

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON CHANGES IN THEOLOGY DURING MY LIFE AS A CENACLE NUN:

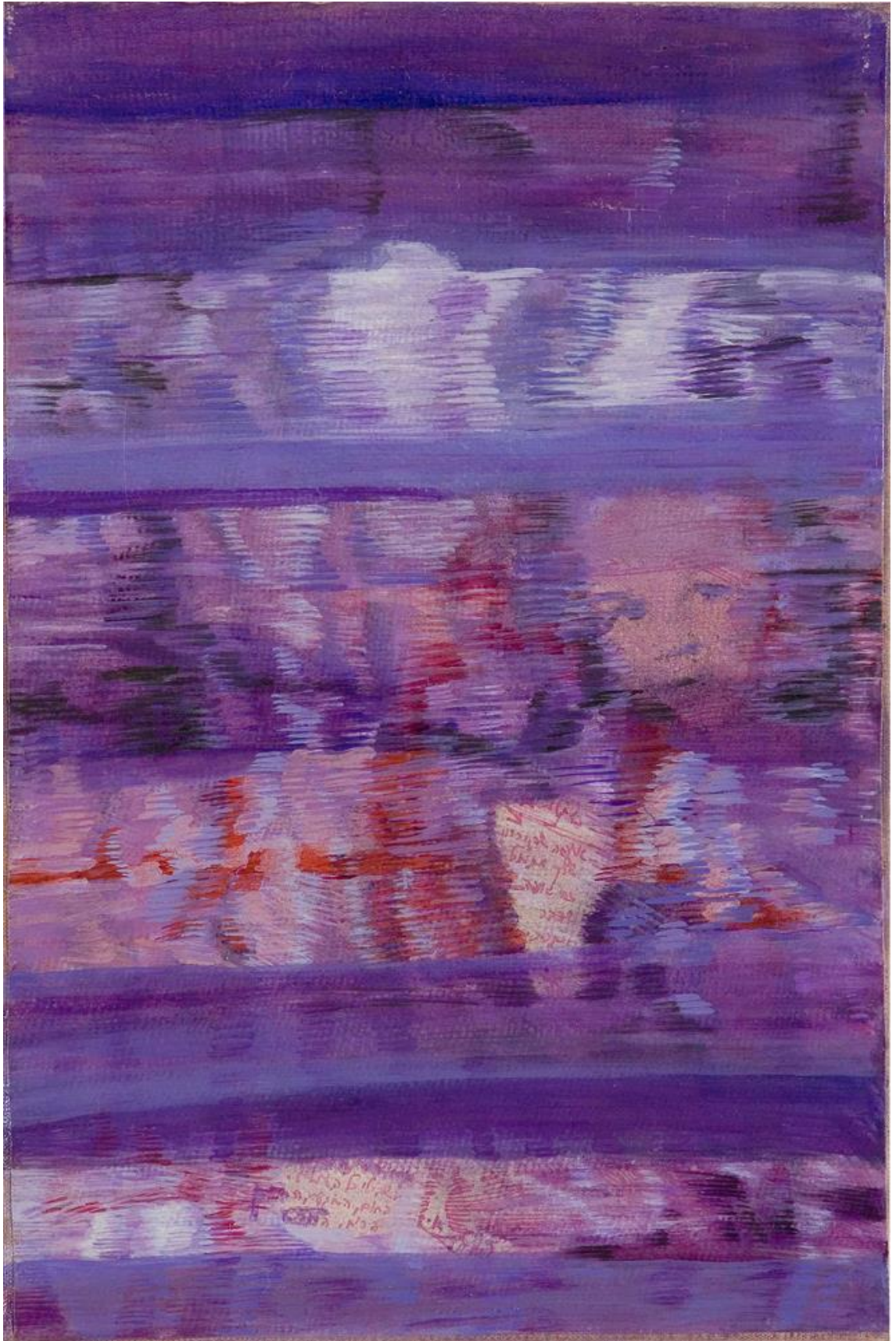
MYSTICISM AND NARCISSISM

KATHLEEN LYONS

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

JUNE 2013

**This Thesis has been completed as a requirement for postgraduate research degree of the
University of Winchester.**



Bracha L. Ettinger, Matrix - Family album, n.7, 2005 Oil on canvas.

Photo courtesy of the artist.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WINCHESTER

ABSTRACT FOR THESIS

A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON CHANGES IN THEOLOGY DURING

MY LIFE AS A CENACLE NUN:

MYSTICISM OR NARCISSISM?

KATHLEEN LYONS

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

JUNE 2013

Belief in the Christian mystery of Pentecost prompts me to analyse sixty-five years of life lived in a women's religious community, the Cenacle, where the tension between mysticism and narcissism is daily enacted. The move from medievalism to modernity/postmodernism during these years called for changes in the consecrated life. My thesis claims that the Incarnation is not realised until the fullness of humanity, 'mysticism', is claimed by all, especially women. My original contribution to knowledge is the application of a theory of psychoanalysis that is a source for relational theology and Incarnational Christianity.

I employ narrative theology expressed heuristically to illustrate the relationship of religious women to the Church. Vatican II is the mid reference point to contrast the 'before' and 'after' of this event of epic proportions. Women's experience is the principle tool which I use to argue that 'feminism' is not an optional extra for the Christian but is rather integral to the gospel. I examine biblical material and find evidence of androcentric, patriarchal and sexist attitudes requiring me to use a hermeneutic of suspicion. I am influenced by recent French psychoanalytic theory and draw on it to stress the origins of human becoming as relational. It has become increasingly clear that the patriarchy of the Catholic Church is inimical to the symbolic Pentecostal event where Mary gives birth to the Church in the first Cenacle. Acts.2.¹⁻⁴ With the interface of theology and the psychoanalytic I make a significant discovery, one that reveals a radical notion of divinity as matrixial rather than phallic!

CONTENTS	PAGE
Title Page	
Image of Matrix – Family album, n.7, 2005	3
Abstract	5
Contents	6 - 10
Declaration, Copyright Statement and Intellectual Property Rights	11
Acknowledgements	12
 A Personal Reflection on Changes in Theology During My Life As A Cenacle Nun: Mysticism and Narcissism	 13
Introduction	13
Chapter 1	21
Methodological Approaches	21
1.1 Introduction	21
1.2 Reflective Writing Method	22
1.3 Heuristic Approach	23
1.4 Feminist Theology	25
1.5 Feminist Spirituality	29
1.6 Feminism and the Psychoanalytic	30
1.7 Conclusion	32

1945-1962 My Experience of Cenacle Religious Life	37
Chapter 2	41
Pre-Vatican II Church	41
2.1 Introduction	41
2.2 Why 'Modernism'?	43
2.3 Resistance to Modernism Through Imposition of Neo-Scholastic Theology	47
2.4 Control by Canon Law	52
2.5 Resistance from the 'Roman Curia'	57
2.6 Conclusion	61
1962-1972 My Experience of Cenacle Religious Life	64
Chapter 3	69
The Church of Vatican II	69
3.1 Introduction	69
3.2 Dei Verbum: 'Revelation and Experience'	71
3.3 Vatican II and Women	76
3.4 The Function of Scripture	80
3.5 Authority and Experience	83
3.6 Conclusion	86

1972-1982 My Experience of Cenacle Religious Life	88
Chapter 4	92
Post-Conciliar Church	92
4.1 Introduction	92
4.2 Interpreting the Council	93
4.3 Feminist Theology and Catholicism	97
4.4 Experience of Authority in Education	102
4.5 Experience of Cenacle Community	105
4.6 Conclusion	110
1982-1992 My Experience of Cenacle Religious Life	113
Chapter 5	117
'Relationality'	117
5.1 Introduction	117
5.2 Inter-subjective Theory	119
5.3 Repairing Relationships	123
5.4 Roots of 'Relational Theology'	127
5.5 Matrixial Trans-subjectivity	131
5.6 Conclusion	135

1992-2002 My Experience of Cenacle Religious Life	138
Chapter 6	140
Christology/Relationality	140
6.1 Introduction	140
6.2 'Who do You Say That I Am?'(Matt: 16. ¹⁵)	142
6.3 Embodied Spirituality	147
6.4 Divine and Human Becoming	152
6.5 Everyday Mysticism	158
6.6 Conclusion	162
2002-2012 My Experience of Cenacle Religious Life	164
Chapter 7	168
The Marian Key	168
7.1 Introduction	168
7.2 Contemplating Mary in the Cenacle	170
7.3 'Born of a Woman'	174
7.4 Mary as 'Privileged'	178
7.5 'Blessed is the fruit of Thy Womb'	180
7.6 Conclusion	186

Chapter 8	189
Conclusion	189
Authority and Experience	190
Ecclesiology	192
Everyday Mysticism	195
Mary 'as the air we breathe'	196
Mysticism or Narcissism?	198
Bibliography	200

Declaration, Copyright Statement and Intellectual Property Rights

No portion of the work referred to in the Thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

I confirm that this Thesis is entirely my own work.

Copyright in text of this Thesis rests with the author. Copies (by any process) either in full, or of extracts, may be made only in accordance with instructions given by the author. Details may be obtained from the RKE Office. This page must form part of any such copies made. Further copies (by any process) of copies made in accordance with such instructions may not be made without the permission (in writing) of the author.

Where issues of intellectual property rights arise, these should be addressed in accordance with the University's Intellectual Property Policy and an appropriate comment defining ownership should be included immediately following the Declaration and Copyright statements listed above.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Professor Lisa Isherwood who as my Director of Studies has been an inspiring and encouraging supervisor. Her initiative and steady scholarly attention to my argument throughout the writing of this thesis has enabled me to rise to the challenge of completing it.

Also my very clever and encouraging second supervisor Dr. Angus Paddison, who spotted everything from errors in references or sentences to scripture texts that needed detailed attention. I appreciated his prompt and clear comments.

Then of course my Cenacle sisters in the European/Togo Province and especially those with whom I live. Kate for her continuing encouragement and for sharing her experience of research, and most significantly for her books on feminist theology.

Mary whose loving care and support has smoothed the way enabling me to focus on my studies.

I was blest with my proof-reader Shirley Taylor who is a wizard with computers and has been generous with her time and patient with my mistakes. Without her conscientious work and unfailing friendship I would still be struggling.

A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON CHANGES IN THEOLOGY DURING MY LIFE AS A CENACLE NUN: MYSTICISM AND NARCISSISM

INTRODUCTION

It is our spiritual duty to become human; this 'becoming human' is not a task we set ourselves to achieve, rather it is a task given us by divine life. Terry Velling ¹

My purpose in writing this thesis is to test my proposition that the narcissism of patriarchy in the Roman Catholic Church runs counter to the Pentecostal vision of Acts 2. I analyse the implications of the changes in Roman Catholic theology during my sixty-five years in the community of the Cenacle Congregation. A correlative is that Mary of Pentecost is an instance of the 'full humanity of woman'.² What justifies this claim is a life-time of contemplating the mystery of Pentecost, and trying to respond to its implications, while experiencing a sense of exclusion from full participation in the institutional Church. My claim that fundamental to the Christian life is a tension between mysticism and narcissism and that this tension can best be resolved within a Christian community, is analysed within the context of the Cenacle Congregation. I specify 'Christian' while being aware that much of what I say might be claimed or denied by other religions, but Roman Catholic Christianity is my context and is what I know and write about. In this introduction I relate the background information that sheds light on my argument, for example, information about the community to which I belong and the influences that have shaped it. I argue for a unifying anthropology that avoids the dualisms in the understanding of Christology and I seek to avoid a male-centred anthropology, which conceals the part played by a woman in the mystery of the Incarnation.

This is the preface to a narrative that is all about change, change in society, in the Church, and in Religious life. More significantly, it is about the reasons for the changes. I analyse these changes by weaving together several different perspectives, feminism, relationality and community. Paul Ricoeur refers to the science of narrative, 'as second order discourse, which is always preceded by a narrative stemming from the creative imagination'.³ I am, of course,

¹ Velling Terry, *Becoming Human*. (The Way. March. 2013)

² Ruether Radford Rosemary, *Sexism and God Talk* (London: SCM Press, 1983).

³ Ricoeur Paul, "On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation," in *Life in Quest of Narrative*, ed. David Wood (London & N.Y.: Routledge, 1991).

inserted into the Christian narrative by reasons of birth, but I embrace it by reasons of choice; 'creative imagination' is still needed to understand and accept the gift of faith. Furthermore, I have assented to interpret the Christian mystery according to specific symbols and stories within the tradition which give coherence and continuity to my life. One lens I use for analysis is that of the female 'I'. To substantiate my claim that the tension between mysticism and narcissism is best resolved within a faith community, I draw on my own experience within a Congregation constituted within the Roman Catholic Church. I have at my disposal the annals of the Congregation, the history of its beginnings, and the archives which capture the intention of the Founders. I have also records of the Chapters that are assembled every six years, with delegates from each Province⁴ to make decisions and elect leaders. These records are documented and kept for reference.⁵ I draw on some writings of the history of the Church, especially those of the Catholic Church in the twentieth century, the events and documents pertaining primarily to the Vatican Council (1963-1965).⁶ It is fifty years since the close of the Council so there is a proliferation of writing and analysis of its meaning.⁷ In fact there have been attempts to re-interpret some documents; John O'Malley describes the debates between Cardinal Ruini and the 'Bologna school,' whose principal, Guiseppe Alberigo, referred to the Council as an 'event' with a 'before and after', an interpretation derided by Cardinal Ruini.⁸

My research is ultimately a concern with Christian feminist spirituality, a postmodern discipline which is interdisciplinary both in the manner in which it formulates its projects, and in the methodologies it develops to analyse those projects.⁹ My understanding of postmodernism is that it declares the essentialist view of human nature a fiction, because it serves to cover up its social, historical and linguistic construction 'death of the subject'.¹⁰ It refutes the idea that there is a natural logic or order to random historical events, 'death of history' and denies the idea that

⁴ The Congregation is international, so is divided into geographical regions called 'provinces'.

⁵ Cenacle Sisters, (Acts of the Chapters and Annales of the Congregation of the Cenacle 1825-1856)

⁶ Flannery Austin, ed. *Document's of Vatican II.*, Third Edition ed., vol. 1, *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (N.Y.: Costello, 1975).

⁷ Faggioli Massimo, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* (Rome: Paulist Press, 2012). See also Jim Corkery Mulligan Suzanne, Gerry O'Hanlon, *Repairing the Harvest: Fifty Years after Vatican II* (Co.Dublin: The Columba Press, 2012). Kindle edition

⁸ O'Malley W. John, "Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?" *Theological Studies* 67 (2006).p.5.

⁹ Schneiders Sandra, "Contours and Dynamics of a Discipline 13.," in *Minding the Spirit; the Study of Christian Spirituality*, ed. & Mark Burrows Dreyer E (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2005).

¹⁰ Nietzsche Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage, 1969.

there is the 'real' external to knower,' death of metaphysics'.¹¹The nihilistic potential of postmodern deconstruction, in its refusal to respect boundaries or play by the rules, is liberating and exciting, allowing space for development within the once totally unified discourse of Catholic theology.

My thesis shows how the Second Vatican Council opened a space for Religious women to move from the Medieval, to the Modern era, and within thirty years to catch up to the Postmodern. If, as a Christian feminist, I still identify with the Roman Catholic tradition and remain within the institutional structures of the Church, it is because I take seriously the Church's self-understanding expressed in its assertion of the principle of Incarnation, 'Divine revelation is only given in human, cultural and societally conditioned language.'¹²This 'Incarnational Spirituality' demands a feminist hermeneutic, directed toward a critique of the Bible, tradition, and Church structures, to the extent that they contribute to the oppression and domination of women in a patriarchal and sexist culture and religion.¹³It is as a woman that I search for my place in the Christian narrative and only slowly and gradually uncover the truth, that woman has not simply a 'place' within 'salvation' history, she is its foundation.

The Cenacle Congregation had its origins in post revolution France. In 1826 in the Ardèche region of France, a priest named Stephen Terme with Thérèse Couderc and a small number of other young women, set to work to provide a place for the pilgrims who came to the shrine of John Francis Regis, a 17th century Jesuit saint who had worked with great zeal among the people. It was through a brilliant intuition on the part of Stephen Terme and Thérèse Couderc that the group committed itself to giving the 'Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius' to women. This was a bold move on their part; the Jesuits had been preaching 'retreats' for two hundred years, but this was to be different, women doing what had been traditionally the privilege of priests. The struggles of these inspired founders has been told in detail in the 'Annals of the Congregation', where we read that relationships among the first leaders were fraught.¹⁴Through it all, the amazing figure of the foundress shines out. The faith, hope and charity of Thérèse Couderc are recognised to have been of heroic degree and the Church celebrated it in 1970 when she was proclaimed a 'Saint'. Her spiritual stature as a woman with a profound mission, has been shown to be an inspiration for contemporary women.¹⁵Her influence in my life has been as an image of what it means to be a Religious woman, while her

¹¹Flax Jane, *Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West* (Berkeley University of California Press, 1990).p.39.

¹²Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II* Gaudium et Spes no.64.p.903.

¹³ Fiorenza Schüssler Elisabeth, *In Memory of Her* (London: SCM, 1983).p.35.

¹⁴ Annales de la Société de Notre-Dame du Cénacle ou de La Retraite 1825-1856.

¹⁵ Stogdon M.Katharine, *"The Risk of Surrender"* (University of Manchester., 2004).

influence for the Congregation is constructed around her text, '*Se Livrer*'; in this script Thérèse surrenders herself unreservedly to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. She inherited the spirituality of the 'French School', developed as an alternative to the dogmatism during the years (1575-1716); it was a spirituality imbued with an apophatic understanding of mysticism, through the Rhineland, Flemish, and Spanish influences.¹⁶ The French school 'Christianised' an otherwise Neoplatonic abstract mysticism by its stress on the humanity of Jesus, that Jesus had come from God and was returning to God (Jn 13⁴). This spirituality focused on Jesus' return journey to the Father, as a journey that we too are to make, in the power of the Spirit.¹⁷ The strand within this school that I pick up as significant for its influence on Thérèse, is the spirituality of a little known Jesuit, Louis Lallemant (1567-1635). His *Doctrine Spirituelle*, complemented the writings of Pierre de Berulle (1575-1629) and Francis de Sales (1567-1622), by the significance he placed on the Holy Spirit as the indwelling presence of God, calling for a human response in terms of discernment and contemplation.

At the heart of the *Doctrine*, in order to work that radical reform, there is the spiritual discernment which commands all of the thought of Lallemant, as it commands all of the advance of the *Exercises*. One is not able to comprehend Lallemant, we believe, if one does not place at the centre of every interpretation of this discernment, this 'guidance of the Spirit' which leads to the 'service of Christ'.¹⁸

At the start of Henri Bremond's fifth volume of *A Literary History of Religious Thought in France*¹⁹ he has this to say,

More integral, more original, twenty times more sublime, twenty times more austere, more demanding than Port Royal, the school we are going to study has made little noise. Its contemporaries scarcely suspect that it existed..... Its founder, the Jesuit Louis Lallemant died in 1635 without having written anything.²⁰

This doctrine may give rise to a suspicion, that when the person of prayer abandons herself to God once for all, she is dispensed from any further effort, but for Lallemant, as for Thérèse

¹⁶Buckley J. Michael, "Seventeenth-Century French Spirituality," in *Christian Spirituality Post-Reformation and Modern*, ed. Dupres Louis and Don Saliers (New York: Crossroads, 1989). p.28.

¹⁷ Thompson M William, ed. *Berulle and the French School: Selected Writings*, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1989). p.32

¹⁸Buckley J. Michael, "Seventeenth-Century French Spirituality." in *Christian Spirituality Post-Reformation and Modern*, ed. Dupres Louis and Don Saliers (New York: Crossroads, 1989). p.54.

¹⁹ Bremond Henri, *A Literary History of Religious Thought in France*, trans. L. Montgomery K (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1930).

²⁰ Ibid. vol.5 p.4.

Couderc, the apostolic life given to service of others in Christ required contemplation, it is a necessary component for a life given over to the building of the reign of God.

The title chosen for the Congregation was adopted about fifteen years after the foundation in 1844, it attests to the special character of the Congregation, its spirituality and mission. 'Our Lady of the Retreat in the Cenacle' offers its members a model of a Religious community in that first assembly of the early believers united in one heart and soul around Mary in the upper room, 'Cenacle'. (Acts.2.)²¹ The mystery of Pentecost is there in the background as I analyse the attitude of the Catholic Church in relationship to women. Mary is at the 'birth' of the Church at Pentecost, but there was no woman at the centre of the Church when it assembled for the 'new Pentecost' at Vatican II.

The symbolisation of this Cenacle mystery is the context of my years as a Religious woman. In it is offered an icon of beauty and goodness in the person of Mary, as she appears in the upper room, surrounded by the disciples awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. (Acts.2) This mystery is the inspiration of our mission as we too, with the women of our time, 'await' the coming of the promised Spirit. However, I discover so much more about this woman called, 'Mary' and the real significance of her place in 'salvation history'.

The other influence to which our Congregation is indebted is the Spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) who was a contemporary of Martin Luther (1483-1546) his role within the Church was linked to a response to the Reformation. The charges made by sincere people against Jesuit Spirituality are many, it is individualistic, rationalistic, semi-Pelagian, introspective.²² But the Ignatian approach to prayer was attacked in its early years for the opposite reasons; it was too mystical and affective, insufficiently ascetical and rational, and giving a dangerous prominence to the Holy Spirit. Many were fearful of 'mysticism', and inclined to assume that discursive meditation was the normal way of prayer. This tension is addressed more fully in the body of the work, where I explain the dynamic of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Suffice it to say here that after the death of the founders, the Jesuits undertook to form the little group of French women, through the *Spiritual Exercises*, so they could minister to the women of the post-revolution. The Ignatian practice of 'discernment of spirits' is the foundation for enabling and identifying, through experiences of 'consolation' and 'desolation', those desires that give life (mysticism) and those that are life-destroying (narcissism), such is the 'everyday mysticism' which I claim to be the core of Christianity. The Holy Spirit is the integrating link in each of the above tenets that make up our charism; Mary's surrender to the

²¹ The Cenacle, from the Latin, *cenaculum*, is first of all a room for the *cena*, the supper room. It has come to signify as well, the gathering place of the disciples at key moments in their history with Jesus.

²² Heiding Fredrik SJ., *Ignatian Spirituality at Ecclesial Frontiers* (Oxford: OUP, 2012). see also

Spirit, at the Annunciation and Pentecost, the *Se Livrer* of Thérèse Couderc, and discernment in the *Spiritual Exercises*.

However, this is all very orthodox and disembodied, so in order to formulate my proposition, that mysticism liberates women from the oppression of the phallic, I needed to deconstruct 'mysticism' from the tendency to see it as manifesting unusual gifts. Also to see what was allowed to count as genuine mysticism was in fact a product of struggles between gender and power.²³ I draw on philosophy to expose some of these traps, especially Grace Jantzen²⁴ and Luce Irigaray,²⁵ because both of these writers are concerned with the feminine divine; Jantzen in terms of social construction, and Irigaray with her belief in irreducible sexual difference. Finally, I include the psychoanalytic because the 'unconscious' has a large part to play in Christian humanism although 'psychology' has not received the same respect in the academic world as theology and philosophy. I trace the development of psychoanalytic theory from Freud to the 'object relations' school, to recent insights of 'matrixial trans-subjectivity'.²⁶ This supports my belief that the source of relational theology is rooted in the psyche, in the experience of every human being in the later stages of pregnancy in the womb. I address the issue of narcissism in the context of theology, seeing it as a refusal or inability to relate to the 'other'. I follow the route of the autonomous subject of the Enlightenment, through inter-subjectivity,²⁷ to the matrixial trans-subjectivity of Ettinger.²⁸ I claim that Mary, in giving birth to her son, enables Incarnation, because as the 'Word became flesh', so female flesh became divine. It takes reflection on seven decades of experience, using different lens with which to interpret.

In chapter one, I lay out my methodology, which is narrative, descriptive, analytical and argumentative. To make the case for my proposition, I begin in chapter two by analysing the decade before Vatican II, which covers my first years as a Religious woman in the vowed life. It is important to describe the kind of Church it was, not simply to record forgotten history, but to show how we lived within restrictive ecclesial circumstances, and yet had the capacity to carry out our mission of serving others. During this decade 'Feminism' was not an issue for those of us who aimed at 'sanctity', such was the nature of our spirituality, we believed

²³ Jantzen Grace, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995).

²⁴ ———, *Becoming Divine* (Manchester: MUP, 1998).

²⁵ Irigaray Luce, *Sexes and Genealogies* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1993).

²⁶ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity," *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 2-3 (2006). Conference attended 23rd – 25th March 2012 Dublin, 'The womb/intra-uterine complex & the analytic encounter: Bracha L. Ettinger's Theory of the Matrixial'.

²⁷ Benjamin Jessica, *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

²⁸ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity."

everything was 'grist for the mill', we read the lives of the saints and saw how they turned everything to the great advantage of knowing only Christ Jesus. I describe the ways the Catholic Church resisted 'modernism', by insisting on 'neo-scholastic' theology to be taught in all schools and colleges. I call it 'neo-scholastic', because it was not authentic 'Thomism' (a framework for the study of philosophy in the form of twenty-four theses by St Thomas Aquinas) it was rather an adapted version 'clarifications' offered by sixteenth-century commentators.²⁹ Meanwhile, what John O'Malley calls the long 'nineteenth century' was gathering momentum and we were at the cusp of change.³⁰

In the next decade, chapter three, I show how Catholic women, including Religious women area becoming conscious of the disparity between men and women in the Church and society. I describe the change from living a semi-monastic life, to that of a student of biblical theology, in a college at a distance from Cenacle community, a move from medievalism to postmodernism. I outline the significant decrees of Vatican II, the themes of 'authority and experience' are the focus of my interest. In the documents 'Experience' is no longer a 'taboo' subject, it even has theological content. Women's experience is acceptable so long as it stays within the bounds of marriage or celibacy. In chapter four I address issues related to women in the Church and note that not a lot has changed since the Council, in terms of government in the Church. There was (and is) a degree of disappointment as 'collegiality' was not implemented and religious education was not in keeping with the principles of adult learning. Chapter five propels me into deeper analysis, for example I am obliged to face the 'shadow' side of human development in myself and others; I needed to face the negative feelings I relegated to the unconscious, because they seemed incompatible with the 'Christ-like' image I wished to project. I appreciate Sigmund Freud³¹ in spite of his misogyny, because he offers an alternative to the self-sufficient subject of the Enlightenment. I will substantiate my claim for 'relational theology' because it is integral to my interpretation of mysticism. 'Intersubjectivity' is introduced and I try to show convincingly (in keeping with classical theology) how and why to be human is to be in need of 'atonement', the repairing of relationships. Chapter six brings me to the important question of how a male Christ can save women. The focus is feminist Christology; I distinguish between the 'body of Christ' and the 'body politic' in order to find space for women in the Catholic Church. I dare to return to 'Chalcedon' to examine theories related to humanity and divinity by stressing the message of Incarnation in a unifying

²⁹ Kerr Fergus, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007). p.11.

³⁰ O'Malley W. John, *What Happened at Vatican II* (London Havard University Press, 2008).

³¹ Freud Sigmund, trans. James Strachery, 24 vols., *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* (London: Hogarth Press., 1953-1974).

anthropology. I look at the doctrines of 'Incarnation' and 'Christology', stripped of their metaphysical overtones, to see what they yield for women. If we are to become free and autonomous, and not simply the 'other' of the ideal male, we need to add 'divinity', for women, it is the missing ingredient.³²

Chapter seven culminates in the 'Marian Key', which brings together the different strands of feminism. I avoid naming the Spirit as the feminine face of God, or aligning the Spirit with Mary as the maternal face of God. I am more radical than that. With the insights of Karl Rahner, interpreted by Philip Endean, I argue that Mary is more than the perfect disciple, and explain why. Endean summarises a profound theological argument:

Christ transforms us, by giving us in his person, his message, his death and resurrection, God's assurance that what we call sin is overcome. In so far as he is essentially dependent for his very existence on Mary, she too is not merely the most perfect recipient of redemption, but rather part and parcel of its proclamation.³³

Part and parcel of this Christian proclamation of the 'Good News', is the fact that it is first revealed in the feminine. This 'matrixial' precedes gender, it is where all life begins, Mary is privileged to embody this message in her person. I turn now to the methods used to substantiate my case.³⁴

³² Irigaray Luce. *Sexes and Genealogies*. New York ; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1993.p.62

³³ Endean Philip, "How to Think About Mary's Privileges," *Priests and People* 7/5, no. May (2003).p.300.

³⁴ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Woman-Other-Thing: A Matrixial Touch," in *Matrix Borderlines*(Oxford: Museum of Modern Art., 1993). 'matrixial' meaning womb. OED 'place in which thing is developed'.

Chapter 1.

Methodological Approaches

To see a problem is to see something hidden that may yet be accessible....It is an engrossing possession of incipient knowledge which passionately strives to validate itself.¹

1. 1 Introduction

This chapter lays out the specific methodological approaches I use to claim that Christian women will bring about their own and others liberation, through 'mysticism'. I use the term 'liberation' to indicate the 'freedom' that women need both in the Church and in society from the oppression of the phallic symbolic. I need to define my terms, because I am writing in a situation where 'Christian Church' includes the 'Anglican Communion'. I write as a woman whose identity is mediated through the symbolic narratives of the Roman Catholic tradition. When speaking as a Cenacle woman as distinct from Christian feminist, I capitalise 'Religious' to refer to women who are in the vowed life. However, my arguments require an interdisciplinary approach, the use of different discourses for the various claims I make, philosophical, theological, and psychological. Each of these fields of learning are constituted by unique issues and methodologies. There are problems with this, I am not an expert in the sense of one who dominates the subject matter and controls the literature in all of the disciplines, I do however, have sufficient knowledge of each to respect their variable concepts in my use of them. Also, this research project is self-implicating, I am not neutral or detached about what my research generates and this has alerted me to the dangers of skewing the methodology to produce the desired results, so I aim for a more rigorous honesty in my search for meaning. Sandra Schneiders points to another danger that of 'methodological narcissism', reminding me that personal anecdotes no matter how interesting and supportive of prejudices do not constitute evidence.²

¹Polanyi M, "Knowing and Being," ed. Marjorie Grene(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

²Schneiders Sandra, "Contours and Dynamics of a Discipline," in *Minding the Spirit*, ed. Elizabeth A. Dreyer & Mark S. Burrows(New York: John Hopkins University, 2004).p.18.

1.2 Reflective Writing Method

During my time in America I attended workshops in which I learned to use Ira Progoff's 'Intensive Journal' method.³ It was significant in forming my practice of reflective writing. The workshop was conducted in a silent reflective atmosphere in which the participants used a workbook divided into numerous sections. For example; after a period of quiet reflection on 'time spells' a section on 'stepping-stones' would be written; another reflection was a section on 'dreams' and their meaning; a section might be written as from a 'sub-personality' to give a distinct perspective on a period; there was a 'life-history log' ; and a section on 'roads not taken'. Each exercise was used with specific procedures that evoked the memories of a person's life in a process that stimulated inner perceptions and movements of energy. Intensive journal writing evokes stronger forces of energy than simply writing a diary, although I have done that from time to time. There is a flow in the intensive journal method that enables the past, present and future to point to the different elements of life and to reveal 'who I am'. Progoff describes this form of journal as

An instrument....capable of drawing together the multiplicity of contents of human life and compressing them into a more manageable space while not losing the quality of movement and change that is there essence.⁴

I use 'a period log' approach in this thesis to reflect on my life in periods of ten years considering each decade as a distinctive whole, with events and feelings associated with that time that are different from other periods this allows me stand back and take a wide view. It is described as one of the methods of 'theological reflection' because it can transform heart-felt inner experience, when recorded in journal or spiritual autobiography and other forms of creative writing, then it 'turns life into text' and becomes a living human document.⁵ In the practice of 'reflection' we are looking beyond the limits of the personal, 'reflexivity' on the other hand can be defined 'as an acknowledgement of the significance of the self in forming an understanding of the world'. Reflexivity may seem to be overly individual, however the self and identity are always formed through interaction with others, a claim I make in my thesis. St Augustine's '*Confessions*' written in AD 394, are an example of a classic piece of reflexive spiritual writing that reveals an intense relationship with God, encouraging readers to view their own lives with similar reflexivity. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) a spiritual writer who is profoundly reflexive in her description of an ever-deepening experience of God and the

³Progoff Ira, *The Symbolic and the Real: A New Psychological Approach to the Fuller Experience of Human Existence* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963).

⁴Ibid.p.133

⁵Graham Elaine, Heather Walton and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods* (London SCM 2005)

nature of the human person. Her writing continues to inspire others as she describes her techniques in prayer and in so doing defends the authenticity and authority of contemplation as a way to know God.⁶ Teresa of Jesus writings are both reflexive and reflective; she illustrates for us how reflexive activity, (attention to oneself in a particular situation) is often closely linked to reflective processes (an awareness of the present context). My writing is primarily reflective because I am looking beyond the personal to the context of my experience.

1.3 Heuristic Approach

I use this method as the foundation of my research because while the experience of God is mediated in many ways, it is experienced primordially so through the changing history of oneself. According to Karl Rahner. The personal experience of the experience of the self is the personal experience of the history of God; the personal history of the experience of God signifies over and above itself, the personal history of the experience of the self.⁷

This heuristic approach is the most appropriate with which to validate the claims I make and supplies much of the data for my findings. I reflect on each decade of lived experience in a Religious community, followed by analysis of the reasons for the dramatic changes in theology and psychology that have occurred.⁸ I set out my thesis against a theoretical framework of constructive narrative theology because this allows me a broader perspective. There is a considerable body of material within modern theology claiming the category of 'narrative', so for conceptual clarity I draw on Alasdair Macintyre's work which recognises many different uses of the term 'narrative', some of which support my research especially in relation to community. In his consideration of morality he says:

It is essential [] to be embedded within a tradition that provides a coherent narrative that frames the beginning of our story and moves us towards the ending.....there is no such thing as universal objective morality outside of human experience. Moral goods can only be discovered by entering into those relationships which constitute communities

⁶Teresa of Jesus, *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, 3 vols.(Washington DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1980-1987).

⁷Rahner Karl, *Theological Investigations*, 23 vols., vol. 3(London: Darton,Longman and Todd, 1961-1992).Vol.13.p125 .Also. *Spirit in the World* trans.William Dych N.Y. Herder &Herder 1968 p.129.

