturgical practice into the more extraordinary ritual of pilgrimage. For the Holy Land pilgrims, the context of the pilgrimage transformed the familiar ritual into a pilgrim celebration. The Eucharistic liturgy took on special significance when celebrated at the places the earthly Jesus had also touched. The grief experienced by one pilgrim when she missed the celebration of the Eucharist demonstrates its importance when placed into a pilgrim context.

In the pilgrimage to Tepeyac, it is more difficult to discern whether the Eucharistic liturgy is a celebration that arises from the pilgrimage or a ritual imposed on it. The presence of male priests as liturgical celebrants and spiritual advisors is especially conspicuous against the backdrop of an all-female pilgrimage. Women lead the prayers while walking, in the form of call and response or song, while men construct a mobile chapel at stops along the road and priests celebrate mass each day for the pilgrimage. The prescription to attend mass betrays the desire among some that the Eucharist play a more central role than it would if left to emerge organically. Indeed, while some women attended mass faithfully each day, others were content to nap, shop, or visit with one another instead.

In Santiago, the pilgrim's mass was an important concluding ritual even for those pilgrims who did not attend mass regularly at home. While the celebration of the Eucharist satisfied an important religious obligation for some, pilgrims also made use of this ritual in their own ways: as a place to reconnect with friends from the road or family come to greet them, as a way of connecting everyday practices to the extraordinary experience of the pilgrimage, as a way of marking holy space and holy practice as distinct from the everyday tempos of faith. Across itineraries, the celebration of the Eucharist occasionally exceeded the boundaries of the church's rite and were celebrated quietly and alone along the side of the road in the Galilee or in an unadorned dining room off a parking deck in Santiago.

The search for a theology of pilgrimage, while well-intentioned, has too often become a search for a better theological model of pilgrimage. Yet the proliferation of diverse traditions and practices of pilgrimage resists such a construction. When our desire

to explain pilgrimage precedes our efforts to witness its realization, we risk simply recreating existing theological models and systems and dressing them up in new images and languages. In truth, pilgrimage is essentially a tactical operation. Pilgrims make use of spaces that they are in but not of. They appropriate the language of pilgrimage and realize it in a plurality of forms that are often unanticipated and surprising. If pilgrimage emerges as enunciations rather than formulations, then a theology of pilgrimage is first and foremost an invitation not to a theology of pilgrimage, but a theology from pilgrimage.

## Chapter 4

### Pilgrimage as Sacramental Ecclesial Practice

The practice of Christian pilgrims has long inspired and informed the Christian theological imagination. The second chapter of this dissertation has already explored several ways that historical pilgrimages shaped the church's contemporaneous anthropological, ecclesial, and eschatological imagination into permanent, enduring theological metaphors. These pilgrim metaphors have not only persisted into the present day, they have dominated the ways that we continue to think about and from pilgrimage—so much so that our theology, at least functionally, seems to imagine that pilgrimage practice either ceased or became static, rather than continuing to develop dynamically into the present day. As the previous chapter has shown, pilgrims have also displayed a remarkable historical persistence into the present day, in spite of our theological inattentiveness to their practice.

While the ongoing descriptive and interpretive work of the social sciences into the historical and contemporary phenomena of Christian pilgrimage provides data, tools, and insights for theologians, the goal of such research and writing remains distinct from the project and work of the Christian theologian. Theological inquiry presses beyond the work of description and seeks a better understanding of the world and humanity as created and saved by God, of the continuing presence and activity of the divine in history and creation, and of the loving, dynamic, and ongoing relationship between God and God's people. Theological interpretation also takes as given the revelation that Christians profess: the ongoing, salvific work of a loving God in the world. Building on the anthropological insights of the previous chapter, this chapter makes the continued, lived practice of Christian

pilgrimage the object of theological attention and constructs a theology of pilgrimage as a sacramental, ecclesial practice.

### **A Theology of Symbol**

While the use of pilgrimage metaphors has proved exceedingly fruitful for theological discourse, these theological metaphors have relied on distilling pilgrim experience into static conceptual domains. The sensibility of the theological metaphor requires the construction of a conceptual domain or model of pilgrimage practice that assigns significance to certain elements of pilgrimage practice while downplaying or ignoring others. The legibility of the pilgrim metaphor counts on the reader's ability to discern the relevant conceptual map and to attend only to those pilgrim practices that fit those categories. The conceptual domain of pilgrimage as journeying calls to mind experiences of movement and travel as well as the possibilities of losing one's way or moving ever closer to one's goal. As exile or penance, the conceptual domain of pilgrimage surfaces experiences of suffering and loneliness as well as the possibilities of forgiveness and redemption. As spiritual ascent, the conceptual domain of pilgrimage evokes experiences of closeness and spiritual ecstasy, as well as the possibility of union with the divine. The plurality of pilgrim metaphors available in our theological imagination comes closest to capturing the plurality of Christian practice, but even this fails to overcome the flattening out of pilgrimage practice to a set of static experiences. A theology that takes pilgrimage seriously as a living, historically particular, and even fragmentary set of practices requires a different theoretical foundation from which to proceed. In this chapter, I re-imagine Christian pilgrimage as having a fundamentally symbolic structure.

The language of symbol in theological discourse is varied and multivalent, so it is helpful to begin by clarifying how the term is used here. Karl Rahner's work on symbol and sacrament offers a helpful starting point for this discussion.<sup>1</sup> Rahner's theology of symbol proceeds from the view of creation and history as fundamentally graced. Beginning with the revelation that God is self-communicating love, Rahner suggests both humanity and creation are structured in a way that makes the reception of God's love possible.<sup>2</sup> For humanity, this prospect of divine friendship is made possible through the anthropological unity of body and spirit that allows a spiritual relationship between God and God's people made known in and through the tangible, concrete manifestations of the world in which we live, the events that constitute one's individual and social history, one's relationships, and

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<sup>1</sup> Rahner lays out his fullest explication of the concept of the symbol in his essay "Zur Theologie des Symbols," published in 1959 and later translated as "The Theology of the Symbol." The point of departure for this little essay is not, as one may expect, the sacraments of the church or even the church itself, but rather the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He revisits and plays out this idea of the symbol in his essays on worship and sacrament and in his book *The Church and the Sacraments*. His theology of the symbol plays a more implicit role in his essay "The Church of the Saints," which I take as a key extension of his theology of symbol in the discussion that follows here. Karl Rahner, "Zur Theologie des Symbols," in *Schriften zur Theologie*, vol. 4 (Zurich: Benziger, 1959), 275–311. Karl Rahner, "The Theology of Symbol," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4 (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co, 1973), 221–51. Karl Rahner, "On the Theology of Worship," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 19 (New York: Crossroad Pub Co, 1983), 141–49. Karl Rahner, "What Is a Sacrament?," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 14 (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co, 1976), 135–48. Karl Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments* (Freiburg: Herder, 1963). Karl Rahner, "The Church of the Saints," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. III (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co, 1967), 91–104.

<sup>2</sup> Rahner writes in *Foundations of Christian Faith*, "In the one and only concrete, real order of human existence, what is most intrinsic to man is God's self-communication at least as an offer, and as given prior to man's freedom as the condition of its highest and obligatory actualization. Moreover, this very thing which is most intrinsic and which alone is self-evident is God, the mystery, the free love of his divine self-communication, and hence the supernatural. This is so because in the concrete order man is himself through that which he is not, and because that which he himself is, inescapably and inalienably, is given to him as the presupposition and as the condition of possibility for that which all in truth is given to him as his own in absolute, free and unmerited love: God in his self-communication." Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 124.

even one's own body. This divine, self-communicating love or grace imbues creation; it is the very first tangible result of God's self-communicating love that spoke the world into being. Through creation—by which Rahner means the entirety of time, space, and relationships—grace presents itself always as invitation: God's self-offer. This grace becomes historically concrete in the words of the prophets, in the incarnation and paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, in the historical extension of the Christ-event as the church, and in individual, everyday lives in which people experience and respond to God's initiative in concrete and historical ways.<sup>3</sup>

Even granting that sin has radically distorted God's creation, Rahner remains convinced of the enduring quality of the grace of God in both the world and the heart of the human person.<sup>4</sup> His discussion of the relationship between sacraments and the quotidian world makes clear the practical significance of this claim. Rahner resists a sacramental theology that views the sacraments as moments of the in-breaking of grace into a profoundly sinful and secular world. By emphasizing the continuity between creation and redemption, Rahner suggests that Christian sacraments are in fact the concrete, historical realization of what is already present in the world not by nature but by grace. This

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<sup>3</sup> Rahner's anthropology starts from a view of the human person as an existential unity of body and spirit, of the historical and the transcendental. Rahner refers to these two dimensions of the human person as the transcendent and categorical poles. See especially Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 75–82, 129, 171–75.

<sup>4</sup> Rahner, "On the Theology of Worship," 144–45. Because the possibility of sin itself is the condition of the radical freedom God has granted to humanity, Rahner sees God affirmed and revealed as Godself both in and in spite of occasions of human sinfulness. The effect of this sinfulness is not a displacement of God but a distortion or veil that is drawn over the reality of God's salvific accomplishment, hiding them from human view. See also Karl Rahner, "The Church of Sinners," in *Theological Investigations*, trans. Boniface Kruger and Karl H. Kruger, vol. 6 (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1969), 253–69; Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 97–108.

sacramental vision of the world opens the possibility for understanding sacramental practice not as that which is confined to the seven formally defined sacramental liturgies, but to any concrete practice which actualizes—that is, makes both explicit and tangible—the grace that is already there in the depths of both the human person and the world.<sup>5</sup>

From Rahner's sacramental imagination proceeds Rahner's theology of symbol. Distinguishing the theological act of symbolizing from more derivative or mundane uses of symbol or sign that simply posit it as a representation or indicator of a referent object or idea, Rahner argues that a symbol's referent is an active *subject*.<sup>6</sup> The relation between the subject (that which is signified) and the symbol (the signifier) positions the two as objectively distinct (the symbol is something other than the signified) but also intimately related. A symbol is that concrete action or event in which the signified performatively expresses itself and in so doing manifests or becomes that which it desires to be. Rahner finds justification for such a claim of reality within the Divine itself, who by the act of speaking or expressing itself caused creation to come into being.<sup>7</sup> Thus creation is not the *result* of God's utterance, but is itself the enunciation of the divine. Creation is at once something *other* than the divine and at the same time the *self-expression* of the divine through which the Trinitarian God is made present and becomes the One who God desires to be: the Creator. Creation, then, is a symbol of the divine through which God *really* becomes the Creator in concrete time and space, and through which other beings—ourselves—can come to know God, the subject of creation, as Creator. This ongoing and

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<sup>5</sup> Rahner, "On the Theology of Worship," 146.

<sup>6</sup> Rahner, "The Theology of Symbol," 224–25.

<sup>7</sup> Rahner, "The Theology of Symbol," 236–41; Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 75–79.

ever-expressive real-izing of grace in history that reaches its culmination in Christ's life and death is what Rahner calls the *liturgy of the world*.<sup>8</sup>

The creative grace of promise and possibility realized in the moment of creation reaches its most perfect expression and thus fulfillment in the incarnation of Christ, the "absolute symbol of God in the world."<sup>9</sup> As the absolute expression of this symbolic nature of reality, the incarnate Christ constitutes the symbol through which God expresses Godself to the world. In the moment of the Incarnation, humanity is not something that God *takes on* as if it is somehow alien to Godself. Rather, when God expresses Godself, "the very thing that appears is what we call the humanity of the Logos."<sup>10</sup> The Incarnation is not only the self-communication of God to the world (revelation) but also the "expressive presence" of who God wished to be for the world. Just as in the moment of creation, so in the Incarnation God became something real and particular; the salvation that was once only promise and possibility now becomes a permanent and enduring reality. This salvific grace constitutes a real, present, and enduring reality in this world that must again and again take concrete historical form through symbolic action. The Incarnation is also further evidence that the ongoing symbolic manifestation of grace has as its referent not an abstract concept but rather a real-ized God. Grace is not an idea or a substance but rather a divine subject whose

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<sup>8</sup> Rahner writes, "The Church's worship is not the installation of a primarily sacramental sphere into a profane, secular world, it is not an event otherwise without roots in reality, but the explicit and reflex, symbolic presentation of the salvation event which is occurring always and everywhere in the world; the liturgy of the church is the symbolic presentation of the liturgy of the world." Rahner, "On the Theology of Worship," 146.

<sup>9</sup> Rahner, "The Theology of Symbol," 237.

<sup>10</sup> Rahner, "The Theology of Symbol," 239.

incarnation is extended as the permanent, irreversible and saving reality in history – not at some point only promised in the future, but right now.

So far, Rahner's theological reasoning has offered us three key insights: (1) reality itself has a symbolic structure that proceeds from the expressive, self-communicative nature of the Triune God; (2) the referent of a symbol is not an arbitrarily determined object or abstract idea but rather an active subject; it is not a *what*, but a *who*; (3) symbolic action is not merely revelatory and communicative, but in fact expressive and constitutive of the subject for both self and others. What follows from this logic of grace and symbol is a theological anthropology that constitutes humanity as the *Imago Dei*. Through the creative action of God and especially through the Incarnation, humanity can be conceived as the symbolic expression of the Divine. Humanity is the symbol whose subject is God. In our very nature, which is at once created, free, fallen, and redeemed, we are the bearers of the divine image. If we continue to follow this logic, we find that humans are not only bearers of the divine image—that is of God's revelation—but are in fact constitutive of the Divine. Just as humanity cannot be but for the utterance of God, God in uttering humanity also constitutes and realizes Godself. In humanity, God is realized and made known in that which is other from God. To put it more radically, God cannot be who God is apart from humanity.

As the image of God, humanity is not only a symbol of the Triune God but also shares the symbolic nature of being. Like our creator, human beings manifest and constitute themselves in the world and in history through their actions and utterances which are

themselves symbols of the individual person.<sup>11</sup> People constitute themselves as scholars not only by declaring it so, but by their practice. The desire to become a scholar is brought to fulfillment through study, writing, publishing, teaching, public presentations, and the like. This activity is symbolic, for it realizes that personal desire by its outward expression and thus constitutes the person as a scholar both to themselves and to those around them. The conferral of an academic degree or the practice of addressing persons by their academic title are recognitions of the permanent and enduring character of one's identity as a scholar. At the same time, the continuing activity of the scholar beyond the conferral of degree and title extends this concrete and historical manifestation of this reality as they continue to research, teach, present, and publish. Similarly, we might think about the practices and activities that constitute parenthood especially as they extend beyond the act of conception to include practices of nurturing, providing, educating, celebrating, loving, and so forth. Religious identity offers yet another exemplar of the symbolic reality. The convention of referring to the Christian faithful as "practitioners" is apt. Christian practice is not only expressive, but also constitutive of Christian practitioners as they realize themselves as Christians through their engagement (and not necessarily only adherence)

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<sup>11</sup> Most fundamentally, Rahner suggests that like our incarnate God, our enfleshed human bodies are symbols of our souls: the outward expression of our inner being. While Rahner's anthropology resists the classical dualism of body and soul/spirit by maintaining a distinction between body and soul that also holds one impossible without the other, his logic still insinuates that the soul is the primary or fundamental reality of the human being and that the body, however inseparable, is nonetheless symbolic and derivative of the soul. Rahner still perpetuates a dualistic nature of the human being that elevates and establishes the primacy of the soul over the body. And yet Rahner's conclusions about the relationship between the human body and soul are only one a possible interpretation that can emerge from this logic of symbolic reality; they are not inevitable and certainly need not be adopted fully here. More helpful to the present inquiry are the possibilities that Rahner's logic opens for understanding human action and practice as symbolic activity through which the actor or subject constitutes and manifests her identity to both herself and others. Rahner, "The Theology of Symbol," 245-52.

with the practical logics of their Christian communities. Setting aside the question of whether a subject or being can exist in some sense in the abstract, we can at least affirm that the subject remains merely a possibility until it manifests itself concretely in time and space. This symbolic reality of the subject is the *Imago Dei*, both with regard to how God expresses Godself in the creation and recreation of each individual, but also in the way that each human person realizes herself uniquely and concretely in the world. So humanity can at once be a symbol of the divine and act symbolically as a condition of being.

