

# **The Contemporary Church and the Real Presence of Women: Of Liturgy, Labor, and Gendered Lives**

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Given that the title of this essay links "real presence"—traditionally associated with Christ's body—with female bodies, "women," it seems appropriate to begin with two transgressions. The first is an act of transgression, the second the story of a transgression. First, the act: the topic for the 2002–2003 Institute of Sacred Music Colloquium at Yale University is "The Contemporary Church and . . ." I conform to this topic in my title and in the remainder of this essay, but will transgress with my beginning. I will commence with a story from the twelfth century, rather than from the twenty-first century. The story itself is the narrative of a transgression, involving liturgy and women's lives (even if the story follows the traditional script of a named, male hero as its central figure). Here, then, is this story of a transgression:

Somewhere around A.D. 1114, Robert d'Arbrissel, the founder of several monasteries in which ascetic women and men lived together under the authority of an abbess, wanted to preach at the little church of Menat in Auvergne. He was told by the locals that women had been forbidden from entering this church ever since a saint, five hundred years earlier, had decreed it so. Any woman defying the ban would die. Robert d'Arbrissel, in a stark and simple response, proceeded to enter the church with a group of women. He then eloquently defended his defiance of the local saint by insisting that "saints are not the enemies of the spouses of Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup> And if women ate and drank the body and blood of Christ—the real presence of God—what folly it was to believe that these women could not bring their own real presence into this church.

Robert's twelfth-century challenge to a tradition of distancing women from the center of ritual power and real presence is an apt lead-in to my theme, "The Contemporary Church and the Real Presence of Women." Against a tradition that has frequently distanced the real presence of women from the real presence of God, I will argue that the real presence of women and the real presence of God are, in fact, relational to, and co-constitutive of, each other. I will begin with a look at gender as a fundamental marker not only of all cultural formations but also of liturgical life. I then will consider the peculiar labor of being "woman" and its relation, or non-relation, to the labor of making meaning in liturgy. This will lead me to examine one liturgical fundamental, namely, the proclamation of the Scriptures, with gender as my interpretive lens. I will conclude with a reflection on the relationality between the real presence of women and the real presence of God.

## ***Liturgy and Gendered Lives***

The category "gender," which in my use undergirds the term "women," attends to all gendered identities and sexualities—men, eunuchs, children, lesbians, hermaphrodites, syneisactics, transgendered people, and others—precisely in their gendered particularities (a focus on women, to be sure, does not intend to privilege men as unproblematic and leave men's cultures as unmarked, as if women alone were gendered). I thus understand gender as a web of oppositions and relationships, all of which are unstable and context-specific. Gender, then, is nothing if not a relational category—relational to "the other (gender)," but relational also to wider cultural materials. What relationship is there between gender, thus understood, and

liturgy? No liturgy was ever celebrated in a vacuum, void of cultural referents, and gender constructions continue to be one such fundamental cultural referent in liturgy, even (or maybe especially?) at a moment in time when traditional gender constructions are in crisis. I will simply claim here that gender has always been and continues to be a fundamental marker of all liturgical life; this essay, with its focus on the "contemporary church," is not the place to display how *historically* the liturgy was profoundly shaped by, and shaped, performances of gender and symbolic meanings associated with femininity and masculinity. Suffice it to say that the discipline of liturgical studies in general, and liturgical historiography in particular, have largely occluded this gendered nature of all liturgical life. Fortunately, recent gender-attentive work in liturgical historiography has allowed us to glimpse the deeply gendered nature of all liturgical traditions and practices.<sup>2</sup>

What work does an insistence on gender do for our thinking about the contemporary church and its liturgical life? Let us take a quick look at the life of an ordinary parish, my own. Here is what I see:

- a woman sitting in a wheelchair serves as eucharistic minister. She smiles broadly at people who have to bow low to receive the body of Christ;
- a group of older women gathers in the dimly lit church. They kneel in front of a statue of Mary and begin to recite the rosary. Their voices fill the whole church;
- a woman accompanies her daughter to the child's first reconciliation in church, painfully aware that the girl has suffered her father's sexual advances and now is asked to receive the sacrament of reconciliation from a "Father";
- a woman hurries to church with her infant son. Her babysitting arrangement fell through, and it is too late to find another person to take her place as lector in this liturgy. The woman processes in with her baby in her arms, having handed the Gospel book to the priest to carry. After the liturgy, one of the women in the congregation says: "I saw my life brought into the sanctuary today";
- a woman enters the church halfway through the eucharistic service. She carries a large image of La Virgen de Guadalupe. While the priest continues with the eucharistic prayer, the Latina grandmother self-confidently places her image of the Virgin on the altar steps;
- a woman attends Sunday worship after having given birth. Her body bears the marks of her nursing a child. She receives communion, a living representation of the ancient image of the Eucharist as God's breast milk;
- a woman comes to a Good Friday service with bruises on her body from a domestic assault. She moves forward slowly, cringing at the veneration of the cross with its portrayal of an abused human body;
- a lesbian couple rises together on Mother's Day. The presiding minister has invited all mothers to stand and be recognized;
- a woman struggles throughout the liturgy with her active child. At the end of