⁸ Moustakas Clark, *Heuristic Research* (London: Sage, 1990).

whose central bond is a shared vision of and understanding of goods.⁹

In an essay designed to analyse Macintyre's conception of narrative, Gregory L. Jones explores the constructive implications of this theory. Jones expands Macintyre's conception of community, the two indispensable poles to a community are communion and hospitality. 'Hospitality' is the relationship that prevents the communion from becoming enclosed. It is through hospitality that friends acknowledge their openness to the stranger and welcome her as a friend.¹⁰ The work of retreats has involved a great deal of hospitality requiring relationships that reach out to the 'other', thus keeping narcissism at bay. Furthermore, Jones claims that a community is an 'alternative' community when it makes a counter statement to society's values. We need, he concludes, modern community that can challenge the institutional Church in its complicity with oppressive structures.¹¹

How far the Cenacle community has challenged or colluded with these structures is a question I explore through its narrative. Elaine Graham describes 'constructive narrative theology' as built upon two fundamental convictions. First, that human beings create our world through the process of telling stories and therein find our own sense of self. Second, that Christians worship a story-telling God, and the work of theological reflection as a consequence is the 'task of bringing our own narratives into relationship with the narrative of God'.¹² The biblical narrative of the mystery of 'Our Lady of the Retreat in the Cenacle' is the inspiration for our community as a 'discerning body'. (Acts 1.¹²⁻¹⁴, 2.¹⁻⁴)

I too, like those early believers at Pentecost, speak as the Spirit gives me to speak, and hope that 'each will hear in her own language'. (2.⁸) Our theological reflection on the Cenacle mystery is a corporate activity; we are a group of individuals with a sense of belonging, and we use biblical and traditional texts, such as annals of the Congregation and letters to and from the founder to her community to create and sustain our ongoing existence.¹³

I utilise Paul Ricoeur's 'hermeneutics of testimony' to recount my history and that of the community believing it to be revelatory. It is a history that 'emerges from a questioning attention to our present life in the light of a particular past, a past seen as generative'.¹⁴ There are, according to Stephen Crites, stories that lie deep within the consciousness that orient us

⁹ Macintyre Alistair, *Narrative Community and the Moral Life*, Modern Theology (1987).

¹⁰ Jones L. Gregory, "Alasdair Macintyre on 'Narrative, Community and the Moral Life'," *ibid.* 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Graham Elaine, Heather Walton and Frances Ward ed. *Theological Reflection: Sources* (London SCM) p. 89.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Ricoeur Paul, "Toward a Hermeneutics of the Idea of Revelation; Essays on Biblical Interpretation," ed. Lewis S. Mudge (London: SCM, 1980).

through time, these are 'sacred stories', then there are mundane stories the kind that we use to facilitate daily living, mediating between the sacred and the mundane, then there is a third type in the form of the experiencing consciousness itself,

Consciousness grasps its objects in an in an inherently temporal way, and that temporality is retained in the unity of its experience as a whole'.¹⁵

I place my experience and that of the women in the Cenacle with whom I have lived, at the centre of reflection to display the cultural, social and religious constructions that undergird concepts about 'Cenacle' religious life. My thesis is set against a theoretical template developed by Johann Baptist Metz¹⁶ and utilized by Elizabeth Johnson in her theological reading of the communion of saints.¹⁷ Metz draws together three realities, memory, narrative and solidarity, he argues that these are basic categories of a fundamental theology. I claim that these categories include pre-natal memories which have bearing on the psychic life of both women and men. Taken together, memory and solidarity can interpret the love of God in a world where there is conflict and a need of relationality. I consult my own experience as a hermeneutical tool from which to wrestle with the attitude that the Catholic patriarchy have towards women. 'Memory', 'narrative' and 'solidarity' together will form one tool that, rooted in Scripture and liturgy, may reveal the Cenacle community as desiring to promote with all Christian women, the liberation that will, according to Sandra Schneiders, 'change the direction of salvation for the race and the planet'.¹⁸

1. 4 Feminist Theology

As a woman I am called to engage in theological reflection as is every Christian but I do so in this context because I wish to support those developing theologies, that are strongly holistic. My thesis aims to hold together in creative tension seeming polarities that traditional theology separates; body and spirit; emotion and rationality; individual and community.

Feminist consciousness did not surface in the Congregation of the Cenacle until about the third decade in the years of which I write. I use the feminist theological critical principle of the 'full

¹⁵ Crites Stephen, 'The Narrative Quality of Experience', Journal of the American Academy of Religion 39, no.3

¹⁶ Metz Johann Baptist, *Faith in History and Society* (New York: Seabury, 1980).

¹⁷ Johnson Elizabeth, *Friends of God and Prophets* (London: SCM Press, 1998).

¹⁸ Schneiders M. Sandra, *Beyond Patching: Faith and Feminism in the Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991).p.36.

'humanity of woman'¹⁹ against which to test the insights of more recent feminist thinkers. While Ruether²⁰ proposes the idea that there is some compatibility between the feminist critical principle and the Biblical prophetic-messianic tradition, Schüssler-Fiorenza prefers to appeal to a critical principle based solely on 'women's concrete experience' rooted for her in women-church (*ekklesia gynaiikon*).²¹ This provides the hermeneutical key through which texts are judged as either oppressive or liberating. Schüssler Fiorenza disagrees that the biblical 'prophetic- messianic' principle necessarily conforms to a feminist principle of 'full humanity' that can be located within the Bible, she claims that it needs to be formulated within women's struggle for liberation. Schüssler Fiorenza considers 'emancipatory praxis' as both the presupposition and goal of feminist theology. Texts and traditions are evaluated in the light of their potential to liberate or oppress women. Fiorenza makes this claim on the basis that all theology is constantly engaged in interpretation; but a hermeneutics that merely attempts to understand the Christian tradition and texts in their historical settings does not suffice.²²

Critical theology has as its methodological presupposition the Christian community's constant need for renewal.²³

I utilise both Ruether's and Schüssler-Fiorenza's principles of arbitration in my thesis, that of 'full humanity' and 'women's concrete experience', as markers for, or signs of liberation. Ruether contends that what makes feminist theology unique is not the articulation of this critical principle of 'full humanity', but that 'women claim this principle for themselves'.²⁴ Rather than appealing to 'women's experience', I choose to work with the category of 'women's discourses' to avoid the notion of 'woman' as an abstract, ahistorical concept.²⁵ My choice of methodology reflects the tension between constructivist's and essentialist's gender theories. While taking note of both standpoints in the debate within feminist theory and theology, I make a choice for 'strategic essentialism'.²⁶ This choice gives me the flexibility to be a pragmatist in response to the question of the essential character of woman when I eventually discover her real 'construction'. Because 'liberation theologians' argue that everyone particularly women have a duty to transcend oppressive situations in a

¹⁹ Ruether Radford Rosemary, *Sexism and God Talk*. (London, SCM Press 1983) p.19.

²⁰ *The Emergence of Christian Feminist Theology*, ed. Susan Frank Parsons, The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology (Cambridge: CUP, 2002).

²¹ Fiorenza Schüssler Elisabeth, *Discipleship of Equals* (New York, Crossroads 1994)

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.p.63.

²⁴ Ruether Radford Rosemary, *Sexism and God Talk*. (London: SCM Press.1983)

²⁵ Jones Serene, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).p.22.

²⁶ Ibid.

just manner I am mindful of this as I explore the work of women's liberation.²⁷ I utilize Foucault's view of history, his linking together of notions of discourse and power that normalize the status quo, and consider his claim that power is a productive force.²⁸ Foucault asks,

In what does it (philosophy) consist, if not in the endeavour to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently, instead of legitimating what is already known?²⁹

I wish to think differently about about the Christian narrative of salvation and women's place or absence within it. I will position Cenacle sisters within the 'net-work of relations' within the institution of the Catholic Church to provide a basis for our identity, while critiquing our marginality within the Church, but also owning the Church as a source of empowerment and creativity. Foucault's thinking of power and resistance offers a route through the philosophical question of what is 'normal' in relation to authority.³⁰ For Foucault, power is not only repressive but also productive, insofar as every system of knowledge depends on social arrangements of power for the production and maintenance of that knowledge. His understanding of the power-knowledge relation has implications for re-thinking aspects of liberation theology, and religious education.

Feminist theology does not avoid questions of Christology and neither do I, especially the question of identity and difference that 'matrixial trans-subjectivity' goes a long way to explain.³¹ I explore a theology that reflects and encourages human relatedness. Tina Beattie puts it this way:

Christianity is essentially relational both in its proclamation of a Trinitarian God and in its celebration of the Incarnation of an event that continuously reveals itself in the space of creative symbolic encounter between God, Mary, Christ and the Church. So the story of Christ is the story of Mary is the story of the Church is the story of humanity is the story God.³²

²⁷ Isherwood Lisa, ed. *Feminist Spirituality, A to Z of Feminist Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). p.121.

²⁸ Foucault Michel, *Afterword; the Subject and Power; Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. Dreyfus H. and Paul Rabinow, 2nd. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

²⁹ Jeremy Carrette Bernauer James, *Michel Foucault and Theology; the Politics of Religious Experience* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) and Foucault Michel, *The Use of Pleasure* (London: Penguin 1984) p.9.

³⁰ Foucault Michel, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1972).

³¹ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity," *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 2-3 (2006).

³² Beattie Tina, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate : A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation* (London: Continuum, 2002). p.39.

Beattie, reminds us that that this vision cannot be expressed by one of these symbols in isolation from the rest. This means going beyond a ³³ narrow Christological focus, to an all-encompassing vision of Incarnation that incorporates all of creation, male, female and the whole cosmos.

Karl Rahner does not write specifically about feminist theology, yet I have recourse to his thinking grounded as it is in the possibility of God's grace infused into the particular experience of the everyday.³⁴ Rahner is influenced by the spirituality of *St. Ignatius and the Spiritual Exercises*,³⁵ and his understanding of what it is to be human and already related to God, is the foundation for my claim of 'everyday mysticism'; his theological anthropology has been heavily criticised 'as an anthropological and subjectivist reduction of theology and Christianity'.³⁶ In claiming that mysticism is the gift of Incarnation and available to all Christians, I show my hand as being 'anthropological and subjectivist'. I believe with Rahner, that the mystery of God is always mediated through an experience that is specifically historical, and that the changing history of woman's subjectivity creates a new situation for language about the divine mystery.³⁷ A disadvantage to my leaning heavily on Rahner is that it is not possible to present a full elucidation of Rahner's thought and scholarship, which might give space to feminist theology.

One significant change in my post-Vatican II years is the Church's attitude to 'experience' and consequently her greater acceptance of women's experience.³⁸ The other liberating aspect of the Council, is in relation to 'authority'; before the Council the Pope's word regarding faith or morals was to be followed unquestioningly. Now the Council interrupts this praxis to include the Pope and the Bishops together, a 'collegiality' to constitute what is called the 'magisterium' for the decision-making process.³⁹ This question is one of the relationship of centre to periphery and is still a burning issue for the Church.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Rahner Karl, *'the Church of the Future'*, trans. Various, 23 vols., vol. 20, Theological Investigations (London/New York: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961).

³⁵ Endean Philip, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*, trans. Philip Endean from the German (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³⁶ Kerr Fergus, *Twentieth-Century Catholic Theologians* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).p.91.

³⁷ Rahner Karl, *Theological Investigations*, 23 vols., vol. 3 (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961-1992). *Experience of Self, Experience of God*.p.135.

³⁸ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II Dei Verbum* para.8 p.754.

³⁹ Ibid. (Lumen Gentium p. 374-376)

1.5 Feminist Spirituality

Because 'spirituality' is a term used comprehensively to describe so many experiences, I prefer 'mysticism', it allows me to distinguish between the superficial and the profound, when describing what Karl Rahner called 'the mysticism of ordinary life'.⁴⁰ In earlier studies I have traced the term 'Spirituality' from its biblical roots in the Old Testament as a designation of that which gives life to the cosmos through the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴¹ How does the Spirit give life and how do we receive life? Sandra Schneider's definition of spirituality is very broad,

The experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms, not of isolation and self-absorption (narcissism?) but of self-transcendence toward the 'other' or the ultimate value one perceives.⁴²

I prefer the definition of spirituality offered by Lisa Isherwood and Dorothea McEwan as, 'Imagining Wholeness'. The word for 'maturity', *teleios*, is often translated 'perfect' in the New Testament, meaning wholeness or completion rather than moral perfection. 'Wholeness' means body, mind and spirit, which must include the psyche.⁴³ Catholic spirituality in the past has had a strong emphasis on renunciation and asceticism, practices often associated with the mystics. Since Vatican II however, there is a more holistic view of 'human nature', God works in and through human realities, 'finding God in all things' is how Ignatius puts it.⁴⁴

My study will clarify some of the characteristics of a spirituality rooted in women's experience, both of disempowerment, and empowering. Secondly, women are concerned, and indeed need to give voice to, and celebrate those aspects of bodiliness about which the patriarchy has been ashamed, especially woman's powers of reproduction those feminine experiences associated with giving life. Thirdly, my study expresses a concern with how women view 'Almighty God', his remoteness, the understanding of sacrifice, redemption, doctrines that may have different meaning for women than for men. I argue for a theological anthropology that is life-giving and liberating for women, that does not perpetuate 'unrelationality' and dis-grace.⁴⁵ explore the issue of 'subjectivity' to strengthen my argument for relationality, because the capacity to relate to the 'other' is essential for a Christian. The optimism of the Enlightenment

⁴⁰ Rahner Karl, *Mystics in Everyday Life* (N.Y.: Crossroads, 1988).

⁴¹ Lyons Kathleen, "Creator Spirit in Modern Theology," (Nottingham University, 1972).

⁴² Schneiders M. Sandra, *Beyond Patching: Faith and Feminism in the Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004). p.73.

⁴³ Isherwood Lisa and Dorothea McEwan, *Introducing Feminist Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993). p.149.

⁴⁴ Puhl Louis, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Chicago: Loyola Univ. Press, 1951). Contemplation to obtain Divine Love. p.101

⁴⁵ Delgado Teresa, "This Is My Body Given for You," in *Frontiers in Catholic Feminist Theology*, ed. Abraham Susan and Elena Procario -Foley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).

was not fulfilled and the Cartesian subject was not the key to the correction and completion of modernity. According to Habermas, 'subject-centred' philosophy was over, it must be replaced by an inter-subjectivist paradigm of communicative action or understanding.⁴⁶ A more practical definition is outlined in the following chapters especially through the exploration of 'developmental psychology', but two points are worth noting here in terms of theology. Because God's very self is relational our Creator God creates out of a yearning for the 'other'. I show the basic structure of the human person to be relational, that is why human /divine becoming and can only be achieved through relationship.

As Catherine Keller puts it:

For if I am partially constituted by you even as you partially constitute me, for better or for worse, that is if I flow into, in-fluence you as you in-fluence me, then my subjectivity describes itself as radically open-ended in time as well as space.⁴⁷

1.6 Feminism and the Psychoanalytic

My choice of this methodological approach is because I believe the Holy Spirit speaks to us through the suppressed feelings that surface from the unconscious. Moreover, this process starts much earlier than classical psychology believed, starting as far back as the later stages of pregnancy. I know that the application of psychoanalysis to any context outside the clinical is problematic because it is concerned with metaphor, fantasy and analogies, the focus is on meanings and motives which are not easily validated.⁴⁸ But Christian methodologies draw on the same repository of wisdom and knowledge within the created order as do secular systems. Both believer and non-believer try to make sense of the same raw material that is human psychology, whilst having different purposes for doing so. The Catholic Church has been cautious on the issue of the operations of grace in psychic terms, seeming to suggest that grace can exercise its effects independently of any psychological considerations,⁴⁹ but 'grace' encompasses the psychic processes of the human-being. There is biblical evidence that God communicates his will through the unconscious and through dreams (Gen.37.⁵ Matt.2.¹⁹). I am assuming that evaluation of the Freudian psychoanalytic perspective is unnecessary, because

⁴⁶ Habermas Jürgen, *Theory of Communicative Action; Reason and the Rationalisation of Society*. vol. 1 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

⁴⁷ Keller Catherine, "Seeking and Sucking," in *Horizons in Feminist Theology*, ed. Davaney SG Chopp RS (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).p.58

⁴⁸ Meissner W, *The Psychology of a Saint: Ignatius of Loyola* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

⁴⁹ Egan Harvey, *The Spiritual Exercises and the Ignatian Mystical Horizon* (St.Louis Mo.: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1976).

although Freud bequeathed us a rich legacy in terms of the unconscious, we recognise that his vision had its limits and was conditioned by its cultural context.⁵⁰ According to the classic psychoanalytic view defined by Freud,⁵¹ narcissism is an infantile psychic disposition that persists as a lifelong opposition to 'object relations', because the libido chooses love objects that resemble themselves, or an ego ideal, rather than the 'other' (object), in order to feel loved.⁵² Finding psychoanalytic theories that do justice to the complexity of relationality is crucial, that is why I propose the provocative and revolutionary idea of Bracha Ettinger's 'matrixial' theory.⁵³ My original contribution to knowledge is the application of matrixial theory to relational theology revealed through Incarnational Christianity. This theory shows feminine difference as a radical otherness that functions on its own terms beyond the world of the phallus, that is beyond language and gender as it is presently constituted. Maternal symbolism is a valid but seldom explored avenue to understanding the divine. I hold with Bracha Ettinger that the first stage of 'human becoming' is within the womb when a process of 'I' and not 'I' emerging in coexistence, shows subjectivity to be more than a single subject.⁵⁴ She has dared to speculate about the potential significance of 'subjectivity as encounter' to open up a dimension of subjectivity that is formed in relationship rather than under the phallic logic of abjection of the maternal.⁵⁵ Griselda Pollock says,

Neither Irigaray nor Kristeva fully resolves the problem of thinking beyond the phallic dimension as radically and creatively as Bracha Ettinger, whose purpose is not merely to define the shape of phallocentrism but to allow a feminine matrixial shifting/supplementing of its hegemony.⁵⁶

I explore the implications of Ettinger's matrixial theory in relation to 'Mary' and her relationship to the baby in her womb during the later stages of her pregnancy and argue that she is an instance of the 'full humanity of women'. It is not enough to concede that the Son of God was born of woman, or that in a complex configuration of esoteric doctrine Mary figures as mother/ daughter/wife of God.⁵⁷ According to Maaïke de Haardt, Mary is a polyvalent

⁵⁰ Wulff M David, ed. *Psychology of Religion*, Second Edition ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997). p.306

⁵¹ Freud Sigmund, *On Narcissism: An Introduction.*, trans. J. Strachey, Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud ed., 24 vols., vol. 14 (London: Hogarth Press, 1914).

⁵² Wulff M David, ed. *Psychology of Religion*. p.355.

⁵³ Ettinger L.Bracha. "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity." *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 2-3 (2006): 218-22.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Pollock Griselda, "Thinking the Feminine," *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, no. 1-5 (2004).p.35.

⁵⁷ Beattie Tina, *New Catholic Feminism : Theology and Theory* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2006).

figure: she is not just full of grace, she is above all full of meaning.⁵⁸ I believe there is a depth of meaning in the prayer, 'Blessed is the fruit of thy womb'.

I examine Mary's role in the mystery of the Incarnation and contrast her place in *Lumen Gentium* Chapter 8, that affirms her unique role in salvation history, (para.53) while portraying her as intimately united to the Church. (par.63)⁵⁹ Then, I will devote a whole chapter, later in my study, to the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church. Perhaps I am mirroring the Council bishops in having a separate chapter for this? The picture of the Church painted by Luke in the Pentecostal scene (Lk.Acts 2:¹⁻¹³) was glimpsed at the Second Vatican Council, but Mary, who was so central at Pentecost was now placed within her history as an 'ordinary' woman. This theological, historicizing and biblical Mary presents a sober, sensible and real person. But the devotions, the prayers and pilgrimages, the 'religious practices' and lived faith testify to so much more. As regards methodology, the anthropological assumptions that guide me are those that try to overcome male-centrism, dualism, one dimensions. I invoke Ettinger's theory which portrays those anthropological assumptions that are human centered, unifying and realist, to be our divine-human origins.⁶⁰

Tina Beattie marvels at the fact that in the early patristic writings Mary's physical maternity was not that it makes Mary's motherhood transcendent, but that it makes God immanent. She claims Catholic theology has retained the symbol of mother but lost the association with the flesh, 'the idea of Mary's motherhood being seen as a "metaphysics of femininity", destroys its significance, because the whole point of insisting that Christ was born of a woman was to show that there was no longer any possibility of a pure metaphysics once God had become flesh'⁶¹.

1.7 Conclusion

Such a long life requires me to place boundaries around the vast material I could draw on. Until recently, methodology required that a student could study those questions which the accepted method in one's own discipline was intended to answer. Now we are studying topics and problems that overflow the margins of a single discipline, but Hans George Gadamer,

⁵⁸Haardt de Maaik, "The Marion Paradox: Marian Practices as a Road to a New Mariology " *Harvard Theological Review* 19, no. no.2 (2011).p.177

⁵⁹ *Documents of Vatican II (Lumen Gentium p.413)*

⁶⁰ Gebara Ivone and Maria Clara Bengemer, *Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor*, Liberation Theology (Tunbridge Wells UK: Orbis Books, 1989).

⁶¹ Beattie Tina, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate : A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation*.p.99.

reminds me when I mix discourses and genres to pay careful attention to the rules and realms they invade, or their interpretation is called not so much interdisciplinary as undisciplined.⁶²

The method of using my own experience as a woman in Religious life over many years is, in some ways a distinct advantage. This narrative structure may be limiting, in that it reinforces a sense of history as simple, rather than complex, unitary, and varied. Also, the time span I refer to is a mere fifty years from Vatican II, a balanced perspective of it needs much longer. But my views as a woman are distinct from the many male voices evaluating the Council just now, as I am old enough to have experienced Catholic life forty years before the event, I do not wish the memory of 'before and after' the Council to be forgotten.

The method I use to examine the attitude of the Catholic Church towards women, in addition to experience, is through a literature review of the magisterial teaching in the twentieth century, from the modernist crisis to the Second Vatican Council.⁶³ My study reveals the methods of control brought to bear on women within the Church; one such 'method' was to present 'Mary the Mother of God' as gentle and meek, one who was totally docile and passive, thus setting certain standards for Christian women that did not encourage them to be smart, opinionated or ambitious.⁶⁴ My argument is that Mary's role is not the idealized icon of popular opinion she is so much more, yet my research is limited to women's experience and psychoanalytic sources unacceptable in some academic circles. To map the linguistic terrain that I have explored, related to feminist theology, is a vast work which I do not attempt, because it would take me too far from my argument. I intend to sketch the basic contours of the engagement with feminist consciousness and the Catholic Church.

Christian feminist theology recognises a methodology that involves three interrelated steps, criticism, recovery and reconstruction.⁶⁵ I have explored the hidden dynamic of domination in the Catholic Church, in its language, ethics, symbolism and laws. I have looked for creative new articulations of old Christian symbols that promote the full humanity of woman. When I ask how questions of gender are to be recovered, I find that there are two main camps, the 'revolutionists', who view Christian principles as too patriarchal and concentrate their efforts on affirming female experience and principles. On the other hand 'reformers' are committed to re-visioning the tradition in ways that honour the feminine without being just simply

⁶² Gadamer Hans-George, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joels Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London: Continuum, 2004).

⁶³ Helman A. Ivy, *Women and the Vatican* (New York: Orbis Books, 2012).

⁶⁴ Callaghan Brendan SJ, "'Then Gentle Mary Meekly Bowed Her Head'," *New Blackfriars* 77, no. September (1996).

⁶⁵ Abraham Susan and Elena Procario -Foley, ed. *Frontiers in Catholic Feminist Theology*. p 3.

compensatory. The first camp, the revolutionaries ask the right questions for reformers to answer; on the basis of this division I am in the reformers camp. There are many answers on offer in the reformers camp, I opt for relationality and ecclesiology. The revolutionaries would see limitations in relationality, true for human beings in general, but how true for the Church? The vision of a 'discipleship of equals' seems unreal,⁶⁶ especially as the faith community of the Catholic Church is struggling to retain elements of a political body, rather than a collegial one. No doubt flaws may be found in each of my chosen methods, perhaps the most obvious is that of the critical difference between the theological approach and a psychoanalytic one; the theologian would hold that we cannot know the origin of certain feeling states, whether or not they come from God. Ignatius assumes we can, in his 'rules' for discernment.⁶⁷ The psychoanalyst would maintain that no such knowledge or discrimination is possible. W.Meissner is skeptical of the divine origins of religious experience, believing it to be attributable to purely natural causes working through unconscious motivations.⁶⁸ But, says Harvey Egan,⁶⁹ the Christian belief that a God of love communicates himself immediately and directly even through the unconscious must not be tacitly assumed to be impossible. I believe that Ettinger's insight into the psychic reverberations engendered in the pre-natal phase of human becoming is to be attributed to the creative work Holy Spirit. The limitation of the method of the psychoanalytic and Ettinger's theory in particular is that it cannot be proved scientifically. Also, *Ignatian Spirituality* has limitations, not least that it is 'gender blind', its context is the sixteenth century, so it needs to be viewed from an historical perspective, both looking back and looking ahead. It is 'truth in process', and 'reality in becoming', as regards finding the will of God, both for the individual and the Church at large.⁷⁰ The Holy Spirit has not said the last word yet regarding women in the Church, discerning the 'will of God' in this regard, is what we, as Church are engaged in.

I am aware that each of the themes threading through the thesis could have a deeper study devoted to them; for example the term 'Mysticism' has built around it a voluminous library tracing the history and development of different understandings of the concept. Evelyn Underhill's vastly influential book *Mysticism*⁷¹ and the significant work of William James⁷² are

⁶⁶ Fiorenza Schüssler Elisabeth, *Discipleship of Equals*.

⁶⁷ Puhl Louis, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. p141-150.

⁶⁸ Meissner W. *Ignatious of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992. p.348.

⁶⁹ Egan Harvey, *The Spiritual Exercises and the Ignatian Mystical Horizon*.

⁷⁰ Heiding Fredrik SJ., *Ignatian Spirituality at Ecclesial Frontiers* (Oxford: OUP, 2012). p.173.

⁷¹ Underhill Evelyn, *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1961).

missing in my references, because they do not further my claim for 'everyday mysticism'. Not all Christians will agree with me that mysticism is liberating. It may be argued that mysticism is based on 'religious feelings', is secondary and derivative and could not embrace Christian revelation as a whole. A further argument is that when mysticism is orthodox it concerns a small number of people and so has nothing to say about Christianity as such.⁷³ Nor would some feminist theologians see it as liberating, they would consider the focus on the experiential as subjective and even narcissistic, in that it allows a secret inner life that may prop up rather than challenge the status quo.

Similarly, 'Narcissism' is defined by psychologists in various ways, my use of it as, self-referential at the expense others, is for me the core dynamic of 'sin'. Arguably, this method could be seen as a short cut through the numerous theories that show more nuanced understandings of how narcissism manifests itself. Moderate levels of what Heinz Kohut called 'healthy narcissism' are consistent with confidence and self-esteem, that is conducive to mental health and wholeness necessary for leaders who are to articulate a vision for others. It could be argued that there are such leaders in the Catholic Church but if so, they have not opened a space for women and brought about the vision of Vatican II with its principle of collegiality.⁷⁴ The very context of my argument, the effect of postmodernism and Vatican II documents on the life of Catholic women Religious, opens up a field of further controversy. I believe that the methods I use contribute to a breakthrough in positioning Christian women as those who have dared the fullness of Incarnation.⁷⁵ As Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza claims, a critical hermeneutical model does not work simply with a dualistic and objectivist-positivist model, which understands the text as object and the interpreter as subject.⁷⁶ Rather, it adopts a process model of interpretation that has four hermeneutical poles, interpreter, text, world, ideology, among which meaning circulates. Consequently critical interpretation begins with reflection on one's own experience and socio-political religious location. We must, Schüssler Fiorenza argues, focus on those women who are at the 'bottom' of the pyramid of domination and exploitation, we must locate the hermeneutical standpoint with them because their struggles reveal the dehumanising oppression threatening every women, and the power of divine wisdom in our midst. To that end we need to develop and engage not only a

⁷² James William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1902).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*. (Lumen Gentium para.22)

⁷⁵ Isherwood Lisa, *Introducing Feminist Christologies* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001).p.131.

⁷⁶ Fiorenza Schüssler Elisabeth, *Sharing Her Word: Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Context* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989).p.77.

deconstructive but also a reconstructive methodology of interpretation.⁷⁷ I believe that the methodology I use contributes to a reconstructing of the position of Christian women as those who have dared the fullness of Incarnation.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Isherwood Lisa, *Introducing Feminist Christologies*.p.131.

1945-1962 *My Experience of Cenacle Religious Life*

By the time I joined the Cenacle community in Grayshott in 1945, the fifty sisters who made up the community formed a self-subsistent society, economically sound. All vegetables were grown on the premises, carefully cooked and skillfully reheated if any were left over. Everything we wore was made by the sisters including shoes. There was great economy practiced sometimes called 'poverty', lights were not to be left on and must be dimmed at night. The restrictions on the use of water that prevailed during the war still pertained. No daily baths. If there was a retreat of twenty or thirty women, everyone was extremely busy especially in kitchen and dining room. Potatoes and vegetables were to be peeled, and cut, dishes and pans to be washed. Community meals required two sittings, 'second table' is first, so that some sisters could serve 'first table' community and the retreatants. I preferred to read aloud during meals to the community or retreatants, or even to serve at table, in preference to helping in the kitchen or washing pans; but everyone has to take her turn at these tasks, the rota changed every week. Some tasks carry the aura of humility: I would never say I hated certain jobs because such strong negative feelings had no place in the psyche of a prospective saint! As far as I was concerned this spiritual ambition was the highest I could aim for as a baptised Christian. To be a 'saint', that is to say, to achieve intimate union the God, was my ambition. No-one ever mentioned 'mysticism', that suggested strange phenomenon that smacked of heresy.

However, I was happy with the many spiritual exercises that filled the day, starting with meditation at 6.00am. I did not like getting up at 5.15am or taking my turn to call each sister. Mass was at 7.15am. The Choir Religious say 'Lauds and Terce', hours of the Divine Office, while the rest of us are busy with our domestic duties. I was always delighted when sometimes I am given two half-hours of adoration, it quite literally "makes my day". Also, I was pleased when we could attend the retreatant's mass in addition to the earlier community one. Quite often the priest who was preaching the retreat would give a conference to the community so I heard the more well-known Jesuits, Dominicans, and others, some of whom were excellent. One such is a Cistercian who talks on the 'Song of Songs', which I found inspiring. Other spiritual practices are grace before and after meals in Latin, reading during meals, preceded by the 'Martyrology' a chronicle of the particular martyr put to death on that day. The Choir sisters help with the dishes during retreats, but in the absence of guests for retreats they processed to the chapel after the midday meal, (which is the main meal of the day) reciting the 'miserere', before saying 'None', the midday prayer.

After recreation of about forty five minutes, there was thirty minutes 'spiritual reading' and about 4.30pm the rosary, and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. For the Choir sisters there is None, Vespers, Matins and Compline, spaced periodically at the appropriate times. The day ended with Compline or night prayers at 9.00pm. Strict silence was maintained after Compline until after breakfast. Because we were 'enclosed' (more about this later), we have a brisk walk around the grounds during recreation, having put on our overshoes.

An important inclusion to our spiritual nourishment is the annual retreat. This is of eight days duration; it was a time of total silence except for that which may be spent talking to the retreat giver. I looked forward to this retreat with great anticipation because there was more time for prayer and only the basic chores are to be done. This retreat is always given by a Jesuit who gives three talks each day following the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Some of these retreat givers are excellent, giving me fresh insights, increasing my zeal for the following of Christ. Others were boring just following the format of the four 'weeks' of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, which I soon knew by heart. Others were entertaining, enacting a sort of psychodrama as they described the gospel scenes, so that I would be engulfed with giggles both during the talk and later. I go to confession of course: 'the sacrament of reconciliation' as we call it now. I used to wonder what to talk about that would qualify for absolution. There was complete anonymity around it, so depending on the priest's sensitivity and my own openness and trust, I found it helpful or a hindrance.

We all operated on norms of hard work and discipline, fidelity to the 'rule', which means that life could become predictable to the point of being dull. What prevented me from becoming bored was the liturgy. The liturgical year alternated with highs and lows, important feasts of Our Lord, feasts of Mary, feasts of the saints. Each of these was classified, double of first class, (Christmas and Easter), first class, second class and ordinary. A great deal of time was spent preparing the Gregorian-chant because we sang both the common and the proper of the Mass for the feasts. The coadjutor sisters stand by the organ to form a choir that adds to that of the choir sisters for all major feasts. The altar is filled with flowers and amazingly tall candles that reach to the ceiling.

One significant aspect of life is the division of labour, 'Choir' sisters spend a great deal of time praying the 'Divine Office', so the domestic work, of which there is a-plenty, was done by the coadjutor sisters. Part of the work of the 'Society' (as it was called then) is to provide hospitality for those who come to make a retreat. At this time the retreat consists of the priest preaching to the people. (The original inspiration of the sisters conducting the retreats is discontinued after the early foundation days, for reasons of 'canon law'). If a retreatant

wished to talk to a sister about her prayer, she would leave a message to that effect, and one of the Choir sisters would be appointed to speak with her. All of us contributed to a prayerful environment, but also to the standard of care that anyone going to a good hotel might expect. Practically it made sense to have two degrees of sisters to ensure the cooking, cleaning, waiting at tables etc. could be done while the Divine Office was being prayed in the background. However, the division of labour extended to many other aspects of the life, so that there are two degrees of sisters. The Choir sisters had a certain status shown by wearing a different dress (habit), having precedence in rank both in chapel and in the refectory before the coadjutor sisters. The decision about who was to be a 'choir' sister and who a 'coadjutor' was based largely on the ability of the family to pay the dowry, or of the candidate having a 'good background', which does imply 'education', but not as we would understand that now. Not all the choir sisters were highly intelligent, while some of the coadjutor sisters were, but because they came from working class background and were not well educated did not qualify for 'choir' status. All this was soon to change but it seemed immutable at this time.

On 14th April 1948 I pronounced my first vows. In choosing to make vows I was directing my three human energies, sexuality, ownership of goods, freedom and subjectivity, by offering them to God for the service of others, although this was not my only motivation as I am to discover later. Vows were made in the context of the celebration of the Eucharist, which took place in the early morning; breakfast followed at which 'Mother Mistress' announced that I am to go to the Cenacle in Hampstead on the following morning. Of course this is a complete surprise having been in retreat for ten days prior to the ceremony, not a whisper of this has come my way. But this is the usual procedure, no sister is given more than a couple of days notice before leaving, after all I am to be ready to ,

travel to various places and to live in any part of the
world where there is hope of rendering greater service to
God...Rule3

The vows I have just made are for the space of five years, if at the end of that time I wish to continue, and the Congregation considers me to have a vocation, then I will make perpetual vows. For now I have promised to live the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. I am filled with spiritual consolation when I say the formula aloud during the ceremony but am soon put to the test when I am told to leave Grayshott on the following day. At this time the explanation for the vow of obedience is fairly clear, it amounts to doing as I am told, if the order is from rightful authority, it is the voice of God. Fortunately none of my 'superiors' abused this power by asking unreasonable tasks of me. The vow of poverty involves economic interdependence, all personal resources are shared with the community, full financial disclosure and complete

financial accountability. Thereafter, permission must be sought to obtain anything I needed, and everything I have or use, is held in common.