By situating the symbolic referent as subject, Rahner also points to the inherent particularity and plurality of this symbolic reality. Because symbolic expression is always historically and concretely situated, the manifestation of an internal or abstract sense of self in the world, both the subject and the symbol must always be understood in the particular. In the examples above, to speak generally of a scholar or a mother or a Christian is not sufficient. As manifest in the world, scholars and mothers and Christians exist not in the ideological abstract but in the particular. We must speak of *this* scholar or *these* mothers or *that* Christian. And, as we saw in the previous chapter with pilgrimage, while attentiveness to shared characteristics can allow us to speak conceptually of scholars and mothers and Christians, these conceptual constructions are secondary and derivative of the symbolic reality described here. Here as before, the referent of the practice is not a concept but rather a distinctive and particular subject.

One might also note that in the examples above, it is not sufficient to speak of a subject as monolithic: as either a scholar *or* a mother *or* a Christian because in fact a single person can be at once all three and other things besides. Rahner writes that, like the Triune God, “each being bears within itself an intrinsic plurality” that, far from being destructive of

the unity of the person, is in fact the person's perfect fulfillment.<sup>12</sup> Its expression through a multiplicity of symbolic forms maintains and manifests this plurality of the subject. The unity in these symbolic expressions comes not necessarily from any set of related characteristics or qualities but rather from their shared referent who itself is a living subject irreducible to any simple or homogenous essence. For Rahner, plurality is not a deficiency or a problem. Rather, individual subjects are more fully realized and recognized in the very multiplicity of symbolic utterances and activities in the world.

There is perhaps no better example of the diverse symbolic expression of humanity than the cloud of witnesses the church has honored as Saints. Through the saving waters of baptism and God's ever-present grace, each Christian becomes a tangible manifestation and thus a living symbol of God's salvific grace in the world. Simultaneously, by coming to the waters of baptism and subsequently living as Christians in the world, the Christian Saint also expresses herself in her own tangible uniqueness and realizes herself as a Christian in and to the world. In the gentle touch of Teresa of Calcutta and the prophetic voice of Oscar Romero, in the steadfast faith of Bernadette and the fervent hope of Juan Diego, in Andre's warm welcome of the stranger at the door and in Catherine's courageous stand before the Pope, in the stubborn persistence of Peter and in the persistent strength of Mary, and in the lives of so many others that go unnamed and unrecognized, God is made manifest in the world without diminishing the expressive becoming of the individual saint, each in their own unique and self-creative ways. The symbolic activity of these Saints has not one but at least two subjective referents: God and the human person.

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<sup>12</sup> Rahner, "The Theology of Symbol," 235.

Although Rahner writes of the saints broadly as “all those who have been justified by faith, love, and baptism and who thus live a truly Christian life,” his sacramental and symbolic theology presses him further than a simple explication of the Saints as merely superior examples of the Christian life.<sup>13</sup> If this were the extent of sainthood, he argues, we would risk reducing holiness to ethics and find very little theological relevance for the Saints beyond their value as moral exemplars.<sup>14</sup> While the Saints are frequently offered as exemplars of heroic virtue in the church, Rahner points out that this distinguishes ordinary Christians from Saints only as a matter of degree and not as a matter of kind. Moreover, this does little to justify the church’s practice of canonization and veneration since these exemplars of virtue could just as easily be replaced with other forms of moral instruction for believers. Holiness must not be collapsed into ethics. But Christian practice, at least in the Roman Catholic communion in which Rahner and I both stand, demands a fuller theology that attends not just to the veneration of the Saints but also to the practice of canonization.

It is through the practice of canonization that the church ritually and doctrinally transforms ordinary believers into Saints. In his discussion of symbol, Rahner argues that the self-communication operative in the symbolic expression of the subjective actor is revelatory to both others and to one’s self. The recognition of the self in one’s own “intrinsic otherness” is a form of self-knowledge in which the symbol precedes one’s own

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<sup>13</sup> Rahner uses the familiar convention of distinguishing all those who have been justified by faith and baptism from those persons the Catholic Church has added to the official canon of the Saints by designating the first with a lower-case “s” (saints) and the second with a capital “S” (Saints). I follow the same convention here.

<sup>14</sup> Rahner, “The Church of the Saints,” 97.

sense of self.<sup>15</sup> This idea of self-recognition forms the implicit foundation of Rahner's description of canonization as an activity whereby the church recognizes her very self (and in particular her holiness) in the symbolic "other," in this case the individual, which is nevertheless constitutive of itself. The practice of canonization is the activity of recognition on the part of the church that affirms and celebrates the concrete, historical manifestation of the ecclesia in history in the life of the individual. That is to say, although the Saint and the church are each irreducible to the other, the Saint is recognized not only as an instantiation of the Christian life and the concrete manifestation of God's grace in the world, but also an expressive outburst of the ecclesia into time and place by which the church really comes into being in a new and surprising way. This is very different, Rahner suggests, than a theology that holds the Saints as the end product of the church as saving institution or the "complete end-result of the triumphant church."<sup>16</sup> The church does not act *on* or *on behalf of* believers; rather, the church acts *in, by, and through* the activities and practices of believers. Thus, the Saints *are* the church's self-expressiveness and self-realization in the world. They are concrete expressions of the church in the world and tangible evidence of the victory of the grace of God. The church is made present in this world in the concrete, historical lives and practices of its constituents.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Rahner, "The Theology of Symbol," 229–31. In *Foundations of Christian Faith*, Rahner describes the complexity of subjective self-knowledge as something that initiates an act of expressiveness, which itself may then become the object of one's reflection. This reflection expands one's knowledge of self beyond that which produced the initial expressive symbol while at the same time maintaining a gap between the original, subjective self-presence and the reflexive self-presence. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 17–19.

<sup>16</sup> Rahner, "The Church of the Saints," 97.

<sup>17</sup> This is a logical outcome of the theological inclination in patristic writers like Augustine to move fluidly between the individual and the ecclesial. What can be said of the Christian can be said of the church and vice versa. See Chapter 2 of this dissertation, pp. 15–16.

The implication of the church's practice of canonization—that is of recognizing itself in the life of an individual—is a reimagining of the subject of this symbolic action. By recognizing the Saints as realizations of itself rather than achievements it has produced, the church can only with difficulty be conceived as a hierarchical institution separate and distinct from the lay believers whom it both governs and serves. In the communion of Saints, the church is revealed as the entire assembly of the baptized redeemed, the holy assembly of believers made such not by the observably weak, stumbling, stubborn members who constitute her subjectivity, but by the grace of God made manifest and fulfilled in the tangible presence of the social body of Christ in time and place. If the lived practices of the Saints are the manifestation or realization of the church in the world, the practice of canonization is the church's recognition of herself and her proclamation of her own holiness made present in the world.<sup>18</sup> The lives of the Saints are symbols of the church in as much as they are genuine utterances and concrete realizations of the holy People of God in history.

Key to Rahner's theology of symbol is the self-reflection the symbol evokes. The continuity of the symbol to the symbolized is held in tension with the quality of "otherness" the symbol possesses, the non-identity of the symbol to the symbolized in which neither is reducible to the other. That is to say that symbols are not always self-evident in their utterance. They require discernment:

When the church canonizes, she says: this life which has been lived is genuine and full Christianity, although—no, because—the way in which such a Saint has lived is not at all self-evident: in the desert and quite 'unecclasiastically;' as an intellectually daring scholar, in humdrum conditions and within pitiful horizons; as a perfectly normal Central European, as a very 'egocentric' beggar (almost like any typical down-and-

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<sup>18</sup> Rahner, "The Church of the Saints," 103.

out); and in a thousand other ways which one never recognizes as Christian possibilities until afterwards, until after they have been lived in a holy way.<sup>19</sup>

This recognition born of discernment is what transforms an individual's experiment of the Christian life into Christian testimony. It is only on looking back at the life of a Saint that the church recognizes what was once thought of as aberrant or deviant action as an unanticipated realization of the ecclesia. The mark of death that must precede canonization is not the culmination of an arc of holy self-improvement and achievement, as if the Saint after death is somehow holier than the newly redeemed still wet from the waters of baptism. Instead, death is a seal on the symbolic expression constituted by a life lived out in concrete time and space. Death permits a different perspective in which the life of the Saint can either be rewritten according to pre-established forms, or (hopefully) recognized as a new, permanent, and enduring form of the social subject, which is the church.<sup>20</sup> It is recognition that transforms the individual Christian expression into an ecclesial practice.

The possibility of the creation of new forms of the Christian life does not imply that everything the church or the Christian does ought to be embraced as the symbolic manifestation of grace in the world. To suggest that the Christian and the church are themselves historical manifestations of the redemptive grace of Christ in the world does not necessarily mean that the expressive actions of the church or of the Christian are therefore sanctified or of God. As symbols, the very otherness of humanity or the church

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<sup>19</sup> Rahner, "The Church of the Saints," 101.

<sup>20</sup> A recognition of the lives of the Saints as symbols of the church collapses the classical distinction between "pilgrims" on earth and "Saints" in heaven to recognize a more imminent eschatology in which pilgrims and Saints are revealed to be one and the same: real and actual expressions of the faithful redeemed while still full of possibility and potential for the further constitution of the self, the church, and the divine.

means that they may manifest themselves in ways that contradict the divine. Indeed, that the presence of God is realized and made present not only in but also in spite of the ways that Christians and the church emerge in history is at the very heart of a symbolic reality in which the subject realizes itself through the other.

The church as symbolic actor emerges in Rahner's essays on worship and sacraments in a manner akin to his discussion of the Saints. Just as Rahner critiques a theology of the Saints that depends on a theory of ecclesial intervention into fallen and secular humanity, so too his theology of worship resists the explanation of the liturgy as a grace-filled intervention of the church into the secular world. It rests on the premise that the church is a historical realization of God's salvific grace already present in the world. In *Church and Sacrament*, Rahner draws a direct link between the incarnation of Christ as the "historically real and actual presence of the eschatologically victorious mercy of God" and the church as the "continuance, the contemporary presence, of that real, eschatologically triumphant and irrevocably established presence in the world, in Christ, of God's salvific will."<sup>21</sup> Consequently, the church as social actor can be described symbolically as "the abiding presence of that primal sacramental word of definitive grace, which Christ is in the world, effecting what is uttered by uttering it in sign."<sup>22</sup> The church is both the symbolic utterance of the divine and a symbolic actor. Thus, Rahner's symbolic theology rehearses a familiar theme in liturgical theology. In the liturgy, the church truly utters itself into being. But in the instantiation of the church in history, the one who uttered the church into being is also made manifest in the presence of the church. That is to say, the church's liturgy

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<sup>21</sup> Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, 14, 18.

<sup>22</sup> Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, 18.

makes present and explicit—the liturgy realizes—that very self-expression of a loving and saving God that Rahner calls the liturgy of the world. The liturgy is thus an ecclesial enunciation through which the church is realized as presence of the Body of Christ in the world.

Rather than introducing a novel idea of symbolic or liturgical diversity, Rahner's notion of symbol adds theological depth to the already familiar experience of a multiplicity of liturgical forms (the seven sacramental liturgies, the liturgy of the hours, funeral liturgies, and others). Rahner is convinced that symbolic expression is necessarily plural and that the church enunciates and manifests herself in ways that reflect both the complexity and creativity of herself as a subjective creation of the triune God. This plurality of symbolic expression introduces the possibility of a more expansive category of liturgical practice, beyond the Eucharist or liturgies that are the primary prerogative of the ordained clergy. That we can recognize and meet the church in these official liturgies of the church does not mean that the church is confined to these. Liturgy can flourish outside of them as well. We can think about this expansion in two distinct modes.

First, the notion of symbolic plurality challenges our ideas about what constitutes the universal or the unitary principle in diverse practice. Since Trent, the primary guarantor of unity within the plurality of liturgical rites has been the universal magisterium (which has in many ways superseded the authority even of the local bishop). This magisterium regulates liturgical practice by decree and the printed page. Logically, this suggests that the subjective actor of this symbolic expression is not in fact the church as the People of God, but rather the church as hierarchical office. Attention to lived liturgical practice has already complicated this liturgical narrative and suggests that the realization

of these ideal, hoped-for forms of the liturgy are only partially and unevenly manifest in the liturgical celebrations of the People of God.<sup>23</sup> If the subjective actor is in fact the hierarchical church, then these lived practices may be described as deviations or corruptions of liturgical form but only with difficulty can they be imagined as symbolic realizations of the hierarchical church. With the clergy presiding, the laity can become either collaborators or a liability but not the primary subject of liturgical action. Rahner challenges this liturgical logic by challenging our ecclesiology and suggesting that the proper ecclesial subject is in fact the entire People of God and that the nature of *this* singular subject provides the guarantor of unity within diverse and plural self-expression. A practice need not be “universal” (that is, practiced consistently across time and place) to be a genuine symbolic expression of the ecclesial body. Rahner’s theology of symbol understood within an inclusive ecclesiology frees our theological logic from a need to “create” a universal boundary for liturgical practice. Liturgy need not be initiated or regulated by the hierarchy to be genuine symbolic expressions of the ecclesial body. Instead, it suggests that the subjective presence of the actor is not only the guarantor of unity, but more fully realized in a plurality of self-expression.

Second, symbolic plurality opens the possibility for the creation of new forms previously unknown or unanticipated by the body ecclesia to emerge as genuine expressive manifestations of the church in the world. In the practice of canonization, the church already recognizes its own instantiation in time and place in the life of an individual Christian and thus embraces that which was previously unimagined as an enduring

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<sup>23</sup> See especially Siobhán Garrigan, *Beyond Ritual: Sacramental Theology after Habermas* (Aldershot: Routledge, 2004).

possibility for the church's manifestation in the world. In canonization, the Saint becomes a symbol of the church and that very presence of the church in the world. We can apply to the worship life of the church the same discernment that sees in the lives of the faithful the expression and presence of the social body of the church. It is through discernment and recognition that the church recognizes the emergence of new forms of ecclesial practice and ecclesial liturgy that constitute enduring forms of the church's self-realization in history.

Rahner's sacramental worldview, rooted in the Christian revelation of a self-communicative God, suggests that we come to know a subject through attention to the subject's symbolic enunciations. That is to say, knowledge of God, of God's people who are the church, and even of the self comes from reflection on their concrete manifestations in time and place. In the symbol, we meet the person. The implication of this sacramental theology authorizes a theological starting point in the ongoing, lived practices of the Christian faithful. It also resists accounts of Christian practice, liturgical or otherwise, that reduce lived practice to the performance of a set or series of pre-established, essentialized scripts. When we speak about the Saints, we must begin by speaking about *these* Saints. When we write about the Eucharist, we must begin by attending to *this* concrete celebration of the Eucharist. Likewise, our theological conceptualization of Christian pilgrimage must proceed from concrete examples of its lived practice. Moreover, by suggesting that the referent of symbolic practice is not an idea or a concept but rather a person, Rahner's theology of symbol does not just change the frame in which pilgrimage is imagined theologically; it also proposes a shift in what is at the center of that frame. Theologies that have as their primary concern the mapping or modeling of this practice we

call pilgrimage risk missing the constitutive element of pilgrimage—the embodied and practicing pilgrim who is both the active subject and the symbolic referent.

In the rest of this chapter, I return to the practices of pilgrimage explored in Chapter 3 and offer my own theological discernment of pilgrimage as the symbolic expression of the People of God. I begin by exploring pilgrimage as a Christian practice by which the Christian realizes herself in the world in the figure of the pilgrim. Second, I explore the ways in which the pilgrim becomes the symbolic expression of Christ in the world. Finally, I turn to the ways the church has recognized and embraced pilgrimage as an enduring form of ecclesial practice.