the service the woman is exhausted. She remembers little of the readings and prayers; she always dreads the sermon since she has to work especially hard to keep her child still;

- a group gathers on the feast day of Saint Hildegard of Bingen (who was never canonized and therefore does not appear in the liturgical calendar). The liturgy has been written by one of the women in the group.

These are just some of the innumerable ways in which women's lives shape, conflict with, enrich, disturb, own, contest, and claim space in the liturgy. Wherever liturgy and women's lives become one, a distinct ecclesial practice is born: women labor to make meaning with what we encounter as liturgy, in the crucible of our own lives. For most women, this labor is not self-reflexive, and for the majority of us, the labor we engage in remains invisible beyond the confines of our own lives. What work, then, does an insistence on gender do for our thinking about the church and its liturgy? At its most basic, such insistence on gender as a category of analysis renders visible women as liturgical subjects and agents. But such an insistence on the importance of gender in liturgical practice also provides a set of critical lenses—critical of interpretive strategies that are oblivious to gender as a fundamental marker of life and of liturgy. Such obliviousness comes to be marked as deeply problematic because these interpretive strategies, first, present seemingly ungendered facts; second, thereby render obscure a fundamental shaper of historical and contemporary practices; and third, therefore offer few guidelines for a world in which gender constructions are in crisis.

One concrete example of the work that gender-attentiveness does relates to the material realities of women's lives. These material realities are part of the cultural fabric in which the contemporary church finds itself and in which it celebrates liturgy. One particular aspect of this cultural fabric is the labor of being woman.

### ***The Labor of Being Woman***

The labor of being woman is a complex one and has not necessarily become any easier in a time when the traditional narrative of what it means to be woman has broken off. This traditional narrative of woman was shaped, for one, by the sexual division of labor. This division of labor marked women's work as that of reproduction—including the labor of "labor" (i. e., birthing) and of the nurture and care of children—and of household labor, such as food production. In this division of labor, the domestic sphere came to be coded as peculiarly feminine. This fundamental division of labor obviously did not leave liturgical life untouched. Liturgy was deeply marked by its own gendered divisions of labor, not only in public liturgical leadership, but also in liturgical place arrangements, in church architecture, in wide-ranging liturgical taboos related to women's bodily and reproductive labor, in constraints on women's voices, in gender-specific life-cycle rites, in the development of a domestic religious sphere and forms of popular religiosity peculiarly linked with women, and in the coding of women's ritual practices as magic and witchcraft.

Since the traditional sexual division of labor has begun to crumble (it is by no means gone if one looks, for example, at the meager number of hours men spend on household work), many of the liturgical divisions of labor based on gender have also begun to crumble. Other forms of the labor of being woman, however, continue. I want to highlight but one aspect—the simple risk of

being born woman.<sup>3</sup> Here are some indicators of this risk: Although the world's population continues to grow, the number of women is declining. Already there are between sixty and one hundred million fewer women than men owing to selective abortions, selective infanticide, and the widespread uneven allocation of basic resources such as food, healthcare, and education to girls. Despite these millions of women who are "missing" (Amartya Sen), women are overrepresented among the world's poor, the world's illiterate adults, and the world's children not in primary school: seventy percent of the world's poor are women, over sixty percent of the world's illiterate adults are women, and sixty percent of children not in primary school are girls. UNICEF reports that violence against girls and women is the most widespread violation of human rights. And this is not a "third-world" problem by any means. More than fifty percent of all women will experience violence from intimate partners; the battering of women results in more injuries requiring medical attention than auto accidents, muggings, and rapes combined. Furthermore, every minute, a woman dies somewhere on this globe owing to complications surrounding pregnancy and birth. And these statistics scratch only the surface of what Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has described as "structural normative practices" of violence against women.<sup>4</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza includes in these normative practices not only physical violence but also the cultural construction of docile feminine bodies—be it through disciplining obsessions with food, dieting, and exercise, or the shaping of youthful and glamorous (but also constrained) female bodies through clothing, cosmetic products, and cosmetic surgery (which has become a billion-dollar industry).