'Chastity' for me is founded on a nuptial metaphor, a total and exclusive intimate relationship with Christ. This personal attachment to the glorified human being Jesus, made relative everything else, even the kind of work or indeed the kind of community. This sexual exclusivity is not a 'Jesus and I' spirituality, but embraces the whole Christ and the whole world. I say Yes, to God 'for the rest of my life', this 'forever' is a response to the 'beloved's call. In contrast to this ideal the 'rule' is very sparse!

*What concerns the vow of chastity needs no explanation,
as it is plain how perfectly it ought to be observed, that is
by endeavoring to imitate angelical purity in purity of
both body and mind.
(Rule 25 Summary of Const. 1948)¹*

The metaphor of marriage to Christ engenders a realistic suspicion in feminine consciousness because it evokes the image of patriarchal marriage with the possession and subordination of a woman to her male partner. Before going on to explore the consequences of this life option, I need to say that consecrated celibacy has been for me, a spiritually liberating and enriching reality, in spite of the extent and depth of patriarchy in the institutional Church.

I made my final vows in London in 1953, and later that year, was sent to Liverpool and appointed 'Infirmarian'. It was not heavy work, except when there was an epidemic of flu and the trays had to be taken up four flights of stairs. I was also responsible for the cleanliness of retreatant's rooms and for the 'vestiaire, where the religious 'habits' were made and repaired. The life style was still 'monastic', prayer, meal times and recreation were regular. The apostolate was a busy one, women and girls came in large numbers for short retreats, while a small number made what were called 'private' retreats involving individual spiritual direction. Other more significant changes related to the spiritual and technical formation of the sisters, which meant that I attended some excellent courses on catechetics, for example, those given by Johannes Hoffinger S.J. In a letter to the Superiors General, Pius XII said, 'The Religious should be able to say, "My Superior will make possible for me a formation which will put me on an equal footing with my colleagues in the world". The 21st General Chapter was most significant because of its decision to abrogate the two degrees of sisters in terms both of external dress, title, (all are to be called 'sister'), with a single status for all. Sisters may visit parents if they are seriously ill and attend a parent's funeral if it is in the same location as a Cenacle. While I was in Liverpool my father died in Manchester just before this Chapter, causing me great sadness.

¹ Constitutions of The Society of Jesus. (Part V1 p. 246. trans. George Ganss. SJ. Institute of Jesuit Sources St. Louis 1970)

The Chapter also decided that the Sisters could take a holiday in another Cenacle, and that a short period of free time may be taken each day. Permissions for leaving the house are still very curtailed, although exceptions could be made for real needs. I was sent back to Grayshott in 1961 where I still had care for the infirm and elderly and soon there was to be an influx of novices who needed periodic care.

Chapter 2

Pre-Vatican II Church

2.1 Introduction

Before analyzing the events of this decade I recall that in the context in which they occurred there was a wide-spread ignorance of the unconscious causing fear and dislike of it. Psychological explanations were rarely considered, 'the affections' if and when they were addressed, could only be done through spiritual categories and the language available to us at that time.² This ignorance and oppression of the psyche is linked, I believe, to the ignorance and oppression of the feminine in the Church and in Society. The findings of my research go a long way to redressing this balance. My claim is that mysticism and narcissism are fundamental elements of the Christian life and the tension between them is best resolved within a faith community of corporate mission, such as that of the early believers in the Cenacle. (Acts:1.¹²⁻¹⁴,4.³²⁻³⁴.) The Cenacle community is lived within the wider faith community of the Roman Catholic Church, which in this era was beginning to think about 'democracy'. Pius XII had delivered a surprise radio address just as the war was drawing to an end in which he commended democracy as a form of government appropriate for the times:

Taught by bitter experience, people today more and more oppose monopolies of power that are dictatorial, accountable to no one, and impossible to reject. They want a system of government more compatible with the dignity and the liberty due to citizens.³

To what degree this was to apply to the Church, is the substance of my story, suffice it to say that this pontificate set the stage for Vatican II. In 1943 Pius XII had written an encyclical

² Arraj James, "*The Church, the Council and the Unconscious*," (New York: Inner Growth Books, 2006).loc.4171 (Kindle Edition)

³ O'Malley W. John, *What Happened at Vatican II?* (London & Boston, Harvard University Press 2010.)p.83.

commending new methods of interpreting Scripture, giving strong approval to the literary, philological and historical methods of biblical exegesis;

In commending those methods, the encyclical dismissed the traditional 'allegorical' senses of Scripture, and instated the literal sense, the sense that could be determined by properly historical methods.⁴

I was to be the recipient of this learning much later on which shed light for me on the account of events in the Cenacle (upper room) and consequently our charism. Through reflection on these first years of my Religious life, I analyse the tension within the Church (of which I was not fully aware at the time) in its resistance to 'Modernism', especially to the issues of 'authority' and 'experience' which were at the centre of 'modernist' claims.⁵

I utilise a Foucauldian understanding of discourse to account for the function of knowledge within relations of 'power and conflict' within the Church. Foucault does not conceive of power in a negative dominatory way, but theorises its exercise as a productive force operating within a network of social relations.⁶ I position the Cenacle sisters within the 'net-work of relations' within the institution of the Catholic Church while critiquing our place on its margins. However, all positions within a network of power relations have the potential to be reversed and destabilized:

There are no relations of power without resistance; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor is it inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power. It exists all the more by being in the same place as power; hence like power, resistance is multiple.⁷

Resistance came through the place of power, that is, through Papal authority that reached 'the faithful' who were bound, not merely by the infallible judgment of the Pope in 'ex-cathedra'⁸ statements, but also by the 'ordinary magisterium'.⁹ In this first section I analyse the claims made by the 'modernists' as they challenged the magisterium on the understanding of authority and experience. In the nineteenth century, the concept of 'experience' received

⁴Ibid.p.84

⁵ Maggolini Alessandro, "Magisterial Teaching on Experience in the Twentieth Century from the Modernist Crisis to the Second Vatican Council," *Communio* 23, no. Summer (1996).

⁶ McNay Lois, *Foucault; a Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994).p.86-87.

⁷ Foucault Michel, *Power /Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings.*, trans. Colin Gordon NY Pantheon Books, 1980).p.142.

⁸ Official papal statements regarding faith or morals.

⁹ Daly Gabriel, "Catholicism and Modernity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no. 4 (1985).p.775.

scant, if any, treatment from theology or the magisterium.¹⁰ Meantime, 'experience' had direct bearing on the principle of discernment in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius and was integral to our Cenacle spirituality. The 'Enlightenment' (the epistemological tradition from Descartes (1596-1650) understanding of the human person with his emphasis on the rational, is alien to Ignatian spirituality; in the prayer of the *Spiritual Exercises* a strong awareness of an individual's 'experience' in prayer is encouraged.¹¹ The difference between these two will become clear through this chapter, as I analyse the strategies that the Church used to resist the experience and the authority of the 'faithful'. The first was 'neoscholastic' theology, made mandatory for the whole Church; the second was the promulgation of the 1917 canon law; the third was employing the Roman curia to exercise unilateral power.¹² I analyse each of these sources of power and authority to further my argument that this resistance to Modernism by Papal authority, concealed a narcissistic¹³ hold onto 'discursive reason'.

If theology was ever going to engage contemporary thought it would have to widen its horizons and face the "two abysses, historicity and subjectivity"¹⁴.

2.2 Why 'Modernism'?

The medieval life style that had been embraced by women Religious in the Catholic Church since the Middle Ages was being challenged, as was the whole Church, by 'Modernism'. This was an attempt to adapt Catholicism to the intellectual, moral and social needs of the time. The two principle issues that the 'modernists' challenged were, 'authority' and 'experience'. Papal authority reached to all the 'faithful' who were bound, not merely by the infallible judgment of the Pope in ex cathedra statements, but also by the 'ordinary magisterium'.¹⁵ For example, Pius XI had written two encyclicals, the first in 1928, *Mortallium Animos*,¹⁶ where he declared it to be unlawful to support the ecumenical movement and reiterating the code of Canon Law promulgated in 1917;

¹⁰ Maggiolini Alessandro, "Magisterial Teaching on Experience in the Twentieth Century from the Modernist Crisis to the Second Vatican Council," *Communio* 23, no. Summer (1996).p.28.

¹¹ Puhl Louis, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Chicago: Loyola Univ. Press, 1951). Annot. 6.p3

¹² Gabriel Daly, "Catholicism and Modernity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no. 4 (1985).

¹³ Kohut Heinz, *The Restoration of the Self* (New York: International Universities Press, 1977). The concept of 'narcissism' will be examined more closely in a later chapter. Here it relates to a hardening of orthodoxy, to defend a 'grandiose' identity.

¹⁴ Komonchak A Joseph, *Humani Generis and Nouvelle Theology*, Ressourcement (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).p.144.

¹⁵ Ex cathedra statements are infallible when made by the Pope in relation to faith and morals.

¹⁶ Pope Pius XII *Mortallium Animos* (Encyclical 1928)

It is absolutely forbidden for Catholics to be present at
or take part in any non-Catholic Religious service.

(As a child I was forbidden to enter a 'protestant' Church with my step-brother and sister who were Anglicans.) In 1930 Pius XI wrote a second encyclical, *Casti Connubii*, dealing with 'Marriage', a sacrament that could never be dissolved. What caused this encyclical to be frequently cited, is the absolute condemnation of birth control; the purpose of sexuality is conception and procreation, and must not be interrupted by any artificial or unnatural means. The language of this passage was so solemn that some theologians interpreted it as an infallible pronouncement'.¹⁷

..any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a
way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural
power to generate life, is an offence against the law of
God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are
branded with the guilt of grave sin.¹⁸

This teaching was accepted by theologians in the 1930s but later, in the 1960s, when the 'pill' became easily available, some theologians began to question the encyclical's validity. Even in the years before the Council the moral implications of the population explosion came to the fore, bringing a new urgency to the issue. These claims, made by some 'modernists' and 'nouvelle theologians' were condemned by Pius XII in his encyclical, *Humani Generis* issued in 1950 in his attempt to close the discussion.¹⁹ But these 'new tendencies' that had been gathering momentum from 1935-1965 came through a new understanding of history breaking into the immobile world of Greek thought. *Nouvelle théologie*, was an attempt by some Catholic scholars to engage with modernity by using modern methods of biblical scholarship, reading the 'Fathers' and the liturgy. Yves Congar and Henri de Lubac, both denied subscribing to a 'new theology' because of the negative meaning given to the label by the magisterium. But these theologians certainly wanted to return to the sources of Catholic faith, in order to build bridges between faith, Catholicism, and the modern sciences. There was an overlap with those theologians whose thinking was labelled *nouvelle théologie*, and those labelled 'modernists' however, neither group wanted to incur the wrath of the Magisterium.²⁰

¹⁷ O'Malley W. John, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010). p.82

¹⁸ Pope Pius XI, *Casti Connubi*. Vatican (Rome: Vatican Publishing, 1930). p.399-400

¹⁹ Pope Pius XII, *Humani Generis* (Rome: Vatican Publishing 1950)

²⁰ Komonchak A Joseph, ed. *Humani Generis and Nouvelle Theology*, Ressourcement (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Pius X identified and condemned Modernism as the 'synthesis of all heresies'.²¹ A full definition of 'modernism' is difficult, because it was not a coherent system, although as I analyse *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907), the 'errors' itemized make it the clearest exposé of the modernist movement to be found. The encyclical was comprised of scattered materials, but set out in such a logical way, that 'friends and foes alike could not but admire the patient skill that must have been needed to fashion it into a coordinated whole'.²² The text of the encyclical is composed of three parts: the first is dedicated to the analysis and interpretation of the Modernist position, the second looks at the causes of Modernism and the third suggests remedies against it. Pius X unequivocally rejected what he believed was the philosophical foundation of Modernism, 'Agnosticism' and all that follows from this, 'Immanentism' and 'Relativism'. According to the encyclical the first basic error agnosticism means human reason is confined entirely to the field of phenomena, so that things are perceptible to the senses, but has no rights and no power to transgress these limits. From this the modernists infer that God can never be the direct object of science and as regards history God cannot be considered an historical subject. Given these premises 'natural theology' and external revelation are mere intellectualism. (6)

'Immanence' the second basic error argues that because there is no path to revelation through any credible argument of reason and all external revelation is denied, we must look for an explanation within the human being. Religion develops from the principle of 'vital immanence', that is from a need of God to dwell in the soul. This method of immanence reduces the entire philosophical enterprise to an 'experimental perception of consciousness' argues *Humani Generis*.²³

Faith is a vital force or seed destined for growth, it will evolve, not speculatively as the scholastic taught, but vitally. In a passage dealing with doctrinal evolution, the Encyclical explains what is meant by 'vital immanence'; everything with life is subject to evolution, faith and doctrine can be no exception. Each stage of this evolution is conditioned by human needs and given direction by religious authority and the forces of progress to be found in individual consciences of those who are in close contact with life. (7) The encyclical states that,

Already we observe the introduction of that most pernicious doctrine which would make of the laity the factor of progress in the Church. Essential modernism is nothing less than the 'perversion' of those doctrinal principles proposed by a 'Divinely instituted authority on

²¹ Pope Pius X *Pascendi Gregis* (Rome: Vatican Publishing, 1907).p.1.

²² Schultenover G. David, *A View from Rome* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993).p17.

²³ Gabriel Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence: A Study in Catholic Modernism and Integralism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). Daly is citing work by Enrico Rosa.S.J.p.172.

the ground that they are part of the general revelation
which the apostles preached in the name of Jesus
Christ.²⁴

The irony for those of us who appropriated doctrine through the practice of the *Spiritual Exercises*, is that we had always believed in God as immanent.²⁵ The encyclical referred to 'morbid mysticism' no useful replacement for a sound objectivity based on apologetic Catholic dogma as an objective, coherent and valid statement of transcendent facts. (7) But, argue the modernists, dogma cannot be a response to a time-bound culture which of its nature is always changing.²⁶ Ignatian contemplation and the idea of God communicating directly to individuals had threatened the authority of the ecclesiastical prelates, who feared the faithful would have no need of them.

"Relativism"; the truths of religion are subject to the general progress of culture caught up in a constant developing and changing reconstruction of its identity.²⁷ The old idea of fixity and permanence has been displaced by the idea of growth and development, but a theory of historical development and reception that tried to reflect change and discontinuity would raise the question of identity of an authoritarian Church;

Such a question would confront the whole community
including the magisterium, and would inquire what the
criteria of normativity are, if the community takes into
account, not scripture alone, but its ongoing experiences
that call for reconstruction of its identity.²⁸

Reconstruction of its identity had to wait until Vatican II, a process that continues today with large 'pockets' of resistance.²⁹ The 'perversions' are summarised in the Encyclical under the following headings: a need for complete emancipation and for science to pursue research without fear of conflict with the Church; emancipation for the State which should not incur conflict with religious authority; freedom of conscience for the individual and for the universal conscience without interference from the Church. The condemnation of Modernism by the Pope meant that theologians during the Council had to be careful not to give the impression that they were returning to the 'historicism' and 'subjectivism' of the Modernist movement. Nevertheless, a theological trajectory can be seen to run from Modernism, via *nouvelle*

²⁴ Pope Pius X *Pascendi Domini Gregis*

²⁵ Puhl Louis, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. Annot 6.

²⁶ Pope Pius X *Pascendi Domini Gregis*

²⁷ Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "Schleiermacher and the Construction of a Contemporary Roman Catholic Foundational Theology," *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 89, no. No. 2 (1996).

²⁸ Ibid. p.193.

²⁹ Faggioli Massimo, *Vatican II. The Battle for Meaning* (New York: Paulist Press, 2012).

théologie, to post-conciliar pluralism.³⁰ The real issue is, I would argue, not whether this or that historical and theological opinion is in accord with the teaching of the Church, but what is the nature, extent, and source of the authority of the Church.

2.3 Resistance to Modernism Through Imposition of Neo-Scholastic Theology

Neoscholastic theology was the strongest controlling influence during this period based as it was on the scholarship of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) described as an 'unsurpassed and unsurpassable theological achievement'.³¹ But the 'neoscholasticism' of this pre-conciliar period was 'Thomism' as interpreted by Catholic theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was an abstract and ahistorical, textbook theology that demonstrated traditional beliefs by citing biblical proof texts and numbers from Denzinger's compendium of papal and conciliar teaching.³² Moreover, Leo XIII's encyclical, *Aeternae Patris* (1879), set out this programme, for all Catholic scholars.

Let carefully selected teachers endeavour to implant the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas in the minds of students, and set forth clearly his solidity and excellence over others. Let the universities already founded or to be founded by you illustrate and defend this doctrine, and use it for the refutation of prevailing errors.³³

Amazingly, most Catholic children were taught about the five proofs for the existence of God! (As a child I could tell you that 'God was a supreme Spirit, who alone exists of himself and is infinite in all perfections'.) In the interests of orthodoxy the 'neo-Thomists taught that Catholic theology must abandon the subjectivity of the post-Cartesian philosophical systems and return to the metaphysics of St. Thomas grounded on the awareness of finite being, that could only grasp meaning through the human senses or through abstract Aristotelian epistemology. This neo-scholasticism could not do justice to the theology of the original or historical St. Thomas partly because of the sheer volume of material attributed to him. 'Thomism' was a framework for the study of philosophy, as twenty-four Thomistic theses covering, 'ontology,

³⁰ Komonchak A Joseph, *Humani Generis and Nouvelle Theology*. Ressourcement, ed Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray. (Oxford OUP 2012)

³¹ Kerr Fergus, *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007). p.11.

³² Denzinger H and A. Schonmetzer, ed. *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 33rd ed. (Freiburg: Vatican Publishing, 1965).

³³ Pope Leo XIII, "Aeternae Patris" in *Encyclical* (Rome: Vatican, 1879).

cosmology, psychology, and theology', it was broad and comprehensive.³⁴ The apologetic and defensive nature of its use led to an 'emphasis on the rational aspect of Thomism at the expense of its contemplative or mystical approach'.³⁵

The imposition of this theology meant that Catholicism (especially Religious life) before Vatican II was like a 'walled village', trying to preserve the last remnants of a six hundred year old classical and medieval culture, while outside the walls, the citizens were struggling to come to terms with the confusion of post-Enlightenment concepts.³⁶ The Catholic Church was so sure of itself, the deeply disturbing questions that pre-occupied the 'Modernists' did not disturb the 'faithful' at this time. In 1910 all priests and seminary Professors had sworn an 'Anti-Modernist Oath', which obliged them,

to firmly embrace and accept all and each of the things defined and declared by the inerrant Magisterium of the Church, mainly those points of doctrine directly opposed to the errors of our time.³⁷

The Oath asserts the Catholic Church's commitment to intellect, for example, the assertion that the existence of God can be known by reason, and may be proved by arguments from cause and effect. The Pope gives a warning to believers not to depend on feeling or intuition, for this knowledge of faith.³⁸ The fundamental principle of Modernism is, according to M. Loisy,

the possibility, the necessity and the legitimacy of evolution in understanding the dogmas of the Church, including that of papal infallibility and authority, as well as the manner of exercising this authority.³⁹

In his book, '*Medievalism*', George Tyrrell, another avowed modernist, raises the questions that needed to be examined, (and still needs to be examined) governance in the Church; the dignity and role of the laity; (women?) and the concepts of experience and tradition as loci of 'truth'.⁴⁰ Tyrrell was an erstwhile Jesuit and when accused of being influenced by Kant said:

As far as the 'method of immanence' is concerned (the method that seeks religious truth by action and not by speculation) it took its rise from the rules of discernment

³⁴ Kerr Fergus, *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).p.3.

³⁵ Ibid.p.331.

³⁶ Daly Gabriel, "Catholicism and Modernity." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no. 4 (1985): 773-96.p.777.

³⁷ Kerr Fergus, *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians*. (prescribed in the motu proprio, *Sacrorum Antistitum*, by Pius X 1910) (appendix p.223)

³⁸ Pope Pius X, "Pascendi Dominici Gregis," (Rome: Vatican Publishing, 1907).

³⁹ Hill Harvey, *The Politics of Modernism: Alfred Loisy and the Scientific Study of Religion* (Washington BC Catholic University of America, 2000).p.78.

⁴⁰ Tyrrell George, *Medievalism*, Third Edition (Tunbridge Wells: Burns and Oates 1908).

of spirits which Ignatius borrowed from the great Catholic mystics. I owe much of my modernism to St. Thomas Aquinas, I owe still more to Ignatius, and am rightly admitted by the discerning to contain the substance of all my later aberrations. They helped me to shape and fix ideas that were formless and floating, and gradually to separate the two systems – scholastic and pre-scholastic- that were so hopelessly entangled in my mind.⁴¹

The 'method of immanence' which claimed that God dwelt within each individual through the power of the Holy Spirit, was feared by Pius X, as it had been for the inquisitors during the life of Ignatius . The fear was that the Church and sacraments would become unnecessary, the 'Quietists' who were abandoned to the Holy Spirit, had shown an 'aggressive contempt for tradition'.⁴² Pascendi asks 'After all is not the affirmation of a personal God, one of those dogmatic formulae which serve only as symbolic expression of religious sentiment'

Modernism is inclined to pantheism, by its doctrine of divine immanence, that is, of the intimate presence of God within us. Does this God declare himself as distinct from us? If so, one must not then oppose the position of modernism to the Catholic position and reject exterior revelation. But if, as modernists believe, God declares himself as not distinct from us, the position of modernism becomes openly pantheistic.⁴³

Making the 'Spiritual Exercises' every year, as the Cenacle Constitutions required of us meant belief in immanence was assumed,

But while one is engaged in the Spiritual Exercises, it is more suitable and much better that the Creator and Lord in person communicate Himself to the devout soul in quest of the divine will, that he inflame it with his love and praise, and dispose it for the way in which it could better serve God in the future. Therefore the director of the Exercises, as a balance, at equilibrium, without leaning to one side or the other, should permit the Creator to deal directly with the creature and the creature directly with her Creator and Lord.⁴⁴

Tyrrell wrote an essay in religious epistemology, *Lex Orandi*, in which he claimed a belief that there can be no, ultimate conflict between what is true for the religious life and what is true for

⁴¹ Tyrrell George, *Medievalism*, 1994 ed. (Tunbridge Wells: Burns and Oates, 1909).

⁴² Kavanaugh Kieran, "Spanish Sixteenth Century," in *Christian Spirituality Post Reformation and Modern*, ed. Louis Dupre and Don E. Saliers (New York: Crossroad, 1989). p.73

⁴³ Pope Pius X, "*Pascendi Dominici Gregis*." para.7

⁴⁴ Puhl Louis, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Chicago: Loyola Univ.Press, 1951). Annotation 15.p.6.

the understanding, whether philosophical or historical'.⁴⁵ He wrote of a 'religious reading of history, which is related to truth, and of prophetic truth which is analogous with poetic, artistic, dramatic truth'. Such truth does not depend on known facts, 'but rather on the sympathy of man's spirit with the Divine spirit, immanent in man's spirit'. Tyrrell continues,

It operates by discernment: this sympathetic divination of prophecy reaches the truth of what *is* in the divine or eternal order of reality; and the truth of what *ought* to be but is not yet in the order of finite reality.⁴⁶

Here Tyrrell reveals the influence of Ignatian spirituality and especially 'discernment'. I shall argue that a facility in the practice of daily discernment is 'everyday mysticism',⁴⁷ which gave back to the Christian the freedom and responsibility, the Catholic Church tried to curb.

Tyrrell's debate with scholasticism reveals his understanding of 'religious experience' as closely linked to revelation he asks, does revelation occur,

by way of statements or by way of experience? Divine truth I still think is revealed to us not as a statement but as a thing—just as beauty or love is revealed to us. We may utter it in statements, but what we apprehend is not a statement, but an experience.⁴⁸

Most Catholics in this period of the Church's history, and certainly those of us in religious life, would rely on 'mediated transcendence' to 'discover God's will', conveyed to us through a representative of the hierarchy. But, argues Gabriel Daly, this 'authoritarian heteronomy', can be seen as a form of Catholic fundamentalism.

This is to treat the magisterium as the Protestant fundamentalist treats the Bible. What is missing in both approaches is, I believe, the willingness to relinquish an over preoccupation with dogma and give more attention and respect to 'pre-conceptual experience' in which God can be apprehended by means other than that of the speculative intellect.⁴⁹

Immanuel Kant⁵⁰ and Friedrich Schleiermacher's⁵¹ influence were, it was supposed, at the root of the Modernist ideas. Karl Barth for example, rejects both neo-Kantian Liberal

⁴⁵ Sagovsky, *On God's Side; Life of George Tyrrell* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

⁴⁶ Ibid. p.173.

⁴⁷ Rahner Karl, *Mystics in Everyday Life* (N.Y.: Crossroads, 1988).

⁴⁸ Tyrrell George, "Revelation as Experience," *Heythrop Journal* 12 (1971). P130-49.

⁴⁹ Gabriel Daly, "Catholicism and Modernity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no. 4 (1985). p.794.

⁵⁰ Jay F. Rosenberg and Immanuel Kritik, *Accessing Kant: A Relaxed Introduction to the Critique of Pure Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁵¹ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* ([S.l.]: T & T Clark, 1928 (1976)).

Protestantism, and a Schlierermachian tradition of openness to the divine in the constitution of human consciousness and subjectivity.⁵² Barth challenges the *nouvelle théologians* who he believes are trying to construct a Christian humanism, thereby opening a route to the knowledge of God other than revelation.⁵³ But what the *nouvelle theologians* did point to, was 'a pre-existing apprehension of what we may later come to know as God given in what it is to be human'.⁵⁴ We claim that 'grace perfects nature' because the Holy Spirit imbues the whole of creation especially 'human nature' which is grace-filled.⁵⁵ An alternative belief is that human nature is lacking in everything, there is no human capacity to perceive grace within the order of creation, until God reaches out to us through revelation. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (written in 1781), Kant demonstrated that reason alone cannot prove metaphysical truths, such as Spirit, freedom, or immortality, but he also argued that reason could not disprove their existence either. Kant wanted to demolish 'dogma' in order to make room for faith.⁵⁶ The other 'bad' influence on the Catholic scholars who were not averse to modernist ideas, was Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), noted for his emphasis on the role of 'feeling' in theology, a reaction against the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Schleiermacher tried to save the centrality of faith by claiming 'faith' not as a knowing but as a feeling of 'absolute dependence on God'. I shall return to the thinking of Schleiermacher in a later chapter, when I claim that he filled the gap left by Kant, between faith and reason.⁵⁷

I agree with Maggiolini's anthropological perspective on the cause of this tension between faith and reason, in which he claims there was in Catholic theology a Platonic or Greek conception of 'man', comprised of 'mind and will', so for the Modernists to belittle mind and reason, and to privilege religious feeling and experience, was totally unacceptable.⁵⁸

Doctrinal formulas would never have been enough to contain women in the vowed life during this age of reason, if there had not been a deep respect for all the forms of Catholic practice that enabled us to assimilate those doctrines that would otherwise be so many propositions. The liturgy with its richness of expression, depending on the Christian mystery that was being

⁵² Harvey James, ed. *Henri Bouillard: The Freedom of Faith*, Ressourcement (Oxford: OUP, 2012).p.268.

⁵³ Ibid.p.270

⁵⁴ *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth- Century Theology*. — — —, ed. Henri Bouillard.p.271.

⁵⁵ Lyons Kathleen, "Creator Spirit in Modern Theology. ("dissertation submitted for B.ed.degree) Nottingham University 1972)

⁵⁶ Ibid..

⁵⁷ Christine Helmer, "Mysticism and Metaphysics: Schleiermacher and a Historical-Theological Trajectory," *The Journal of Religion* 83, no. 4 (2003).

⁵⁸ Maggiolini Allesandro, "Magisterial Teaching on Experience in the Twentieth Century: From the Modernist Crisis to the Second Vatican Council," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 23, no. Summer (1996).

celebrated, (missa cantata, high mass etc.), processions in honour of Our Lady, the practice of regular confession; prayer before the 'blessed sacrament exposed'; Benediction, all experiences that carried and brought to our understanding the doctrines of the Paschal Mystery. All the Catholic praxis as we knew it during these years, required imagination and intuition, as we prayed before the Eucharist exposed, or walked in processions, or sang the Latin plainchant, our devotion was not stimulated simply by reason or logic.

If the 'religious consciousness' at the root of the work of both Kant and Schleiermacher, had been respected, along with the functions of 'imagination', 'affectivity', or 'intuition' (terms that smack of 'mysticism', which Neo-scholastic Catholicism disliked), a more comprehensive understanding of the Catholic faith could have contributed to a healthier 'modernity'.⁵⁹ In fact modernism never had the opportunity of a stimulating exchange of ideas freely held and freely debated. If they had, the trend towards what was considered radical immanentism (pantheism) might have been countered, not just by the neo-scholastic theologians but by the modernists themselves. The modernists exemplify the Catholic response to problems that much earlier had troubled Protestants. Most modernists rejected Neo-scholastic Catholicism's obsession with revelation as statement which offered belief without faith and they rejected Liberal Protestantism's reduction of it, to moral experience which offered faith without belief. I concur with Gabriel Daly who says that 'both offerings suffer from a tragic lack of mysticism, or if you prefer, of real religious sensibility, operating through a baptised imagination'.⁶⁰ I conclude by saying with Coulson, that while scholasticism, rationalism and over systemisation are one set of evils, mindless euphoria, fanaticism and neurosis are another.⁶¹ I agree with Newman who draws a firm distinction between 'dogma which is discerned, rested in, and appropriated as a reality by the religious imagination, and the dogma 'held as a truth by the theological intellect'.⁶²

2. 4 Control by Canon Law

I turn now to Canon Law, another way in which the Church used its authority to resist Modernism. The 1917 Code which was inspired by Pius X who wanted to impose a new order

⁵⁹ Daly, "Catholicism and Modernity." p.788.

⁶⁰ Daly Gabriel, "Catholicism and Modernity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no. 4 (1985).p.783.

⁶¹ Coulson John, *Religion and the Imagination 'Aid of the Grammar of Assent'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).p.46.

⁶² Newman H. John, *Grammar of Assent*(Oxford: Longmans Green & co., 1903).

on the universal Church to counteract modernism. This new law was to raise the Church to a position of unchallenged greatness in the world by virtue of the power of the Pope, described in the new canon as 'the supreme and most complete jurisdiction throughout the church, both in matters of faith and morals and in those that affect discipline and Church government throughout the world'.⁶³ This code was in use until 1983. My focus is with the effect of Church Law on women religious who make public profession of vows in institutions canonically established by the competent ecclesiastical authority in the Church. The original inspiration comes as call of love through the Spirit, to follow Christ by serving others, not as a law to be observed. As Religious of the Cenacle, with Ignatian spirituality, our aim is to listen to the guidance of the Spirit, the mystery of Mary at Pentecost is never far from our prayer. Some reluctance to 'constitutions' can be heard in the 'Preface' to our early rules which are those of the Society of Jesus,

....on our part the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit is accustomed to write in our hearts will help more powerfully than exterior Constitutions yet because... God requires our cooperation and his Vicar on earth has so ordained it, also 'right reason' teaches us this, we think that Constitutions should be written.⁶⁴

Pre-Vatican II Religious Life under the 1917 Code of Canon Law considered women as functionally subordinate, relatively inept, emotionally unstable and morally suspect.⁶⁵ Cloister, or enclosure assumed and fostered an immaturity in women. Nor did the law of the Church include any principles of human rights.⁶⁶ Since the fourth century men and women chose to withdraw from society and live in monasteries where they started centres of learning. Women religious developed their intellectual gifts in a way that their counterparts in the 'world' could not. At the same time their influence for good was often curtailed by strict regulations imposed by bishops who limited their mobility. These regulations were always more severe and numerous than those which governed men's monasteries.⁶⁷

While enclosure has formed a crucial component of a monastic vocation within the Western Church, its imposition as an ideal had significant impact on women who desired to follow the path of Christian discipleship in a variety of ways. The papal promulgation *Periculoso* of

⁶³ Noel Gerard, *Pius XII. The Hound of Hitler* (London: Continuum Press, 2008).p.17.

⁶⁴ Saint Ignatius of Loyola, "The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus; with an Introduction and a Commentary," (St. Louis MO.: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970).p.119.

⁶⁵ McDermott, *The Legal Condition of Women in the Church; Shifting Policies and Norms* (Washington,DC.1979). pp.1-55.

⁶⁶ Coughlin J. John, "Canon Law and the Human Person," *Journal of Law and Religion* Vol. 19, no. 1 (2003 - 2004).

⁶⁷ Brennan Margaret, "Enclosure: Institutionalising the Invisibility of Women in Ecclesiastical Communities," *Concilium* 182 (1985).p.41.

1298, binding all nuns to observe perpetual strict enclosure, was an attempt to demarcate the status of 'nuns' as the epitome of holiness in contrast to those women in the 'active' life who were considered to be pretending to be 'true nuns'. Not until 1900 when Pope Leo XIII issued the bull *Conditiae Christi*, did the Church recognise the status of apostolic religious.⁶⁸ This constitution charges Bishops 'not to permit sisters to open houses as hotels for the entertainment of strangers or for both sexes'. In the Cenacle men were not allowed to make retreats or to enter the 'enclosure.' In the *Acts of the Chapter* (1879) we read;

In approving these Constitutions, one of the fears of the Sacred Congregation of Religious was that the worldly spirit would invade our houses. It required long debates and the reasons given for the needs of modern times, to make them accept this point of allowing seculars in our chapels and houses.⁶⁹

As recently as 1962 the Acts of the 21st Chapter states:

Retreats for married couples or priests can be accepted in the judgment of the Provincial, on condition that there exists a building entirely separate from the community, or that a section of the house can be completely isolated.⁷⁰

Enclosure did not restrict the apostolic activity of the Cenacle Congregation in the observance of enclosure, because women wishing to make a retreat came to the retreat house. But the practice of 'one to one' ministry to women that the founders envisioned was not retained after the early years, and was only restored after the Council when we were told to go back to the 'profound intention of our founders'.⁷¹ Women were forbidden to be priests, to preach, to teach, even to study at the universities; the Church as a whole came under the control of the clergy. But, argues Caroline Walker Bynum,⁷² (whose work has focused on the way medieval people understood the nature of the human body) talking of mysticism, shows how the discourse of the female mystic was built out of disciplines meant to regulate the female body, and it is paradoxically through these disciplines that the mystic consolidated her power. Control over her body was the one personal control left to women. This experience of union with God allowed them to 'know a direct contact with God that was even more privileged than

⁶⁸ Vermeersch A, "Nuns," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1967).