### **The Pilgrim**

Late in his life, his Jesuit brothers encouraged Ignatius of Loyola to write down the story of his life. After refusing several times, Ignatius finally consented to dictate his autobiography to a younger priest. As he unfolded his story, beginning with his youth in Pamplona and moving through his long pilgrimage to the Holy Land, his studies in Paris, his ordination and founding of the Jesuit order, he narrated the tale in the third person, referring to himself only as “The Pilgrim.” Ignatius’ conversion as he lay ill and wounded was accompanied by a desire to become a pilgrim to the Holy Land, and indeed his pilgrimage was his first instantiation of his Christian self once he was well. For Ignatius, becoming a pilgrim was also a way of truly becoming a Christian and of being in the world as such. Over the course of his life, the realization of his Christian life deepened and multiplied: mystic, spiritual guide, priest, founder. Today these are the identities that are most readily remembered and celebrated about Ignatius. But when invited to tell his own story, Ignatius did not cling to any of these symbols. Instead, he told the story of his life

through that first symbol, his first manifestation as a Christian in the world. Even at the end of his life, Ignatius was still *The Pilgrim*.

This dissertation has already explored the futility of a conceptual definition of pilgrimage and suggested that while pilgrimage resists definition, it invites investigation. The etymology of the noun *pilgrimage* is indicative of this invitation. The noun is formed by attaching the suffix “-age” to the noun “pilgrim” in a Latin convention that simply creates a general or abstract noun from one more particular. In this case, the term pilgrimage quite literally points back to its subjective origins: “relating or belonging to the pilgrim.” This rather banal etymology offers perhaps the most accurate definition of pilgrimage: that [practice] which belongs to the pilgrim. We learn what pilgrimage is by observing what the pilgrim does. An accurate account of pilgrimage practice should not reduce this observable phenomenon to a set of common characteristics nor should it seek to discover a singular organizing principle or model underlying these seemingly disparate practices. Rather, it should illuminate the plurality of ways the phenomenon of pilgrimage emerges in time and space as pilgrims continually realize new possibilities for pilgrim practice and perpetuate ones already familiar to us as observers. Any conceptual definition of pilgrimage is gained only by its separation from lived practices. But the practice of pilgrimage is given definition, that is, its contours are actualized and made visible, in the enunciations of its pilgrim practitioners.

A symbolic interpretation of pilgrimage offers a theological variation on this same theme. The relationship between pilgrimage and the pilgrim, between practice and practitioner, is that of the signifier to the signified. Pilgrimage is the outward expression and actualization of the pilgrim in the world. Pilgrim and pilgrimage: each term

constituting the other. One becomes a pilgrim by acting as a pilgrim in the world and those actions that we call pilgrimage are conceivable not as abstract forms or pre-existing scripts, but rather as those expressive utterances or enunciations of the pilgrim acting in the world.

This relationship between pilgrim and pilgrimage, between symbol and subject, depends on a sort of circular reasoning: the pilgrim is one who pilgrimages and pilgrimage is what the pilgrim does. Still, this reimagining of pilgrimage in light of its subject, the pilgrim, should not be construed as a turn to the individual, as if pilgrimage were whatever a person said it was. Indeed, the impetus to describe one's practice or experience as a "pilgrimage," whether metaphorically or actually, is itself an interesting phenomenon that invites further exploration, and present society is replete with examples of such practices of naming. That is not the task that concerns us here. Because the very act of symbolic expression is dependent on a tangible manifestation in the world, there is an inherently social and relational quality to symbolic practice in which the pilgrim both acts within existing social spaces and structures and cannot exist apart from them. Thus, the creative utterance of pilgrims into concrete time and space depends always on that which is already available to them. The incarnation of the Logos could not exist apart from this world and in fact depends on the very particularities of the world of first-century Palestine. Likewise, the pilgrim emerges and takes shape within spaces and environments that the pilgrim encounters as given rather than as constructed. Attending to pilgrimage, then, means not just attending to idiosyncratic practice in isolation but to the actions of individuals in, through, and against the cultural contexts in which they act.

The pilgrim makes the pilgrimage, and the pilgrimage makes the pilgrim. The wisdom in this circular explication of the symbol is to link the practice of pilgrimage not to

an abstract idea or model, but rather to an acting and believing subject who is constituted not as some existential being but as an embodied person whose being is both the source of its practices or action and is actually constituted by its concrete action in the world. And yet for a Christian, one's origin does not lie only in the subjective intention and experience of the individual. The Christian's origin is inextricably bound up in the saving work of God in the world, first through creation and ultimately through our re-creation in Christ. Thus pilgrimage, when undertaken as an act of Christian faith, is not only an anthropological symbolization but also a religious one. Pilgrimage is a form of Christian life, the way a Christian actualizes herself in history. Christian pilgrimage is a symbolic realization of the Christian in the world. Thus, attending to pilgrimage requires attending to the ways that the Christian enunciates herself in the world as a pilgrim. It requires something like ethnography.

The previous chapter explored three contemporary ethnographic accounts of pilgrimage practice. One followed women on a pilgrimage to Tepeyac in Mexico. Another accompanied American parish and diocesan pilgrim groups in the Holy Land, and a third described the diversity of pilgrims and pilgrim practice on the Spanish Camino. In each of these accounts, the authors note the preparations pilgrims made for the journey before ever leaving home. Elaine Peña explains how women in Mexico purchased *distintivos* (pilgrim badges) from their local parish or diocesan offices. Some had saved for the entire year to purchase the token.<sup>24</sup> Hillary Kaell describes one woman who went door to door to collect prayer petitions from her neighbors to take with her to the Holy Land.<sup>25</sup> Nancy Frey

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<sup>24</sup> Peña, *Performing Piet.*, 77–78.

<sup>25</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 63.

recounts how pilgrims prepared for the long days of walking by making progressively longer walks in their home city or town for weeks or months before departure.<sup>26</sup> In these initial activities, the Christian offers her first pilgrim enunciations. Everyday life begins to change as she supplements quotidian practices with more extraordinary activities that look ahead to the fulfillment of a desire. Already in such preparations, Christians begin to express themselves as a pilgrims.

In the beginning, these symbolic utterances remain full of hopeful desire, an expression of what the Christian wishes to become—not only a Christian, but a Christian pilgrim. On the way, the Christian pilgrim continues to unfold in time and space. One purchases a shell in Roncesvalles and ties it to her backpack before starting off alone.<sup>27</sup> Another pins a ribbon to her chest and happily greets her friends from a nearby village as they find their place in the column.<sup>28</sup> A third lifts a cross high above his head and begins his walk through the narrow streets of Jerusalem, stopping along the way in the midst of the bustle of vendors and merchants to ponder and pray.<sup>29</sup> Although the practices are strikingly different, and distinguish the pilgrims, they share a ritual quality that Catherine Bell describes and through which the Christian becomes a pilgrim.

These pilgrim enunciations are not ephemeral. They are tangible, bodily, visceral. Voices and feet join in shared patterns as they experience and embody familiar prayers in new and even surprising ways. Much of what is private suddenly becomes public as pilgrims share their stories with those who are both strangers and fellow pilgrims, allow

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<sup>26</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 50.

<sup>27</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 56.

<sup>28</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 68, 77–79.

<sup>29</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 118.

their feet to be washed and bandaged, or relieve themselves next to a crowd of passing pilgrims with privacy marked out only by the fringes of a skirt. Feet and legs ache from unfamiliar roads. Backs and necks ache from unfamiliar beds. Stomachs ache from unfamiliar food. Not only is this expected, sometimes it is even welcomed as confirmation of one's actualization as a pilgrim.

Despite the widespread adoption of certain symbolic forms of expression like the scallop shell, the practice of “journey shaping” —that is, the way that one constructs their practice and identity as a pilgrim —varies widely across practitioners and often incorporates creative or unconventional uses of traditional forms of expression or the creation of new forms. While pilgrims often make use of a ritual vocabulary—that is of a familiar set of patterns and practices that are recognized as pilgrim actions with a particular context—pilgrims express themselves through a wide range of creative improvisations. Even in pilgrim practices that are more tightly regulated, the creative self-expression of the pilgrim emerges in surprising ways. The women's pilgrimage to Tepeyac offers a helpful example of this point. In this pilgrimage, a number of significant practical identifiers were stipulated by the lay pilgrim leaders and the leadership of the diocesan bishop and priests. Pilgrims were required to obtain a pilgrim badge and to march in a particular order and with a particular group to the place designated on the badge. They were required to dress in a particular way (skirts over pants). They were required to participate in daily Eucharist and to make their confessions. While there was a good deal of variation in how the *peregrinas* conformed to these rituals and customs, the observance of the customs does not appear to have stifled their spirit of creativity and self-expression. For example, although official discourse and observances emphasized the penitential

dimension of the pilgrimage by expecting simple and modest attire and quiet or reverential speech, some *peregrinas* defined their pilgrimage by gratitude and festivity. Many adorned their hats with bright ribbons and flowers or peppered their daily march with singing and dancing and laughter.<sup>30</sup> While many leaders and especially the clergy attempted to construct the pilgrimage with the Eucharist as its spiritual center by celebrating the liturgy at the beginning and end of the pilgrimage and daily in a chapel that moved along with the pilgrims, some *peregrinas* would skip daily mass to take a nap or visit a nearby town or market. Yet as they approached Tepeyac, a spiritual consensus began to emerge among the pilgrims themselves. The *peregrinas* took special effort with their appearance: brushing and styling their hair, applying make-up, and donning the best clothes they had carried with them over the nine days just for this moment. Each in her own way prepared herself to meet the Virgin of Guadalupe, the source and summit of their journey. Peña observed that while much of the journey had been marked by communal practice and camaraderie, the encounter in the sanctuary of the basilica was a supremely individual interaction between the *peregrina* and the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The creative expression of each pilgrim was the realization of yet another possibility, another form of pilgrimage, while at the same time being undeniably recognizable as pilgrim practice.

The realization of the pilgrim in the world cannot be understood in isolation. The pilgrim enunciations through which the Christian manifests herself concretely in the world depend on both action and recognition. It is the act of recognition rather than a conceptual definition that reveals the pilgrim. A group of pilgrims who began their journey in Le Puy,

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<sup>30</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 55.

France, over a thousand miles from Santiago, were surprised at the question “Vous faites le Chemin de Saint Jacques?” (Are you making the pilgrimage to Santiago?) Even at such a distance, their backpacks and their manner of going (walking) made them easily recognizable to others as transients, strangers, and pilgrims.<sup>31</sup> A young woman walking to Santiago was surprised when a local man insisted she wear a scallop shell. Giving her one of his own shells was an act of recognition of her pilgrim status and the shell became a tangible confirmation of her pilgrim identity. Rituals of hospitality which receive the pilgrim in spaces where strangers are not typically welcomed or go out to greet pilgrims with gifts of encouragement and sustenance are tangible acts that recognize the pilgrim in the world.

While the pilgrimage is bounded in time—that is, the journey seems to have a beginning, a middle, and an end—the pilgrim seems to endure. Indeed, in all three pilgrimages, the Christian’s experience as a pilgrim had a sense of perpetuity to it that extended beyond the pilgrimage event. “My very dear friends in Christ, I am so happy to be able to invite you to join me on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, to a place and an experience that will change your life.”<sup>32</sup> Fr. Mike’s promotional letter envisioned pilgrimage as something that would extend beyond the event itself and engender a transformation of sorts, and prior to the trip many of the Holy Land pilgrims with whom Kaell spoke echoed this sense of anticipation even though the content or nature of the transformation was left open.<sup>33</sup> After returning home, a Camino pilgrim observed, “You are not the same when you

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<sup>31</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 61.

<sup>32</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 161.

<sup>33</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 162.

return as when you started out. Your very soul is on the move.”<sup>34</sup> Although not all pilgrims shared this same transformative experience, Frey points out that pilgrims usually arrived home with a difference that was not only “ineffable and subjective,” but also physical: “the backpack, now dirtied and broken in; the scallop shell and staff; souvenirs of the way; perhaps a diary; addresses of new friends, both pilgrims and villagers; the pilgrim’s passport, stamped, perhaps warped by water; the *Compostela*, folded, rolled, or laminated; and photographs.”<sup>35</sup> For some pilgrims, telling and retelling the stories of their pilgrimage helps them discover and even facilitate the experience of transformation or conversion, while others described the inexpressibility of their experience of difference.<sup>36</sup> For pilgrims to Santiago and to Tepeyac, the repetition of the pilgrimage becomes a renewal and fulfillment of one’s pilgrim identity.<sup>37</sup> In Mexico, many *peregrinas* make the annual pilgrimage year after year. The repetition of the pilgrimage event is itself a ritual instantiation of one’s permanent sense of self as pilgrim. The realization of the pilgrim through the practice of pilgrimage, even if not perpetuated, endures. The promised transformation takes on as many shapes and forms as there are pilgrims. And yet the realization of Christian as pilgrim endures. For Ignatius, the pilgrim was inseparable from the Christian. The activity of pilgrimage had forever changed him into the person he desired to be. The practice of pilgrimage transforms the individual into a concrete and tangible pilgrim. One pilgrim, upon returning home, engraved this new sense of self on his

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<sup>34</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 188.

<sup>35</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 186.

<sup>36</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 168–95; Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 186–98.

<sup>37</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 70; Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 211–14.

business cards on which he replaced his full name with his Camino name: “Paco, El Peregrino.”<sup>38</sup>

Rather than as a model or abstract conception, pilgrimage is best understood as a genuine symbolic utterance and realization of a particular way of being Christian in the world. It is a public act that recognizes the faithful expression of the speaker not simply as that individual’s adoration and testimony but as a genuine and authentic manifestation of the Christian faith. To understand pilgrimage theologically as symbolic practice is not to see it as constituting an abstract or pre-existing reality of *the pilgrim*, but rather as the expressive and constitutive act of *this* pilgrim. In the abstract, “pilgrimage” is difficult to conceive or define because it exists entirely in the realm of “possibility” and “potential” that extends beyond what we as observers and even fellow practitioners can fully anticipate. The realization of pilgrimage in the world is a symbolic action that points back to the subject—the pilgrim is the symbol of the Christian. It is a form the Christian subject takes in the world.

### **Pilgrimage as Ecclesial Practice**

The campus architect for a Midwestern university described how he decided where to pave new sidewalks on the university’s grounds: “I pay attention to where people walk.” Yet he explained that despite his best efforts to notice and then direct the footsteps of faculty, students, and visitors, people inevitably made their own ways by slipping through buildings and especially by cutting across lawns. Most of these trails are invisible. A single set of feet traipsing across the grassy quad leaves little evidence it was ever there. But

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<sup>38</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 197.

sometimes a trail appears where the grass has been worn away by the consensus of the walkers. A path emerges where there once was none and more and more pedestrians, recognizing the walking wisdoms of those anonymous walkers who went before them, step off the sidewalk and follow the new way. What was once hidden is now revealed, what was once experimental is now confirmed, what once could be ignored now cannot be missed. These dirt paths disrupted the carefully manicured aesthetic of a campus. Pushed to respond, the architect identified two possibilities: either put up barriers to prevent people from walking on the grass or embrace the will of the walkers and transform their dusty paths into sidewalks. The architect was now a judge: Were these walkers heretics or Saints?

Pilgrimage is one way the Christian performs herself into being. The practice is not the product or the result of Christian action, but rather the very enunciation of the pilgrim. The practice of pilgrimage is the liturgy of the pilgrim, that tangible utterance of faith that makes the Christian present in the world as *this* pilgrim here now. But pilgrims also leave traces. Their feet wear paths into the Christian tradition that over time become familiar. What was once only the experiment of a Christian presence in the world is recognized, others now confirm. The experiment becomes a pattern, a shape, a liturgy by which others who follow may take up the pilgrim's way. Pilgrimages to Tepeyac or to Jerusalem or to Santiago are not spontaneous improvisations of the wandering Christian. Each of these pilgrimages is recognizable as a permanent and enduring form of Christian worship that has been worn into the church by generations of pilgrim feet making a new way where once there was none.