What does all this have to do with liturgy? Is there a relationship between the labor of being woman and the labor of liturgical meaning-making? For most liturgical assemblies with which I am familiar, the answer to that question has to come as a resounding no. Such a rift between women's lives and liturgy, however, raises an immediate question: given that none of us leaves her (or his) particularities, markers of difference, and gendered subjectivity behind when entering a place of worship, which powers discipline the boundaries between women's lives and liturgy? (And "powers" they must be, since these boundaries seem to be sealed.)

### ***Women and Worship: A Con-Celebration***<sup>5</sup>

One of the dynamics that disciplines the boundary between women's lives and liturgy is a particular understanding of the meaning of liturgy and of where this meaning is to be located. In the past, liturgical scholars have often identified the meaning of a liturgical rite with the texts of the liturgy in question and with what its rubrics govern. In recent years, however, scholars attentive to contemporary literary, critical, and social theories have insisted that the process of meaning-making, rather than being stable, unified, and given with a text or a rite, is better understood as a plurality of meaning-makings as liturgical givens are actively negotiated by those present. In other words, there is no simple way to identify the site of liturgical meaning, since no single meaning in any liturgical piece or liturgical event can be said to be definitive.<sup>6</sup> The particularities of liturgical subjects, rather than being "context" to what is supposedly primary, namely the liturgical "text," are co-constitutive in the making of liturgical meaning. Moreover, not only are there "as many interpretations, or 'meanings,' for any liturgical act as there are people attending,"<sup>7</sup> but there are more meanings than there are people attending, since, rather than being a unified self, most people are better understood as sites of multiple and contesting meanings.

For the seemingly sealed boundaries between women's lives and liturgical meaning, this breaking open of the traditional understanding of liturgical meaning offers new possibilities. If liturgical subjects (other than the priest) come to be seen as co-constitutive of the production of liturgical meaning, then there is at least the theoretical possibility of acknowledging these subjects as always situated, particularized, gendered, and racialized.

How, then, can we think about liturgical meaning in such a way that gendered subjectivities are not occluded? I have found theories of culture that focus on cultural production and the processes of meaning-making suggestive at this point. These theories read culture as fluid and unstable, rather than as fixed. Meaning and coherence are seen as always temporary, contingent, and dispersed.<sup>8</sup> Following these theories in reading the culture of liturgy, one would have to stress the co-constitutive nature of liturgical meaning and its fluid, emergent, and indeterminate character. One would then have to ask how women's subjectivities are both produced and constrained in liturgy; how agency is exercised; how gendered identity shapes liturgical meaning-making; how material realities, including female bodies, interpret liturgical practices; how liturgy and liturgical meaning may be a contested terrain for women, the site of multiple and conflicting claims.

Clearly, such a reading of liturgy confronts us with a multiplicity of liturgical meanings, something we are all, in fact, familiar with in life. Think of these simple examples: the biblical image of God's abundant grace as an "overflowing torrent" (Isaiah 66:12, *New American Bible*) will "mean differently" for a woman bringing her infant son for baptism, and running through a torrential downpour to get to the church, than for a woman in a drought-stricken part of the world who walks twelve miles every day to fill buckets of water at a well. It will "mean differently" again for a woman in rural eastern North Carolina who, two years after Hurricane Floyd swept through, still has not been able to return to her home.

My argument is that liturgical meaning is created by people (in my case, women) conspiring with the biblical texts, the rubrics, the priests—but regularly also "against" them—to discern the presence of the living God and their own lives as graced within that presence. In that sense, every liturgy is a con-celebration: women, as indeed all present, always con-celebrate with the presider. Con-celebration is not a particular priestly "special"; it is the basic form of all liturgy. And liturgy is a con-celebration not only in terms of a multiplicity of celebrants, but also in terms of the material givens of the celebrants' lived lives and the wider cultures they inhabit. Rain or drought, race and gender, our baptismal or our funeral liturgies—all of these mean differently for each of us.