⁶⁹ 'Cenacle Sisters, "Acts of the General Chapter," ed. Cenacle Congregation (Rome 1998).

⁷⁰ Ibid. Rome 1962.

⁷¹ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*, Third Edition ed., vol. 1, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (N.Y.: Costello, 1975). *Perfectae Caritatis* no.47 p.612

⁷² Bynum Caroline Walker. *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988.

that of the priest who touched the Eucharist'. Beneath the anti-body rhetoric in medieval thought, these women were effective in transforming anti-female discourses, by recognising the body as the place of the holy. Despite protestations against the flesh, they pitted their own bodies by extravagant methods of self-discipline meant to limit the autonomy and authority of women, yet paradoxically they become, for the mystics a source of self-determination, the only one available to them in this period.⁷³

The containment of women within Roman Catholicism has never been totally successful. Within the restrictions of the law women have found ways to exercise their gifts of leadership and to pursue a life of holiness. Since 1900 precise rules for internal government have been laid down in Canon Law for religious. For example, the government of the congregation is vested in the general chapter and in the superior general assisted by her council. All other legislation is under the direction of the 'Sacred Congregation of Religious', which was set up at the time of the reform of the Roman Curia in 1908 to oversee the affairs of ecclesiastical communities.⁷⁴ Patricia Curran argues that the culture of convent life as it was lived in this pre-Vatican II period fostered an ascetical tradition on the basis of conflicts between nature and grace.⁷⁵ Lurking in this 'nature and grace' debate is the issue of dualism, which even in these years is contested by the *nouvelle théologians*.

The distinction and proper relationship between the natural and the supernatural, was arguably at the heart of the *nouvelle théologie* project, and its achievement, as Boersma argues, was to have secured a happily sacramental understanding of the world.⁷⁶

For those Religious women who did engage with an ascetical tradition, 'nature and the supernatural' was integrated by way of an overall belief that history and experience were God's chosen means to become present. It is during these years that Cenacle women increased their awareness and trust in the Spirit and sat more loosely to the demands of the Law. (Gal.3.⁵)

Ignatius knew that for a truly apostolic life for both women and men, he needed to address the challenge of the 'world' to holiness, and prescribe an alternative 'to the medieval panacea, the cloister'.⁷⁷ Apostolic Religious life involves mobility, Jesuits viewed their residence as a

⁷³ Laurie A. Finke, ed. *Mystical Bodies and the Dialogics of Vision*, Maps of Flesh and Light (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1993), p. 44ff.

⁷⁴ Vermeersch A, "Nuns." *CE*, 11 pp. 164-168.

⁷⁵ Curran Patricia, *Grace before Meals: Food Ritual and Body Discipline in Convent Culture* (Chicago: Urbana and Chicago University Press., 1989).

⁷⁶ Loughlin Gerard, *Nouvelle Theologie: A Return to Modernism? Agnosticism and Analogy* Ressourcement (Oxford: OUP, 2012), p. 44.

⁷⁷ McCarthy Caritas, "Apostolic Congregations of Women and the Ignatian Charism," *The Way*

stepping stone to the ministry. It is well known that Ignatius disclaimed any responsibility of himself and his order for congregations of Religious women,⁷⁸ yet Jesuits did take responsibility for providing the means of growth in the Spirit to full Christian maturity, by providing Religious women with the *Spiritual Exercises*. So far I have painted a rather ideal picture of Ignatian influences, that slowly but steadily inspired Religious women, and the congregation of the Cenacle in particular towards their mission in the Church. But in this period of my history, some of those elements of our charism relating to apostolate, were 'dis-embodied', so to speak. In common with many other religious congregations, the style of life in this era was designed to protect the 'Religious', as well as to achieve physical and moral separation from the world. James Walsh, S.J., writing of 'Apostolic Spirituality,' says:

Protective spiritual devices do not have any essential part to play in the life of the Apostolic Religious and are thus not integral to apostolic spirituality as conceived by Ignatius of Loyola. What is integral to it is discernment, a discernment which is always related directly to the apostolate.⁷⁹

Unfortunately, the Ignatian heritage in all its fullness in the *Constitutions*, was not transmitted to women's congregations. The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus comprise four separate treatises which incorporate the principles and promote the giving of the Exercises, 'the Constitutions reflect Ignatius' profound mystical experience of the life of the Trinity'.⁸⁰ However, in this period there was no sign of this 'mysticism' in the rules as we had them. The 'Common Rules' prescribed for every detail of our lives, there were rules of modesty, rules for recreation, rules for the temporary professed sisters and rules for the finally professed sisters. What we were given was the Jesuit *Summary of the Constitutions*, which was a set of guidelines for novices. The full text was not considered suitable for women religious. The obstacles came from the unwillingness of diocesan and Roman authorities, and/or Jesuits, to allow women religious to use, what was in effect Ignatian, 'theology of the apostolic life'. It is not surprising, considering 'mobility' was such a strong feature of this life style. Ignatius obtained permission from Rome to dispense with the choral recitation of the *Divine Office*, so as to be free for the mission. Curran claims that later, energies were deflected to the purification of the passions, and self-mastery overtook ministry, on the road to 'perfection'.⁸¹ In spite of the infantile prescriptions in the rule, however, the sound spirituality of the *Spiritual*

Supplement 14, no. Autumn (1973).

⁷⁸ Saint Ignatius of Loyola, "The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus; with an Introduction and a Commentary." p.262.(588-5).

⁷⁹ Walsh James SJ, "Apostolic Mission," *The Way Supplement* 28, no. Summer (1976).p.19.

⁸⁰ McCarthy Caritas, "Apostolic Congregations of Women and the Ignatian Charism."p.37.

⁸¹ Curran Patricia, *Grace before Meals: Food Ritual and Body Discipline in Convent Culture*.p.104.

Exercises based as it was on meditation on the mysteries of the Gospel, meant a more balanced approach to religious life. Valerie Saiving's comment that,

If it is true that our society is moving from a masculine to a feminine orientation, then theology ought to reconsider its estimate of the human condition and redefine its categories of sin and redemption. For a feminine society will have its own special potentialities for good and evil, to which a theology based solely on masculine experience may well be irrelevant.⁸²

My thesis is an attempt to 'reconsider the human condition, and redefine its categories of sin and redemption', I examine feminism to uncover its theology with its own 'special potentialities for good and evil'.

2.5 Resistance from the 'Roman Curia'

The 'Roman Curia' called, in this period, the 'Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office', was previously known as 'Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition'. The Roman Curia is the administrative arm of the *Holy See* and the central governing body of the Church, together with the Pope.⁸³ Pope Pius XII had striven since his coronation in 1939 to create a *Grand Design*, 'the Church was to be a vast, totalitarian monolith, with ultimate authority concentrated in the person of the Pope', when he died in 1958 he had finally completed it'.⁸⁴ It was this undisputed power of the Pope that George Tyrrell was challenging, when he argued that Catholicism had constructed its system of Church government on a deistic concept of transcendence. 'A sort of direct telegraphic communication between heaven and the rulers of Church and State', an absent God making his will known through his 'representatives'.⁸⁵ This was the accepted belief before Vatican II (and it still is for many Catholics) thinking of God, as Tyrrell put it, 'as a sort of arch-pope' I see it as a form of 'narcissism' defending a grandiose self-image.⁸⁶

⁸² Saiving Valerie, "The Human Situation: A Feminine View," *The Journal of Religion* 40, April (1960). Reprinted in *Woman's Spirit Rising : a Feminist Reader in Religion*, edited by Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow (New York: HarperCollins, 1979) p.41.

⁸³ 'The Holy See' is often referred to as the 'Vatican' a word of many meanings. We now call this office the 'Congregation for the Defence of the Faith' (C.D.F.)

⁸⁴ Noel Gerard, *Pius XII. The Hound of Hitler* (London: Continuum Press, 2008).p.173.

⁸⁵ Tyrrell George, *Through Scylla and Charybdis: Or the Old Theology and the New* (London: Longman's Green & Co., 1907).p.360.

⁸⁶ 'Narcissism' is a self-love that has to be defended at all costs.

a sheer struggle for power using a theoreticism that puts constraints on the adaptability of everyone but the theorist himself. It involves a 'grandiose' self-image to cover for deep insecurity.⁸⁷ The grandiose titles given to the Pope and the power invested in him find their culmination in the teaching authority of the encyclicals. The Liberalism of the nineteenth century, which was anti-Christian and particularly anti-Catholic, led to the papacy's search for a defense against attacks on the Church. The circular letter, 'encyclical', had been used by popes since ancient times to make judgments, dispense favours, or issue orders. They continued this, but in addition elaborated on topics, explaining them and teaching their meaning. We often looked to 'Rome' as a court of appeal, the question, 'what did Rome say'? prompted a telephone call before any major decision that could not be answered in Canon Law. The papal encyclicals of the nineteenth century enjoyed the status of authoritative doctrinal pronouncements, so that even before the definition of infallibility, what popes said in their encyclicals tended to assume an irreversible quality.⁸⁸ James Arraj names this excess the 'apotheosis' of the Pope, it illustrates by way of powerful psychological processes how 'transcendent realities of faith become materialized'.⁸⁹

In 1950 Pope Pius XII, having been made aware of theological stirrings, (*nouvelle théologie*) in France, responded with an encyclical letter, *Humani Generis*, in which he remarked..

It is apparent that some [Catholic teachers] today, as in apostolic times, desirous of novelty, and fearing to be considered ignorant of recent scientific findings, tend to withdraw from the sacred Teaching Authority and are accordingly in danger of gradually departing from revealed truth and of drawing others along with them into error.⁹⁰

As a consequence of this encyclical, some of the best theologians in France were silenced, Henri de Lubac S.J., Gaston Fessard; Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, had already lost his chair at the *Institut Catholique*, and was not allowed to see a single theological work of his printed during his lifetime.⁹¹ After his death on Easter Sunday 1955, his writings were published posthumously and circulated among Religious in France.

The 'worker priest movement' was 'also obliged to relinquish the *Mission de France* started after the war by the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, Emmanuel Suhard. This movement had tried to regain the workers to Catholicism by appointing priests as workers. The experiments that

⁸⁷ Kohut Heinz, *The Restoration of the Self*. (New York International University Press 1977)

⁸⁸ O'Malley W. John, *What Happened at Vatican II* (London Harvard University Press, 2010).p.176.

⁸⁹ Arraj James, "The Church, the Council and the Unconscious."p.1849. Kindle Edition.

⁹⁰ Pope Pius XII, "Humani Generis; Concerning Some False Opinions Which Threaten to Undermine the Foundations of Catholic Doctrine," (Vatican: Catholic Church, 1950).

⁹¹ Kerr Fergus, *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).p76.

had been made during the war by the French forced labourers in German armament factories were tried in France. But from now on (1953) all worker- priests are recalled from the factories and the seminary of the Mission is closed.⁹²

It is interesting to note that Hans Küng remained unscathed by *Humani Generis* and chose to work for his doctorate on the theology of Karl Barth. However, the Vatican opened a file on Küng, not pleased that a young Catholic theologian might learn from a Protestant.⁹³ In the 1950s justification by faith alone, was the doctrine assumed to lie at the heart of the split between the churches of the Reformation and the Roman Catholic Church. Küng's *Justification* was published in 1957 and revealed how much Catholics had to learn from Barths' *Church Dogmatics*.⁹⁴ Küng declared that the foundations that gave strength to Protestant theology, rested in faith in Jesus, justification by faith in Jesus,⁹⁵ but surely this is Paul's message too? (Rom:4⁵.) Those of us who were aiming at sanctity could be in danger of trying to justify ourselves through righteousness! 'The law reveals the sinfulness of the subjects narcissistic self-understanding, exhibited in her desire to save herself.'⁹⁶

Yves Congar, an ecumenist and ecclesiolgist of great repute by now an *auteur suspect*, and banished to Cambridge, had written 'True and False Reform in the Church', which the Holy Office banned. Congar circulated the word 'collegiality', the idea of the Apostles as a college and the bishops as an order. It was not a new idea, a draft of a constitution prepared for discussion in 1870, noted it to be a dogma of faith that the Bishops share in governing and teaching the universal Church but it did not have time to complete its teaching on the hierarchical structure of the Church.⁹⁷

On November 1st 1950 there is the first example of 'Papal Magisterium', defining a new dogma since the definition of Papal infallibility by Vatican I in 1870.

The immaculate Mother of God and perpetual Virgin
Mary was taken up after the completion of her earthly
career, body and soul, into heavenly glory.⁹⁸

Pius XII solemnly declares this doctrine to be binding on all Catholics, but the new doctrine divided the Church and halted the moves towards unity with other Christians. This doctrine was celebrated with joy in the Cenacle. Here we believed, was another example of the power

⁹² Küng Hans, *My Struggle for Freedom* (London and New York: Continuum, vol.1 2002).p.99..

⁹³ Küng Hans, *My Struggle for Freedom; Memoirs*, trans. John Bowden, vol.1 Continuum (London 2002).p.147.

⁹⁴ Ibid.p.150.

⁹⁵ Küng Hans, *My Struggle for Freedom; Memoirs*.p.146.

⁹⁶ Jones Serene, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology*.p.62.

⁹⁷ McBrien P.Richard, "The Church (Lumen Gentium)," in *Contemporary Catholic Theology: A Reader*, ed. Hayes A. Michael & Liam Gearon (New York: Continuum, 1998).p.282.

⁹⁸ Pope Pius XII 1950 Assumption of Mary, "*Munificentissimus Deus*," (Rome: Vatican Press, 1950).

of the Holy Spirit at work in this woman 'full of grace'. Not much doctrinal discussion would have been entered into, the fact that the Pope had proclaimed this as *ex cathedra*, meant it was to be submitted to in faith. Pacelli made it clear that his power to pronounce dogma through encyclical must be regarded as absolute truth, this was how the Church accepted the power of 'infallibility'.⁹⁹

Theological textbooks before Vatican II described the papacy as a monarchy, and papal-centric readings of church history supported the monarchical model to the exclusion of all others.¹⁰⁰

For Religious women, the fact that there was no scriptural evidence for Mary's Assumption, was less significant than the belief, that at least one woman had been bodily assumed into heaven! During this period Lay Apostolate was defined as 'the collaboration of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy'. Ministry was the prerogative of the clergy. Nevertheless, Pius XII had made some significant changes especially with the encyclical, *Divino Aflante Spiritus*, which allowed Catholic scripture scholars to use historical-criticism (although some had started surreptitiously much earlier, my own tutor was already an up-to-date scholar).¹⁰¹ This led the way for *Mediator Dei* 1947, great encyclical on the liturgy. Although this letter warned against excesses of some liturgical reformers, it encouraged the liturgical movement and commended the 'dialogue Mass'.¹⁰² Religious women who attended daily mass were among the greatest beneficiaries of this change since they could now participate more fully, as there was more engagement with the celebrant. It seems we had to be pathetically grateful for the inclusion of women in the liturgy to this degree! Another important change for those sisters who taught catechism in the years before Vatican II was that of catechetical reform brought about largely through the work of Johannes Hofinger S.J. (1905-1984). Following his mentor Josef Jungmann S.J., Hoffinger referred to his approach as reclaiming the *kerygma* of the early church which was Bible centred and Christ centred.¹⁰³ He sought a middle ground between 'correct doctrine' and an 'unhealthy catechetical scholasticism'.¹⁰⁴ Hoffinger makes the claim that in the first centuries, Christians received their knowledge of the faith from within the worshipping Church. He believed it to be possible to worship without a priest, such a service was genuinely liturgical because we have here the worship of a Christian community which is ordered by the

⁹⁹ Noel Gerard, *Pius XII. The Hound of Hitler* (London: Continuum Press, 2008).

¹⁰⁰ O'Malley W. John, *What Happened at Vatican II?* p.32.

¹⁰¹ Leonard Johnston one of the editors of the Jerusalem Bible . DTL 1966

¹⁰² Rausch P. Thomas, "The Church and the Council," in *Contemporary Catholic Theology*, ed. Michael A. Hayes & Liam Gearon (New York: Continuum, 1998). p.261.

¹⁰³ Hoffinger Johannes, *The Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine: The Good News and Its Proclamation* (South Bend Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1957).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Church and performed in her name. A critique of Hoffinger's book, argues that to make these assertions is simply to deceive oneself and others, and to attribute to acts of private piety, (even if performed by a group in a sacred place) a value and efficacy, which simply contradicts the mind of the Church. Yet, Hoffinger knew from his experience of the missions in China and the Far East the need of lay involvement. He wanted the laity of the 1950s to rediscover the 'holy action' of those participating in the liturgies of the early church, in contrast to the 'spectating' that he witnessed in his travels throughout the West. During this period Lay Apostolate was defined as 'the collaboration of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy'. Ministry was the prerogative of the clergy.

Hoffinger's enthusiasm for empowering the laity caused concerns among his fellow priests. In his missionary work in China and the Philippines he saw how religious women and laity did far more educational ministry than clergy. Claiming a radical concept for the 1950s he believed the primary criterion for a religious educator was based not so much on the 'teaching authority' conferred by ordination, but the catechist's formative influence on others. He was no 'slouch' on pedagogy either, and encouraged catechists to make use of educational psychology.¹⁰⁵ But he observed that the best catechists kept religious experience central to their educational ministry, and seemed to have a great desire to share their experience with others.¹⁰⁶ Of particular concern to Hoffinger, was the inability of catechists, both those who wrote the theory and those who taught, to appreciate the truly unique nature of religious education as distinct from all other forms of education, that the goal was a personal encounter with God in prayer and in life. This required a radical reorientation in the way the faith tradition was presented and a break with the Catholic tradition's centuries old use of apologetics.

2.6 Conclusion

Analysing Cenacle Religious life, as it was lived before Vatican II, through the critique of feminist theology, is not an easy task, because feminine consciousness was in its infancy, and had not as yet percolated to the 'cloister'. However, it has given me an opportunity for a re-reading of accepted interpretations of the role of Religious women within Catholicism, to look

¹⁰⁵ Hoffinger Johannes, *The Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine: The Good News and Its Proclamation*.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

back from the restricted roles prescribed for them, at the present time, and to ask, what has changed?

My study reveals the methods of control brought to bear on women within the Church and although the language of 'experience' is no longer taboo, the language of 'authority' has not changed greatly. In this introductory chapter I have traced a tension between the experience of the individual and the 'office-holders' of the Church and the Church as the entire community.¹⁰⁷ Religious women, or more specifically, Cenacle women, navigated a course between two extremes, that of 'subjectivism' on the one hand and compliance to 'external authority' on the other. I see that as a community of women, within the boundaries laid out for us by the patriarchy of the Church, we were able to liberate ourselves from within the midst of these restrictions, through the exercise of the 'practices of the self'. In Foucault's 'arts of existence', he argues that subjects are told how they 'ought' to conduct themselves or to form themselves as an ethical subject by reference to the moral code given to them; his ethics of the self prioritises 'difference', and is an antidote to the dogmatic and totalising discourses, with which the Magisterium attempts to silence difference. However, we were able to avoid an over individualistic spirituality on the one hand, and total unreflective compliance with ecclesial directives on the other. Scripture, which is so important for the *Spiritual Exercises*, was mediated through doctrine, the whole 'paschal mystery', interpreted by the Church. In a sense we were always within a community, that of the Church, and that of the Cenacle Congregation. In other words 'religious experience' was always relational, and helped us to navigate between two extremes of inner and outer authority. While a certain compliance with Church law was necessary in order to retain canonical status as 'Religious Sisters', we lived according to norms that befitted the vision of our founders, rather than the letter of Canon Law. Our Founder Stephen Terme had a breadth of vision, although he expressed it in the language of his day (1833);

I have put the whole business of retreats into the hands of the Blessed Virgin and yours. I hold only to one thing to find the best means to make Jesus known and loved and to save souls. Whether this be done by one means or another, with a certain dress or not, means little to me, if only Jesus be glorified and souls chosen.¹⁰⁸

The 1917 code of Canon Law had obliged women Religious to wear a distinctive habit and to live within a separate section of the house, going out only for exceptional reasons.

¹⁰⁷ Heiding Fredrik SJ. *Ignatian Spirituality at Ecclesial Frontiers*. Oxford. 2012 OUP

¹⁰⁸ Terme Stephen, "Anthology of Congregational Documents," *Letters of 1833* (1985).

Notwithstanding this we held Terme's vision as the basis of our life while we conformed to the externals of Church law.

1962-1972 My Experience of Cenacle Religious Life

The 'swinging sixties' entered with song, dance and a new sexual liberation; the 'Beatles' introduced a different and extremely popular style of music, I was unaware of their impact until many years later. In 1962 the Cuban missile crisis brought the world to the brink of nuclear war. I recall watching 'Panarama' (a clandestine TV session) called 'The Edge of the Sixties', which looked backwards to the post-war austerity of the fifties and forward to a new decade of liberation. But no one was aware of the changes that were to breeze through British Society, the Catholic Church and Religious life. It all started for me with the 21st General Chapter of the Congregation which took place in a newly built international Cenacle in Rome. It was for the use of the Superior General with her Councillors and those sisters who came for a time of preparation before their final vows.

This decade was one of my most eventful, beginning as it did with the unification of the two degrees of sisters. 'Cracks in the cloister' had begun with the 1956 Chapter, during which questions related to the two degrees were discussed at length. Although the 'capitulants' were unanimous in affirming the expediency of two classes of sisters for the sake of the retreats, on the other hand the identity of religious consecration and the unity of the Cenacle family required our external symbols to be the same. At this 20th Chapter (1956), there is one little opening in the rules for enclosure which I find amusing, 'the sisters may in future accompany the dead to the cemetery'.

At the Divine Office of the first Christmas Eve after the unification 1962, I sang the plain chant 'Invitatory', and one of the nine lessons of matins, it was a daunting experience. There were three Masses, vigil, dawn and day; I loved the introit, 'Dominus Dixit ad me', which was beautiful in its profound sense of solemnity and devotion. Although the house was full of guests who had come for the Christmas Liturgy, we were able to relax more than in previous years. During my nine years in Liverpool I had formed a close friendship with one sister, who was subsequently sent home because 'she had no vocation'; this kind of loss was to be accepted as part of the detachment expected of someone who had chosen an exclusive bond with Christ, nevertheless I found it hard until I formed new friendships with the Sisters in the Grayshott community.

It is a very exciting time for the Church and for those of us in Religious community when, in 1958 John XXIII became Pope, and called an Ecumenical Council. We followed the debates of the Council Fathers hearing the tensions between the different factions as the news filtered through from Rome. We heard about Cardinal Ottaviani, who was an arch conservative and Head of the Holy Office. Sebastian Bullough OP, came to Grayshott to give a retreat and gave

the community a summary of what had been discussed, about the twin founts of revelation, 'Scripture and Tradition'. One of the early debates was about the 'constitutive nature of Tradition as a source of revelation'. I will examine this issue more fully in the body of my work because, although the question was answered to the satisfaction of the majority of the Council bishops, it took a long time to seep into the collective consciousness of the 'faithful'. Meantime, work was going on to revise our Constitutions yet again. The impetus for a new text came from the advice of several Canonists who considered the spiritual value of our Constitutions to far outweigh their canonical and juridical worth, although I thought this was rather a good thing. The charism of the Congregation had been influenced by the Superior General, Mother Marie Aimée Lautier, who had added texts to the draft of the 1886 Constitutions, in order to include elements of spirituality, such as devotion to the Holy Eucharist, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Our horarium was laden with spiritual exercises, inappropriate when we claimed an apostolic identity.

The first draft of the revised Constitutions presented at the General Chapter of 1962 were viewed as lacking good logic. They were then rewritten by Father Delchard S.J. and Sister Marguerite-Marie Bastien, of the French Province. The final text was approved by the Sacred Congregation of Religious on March 18th 1966 but the ink was not yet dry on these Constitutions, before the message of the second Vatican Council required each Religious Congregation to go back to the 'profound intention' of their Founders, to restore the original inspiration. We experienced an identity crisis, similar to the one the Church was going through; were we 'monastic' or 'apostolic'? We were required to make a decision, based on the intentions of the founders, and to follow it by structuring an appropriate life style. In 1966-67 we answered a series of questionnaires, one each month for twelve months, on different subjects which touched on all aspects of our lives. The climate in which we were responding was in the spirit of 'aggiornamento' (bringing up to date), we worked with enthusiasm and concentration. A synthesis of all the responses was made according to subjects discussed and a copy given to each of the delegates to the Chapter. A first draft of these was called 'Guidelines', they were written entirely by the Sisters and were in use for about twelve years. During this period a 'Constitution Commission' working in communication with the sisters of the Congregation reflected, prayed and experimented with changes in life style, but never in terms of our charism, which was deeply rooted in Scripture.

The theological developments that came with Vatican II completely changed the relationship of the Church to the world, and with that changed the very form and structure of Religious life.

For someone whose entire adult life had revolved around withdrawing from the 'world', learning to be in it, demanded an entirely new repertoire of behaviors, skills and sense of purpose. I had chosen what I thought was a contemplative (monastic) life, now I was to be re-trained for an apostolic life. The Decree on the renewal of Religious Life that came out from Vatican II did not make any major pronouncements, it simply asked that Women Religious examine their lives according to the 'charism of the Congregation, the needs of the members, and the signs of the times'. In 1965 it was easy to miss the implications of this, because these directives to Religious were embedded in the concepts contained in the other fifteen documents related to the whole Church. Our lives were as deeply touched by the other documents as they were by our own.

In the Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious life, Perfectae Caritatis, the Council instructed religious to turn to the gospels, to see the intention of the founders, and the social realities of the times. This time, we were not simply to turn to Canon Law or the local bishop for principles and directives, we were to follow 'the signs of the times'. This was the signal for the Provincial superior who had been in office for thirty years to retire and for the Superior General to elect someone much younger.

It was this new Provincial Superior who sent me to obtain a qualification in 'Religious Studies', because I was needed for the work of retreats and catechetics. This all happened without much enthusiasm on my part because I was in Manchester now, having just settled down after five years in Grayshott. I was caring for a sister with 'multiple sclerosis' and I did not think she could do without me! However, off I went to be resident for four years in 'Mary Ward' college near Nottingham, which had started as a college of Education and eventually was accredited by Nottingham University. This was an amazing event for the community who had only recently started to go outside the 'enclosure', and many of them wondered if I would ever come back. Fortunately for me I had a fine scholarly tutor who had been engaged in biblical studies long before the encyclical 'Divino Afflante Spiritu' gave permission for Catholic scholars to engage in these studies. It was also traumatic for me as a 'mature student' to mingle with young students, many of whom had come straight from school. However, to be given the opportunity to understand how the Scriptures were compiled and appreciate the revelation of God in History, was my time of 'enlightenment'. I was in a place to be exposed to some of the challenging questions addressed to Christians by atheists. For me the consequence of this biblical theology was immensely exhilarating, but for some of my sisters and lay friends, it was deeply disturbing. Meantime, other changes were introduced; once we started to give the retreats ourselves, and to attend courses for training, the medieval dress, which was five

centimeters from the ground, had to give place to a shorter suit and veil. We had spent hours, making and repairing our religious 'habits' (dress), starching and ironing the bonnet, knitting and darning stockings, now we did not have the time for this. It was with relief that in 1968 when I went to study I had a simple suit and no veil.

I want to relate an interesting initiative that started in London by Cardinal Heenan because it echoes the Council debates on scripture versus tradition. Hitherto full courses in Catechetics had to be studied at 'Lumen Vitae' in Brussels, or in Strasbourg, or Paris. This new London College of Catechetics (Corpus Christi) was to have an equally high scholastic standard but would specialize in giving practical experience of teaching. The college was open from 1965-1975. In July 1965, six hundred teachers and priests from all over Britain attended the summer school, where a flavour of the curriculum of the new college to be opened in the autumn, was presented. Hubert Richards was chosen by Cardinal Heenan to become the Principal and Peter de Rosa his assistant. These two creative thinkers had worked with Charles Davies, who had taught Dogmatic Theology at Ware, for sixteen years. On December 21st 1966, a sadness was cast over our Christmas festivities, when in a blaze of publicity, Charles Davis, (who had been 'peritus' at the third session of Vatican II) announced his decision to leave the Roman Catholic Church. His reason; 'the Church's concern for authority at the expense of truth and its disregard of persons'.

It soon became clear that the Catholic bishops were not happy with what was being taught at Corpus Christi College. Neither they, nor Cardinal Heenan, were fully aware of the developments in Catechetics in the continental institutes, they considered these institutes too theoretical and out of touch with the 'working class' world. Cardinal Heenan came to question the theological orthodoxy of what was being taught and the methodology of teaching principles. The HMI (Her Majesty's Inspector's) report of the curriculum was very positive, but included a sentence that caused concern among the hierarchy; the report stated that,

there was no attempt to impose a specific point of view, which was entirely appropriate in an adult educational context.¹

Here is evidence of the dichotomy or tension, between the principles needed in an adult educational context and the concern of the hierarchy for theological orthodoxy. According to Cardinal Heenan, there should be an 'attempt to impose a specific' Catholic point of view. I have recourse to Brother Damian Lundy's analysis of what happened at this time. Hugh Lavery, a diocesan priest, who later tried to save the college from closure, wrote,

¹Lundy Damian, "Corpus Christi College" (1980).p.274.

Formulae are the strict diet of the besieged; they live sparingly. The catechism fed us iron rations with just enough protein for survival...With the war now over, men want a richer and more nourishing bread. They want the reality, the proposition contains, conveyed in a language they can understand. All this is delicate work, work of depth, not demolition. It cannot be done in haste, nor without humility.We have moved into a questioning age. This should not alarm us. It is a shallow faith that shies away for the question and woodenly recites the ready-made reply. Not only the Church but the whole of society is examining its assumptions.²

The underlying tension was between scripture and tradition; we were encouraged to use historical and literary criticism, and ask questions of the 'sacred text', that had previously been answered by 'tradition'. The four year B.Ed. course in 'Mary Ward College' offered me the necessary up-dating and re-evaluating in the light of current theological, psychological, and sociological insights, but the College was out of the 'Westminster radar' so met with very little disapproval. For my dissertation on 'Creator Spirit in Modern Theology' submitted for a B.Ed in religious studies in 1972, I obtained a distinction, this would not have happened a few years earlier, because I drew heavily on Teilhard de Chardin, T.F. Torrance, W.Pannenberg and other writers of whom the Catholic Church did not approve. 1963 saw the publication of Robinson's 'Honest to God', which proved to be an influential contemporary theological statement, needing to be addressed in any religious education context. But the single most controversial event of the early post Vatican II years, which affected Corpus Christi College, and all other pastoral ministry, was Paul VI's encyclical, 'Humanae Vitae', issued in July 1968, and the crisis of authority of which the encyclical was both a symbol and cause. Numerous priests left the Church and many of the laity struggled with matters of conscience as a consequence.³ During these years our liturgy changed dramatically, we could no longer punctuate the day with the hours of Divine Office, nor could we spend hours before the Blessed Sacrament, followed by Benediction, with adoration during the night once a week; the implications of restoring our apostolic thrust were far reaching. Renewal required that we dismantle many of our old ways of looking at life, of looking at ministry, of looking at oneself. Discovering that the

²An extract from an Article by Father Hugh Lavery in a catechetical journal called the 'Sower', 1962.p.298 in Lundy.

³ My source for these details is Damian Lundy's chapter on 'Corpus Christi College' in his MA Thesis on Religious Education, which I borrowed from Loyola Hall library, Liverpool. Damian was a respected and much loved *De La Salle* brother.

familiar structures that had controlled life, and that the way we used to do things was no longer effective, meant the 'deconstruction' of what we had given a lifetime to internalizing. In 1965 there were traditionalists, both in the convent and outside of it, for whom the medieval way of life was of the essence of religious fidelity, changing it had all the hallmarks of heresy. At the centre of Cenacle deliberations was the tension between two theologies of religious life, one formed in the ascetical tradition and the mystique of religious life, the other, out of the biblical theology of the Incarnation. Our foundation of 'Ignatian Spirituality,' left us in no doubt that the mission of the Cenacle is to bring the Reign of God to be visible in this world. Ours was an Incarnational spirituality.

Chapter 3

The Church of Vatican II

3.1 Introduction

As the drama of the Council began to unfold, institutional 'Thomism' as grinding on in the classrooms of the Catholic world, unaware of its imminent demise. Once authority lifted its hand from the imposition of this style of learning, it was soon replaced, according to James Arraj,⁴ with a release of repressed energy, expressed in 'ressourcement', one aspect of which is learning from earlier writers how the questions ought to be framed in the first place.⁵ I explore the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*,⁶ to understand the breakthrough to the historicity of revelation, from its previous, ahistorical, intellectual conception, and the implications of this for women. Although the Council opened up the discussion of 'experience' it was without the contribution of women either in their presence or in their thinking. The history of *Dei Verbum* was one of the focal points of tension and conflict between theological viewpoints at the Council, and, says Robert Murray, it is the most fundamental of the document.⁷ For this reason, I need to explore the serious questions posed by my previous analysis of Modernism, to see, not simply how the Council responded then, but its influence in

⁴ Arraj James, "The Church, the Council and the Unconscious." (kindle edition)

⁵ McDade John, "Epilogue 'Ressourcement' in Retrospect," in *Ressourcement*, ed. Flynn Gabriel and Paul D. Murray (Oxford: OUP., 2012).

⁶ *Dei Verbum* 58. Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*. p.750

⁷ Murray Robert, "Revelation (Dei Verbum)," in *Contemporary Catholic Theology: A Reader*, ed. Hayes A. Michael and Liam Gearon (New York: Continuum, 1998). p.13.

this decade. For example, the question of the inspiration and inerrancy of the bible, the question of the development of doctrine, and the support of the Liturgical Movement which had started in the 1950s. A further argument in this chapter is to claim that the Council missed an opportunity to open a window for women's experience, in the service of the Church. I examine those documents of Vatican II that have bearing on the place of women, and argue that while the Church gave a space for feminism in the documents, it resisted it in practice. I examine the Church's attitude to authority, and utilize the thinking of Foucault and his notions of power. He claims,

Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization... [Individuals] are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation.... Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application.⁸

I explore this theory as a woman, who has chosen to live within a religious power structure, and at the same time is herself, a 'vehicle of power', within the net-like organisation of the Cenacle community. Foucault furthers my argument, by stating that history, read 'narcissistically', confirms a false sense of identity, by holding on to theories and values and suppressing any potentially disruptive awareness of difference.⁹ The issue of 'difference' is to figure more significantly in later chapters, when I turn to the importance of 'relationality' for my re-definition of 'mysticism'.