Like these paths and trails that cut through this carefully manicured campus, pilgrimage is a form of worship that the church has generated but has never known how to sanction. In the wake of the Reformation, Trent's concern for liturgical systemization largely focused on Eucharistic practice. Pilgrimage, no less on the receiving end of Protestant reformers' scorn than other liturgical practices, was largely ignored by Catholic reformers. In part because it has been ignored, pilgrimage has sustained into the present era the plurality of form that the baptismal and Eucharistic liturgies also knew once. Without the intervention of the Roman hierarchy, pilgrimage continued along a more organic path of development with familiar forms waxing and waning through the centuries and new forms occasionally emerging and establishing themselves as genuine realizations of previously unimagined pilgrimages. In their seminal work on Christian pilgrimage, Victor and Edith Turner propose a four-fold categorization of Christian pilgrimage forms, each form emerging in a particular historical moment and enduring—even overlapping with one another—into the present day.<sup>39</sup> Although their reduction of the diversity of

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<sup>39</sup> The Turners describe four types of Christian pilgrimage: *prototypical pilgrimages* established by a religious founder or leader; *archaic pilgrimages* inherited from religious systems that pre-dated the establishment of Christianity; *medieval pilgrimages* that replaced the loss of access to Palestine with the establishment of a holy landscape in Europe; and *modern pilgrimages* that have the shape and function of a Catholic apologetic against the modern world. In this classification system, the Turners imagine an enduring form to each pilgrimage that is an extension of the pilgrimage's historical advent in pre-Christian, early Christian, medieval, or modern times. The Turners themselves acknowledge the limitations of their classification system as the ongoing development of pilgrimage traditions often means that practices characteristic of each of these forms are translated across pilgrimages. The pilgrimage to Tepeyac provides the most complex account of pilgrimage in the Turners' monograph, incorporating elements of all four pilgrimage traditions. Although the classification ultimately flattens out pilgrimage practice in ways that offer only limited helpfulness even to the Turners' own project, it is an attempt to affirm and deal with the plurality not only of pilgrimage practice but of pilgrimage systems in Christianity. It also accounts for the historical establishment and proliferations of new forms rather than positing an evolution of a single form of pilgrimage through Christian history. Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, Reprint edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 17–20.

Christian pilgrimage risks an overly simplistic or generalized account, the historical observation that inspired this interpretation remains relevant: this history of pilgrimage within Christianity cannot be told through a narrative of the endurance of a singular practice. Rather, any theological explanation of pilgrimage must necessarily be told in the plural and account for both the endurance of particular forms and their modifications and extensions, and the emergence of new recognizable forms of pilgrimage.

Like the campus sidewalks, pilgrimage forms have an origin. There is a time before which they did not exist. There was also a time in which they were largely experimental, practices that became recognized as such only gradually as more and more feet wore their imprint into the Christian experience. The canonization of particular forms of Christian pilgrimage, however, happens not by attending to the walkers, but rather by attending to the traces they leave behind. The recognition of these forms is dependent on both the imprint and the absence of the pilgrims who created them.

The historical persistence of pilgrimage as an enduring practice of Christian worship is already well-established. The earlier chapters of this dissertation have explored a multitude of examples of Christian pilgrimage ranging from the early church until the present day: Egeria's pilgrimage around the Holy Land, Egypt, and Asia Minor, the wandering peregrinations of the Irish clergy, medieval penitential journeys to Jerusalem or Rome or Santiago and festive visits to local shrines and sanctuaries, modern Marian pilgrimages in which the local apparition is received and celebrated as a legitimate and ongoing expression of the universal, and contemporary gatherings like World Youth Day. Today, pilgrimages to Santiago, Jerusalem, and Mexico City revive these established forms and extend them in a way that would be perhaps surprising and even scandalous to those

pilgrims of earlier ages. And yet the practice of pilgrimage, in all its diverse instantiations, remains utterly recognizable even into our present day. Pilgrimage, whether as concept or practice, has never faded completely from the experience of the church.

Some pilgrim practices are or may become permanent, enduring forms of pilgrimage that are taken up over and over again either by a local pilgrimage tradition or occasionally across pilgrimage traditions. For example, pilgrimage to the Holy Land emerged early in the tradition out of a plurality of practices, which seem to have come together by the fourth century to shape and inform the practice of the pilgrim Egeria: the veneration of the martyrs, the veneration of holy persons, and the veneration of holy places.<sup>40</sup> It was the presence of the bones of the martyrs, of the holy desert mothers and fathers, of the early Christian community, and of the landscape of salvation history that effectively transformed the Jewish Israel, the Greek Palestine, and the Roman Judea into what Christians perceived as their own Holy Land. This same combination of factors has continued to inform Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land for almost two thousand years. These elements of early Christian pilgrimage have endured to the present day as a set of familiar possibilities for pilgrim practice. Indeed, the faithful still leave their homes and come to walk the paths the savior trod, touch the stone that held the cross of their savior, and stand in the cave and confirm the testimony of the women who told us that he is not there. The faithful still stand at the tombs of the martyrs and seek the wisdom and prayers of those whose witness is sealed by death and offered to us as an enduring form of the Christian testimony. The faithful still seek the living, those holy men and women who serve

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<sup>40</sup> See Chapter 1 for a longer explication of Egeria's pilgrimage.

as the permanent and enduring realizations of the Christian community in this particular place, and they sit at their feet as strangers and guests to listen and to learn what they have to teach. While the pilgrim is realized in the pilgrimaging, the recognition of the traces these pilgrims leave behind by the Christian community transform the pilgrims into enduring forms of Christian pilgrimage.

This recognition takes the form of a canonization of pilgrimage which happens not by fiat but concretely through the construction of physical and ritual infrastructure, a liturgical hagiography, which paves the pilgrim path and establishes a sense of permanence. We need only think of Constantine's construction of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, Bishop Bertrand-Sévère Mascarou Laurence's transformation of the Grotto of Lourdes, or the proliferation of pilgrim hostels along the Camino in Spain to recognize this enduring pilgrimage infrastructure. Similarly, the establishment of familiar ritual forms—carrying a pilgrim credential and scallop shell on the Camino, walking the *Via Dolorosa* in Jerusalem, or making the journey annually to Tepeyac—demarcates particular pilgrimage forms in recognizable ways. And yet, while these infrastructures serve as written rubrics of these pilgrimage forms, pilgrim practice suggests that the endurance of the form is not dependent on this infrastructure. Certainly others recognize the faithful as pilgrims when they make use of these forms. But those forms are not the only possibilities for Holy Land pilgrims, nor are they required for a genuine manifestation of the pilgrim in the world. The pilgrimage to Santiago offers an excellent example of this claim.

The pilgrimage to Santiago began in the ninth century with what legend records as the rediscovery of the bones of St. James the Apostle in northwestern Spain. Similar to

forces that called both pilgrims and crusaders to the East, religious zeal mingled with political concerns for the reconquest of the Iberian peninsula inspired civil and religious authorities to launch Santiago formally as a pilgrimage center in the tenth and eleventh centuries, especially when Muslim forces closed the road to Jerusalem to pilgrims in 1087. Its status as the site of the Jubilee celebration in 1122, conferred by Pope Calixto II, drew more and more pilgrims from throughout the Christian world. The appearance, also in the twelfth century, of the *Libre Sancti Jacobi*, a written pilgrimage infrastructure, supplemented the Pope's recognition of the pilgrimage. The book contains a remarkable collection of liturgical texts and music, the story of the translation of the apostle's relics to Spain, a catalogue of twenty-two miracles attributed to the Saint (most of which take place away from the shrine and during a pilgrim's journey to Compostela), an account linking the reconquest of Spain to the apostle's intercession, and a pilgrim's guidebook that describes the landscape, routes, hospices, points of interest, and communities. It also includes a primer on the Basque language.<sup>41</sup> By the fourteenth century, pilgrimage to Santiago began to wane. Scathing critiques by sixteenth-century reformers further numbed enthusiasm for the practice of pilgrimage.<sup>42</sup> Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the relics of Saint

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<sup>41</sup> For more on this text and an excellent history of the Camino de Santiago, see William Melczer, *The Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela* (New York: Italica Press, 1993). See also Maryjane Dunn and Linda Kay Davidson, *The Pilgrimage to Compostela in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, (New York: Garland, 1996). Linda Kay Davidson, *Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages: A Research Guide*, (New York: Garland, 1993).

<sup>42</sup> Martin Luther was notoriously harsh when it came to the practice of pilgrimage. The perception of pilgrimage as a spiritual good could simply not be supported, he argued, because there was no divine command to undertake it. Worse, the time and expense required to undertake a pilgrimage often resulted in the neglect of one's family and of one's duty to the poor. Luther wrote, "All pilgrimages should be abolished. For there is no good in them, no commandment and no duty, but only countless occasions for sin and disdain of God's commandments." Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Improvement of the Christian Estate, 1520," in *The Roots of Reform*, trans. James M. Estes (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 420.

James were either lost or hidden and were only rediscovered during the excavations of the cathedral in 1879. By the nineteenth century, pilgrims to Santiago were few and far between until the 1980s.

The reanimation of the medieval pilgrimage to Santiago began in the mid-twentieth century first with growing academic interest in the art and history of the medieval Camino and then with growing economic interest in its cultural tourism potential. In 1963, three Spanish pilgrims, dressed in medieval capes and wearing scallop shells, walked from Estella to Santiago in hopes of reviving the ancient tradition of making the pilgrimage on foot. However, it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that pilgrims rejected their cars and took up walking and cycling in imitation of their historical predecessors. The Catholic Church in Spain embraced and promoted the pilgrimage as a way of cultivating faith, especially among young Europeans. Priests living along the route also helped to revitalize the practice by expanding or improving the infrastructure and organizing pilgrimages.<sup>43</sup> A new Camino pilgrimage was born.

As much as some modern-day Camino pilgrims may imagine their practice an imitation of medieval pilgrims, many elements that define the Camino today are in fact modern innovations. Although both medieval and present-day pilgrims carried pilgrim credentials, the medieval credential was typically a letter from the pilgrim's home priest or bishop attesting to the person's status as a pilgrim and imploring their protection. The modern-day credential resembles the modern passport, with spaces for local hospices, churches, and even bars to place a stamp attesting to the pilgrim's presence in that place.

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<sup>43</sup> Nancy Frey appends her ethnography with an excellent account of the revitalization of the Camino in the twentieth-century. See Nancy Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 237-254.

While the modern credential does attest to pilgrims' authenticity and admits them to the protection of the pilgrim hostels, it also serves as a souvenir of sorts for pilgrims and as well as a record or itinerary of their journeys. Unlike the medieval credential, which attested to the commencement of one's journey as a pilgrim, the modern credential attests to a pilgrim's completion of the journey and permits their reception of the beautiful Compostela, the testimony of the church to the authenticity of the pilgrimage. Curiously, the scallop shell has experienced a similar shift. Whereas the scallop shell has been associated with Saint James since the medieval pilgrimage, the medieval pilgrim often received their shell upon arrival in Santiago as a symbol of their completion of the pilgrimage while present-day pilgrims often receive or purchase the shell at the outset of their journey and wear it like a pilgrim badge to identify themselves as such. Some of the modern infrastructure of the Camino has little connection to medieval pilgrimage. Pilgrims on the Camino today follow the painted yellow arrows that mark the formally recognized routes to Santiago.<sup>44</sup> These arrows are a product of the modern revival of the Camino pilgrimage in the 1980s. Originally conceived and painted by a local Spanish priest and scholar of the Camino as a way of facilitating the pilgrimage's twentieth-century revival, it is the Jacobean Council, a cooperative body comprised of representatives of the national government and of the local communities through which the routes pass, that today maintains those arrows.<sup>45</sup> So while present-day Camino pilgrims share some common practices with medieval pilgrims to Santiago, many would in fact be unfamiliar to their

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<sup>44</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 102, 188–98.

<sup>45</sup> Xunta de Galicia, "The Yellow Arrow—Way of Saint James in Galicia: Official Web," *The Way of Saint James*, accessed August 26, 2018, <http://www.caminodesantiago.gal/en/discover/the-way-at-the-present-time/the-yellow-arrow>. See also Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 8.

medieval counterparts. The enduring form of the medieval pilgrimage to Santiago is thus not dependent on the reproduction of certain pre-established scripts. Rather, its re-animation in the present day has realized and incarnated the medieval pilgrimage in a new time and place. It is the endurance of the form that permits its invention in a new historical context.<sup>46</sup>

This example of the Camino de Santiago also underscores that we must not confuse these enduring forms that we call pilgrimages with the practice of pilgrimage itself. Practice is not static and pilgrimages are not the rote rehearsal of pre-written scripts that are passed down through the ages. We might think of these forms as closer to languages and grammars than scripts. They offer both a specific repertoire and organizing principles for the pilgrim to use in her own expression of herself. These enduring forms, each established by previous generations of pilgrims and now recognizable throughout the Christian community, are living in as much as they continue to be animated—shaped and reshaped—by the ongoing, lived practices of Christian pilgrims. That is to say that these forms must be realized in the concrete. So while they form and inform the practice of Christian pilgrims, Christian pilgrimage is not reducible to these forms just as the English language cannot be

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<sup>46</sup> The question of authority should also be noted here. Although the institutional church in the form of the clergy often initiates and oversees certain practices of canonization—the construction and designation of basilicas, the regulation of Compostelas in Santiago, or the establishment of plenary indulgences for participation in particular pilgrim rituals, for example—they are by no means the only authority that confers significant recognition on particular forms of pilgrimage. It was the Roman Emperor rather than the bishops of Rome and Jerusalem, for example, who initiated the early construction of the basilicas in Rome and Jerusalem. Pilgrim rituals are sometimes enforced at the level of the institutional church—like requiring pilgrims to Tepeyac to wear a pilgrim badge—but just as often it is other pilgrims who perpetuate and enforce them. Nancy Frey describes an occasion on which a local man who had previously made the pilgrimage to Santiago, upon meeting a young pilgrim in the early days of her journey, gave her a scallop shell, insisting that pilgrims needed to wear it. Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 58.

reduced to the collected works of William Shakespeare. Instead, Christian pilgrimage is more akin to speech. Pilgrims make use of these forms not as obligatory scripts, but rather as spaces of possibility in and through which they enunciate their own pilgrim practices. These utterances manifest and realize the practitioner's own presence as a Christian and as a pilgrim in the world. It is this ongoing, lived practice that perpetuates, reimagines, and incarnates these enduring forms of pilgrimage in the ongoing history of the Christian people. At the same time, it is through the actualization of these enduring forms that pilgrimage renders present its living subject, the pilgrim.

The practice of writing pilgrimage forms is an ecclesial practice of canonization. It recognizes and then inscribes with some permanence those forms of Christian pilgrimage as enduring and authentic expressions of the Christian in the word. This canonization of form, this recognition and production of these pilgrimage liturgies, is an ecclesial practice. It is the pilgrim church that has generated these forms, and in turn these forms instantiate the pilgrim church on earth. The pilgrim is not only a manifestation of the individual Christian but of the church, *this* church concretely realized in *this* time and *this* place.

### **Pilgrim as the Sacrament of Christ**

In *Pilgrim Stories*, Nancy Frey describes the story of a Spanish man's difficult journey to Santiago. What began as a foot full of blisters progressed to pains in his legs as he continued to walk westward. Finally unable to walk further, he appealed to St. James for help.<sup>47</sup> Elaine Peña recounts a similar story from her pilgrimage to Tepeyac with women from Zitácuaro, Mexico. After twelve hours of walking, rest does not always provide the

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<sup>47</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 109–110.

anticipated relief. Soon after sitting down, one woman's legs were gripped with *calambres*, or muscle spasms that so immobilized her she could not even ask her companions for help.<sup>48</sup> Although this is admittedly an extreme example, Peña notes that these pilgrims attempted to embrace pain throughout their journey and its endurance was part of the pilgrims' ritual. Hours of walking, thirst and hunger, the raw force of natural elements of sun or wind or rain, sore muscles, and sleep deprivation were all part of the undertaking.<sup>49</sup> How curious is it that in a world racked with experiences of pain and suffering forced and inflicted on unwilling participants we find Christian pilgrims embracing pain not as an interruption to their pilgrimage but as a constitutive element? How unusual it is observe persons who voluntarily undertake a practice knowing it will involve suffering when so much of our everyday life is concerned with relieving unexpected or unwanted suffering. What are we to make of this inbreaking of voluntary suffering into our world?