What happens when we focus the meaning of liturgy in these particularities and the complex meanings they engender? What if we take as our starting point the assumption that it is "our bodies, women's bodies, into which the story of Christ is inscribed and which perform it, without which the story of Christ can in fact not be performed"?<sup>9</sup> Obviously, we are assigning theological meaning to the lived (liturgical) lives of women here. Such a theological move is part of a larger trend in recent theological reflection, which has begun to privilege ordinary sites in the production of theological meaning. Privileging the liturgical meaning-making of women is one way of rendering women more central in accounts of "church"—and of rendering visible the ever-present power differentials in the life of the church and its liturgy which mark women's lives so profoundly. Our gendered identities do inflect liturgical meaning-making in particular ways, and preferential masculinity still dominates both our cultural and liturgical worlds. What

has changed in the last few decades is that liturgy has become powerfully *visible* as that which, arguably, it has always been: a site of struggle over symbolic meanings associated with masculinity and femininity.

### ***Liturgy: A Site of Struggle***

In the twentieth century a fundamental shift took place in the complex relationship between liturgy and women's lives, so that today liturgy has become one of the most politicized ecclesial sites. The roots of this transformation can be traced back at least to the early-twentieth-century liturgical renewal (and women's engagement with it). But the shift gained specific momentum in the second half of the twentieth century, owing to cultural and ecclesial developments, especially the second wave of the women's movement and the liturgical reforms sweeping through the churches. For the most part, official liturgical reforms were implemented just before churches found themselves confronted with sustained feminist critique. For many women, therefore, dissatisfaction with existing worship patterns grew despite all the liturgical reforms now put in motion. Some women have responded by developing alternatives to existing worship practices. At the turn of the twenty-first century, women-identified liturgies and rituals are celebrated across the globe. There are also regular women's worship services in parishes, women-identified celebrations among large gatherings of women, and lively networking between many of these women at worship. These new liturgical traditions are supported by an unparalleled explosion of religious material by and for women: there are hundreds of new women-identified hymns and songs, meditations and creeds, and a host of new prayer books and lectionaries specifically for women.

Liturgy indeed has become one of the most politicized ecclesial sites in our time. The importance of liturgy as a site of struggle over symbolic resources that shape women's religious lives cannot be emphasized enough. For the Christian tradition, the fact that women themselves now actively claim ritual authority, by constructing and interpreting their liturgical lives, is a primary mode of claiming power.<sup>10</sup> To put it differently, women have moved from liturgical consumption and reproduction to liturgical production, grasping liturgy as a crucial site for the negotiation of faith and women's lives.

To review my argument, my analysis so far has focused on several problems in the complex relationship between liturgy and women's lives: the labor of being woman, the material realities of women's lives, a Christian tradition and historiography that occlude women's agency, and a theorizing of the meaning of liturgy that bypasses material realities and markers of difference. Given this list, a site one might assume to be "safe" from the asymmetries inscribed into our gendered particularities is the Christian story itself, which is present in our liturgies, above all, in the proclamation of Scripture. Let us, then, take a look at this element in relation to women's lives.

### ***Women and the Word: Leaving Women Speechless***

To begin with, we will have to acknowledge that the Scriptures themselves are marked by gendered asymmetry. The textual representation of women in our scriptural canon, after all, is clearly limited. One example will have to suffice: only about ten of the nearly three hundred

instances of recorded prayers, or allusions to prayer, in the Hebrew Scriptures purport to be those of women.<sup>11</sup> Although nothing would lead one to assume that women invoked the Holy One with any less frequency or fervor than did their male counterparts, the Scriptures give us only a small number of women's prayers in comparison to those of men. The content of the recorded prayers also speaks to the power of gender in shaping faith. The majority of prayers put in women's mouths in the Hebrew Scriptures are related to women's reproductive and maternal roles.

This androcentric bias of the biblical witness, moreover, is heightened by the choice of passages for reading in the liturgy. The lectionary that governs the choice of readings in my ecclesial community simply has not attended carefully enough to biblical stories about women and their faith.<sup>12</sup> (I take as my material the Sunday lectionary for the Roman Catholic dioceses in the United States.) The story of the two Hebrew midwives Shiphrah and Puah, who set the scene for the Exodus by defying Pharaoh, is simply cut out from the liturgical reading of Exodus 1:8–22. The lectionary reading of this passage jumps from verse 14 to verse 22, thus "disappearing" Shiphrah and Puah from sight. As a result, the liturgical assembly does not hear the stories and names of these women, although in a wonderful irony of history the biblical witness does remember their names, while it has forgotten the name of the pharaoh. Other omissions have rendered invisible, among others, the Hebrew prophet Hulda (2 Kings 22:14–20). Hulda's story is that of a temple prophet who is asked to validate a scroll found in the temple during repairs. Feminist scholars argue that through this validation, Hulda, in fact, authorizes what will become the core of our Scriptures: "Her validation of a text . . . stands as the first recognizable act in the long process of canon formation."<sup>13</sup> The lectionary, however, thinks nothing of Hulda's authoritative act.