Vatican II exposed two forces of power, one that saw history as the passage of time, with a logical flow of causally connected events, forming part of an overall pattern of meaning to history, and the other force of power,¹⁰ those who to some degree, were able to abandon faith in metaphysics, and recognize the historical processes that give rise to events, which are in fact discontinuous, divergent and governed by chance, or I would claim, by the Holy Spirit. Although the Council opened up the discussion of 'experience', it was without the contribution of women either in their presence or in their thinking. I analyse the effect of the historical-critical approach to biblical study, which was the single most dramatic change for those of us who had approached the mysteries of the gospel with the '*sensus fidelium*'.

⁸ Foucault Michel, *Power /Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings.*, trans. Colin Gordon (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1980).p.98.

⁹ibid.

¹⁰ Foucault Michel, *The Foucault Reader; an Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin, 1984).p.89.

I turn then, more specifically, to the issue of women and the Council. After all, we are talking about half the human race, and although Catholic women were invisible in St. Peter's, the two thousand-five-hundred bishops, would not be there, were it not for the women who gave them birth. With the rise of the 'second wave' of feminist consciousness in the 1960s, women had begun to see the profound connection between patriarchy and organized religion.¹¹ I examine the effect of this on Catholic feminist consciousness, as we became aware of our exclusion from significant contributions to sacramental ministry, leadership, and decision-making in the Church. We were told that this exclusion was based on the divine will, regarding the female of the species, and was theologically based.¹² I explore the document pertaining to women Religious, the *Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life, Perfectae Caritatis*; it had one sentence that caused a paradigm shift, we were to renew according to 'the signs of the times' a phrase used by Pope John XXIII in his encyclical, *Pacem in Terris* (1963). I look more closely at the implications of this for the Cenacle congregation. Can I claim a pre-conscious, proto-feminism, in that our founders saw the need for women to serve other women, as spiritual directors and retreat givers, an insight not yet named 'feminism'? I introduce the debate on the sources of revelation because my own study of the Bible led me to a profound understanding of the Word of God, through historical and literary approaches. Notwithstanding Catholic 'tradition', theology was now addressed to intelligent adults, far removed from the apologetic approach of the catechism. I could start my short teaching career, by asking this Catholic school to supply every girl with a bible, and after the headmistress and the staff recovered from the shock of this request, every pupil received a Jerusalem study Bible. Finally, the themes of 'authority' and 'experience' run through my thesis, so I include a section where I look more closely at *Lumen Gentium*. I focus on chapter two and the whole question of collegiality, also at the decision to include the laity as full partners with the hierarchy, in the life and mission of the Church

3.2 *Dei Verbum: 'Revelation and Experience'*

'*Dei Verbum*' was the culmination of a long nineteenth century debate about the methods and presuppositions of scholastic theology.¹³ It was in fact an acknowledgement of the more historically conscious, existentially focused thinking, described as 'return to the sources' of

¹¹ Schneiders Sandra, *Beyond Patching* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004).p.32.

¹² Ruether Rosemary, *Sexism and God Talk*. citing Augustine, *De Trinitate* 7.7.10.p.95

¹³ Mettepenningen Jurgen, " Nouvelle Theologie: Four Historical Stages of Reform," in *Ressourcement*, ed. Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray with assistance of Patricia Kelly(Oxford: OUP, 2012).p.172.

scriptures, the 'Fathers' and the Liturgy. In the 1940s and 1950s this theology had been branded as 'the new theology' (*la nouvelle theologie*). Many French scholars, Jesuits and Dominicans, who had subscribed to these ideas, had been 'cautioned' by the Vatican, but now found themselves consultants at the Council. The foremost exponents of this movement, Marie-Dominique Chenu (1895-1990), Yves Congar (1904-95) both Dominicans at Le Saulchoir, and the Jesuits, Jean Daniélou (1905-74) and Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) at Lyon- Fourvière, had not been named in the encyclical letter issued in 1950, *Humani Generis*, but Superiors withdrew their teaching and writing appointments. Yet it is the theology of these scholars that is underpinning the inspiration of the Council Documents.¹⁴

From the beginning, *Dei Verbum* declares revelation as primarily God's self-disclosure, thus making it clear that revelation means primarily God's personal self-revelation. By divine revelation God wished to manifest and communicate both himself, and the eternal decrees of his will, concerning the salvation of mankind.¹⁵ Moreover, Jesus the Christ, in both word and work, is the unique source of revelation, and the Bible is the normative witness in the Church to that revelation. It becomes clear in this document that tradition is not primarily the handing on of historically developed dogmas, but a handing on of a faith in which we are all participants, not simply observers of history. Although revelation occurred in its fullness in the life of Jesus, it must continue in the Christian's experience, because if it is not realised in us, and does not become immediate in us, it cannot exist for us. Revelation, although it presupposes human and historical preparation, comes directly to everyone, so it is impossible to hold fast to faith in revelation, without extending it beyond biblical times. Revelation is neither information about the past, nor abstract doctrinal truth, but God's self-communication to one who is open to the experience of God's presence.¹⁶

The neo-scholastic theology had posited two kinds of revelation, natural and supernatural; because since the 'fall' it was difficult for human nature to know the existence of God by unaided reason, supernatural revelation was necessary for salvation.¹⁷ This approach, as illustrated in the previous section of my study, cultivated the use of reason as it was applied to the doctrines proposed by the Church. Pre-Vatican II Christians tended to equate 'tradition' with official doctrine, and to regard authoritative teaching as the primary mode of

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II* Third Edition ed., vol. 1, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (N.Y.: Costello, 1975). *Dei Verbum*. art. 6.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Dulles A, *Models of Revelation* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983). p. 42.

transmission.¹⁸ This led to greater emphasis on the role of the magisterium in terms of its power over the interpretation of the scriptures. In contrast, *Dei Verbum*, makes clear that the role of the magisterium, is interpretation, not control.¹⁹ Tradition is handed on in a number of ways one of the most important being the liturgy, where the body of Christ is shared in word and sacrament. For women Religious, the changes in the Liturgy, during the 1950s had been of immense significance; the daily celebration of the Eucharist was the source of our spiritual nourishment. We were grateful when we were allowed to participate more fully, by responding to the invocations in our own language. The first document agreed to by the Council bishops in 1963, was that on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. The Liturgy, it states, 'sanctifies almost every event in people's lives', it is not about 'inviting God into the secular lives of parishoners', but a sublime ritual for making explicit the implications of the Incarnation, that the presence of God is in the ordinary, the Liturgy celebrates our embodied-ness, through the Word becoming flesh.²⁰ This enfleshment was symbolised in the bread and wine of the Eucharist but also in the body of the faithful assembled to celebrate.

In order to reopen a renewed discussion on the issue of experience, the Council decided it had to widen the horizon of theology. This 'Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation', is theologically the most fundamental of the documents, in that it both undergirds and relates to many others, especially those with a pastoral thrust. In this Constitution, the Council reversed its unqualified rejection of modernity and declared its solidarity with the world. This change was not only theologically significant for the whole Church; it meant a profound existential adjustment for women Religious and others, by vindicating the value of experience. The draft of the document on revelation presented in November 1962 caused the Council to acknowledge the polarization that was to shape the Council's history. Those bishops who had been formed to think of modernism, as the 'most insidious of all heresies', struggled to defend the Church against ideas of development and change. On the other side were the biblical scholars, who were convinced that the Catholic Church needed a credible account of how God's Word acts in history, starting with its early human formulation in scripture and evolving through a process of developed understanding.²¹

In para.8 of *Dei Verbum*, the council lists three factors in the process of tradition; theology, experience, and the magisterium,

¹⁸ Schneiders Sandra, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (Minneapolis: The Liturgical Press, 1999).p.85.

¹⁹ Flannery Austin, *Documents of Vatican II*. *Dei Verbum* 2. Art.10

²⁰ O'Leary Daniel, "Brightest Presence in the Darkest Places," *The Tablet*, (September 8th 2012).

²¹ *Ibid*.p.14.

This tradition which comes from the apostles develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers who treasure these things in their hearts, through the intimate understanding of spiritual things they *experience* and through the preaching of those who have received, through episcopal succession the sure gift of truth.²²

In his commentary on this paragraph, Latourelle considers 'this tradition' from a dynamic point of view, pointing out that in one sense the Tradition, stemming from the apostles is continually developing under the action and assistance of the Holy Spirit. It is not the apostolic tradition itself but our penetration of these inherited words and realities through contemplation and study, and the day to day 'experience' of spiritual realities, with the rich understanding to which it leads.²³

This reference to experience is significant, although the document does not specify what kind of 'intimate understanding of spiritual things' believers might experience through their study and contemplation. The significance of the document lies in the fact that the Council raised the question of whether revelation has been fully given in the events to which Scripture bears witness or whether Revelation continues now, 'For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and words which have been handed down'.²⁴ A number of bishops had problems with paragraph 8 of *Dei Verbum*, because it seemed to them to repudiate Pius X's encyclical, *Pascendi*; the fear was that 'Tradition' would not have the privileged role in the Church, that pertained when 'revelation' consisted of truths and doctrines, proclaimed by the Magisterium, which the laity must accept.

According to John O'Malley,²⁵ the real issue under most other issues, was the question of how the Catholic Church would deal with change. The Church believed its essential mission was to pass on by word and deed, a message received from Jesus in the gospels. But, Pope John had put 'change' on the agenda by describing the Council's purpose in part as updating '*aggiornamento*'. In his opening address he declared that the message of the Church is the same, but the way it is presented may need to be changed.²⁶ '*Aggiornamento*', 'development', '*ressourcement*', these were the three categories the Council wrestled with, and I would claim

²² Flannery Austin, *Documents of Vatican II*. (*Dei Verbum* p754 para.8.) (emphasis mine)

²³ Latourelle Rene, *Theology of Revelation* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1968).p477.

²⁴ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*, Third Edition ed., vol. 1, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (N.Y.: Costello,1975).(art.8)

²⁵ O'Malley John W, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge US: Havard University Press, 2008).p.299.

²⁶ John XXIII's opening allocution to the Council, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia*

the Church is still struggling with. The three specific issues, under the more general ones that the bishops debated are, change, collegiality, and identity.²⁷ I introduce them here, because they were also experienced by women Religious, during and after the Council, and because they are three 'issues-under-the-issues' that are not yet fully resolved. Of these three categories of change, 'development', was and is the least threatening, because it implies an unfolding continuity. The second, '*Aggiornamento*', up-dating, was not really a problem, the question was, how far can we go? What is the limit? The surprise is that both the Church and the Cenacle Congregation accepted 'change' as a broad principle, rather than as a rare exception. The third, '*Ressourcement*', tended to look to the past to retrieve something more authentic, as if the past held information applicable to the present. *Ressourcement* might seem to be the most traditional, but in fact it held the potential to be the most radical; for example, John McDade asks,

What are we to make of the cavalier way in which Congar and Chenu take upon themselves the project of liquidating "Baroque theology", as though a whole swathe of post-Tridentine religion should be wiped from public consciousness in order to allow "true" tradition to shine through with lambent gleam?²⁸

The *ressourcement* theologians were not immune to imbalances and biases; I agree with James Arraj, that many of us, (not just theologians), were reacting at this time to feelings that had been suppressed during the years of theological imposition.²⁹ Genuine questions were raised during these years but were never adequately addressed, with the result that negative feelings fell into the unconscious and later surfaced in consciousness in the form of projections that saw 'modernism' everywhere. There was a great fear of change among Church leaders and the three ways of dealing with it, *aggiornamento*, development, *ressourcement*, were called on each in turn; although the decree on Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, required all three to be in place. We were to return both to the sources of Christian life, and the primitive inspiration of the founders, and to adapt to the signs of the times.³⁰

No instance of *ressourcement* was more central at Vatican II, than the principle of 'collegiality', the second undercover issue of the relationship between the 'centre and the periphery'; it caused anguish right from the start of the Council, linked as it is with power. However, it was believed by some of the bishops to be a recovery of an aspect of Church structure, pushed out

²⁷ O'Malley W. John, *What Happened at Vatican II?* (Harvard University Press Boston US. 210 edition)

²⁸ McDade John, "Epilogue '*Ressourcement*' in Retrospect." p.518. in *Ressourcement* ed. Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray (Oxford OUP 2012)

²⁹ Arraj James, "The Church, the Council and the Unconscious." (Kindle edition location 1083) 2006.

³⁰ O'Malley W. John, *What Happened at Vatican II?* p.300.

of sight by the papal primacy of Vatican I.³¹ The bishops who brought it to the floor, fought for it passionately, because they wanted to redress the imbalance between the authority of the Vatican congregations and their own authority as heads of local dioceses'. The third issue, identity, is a sort of prism through which to view the Council through the 'style' of the teaching, O'Malley claims two different visions of Catholicism ensued;

from commands to invitations, from laws to ideals, from definition to mystery, from threats to persuasion, from coercion to conscience, from monologue to dialogue, from ruling to serving, from withdrawn to integrated, from vertical to horizontal, from hostility to friendship,from suspicion to trust....³²

The Council is speaking about the very identity of the Church, teaching by means of its style, it changed from being juridical and legislative to being pastoral and compassionate, an approach that befits the 'people of God'.³³ All of the above I argue, points to the 'relationality' essential for a faith community; O' Malley does not include the absence of women, he records 'what happened' and 'women's issues did not happen!'³⁴ And yet could the change in identity have happened, if a movement called 'feminism' was not abroad in the wider world? In this thesis, three 'issues-under-the-issues' are, a concern for women's inclusion in the body of the Church, (*aggiornamento*); a concern for 'embodied spirituality', ('development'); and the root of *relationality*, (*ressourcement*). In the following section I uncover aspects of *ressourcement* that did not serve the image of the Church as the 'people of God'.

3.3 Vatican II and Women³⁵

I could begin with an examination of what is said about women in the Council texts, but to be faithful to my experience, I need to start with the encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, because this came to my awareness long before the Council Documents. The question of birth control was already a looming pastoral problem in the 1960s for Catholic married couples, who found the 'rhythm method' unsatisfactory.³⁶ Pope John XXIII, at the urging of Cardinal Suenens, had

³¹ Ibid.

³² O'Malley W. John. *What Happened at Vatican II* (Harvard University Press 2008)

³³ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*. Lumen Gentium Ch.2 para. p.359

³⁴ O'Malley John W, *What Happened at Vatican II*.

³⁵ Helman A.Ivy, *Women and the Vatican*. Written fifty years after the close of the Council, this is an exploration of official documents. It shows some development in the theology of women, in relation to the family, the world and the Church.

³⁶ Arraj James, "The Church, the Council and the Unconscious." (Kindle edition location 2160)

established a secret, 'Birth Control Commission', which was retained by Paul VI.³⁷ Theologians had not felt free prior to the Council, to examine the issue of the use of artificial contraceptives, because previous Popes, Pius, XI, XII, had taught that the practice of birth control was 'always seriously evil'³⁸ and to change that edict now would imply that the Pope could err, and Vatican I had claimed infallibility for the Papacy. The issue of conscience came up with force in 1968 when Paul VI made his decision, (and it was 'his' decision) against the majority opinion of the members of the Commission to uphold the teaching of *Casti Connubii*, 'that each and every marriage act must be open to the transmission of life'.³⁹ This decision can be challenged on two counts; the first is the question of authority and infallibility, which I will address in a later chapter. The second count is the effects on women; although this encyclical pertains to married couples, its effects on women have been the most destructive. A Catholic woman may have to accede to the desires of her husband and risk pregnancy every year. She bears the joy and pain of childbearing, and in some areas of the world she carries the economic responsibility for the welfare of the child. Few questions have been as divisive as this was at the time, over six hundred theologians, priests and academics signed a statement dissenting from the pope's position.⁴⁰

What in the Council's teaching offered so much joy and hope that is yet to be delivered?⁴¹

There is a great deal of promise in the opening words of *Gaudium et Spes*,

the joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the
[men] of this age, especially those who are poor or in
any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the
griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.⁴²

This inspiring agenda assured everyone including women, that our joys and hopes and griefs and anxieties are legitimate. The actual text talks about 'men', which meant, 'men and women' in 1966 (it still does), because men have usurped the generic term. So what did the Council teach about women? There is a message about the impact of women in public life in a paragraph that looks hopeful,

Women are now employed in almost every area of life. It
is appropriate that they should be able to assume their

³⁷ Helman A. Ivy, *Women and the Vatican* (New York: Orbis Books, 2012).p.26.

³⁸ Pius XI *Casti Connubii*, Encyclical Letter (Vatican City Rome 1930)

³⁹ Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, Encyclical Letter (Vatican Rome 1968).para.11.

⁴⁰ Rausch Thomas, "Sexual Morality and Social Justice," in *Contemporary Catholic Theology*, ed. Michael A. Hayes and Liam Gearon (New York: Continuum, 1998).p.409.

⁴¹ Byrne Lavinia, *Woman at the Altar* (London: Mowbray, 1994).p.22.

⁴² Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*. The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World., *Gaudium et Spes*.p.903 (1975 ed.)

full proper role in accordance with their own nature. Everyone should acknowledge and favour the proper and necessary participation of women in cultural life.⁴³

So the 'full proper role' of women is to be 'in accordance with their own nature', and it soon becomes clear how 'their own nature' is perceived. Not until Cardinal Suenens observed that there were no women present for these deliberations, that six days before the third session opened in September 1964 Pope Paul VI wrote:

We have given orders that some devout ladies could attend' (as non-speaking, non-voting auditors) for ceremonies and general assemblies women will know just how much honour the Church pays to them in the *dignity of their being* and of their mission on the human and Christian level.⁴⁴ (emphasis mine)

The hierarchy's view of the 'dignity' of women's 'being' was a reference to the 'anthropological subordinationism', put forward in the work of Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas. This refers to the male headship within the order of creation, that Rosemary Radford Ruether describes as;

The notion basically identifies patriarchal social order with the natural or divinely created order. Male headship is thus regarded as rooted in the intrinsic nature of things and willed by God. Any effort to upset this order by giving women autonomy or equal rights would constitute a rebellion against God and would result in moral and social chaos in human society.⁴⁵

A woman who picked up the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1914), still in use in 1962, would have read that 'women were inferior in some respects to men in body and soul', her power would reside in her 'indirect influence on her husband'. After two hundred years of this sort of reasoning, the Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, was profoundly liberating;

Since all men and women possessed of a rational soul and created in the image of God have the same nature and the same origin, and since they have been redeemed by Christ and enjoy the same divine calling and destiny, the basic equality which they all share needs to be increasingly recognised. Not everyone is identical in physical capacity and in mental and moral recourse, but every type of discrimination affecting the fundamental rights of a person, whether social or cultural, on grounds of sex, race colour, class, should be overcome and done away with, as contrary to the

⁴³ Abbott W. M, ed. *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, Documents of Vatican II (New York: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966). p.267.

⁴⁴ Halter Deborah, *The Papal 'No'*. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004). p.21.

⁴⁵ Ruether R. Rosemary, "Christianity," in *Women in World Religions*, ed. Arvind Sharma and Katherine K. Young (Albany State University: New York Press, 1987). p.202.

purpose of God. It is a matter of deep regret that these basic personal rights are still not universally recognised and respected, as when women are denied the choice of a husband or a state of life, or opportunities for education and culture equal to those of men.⁴⁶

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*),⁴⁷ (its sub-title, the 'Mystery of the Church'), stressed that all the faithful shared in the one priesthood of Christ through baptism. The Church was the baptised, the 'people of God', unlike the previous definitions of the Church as a 'hierarchical institution'.⁴⁸ There are references to women that relate to culture and open up new appreciation of her work in society, for example,

At present women are involved in nearly all spheres of life: they ought to be permitted to play their part fully according to their own particular nature. It is up to everyone to see to it that women's specific and necessary participation in cultural life be acknowledged and fostered.⁴⁹

The body politic of the Church is not one of the 'spheres of life' in which women are involved, the home and child care is where they 'play their part according to their own particular nature'

The active presence of the father is very important... the mother too has a central role in the home, for the children, especially the younger children, depend on her considerably; this role must be safeguarded without, however underrating women's legitimate social advancement.⁵⁰

Paul VI's *Octogesima Adveniens*, affirms women's equality with men in the sight of God but goes further and argues that this equality gives them an equal right to all facets of social, cultural, economic and political life. But according to the later synod of Bishops,

These appeals of the Church to the world for the advancement of the status of women, are on the point of losing all impact unless the recognition of women as full members becomes simultaneously a reality within the Church itself.⁵¹

Neither was it clear to Religious women, that as the Council drew back the curtains on the four-hundred year old model of Religious life (designed by the Council of Trent), that the

⁴⁶ Tanner P. Norman, ed. *Gaudium Et Spes*, 2 vols., vol.11, Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils (London: Sheed and Ward, 1962-1965).art.29. p.1086

⁴⁷ 'Light to the Gentiles'

⁴⁸ Flannery Austin, *Gaudium et spes* art.10.

⁴⁹ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*, Third Edition ed., vol. 1, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (N.Y.: Costello, 1975).art.60.p.965.

⁵⁰ Ibid.art.52. p.956.

⁵¹ Synod of Bishops, 'Male and female reconciliation in the Church', *Origins* 13-19 (Oct.1983; 334-35)

modern age they were trying to implement had nearly run its course, that in fact we were on the verge of postmodernism.⁵² The Decree 'On The Up-To-Date Renewal of Religious Life' (*Perfectae Caritatis*), was addressed to women and men Religious, and reminded us to read it in conjunction with chapter's five and six in *Lumen Gentium*, which declares that everyone was called to holiness, not merely certain Christians who live apart in convents or monasteries.

The distinctive way in which some laity choose to respond to this call to holiness is through the practice of the evangelical counsels, but it does not privilege them or imprint on them some higher status; or is it a kind of middle way between the clerical and lay conditions of life.⁵³

There are several implications of Religious accepting solidarity with the laity, it allows us to stand with, and for the disempowered in the Church it should give the right of respectful dissent in support of a more democratic Church. A further implication has to do with gender, because Religious are 'lay' and 'women', they have a legitimate stake in all the issues that weigh on women, but they have no effective voice in the decisions the Church makes in relation to them. Our work with women brought us face to face with issues related to marriage, birth control, same-sex relationships, on all of which the Magisterium had placed restrictions. As women we are 'feminine', but as 'female' we are, unfit for the sanctuary. There is tension for all Catholic women who are feminists between their growing subjectivity and their Catholic identity.⁵⁴ My research leads me to reduce that tension by discovering that the 'feminine' is the foundation of Christian identity. This claim is first to be substantiated by the historical-critical method, in relation to scripture when Mary's self-surrender at the annunciation is the pre-condition for the birth of Jesus. Later I turn to the psychological-critical method becoming aware of the nature and dynamics of the psyche both conscious and unconscious.⁵⁵

3.4 The Function of Scripture

Until Vatican II the fact that God had inspired the Bible and the authors of the different books of scripture made irrelevant for most Catholics such historical questions as: What traditions or sources did the authors draw on? What was the author's background and point of view? What

⁵² Sandra Schneiders, *Finding the Treasure* (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 2000).p.103.

⁵³ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*, Third Edition ed., vol. 1, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (N.Y.: Costello, 1975).p.403. *Lumen Gentium*

⁵⁴ Beattie Tina, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate : A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation*.

⁵⁵ Arraj James. "The Church, the Council and the Unconscious." New York: Inner Growth Books, 2006.

were the problems of 'his' time and community? Why are there no women authors? In addition to historical questions, there are various types of criticism or analysis of a book to be employed: What literary form is the author using? What of the archaeological fields that may give credence to a text? I had to learn that the Bible was a library of books, that to understand the literary form and the historical context of the writings, would lead to the religious insight.⁵⁶ We were only now beginning to own a personal bible. It is not surprising then that once Catholics owned a Bible they asked factual questions about the stories that previously they had assumed to be historically true. What of the mystery of 'Our Lady of the Cenacle', which had inspired our Congregation from the beginning? What is the mystery we are called to keep present in the Church and the world? A brief passage in the New Testament provides the text of the characteristics of our mission.

So from the Mount of Olives, as it is called, they went back to Jerusalem, a short distance away, no more than a Sabbath walk; and when they reached the city they went to the upper room where they were staying; there were Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Jude the son of James. With one heart all these were joined constantly in prayer, together with some women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.(Acts: 1.¹²⁻¹⁴)

The articulations of the mission entrusted to the apostles by the risen Jesus, given at the end of Luke's gospel and the beginning of Acts are to be linked. The reference to the mission entrusted to the disciples as he leaves them ends with 'and they were continually in the temple praising God' (Luke 24⁴⁴); this is followed by Acts 1, where the same disciples are in the upper room 'joined constantly in prayer'. This one event of Jesus sending his disciples on mission is described from a different perspective in each scene suggesting a more profound meaning than a description of an historical event. We can express our charism in this way;

The Mystery of the Cenacle expresses our mission in the Church and the significance of Mary in our spirituality. It is the mystery of prayerful expectation and waiting in retreat by the first assembly of the Church, with Mary, directed to that outpouring of the Spirit which sent the apostles to the ends of the earth 'clothed with power from on high' (Acts 1⁴⁻⁸ Lk.24.⁴⁹⁻⁵³)

⁵⁶Raymond E Brown., . "Historical Critical Exegesis of the Bible in Roman Catholicism," in *Contemporary Catholic Theology*, ed. Michael A. Hayes and Liam Gearon(New York: Continuum, 1998).p.25.

The explicit teaching of the 1964 Biblical Commission held that the gospels, while retaining the sense of the sayings of Jesus, were not necessarily conveying his sayings, word for word.⁵⁷ No evangelist was an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus. The authors of the gospel accounts drew their knowledge from a previous apostolic generation that had seen Jesus and had already shaped the tradition. By this approach to Biblical historicity the Council avoided, (it thought) time wasted on a fundamentalist attempt to defend every historical difficulty. More attention was given to the purpose of the inspired author, Raymond Brown considers this greater realism has helped our understanding of the challenges to Christianity.⁵⁸

According to Nicholas Lash there was 'lively debate' amongst biblical scholars at the time of the Council as to how the understanding of the *sensus plenior* ('fuller sense') of scripture could be expressed.⁵⁹ Was the fuller sense (spiritual sense) to be discovered through the human authors' writing? Could the deeper meaning that God wished to convey be discerned through prayer and/ or, study of these writings? Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou were known for their great knowledge and love for the Church Fathers, and gave the impression that it was not legitimate to analyse and discuss scripture without first passing them through the views of the Fathers. De Lubac's claim that if we do not accept the non-literal, 'spiritual' senses of scripture, much of the Old Testament, especially the Pentateuch is spiritually unavailable to us.⁶⁰ A minority of bishops at the Council claimed that the human authors could only convey the literal sense, that to discover the spiritual sense, it was necessary for the Church to interpret scripture. This could privilege the Magisterium to bypass the interpretive work of the exegetes. The opening of paragraph 12 of *Dei Verbum* made a distinction between the literal and spiritual sense of scripture but without separating the two;

Seeing that, in sacred Scripture, God speaks through men in human fashion, it follows that the interpreter of sacred Scriptures, if he is to ascertain what God has wished to communicate to us, should carefully search out the meaning which the sacred writers really had in mind, that meaning, which God had thought well to manifest through the medium of their words.¹²⁶¹

⁵⁷ Raymond E Brown., *The Critical Meaning of the Bible; the What the Biblical Word Meant and What It Means*(New York: Paulist Press, 1981).

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ Lash Nicholas, *Theology for Pilgrims* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).p.251.

⁶⁰ Viviano T.Benedict, "The Renewal of Biblical Studies in France," in *Ressourcement*, ed. Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray(Oxford OUP, 2012).p.316.

⁶¹ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II.*, Third Edition ed., vol. 1, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (N.Y.: Costello,1975).p.757.

The document introduces the double sense of the way God communicates, in a clause that links the literal and the spiritual sense, introducing the clause with a single pronoun. The Theological Commission intended a distinction but not a separation between the divine or human authorship.⁶² The Council voted unanimously to approve this Dogmatic Constitution, which speaks of the importance of exegete's work of finding the divine and human sense of Scripture. In order to safeguard the work of biblical criticism in the Church, Raymond Brown suggested a division of labour; biblical exegetes discover what the text meant in its own time, while the teaching office of the Church decides what it means today. The meaning of a passage in the literal-historical sense as the exegetes interpreted it might be quite different from the interpretation that the Church gives to it for today.⁶³ This independence for biblical scholars is an attempt to avoid conflict with the magisterium. One such conflict is described in the instance of the London *Corpus Christi* college during the immediate aftermath of the Council; a painful but inevitable clash between hierarchy and what came to be described as 'neo-modernism' but was in fact an attempt to bring catechetical teaching in line with the Council's teaching in *Dei Verbum*.⁶⁴

3.5 Authority and Experience

'The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church' (*Lumen Gentium*) changed the self-understanding of the Church from the pre-conciliar clerical and monarchical ecclesiology of a top-down image, with a view of authority as descending from the Pope, to the bishops, priests, and finally the laity. Now the stress is on the 'people of God', on the principle of the episcopal collegiality and a theology of the laity. Chapter three of *Lumen Gentium* is entitled 'The Church is hierarchical' but in fact gives much time to explaining how that hierarchy is to function in a less hierarchical fashion. There are clear statements reiterating the Pope's infallibility with regard to defining doctrines of faith or morals, but much more space given to the authority of the Pope and Bishops together, which developed a collegial understanding of the Church and its government;

The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops, when together with Peter's

⁶² Lash Nicholas, *Theology for Pilgrims* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).p.251.

⁶³ Raymond E Brown., *The Critical Meaning of the Bible; the What the Biblical Word Meant and What It Means* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981).

⁶⁴ Lundy Damian, "Corpus Christi College" (1980).Unpublished Dissertation)

successor; they exercise the supreme teaching office. Now the assent of the Church can never be lacking to such definitions on account of the same Holy Spirit's influence, through which Christ's whole flock is maintained in the unity of the faith and makes progress in it.

This statement considered to be a significant accomplishment of the Council is a proclamation of Episcopal collegiality, the principle that the bishops form a college and govern the Church together with the Pope who is their head. Although the detailed working out of this principle is still to be done, Catholics expected that the centralized control by the 'curia' or magisterium would cease to be so autocratic. Gabriel Daly claims; 'that what made Vatican II different from the previous councils, was the phenomenon of a Pope colluding with a Council, to challenge the Roman Curia, the 'Congregation for the Defence of the Faith' on its own bureaucracy'. The teaching authority of the Church was meant to be predominantly pastoral but even here there was debate on whether 'pastoral' meant that there was no real 'bite' to an issue, no binding obligation to accept the proposition. After considerable discussion, the norm would apply that no doctrine was to be infallibly defined unless the Council expressed its intention to define it. In fact no Document was given the title of 'dogma', the nearest one reaching that degree of authority, was the one on 'collegiality'. There are varying degrees of importance given to the Council's Documents, so when Ratzinger attributes greater authority to the texts of Vatican II, than to papal encyclicals 'he is not comparing the teaching authority of the Council with that of the Pope, just showing two examples of the exercise of the ordinary magisterium'.⁶⁵ The exercise of the 'teaching magisterium' is best expressed in the words of *Dei Verbum*;

The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God whether in its written form or in the form of the tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Yet this magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II.*, Third Edition ed., vol. 1, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (N.Y.: Costello, 1975). *Lumen Gentium* para, 25. p. 380..

⁶⁶ see Mary McAleese, 'Today the best experts of the Church cannot coherently explain the Church's governance structures, or their juridic infrastructure'. Irish Times, Oct. 20th 2012,

⁶⁷ Gabriel Daly, "Catholicism and Modernity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no. 4 (1985). p. 778.

⁶⁸ O'Malley W. John, *What Happened at Vatican II.*

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 341.

⁷⁰ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II.*, Third Edition ed., vol. 1, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (N.Y.: Costello, 1975) *Dei Verbum*. art. 10

This understanding of the magisterium, as being invoked as the third member of the triad (scripture, tradition, magisterium) was current until the mid-nineteenth century when it began to have a capital M and be restricted to the papacy.

Religious life before the Council was authoritarian; some might describe it as totalitarian. Both individually and corporately, unquestioning obedience and intellectual assent was expected to Vatican authority, we were proud to be 'daughters of the Church', understanding ourselves to be an integral part of it. But now many of the theological and ecclesial co-ordinates which had made the life coherent were no longer supportive. Some of the self-evident faith propositions by which we had lived, were questioned. For example, the superiority of celibacy over sexual intimacy as a lifetime commitment, the divine guarantee of the 'grace of the office' given to the one in authority, presuming obedience even when that authority was poorly exercised. How psychologically healthy was an ascetic life style and the renunciation of a preferred ministry in favour of the good of the community? Some considered this questioning to be regression into a liberal narcissism, rather than the pain of cognitive and emotive misery, as we faced the doubts about the loss of those things that had been true and good in the medieval theological and ecclesial era.⁷¹

As a result of *Perfectae Caritatis* and *Lumen Gentium*, Religious ceased to understand obedience as blind submission to divinely empowered, absolute authorities.⁷² Obedience had become part of the vocabulary of asceticism, involving subjugation of the will to that of another. It was now changed to reflect a more accurate etymological sense, meaning to listen attentively, from the Latin, *ab-audiere*.⁷³ Obedience as attentive listening and mutual discernment, is of central importance for leadership within the Church or in Religious life but it does not confer on the office holders a monopoly of the Holy Spirit. Obedience is rather the full and free co-operation of all members of the community and their leaders, in co-responsibility for life and mission. There is place for the wisdom that is a gift of the Spirit that endows a healthy capacity to criticise and energise.⁷⁴

Although the Council proposed a 'pastoral magisterium', the official Church has struggled for decades against the kind of egalitarianism, collegiality, discernment processes that most women Religious had adopted. The concept of 'experience' had been problematic in Catholic theology before Vatican II, partly because it is difficult to be precise in the use of the term, and in the wake of the modernist crisis, experience was perceived as a code word for mere

⁷¹ Sandra Schneiders, *Finding the Treasure* (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 2000).p.186.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ O'Murchu Diarmuid, *Consecrated Religious Life*, (New York Orbis, 2006).p.74.