Although perhaps unexpected from the perspective of our everyday circumstances, this kind of voluntary undertaking punctuates the telling of salvation history as first the prophets and then the apostles take up their tasks anticipating difficulty and struggle. Indeed, the culmination of both the prophets and the apostles is found in the incarnation and passion of Christ, whose broken and suffering body remains that potent symbolic utterance of divine love. It is not only Christ's suffering, but also the voluntary nature with which it is undertaken that the practice of the pilgrim recalls. While the above accounts make it impossible to determine the extent to which the pilgrims themselves interpreted their experiences as a participation in the way of their Lord, it is in the recognition rather

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<sup>48</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 101–102.

<sup>49</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 102.

than the intention that we discern in the pilgrim's practice the accompanying utterance of Christ that transforms symbol into sacrament. The presence of Christ in the body of the pilgrim is heightened and expanded as we press further into these two pilgrimage accounts.

The suffering Spaniard's prayer was soon answered by the arrival of two pilgrims who helped him to the nearest village and massaged the cramps from his legs. Peña describes herself kneeling before the woman in pain and likewise rubbing the cramps from her body as the woman struggled to articulate where she hurt. In these cases and in countless others, the pilgrim not only suffers but shows a willingness to put her body in the hands of others. Frey describes the way that feet, so often hidden from view, come to the fore on the Camino as pilgrims learn to offer their feet for washing and medical care and eventually even display them proudly by propping them on the dining table.<sup>50</sup> Peña writes that for the pilgrims from Zitácuaro, survival is a group concept.<sup>51</sup> The suffering of pilgrimage requires the pilgrim to entrust her body to the care of others. In pilgrimage, humility becomes not simply an ephemeral quality but an embodied practice and an incarnation of the Christological virtue described in the great song of the Philippians:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus  
 who, though he was in the form of God,  
 Did not regard equality with God  
 As something to be exploited,  
  
 But emptied himself,  
 Taking the form of a slave  
 Being born in human likeness.

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<sup>50</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 113–14.

<sup>51</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 102.

And being found in human form,  
 He humbled himself  
 And became obedient to the point of death—  
 Even death on a cross.<sup>52</sup>

These voluntary practices of humility, often so distinctive from quotidian life, constitute a symbolic realization of the pilgrim in the world with a distinctively Christological character. And yet it seems inadequate to simply presume that this character is the result of an intentional imitation of a Christological paradigm. In fact, these accounts offer no evidence that the pilgrims intended or interpreted their experiences as such. What both accounts do suggest, however, is that these pilgrims were also Christians and undertaking the pilgrimage as a faithful expression of their Christian identity. By constituting themselves as pilgrims, they were also constituting themselves as Christians in the world. This Christian identity points us towards another source, another subject, another who is speaking itself into being in the world. That is, pilgrimage has the possibility of realizing not only the presence of the Christian pilgrim and the presence of the church, but also the presence of Christ in the world.

The sacramental manifestation of Christ in the figure of the pilgrim takes many forms, each a concrete realization of the grace of Christ realized in time and place. These pilgrim accounts offer a plurality of Christological expressions. For example, Christ appears not only in the figure of the suffering pilgrim but also in the ones who attend them. The pilgrims on the road to Santiago, like the good Samaritan in Luke's gospel, stopped to help a fellow traveler on the road. Recounted in the words of Jesus, the figure of the good Samaritan serves not only as a moral exemplar but also as a revelation of Jesus' own self. In

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<sup>52</sup> Philippians 2:5–8.

the same way, the actions of these pilgrims are not only instantiations of their own sense of self as pilgrims on the Camino, but also realize the presence of Christ in the world. The same is true of Peña's account, where the Christ that knelt at the apostle's feet, taking each in his hands, is made present once again on a dusty road to Tepeyac as one pilgrim crouched at another's feet and took them gently in her hands. In these moments, we recognize not only the pilgrim but Christ. Made present in one that is not himself, the pilgrim is that outburst of redemptive grace and of Christ in the world. In these moments, we may truly call the pilgrim a sacrament of Christ.

The sacramental quality of the pilgrim is sometimes best recognized in rituals of hospitality that welcome the pilgrim as a sacred guest. The arrival of the Quarétaro pilgrims in Mexico City rouses people from their sleepy morning routines and brings them to their porches to cheer the pilgrims on with banners, balloons, and refreshments.<sup>53</sup> Frey's collection of pilgrim stories from the Camino is full of accounts which range from local villagers welcoming pilgrims into their homes to rituals of simple recognition. A dockworker sees a pilgrim disembark from a boat to begin his journey and silently makes the sign of the cross as he passes.<sup>54</sup> A local woman invites a pilgrim into her home for coffee.<sup>55</sup> Clergy, religious, and lay people have all established places of hospitality along the Camino that offer food, shelter, and medical care for pilgrims.<sup>56</sup> Frey explains that for many

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<sup>53</sup> Peña, *Performing Piety*, 81–82.

<sup>54</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 61.

<sup>55</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 64.

<sup>56</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 90–100, 249.

local residents and *hospitaleros*, this pilgrim hospitality is inspired by the Christian tradition that sees in the stranger a potential Christ.<sup>57</sup>

The rituals of pilgrimage that transform the stranger into pilgrim on the Camino are fundamental to understanding what might otherwise be thought of as very strange behavior: inviting unknown men and women, obvious strangers and vagabonds, into one's house. While strangers may pose a danger, pilgrims bring blessings. How lovely on the mountains, the prophet sings, are the feet of one who brings good news.<sup>58</sup> From other places, they bring news and new stories that interrupt the monotony of everyday life. Even more, they bring a sense of the sacred into one's house, just as if one were to welcome into it a holy saint, a holy relic, or the Eucharistic body of Christ. And yet the very mobility of the pilgrim on the Camino or on countless other roads in countless other places suggests a temporal quality to this manifestation of Christ. The gentle words of the resurrected Christ to Mary, "Don't hold on to me," might just as well be spoken by the pilgrim whose sacramental presence is realized in the very transitory nature which will draw her away from that place and onto the next.<sup>59</sup> Once blessing and presence is recognized and embraced, the pilgrim, like the resurrected Christ, soon vanishes from sight.<sup>60</sup>

In some instances, pilgrims did more than bestow blessings on those they met. They also took on the role of spiritual messengers. Frey recounts her own surprise at being asked to carry to St. James in Santiago the prayers and petitions of people whom she met

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<sup>57</sup> Matthew 25. Frey, 90. *Hospitaleros* are volunteer attendants that maintain the pilgrim refuges along the Camino. They are often former pilgrims who spend several weeks at a time volunteering, although today some have made this their full-time ministry.

<sup>58</sup> Isaiah 52:7, Romans 10:15.

<sup>59</sup> John 20:17.

<sup>60</sup> Luke 24:31.

even though she did not see herself as a religious pilgrim. Nevertheless she assented.<sup>61</sup>

Other pilgrims willingly embraced the role of spiritual messenger. Kaell describes how one woman collected the petitions of her neighbors (not all of whom were Christian) to take to the Holy Land, and Peña describes one young pilgrim to Tepeyac who wore a white t-shirt inscribed with prayers and petitions of family and friends who could not make the journey with her.<sup>62</sup> In these practices, sometimes initiated by pilgrims and other times initiated by those around them, pilgrims take on a role similar to the Catholic saints that so often motivate and define their pilgrimages. The pilgrim to Santiago carries petitions to St. James, the pilgrim to Tepeyac carries requests to the Virgin, the pilgrim to the Holy Land carries prayers to Christ himself. Saints and pilgrims both take the role of spiritual messenger and advocate. As advocate and intercessor, the pilgrim is transformed into Christ the priest and offers the prayers of the faithful to God. Through the practice of pilgrimage, the Christian subject constitutes herself in the world as both *this* pilgrim and *this* Christian. The Christian community's recognition of the pilgrim as an authentic realization of Christianity transforms the individual symbol into a sacramental enunciation of the divine. In the pilgrim, we meet the pilgrim God.

### **Pilgrim as Sacrament of the Eschatological Kingdom of God**

So far, we have explored how the figure of the pilgrim realizes the sacramental presence of Christ in the world. The Christological character of the pilgrim is pluriform. We can, in the pilgrims above, recognize the presence of the suffering Christ and the

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<sup>61</sup> Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 63–66.

<sup>62</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 63. Peña, *Performing Piety*, 107.

resurrected Christ, Christ the healer and Christ the priest. In these moments, the enunciations of the pilgrims and the enunciations of Christ are one and the same. The risen and ascended Christ is made present time and again in the symbol of the pilgrim, which we may rightly call sacrament. Rahner reminds us that this sacramental presents is not only the realization that historical incarnation of the mercy of Christ that has marked the world indelibly with his grace. This enduring presence of Christ sacramentally realized in history through the presence of the other has an unavoidably eschatological character:

Christ is the actual historical presence in the world of the eschatologically triumphant mercy of God. It is possible to point to a visible, historically manifest fact, located in time and space, and say, because that is there, God is reconciled to the world. There the grace of God appears in our world of time and space.<sup>63</sup>

The permanent and enduring character of the Incarnation and resurrection make possible the continued realization of Christ in the world through the sacramental presence of another. This character also makes possible the symbolic realization of the eschatological kingdom of God in history. The eschatological kingdom that awaits us is also already accomplished through the work of Christ. Thus, the present absence of the resurrected Christ is apparent not only by looking to the past but also by looking to the future. Just as the absence of the resurrected Christ permits and makes possible his ongoing sacramental presence in the world, so too does the absence of the eschatological kingdom of God permit and make possible its sacramental realization in history in that which remains definitively other: the world of the pilgrim.

Catherine Bell has described ritual as a way of acting that distinguishes and privileges a particular practice from other, usually more quotidian, activities. As we have

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<sup>63</sup> Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, 15.

already seen, pilgrims use ritualized practice as a way of constituting themselves as pilgrims. But in these pilgrim practices ritual takes on a broader function, which not only distinguishes the individual pilgrim as such but which reinvents the relationships between pilgrims and between the pilgrim and her world in ways that distinguish them from the familiar, everyday world. Pilgrim practice does not only create pilgrims; it creates pilgrim ecologies that reimagine and reconstruct the social conventions and relationships in which the pilgrim moves and acts. Pilgrims effectively imagine and make present alternate worlds. What I am describing here is something akin to what Adam Seligman and his colleagues have described as the ritual creation of the “subjunctive,” or what-if worlds.<sup>64</sup> Once again, our pilgrim itineraries can illuminate this claim.

We have already seen how the figure of a pilgrim permits and makes sense of a Camino hospitality that would defy both logic and commonsense in a more quotidian context. For example, a single woman traveling alone would most likely (and with good reason) look with suspicion on the random invitation of strangers to enter their homes. But on the Camino she gladly accepts the invitation. Likewise, upon hearing of an elderly woman who had a habit of inviting transient men and women off the street and into her home, we may think her eccentric, naïve, and perhaps even at risk of real harm.<sup>65</sup> Yet within

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<sup>64</sup> Adam Seligman et al., argue that ritual allows us to live in a world that is essentially fractured and discontinuous by “creating a temporary order through the construction of a performative, subjunctive world” (11). These theorists liken this subjective creation to the practice of play where a sense of temporary social order is constructed that allows all parties to enter knowingly into these imagined spaces. Emphasizing the subjunctive function of ritual helps to illumine the social consequences of ritual practice. Adam B. Seligman et al., *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>65</sup> In a moment of co-performative witnessing, Nancy Frey described one of her own experiences walking the Camino, to which I am referring here. “A woman, Michaela, invited me in to rest as I passed through her small village in Navarre. I accepted her generous hospitality and at one point

the ritual space of the Camino that pilgrims have constructed in collaboration with the local communities, gospel hospitality is not only imagined or anticipated, but realized in the encounter between pilgrim and host.

This pilgrim hospitality is not limited to individual encounters. The ritualized space of the pilgrim refuges not only reimagines the stranger as friend and blessing; it also imagines and creates a subjunctive economy. Pilgrim refuges or hostels on the Camino are also commonly called *donativos*, a reference to the box that receives the pilgrims' donations. In contrast to an economy of commercial exchange where travelers provide money in exchange for services, the model of the pilgrim hostel reverses this. Pilgrims are provided services—a meal, shelter for the night, even medical care—on the basis of their status as pilgrim, a status often determined solely by their presentation of the pilgrim

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she commented to me, “¡Qué sacrificio es hacer el Camino!” (What a sacrifice to make the Camino!)...I could not help but contradict Michaela in my mind. Yes, perhaps for some it is a sacrifice, but the majority of participants make the pilgrimage because it is the process, not their arrival at the goal, that is the most significant in the experience. However, it was hard to tell this woman that for me it was not a sacrifice. Rather, it was, as it is for many others, personally rewarding, a journey of self-exploration, human contact, visual and physical pleasure, catharsis, voluntary and self-imposed hardship. I began to wonder if she invited me in simply because she believed I was making a sacrifice. Suddenly I found myself in a bind. I wanted her to think that she had helped someone who was making a sacrifice. I wanted to fulfill her idea of the modern traditional pilgrim, the authentic pilgrim, and not shatter that image. I wondered, as I drank coffee in her small parlor that was covered with macramé and a few photos of herself and pilgrims, What right do I have to be here? We met on the corner in the village...I suddenly heard, “¿Peregrina?” Although I wore no symbols of the pilgrimage—no scallop shell or walking staff—my backpack was a telltale sign. I turned with a smile to the women and responded in the affirmative and we began a conversation. She then told me to come to the first house of the village. She wanted to invite me in...When I met Michael she had a rubber stamp with the village's seal that she offered to mark my pilgrim's passport. She had carved out a place for herself in the community of pilgrims and, as happens with many of the villagers who take an interest in the pilgrims who constantly pass through, a name. I do not mean to imply that her acts of generosity come from a vain interest in being famous in the Camino's group network. Rather I had the impression that her belief in being a good Catholic motivated her acts of kindness...Suddenly whether the Camino was a sacrifice for me became less important. Sacrifice is how Michaela understood what she gave to pilgrims.” Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 63–65.

credential. In return, pilgrims offer a donation in gratitude for the hospitality and as a way of “paying it forward,” knowing that their donation will help to provide shelter and food for those who come after them. In the infrastructure of the pilgrimage, a system of commercial exchange is ritually replaced by a gift-economy.<sup>66</sup>

Pilgrims on the Camino and pilgrims to the Holy Land both expressed a desire to separate themselves from the exchange economy as pilgrims—effectively distinguishing themselves from “tourists.” Yet, the practical means of accomplishing this goal differed. On the Camino, pilgrims distinguished themselves by their manner of travel as well as by the way they consumed the experience. They made use of the system of the *donativos* instead of staying in the hotels also available along the route. In relying on the *donativos* for food and lodging, the Camino pilgrims also distinguished themselves from other travelers by not establishing an itinerary ahead of time. In fact, most pilgrim hostels do not accept reservations and receive pilgrims on a first come, first served basis. Submitting to the unpredictability of the road is an essential component of participation in the gift-economy of the Camino.

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<sup>66</sup> Marie-Louis Chauvet finds within the liturgical/sacramental practice of the church a similar logic. Chauvet contrast the logic of the marketplace, which assigns value to the commodities being exchanged, with the logic of symbolic or gift exchange in which the objects exchanged, be they money or other items, mediate and make present the relationship between the parties involved. In a gift economy, “the true objects being exchanged are the subjects themselves” (*Symbol and Sacrament*, 106). At stake in this discussion for Chauvet is the way that we in the liturgy enter into the gratuitous logic of God. The same is at stake for the pilgrim. In the space of pilgrimage, the economy is transformed into one that places little value on objects themselves apart from the ways they mediate the pilgrim community and transform it into something more akin to the economy and therefore the kingdom of God. See Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence*, trans. Madeleine M. Beaumont and Patrick Madigan (Collegeville: Pueblo Books, 1994), 99–109. Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments—The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Collegeville: Pueblo Books, 2001), 117–27.