The lectionary, furthermore, makes women's stories "optional" in a number of readings. That is, these women's stories form part of a longer biblical passage that may be shortened by the presider if he [!] considers the passage too long. The presence of the prophet Anna at the presentation of Jesus in the temple (Luke 2:36–38) thus is rendered optional—the biblical writer already having left her speechless, giving only Simeon a voice. Optional is also the fate of the woman with a hemorrhage who is healed by Jesus (Mark 5:25–34). The same applies to the beautiful parable in which Jesus likens the coming of God's reign to a woman baking (Matthew 13:33); it too is optional on the only Sunday when it might be read, although it is one of the few biblical texts that show Jesus drawing on women's everyday lives to image God's reign. There are yet other ways in which women's presence in the Scriptures and the lectionary readings come to be veiled. Take the reading of Proverbs 31 as just one example: the lectionary omits precisely those verses that show the woman to be a powerful and productive household manager, and focuses instead on her service to her husband.

There is third way in which gender shapes the proclamation of our sacred story. If this story itself already under-represents women, and if the lectionary exacerbates this under-representation, the translations in which we hear our Scriptures add their own peculiarly gendered inflections. The way in which Junia, whom Paul describes as "prominent among the apostles" (Romans 16:7), was transgendered into a male "Junias"—against all evidence that there never was such a male name—is a case in point. And a fourth way in which gender shapes the proclamation of our sacred story has to do with the gender of the one who expounds the Scriptures in the homily; the fact that the authority to preach has been linked to the priestly office, and thereby to maleness, is obvious. Subtler, but no less incisive, are the ways in which

such gendered particularity shapes actual homiletic material and performance.

It will be clear by now that problems become visible in our proclamation of the Scriptures as soon as gender is made a category of liturgical analysis. The liturgical proclamation of the Scriptures comes to be seen as participating in the gendered asymmetries of the Christian tradition as a whole, asymmetries that also pervade the wider culture. With this acknowledgement we seem to have come full circle: gender marks all cultural formations. There is no gender-free vacuum in which to hide—certainly not in liturgical life.

## **Conclusion**

I have highlighted a number of ways in which the real presence of women has been distanced from the real presence of the Holy One: in the Scriptures, in our liturgical readings, in our history, and in our theorizing of what and how liturgy "means." What might constitute good news? I want to point to one resource that is often overlooked. Our tradition is rich in ways of undoing these strategies of distancing women from the Holy: from the early Christian image of the Eucharist as God's breast milk,<sup>14</sup> to medieval images of Jesus as mother, and as a woman in labor who births new life on the cross,<sup>15</sup> to the profound connection between women mystics and eucharistic devotion in the thirteenth century and beyond.<sup>16</sup> Robert d'Arbrissel thus embodied a resistance to the distancing of women from the Holy that also has and is a rich tradition. What I find peculiarly appealing about Robert d'Arbrissel is the link he makes between his forceful presencing of women in the little church of Menat and the real presence of Christ in the eucharistic elements.

Are there other signifiers in the tradition that might help in imagining this? I want to leave you with an image that I have found suggestive: the so-called shrine or tabernacle madonnas.<sup>17</sup> These tabernacle madonnas, which represent Mary as a eucharistic vessel, capture a truth hidden deep within: the first tabernacle, the first vessel to hold the body of Christ, was not a golden receptacle, but a woman's body, a womb.<sup>18</sup> By "hosting" God, Mary essentially says that "there is no real presence of God without the real presence of women." But I dare to go one step further: the deepest bond between the body of woman and the body of God might not even be that a woman was the first to give us the body of Christ—although Mary certainly did that. Rather, the deepest bond is that Mary was the one who gave her own body so that God within her might live. This, then, is what the tabernacle madonna invites us to see: a woman saying to God, "Here is my body, for you. Your presence cannot be real without mine."

## **ENDNOTES**

1. The story and text can be found in Jacques Dalarun, *Robert d'Arbrissel, fondateur de Fontevraud* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1986), 128–29 [translation mine].