⁷⁴ Heiding Fredrik SJ., *Ignatian Spirituality at Ecclesial Frontiers*.

psychological impulses, or subjective states of mind, advanced at the expense of doctrinal clarity. For Friedrich Schleiermacher writing on 'experience' was part of his need to free religion from dependence on metaphysics and ecclesiastical authority.⁷⁵

Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) had been imprisoned three times suspected of heresy because he believed the Holy Spirit revealed herself to the individual, he knew from experience that without discernment, authority could be abusive. But Ignatius knew also, that a Christian could not be the sole judge of the reliability of religious experience, so he gave some good guidelines with which to test the spirits. He makes clear that it takes time to discern patterns of experience, and possibly wait for a resolution, before pronouncing an experience to be of God. 'Feminist liberation theology' is not an explicit theme in Ignatian spirituality, but 'inner freedom' is, and sooner or later the Holy Spirit moves to fulfill the promise, 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom'. (2:Cor. 3¹⁷) Ignatius left a legacy that allows for the exercise in discernment that is of immense significance for the postmodern woman to find that freedom, as I shall explain later in this study.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the effects, both positive and negative of Vatican II on the life of women of the Cenacle. Foucault refused to accept that 'modernity' was giving way to a secular age, rather he saw the emergence of an energy which brought about a 'Christianisation in depth';⁷⁶ this is, I believe the energy of the Holy Spirit, that emanated from Vatican II and caused the Church to relinquish its 'cult of the formula',⁷⁷ enabling Cenacle religious to do the same. We understood that the texts that enshrined the beliefs of 'Our Lady of the Cenacle', as outlined by Luke in Acts of Apostles, held greater theological depth, when we held in mind the intention of the inspired evangelist and his history. We discovered that the word 'Cenacle' has multi-layered meanings, each with great symbolism, especially that of Mary, who is a symbol of life, fruitfulness and abundance. The God-Man, had used the reality of the female body to interpret His love, and now she gives birth to a new plenitude of that love, as the Spirit

⁷⁵ Johnson W.A, *A Study of Theological Method in Schleiermacher and Nygren* (Netherlands: Brill, 1964).

⁷⁶ Jeremy Carrette Bernauer James, *Michel Foucault and Theology; the Politics of Religious Experience* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).p.78.

⁷⁷ Gabriel Daly, "Catholicism and Modernity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 53, no. 4 (1985).

descends on the community of these early believers.⁷⁸ For example, it becomes clear to us that we do not all need to be resident in a house known as 'Cenacle', our mission is to go to the ends of the earth with the 'Good News', 'Cenacle' is not to be understood geographically but as mission. During the 1960s the Church changed its attitude to power, realising more fully Foucault's notion of power as something that circulates, like a chain in a net-like organization, where individuals are the vehicles for its circulation and its application.⁷⁹ Our experience of this in terms of the revision of our Constitutions is when each sister in the Congregation gave her opinion about all the subjects that related to her life. It is true that the government of the Congregation continued to follow the Ignatian structure, with a 'Superior General' and her council in leadership roles. However, the exercise of that government required much more responsibility on the part of the sisters. Our life style was brought into line with *Lumen Gentium*, we were taking our place among the laity as the 'People of God, but it did raise the issue of obedience on two levels, that of women to men, and secondly the laity to the ordained. During my years of study, these issues impinged on my life and raised my awareness, causing me to recognize injustice both in the Church and in society.

The breakthrough of the historicity of revelation, from its previous intellectual conception, offered a window of opportunity to women in their thinking, but not in their presence within the structures of the Church. 'Experience' may now be creditable but not officially for women. The historical-critical approach widened and deepened the mystery of the Cenacle for us, in terms of our mission, yet this mission was still circumscribed by Church law, which did not change until 1983. I find it hard to agree with Foucault, that the conception of power does not rest in the theory of 'powerful and powerless', but in the possibility of agency for those in the subordinate position, to shift the power. I retain my claim that conflicts between hierarchical authority, and the exercise of our prophetic role, as Cenacle Religious, is an instance of the tension between the mystic and the narcissist. I do not illustrate Religious women as the mystics and the hierarchy as the narcissists, and always there was this tension within myself as an individual and within the Christian Church as a whole.

⁷⁸ Cote Ghislaine, *The Cenacle* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1991).

⁷⁹ Foucault Michel, *Power /Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings.*, trans. Colin Gordon (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1980).p98.

1972-1982 MyExperience of Cenacle Religious Life

Thérèse Couderc, our foundress was canonised as a saint on May 10th 1970 because she was found to be the epitome of humility, summed up in the description of her as 'une grande humble'. As many of the sisters who could went to Rome for this exciting celebration, it was wonderful to meet the whole International Congregation. In 1972 I emerged from four years study with an upper-second honours B.Ed degree in Religious Studies, I had enjoyed the whole course of study but found the teaching practice hard. 'Child-Centred' education required maximum choice to be given to the child; they were to be encouraged to discover for themselves. Teachers were asked to provide projects for an individual pupil or class to examine through each subject in the curriculum. I was fortunate to have the Prince of Wales investiture in the news so this provided me with a topic that could be examined through all the disciplines. This was fine at junior level, but at the senior school where I did my second teaching practice pupils could choose a project that interested them personally and examine it by moving physically through the school to use the different class-rooms. It was chaos! Most of the projects chosen were about 'Pele', the football hero of the time. Not until my third teaching practice did I feel I was going to succeed. It is interesting that this was an Anglican school where discipline was vastly better than at the previous R.C. school.

At the end of my studies I was asked by the community, if I would like to do the compulsory year of teaching, necessary to complete my qualification as a teacher. I answered an advertisement for a Religious Education teacher in a girls' Catholic grammar School. Of course there was an interview with a panel consisting of Parish Priest, Headmistress (a Sister), the head of department a laywoman, and the priest curate in the local parish of the Cathedral. Since this was quite a prestigious Catholic school I was expected to be orthodox. I was asked how I would teach 'infallibility', the 'Virgin birth' and the 'miracles'. Because I was now familiar with the 'spiritual sense' of scripture I could stay clear of the historical-critical approach (which I would later teach) and quote the Council on Collegiality. I was given the post and stayed in it six years until I was asked by the community to be novice mistress.

My time as a teacher was challenging, after all it was not long since I had left the cloister. I was insecure in the early years, not helped by the disapproval of the senior teachers who had been pupils at the school themselves and did not want anything changed. Mixing with young students in college I learned some of the popular songs of the time. Furthermore, I had been taught to use up-to-date teaching method, especially in R.E., so I used the 'Simon and Garfunkel' songs and others of that ilk, with plenty of discussion about the songs in relation to the gospel. The senior teachers were not happy and wondered why my classrooms were so

noisy; did I not have any discipline? After a few years I was given A level scripture classes and was accepted when my students passed their exams successfully. When teaching the senior girls one of my projects was based on the dissertation I had written for the 'Divinity' B.Ed requirement. It was entitled 'Creator Spirit in Modern Theology', the sub-title, 'What does the World indicate about the activity of the Holy Spirit'. It drew heavily on Teilhard de Chardin, W. Pannenberg, Henri de Lubac, and was too profound for straight teaching, I needed to dilute this into an attractive teaching scheme, which I did with a project on ecology. Because the testimony of the world indicates that we should think of God's Spirit as guiding evolution and enjoying the rich, complex and beautiful forms that emerge in it, we may contribute to God's enjoyment, as well as our own by the co-creation and care of the universe. The bright girls liked it, the less able found it too much work.

Meanwhile Religious life was evolving too; the Cenacle congregation had been living according to the guidelines drawn up at a special general chapter in 1968. They were in response to Vatican II where we were asked to renew our lives by going to the gospels, to the 'profound intention of the Founders' and to the 'signs of the times'. The 'Guidelines' served us well but they were not Constitutions, they were allowed so that we could experiment with appropriate life styles for apostolic Religious. The Chapter of 1974 elected an American sister as Superior General who was in office during the difficult post-Vatican II years. It was made clear at this chapter that we were an 'Apostolic Community in the Service of the Church'; this emphasis allowed for pluralism within our mission, we were to engage in 'Retreats, Religious Education, and other forms of pastoral ministry. We were to 'awaken and deepen faith' whatever form our ministry took.

The very large Cenacle in Manchester where I had been sent in 1966 was vastly reduced in size whilst I was in college, so that on my return the small community gave retreats on a much reduced scale and in greater depth. We had looked at the intention of our founders and seen that we should be giving the 'Spiritual Exercises' and the sisters were busy with this ministry when I was teaching. This did not always make for harmonious living as we were both busy at different times. However, these were happy years giving me the experience of working with young people which stood me in good stead when I was novice directress. A further growth point for me was to be elected as a 'provincial councillor' a post of some responsibility since it is to share with the provincial superior in some degree the government of the province. It gave me a different perspective on some of the issues in the province about which I had been critical. These regular discussions with the other three councillors provided a support community during my years of teaching, but it did mean going to meetings in 'half-terms' and other

holidays. It was while I was on the Council that the need for a novice directress came on the agenda. One dear friend among us 'felt strongly' that someone should be 'trained' for such a role. My name was suggested among others but I did not take it seriously until I was asked to give in my notice and apply for a place in St. Louis University. I forthwith found myself packing for the U.S.A. I had mixed feelings about this change because I was happy in the sixth-form college to which I had been assigned after the grammar schools were closed in order to give way to comprehensive schools.

The 'Institute of Religious Formation' in St. Louis was founded by John Carroll Futrell S.J., and other Jesuits, and was a year long programme. In my year there were thirty eight women and men from different religious orders and nations, all of whom were destined to take charge of the formation of the candidates hoping to join the order or congregation to which they belonged. Women and men had separate residences but came together for lectures each day, on theology, or history of spirituality and structures of Religious life, with the Vatican II document on Formation, 'Renovationis causam'.¹ We also had numerous 'work-shops' with well-known speakers and writers who facilitated programmes, like 'Myers-Briggs' and human development or communication skills and group dynamics.

This U.S. year broadened my mind not only in terms of living with people from different backgrounds and schools of spirituality, but also through meeting our own sisters in the different Cenacle communities which I visited. It was also a lot of fun, like my introduction to McDonald's milk shakes, to barbecues, to the whole American way of doing things. It also heightened my feminine consciousness. The very first community Eucharist found half the group who were priests, on the altar in their albs to 'concelebrate'. A meeting was called the next day by the American sisters who protested at this division of the community, did we not all share in the priesthood of the baptised? Why did they wish to separate from us, there was only need for one President, so no more con-celebration of the Eucharist.

At the end of the year and included in the programme was a thirty-day retreat in Spain in Manresa, the place of Ignatius' conversion. I had by this time been told I was to be Novice Directress, so it was a good time to deepen my relationship with God. I went to the beautiful monastery of Montserrat, a short way from Manresa, where Ignatius had kept his significant vigil. Here it was to pray to Our Lady, the black Madonna, for the graces I would need for my new role. On my return to the province I was introduced to the group of six young women who had completed what is called their 'postulant' stage so were now ready for the two year programme of 'formation'. The provincial superior and her council had decided that the place

¹Decree on the Up-To-Date Renewal of Religious Life, document pertaining to formation of candidates, 'Vatican II Conciliar Documents' by Austin Flannery OP. 47.p.634.

for this would be Liverpool, a very large house where we had a separate wing and could be wholly self-sufficient.

I found this role very hard, but very rewarding; I had been introduced to totally different way of doing formation than the one I, and other sisters in the community, had experienced when we entered. The emphasis in the St. Louis programme had been on interiority, allowing the novice to get it wrong, and then discussing it with them afterwards, rather than anticipating their mistakes and making sure they avoided them. One of the important features of the novitiate programme was the thirty-day retreat, in which they had a daily interview with me called, 'spiritual direction'. I loved this part of the role.

The professed members of the community were still experimenting with the appropriate way of common prayer for apostolic religious. There was no more 'common life' in the sense of spiritual exercises occurring all together at the same time. There was a vast difference in the expectations of the community as to how novices should behave and that of the individual novice, and I was in the middle of this tension. Some of the novices left, more to do with the fact that the life-form was not for them, than any criticisms about their unsuitability. It was a disappointing time for me especially after the last novice left, I went through a period of soul searching and self-doubt. I returned to Grayshott where eventually more candidates applied and I started again. The decision about who was accepted for entrance to novitiate or who made first vows, was not mine, although my word went a long way for this latter decision. We had been prepared for the tension between the novice directress and the provincial superior in St. Louis, but my difficulty was usually between the novices and the local community where we lived.

A new Superior General, an Italian sister was elected at the 24th General Chapter which took place in two sessions, the second of which was in 1981. It was a Chapter to prepare for the new revised constitutions for the nine-hundred and forty sisters in the congregation. Here there was the emphasis by the Chapter delegates of our need to be more aware of the concept of justice. The whole tenor of the Cenacle life style was outward looking in keeping with 'Lumen Gentium'. It had been easier for the previous generation of sisters to have their apprenticeship in the Retreat house, now our work was so varied in location it was more difficult to find the right kind of training for Spiritual Direction. Later we would set up our own training programme. This period of my life alternated between agony and ecstasy, and always the tension between the mystic and the narcissist.

Chapter 4

The Post-Conciliar Church

4.1 Introduction

The events of this decade caused me to consider again the aspect of my argument that the basic structure of the human person is relational and is best supported within a faith community. I ask myself if Vatican II supported this claim for the Catholic community. The interpretation of the Council as simply continuous with the Catholic tradition of the past, runs the risk of minimising those significant aspects that were discontinuous with that tradition and entirely new.

The Council did in effect turn its collective back on a mechanical and dualistic doctrine of human nature, with all that had meant for politics, spirituality and the Church. There is a discontinuity that cannot be gainsaid.²

What is continuous with the past is the Church's attitude to women, what is new is the Council's attitude to modernity. The changing position of women in the world is acknowledged; women deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, yet whatever their public role, they are called to make family life their priority.³ With the controversies of the early seventies regarding the interpretation of the Council documents it became apparent that a split was running through the unified stance of the reception of the Council, more to do with ideological views, than with the history and theology of the Church.⁴ Towards the end of the Council the debate concerning the content and role of *Gaudium et spes* showed the division between the neo-Augustinians, Daniélou, de Lubac, Ratzinger, von Balthasar, who preferred to interpret the Council with what they called a hermeneutic of continuity, and the neo-Thomists, Chenu, Rahner, Lonergan and Schillebeeckx, who were representative of the more progressive attempt to bring the message up to date, (aggiornamento). The debate rested on the interpretation of the relationship between modern culture and Christian anthropology.⁵ Secondly, that notwithstanding Council's acceptance and use of the concept of 'experience'⁶ it failed to give space to women's experience in terms of 'gender', and the need to avoid the extremes of 'relativism or essentialism'.⁷ I will introduce the debate among feminist

² Williams Rowan, "Lead, Radical Light. Vatican II Fiftieth Anniversary," *The Tablet*, no. December (2012).p.24.

³ Helman A. Ivy, *Women and the Vatican; an Exploration of Official Documents*.

⁴ Faggioli Massimo, *Vatican II. The Battle for Meaning*.(2012 Kindle edition loc.118 Ch.1)

⁵ Ibid. (Ch.4 loc 1122)

⁶ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II. Dei Verbum para. 8*.no.58.p.752.

⁷ Jones Serene, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology*(Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).p.22.

theologians, between those who aim to find a theological base for women's equality with men, and those who propose to celebrate women's difference, and women's identities as women.⁸

I recount that, in the early years following the Council, the Church failed to fulfil the glimmer of hope it offered in the Council documents, in relation to women's experience.

Thirdly, I will claim that for those of us whose apostolate lay at the intersection of theology and education, the changing attitudes to education caused tensions in Catholic schools.⁹ 'Child-centred' education had its roots in eighteenth century French philosophy; its theories were not too far from Foucault's, regarding power and knowledge, especially in its attempt to give space for the creative power of the student. Also, I recall that the Council documents present a more collegial exercise of power, reflecting Foucault's interpretation of 'power' as 'disciplinary and strategic' in contrast to a 'sovereign and juridical' conception of power. Finally, I analyse the decisions of the Congregation of the Cenacle, when in 1974, the Chapter took hold of the 'intention of the founders', to give individually guided retreats to women, enlisting priests only for the celebration of the Eucharist. Also, I show the difficulties that are the result of the boundaries put in place for women, in the exercise of our work of 'religious education, and other forms of pastoral ministry'. I intend to illustrate that while the ideological effects of Vatican II in this period were intensely creative, they did not provide a legitimising framework for Religious life, because the weaknesses of the nineteenth century model of that life were still in place.¹⁰

4.2 Interpreting The Council

The documents of the Second Vatican Council reveal the new self-understanding of the Church, her power was to be shared, she was the 'People of God',¹¹ there was great attention paid to the laity. In *Gaudium et spes*, the Council addressed 'all humanity', all persons of good will, Christians and non-Christians, believers and non-believers.¹² In these years we heard that the Council meant 'the end of the Counter-Reformation', it was a 'new Pentecost'; there was

⁸ Joy Morny, "Equality or Divinity," *Journal of Feminists Studies* 6, no. Spring (1990).

⁹ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II. Lumen Gentium, Declaration on Christian Education* 55. p725.

¹⁰ Wittberg Patricia, *Pathways to Re-Creating Religious Communities* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996).p.75.

¹¹ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II. Third Edition* ed. Vol. 1, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents. N.Y.: Costello, 1975(*Lumen Gentium*)p.359

¹² Ibid p.102.

talk of the 'spirit of the council' indicating that the council had an overall direction, that transcended the letter of its documents.¹³ The Holy See, and the Roman Curia, did not have the strict monopoly on interpreting the Council texts, as had been the case in 1564, after the Council of Trent. Nevertheless,

the Council was held in the centre, named for the centre, operated to a large extent with the equipment of the centre, and was destined to be interpreted and implemented by the centre.¹⁴

My experience is of a 'before' and 'after' the Council, related to the issue of authority, the connection of the 'centre to the periphery',¹⁵

Every role and task in the Church was held up for inspection and marked for renewal: priest, lay person, religious, bishop, missionary. But there was one exception: the papal office itself did not come under scrutiny, nor did the college of cardinals.¹⁶

It is not as if 'continuity', or the exercise of authority, needed to return to the narrowly juridical teaching on papal primacy of Vatican I, it could simply refer back to the 1917 code of Canon Law, that claimed papal primacy included the right to appoint bishops, which allowed for Episcopal authority. I share with Nicholas Lash in his frustration in the fact that the Vatican did not restore Episcopal authority to the episcopate, as promulgated in *Lumen Gentium*.¹⁷ Lash argues that the need for collegiality, is crucial to the vision of the Council. It is not about diminishment of papal or Episcopal authority, which the Council time and again confirmed, it is about how that authority is to be exercised.¹⁸ Lash claims that no one expected that the principles of collegiality¹⁹ would result in such a disparity between theory and practice, as to end in the Church being more rigorously and monolithically controlled by the Pope and the Roman Curia than at any other time in history.²⁰

The debate between the different interpretations of Vatican II is often framed, as a clash between liberal or progressive Catholics, on the one side, and conservative Catholics on the other. But, although there may be different ideological orientations in contemporary

¹³ O'Malley W. John. "Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?" *Theological Studies* 67, (2006).

¹⁴ O'Malley W. John, *What Happened at Vatican II?* P.311

¹⁵ Lash Nicholas, *Theology for Pilgrims* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).p.235.

¹⁶ Hebblethwaite Peter, *The Next Pope* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1995).p.65.

¹⁷ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II Lumen Gentium para.22. p.374.*

¹⁸ Lash Nicholas, *Theology for Pilgrims*.p230.

¹⁹ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II. Lumen Gentium pp.374, 425.*

²⁰ Lash Nicholas, *Theology for Pilgrims*.p.230.

Catholicism Massimo Faggioli, believes the way the Council is received depends on contrasting theological views, about Christology and ecclesiology. Even more profoundly, it is shown in a theological and philosophical divide, between neo-Augustinians and neo-Thomists.²¹The neo- Augustinian school according to Avery Dulles, wants to set the Church and the world in a situation of rivalry. The world is seen in a negative light because of sin and evil and the Church must be suspicious and distrustful, not indulging in naïve optimism. Those theologians who took this approach to the Council documents felt the openness to the world of *Gaudium et spes* showed a naïve optimism. Even Henri de Lubac, showed his scepticism, in 1971 he wrote,

Today we are witnesses of an endeavour that wants to dissolve the Church into the world.....the tide of immanentism is growing irresistibly.²²

This tendency attracted many theologians. Some eminent representatives of the *nouvelle théologie* for example, Joseph Ratzinger, Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniélou, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Louis Bouyer all shared a common affinity with neo-Augustinian theology.²³ Joseph Ratzinger's Augustinianism is at the roots of his scepticism of *Gaudium et spes*, as he fought the assumption of 'liberal' theologians regarding the reconciling of Catholic theology with 'modernism', reminding them that the orientation of the theology of Vatican II, rests with the 'fathers' of the Church not 'modernism'.²⁴The second basic tendency in the interpretation of the documents of Vatican II, Faggioli calls, 'Progressive Neo-Thomism', this group of theologians has a positive appreciation of history as a tool for theological work. I tend towards this interpretation when I cite Marie-Dominique Chenu, who had battled an earlier expression of 'Thomism', and who now, with Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan share a basic Thomistic epistemology:

Given that the 'sacred doctrine' does not present itself as a system of abstract principles whose application depends on a mental or moral casuistry, but according to St. Thomas, as the 'Word of God' developing itself within human intelligence in the act of faith, 'the signs of the times' must enter, implicitly or explicitly, in the discernment of the impact of the Word in the historical community of the faithful.²⁵

²¹ Faggioli Massimo, *Vatican II. The Battle for Meaning*. 2012 (Kindle edition Ch.4.loc.1125)

²² Sheppard Lancelot, ed. *Augustinianism and Modern Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 2000).

²³ Faggioli Massimo, *Vatican II The Battle for Meaning*. 1162. (Kindle Edition)

²⁴ Ibid. 1260

²⁵ Ibid. (Kindle Ch.4 loc. 1299)

Karl Rahner believed the 'historical communion of the faithful' called for a transition from a 'Western Church' to a 'World Church'; he saw a change, the like of which had only happened once before, when Paul made the transition from a Jewish Church to a Church of the Gentiles.²⁶

The Second Vatican Council is, in rudimentary form still groping for identity, the Church's first official self-actualisation as a world Church.²⁷

Rahner believes such 'caesuras' or 'transitions' are not planned theologically, but are unreflectively realised through a hidden instinct of the Spirit and of grace that remains mysterious.²⁸ He wonders,

what lasting and timely significance there is in the fact that the whole college of bishops with, and under the pope, make up the highest collegial constitutional leadership body in the Church, while the practice of this remains unclear in our time, and was not clarified by Paul VI even after the Council?²⁹

Rahner claimed that an inner, essential connection of which the bishops may not have been fully aware, caused a fundamental theological event, brought about through the power of the Spirit circulated among them, and caused a transition from a 'European Church' to a 'World Church'. Rahner is not calling for a new 'Christendom', but for an awareness of the culture and rituals of Latin America, Asia and Africa. The call for 'inculturation' asks that centralised bureaucracy, which thinks it knows best what serves the Kingdom of God, must broaden its vision, no longer taking Rome or Italy, as a self-evident standard.³⁰ Rahner's view supports my argument for a faith community that is inclusive of the 'other' and of 'difference', a claim that 'relationality' is an essential ingredient for Christian mysticism.

Foucault, argues that establishing 'discontinuities' or 'continuities' is not an easy matter, as much as we would like to draw a dividing line, any limit we set may be no more than an arbitrary division made in a constantly mobile whole.³¹ He sees traditional history as falsely celebrating great moments and putting the self-reflexive subject at the centre of the movement of history. Privileging the individual actors places an emphasis on immutable elements of human nature; it is also to read history narcissistically, to reconfirm a present

²⁶ Luke, "Acts of the Apostles," (1: Ch.10³⁴⁻⁴⁸ 11:1-18)

²⁷ Rahner Karl, "Basic Theological Interpretation of Vatican II.," *Theological Studies* 40, no. 4 (1979).

²⁸ Ibid.p.723.

²⁹ Ibid.p. 726.

³⁰ Ibid.p.718.

³¹ Mchoul Alec and Wendy Grace, *A Foucault Primer*(London: Routledge, 1993).

sense of identity and to suppress any potentially disruptive awareness of difference.³² The identity of the Catholic Church as hierarchical, under clerical control, could not be surrendered it seemed, for the sake of the inclusion of women. The exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge, impossible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power.³³ New objects of knowledge such as 'feminism', obliged the Church to think again about women.

4.3 Feminist Theology and Catholicism

Approaches to, and understanding of feminist theology varies with each theologian, Ann Carr³⁴, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza³⁵, Rosemary R. Ruether³⁶ and Mary Daly³⁷, are among the early writers, but they did not search for an absolute statement, they valued their unity in difference. They all agreed that the present language about God, linguistically and conceptually is oppressive to half the faith community.³⁸ There is an ambiguity and tension inherited from these foremothers that is an option for the new generation of Catholic feminists, either a rejection of the Church, ('post Catholic') or a commitment to stay within the Church and to claim it as the place from which feminist ecclesiology is written. Susan Abraham is among these latter, she claims that to be 'Catholic' is less an identity category arising out of membership and has more to do with being in the world, with a sacramental view of the world.³⁹ Abraham writes 'Sacramentality' is the perspective that can apprehend,

The divine in the human, the infinite in the finite, the spiritual in the material, the transcendent in the immanent, and the eternal in the historical.⁴⁰

³² Foucault Michel, *The Foucault Reader; an Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin, 1984). p85-95

³³ Foucault Michel, *Power /Knowledge, Selected Interviews and Other Writings.*, trans. Colin Gordon (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1980).p.52.

³⁴ Carr Anne, *Transforming Grace; Christian Tradition and Women's Experience*, 2nd ed. (New York: Continuum, 1988).

³⁵ Fiorenza Schüssler Elisabeth. *In Memory of Her*. London: SCM, 1983.

³⁶ Ruether Rosemary. *Sexism and God Talk*. London: SCM Press, 1983

³⁷ Daly Mary, *Beyond God the Father* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974).

³⁸ Weaver Mary Jo, *New Catholic Women; a Contemporary Challenge to Traditional Religious Authority* (London, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985).

³⁹ Abraham Susan, "Justice as the Mark of Catholic Feminist Ecclesiology," in *Frontiers in Catholic Feminist Theology*, ed. Susan Abraham and Elenor Procaro-Foley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press., 2009).

⁴⁰ Ibid.p.196.

1976 was an 'International Women's Year', it was followed by a cluster of papal documents, including *Inter Insigniores, a Declaration on the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood*.⁴¹ Other papal documents followed which dealt with issues about women's sexuality. Tina Beattie notes that, 'The impact of feminism on the Church can be gauged by the extent to which it has triggered an attentiveness to questions of sexuality, gender and embodiment.'⁴² After a spate of documents from the Vatican 'knowledge' of women's experience caused the power of resistance to them to be made explicit. The resistance came from the US in 1975. In the spirit of ecclesial renewal the Canon Law society of America, (CLSA) created a committee to study the status of women in the Church.⁴³ This study stated that the Church had taken little notice of the women's movement, and had failed to recognise the dignity of women as persons, which limits their opportunity for service in the Church; 'the exclusion of women from all effective decision-making created a grave pastoral problem'.⁴⁴ Foucault had dissolved the traditional distinction between power and knowledge, as if knowledge may lead to power, or power may be enhanced by the acquisition of knowledge, they are coterminous. Secondly, according to Foucault, rather than being external, something which operates on something or someone, power is integral or productive. Foucault struggles against large institutional domination, both in collective and individualistic forms. His interest is not so much in 'power' as in the human subject and the ways in which the person has turned into a subject (of language, power, or sexuality) or submits to become an object (of medical, penal, or political power). Foucault asks for an 'on-going resistance activity' echoing I believe that of contemporary feminist liberation theologians.⁴⁵ This creative element in power introduces another element of Foucault's work, he perceives the 'human subject' as produced historically, not 'given', but constituted through correlative elements of power and knowledge. An effect of the power of feminism was a heightened realisation that the female mode of experiencing and understanding reality was in many ways distinct from that of the male.

In the search for a theological solution to the question of women's place in the Church, I analyse the contribution feminism has made, and ask what does it offer, and what is the critique it must undergo, if I am to use it to further my argument for the Christian woman's experience of God. The issue of women's experience, of their specific ways of being and knowing, introduced a basic dilemma into women's theology. Appeals to 'experience' can be

⁴¹ Document issued by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. (October 15th 1976)

⁴² Beattie Tina. *New Catholic Feminism : Theology and Theory*. London ; New York: Routledge, 2006.p.19.

⁴³ Halter Deborah, *The Papal 'No'*. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004).

⁴⁴ Canon Law Society of America, *Women in Canon Law, (Origins 5 November 1975) p.260-61*

⁴⁵ Foucault Michel, *Power /Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings.*, trans. Colin Gordon (N.Y. Pantheon Books, 1980). (Powers and Strategies)p.142.

suspect; the subject of Cartesian modernity controls the process of knowledge, and in so doing posits herself over against an external object, her experience is validated according to criteria of logical or scientific verification. How then can women move beyond this empirical objectivity, and at the same time avoid the extremes of relativism or essentialism? ⁴⁶Just as we learned to use the historical critical method in relation to scripture and tradition, by using the psychological-critical method ⁴⁷ we can become aware of the nature and dynamics of the psyche when interpreting women's experience and so avoid the extremes of relativism and essentialism. With Ettinger's theory of 'matrixial trans-subjectivity' an experience that reverberates in the psyche throughout life, we undercut the gender debate about the process by which the individual is constructed or produced. The process of human becoming means identities are not absolute, but always relational and can only be seen in relation to somebody else. Serene Jones writes,

Any view of women's nature that makes universal claims about women, based on characteristics considered to be an inherent part of being female, is an essentialist one. ⁴⁸

The opposing argument, 'constructivism', is the belief of those who take the position that social, cultural and economic factors impact on women's gender' is formed, rather than given. I am acutely aware of these difficulties, as I argue for Christian women's mystical experience being both essential to women, and 'constructed' by the Christian message. I draw on this newer psychoanalytic argument, because it gives me sufficient flexibility to question the normative status of feminist thinking on mysticism. ⁴⁹

Mary McClintock Fulkerson, ⁵⁰ disrupts the normative claim of what was referred to as 'women's experience' even mystical experience, as she criticises feminine theory in its neglect of questions of difference, accusing them of re-inscribing the Cartesian split between mind and body. Fulkerson resists the notion of the free autonomous individual in whatever guise it may appear. Fulkerson introduces 'a new kind of subject' presenting a 'fragmented and multiple' subject rather than a 'unified and self initiating' one. Her theory, is one I endorse in my argument for relationality; 'the subject is not an entity, a substance, but a relation, or sets of

⁴⁶ Joy Mornay, "God and Gender: Some Reflections on Women's Invocations of the Divine," in *Religion and Gender*, ed. Ursula King (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

⁴⁷ Arraj James. "The Church, the Council and the Unconscious." (New York: Inner Growth Books, 2006) Ch1. 3. Kindle Edition.

⁴⁸ Jones Serene. *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000.p.26.

⁴⁹ Ettinger L.Bracha. "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity." *Theory, Culture & Society* 23. no. 2-3 (2006): 218-22.

⁵⁰ McClintock Fulkerson Mary, *Changing the Subject : Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).p.2

relations, 'identity is always forged out of differences'.⁵¹ Grace Jantzen maintains that 'Christian mysticism' is a socially constructed phenomenon, she writes, 'there is no such thing as an essence of mysticism, a single type of experience which can be characterised as mystical, while others are excluded'.⁵² I argue that there is a 'single type of experience' it's called 'Christianity', that offers mysticism to all. But Jantzen does warn of the need to be alert to the social context, including gendered structures of authority, within which the experience of the classical mystics took form. She alerts us to the dangers of a privatised and psychologised construction of experience, lest we miss the vital connections to the urgent issues of social justice.⁵³ Each of these dangers will be addressed in this study. One important contribution feminism made to Catholicism, was to posit the right questions.

Did God create one human nature in which women and men participate fully and equally, or is human nature dual, with men called by nature to a full participation in the Christian mystery, in the image of God and the likeness of Christ, and women called to a derivative identity and role, in the likeness of men?⁵⁴

With Sandra Schneiders, I believe that feminism envisions nothing less than the radical transformation of human history. The Church or Society may perceive 'feminism' as an obsession about equal status, it is so much more. The question is whether Catholicism can illustrate women's relationship to God, in and through a discipleship of equals, an assembly of free citizens who decide their own spiritual welfare, having little to do with competition to achieve parity in the Church.⁵⁵ Schüssler Fiorenza's depiction of women grounded in the *Sophia* lineage,⁵⁶ has its primary inspiration in the empowerment of women - not simply as participants in liturgy, but as agents of their own liberation. She is well aware that equality of women with men is not the ultimate concern, certainly it is not to achieve parity with men in the cultic practices and structures of the Church as they exist today. Her concern is with restoring women to their rightful place in the order of things, this is my concern too, especially women's rightful place in the plan of salvation. Luce Irigaray the French feminist and psychoanalyst,⁵⁷ critiques Schüssler Fiorenza because she mistakenly sees the latter's understanding of liberation to be about equality within Church's structures that have been

⁵¹ Ibid. p.94.

⁵² Jantzen Grace. *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*. Cambridge: CUP, 1995. p.331.

⁵³ Jantzen Grace. "Feminists, Philosophers and Mystics." *Hypatia* 9. no. Fall (1994). P.203.

⁵⁴ Schneiders M. Sandra. *Beyond Patching: Faith and Feminism in the Catholic Church*. New York: Paulist Press. 1991. p.35

⁵⁵ Fiorenza Schüssler Elisabeth, *In Memory of Her*. p.349.

⁵⁶ Fiorenza Schüssler Elisabeth. *Sharing Her Word*. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998.) p.165.

⁵⁷ Irigaray Luce. *Sexes and Genealogies*. New York ; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1993

denied them, and so selling out to those masculine forces that have dominated Christianity, and formed God in their own image.

For Irigaray, the denied inheritance that women must claim is that of 'divinisation'. The basic premise that informs her criticism is that to achieve autonomy, women must be able to envisage themselves as divine. 'The core of our destiny' Irigaray has argued, 'is to generate the human, the divine, within us and among us'. To attain the goal of becoming divine, it is essential to have 'a gender or an essence (consequently a sexuate essence) as horizon'.⁵⁸ Fiorenza and Irigaray represent two perceived remedies to patriarchy, 'revolution or reform'. 'Revolutionaries' view the Christian traditions as irredeemably patriarchal, so their efforts focus on affirming female experience and principles. Irigaray could be classed as a revolutionary, but more often she is perceived as a 'Reformer'. A reformer is one who is committed to re-visioning the tradition, in ways that honour the feminine element, other than in a compensatory manner, such as using the icon of the Virgin Mary as the idealisation of women, or positing her as the feminine side of God.⁵⁹ I return to this aspect of the 'Mary' icon when I examine the Catholic concept of the 'full humanity of woman'. The core issue in this debate is expressed succinctly by McFague.