Kaell depicts very different tactics taken by the pilgrims to the Holy Land. Like pilgrims on the Camino, these Holy Land pilgrims constituted themselves as pilgrims by their practices of spending. Yet their concern to distinguish themselves from “tourists” took tangible form as pilgrims discussed ways of financing the pilgrimage itself. Some received monetary gifts from family or friends to make the pilgrimage. Others described the pilgrimage as the result of years of “saving up their little pennies.”<sup>67</sup> While many pilgrims had indeed saved for many years to afford the trip, Kaell notes that this way of narrating also enunciates a justification for the pilgrimage that both distinguishes the pilgrimage from other forms of travel and privileges it over a mere vacation.<sup>68</sup>

Unlike the Camino pilgrims, many of the Holy Land pilgrims expressed their intention not to engage in any form of commercial exchange while on pilgrimage, like buying personal souvenirs.<sup>69</sup> Others indicated that they would spend money only on gifts for those at home who could not accompany them.<sup>70</sup> The greatest challenge to this desire to step out of the economy of commercial exchange comes when attending to basic needs: food and shelter. Whereas pilgrims on the Camino can easily opt out of an economy that caters to tourists in favor of the system of pilgrim refuges, the Holy Land does not boast the same sort of built infrastructure. Holy Land pilgrims, then, accomplish the same goal of “opting out” of economies of commercial exchange by pre-paying a single lump sum for the pilgrimage to an organizing group that then arranges for lodging and meals. The pilgrim participates in the transactional exchange at the very early stages of her pilgrim

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<sup>67</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 62.

<sup>68</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 62.

<sup>69</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 62.

<sup>70</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 175–82.

performance. The exchange is often faceless (the pilgrim mails a check or makes an online payment) and is made between the pilgrim and a US intermediary rather than the pilgrim and the local vendor who supplies the accommodations. While on pilgrimage, pilgrims are able to opt out of practices like paying for their hotels or settling the tab for their evening meals. These activities are tended to by someone else and typically out of sight of the pilgrims.<sup>71</sup> This system is no less a pilgrim infrastructure than the one that exists on the Camino. In the Holy Land, this system makes it possible for the pilgrim to imagine her relationships not as commercial transactions between a client and a range of vendors, but rather as exchanges between a traveler and locals or perhaps even between a guest and hosts. The practice of pre-paying for tours opens a new space in which a different set of social conventions and relationships can be realized.

One group of Holy Land pilgrims used the language of liberation theology and Catholic Social Teaching, which envision the realization of the kingdom in the social structures of human history, to frame the pilgrim economy. Interactions with local Palestinian Christians fostered a deep connection and concern between these American Christians and their Palestinian counterparts that often elicited both generous donations and shaped a moral imperative to purchase goods from Arab vendors.<sup>72</sup> Kaell notes that in contrast to those who defined their pilgrimage by limiting their use of money, this moral imperative often compelled even unnecessary purchases, indeed ones that were often deliberately left behind. The purchased items were of little consequence. The pilgrims

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<sup>71</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 124.

<sup>72</sup> Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 122–27.

envisioned the exchange as an exercise of Christian justice. The ritual of purchasing items honored the vendors' need for material sustenance and also their dignity as workers.

Each in their own way, the pilgrims on the Camino and in the Holy Land both imagined and brought about in small and incomplete ways the Christian vision of the kingdom of God. The very ritual practices which pilgrims use to set apart and privilege their activities are also the symbolic manifestations of the promises of God fulfilled in history. The same symbolic logic that helps us to recognize the presence of Christ in the pilgrim also discloses the eschatological realization of sacramental/liturgical practice. The sacramental quality of pilgrimage subsists not only in the symbolic realization of Christ in the figure of the pilgrim, but also in pilgrim liturgies which are themselves symbolic presentations of the eschatological kingdom. Not to be confused with the eschatological kingdom of God, pilgrim practice is the symbolic, sacramental presentation of the kingdom of God.

This chapter has explored the continuity between symbol and subject that makes possible the realization of Christ's eschatological salvation in the space between the already of salvation and the not yet of the kingdom. It reimagines pilgrimage as a sacramental ecclesial practice in which the pilgrim, the pilgrim church, and the pilgrim God enter into human history time and time again, each in a unique and unrepeatable moment that tangibly realizes the grace of God in and for the world. And while this account of pilgrimage has emerged from careful attention to the lived practices of Christian pilgrims, the pilgrim itineraries traced in the previous chapter also push back against this account. It is difficult to find in these itineraries a uniform account of the realization of grace. These

itineraries also contain moments that disrupt and disturb this vision, creating a dissonance in theology of pilgrimage as the realization of grace.

Strategies of compartmentalization can help to make sense of these discrepancies. Indeed, in these fractured accounts of pilgrimages woven together into itineraries we could easily write out these dissonant practices. We could distinguish between “authentic moments” which are pilgrimage and moments which stand outside our normative theological frame. Perhaps practices that do not conform to our sacramental ideal are not really “pilgrimage” at all. Or perhaps they are pilgrim failures, places where pilgrims fall short of authentic pilgrimage. We can decide according to a sacramental ideal, which practices are pilgrimage and which are not. And yet these strategies avoid the problem of dissonance in our pilgrim theologies rather than attending to it. They solve the problem once again by the dual processes of forgetting and flattening out and they remake pilgrimage according only to its best image. Furthermore, the normative separation of pilgrim practice from non-pilgrim practice has an arbitrary character that comes from its conformity to an ideal rather than its realization in the world. It is difficult to contend that some of these dissonant practices are not in fact genuine realizations of the pilgrim in the world: accounts of pilgrims ostracizing those who pilgrimage differently than they do; instances of pilgrims using their own status to impose their will on others; piles of pilgrim litter or waste left in the wake of the pilgrim column. These too are the tangible ways pilgrims have uttered themselves into being. These too demand sustained attention in a theology from pilgrimage.

## Chapter 5

### The Pilgrim Church

There is a crisis in the church today. In January of 2002, the Boston Globe published a story that accused then head of the Boston archdiocese, Cardinal Bernard Law, of allowing one of his priests to continue in parish ministry despite a demonstrated pattern of child sexual abuse.<sup>1</sup> In that same year, the Globe published hundreds of stories that revealed the disturbing abuse of children at the hands of local clergy and an alarming tolerance for this behavior on the part of religious leaders. The investigation that ensued ended in Cardinal Law's resignation. But this was only the beginning of a crisis emerging within the Catholic Church.

In the sixteen years that have followed since the Boston Globe's initial reporting, similar revelations have surfaced in dioceses across the United States and around the world. Public outcry at these revelations within the Catholic Church and outside of it have prompted both civil and criminal investigations, the most recent of which was the report by a grand jury in Pennsylvania that named more than three hundred priests who were credibly accused of sexually assaulting over a thousand children during the past seven decades. A review of church documents again suggested that senior church officials in the diocese and in the Vatican knew of these allegations long before they were uncovered by the grand jury, and that they had deliberately covered them up. A recent report in Germany found that at least 1670 priests have been involved in the sexual abuse of over 3600

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Rezendes, "Church Allowed Abuse by Priest for Years," The Boston Globe, January 6, 2002, sec. A.

children during this same seventy-year span. Investigators also found evidence that church files documenting this abuse had been intentionally manipulated or destroyed.<sup>2</sup> Although the systemic exploitation of children is among the most upsetting of accusations that have surfaced in recent years, stories from adults have also illumined the breadth of these patterns of abuse at the hands of Catholic clergy. American seminarians have described sexual exploitation at the hands of a powerful cardinal and religious sisters in Chile and India have begun to share their stories of rape and sexual assault by local priests and bishops.<sup>3</sup> Accusations of abuse have also been leveled at lay religious men and women, most notably in the 2009 Ryan report, which detailed widespread abuse at over 250 Catholic social institutions in Ireland.<sup>4</sup> The haunting words from the Pennsylvania grand jury describe well the scope and scale of this unfolding ecclesial crisis: “For many of us, those earlier stories happened someplace else, someplace away. Now we know the truth: it happened everywhere.”<sup>5</sup>

Evidence of such widespread abuse within the Catholic Church’s leaders and institutions has elicited cries from the faithful for restitution, resignation, and reform. Surely this ecclesial crisis demands such a sustained and multifaceted pastoral response. But the crisis in the church today is not only pastoral; it is also theological. The persistent

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<sup>2</sup> Katrin Bennhold and Melissa Eddy, “Catholic Clergy in Germany Abused 3,600 Children Over 7 Decades, Study Says,” *The New York Times*, September 12, 2018, A8.

<sup>3</sup> Laurie Goodstein and Sharon Otterman, “Ousted U.S. Cardinal Left a Trail of Abused Recruits,” *The New York Times*, July 15, 2018, A1. Dutt Barkha, “In India, a Nun’s #MeToo Moment Exposes the Failings of the Catholic Church,” *The Washington Post*, September 14, 2018; “New Complaints of Abuse among Good Samaritan Sisters in Chile,” *Catholic News Agency*, July 26, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, Ireland, “Executive Summary, Commission Report,” May 20, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Office of Attorney General, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, “Report I of the 40th Statewide Investigating Grand Jury (Redacted),” July 27, 2018.

concern to cover up sin in the church points to a paucity of ecclesiological imagination that cannot conceive of the presence of sin in the church and so acts as if it is were not there at all. When our theologies work to suppress evidence of sin in the church or to dismiss it as irrelevant, we should hardly be surprised to find the tangible manifestations of these attitudes in our communities. In addition to a pastoral response, this ecclesial crisis suggests that we have not yet developed sufficient theological discourses that take seriously the persistent presence of sin in and by the church. Better attention to lived ecclesial practices like pilgrimage can provoke a new ecclesiological understanding and press for an expanded account of ecclesial practice that attends not only to the sacramental, but also to the sinful manifestations of the church in the world.

### **A Church of Sinners or a Sinful Church?**

The affirmation that the church is holy is part of the church's profession of faith. The People of God, the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit: the church's profession of her own holiness is not a statement about her own accomplishments but about what God has accomplished in her.<sup>6</sup> To proclaim that the church is holy despite all evidence to the

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<sup>6</sup> The use of pronouns in theological discourse about social subjects like the church is always fraught and the long history of gendered pronouns in ecclesiology carries its own baggage, which in its worst moments continues to reinforce the subjugation of women to men as a matter of theological revelation rather than a social and even sinful construct. The use of the impersonal "it" also poses a linguistic problem, tending to obscure the subjective nature of the church and upholding only its objective institutions. As explored further above, this objectification of the church makes it possible to claim it is holy (as the objective recipient of the grace of God), but not that it is sinful (as a subjective actor in the world). In light of the imperfections of our language, I have elected to employ the feminine pronouns "she" and "her" for the church. These pronouns reflect the subjective nature of the ecclesia as not only a symbol but also a symbolic actor. Equally important, the feminine pronoun also parallels my use of the same set of pronouns for the individual pilgrims who are themselves symbolic manifestations of both God and the church in the world. The use of the feminine for church is here meant to illumine the liturgical performance and leadership that is not restricted to men via the clergy. Instead, the femininity ascribed to the church through the use of these pronouns recognizes and affirms in particular the ability of women to

contrary is not only to point to the promise of God but also to its fulfillment. The establishment of the church in the space created by the risen and ascended Christ is the very enunciation of a saving God taking place already and tangibly in the world. The church's profession that she is holy is a witness and testimony to what has already been accomplished in Christ.

At the same time, that this holy church is comprised of sinners should come as no great surprise to her members. Even if one's own experience in the church has not already substantiated this claim, we still affirm as a matter of faith that Christ's grace comes to us while we are still sinners (Rom. 5:8). This paradox of holiness and sin has long posed a theological problem for the church that has too often resulted in theological claims that isolate the church from the actions of her sinful members. Theological efforts to distinguish the holiness of the church's institutions and sacraments from the sinfulness of her members emerged early in the tradition. Augustine's concern to insulate the sacrament of baptism from the sinful disposition of its minister emphasized divine action in the sacrament rather than its human performance.<sup>7</sup> This distinction grew into the medieval *ex opere operato*, which emphasized a clerical power divested from the personal purity of the minister.<sup>8</sup> This sacramental theology serves an ecclesiology that also differentiates between the holy church (in her institutions, sacraments, and ministers) and its faithful yet sinful members. This ecclesiology was frequently articulated through the metaphor of the

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symbolize the church not only in their pious lives but also in their liturgical performance and leadership.

<sup>7</sup> Saint Augustine, *On Baptism*, book IV, chapter 10.

<sup>8</sup> For an excellent treatment of the principle of *ex opere operato*, see Antonio Alonso, "Eucharistic Hope in a Commodified World" (Doctoral Dissertation, Emory University, 2017), 180–91.

medieval penitential pilgrim who, having been exiled from his home journeyed towards a shrine with the church's promise of forgiveness and salvation should he reach his goal. So too, the sinful children of Adam and Eve, having been exiled from the garden of God, journey to their heavenly home with the promises of Christ and the help and guiding light of Holy Church.<sup>9</sup> This church is conceived as a church *for* sinners, not a church *of* sinners.

This ecclesiology, which has so imbued the church's historical understanding of itself that Karl Rahner called it "traditional," endures even today.<sup>10</sup> The persistence of this ecclesiology cannot be isolated, then or now, from the hubris that is the concern of the clergy to maintain their power and authority, be it political, spiritual, or moral, in a world less and less willing to take this authority as a given. Nevertheless, we can also recognize in this ecclesiology the concern to affirm the creedal statement that declares the church to be holy. Because sin is opposed to holiness, the holiness of the church, it is thought, must reside someplace other than the obvious sinfulness and brokenness of her members. And yet the consequence of such a theology is to re-create the church against our own image and to turn the church into an idealized construct that exists not *in* its members, but *apart* from them, *over* them, and even *in spite of* them.

The ecclesial shifts of the Second Vatican Council have made it more difficult to sustain an ecclesiology that separates sinners from the church. The Council stressed an ecclesiology that understands the church not just in terms of its sacraments and institutions, but as the entire People of God. Yet once the church widened its self-

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<sup>9</sup> For a fuller exploration of the development of this pilgrim ecclesiology, see Chapter 2, "Conceptual Domain 2: Penitents and Exiles," 107-116.

<sup>10</sup> Karl Rahner, "The Sinful Church in the Decrees of Vatican II," in *Theological Investigations*, trans. Boniface Kruger and Karl H. Kruger, vol. 6 (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1969), 277.

understanding to include those wayward wanderers, it also rediscovered the presence of sinners within the holy People of God. Karl Rahner anticipated this problem even ahead of the Council in an essay first published in 1947:

For the word 'Church' signifies in this connection the visible presence of God and his grace in this world in sacramental signs, it means the historical embodiment of Christ in the here and now of the world until he comes again to 'appear' in the glory of his Godhead; 'Church' signifies here what is human, which while it is really distinct from what is divine is yet inseparably united with it. And 'a sinner in the Church' does not here signify a person who has been in conflict with the police (this can happen occasionally even to the dearest friend of God), but 'sinner' in this article of faith signifies a person who is in reality devoid of God's grace, a person who is wandering far from God, a person whose destiny is perhaps moving with fearful consistency towards an ultimate eternal damnation. And this sinner belongs to this Church: he is not merely entered in her official register but is her member, a part of the visible presence of God's grace in the world, a member of the Body of Christ! Is this perhaps something self-evident? Is this something which is already unmistakably and without difficult a matter of our experience? Or is this not rather a truth which in sheer incomprehensibility far outstrips anything which unbelievers can bring forward in their accusations against the Church and their protests at her unholiness?<sup>11</sup>

Despite his affirmation that both sin and holiness exist together in the church and that sin is even a part of the church's tangible presence in the world, Rahner ultimately concludes that sin and holiness do not belong to the church in the same way. Where the church makes holiness tangible in history, Rahner finds an expression and thus a revelation of the church's true being. Alternatively, Rahner describes the appearance of sin in the church as a lie or a contradiction of the church's being that veils her true self from view: "sin remains in her a reality which contradicts her nature, but her holiness is the manifestation of her essential being."<sup>12</sup> Here Rahner certainly presses earlier triumphalist ecclesiologies towards more humble claims and yet he still stops short of the idea that the church itself

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<sup>11</sup> Karl Rahner, "The Church of Sinners," in *Theological Investigations*, trans. Boniface Kruger and Karl H. Kruger, vol. 6 (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1969), 257. Italics in original, underlining mine.