2. See, for example, Gisela Muschiol, *Famula Dei: Zur Liturgie in merowingischen Frauenklöstern*, Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens, 41 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1994); Robert A. Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996); Robert F. Taft, "Women at Church in Byzantium: Where, When—and Why?" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52 (1998): 27–87; Teresa Berger, *Women's Ways of Worship: Gender Analysis and Liturgical Historiography* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1999); Margot Fassler, "The First Marian Feast in



Constantinople and Jerusalem: Chant Texts, Readings, and Homiletic Literature," in *The Study of Medieval Chant: Paths and Bridges, East and West*, ed. Peter Jeffery (Rochester, N. Y.: Boydell Press, 2001).

3. The statistics come from the United Nations' *Human Development Report 2002*, UNICEF, and the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. One general source worth mentioning is *The State of Women in the World Atlas*, ed. Joni Seager, 2d rev. ed., Penguin Reference (New York: Penguin (1997).

4. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, introduction to *Violence Against Women*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and M. Shawn Copeland, Concilium (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1994), X.

5. The hyphens in several words in this section are intended to make readers re-configure the meaning of the words. In feminist writing these hyphens are ubiquitous; they signal our struggle with language.

6. Scholars who have stressed this from a number of different angles include Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 197–223; Martin Stringer, "Situating Meaning in the Liturgical Text," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 73 (1991): 181–94; Bridget Nichols, *Liturgical Hermeneutics: Interpreting Liturgical Rites in Performance* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1996); Martin Stringer, "Text, Context and Performance: Hermeneutics and the Study of Worship," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 53 (2000): 365–79; Richard E. McCarron, "Pursuing 'How Liturgy Means': Liturgical Texts as Hypertext, Oral Text and Intertext," *Proceedings of the North American Academy of Liturgy Annual Meeting* (2002): 101–11.

7. Stringer, "Text, Context and Performance," 378.

8. The work of Kathryn Tanner has been particularly helpful here. See especially Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997); Idem, "Theology and Popular Culture," in *Changing Conversations: Religious Reflection & Cultural Analysis*, ed. Dwight N. Hopkins and Sheila Greeve Davaney (New York: Routledge, 1996), 101–20; Idem, "Social Theory Concerning the 'New Social Movements' and the Practice of Feminist Theology," in *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms*, ed. Rebecca S. Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 179–97.

9. Natalie Knödel, "Reconsidering Ecclesiology: Feminist Perspectives" (Ph. D. thesis, University of Durham, 1997), 260.

10. See Lesley A. Northup, *Ritualizing Women: Patterns of Spirituality* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1997), 11, 22.

11. See Patrick D. Miller, "Things Too Wonderful: Prayers of Women in the Old Testament," in *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel*, ed. Georg Braulik et al. (Freiburg: Herder, 1993), 237.

12. For detailed analyses, see Regina A. Boisclair, "Amnesia in the Catholic Sunday Lectionary: Women—Silenced from the Memories of Salvation History," in *Women and Theology*, ed. Mary Ann Hinsdale and Phyllis H. Kaminski, College Theology Society, vol. 40 (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis

Books, 1995), 109–135; Marjorie Procter-Smith, "Images of Women in the Lectionary," in *The Power of Naming: A Concilium Reader in Feminist Liberation Theology*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1996), 175–186; Ruth Fox, "Women in the Bible and the Lectionary," in *Remembering the Women: Women's Stories from the Scripture for Sundays and Festivals*, compiled and annotated J. Frank Henderson (Chicago: LTP, 1999), 359–67.

13. Claudia V. Camp, "Hulda," in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*, ed. Carol Meyers et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 96.

14. See Johannes Betz, "Die Eucharistie als Gottes Milch in frühchristlicher Sicht," *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 106 (1984): 1–26, 167–85.

15. Balthasar Fischer is unusual among liturgical scholars in having paid attention to this research. See Balthasar Fischer, "Jesus, unsere Mutter," in *Frömmigkeit der Kirche. Gesammelte Studien zur christlichen Spiritualität*, ed. Albert Gerhards and Andreas Heinz, Hereditas, vol. 17 (Bonn: Borengässer, 2000), 91–102.

16. See Caroline Walker Bynum, "Women Mystics and Eucharistic Devotion in the Thirteenth Century," in *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*, 3d ed. (New York: Zone Books, 1994), 119–50.

17. There is no accepted English translation, other than the literal "shrine madonna," for the German Schreinmadonna (French: *vièrge ouvrante*) or the more particular type of the Platyteramonstranz (French: *vièrge-tabernacle*).

18. Although this might be read as dangerously close to essentializing women and their reproductive labor, it is, rather, part of an imagining of bodiliness and of natality as Grace Jantzen has developed it. See Grace M. Jantzen, *Becoming Divine: Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

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