...from the reformers point of view, the greatest contribution of the revolutionary feminist theologians, lies in asking the question: whether a feminine model for the divine-human relationship is not only needed, but also desirable, not just for women, or for adherents to a new religion, but for all people and for Christianity? The revolutionaries have posed the question, it will be up to the reformers to see if the Christian paradigm has any resources for answering it.⁶⁰

My conviction that the Christian paradigm does have the resources, starts with honouring the fullness of our humanity before we can become divine;

God forces us to do nothing except become. The only task, the only obligation laid upon us is: to become divine men and women, to become perfectly, to refuse to allow parts of ourselves to shrivel and die that have the potential for growth and fulfilment.⁶¹

For Schüssler Fiorenza the issue is not one of the divinisation of femininity, but of the images that society has used and continues to use to control women. It seems the battle must be

⁵⁸ Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, 'Divine women' pp.63-4

⁵⁹ Hollywood Amy, *Sensible Ecstasy; Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

⁶⁰ McFague Sallie, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).p.164.

⁶¹ Irigaray Luce, *Sexes and Genealogies*. 'Divine Woman' pp.68-9

waged continuously on two fronts the social- equality (Schüssler Fiorenza) and the divine-identity (Irigaray).

If the path of social justice is followed, psychological questions of identity, relationship, and autonomy are bound to accompany the process of social redefinition. According to Morny Joy, equality or divinity is a false dichotomy, we need both.⁶² This 'potential for growth and fulfillment' needs a certain kind of education, which the 1970s sought to achieve with its 'child-centred' education.

4. 4 Experience of Authority in Education

My experience as a Catholic teacher in the 1970s, afforded me an opportunity to reflect on the attitude of the Church to religious education after the Council in terms of 'authority and experience'.⁶³ These years required of me an ability to handle change in my own life as a woman Religious, and to facilitate change in the beliefs of young Catholic girls. I was prepared for an adult catechesis that would not shrink from a searching analysis of the institutions that dominate our lives and to attain a deeper understanding of faith. For example, to be able to discuss interpretations of Christology, without it disturbing the foundations of their faith.

I am reminded of Foucault, who exposed the self-justification practices that are an inseparable part of even the best teaching. He claims the way, what, and how we know, are that we repress as well as produce. Foucault describes three instruments used in the discipline of pupils in school, all three of which were the practice in most schools during this decade. First, is the organising of space, so that pupils may be constantly observed, while teachers are also observed by their peers. Although this observation rests on individuals, its functioning is that of a network of relations from top to bottom, also from bottom to top, and laterally. 'It is the apparatus as a whole that produces power'.⁶⁴ The second instrument of discipline is a normalising judgment, what is 'normal' is enforced through systems of penalty, with judgment and correction possible for non-normal behaviour. Finally, Foucault highlights the instrument of the 'examination', which combines the observation and the normalising judgment techniques. Examinations have a key role in creating individuality through the 'objective'

⁶² Joy Morny. "Equality or Divinity." *Journal of Feminists Studies* 6, no. Spring (1990).

⁶³ Flannery Austin, *Documents of Vatican II*.

⁶⁴ Foucault Michel, *Discipline and Punish* (London: Penguin, 1975).p.177.

criteria released through the evaluation.⁶⁵ This is Foucault's attempt to shift attention to 'difference', to what is excluded by the governing power-knowledge regimes that produce and repress 'truth'.

An example of one who disrupted the 'objective' criteria of religious knowledge discourse was Gabriel Moran whose *Theology of Revelation* challenged the whole nature and direction of 'RE', there was no question of 'handing on the message' as though it were a body of information. Catechesis was now seen as that which supports continuing and growing revelation, or 'self-gift' of God, to each person and the person's conscious willing response.⁶⁶ There were two irreconcilable understandings of the nature of religious education, 'fidelity' which was to be understood as fidelity to Catholic dogmatic and moral teaching entrusted by the Magisterium to teachers, and protected by the bishops in virtue of their authority. A newer approach in the early 1970s was a more authentic catechesis that required the exploration of different points of view, and the formation of mature personal judgments. Different understandings of faith, of Church, of education, while not mutually exclusive, were the source of a polarised debate in the post-conciliar Church.

The training of the teacher for Religious Education was to be updated in the light of current theological, psychological and sociological insights. Pedagogy was to be deeply rooted in basic child psychology and teachers were to keep up to date in the research related to this. The move was away from traditional education, to what was called 'Child-Centred' teaching.

Andrew Marr describes it as either,

viewing the child as an empty pot, happily large, or sadly small, into which a given quantity of facts and values could be poured, or, as the new teaching regarded the child, as a magic box, crammed with integrity and surprise, which should be carefully unwrapped.⁶⁷

As Marr goes on to say there was here a fundamental disagreement, about the nature of humanity and the social order. This 'new' teaching goes back to the thinking of French philosophers of the eighteenth century. Jean-Jacque Rousseau believed it was possible to preserve the good nature of the child, assuming that as each child passed through different physical and psychological stages of development, she would be eager to discover.⁶⁸ Rousseau stressed the importance of encouraging the child to develop ideas for themselves, according to the stage of development they had reached, and to reason their way to their own conclusions

⁶⁵ ———, *The Foucault Reader; an Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. p.198.

⁶⁶ Moran Gabriel, *Theology of Revelation* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966).p51.

⁶⁷ Marr Andrew. *A History of Modern Britain*. London: Macmillan, 2007.p.249.

⁶⁸ Rousseau Jean-Jacque. *Emile*. 1911 London: Dent, 1762.cited by Michele Erina Doyle and Mark K. Smith (2007)' Jean-Jacque Rousseau on Education', the encyclopaedia of Informal Education.

from experience. Children should not rely on the authority of the teacher who may be teaching them other people's ideas.⁶⁹

How was it possible to educate for liberation, when it was assumed to be settled, by the very nature of the Christian discourse? Teachers of 'liberation theologies' including myself, did not always have enough self-awareness of their own exercise of power. For example, the realisation in this decade of God's preferential 'option' for the poor (especially women who make up half of the world's poor) did not mean that the teacher, by reason of her 'knowledge', could assume she was covered by some divine privilege, that removed her need to practice the 'option' in her pedagogy. This was difficult when the Catholic teacher was required to uphold the 'law' model of power. Teaching the early chapters of Genesis, which relate fundamental truths in figurative language, not history in the modern sense, led to my being cautioned, when the students told their parents, 'Sister Kathleen says there is no Adam and Eve!' 'Original sin' especially as contracted by Eve, was a doctrine that held the strength of law, it must be taught to Catholic girls, no questioning on the part of the teacher could be allowed. Rousseau's ideas were studied by prospective teachers in the early 1970s and I subscribed to them with enthusiasm. Only when putting them into practice in the classroom did the tensions between theory and praxis become evident. How different the reality was; Foucault captures it, when he describes the examination process that places the pupil in a 'field of surveillance and situates them in a network of writing, engaging them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them'.⁷⁰ Was 'Emile' a counterstatement to this disciplinary society?⁷¹ The failure of the 'Child-Centred' education had much to do with tactics of power, that according to Foucault, fulfil three criteria, 'first to obtain the lowest possible cost, second to bring the effects of this social power to their maximum intensity, and to extend them as far as possible, third, to link this economic growth of power, within the education system in which it is exercised'.⁷² It is for each of these reasons that, this 'Child-Centred' Educational philosophy failed. In his story of 'Emile', Rousseau describes the education of girls, 'The man should be strong and active; the woman should be weak and passive'. Girls are to be educated to think, to will, to love, to cultivate their minds as persons; nature makes up for their lack of strength, to enable them to direct the strength of men. Much of this theory was used in Catholic

⁶⁹ Rousseau Jean-Jacque. *Emile*. 1911 ed. London: Dent, 1762. cited by Michele Erina Doyle and Mark K Smith (2007) 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau on education', the encyclopedia of informal education.

⁷⁰ Foucault Michel. *The Foucault Reader; an Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. Edited by Paul Rabinow, London: Penguin, 1984.p201.

⁷¹ Rousseau, J-J. (1762) *Émile*, London: Dent (1911 edn.) Rousseau's exploration of education took the form of a novel concerning the tutoring of a young boy.

⁷² Foucault Michel. *The Foucault Reader; an Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. Edited by Paul Rabinow London: Penguin, 1984.p.2007

education to prepare girls for family life.⁷³ Women must uphold the right to life, no matter what impassioned reasons might be given for abortion. The Church considers the feminist push for 'abortion rights' to obscure the real issue, which is not about rights, but about human life. But the declaration leaves no space for the woman who has an abortion, and because of her dire circumstances, may not incur this 'crime of utmost gravity'.⁷⁴ Educating girls had to include Catholic teaching in regard to women's reproductive decisions, because it was important that the girls had an informed conscience. Guidance in human love and outlines for sex education were not issued until 1983. I was no longer teaching then.

In January 1977 Pope Paul VI develops his understanding of the role of women in salvation history.⁷⁵ He confirms the theology of the previous decade and adds that although women's primary responsibility is to the home and children, they are to use their distinct characteristics to make the world, more just, more compassionate and more humane.⁷⁶

4.5 Experience of Cenacle Community

As we have seen, Vatican II reversed the Church's unqualified rejection of modernity, declaring its solidarity with the world and its peoples.⁷⁷ This ecclesiastical transition from the medieval to the modern world at Vatican II, and the cultural transition of Western society, from modernity to 'postmodernity' is in the wake of historical events such as the horror of Hiroshima and Auschwitz, which did the most to dislodge an ordered view of history and of divine providence.⁷⁸ This precipitated a spiritual crisis for many women Religious. Those of us who 'weathered' this crisis had to come to terms with post-modernity which is a complex phenomenon, involving a tangle of sensibilities and issues that are hard to define.⁷⁹ The world-view in which many of us had been educated, was one in which the Christian vision was of a unitary world view, a great chain of being, from inanimate nature to a supreme Being. Human beings are placed a little less than angels, but superior to the animals, in other words, it was a hierarchically ordered universe, created and sustained by God. Modernity upturned this

⁷³ Rousseau J. *A Discourse on Inequality*, trans. Cranston M. (London: Penguin 1755, 1984).

⁷⁴ Pope Paul VI *Declaration on Procured Abortion*, 1974 (Ivy Helman, *Women and the Vatican*) p42.

⁷⁵ Pope Paul VI, *Angelus Domini*, address given January 30, *The Role of Women in the Plan of Salvation*.

⁷⁶ Helman A. Ivy, *Women and the Vatican*. p.53.

⁷⁷ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*. see, 'Gaudium et spes' 1.

⁷⁸ Downey Michael, ed. *Postmodernity*, *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993) p.747.

⁷⁹ Schneiders, Sandra. *Finding the Treasure*. N.Y.: Paulist Press, 2000.

notion of reality; the critical rational (and male subject) not God, was at the centre of creation. God was still in 'his' heaven, but the human mind was no longer subject to reality, reality was subject to the 'mind' which was an object of knowledge.⁸⁰

This postmodern critique of the Cartesian subject is viewed as a threefold death. The 'death of man', argues that the essentialist view of human nature is a false cover for its social, historical and linguistic construction.⁸¹ The 'death of history', denies any logic or order in historical events, a linear concept of historical progress merely suppresses contradictions and inconsistencies. The 'death of metaphysics', denies that there is a notion of the 'real' that is external to the knower. Much that is accepted as 'reality' is constituted through discourse, and varies according to culture and historical time.⁸² Postmodernity has subtle, and not so subtle features that had implications for Religious life. The first is the loss of a unitary worldview, fragmenting the sense of reality on every level, and raising serious challenges for a life project of self-integration, around the God-quest. Modernity's bold claims, for the idealist self-subsistent rational self and a view of history, as inevitably progressive had been unsettled by the two world wars. The terror of this history called into question human conceptions of order and the very nature of God. This left the 'postmodern' with a sense of 'radical contingency', existential rootlessness, abandonment in an impersonal cosmos.⁸³ The postmodern subject suspects there is nothing stable on which to base hopes and dreams for the future. Who is to say that any construction of reality, any set of beliefs, or any particular theory of how to be in the world, has any validity or claim on us? The postmodernity lives in a world of universal and irresolvable 'relativism'. Another formulation of postmodernity is given by Jean-Francois Lyotard, who remained incredulous of universalistic claims of the great narratives, such as the emancipation of the rational subject. The 'death of metaphysics' excludes commanding 'metanarratives', any master story into which the whole of reality is to fit, is oppressive in that it makes everyone other than us, subsumed into our narrative. Without such a narrative to 'explain' existence the postmodern is alienated and isolated.

There are different responses to postmodernism; radical postmoderns are content to reinvent themselves endlessly in terms of new situations, making no claim that any version of the self, is intrinsically better than any other, as long as no one is getting hurt.⁸⁴ Then there are those

⁸⁰ Ibid.p.110-117.

⁸¹ Nietzsche Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage, 1969.

⁸² Flax Jane, *Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West*.pp 32-6

⁸³ Schneiders, Sandra. *Finding the Treasure*. N.Y.: Paulist Press, 2000. p112.

⁸⁴ Schneiders, *Finding the Treasure*.p. 115.

'nostalgic postmoderns' who embrace the technology and materiality of postmodernity, but derive their values and social agenda from pre-modernity. As we have seen Catholic nostalgic postmoderns feel that Vatican II 'sold out' to modernity, which they had resisted for years, so they desire to restore pre-conciliar absolutism, and resist *aggiornamento*.⁸⁵ Feminists, have noted the distinctly nostalgic character of what John Paul II intended as the promotion of women; his ideal of 'the eternal feminine', embodied in universal vocation to motherhood, physical or spiritual, which is out of touch with postmodern feminist sensibilities.⁸⁶

'Constructive'⁸⁷ postmoderns make up a third group, which included most women Religious; these were not resigned to a radically fragmented, apolitical, isolated despair in the face of the postmodern deconstruction, but believed that this age can be open to gospel values, as other ages have been. They question the moral absolutes of the pre-modern era, while holding to the one absolute 'love of God, self and neighbour', especially the recognition of the 'other' and the need for relationality, interdependence, community and tradition.⁸⁸ The implications of postmodernism for women Religious meant first and foremost dialogue with the surrounding culture. At the same time, there was a deeply countercultural message in the notion of unified religious project, such as the vowed life, requiring permanent commitment, within a contemporary context of fragmentation.

Because the basic structure of the human person is relational, human becoming, I have claimed, can only be achieved in human community and this is expressed in the Christian mystery, 'the whole group of believers was united in heart and soul,' (Acts 4:³²) to be in the Church is to be in relationship. This period of post-Vatican II religious life in the Cenacle saw the language of 'superiors and subjects', 'blind obedience' and military metaphors for relationships, gradually relinquished. Patterns of government moved towards collegiality, wide participation in decision making, and mutual discernment was the process used to make, decisions affecting individual members. Mutual sharing, and egalitarian government, which are the subject of the vows of poverty and obedience respectively, meant that community structures 'cannot be based on ontological inequality among members' even in the name of order and efficiency.⁸⁹ The Church continues to maintain that she is a community of intrinsically equal members baptised into Christ's one Body, at the same time, she is by divine institution,

⁸⁵ Lakeland Paul, *Postmodernity in a Fragmented Age; Guides to Theological Inquiry* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).p.2-5

⁸⁶ Beattie Tina. *New Catholic Feminism : Theology and Theory*. London New York: Routledge, 2006.

⁸⁷ Constructive is not used as opposite to 'deconstruction' (although this may denote positive challenging of moribund essentialism) but to the equally positive and creative within this position.

⁸⁸ *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, ed. Downey Michael (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993).p.747.

⁸⁹ Schneiders, Sandra. *Selling All*. N.Y.: Paulist Press, 2001.p.298.

hierarchical.⁹⁰ Cenacle religious life, as a life form in the Church, explores and promotes the reality of equality in its concrete daily life, taking seriously *Gaudium et spes*.⁹¹ The institutional Church resisted the implications of baptismal equality, and the force of the 'People of God' as a governing metaphor for the Church'.⁹² It was no surprise, or indeed of very little interest, to most women Religious when in 1976 the document *Inter Insigniores*, a renewed declaration of the Church, to refuse admission of women to the ministerial priesthood, was published, closing the issue in the negative.⁹³ Cenacle women, prior to the Council never raised the question of ordination, because it was a foregone conclusion that it was simply not (and never would be) a possibility. That it was an issue at all in this decade, is an indication of the power of Christian feminists, and also of the Council's call for increased awareness and participation of the laity in Church teaching and practice. If priesthood was not a motivating force for Cenacle Religious, 'contemplation' was; as *Dei Verbum* states, 'tradition comes about in various ways. It comes through the contemplation and study of believers, who ponder these things in their hearts'.⁹⁴ By seeking to act out of the prophetic and mystical heart of community, our role we believed was not simply to support the structures of the Church, but to assist her in her proclamation of the gospel. We had hastened to fulfil the injunction in *Perfectae Caritatis*, to return to the 'profound intention of the founders' and to include the 'signs of the times', by taking seriously our need to deepen our knowledge of theology in order to fulfill our mission. The Chapter of 1974 emphasised anew that we were an 'Apostolic Community in the Service of the Church', through our mission which was, and still is, Retreats, Religious Education and other forms of pastoral ministry, for the 'deepening and awakening of faith'. Retreats are given according to the *Spiritual Exercise of St. Ignatius*,⁹⁵ and although there are difficulties with the sometimes repugnant symbolism embedded in Ignatius' writings, for example, his use of military images that reflect his culture, and which are in direct contradiction to the struggles women have with an oppressive Church structure, there is also the core of liberating possibilities for women in the *Spiritual Exercises* through the spiritual freedom that springs from them.⁹⁶ Of course the writings of a male saint in the sixteenth century are going to be 'gender blind'. Katherine Stogdon in drawing attention to the centrality of desire in the

⁹⁰ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*. Third Edition ed. Vol. 1, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents. N.Y.: Costello, 1975. (*Lumen Gentium* 11,10 and 111)

⁹¹ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*. (*Gaudium et Spes* p903)

⁹² Schneiders, Sandra. *Selling All*. N.Y.: Paulist Press, 2001.p.299.

⁹³ Helman A.Ivy, *Women and the Vatican*. *Inter Insigniores* 1976. P.77

⁹⁴ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*. (*Dei Verbum* p.754.)

⁹⁵ Puhl Louis, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*.

⁹⁶ Dyckman Katherine, Garvin Mary, and Elizabeth Liebert. *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed*. N.Y.: Paulist Press, 2001.p.4.

discernment process suggests the strategy of reading against the grain of the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* to allow the possibility for thinking differently.⁹⁷ Stogdon believes that the 'deconstructive' tool⁹⁸ used by Grace Jantzen enables the strategy of 'double reading, to destabilise a text and create the possibility for knowing' otherwise'.⁹⁹ Creative alternatives may be opened up if we are not extrapolating from the text externally, but exposing it from within,

Because deconstruction does not require an already formed place external to the text on which to stand, but rather works by exposing it from within, it is well suited to the ambiguous position of the woman subject, working from and within a heavily masculinised position in order to bring about a different future.¹⁰⁰

To expose the text from within requires engaging with the dynamic of the *Exercises* 'asking for what I desire' and letting the searing light of the Holy Spirit enable me to sift and sort, desires to pursue and those to relinquish. I shall return to the question of discernment, and 'gender' in chapter six.

The basic value, as we have seen, that did not get wholehearted approval from the Church, was the belief in subjective experience. 'Experience' has to do with the perception of reality, with the receptiveness towards the real in all its manifestations, it requires paying attention to that reality. Bernard Lonergan distinguishes between the world of immediate experience, and the world mediated by meaning.¹⁰¹ The movement by the retreatant, from immediate objective reality, to a reality mediated by meaning, can happen when a woman is able to tell her story to another woman, who listens and draws attention to the meaning. Carol Christ says,

The expression of women's spiritual quest, is integrally related to the telling of women's stories. If women's stories are not told, the depth of women's souls will not be told.¹⁰²

Such attending forms the substance of the relationship between the one guiding the retreat and the one making it, each person listens to her own experience in all its contexts, not just those she would name as 'religious'. If the one guiding the *Exercises* follows Ignatius' directives in the 'Annotations', she will not dilute or distract from the relationship that the person has

⁹⁷ Stogdon Katharine, "Life, Death and Discernment: Ignatian Perspectives," in *Grace Jantzen*, ed. Elaine Graham (Surrey UK: Ashgate, 2009). p.144.

⁹⁸ Derrida Jacques *Writing and Differance*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1967).

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Jantzen Grace. *Becoming Divine*. Manchester: MUP, 1998. p.63. qqww

¹⁰¹ Lonergan Bernard, *Method in Theology* (London: DTL., 1972).

¹⁰² Christ Carol, "Spiritual Quest and Women's Experience," in *Woman Spirit Rising*, ed. Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow (London: Harper & Row, 1979). p.228.

with God. Instead, she will provide a safe context, to enable the one making the retreat, to notice what the Spirit of God is doing in her life.

The *Exercises* have the whole person in focus, allowing latitude for individual women to come to grips with their personal issues. Each woman is encouraged to take responsibility for their own lives, as the retreat provides means to achieve spiritual maturity.¹⁰³ Women's self is grounded in their bodies, they often experience deep connection, between their spirituality and their bodies, so if the system tends to identify the body and nature with evil, for example, being a 'daughter of Eve', or with the total exclusion from the structures of the Church, being unworthy as female to receive the sacrament of ordination, a poor self-image may be presented. Cenacle women often hear 'confessions' but the Church's official reassurance of God's love and forgiveness, must wait for the ordained priest.

4.6 Conclusion

I began my analysis of the 1970s by entering the debate on how the Council should be interpreted, continuous with the past, or a new event that is discontinuous with the past. The early history of the Council's effects reveals ambiguity about how far we have realised, or not, the programme of reform, which it initiated.¹⁰⁴ I think I have merely set the scene as it were, a scene that has darkened, as my research has progressed. This decade (1970s) opened with hope and enthusiasm for women, in the light of *Gaudium et spes*, but pretty soon a cluster of further teaching addressed to the self-understanding of women as sexual beings was issued.¹⁰⁵

By now women had the opportunity to control their own fertility in ways unknown to previous generations, but each issue was decided by the Magisterium, usually in the negative, for example, issues on abortion, adoption, birth-control, family planning, marriage to 'non-catholics'. Although the Church responded to some degree to feminist claims by addressing the civic and social life of women, it did not suffer from the ambiguity that the 'continuity or discontinuity' debate did, the role of women was basically continuous with the past. It became increasingly clear to me as I looked at document after document (five in all) addressed to

¹⁰³ Dyckman Katherine, Garvin Mary, and Elizabeth Liebert. *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed*. N.Y.: Paulist Press, 2001.

¹⁰⁴ Byrne Lavinia. *Woman at the Altar*. London: Mowbray, 1994..

¹⁰⁵ Helman A.Ivy. *Women and the Vatican*. New York: Orbis Books, 2012.

women during this decade, that the Church constructs her view of womanhood based on an essentialist view, that is to say, it is women's bodies and biological functions that determine their role in society, and at the same time it is these very attributes that keep her from the sanctuary.¹⁰⁶ Strongly worded documents emphasised the role women play in the plan of salvation, one that is different from men, one that does not allow them to be priests, because women's real vocation is to children and families.¹⁰⁷ Women are presented with high ideals, sometimes with prohibitions and warnings, but always with supreme authority. We hear a male understanding of God and salvation, not salvation for a woman as conceived by a woman, which will be very different as I shall argue in a later section of the study. That women are not to be ordained, is a loss to the whole Church, I do not believe a sacrament to be the fullness of God's saving grace without the participation of that half of humanity that generates life. However, many women, including me, believed the theology and praxis of priesthood needed to be changed, which of course they would if women were ordained. The Council's message to those who were engaged in the ministry of retreats, religious education and other forms of pastoral work was encouraging and trustful. Catholic scholarship had been given clearance to work in an ecumenical setting, and Catholic teachers turned with new confidence to historical and biblical criticism. The 'faithful' had understood the gospels to be four versions of the life of Christ, so teaching young people about the way they had been compiled was a challenge. It was made more difficult as the clergy had not yet appropriated this approach to biblical studies. Women Religious had been praying with gospel texts for most of our adult lives, and the Holy Spirit used this to further our union with God. Now however, questions about the deeper meaning of the text were surfacing, causing the hierarchy, both bishops and priests who had been trained before the Council, to be defensive about preserving the 'deposit of faith' in its purity. The work of the 'London College of Catechetics' opened by Cardinal Heenan, but also closed by him because of the whole new approach to adult teaching, is an example of 'authority' being exercised in favour of an interpretation of the Council, as 'continuous with the past'. It became increasingly clear in this period when many people were beginning to discover a new freedom and new perspectives brought by the Council, that a counter-reaction to what appeared to some as a loss of the substance of the faith had set in. Henri de Lubac and Joseph Ratzinger appeared to recoil from new but genuine expressions of the faith, believing them to be philosophical and theological excesses. This may have been a

¹⁰⁶ Helman A. Ivy, *Women and the Vatican*. p.41.

¹⁰⁷ Pope Paul VI, "Inter Insigniores," in *Vatican Documents*, ed. Congregation for the Defence of the Faith (Rome 1976).

necessary response or it may be an unconscious desire to retain the old papal centralism.¹⁰⁸

The Catholic laity were beginning to think for themselves and were being encouraged by new approaches to biblical studies and pedagogy in Educational establishments.

The 1970s brought great challenges to women Religious, propelling us from 'modern' to 'postmodern' culture in the space of a few years. We were learning that 'ministry' was not the overflow of a basically monastic form of our life, nor was service to others a 'secondary end'; the Council affirmed that ministry was proper to the life, and community has to be understood and structured to support and foster ministry.

Although the documents issued in this decade give more space for the social and civic role of women, there is no change to issues of priesthood and sexual ethics.¹⁰⁹ Cenacle women whose mission it is 'to awaken and deepen faith, with and for the people of our time', identify with all women who try to adhere to the directives of the Church who defend, the 'right to life', rather than 'women's rights'.¹¹⁰ It is the place of the female body in 'saving history' about which feminist theology and the Catholic Church are in confrontation.¹¹¹ At the start of this chapter I asked myself if the Council had supported the experience of mysticism, it did by precipitating a corporate 'dark night of the Spirit' among Religious Congregations, who continue to struggle to uphold a Christ-centred humanism, in face of the many tensions with contemporary culture, especially those involving women.

¹⁰⁸ Arraj James, *The Church, the Council, and the Unconscious* (New York: Inner Growth Books, 2006). Kindle Edition

¹⁰⁹ Helman A. Ivy, *Women and the Vatican*. p.55.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Beattie Tina, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate : A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation*.

1982-1992 My Experience of Cenacle Religious Life

In this decade I accepted a responsibility in the Congregation in the role of 'Novice Directress', that is to say, I introduced prospective candidates to the charism of the Congregation. Our Chapter of Renewal was well over by now, life in community was becoming dynamic, energising, mature, highly effective and meaningful, where before it had tended to be introverted, restrictive and static.¹ I returned from the U.S. and settled in Liverpool where six young women awaited the two year programme which would enable them to discern if they had a vocation to the Cenacle.

Meanwhile, 'liberation' was the theme of the Congregation as in 1980-81 the Chapter worked to prepare Constitutions acceptable to the nine-hundred and forty sisters of the post-Vatican Church. The Constitutions of 1981 written during the second session of the chapter were the result of work, reflection, prayer and lived experience of all the Sisters of the Congregation for a period of twelve years. They were approved by the Church in 1983. It is with the Chapter of 1986, that we start to use 'preferential option for the poor', an expression that came to prominence at the Third Conference of Latin American Bishops in Puebla, 1979. Here it was said, 'We affirm the need for conversion on the part of the whole Church to a preferential option for the poor, an option aimed at their integral liberation'.² The 'Acts of the Chapter' (1986) affirm this need of liberation for women in our society and in the Church.

The experience of prayer and community life which is ours as Sisters of the Cenacle can enable us to assist other women who are among the most powerless. We realise that we shall be transformed and strengthened by the very women whose struggle we are invited to share.³

My task of forming the candidates in the novitiate consisted primarily of introducing them to the Cenacle Constitutions and to Ignatian Spirituality. The whole process of shedding their professional identity whilst appropriating the identity of a Cenacle Religious radically committed to Christ through the vowed life, required of me some skills in human development which I did not have at this time. Just as in the changing methods of education so the formation work required a whole new approach. It was becoming clear to me that my 'shadow side' had seldom been fully owned and claimed. Negative feelings that echoed rumblings of the 'seven deadly sins' were often suppressed as they did not reflect the holiness required of a budding

¹ Mary Collins. O.S.B., "American Benedictine Women in the Roman Catholic Church" in Joan Chittister, O.S.B., et al., *Climb Along the Cutting Edge: An Analysis of Change in Religious Life* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 71-127.

² 'Document on Christian Freedom and Liberation' No.65 March 1986.

³ 'Acts of the Chapter 1986.' Congregation of Our Lady of the Cenacle.

saint. Religious formation needed to make clear that these seven impulses (not to be acted on) are essential to full humanity. In 1985 therefore I started a three year programme to train as a counsellor. Psychosynthesis is an approach to psychology which acknowledges the existence of the soul and the spiritual nature of 'humankind'. Later I was able to study and practice this psychotherapy to the level of MA. Roberto Assagioli, an Italian psychiatrist began developing Psychosynthesis in 1910, as a system which would address both the psychology and the spirituality of the human being. Psychosynthesis was one of the forerunners of the fields of both humanistic psychology and transpersonal psychology. It shares a great deal of common ground with the assumptions, aims and techniques of a wide range of psychoanalytic and humanistic psychology. Roberto Assagioli is quite open about the pre-suppositional limitations of his approach. He writes, 'Psychosynthesis does not aim nor attempt to give a metaphysical nor a theological explanation of the grand Mystery - it leads to the door, but stops there.'⁴ In this brief significant excerpt we see the tension between the scientist and the 'mystic' in Assagioli. His reference to the 'great Mystery' rests in the belief that the person is a soul as well as a personality, yet evidence for this is considered to be outside the scope of the empirical sciences. To be acceptable at all, Assagioli, like Freud and Jung, had to put his work into scientific language.⁵ Psychosynthesis training allowed me to work with those who did not subscribe to religious belief or practice, but were on a quest for meaning. During the training the experience of sharing thoughts and feelings with the same group of people, mainly women, week after week for three years, allowed me to make some close friends. More importantly it shed light on the way I related to others, how I might project on to others the things I disliked in myself; how I tended to be in denial of situations that were painful, and the serious failing of 'splitting' which is the inability to own to both good and bad in myself and others. I learned too, about narcissism, how a grandiose self-concept often underlies the chronic aim of trying to get continuous self-affirmation. All of this helped me in my last year of formation with the novices, it would have helped had I understood some of it at the beginning of my work with them.

As a consequence of this qualification in psychotherapy I started work with another sister (who had similar training) and to travel to different venues to introduce programmes such as 'Enneagram' and 'Myers-Briggs Typology Indicator' or 'Inner-Child' workshops. This ministry was stimulating and rewarding in that it facilitated in others a heightened awareness of their

⁴ Assagioli Roberto, *Psychosynthesis: A Manual of Principles and Techniques* (New York: Viking Publishers., 1971).

⁵ Hardy Jean, *Psychology with a Soul* (London: Woodgrange Press, 1996).

humanity, especially those like myself who had been on a transpersonal axis, sometimes unaware of the 'shadow' or negative side of the psyche.

In about 1981 Sister Elisabeth Smyth was asked to introduce Anglicans to Ignatian Spirituality, so with an Anglican priest of the Community of the Resurrection she set about designing a programme. I joined them as soon as I completed my seven years as Novice Directress and Elisabeth Smyth and myself managed to get permission to live in London, in a cottage in the grounds of the Royal Foundation of St. Katharine. This was emancipation on a scale unknown in our Province, to live in a small house like other families, to shop, cook and eat at a time suitable for our ministry while having to be financially viable, was a sharp contrast to 'common life' as previously lived in a large group.

The Ignatian Spirituality Course started with a small group meeting on a monthly basis; it has evolved over the years to become a three year programme requiring one day a week attendance. The purpose of the course at this early stage was to prepare participants to direct the full Spiritual Exercises, a thirty-day retreat. It required them to understand and interpret for this century, the counter-reformation theology of the sixteenth century. My task was to 'unpack' the meaning of the Exercises beginning with the 'Annotations', the guidelines for both the 'director' and the one making the retreat (retreatant). The important point throughout was not to get in the way of God dealing with the person, 'it is more suitable and much better that the Creator and Lord in person communicate himself to the devout soul in quest of the divine will.....'. Many, even Jesuits, had been fearful of this 'mysticism', suspicious of affectivity, they were inclined to assume that discursive meditation remained for most people the normal way of prayer. Our aim for those who committed themselves to the programme was to help them to recognise the Holy Spirit in their own experience so that they could help others, especially women, to discern the presence of God, not only in decisions of significance, but also in everyday life. Furthermore, we were in effect training 'lay' persons to do the work for which we had been founded.

The specific period given to religious communities to carry out the experimentation called for by the Council was to close with the new Constitutions proposed for approval. The new code of Canon Law was promulgated in January, 1983. On the 22nd June of that same year 'The Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes' (SCRIS) released a text entitled, 'Essential Elements in Church Teaching on Religious Life'. These documents distinguished what was 'lawful' from what was 'essential' for our lives and stated clearly those that were not to vary with historical and cultural change; the norms continued to perpetuate the value of 'enclosure' which had been such a play in controlling the lives of women Religious. In fact, the new Code of

Canon Law upheld many of the structures of the nineteenth-century model of Religious life rather than that prescribed by the Council which was to structure according to 'the signs of the times'. For example, it still insisted on a hierarchical structure of governance, and a model of obedience and authority that seemed unaware of shared decision-making and collegial forms of leadership. It still required submission to clerical directives.

In the chapter of 1986 we had an inspired leader who happened to be an American and whose influence sprang from the gospel in terms of its emphasis on spirit rather than law. Thereafter, we ceased to call her 'mother general' she was to be referred to as 'sister'. We were invited not only to work towards an ideal of justice and peace, we had to approach realistically our own experience of poverty with our diminishment, such as closing of houses, decreasing personnel, loss of health and strength, because this we saw as a place where God teaches us to be in solidarity with the poor in their powerlessness. Of course, this sensitivity to the poor and oppressed should challenge us in the way we live our poverty and the way we witness to it through our life style; a future generation of Religious will fight the causes of poverty.

We were to affirm the role of women in our society and in the Church by the experience of prayer and community life, which is ours as sisters of the Cenacle and which can empower us to empower other women who are among the most powerless. Sister Barbara Ehrler ended the chapter the way she had begun it, by reminding us of our capacity for God, 'Capax Dei', a word that speaks the whole meaning and destiny of creation. She reflected to the delegates that they came to the Chapter with the lived experience of our new Constitutions which were developed through years of upheaval, challenge, radical change and suffering; Constitutions which were the fruit of a faithful, even at times imperfect effort to follow God into a challenging future in ways that were both old and new'.⁶

The day the Chapter ended was the feast of Our Lady of the Cenacle, 'It is Mary of the Cenacle who incarnates who we are to be as Sisters of the Cenacle'. (Cons, No. 37) Barbara ended the Chapter by saying, 'Mary of the Cenacle is the one who lives in the fullness of the Paschal mystery, who has experienced God's utterly faithful love in the resurrection of her Son. She is our steady flame of hope, woman of faith, of hope, of love...Capax Dei, we ask her in the words of St. Ignatius to place us with her Son'. (Barbara Ehrler May 1986)

⁶'Acts of the Chapter' 1986 Congregation of Our Lady of the Cenacle.