<sup>12</sup> Rahner, "The Church of Sinners," 265.

can sin. In fact, Rahner still persists in insulating the church from any subjective claim to sinfulness by locating the sin not in the church itself, but rather in its members. Thus, the sinfulness of the church is more accurately described as the consequence of the sin of its members rather than as an act or utterance of the church herself and so Rahner proposes a remedy that is appropriate to this diagnosis.

When encountering sin in the church, Rahner insists that our first response must be one of humility and confession by which we recognize the appearance of sin as a reflection of our own sinful shortcomings, shortcomings that distort and hide the true nature of the church.<sup>13</sup> Second, Rahner suggests that the experience of enduring sin in the church is a participation in the suffering of Christ that makes the conquest of sin possible.<sup>14</sup> Together, these remedies allow Rahner to suggest, perhaps with some degree of accuracy, that the offense Christians take at the experience of sin in our church does not reflect our scandal that such sin is found in the midst of the church but instead reflects our own sinful nature, which resents that we must bear sin's effects:

We are offended, for example, by the 'hard-hearted clergy' not usually because they are empty of love before God, but because they give nothing to *us* or because their 'failure' humiliates *our* pride in the holy Church, as whose members we appear before the heathen, and brings *us* into disrepute in the eyes of those who are without. Why do we not love the Church in such a way as to suffer humbly and silently the ignominy of her sin? That would make her holy much more effectively than our protests against the scandals in the Church, no matter how much they may often be called for and however praiseworthy they may be."<sup>15</sup>

While Rahner does make space in his ecclesiology for the inclusion of sinful members in the church, ultimately he cannot tolerate the idea that sin can be attached to the subject of

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<sup>13</sup> Rahner, "The Church of Sinners," 267.

<sup>14</sup> Rahner, "The Church of Sinners," 264.

<sup>15</sup> Rahner, "The Church of Sinners," 264. Italics in the original, underlining mine.

the church herself. If sin is understood merely as a distortion of the true church, then the responsibility for such sin lies solely with the individual who must both repent for their own part in the sin of the church and silently bear the consequences of the sins of others. Rahner's solution has a certain amount of nobility if one presumes, as he seems to, that those who must bear the brunt of these sins are those Pharisees who have gathered around, prepared to hurl their stones at the sins of another without first examining their own.<sup>16</sup> And yet, how different must our response be when we realize that those victims of these sins are in fact the most vulnerable among us? Any description of sin in the church that results in the sanctification of the silence and endurance of those who are victims of it certainly cannot be sufficient to the ecclesiological crisis of today.

The bishops at Vatican II turned to the familiar trope of the sinful pilgrim to reimagine how sin in the church is thinkable today. *Lumen Gentium* offered a substantive answer to the "problem" of the presence of sinners in the church through the image of the pilgrim. By placing the church in an eschatological frame, the Constitution envisioned the Pilgrim Church as the receptive subject of the ongoing work of Christ in the world: "the universal sacrament of salvation."<sup>17</sup> This image depicts the church not as the source of salvation, but rather as its site, and as such it has already been made holy through the work of Christ. By imagining the church as a penitential pilgrim on her way to the heavenly Jerusalem, the Council was able to acknowledge both the already and the not yet of God's salvific grace. The inclusion of sinners in the church is itself a sign that the restoration and reconciliation of sinners promised by Christ has already begun. Because the salvific work of

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<sup>16</sup> Rahner, "The Church of Sinners," 267–69.

<sup>17</sup> Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium," para. 48.

God has not yet been brought to completion, the church which these pilgrims comprise is also still imperfect.<sup>18</sup> In the Council's Decree on Ecumenism, this image was more pronounced. The Decree depicts the Pilgrim Church as the subject of purification and renewal and called her to continual reform.<sup>19</sup> Although the bishops at Vatican II wrestled with the implications of finding among the People of God sinners as well as saints, the conciliar documents ultimately fell victim to the same Rahnerian shortcomings that simply cannot imagine a theology of the church, even a pilgrim church, that can hold both sanctity and sin as part of the character of the church itself. While the Council admitted to a church whose sanctity is true but imperfect, it stopped short of acceding that the church is sinful.

Still, the hesitancy of the conciliar texts on this matter should not be construed as lack of interest in the topic at the Council. Austrian bishop Stephen Laszlo was especially outspoken on this issue:

Warnings have often been expressed already in the Council against a neglect of the teaching on the eschatological goal of the Church. The Church cannot be understood except as the eschatological people of God, on pilgrimage through time, proclaiming the death and resurrection of the Lord until he comes. But this eschatological pilgrimage is often understood too abstractly. We might hear talk, for instance, of the difficulties and obscurities of the Church's journey in this world. But if we speak of the pilgrim Church in the biblical sense, we understand more than that: we say the Church is on pilgrimage because in all its difficulties and miseries this people is not without fault, not without sin...

Men of this world often point out that the concrete Church is very different from the Church described by theologians and preachers. Theology seems to describe the Church of *saints*, but life itself seems to show us a Church of *sinner*s. What are we to say to this question which is very frequently asked by Christians in our day? If our answer wants to convince men of our day, it must not be compounded of triumphalism and pretense, but must be realistic and completely sincere. In other words, on this earth we may not proclaim only an ecclesiology of glory; that belongs

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<sup>18</sup> Etenim Ecclesia iam in terris vera sanctitate licet imperfecta insignitur. Vatican Council II, "Lumen Gentium," para. 48.

<sup>19</sup> Vatican Council II, "Unitatis Redintegratio," paras. 4, 6.

to the end of time. When we speak of the pilgrim Church, we must always begin from an ecclesiology of the Cross.<sup>20</sup>

For Laszlo, an ecclesiology of the cross pointed to the radical non-identity between Christ and the pilgrim church.<sup>21</sup> Unqualified claims of holiness belong to Christ who alone is without sin. The holiness of the church on the other hand lies precisely in her identity as a sinner redeemed. In Christ a community of sinners becomes a community of penitents who boldly approach the throne of grace confident of the power of the cross to forgive even the church herself. In his speech, Laszlo did not simply propose the possibility of a penitential church. He pointed to the moments this penitential church is already being constituted in time and place. When the church begins its Eucharistic celebration with the Confiteor or prays “forgive us our trespasses,” he recognizes that these are not merely the prayers of its individual members that somehow stand apart from the holy church. Rather, they are the authentic utterance of the church herself who in her prayer and worship tangibly realizes herself as sinner. The theological task of the church does not begin with reform, but rather with a recognition of its non-identity with Christ and a humble proclamation of the church as both holy and sinful. Only then can true reform begin.

In the end, Laszlo’s ecclesiology of the cross did not prevail. The conciliar texts largely assign the responsibility for sin in the church to its individual members, imagined most frequently in the figure of the pilgrim. However, in adopting the metaphor of the pilgrim church, the Council nevertheless opened the possibility of recognizing in the

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<sup>20</sup> Stephen Laszlo, “Sin in the Holy Church of God,” in *Council Speeches of Vatican II*, ed. Hans Küng, Yves Congar, and Daniel O’Hanlon (Glen Rock: Paulist Press, 1964), 44–45.

<sup>21</sup> Laszlo writes “There should not be only an insistence everywhere on the union of the Church with Christ, but also on the distance of the pilgrim and penitent Church from Christ, who is the Lord of the Church and who alone is holy.” Laszlo, “Sin in the Holy Church of God,” 47.

metaphorical image of the penitent pilgrim the possibility of a sinful church. Richard Gaillardetz has suggested that the idea that the church more closely resembles its sinful members on earth rather than its saints in heaven has become the primary point of reception of the image of the Pilgrim Church in post-conciliar Catholicism.<sup>22</sup> The popularity of this idea of a sinful church ultimately proved too much for some in the church hierarchy. Responding to concerns that a too human depiction of the church that included the possibility of ecclesial sinfulness could embolden the church's detractors, reinforce prejudice against Catholics, and ascribe responsibility to contemporary Catholics for sins committed in the past, the International Theological Commission ultimately moved away from this metaphor of the pilgrim church in their 1999 report on the church's faults of the past. In rejecting the claim that the church could sin, the commission replaced this revised metaphor of the Pilgrim Church with a more traditional metaphor that distinguishes between Holy Mother Church and her (sinful) children.<sup>23</sup> This retreat points to the limits of our theological imagination when confronted with the experience of a holy, sinful church. The metaphor of the pilgrim church has preserved the church's sanctity and suggested the church's sinfulness, but never both at the same time.

The turn to liturgical and especially Eucharistic practice as the source and summit of the church's self-understanding has largely served as an affirmation of the church's holiness. The claim that the church actualizes that holiness in her sacramental liturgical practice stands as a bulwark against the idea that the church herself can sin. In the church's

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<sup>22</sup> Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 101–102.

<sup>23</sup> International Theological Commission, "Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past" (1999).

liturgy at least, we can find the realization of the church's true self, the self that is so often distorted by the sin of her members outside of the liturgical event. This statement can only be true if we also acknowledge its limits. To affirm unequivocally that the holiness of the church is realized in the church's liturgical practice does not necessarily require us to insist also that this is the only possible outcome of the church's liturgical practice. To do so would risk the very problematic slippage that Laszlo cautioned against and suggest that the church shares in the sinless quality of the divine. In the current ecclesial climate, it is especially tempting to look to the church's liturgies as the realization of the church's best self, her ideal self, holy and spotless before the Lord. What then does it mean when liturgy sometimes fails to do this?

Both an empirical account of the church in the world and a theological attention to the liturgical practices through which the church utters herself into being informed Laszlo's proposal to the Council. Where the metaphor of pilgrimage proved too abstract, he turned to the concrete practice of the liturgy and found there the presence of a confessing church. Liturgical practice was able to hold together the church's manifestation of sin and sanctity in a way that the metaphor of the pilgrim did not. Laszlo's turn from abstract metaphorical thinking to the lived practice of liturgy in light of questions provoked by larger experiences of sin in the church is a practice of ecclesial self-reflection. By paying attention to the way the church realizes herself symbolically in the world, we gain a better understanding of our ecclesial self.

But perhaps Laszlo was too quick to move away from the image of the pilgrim. Pilgrimage remains an effective resource for thinking theologically about the church if we approach it not as metaphor but as liturgy. Attention to pilgrimage as liturgical practice can

inform pilgrim-talk in ways that lead to a richer theological understanding of the church. Anthropologist Christopher McKevitt offers an account of the pilgrimage to Padre Pio's shrine in southern Italy that resists efforts to see pilgrimage as solely sacramental. It also resists an easy separation between authentic pilgrimage practices and others that are more problematic and instead presses towards a more robust theology of sanctity and sin in the pilgrim church.

### **The Pilgrims of Padre Pio**

Any description of pilgrims to San Giovanni Rotondo must begin with an account of Padre Pio, the saint whose life opened the space for a pilgrimage in his name. Pio was born in 1887 in southern Italy. He entered the Capuchin order at age sixteen and was ordained a priest seven years later. In 1916, Pio was sent to the remote friary of Santa Maria delle Grazie outside the small mountain town of San Giovanni Rotondo. From here, Pio's public ministry grew from the spiritual direction of a few of the local women to a national and even international spectacle. Pio became a popular spiritual guide and confessor, his spiritual reputation strengthened by reports beginning in 1918 of his reception of the stigmata, the physical appearance of the wounds of Christ. Pio's reputation was spread not only by word of mouth, but with the help of the Italian press, who regularly printed stories about the "stigmatized friar of the Gargano."<sup>24</sup> Soon, the quiet friary began to attract an unprecedented number of visitors.

These pilgrims recognized Padre Pio as a true *alter Christus*. His reception of the stigmata transformed both his life and his body into the very image of Christ. Although Pio

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<sup>24</sup> McKevitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 81.

usually covered his stigmatized hands with fingerless gloves, he would remove them for the celebration of the Eucharist, his bloodied palms a realization of the sacramental faith that it is indeed Christ who is present as both priest and victim at the altar of our salvation.

McKevitt explains, “Pio’s life did not merely commemorate the crucifixion of Christ; it made it present again.”<sup>25</sup> For Pio, his share in Christ’s suffering also allowed him a share in Christ’s powers of healing and forgiveness and many pilgrims testified to his ability to cure sick bodies and souls. Pio realized not only the person of Christ, but also his saving grace in the world. The presence of the crucified Christ in Pio was also the presence of salvation. In the person of Padre Pio, devotees recognized the symbol of Christ—a symbol not confused with Christ but at the same time inseparable from him.

Although many of those who climbed the hill to visit Pio at the friary were from local villages, those from further away who could afford to make the trip also came, including the young priest Karol Wojtyla who, as Pope John Paul II, would eventually oversee Pio’s beatification and canonization. The location of San Giovanni Rotondo on another pilgrimage route to Monte Sant’Angelo also facilitated the development of the friary as a pilgrimage center, since many pilgrims stopped to visit Pio on their way to St. Michael’s shrine.<sup>26</sup> Pilgrims to San Giovanni Rotondo carried their devotion to Padre Pio home with them and there established groups dedicated to praying for the intentions of Pio and to his charitable support. Other pilgrims did not return home and instead became what McKevitt

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<sup>25</sup> Christopher McKevitt, “‘To Suffer and Never to Die’: The Concept of Suffering in the Cult of Padre Pio Da Pietrelcina,” *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 1, no. 1 (1991): 59.

<sup>26</sup> McKevitt, “San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio,” 93.

calls “resident devotees” who settled in the area of the friary in order to remain close to their living saint.<sup>27</sup>

During his life, Padre Pio’s spiritual magnetism was not without controversy. As so frequently happens with charismatic individuals, what is recognized as holiness by the people becomes cause for concern in the ranks of institutional leadership, and stories of his sanctity were frequently at odds with more disturbing accounts. Local bishops and even Pio’s own religious superior raised suspicion about the source of his popularity and the veracity of his claims to the stigmata. Other priests and bishops were dismayed about the diversion of resources from their own local ministries as people responded to Pio’s call for charitable contributions. Most concerning were reports of problematic sexual relationships with women during confession or spiritual direction. Pope John XXIII called Pio’s actions an “immense deception.”<sup>28</sup> In both the 1920s and again in the 1960s, the Vatican limited Pio’s

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<sup>27</sup> McKevitt, “San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio,” 93.

<sup>28</sup> Concerns about Pio’s conduct in the confessional had already surfaced prior to this incident. Pio’s tendency to raise his voice loudly in the confessional, especially when he either granted or denied absolution, broke the seal of the sacrament and often made public what was meant to be private. Nevertheless, pilgrims flocked to San Giovanni Rotondo, eager to confess to Padre Pio. Although one pilgrim was struck by the juxtaposition of the large crowds and the “hasty,” “utterly wrong” way Padre Pio conducted the confession, this pilgrim’s assessment seems to not have been the predominant one at the shrine and the lines at the confessionals lengthened so much that the Capuchins introduced a booking system and only those with reservations could confess to Pio (Luzzatto, *Padre Pio*, 90). The system lent itself to abuse. It was managed by a handful of resident devotees who often manipulated the list of reservations. Concerns about the way confession was being conducted led some of Pio’s detractors to hide recording devices in his living quarters (and possibly even in the confessional, although evidence for this is inconclusive). The tapes revealed something even more problematic: sexual misbehavior. When presented with this evidence, Pope John XXIII wrote in his private notes, “I am sorry about P.P., who does have a soul to save, and for whom I pray intensely. The events—that is, the discovery by means of tapes, *si vera sunt quae referentur* [if what they imply is true], of his intimate and improper relations with the women who make up the impenetrable praetorian guard around his person—point to a terrible calamity of souls, a calamity diabolically prepared to discredit the Holy Church in the world, and here in Italy especially. In the serenity of my spirit, I humbly persist in thinking that the Lord *faciat cum tentazione provandum* [is doing this as a test of faith], and that out of this immense deception will

public ministry and he was not allowed to meet with women alone. The veracity of these claims about Pio continues to be disputed. Was Pio a sinner or a saint? Paul VI lifted the restraints on Pio's public ministry in the face of public petition shortly before Pio's death in 1968, claiming to have been misinformed of the true nature of Pio's holy life and work. In 2002, Pope John Paul II canonized Padre Pio and both Pope Benedict and Pope Francis have made their own public pilgrimages to his shrine. The canonization and papal pilgrimages have effectively ratified the popular sense of the faithful and have recognized both the life of Padre Pio and the ongoing pilgrimage to his shrine as authentic ecclesial practices.

Today, the area around the friary, now called the Cappuccini, looks very different from the remote mountain hilltop Pio once wrote about to his superior.<sup>29</sup> The long dirt track that initially separated Pio's friary from the town is today the Viale Cappuccini, a wide road lined with houses, shops, and hotels that leads to the main shrine complex and a large hospital.<sup>30</sup> In 2006, a new church was dedicated that can hold more than 35,000 people. At the shrine, pilgrim practice was primarily that of prayer. Pilgrims attended daily mass, prayed the liturgy of the hours, and confessed their sins. Pilgrims and devotees also imitated Pio's suffering of the stigmata through practices of penance, self-denial, and mortification. McKevitt writes that "suffering understood this way becomes the currency through which salvation and sanctification are obtained."<sup>31</sup> Like the suffering of Pio and the

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come lessons for the clarity and the well-being of the many." Fondo Roncalli, "Scritti Del Servo Di Dio, Vol. XI-127" (entry, June 25, 1960). For a substantive account of this controversy as well as a longer excerpt of John XXIII's written comments, see Sergio Luzzatto, *Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age*, trans. Frederika Randall (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), 268–71.

<sup>29</sup> McKevitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 80.

<sup>30</sup> McKevitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 85–86.

<sup>31</sup> McKevitt, "'To Suffer and Never to Die,'" 60.

suffering of Christ, the suffering of the pilgrims was understood as altruistic. It was a way not only to obtain one's own salvation, but to obtain help and salvation for others. By a ritual imitation of the saint's suffering, the pilgrim became like the saint and so became another realization of the saving, crucified God in the world.

Pilgrims to the shrine were welcomed and ministered to by Capuchin priests assigned to San Giovanni Rotondo and by those permanent pilgrims or "resident devotees" who lived in the area during Padre Pio's life and have remained after his death. Predominantly unmarried lay women, these devotees spend their lives in prayer and provide hospitality to the many temporary pilgrims who visit the shrine. Many lived off private incomes or pensions and those that do work almost always worked for the friars in the shrine complex or in one of the hotels or boarding houses that now line the road. Even so, they considered their real work, McKevitt notes, "the salvation of their souls and praying for the salvation of others."<sup>32</sup> Together, the friars and pilgrims have become both hosts and evangelists. Pilgrims to the shrine seek these spiritual guides, and in this holy space they too join for a time in the holy life and prayerful ministry of Padre Pio.

The previous descriptive work of pilgrimage in this dissertation has in some ways primed both the author and the reader to recognize in the pilgrimage to San Giovanni Rotondo the sacramental presence of Christ in the world. Yet the importance of McKevitt's account to theologians is his willingness to lift up elements of pilgrimage practice that disrupt our attractive and even cherished theological ideals. McKevitt's description of pilgrimage in San Giovanni Rotondo suggests that this account of the sacramental pilgrim

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<sup>32</sup> McKevitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 93.

holds only insofar as we can isolate the pilgrimage—its infrastructure, its pilgrims, and its hosts—from the eyes and experiences of the local residents who live in the village near the shrine. While an account of the pilgrimage from the perspective of the pilgrims reveals the sacramental presence of Christ, McKevitt's description suggests that in other ways, the pilgrimage may manifest something more ominous. Going down from the hill and into the village, McKevitt found a very different interpretation of the pilgrimage among the local Sangiovesi.<sup>33</sup>

For the residents of the village of San Giovanni Rotondo, Padre Pio was an outsider whom they embraced as their own. While pilgrims saw Pio's mission in the world as the salvation of souls, locals remembered Pio's deep concern for the physical and material well-being of those in the village. Soon after arriving at the friary, Pio lobbied local politicians to construct roads, improve infrastructure, and establish a small municipal hospital in the area.<sup>34</sup> This first hospital closed after only a couple of years, but Pio was already soliciting money to construct the larger Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza—the Home for the Relief of Suffering. This five hundred-bed hospital was meant to provide both physical and spiritual care to the sick. Pio's fame was essential to this project as most of the funds for the hospital came from Pio's pilgrims outside of the region, although the land on which the hospital was built next to the friary was donated by a local devotee.<sup>35</sup> The construction of the hospital provided employment to the town, which had recently seen

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<sup>33</sup> The distinction between pilgrims to the shrine and resident devotees, McKevitt argues, is a quantitative rather than a qualitative one: pilgrims seek to enter this sacred space and participate in its life and ritual for a temporary time while resident devotees seek to occupy this sacred pilgrim space permanently. McKevitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 94.

<sup>34</sup> McKevitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 81.

<sup>35</sup> McKevitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 81.

many of its young residents leave in search of more profitable work. Pio also helped establish schools, nurseries, and labor co-ops in the village. Today, the town has flourished even while nearby villages continue to struggle. The area's two primary industries are both inspired by Pio: the hospital and the pilgrimage. As McKevitt observes, for the Sangiovesi, Pio's most significant miracle was an economic one.<sup>36</sup> The local residents thought of Padre Pio as *their* priest—the one who came and lived among them, even speaking to them in their own dialect instead of Italian.<sup>37</sup> They still hung pictures of Pio in their houses or lit red memorial candles in their windows in his honor.<sup>38</sup> And yet Sangiovesi attitudes towards the pilgrims did not reflect this same reverence they held for their priest.

Although both the hospital and the pilgrimage have brought great wealth to the area, these benefits have largely circumvented the local Sangiovesi. For it is outsiders to the local community who have monopolized the development of the pilgrimage infrastructure, and it is outsiders' money and resources that have quickly dwarfed anything the local economy could project. Furthermore, much of the profit from this industry has gone either to the Capuchin order or to businesspeople from outside of the town.<sup>39</sup> The hospital, originally owned by Padre Pio, is now the property of the Vatican, and it is the Vatican rather than the town that is the primary beneficiary of the wealth generated by its administration. Rapid growth and development of the hospital and pilgrimage

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<sup>36</sup> McKevitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 92.

<sup>37</sup> McKevitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 86.

<sup>38</sup> McKevitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 86–87.

<sup>39</sup> McKevitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 87–88.

infrastructure also seem to have paid little attention to the environmental effects that will shape the local area for generations.<sup>40</sup>

Outsiders have also co-opted the cult of Padre Pio and often express distaste for the presence and customs of the Sangiovesi. Pilgrims preferred to stay within the Cappuccini and only ventured into town by necessity and with great trepidation. Some pilgrims even described the Sangiovesi as evil spirits waiting to take advantage of the good and pious pilgrim.<sup>41</sup> Many of the Sangiovesi viewed pilgrim practices of seclusion and mortification as a distortion of Pio's message while pilgrims complained that local residents never visited the tomb of Padre Pio and accused them of rejecting his message.<sup>42</sup> Indeed the Sangiovesi wanted little to do with the shrine itself. Their devotion to Padre Pio took place in their homes. It is not difficult to see why many of the Sangiovesi referred to the pilgrims "*i pacc*" (the crazy) and insisted to McKeivitt that the activities 'up on the hill' have nothing to do with them.<sup>43</sup> Despite the limited economic benefit that the town reaps from the hospital and pilgrim industries, McKeivitt reports that many of the townspeople "expressed the feeling of having been alienated from the gift of Pio," that outsiders have co-opted and consumed his spiritual and material benefits with little concern for the people whom Padre Pio loved.<sup>44</sup>

McKeivitt's account of Padre Pio's pilgrims is helpful in foregrounding aspects of Christian pilgrimage that threaten a sacramental view of the practice. The strained

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<sup>40</sup> McKeivitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 88–89.

<sup>41</sup> McKeivitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 93.

<sup>42</sup> McKeivitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 94.

<sup>43</sup> McKeivitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 96.

<sup>44</sup> McKeivitt, "San Giovanni Rotondo and the Shrine of Padre Pio," 89.

relationship between pilgrims and locals challenges any easy romanticizing of Christian pilgrimage. Any recognition of the sacramental presence of Christ in this pilgrimage must also reckon with the ways the pilgrim community has displaced and disregarded those who are the least among them and divided the body of Christ. It is also impossible to simply dismiss the practices of Pio's pilgrims as an aberration or a distortion of the phenomenon of Christian pilgrimage rather than its authentic manifestation. The popularity of the pilgrimage from people to popes resists an easy erasure of the problematic practice when there is much consensus among the faithful as to its authenticity. Nor should we too quickly assume that similar concerns are absent from those pilgrimages already presented in this dissertation. Concerns about the relationship between pilgrims and local Christian communities could be raised of any of the Christian pilgrimages previously considered. Nancy Frey recounts the tale of a priest who bullied local restaurant owners into serving him their own evening meal because he had arrived after the restaurant had closed for the evening.<sup>45</sup> Elaine Peña describes the enormous amount of litter and waste left behind in communities and on the road by 16,000 pilgrims who refused to carry their garbage with them.<sup>46</sup> Hillary Kaell explains the distaste pilgrims held for Christian spaces and rituals in the Holy Land that did not reflect their own denominational aesthetic.<sup>47</sup> A local Palestinian bishop has professed perhaps the most haunting admonishment of Christian pilgrims in the Holy Land when he asked a journalist, "Did you come for the shrines—or do you want to learn about the living stones?"<sup>48</sup> No doubt the examples of problematic pilgrimage practices

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<sup>45</sup> Nancy Louise Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 135.

<sup>46</sup> Elaine A. Peña, *Performing Piety*, 65–66.

<sup>47</sup> Hillary Kaell, *Walking Where Jesus Walked*, 127, 129–30.

<sup>48</sup> David Hazard and Elias Chacour, *Blood Brothers* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 1984), 15.

are many. How are we to understand pilgrim liturgies in which the church manifests the presence of both sin and grace?

### **Saint and Sinner**

When Laszlo turned to the church's Eucharistic liturgy, he caught the church confessing its sins. In attending carefully to the pilgrimage to San Giovanni Rotondo, we catch the church in the act of sinning. In this pilgrimage, we find not only a liturgical realization of holiness but also a liturgical realization of sinfulness. How then should we think about the church, which here seems to manifest as both saint and sinner? Although Rahner's theological conclusions regarding sin in the church have ultimately proved inadequate to our present situation, it is possible to step back into his theology of symbol and, in light of this liturgical evidence, to chart a new path.

Rahner's definition of symbol depends on both continuity and difference: the realization of the self in the other. His theology tends to stress the continuity of the symbol to the symbolized: while the symbol should not be confused with its divine subject, neither is it inseparable from the subject whom it symbolizes. This continuity between symbol and subject forms the basis of his idea of the church as sacrament. In the church, the holiness of God is realized and made present in the life and action of the church in the world. And yet this symbolic continuity finds its limit when it comes up against the presence of sin. If the faithful's claim that the church is holy finds its confirmation and truth in the concrete embodiments of holiness that are the saints, what then are we to make of the idea that the church is constituted in the world not only by saints, but also by sinners? If the church's liturgy realizes concretely the saving grace of God that already permeates the world, what

then are we to make of pilgrim liturgies and practices that bring pain, fear, alienation, and ecological degradation rather than life?

In pilgrimage, manifestations of grace exist side by side with manifestations of sin. We cannot simply count one as pilgrimage and the other not: both are manifestations of the pilgrim in the world. Here then, the theological problem emerges. In affirming that the sinner is in fact a symbol of the church, we cannot also affirm that the sinner is a sacrament of God, for how can God's grace be manifest in the world in and through sin? It cannot. The presence of sin as a manifestation of the church in the world necessitates a distinction between symbol and sacrament that is made possible by the very nature of symbol itself, which is the expression of the self through the other. Not every symbolic manifestation of the church in the world is a sacrament. But neither should we presume that the manifestation of a sinful presence of the church in the world is somehow less real than the manifestation of her holiness.

While Rahner acknowledges the otherness of the symbol as a way of resisting triumphalist theologies that too closely identify and thus confuse the symbol of the divine with the divine itself, he is ultimately unable to tolerate a sense of symbolic otherness that leaves open the possibility of the non-identity of the symbol with the symbolized. And yet it is just this sort of move that is needed if we hope to avoid a theology that dismisses rather than engages the observable presence of sin manifest in our institutions and in our liturgies.

The possibility of a symbolic non-identity is rooted in the subjectivity of the symbolization of the divine. In the creation of humanity, in the church, and most fully in the person of Jesus Christ, God is made present in the world through symbols that take on the

image of Godself in their very subjectivity which is imbued not only with the possibility of their acting in and on the world but also with the freedom to do so. It is this capacity for creation and for freedom, this subjective sense of personhood at once created and creator, that differentiates the individual or social body from the divine and opens the possibility for activity both independent of and even in contradiction to the symbolized from which she proceeds.

Thus, the affirmation that God is made present in and through the pilgrim should not be taken to imply that everything the pilgrim does ought to be embraced uncritically as the symbolic manifestation of God's grace. To submit that the pilgrim realizes the redemptive grace of Christ in the world is not to suggest that therefore the expressive actions of the pilgrim are *always* the work of God. The very otherness of the pilgrim as symbol of the divine necessarily allows for the possibility that she may manifest herself in ways that contradict her divine creator of which she is a symbol. Indeed, that the presence of God is realized not only in but also in spite of the ways that pilgrims emerge in history is at the very heart of a symbolic reality in which the subject realizes itself through the other.

We might also recall Rahner's insistence that subjects themselves are plural. Like Godself, the pilgrim is not monolithic. It is possible, indeed it is an article of faith, that we are at once both sinners and redeemed, a claim which finds confirmation in the pilgrim presence in the world. The discernment of sin and sacrament falls to the People of God, and we should not hesitate to seek and recognize the tangible ways the pilgrim makes God present to the world as well the ways in which the pilgrim's presence contradicts God's grace and symbolizes that which is truly other than the loving divine. It is possible to recognize in the pilgrim community of Padre Pio the sacramental presence of the suffering

Christ while also discovering the manifestation of a triumphalist church who establishes herself as separate and distinct from the People of God, an outsider who takes another's place as her own and plunders its resources for her own personal gain. If pilgrimage is in fact a concrete manifestation of the church in the world, then the image of the pilgrim church must be one that holds together both sin and sanctity. In light of this pilgrim plurality, the statement that "the church is holy in and in spite of her members" simply will not suffice. We can do little more than place the two statements side by side: The church is holy and the church is sinful. This is the pilgrim church.

If the recognition of saints and sacraments should lead the church to proclaim her holiness and rejoice in the accomplishment of God's promises already realized, then the recognition of sin and its consequences must move us not only to confession but also to lamentation, repentance, and conversion. In lament, we cry out to God at once confident in God's mercy and yet inconsolable by what is yet to be accomplished in the world. We weep for and with those victimized by our sin, refusing to tolerate the silencing of voices who cry out to God for justice, and we instead amplify those voices with our own. This recognition of the pilgrim church as both saint and sinner draws a confession from our lips. In humility we examine our own responsibility, our own complicity, and we recognize that our sin is the sin of the church and the sins of the church are also our own. Our lament and confession open a new space in the church, which is the possibility of reform. *Ecclesia peregrinantis semper reformanda*. At the heart of this cry is a commitment not to the continuous "updating" of the pilgrim church, but rather for her perpetual conversion.

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