Chapter 5

'Relationality'

5. 1 Introduction

My problematising the attitude of the Catholic Church in both the theory and praxis of 'authority' and 'experience', as stated in the prefacing narrativeis, in this chapter set against the background of my role of 'forming' candidates for the Cenacle. My apostolic work was focused on the building of communities of faith and love. Firstly, with the group of young women who were generously offering their lives to God through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Each of them with sky-high ideals which had to be honoured and at the same time 'grounded' in the everyday 'nitty-gritty'. Then there was the Christian laity, they too looked for help with relationships, often the women we met were in stressful situations and although the Christian precepts of, 'love one another' were held out to them, they had not been given much help with their own human development. It is in this decade that I learned about the unconscious and the 'shadow' side of the Christ-like image I tried to project. I use a psychological optic by exploring the necessity of achieving maturity within community. The candidates came from a world where self-determination and individuality was highly prized, they were being invited to find other values through inter-subjectivity in community.⁷ My aim in this chapter is to illustrate that the basic structure of the human person is 'relational' and is the foundation for Christian mysticism. My experience of forming a 'noviciate' community, influenced my research into the analysis of subjectivity. The young women who entered, felt called to give themselves wholly to God, and that meant learning to live and work with women they had never met before, in a community of faith, whereas they had just learned autonomy and independence.

I claim that from the moment of conception the being of the self is structured in relation to others, by drawing on the fundamental insight both of modern psychology and of Christian discipleship, that God's very self, in whose image we are made, is relational.⁸ The self is inherently relational, but the phenomenon of narcissism can jeopardize this fundamental need to relate to others in a healthy manner. Although Freud's theories have been subjected to considerable criticism by feminists, who have drawn attention to his implicit misogyny, his discovery of the unconscious suggests a different picture of subjectivity from that of

⁷ Jones L. Gregory, "Alasdair Macintyre on 'Narrative, Community and the Moral Life'." (Modern Theology Vol.4. pgs.53-69 1987)

⁸ Johnson Elizabeth, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (N.Y.: Crossroads, 1992).

Enlightenment rationality.⁹ My training as a therapist was closer to the post-Freudian school of thinking, referred to as 'object-relations' school, which develops Freud's work¹⁰ by stressing the importance of early caregivers for a person's self-identity and development. The central role of the Oedipus complex is re-examined and more focus is given to the pre-oedipal events in the life of the child. The 'objects' in object relations theory should more properly be 'human objects' since it reflects the use of the term for 'relations with others'.¹¹ A survey of the various theoretical positions fails to reveal a unified 'object relations' theory. I will introduce a more recent understanding of the formation of subjectivity and of sexual difference, that Bracha Ettinger names, 'subjectivity-as-encounter'.¹² This will also be the place to consider narcissism and its tendency to thwart growth to selfhood. I take this approach to further my argument that the Christian community is to facilitate a choice of mysticism in face of narcissism.

I turn then to the theology of 'at-one-ment', because the traditional theory of how the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ repaired a state of separation or estrangement between humanity and God, needs to be revisited in the light of recent psychoanalytic theory. For example, could re-imagining the whole Christ event as 'embodiment and incarnation of relational power in action', serve as the basis for the Pentecostal (Cenacle) community? (Acts 1.¹²⁻¹⁴.)

Because 'at-one-ment' is a central category of Christian theology my argument leads me to examine traditional orthodox theory of atonement in Anselm and Abelard. I note the two models are within the patriarchal paradigm, one is concerned with justice and unequal power relations and the other is concerned with the breaking of a loving relationship.¹³ I define sin as that which disrupts a relationship between self, the world and God, and that it can be seen in an abuse of power and an aspect of narcissism; I claim that there is also a difference in the expression of sin in women and men. I have recourse to the philosophy of Schleiermacher, to address the issue of 'experience' over against the rationalism and intellectualism of the Enlightenment. Atonement is a theory that has been understood in a number of different ways in the history of the Church. My perspective is a feminist one and is concerned with questions such as, what if humanity was never apart from God? What if Eve was not originally

⁹ Hekman Susan, *Gender and Knowledge: Elements of a Postmodern Feminism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990).

¹⁰ Wulff M David, ed. *Psychology of Religion*, Second Edition ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997). p. 258

¹¹ Kernberg Otto, *Object Relations and Clinical Psychoanalysis* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1976). p. 58.

¹² Ettinger L. Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity." (*Theory, Culture and Society*. 23 no. 2-3. 2006)

¹³ Wheeler L. David, *A Relational View of Atonement* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989).

sinful? I explore these questions through considering the psychology and theology of 'human becoming'.

5.2 Inter-subjective Theory

From 1985-1988 while training as a counselor, I grew more attuned to the confusing reality that people who reported spiritual experiences, could sometimes show poor emotional health and as a result were often unable to sustain relationships. Psychosynthesis allows for a holistic view of the person so that 'self-realisation', is an integration of body, mind, and spirit.¹⁴ But according to most psychoanalytic theories, subjectivity is understood as the achievement of separation; maturity is seen to be reached when the dependent infant comes to regard its primary caregiver, who is usually a woman, as simply an object through which it defines its own identity. Implicit in most theories of identity is the assumption that 'otherness' is the necessary condition of women, so separation and objectivity rather than relationship and connection, are the normal marks of identity. Freudian theory supports this view, the de-centred subject may be described through Freud's notion of the unconscious, as seeking to gratify instinctual and universal drives which dominate. The infant in Freud's theory is an

autoerotic isolate, inherently aggressive and competitive, its sexuality and identity oedipally resolved only by fear, seeking to discharge libidinal energy which is necessarily in conflict with the "rational and enlightened" concern for others and for society as a whole.¹⁵

We need to imagine alternative models of subjectivity, instead of emphasising autonomy as the goal of maturity. My argument is to emphasise the importance of maintaining connection and inter-subjectivity, because (among other reasons), identification of self with an impossible ideal of autonomy that avoids vulnerability or neediness, is a recipe for failure of love and relationship. For Example, in Erikson's theory, after the first stage of the infant's development, in which the aim is basic trust, the goal of every other stage until adulthood is some form of increased separation as a sign of self-development.¹⁶ The goal for each stage is not something like 'greater capacity for emotional connection with others', or for 'contributing to an interchange between people', or for 'playing a part in the growth of others as well as one's

¹⁴ Assagioli Roberto, *Psychosynthesis: A Manual of Principles and Techniques*.

¹⁵ Waugh Patricia, "Modernism, Postmodernism, Gender: The View from Feminism," in *Feminisms*, ed. Sandra Kemp & Judith Squires (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁶ Erikson H. E, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1950).

self". Instead, development of the self occurs through a series of painful crises, by which the individual learns to negotiate a separation from others and achieve an inner sense of separated individuation.¹⁷ The need to imagine alternative models of subjectivity emerged with the realisation that the mind and the psychic structures that comprise it, evolve out of human interactions, rather than out of biologically derived tensions as Freud had claimed.¹⁸ Freud hints at other possibilities. In a paper on 'Narcissism' for example, he says, 'A strong egotism is a protection against falling ill, but in the last resort we must begin to love in order not to fall ill, and we are bound to fall ill if in consequence of frustration, we are unable to love'.¹⁹ It is this need for human contact that is the primary motive, in a loose network of theories that might be described as 'relational dynamic' approaches. In so far as they place a central emphasis on human relational ties as the primary context for development and draw on the psychodynamic tradition in their description of relationality.

The 'object-relations' theorists as they were named, emphasise the drive or yearning for connection with another, described in terms of 'object-seeking', in contrast to Freud's emphasis on biological and sexual drives as the fundamental motive for development.²⁰ Freud thought that the earliest states of human existence involved a fusion of self and other. In Freud's words, 'Originally the ego includes everything, later it separates off an external world from itself'.²¹ He described the infant as immersed in a state of 'primary narcissism' and 'oceanic feeling', lost in instinctual drives and fantasy, isolated from environmental realities. As a result, the claim of mainstream psychoanalysis was that mystical experience represents regression to the narcissistic state of the infant, because mysticism was seen as a general abstraction from the external world, and the experience of fusion with a greater being involved, a corresponding disappearance of a sense of self and ability to relate to others.²² According to this view of early human development, the infant only gradually breaks out of this primitive undifferentiated state. Margaret Mahler described this process as 'separation-individuation' by which the infant emerges from a symbiotic fusion with the mother.²³ Parts of the infant's own body at first hardly distinguishable from mother's body becomes highly

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Firman John and Ann, *The Primal Wound* (N.Y.: State University, 1987).

¹⁹ Freud Sigmund, *On Narcissism: An Introduction. Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays*, ed. J. Strachey, vol. 23, Standard Edition (London: Hogarth Press, 1964).

²⁰ Wulff M David, ed. *Psychology of Religion*.

²¹ Freud Sigmund, *On Narcissism: An Introduction*, ———, *Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays*, ed. J. Strachey, vol. 23, Standard Edition (London: Hogarth Press, 1964).

²² Wulff M David, ed. *Psychology of Religion*.

²³ Mahler Margaret, *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant*. (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

cathected with libido, a condition called 'narcissism' after 'Narcissus', the youth in the Greek myth who fell fatally in love with his own reflection.

The narcissist never encounters the objectivity, the acute difference of the other, but uses the other for self-gratification. The world is the mirror of the narcissist. But things are quite the reverse for the connective self. This selfmirrorsthe world.....Is the Cartesian ego, with its splendidly separate sense of self, not an idealised self-image of the narcissist? ²⁴

According to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*,²⁵ narcissists are preoccupied with dreams of success, power, beauty, and brilliance. Narcissists live on an interpersonal stage with exhibitionistic behaviour and demands for attention and admiration, if they do not get the esteem they feel entitled to, they respond with feelings of rage, defiance, shame, and humiliation. The temptation for the narcissist is to hide or deny 'unworthy' motives with all kinds of psychological subterfuge instead of owning and claiming neediness and letting the power of God's love heal.²⁶ As religious women who aimed at sanctity, it is easy to fall into the trap of projecting an image of holiness that allowed a 'grandiose' self on the one hand, and the need for a 'parental' image on the other. Furthermore, a common element of spiritual experiences is a sense of transcendence or inflation which may lead to psychological grandiosity or narcissism.²⁷

Heinz Kohut is the most important of the theorists who combine classic drive theory with the newer relational mode. According to Kohut there are two basic narcissistic needs that the child tries to satisfy through early relationships, one is to show off her capabilities and be admired for them and the other is to have an idealised image of at least one of the parents. With the inevitable insufficiencies of parental care and with cognitive growth, the infant establishes two new relatively stable self-structures, the 'grandiose self and the idealised parental imago'.²⁸ The need to express her capabilities, and the ability to demand action against factors that seek to block the development of them, is the right of child.²⁹ To the extent that the child is naturally concerned with developing a positive and rewarding self-structure, it is true to say that she is basically narcissistic in nature. Whereas both of these

²⁴ Keller Catherine, *From a Broken Web* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).p.92.

²⁵ *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (4th ed. [DSM-IV]; American Psychiatric Association, 1994)

²⁶ Becker L. Kenneth, *Unlikely Companions; C.G. Jung on the Spiritual Exercises* (Leominster, Herefordshire Gracewing, 2001).

²⁷ Shults F. Leron and Steven J. Sandage, *Transforming Spirituality; Integrating Theology and Psychology*.

²⁸ Kohut Heinz, *The Restoration of the Self* (New York: International Universities Press, 1977).

²⁹ Ibid.

childhood aims are healthy parts of the child's representational relations, but she needs to extend beyond mere narcissistic needs otherwise the inner structures deriving from them will interfere with adult functioning and cause abnormal behaviour. For Kohut, the origin of narcissism is not because the 'infant is lost in instinctual drives' but because the libido is directed to self or objects perceived to be parts of the self, causing the child to turn inwards to her 'self' for love.³⁰ 'Grandiosity' is a defensive procedure sometimes the result of early traumatic ruptures in relationships, parents or care-givers have not given or received the child's love. It is also seen as at the root of a 'rising cult of self-centredness', both in the individual and in contemporary society.³¹ D W. Winnicott arrived at a similar formulation of narcissism, he understood that when the true self of the infant is unacceptable to others, the child retreats behind a false facade. But the aspect of Winnicott's work that supports my argument, is the place in human experience that is neither inner subjective experience nor outer objective experience, it is the place between the two that cannot be ignored. He believed the space between the infant's lips and the mother's breast was the place that was relational, a matrix of identity, the centre of the human self.³² The infant believes that it has taken from a breast that is part of itself, from the mother's perspective she has given milk to an infant that is part of herself. So argues Winnicott, there is not really an interchange between them because one is taking herself and the other is giving herself.

Here we find the human experience of the unity of the act of creation and the thing created; here the creator and the created are one. This is the field of relatedness, the place from which we become aware. This is a cooperative space, the space where contact is experienced as union.³³

Jessica Benjamin expands Winnicott's theory of the intermediate area of experience in order to add clarity to the way in which both identity and difference are held in the same moment of experience. She suggests a continuous tension exists between asserting one's reality and accepting the other's reality, this is the 'paradox of recognition' in which both denial and affirmation of self and other are the consequences.³⁴ Benjamin argues for the inclusion of the

³⁰ Wulff M David, ed. *Psychology of Religion. A Revised Perspective on Narcissism*. 355. Diag-nostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th ed. [DSM-IV]; American Psychiatric Association, 1994) as a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, self-focus, and self-importance. According to the DSM-IV, narcissists are preoccupied with dreams of success, power, beauty, and brilliance. They live on an interpersonal stage to with exhibitionistic behaviour and demands.

³¹ Ibid.p.355.

³² Winnicott D.W, *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock, 1971).p.2

³³ Ibid.p.2

³⁴ Benjamin Jessica, "Recognition and Destruction: An Outline of Intersubjectivity," in *Relational Perspectives in Psychoanalysis*, ed. Neil J. Skolnick & Susan C. Warshaw (New York: Analytic Press, 1992).

'negative' that the 'other' sets up for us which has possibilities, that 'productive irritation' heretofore insufficiently explored'.³⁵

According to Daniel Stern inter-activity begins as a body-based awareness of another, an exchange of affective states.³⁶ Although the earliest stage of the infant's place of 'core-relatedness' is the physical self, this develops later through key moments of transformation to become empathic bonding. Stern's work revealed that the newborn was relational from the moment of birth. By actively engaging with the infant inviting the baby to respond to experimental situations, through head-turning, sucking and looking, the infants themselves disclose a preference for mother, her milk, her voice, her face, versus other women who may be present. The methods Stern employed revealed the infant was not lost in primal 'self-other fusion', but was a conscious intentional being.³⁷

5.3 Repairing Relationships

This decade of my life led me to appreciate and understand more about the psyche, so as to be more resourceful in my ministry with adults; it also led to a more profound inquiry into the mystery of 'sin'. In what follows I critique the traditional understanding and theories of atonement in order to further my exposition of the mystical character of the Maternal Matrix in the Incarnation and the Redemption. I analyse Mary's role in the work of repairing the rift between God and humankind caused by 'original sin'. She is, I claim a more powerful agent in restoring harmony than we have been led to believe. We are reconciled and redeemed both by Christ's humanity and Mary's maternity, there are profound implications of this for every woman and man, which I shall explore later in this study.

At the heart of Christian theology is the doctrine of atonement; 'at-one-ment' with God, with others and with oneself, 'relationality', but 'sin' is a hatred of the relational, 'a hatred of something that is inherent in our being'.³⁸ While the claim that 'Jesus saves' is at the heart of Christian theology, how he does this, and what he saves us from, are questions that have been answered with a variety of interpretations and metaphors through the ages. The Anselmian tradition holds to the need for satisfaction for sinful humanity, held accountable for its disobedience. The basic features of Anselm's approach to the meaning of Christ's death begin

³⁵ *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis*.

³⁶ Stern Daniel, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Symington Neville, *Narcissism* (London: Karnack Books, 1993).p.18.

with the fact that humanity is created in a state of eternal blessedness, but this is contingent on human obedience to God which humanity is unable to achieve. Only a God-man can make satisfaction, therefore the Incarnation takes place. Sin in this model reflects the masculine and patriarchal world, understood as domination of others arising from pride on the part of an isolated and individualised self. Divine mercy is circumscribed by the demands of justice which in turn requires that debts be paid, honour is restored and order maintained.³⁹ Sin for Anselm centres on issues of obligation, rendering to God his due honour. This approach is legal and suits well the more patriarchal approach to the concept of atonement. My early Catholic understanding of atonement was in the tradition of Anselm who taught that original sin was the absence of the original justice with which the world was created, this meant that the exercise of free will is impeded causing a propensity for evil. His understanding of original sin is the foundation of later arguments in the defence of the Immaculate Conception to which I will return.⁴⁰ Peter Abelard (1079-1142), unlike Anselm, relativises the importance of the death of Jesus by stressing the significance of his life; he understands the Incarnation to be the ultimate revelation of God's love for humanity. In this view, reconciliation between God and human beings, 'at-one-ment' is brought about by love, the love of God that Jesus the Christ, fully embodies

Our redemption through the suffering of Christ is that deeper love within us which not only frees us from slavery to sin, but also secures for us the true liberty of the children of God, in order that we might do all things out of love rather than fear – love for him who has shown us grace that no greater can be found.⁴¹

Abelard says that the purpose of the incarnation is not the payment of anything to anyone, the incarnation is simply the ultimate revelation of God's love for humanity. That the incarnation of itself is redemptive will be my further claim when I consider the role of Mary the mother of Jesus.⁴² In the Abelardian model of atonement, reconciliation between God and human beings is brought about by love, the love of God that Jesus Christ perfectly embodies, the love of God is the means as well as the motive of redemption. It is not simply the fact that Jesus lived and died that is redemptive, but the way in which he did these things. My concern with both these theologies of atonement is that sin is defined primarily in terms of human pride and rebellion

³⁹ St Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo in St. Anselm: Basic Writings*, trans. S.N.Deane. (La Salle, Ill;: Open Court Publishing, 1962).p.216.

⁴⁰ Boss Jane Sarah, ed. *Mary: The Complete Resource* (London: Continuum, 2007).p.2009.

⁴¹ Abelard Peter, *Exposition to the Epistle to the Romans*, ed. 'Exposition to the Epistle to the Romans. A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham, trans. Eugene R. Fairweather (New York: Macmillan, 1970).

⁴² Abbot Rupert of Deutz, "Incarnation as God's Response to Sin," in *The Christian Theology Reader*, ed. Alister E. McGrath (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).p.361.

against God's authority. Certainly the Anselmian model of human sin seems to contribute to a politics of submission of cosmic proportions, that suggests a purely juridical notion of justice; also, sin is understood to be universal for which all are equally responsible.⁴³ The implied model of relationship based on the unilateral power of one over another can offer divine sanction in situations of violence and personal abuse, when sin is understood in terms of disobedience and dishonour. A woman may acquiesce in obedience to a violent man (husband?) believing she is being more Christ-like. The main difference between these two traditions is that the Anselmian model requires a theory of domination; it is pre-conditioned by unequal power relations. God's power and authority are grounded in a transcendence that requires the powerlessness of humanity which is enforced by threat of punishment. The Abelardian model although still within a patriarchal paradigm has its primary focus on love not punishment, and on transformation that opens up possibilities for another definition of sin. This model is founded on mercy rather than justice.⁴⁴ Sin is a distance a gap between what we are and where we ought to be, yet as we experience the limitless depths of God's love revealed in Jesus this amazing love and forgiveness will generate in us gratitude and a reconciling love. Feminist and liberation theologies argue that both these approaches are too narrowly concerned with the individual 'human soul', and tend to ignore, or discount the historical corporate and socio-political context of all events and activities.⁴⁵ In classical theology the definition of sin and evil concentrates on human disobedience to divine law. But the experience of women identifies evil to be the phenomenological conditions of pain, separation and helplessness.⁴⁶ Atonement theology is largely about sacrifice, and women do not experience sacrifice as 'saving', but rather crushing to their humanity as they are usually the victims. Sacrifice for, and obedience to their masters has caused them to be consistently exploited.⁴⁷ For those who are victimised by patterns of injustice or by interpersonal abuse, the emphasis on images of an all-powerful God the Father who must be honoured and obeyed, can lead to feelings of shame when they refuse to keep silent, or try to rebel. In submitting they may feel they are emulating the suffering of Jesus. Thinking of the death of Jesus as a saving act by its very nature, instead of 'an outrageous act of public torture and social control', continues to put the lives of women at risk.⁴⁸ To describe sin as a universal identification with

⁴³ Darby Kathleen Ray, *Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, Abuse and Ransom*. (Cleveland Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1998).

⁴⁴ Abelard Peter, *Exposition to the Epistle to the Romans*.

⁴⁵ Darby Kathleen Ray, *Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, Abuse and Ransom*. p. 54.

⁴⁶ Johnson Elizabeth, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*.

⁴⁷ Williams Dolores, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993).

⁴⁸ Isherwood Lisa, *Introducing Feminist Christologies*. p.27.

pride, will to power, self-assertiveness, and the treatment of others as objects, does not reflect the feminine, whose sin is often a lack self-realisation, by depending on others to supply her own self-definition. Carter Heyward defines sin, personal and systemic,

as the violation of right relation; right relations are those which are mutually empowering, 'sin occurs whenever a person or group use or abuse an individual, group or natural resource for their own purposes, often thereby disempowering, degrading and all too often destroying who or what was used.'⁴⁹

Both Ricoeur and Moltmann have developed their theological views on the death of Christ in dialogue with psychoanalysis, so that the image of crucified Christ has for them been an answer to the dimensions of Kohut's analysis of narcissism and its transformation.⁵⁰ Paul Ricoeur agrees with Moltmann in viewing the omnipotent and moralistic God of the Hebrew Bible as a projection of the Oedipal father.⁵¹ The progressive freeing of the biblical image of God from these origins culminates for Ricoeur in the crucifixion of Christ, whose death he interprets as the death of God showing the powerlessness of God. Because this death is primarily an act of loving self-sacrifice, rather than an act of murder it completes the metamorphoses of the archaic father image and marks the overcoming of Oedipal wishes. In the theology of Jurgen Moltmann, the higher forms and transformations of narcissism can be brought about through the power of the crucified God, whose death breaks the spell of the authority of the 'Oedipal father'. No longer driven to rebel against a divine authority, we are drawn into sympathetic association with a suffering God;

The unknown father of Jesus Christ has nothing to do with those idols of the father which lead to the Oedipus complex. The crucified Christ makes earthly fathers and earthly sons alike sons of God, and brings them in community to the freedom which lies beyond the Oedipal complex. In origin Christianity is not a father-son religion if it is a religion at all, it is a son- religion, a brotherly community in the situation of the human God.⁵²

Many liberation theologians agree with Moltmann in seeing solidarity in suffering as the ultimate expression of God's saving love but others recognise that this claim does not go far

⁴⁹Tatman Lucy, "Sin," in *An a to Z of Feminist Theology*, ed. Isherwood Lisa and Dorothea McEwan (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

⁵⁰ Wulff M David, ed. *Psychology of Religion*. p.359.

⁵¹Ricoeur Paul, "Fatherhood: From Phantasm to Symbol," in *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays on Hermeneutics*, ed. Ihde D. Evanston (New York: North West University Press, 1974). p.493.

⁵²Moltmann Jürgen, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973). p.307

enough. Johanne Baptist Metz,⁵³ Dorothee Soelle,⁵⁴ Wendy Farley,⁵⁵ claim that the evils of radical suffering and of dehumanising injustice elude conceptuality, they demand praxis, historical acts of resistance to evil, together with active compassion for and solidarity with those who are its victims. These theologians locate atonement in the whole life of Jesus, ending in his death; his suffering is redemptive insofar as it was a struggle against injustice. From a feminist perspective one way of transforming the meaning of atonement, is to make a theological shift and instead of seeing it as 'a once for all action' performed by a faraway God, 'atonement' can become a theory concerned with what it means to live in a faith community, as one among many, one community among many, and one species among many.⁵⁶

5.4 Roots of 'Relational Theology'

Friedrich Schleiermacher rejected traditional attempts to construe atonement in terms of satisfaction, substitution or punishment, insisting that although humanity's original blessedness has been tainted by sin it has not been completely wiped out.⁵⁷ We retain the vestiges of our original predisposition toward God consciousness. Christ's perfect God-consciousness is the fulfillment of human potential and the definitive revelation of divine-human communion with God. Christ originates and makes possible a completely unique communion with, a simultaneity of immanence and transcendence, enabling greater union with the divine and with one another.⁵⁸ The essence of corporate piety of the Church is not a rational or moral principle but the 'feeling' of absolute and total dependence on God.⁵⁹ Schleiermacher stressed that Christian faith is not primarily conceptual, rather doctrines are second order expressions of primary religious truth such as the experience of redemption. He presents another view of sin which affirms life in its primordial experience, as an experience of the infinite in a moment of grace. Grace liberates us from socially constructed identities that

⁵³ Metz Johann Baptist, *Faith in History and Society* (New York: Seabury, 1980).

⁵⁴ Soelle Dorothee, *The Silent Cry; Mysticism and Resistance* (Minnneapolis: Fortress, 2001).

⁵⁵ Farley Wendy, *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy*. (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1990).

⁵⁶ McFague Sallie, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1993).

⁵⁷ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. M.R.Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart([S.I.] : T Clark, 1928 (1976)).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Schleiermacher Friedrich, *On Religion: Speeches to the Cultured Dispersers*, trans. John Oman (Louisville/Westminster: John Knox Press, 1994).

reduce the expanse of the self and restrict it to strategies that employ us in struggle and tension.

However, my recourse to Schleiermacher is not in relation to sin as such but because his theory furthers my argument for the significance of 'experience' understood as a conscious body-affirming feeling of congruence, that is to say a felt experience of total dependence on God. According to Jacob Needleman, for a person to be able to say, 'I am a Christian', he must first be able to say, 'I Am'.⁶⁰ Schleiermacher is saying something similar; 'For in order to intuit the world and to have religion, man must first have found humanity, and he finds it only in love and through love'.⁶¹ Schleiermacher sets out to affirm a link between mind and body which combines unity as well as difference as core to human experience. What follows is my linking theories of psychology and theology to further my argument for an anthropology that evokes a vision of the human/divine destiny, 'mysticism' for us all.

Thandeka, who is a feminist theologian, draws on the work of Schleiermacher, who she claims retrieves the 'embodied self' from the gap left by Kant's rational theology. Kant taught that the experience of God is impossible because we can never get beyond the phenomena of experience to reality as it is in itself, and because the term 'God' cannot ever be the object of experience it can only stand for a regulative idea.⁶² Schleiermacher examined the phenomena of religious consciousness, opening the doors shut by Kant. He sought to give an account of religion from within appealing to feeling and intuition, not simply to scripture and tradition. Thandeka claims Schleiermacher found the self that Kant lost

In 1798 Kant discovered that he had lost the self: he had not demonstrated a necessary link between the pure and the empirical 'I'. He realized that he had failed to explain adequately how the "I think" can be an empirical proposition even though the "I" in this proposition is not an empirical representation but is rather purely intellectual. This failure to demonstrate a necessary bond between the pure and empirical "I" left a gap in Kant's theory of self-consciousness. The self embedded in nature slipped through this gap in Kant's theory and lost its body. This is the self that Kant lost— the embodied self, the self that is an organic part of the world of experience.⁶³

⁶⁰ Needleman Jacob, *Lost Christianity* (Dorset: Element Books, 1990).

⁶¹ Schleiermacher. D. Fredrick, *On Religion: Speeches to the Cultured Despisers* (New York: HarperTorchbooks, 1994).

⁶² Jantzen Grace, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*. p.311.

⁶³ Thandeka, "The Discovery of the Self That Kant Lost," *Harvard Theological Review* 85 (1992)p439.

Schleiermacher first identified our capacity for the embodied self as 'that which remains over' when we are not actually thinking about something. Thinking has both an intellectual function and also a sensate function. Thinking shifts from one determinate moment of consciousness to another and between moments of consciousness there is a transition when no thinking is going on. From the perspective of the intellect, this place is empty, he calls this an 'indifference point', we have ceased one function and not yet begun the other. 'From the perspective of our organic reality, however, everything is present, we are an indistinguishable part of life; neither I nor you, but 'we' exist as one unit of experience'.⁶⁴

Schleiermacher referred to this point as the 'common border', that which is in us as thinking organisms, but the transition to the 'common border' is not 'thinking', but the self that remains when the thinking has ceased.⁶⁵ From the standpoint of the intellect the space between thoughts is empty, from the standpoint of our reality, the 'space between' everything is present, we are an indistinguishable part of life. 'Feeling', for Schleiermacher is not merely one aspect of human existence among others, feeling, or consciousness as such, is the organ of receptivity, or openness to an immediate union with being. Every feeling is the immediate co-existence of the individual with the whole; Robert Williams in contrasting the work of Feuerbach and Schleiermacher quotes the latter;

If in general the immediate self-consciousness is the mediating link between moments in which knowing predominates and moments in which doing predominates..., it will belong to piety [a modification of feeling] to stimulate and arouse knowing and doing, so that every moment in which piety predominates will include one or the other of the two in germ.... Consequently, there are a knowing and doing which belong to piety, but neither of the two constitutes the essence of piety; rather they belong to it only insofar as the stimulated feeling comes to rest in a thought which fixes it, or in an action which expresses it.⁶⁶

Schleiermacher suggests that being self-conscious is not necessarily synonymous with being pious, it is a general organ of receptivity and openness towards the whole, undivided being. He holds that in every actual self-consciousness there are two irreducible elements, a being-for-self and a 'coexistence-with-other'. The 'I' cannot be actual without its 'thou', self-consciousness cannot be actual without consciousness of other. 'I-Thou' polarity is the 'basic

⁶⁴ Robert Williams, "Schleiermacher and Feuerbach on the Intentionality of Religious Consciousness," *The Journal of Religion* 53, no. 4 (1973).p.436.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Robert Williams, "Schleiermacher and Feuerbach on the Intentionality of Religious Consciousness," *The Journal of Religion* 53, no. 4 (1973).p.432,

condition of all experience'.⁶⁷ Schleiermacher designates self-consciousness as consciousness of life, our own and all life. Inseparable from all life this self is subject-less; this self is the embodiment of life itself.⁶⁸ For Schleiermacher mysticism consists of the pre-rational immediate in which there is not as yet distinction between subject and object, this distinction comes about when rational considerations are applied. The pre-rational subject is completely absorbed, lost in a unity preceding discursive thought.

Thandeka defines the embodied self ;

as a felt congruence of mind and body with the surrounding environment as one moment of lived experience. The 'feeling' of this congruency is cognitively empty, but affectively full as an immediate, not-reflective, lived moment of life'.⁶⁹

Winnicott found the link of the 'embodied self' in the space between subjective and objective human experience, overlooked in classical Freudian theory; Kohut found it in the,

embodied bond to be transmuted, but grounded in our experience as beings whose identities are built up through feeling'.⁷⁰

I argue that the link between mind and body is made in Bracha Ettinger's matrixial trans-subjectivity. In her theory as the pre-birth experience of the 'embodied self' extending beyond the borders of many subjectivities', she shows the boundary between the conscious and unconscious as a product of a specific inter-subjective context.⁷¹

Grace Jantzen argues that whether or not twentieth century writers on mysticism are aware of it, and although Schleiermacher did not intend it, his theory has caused a 'psychologising' and subjectivisation' of mysticism.⁷² 'Psychologising' is precisely what I intend to do in my next chapter when I argue that 'mysticism' as understood by Schleiermacher begins in the womb where the borders between objective and subjective are not formed. I will take up the challenge made by Grace Jantzen; in her concern for the varying social constructions that the term 'mysticism' has accrued over the centuries, she argues that certain elements are still with us throughout, namely that the female is emotional and the male rational.⁷³ Ettinger considers this binary thinking to be answered through matrixial trans-subjectivity. I argue that the link

⁶⁷ Ibid.436'

⁶⁸ Thandeka, *The Self between Feminist Theory and Theology*, ed. Chopp S.Rebecca and Sheila Greeve Davaney, Horizons in Feminist in Feminist Theology; Identity, Tradition and Norms (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977) p.452.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ ———, "The Discovery of the Self That Kant Lost."p.93.

⁷¹ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity."

⁷² Jantzen Grace, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*.

⁷³ Ibid.

between mind and body is made in Ettinger's matrixial trans-subjectivity theory, as the pre-birth experience of the 'embodied self' extending beyond the borders of many subjectivities'. She shows the boundary between the conscious and unconscious as a product of a specific inter-subjective context in the 'matrixial.'⁷⁴ Schleiermacher points to a primal stage in consciousness before subject and object are differentiated, for him this is the truly religious moment.⁷⁵ This is the moment in the matrixial theory of 'I' and not 'I', when m/other and baby are 'becoming', the pause before consciousness of difference. Schleiermacher describes the secret of interpersonal love as the 'context in which religion is disclosed.

For in order to intuit the world and to have religion,
[man] must have first found humanity and he finds it
only in love and through love.⁷⁶

Ettinger claims that in the later stages of pregnancy there is such an experience in the process of 'human becoming'; this is the time in the womb, everyone experiences⁷⁷ before gender differentiation, a matrixial time. Ettinger does not consider it a religious moment, but I do. The 'Matrix' (womb) is not the opposite of the phallus; it is rather a supplementary perspective, it does not replace the pre-Oedipal or the Oedipal, it rather precedes these symbolic stages. Neither is it a concern with a rivalry between 'penis' or 'womb'; it is a psychoanalytic theory about the transmissions and reverberations in the psyche of every woman or man, set in motion in pregnancy.

5.5 Matrixial Trans-subjectivity⁷⁸

Bracha Ettinger is an Israeli/French psychoanalyst, philosopher and prominent international artist, whose thesis about feminine sexual difference and subjectivity emerge at the intersections of painting, analytical practice and feminist theory. She offers a radical understanding of human 'be-coming' by asking us to consider aspects of 'subjectivity' as encounter arising from a sexual difference that has its origins in the 'feminine' of every subject, irrespective of later sexuality or gender identification.⁷⁹ Ettinger's argument is to perceive human subjectivity not only as the effect of the 'castration' cut familiar to us through classical

⁷⁴ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity."

⁷⁵ Jantzen Grace, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*.p.312.

⁷⁶ Schleiermacher.D.Fredrick, *On Religion: Speeches to the Cultured Despisers*.

⁷⁷ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity."

⁷⁸ 'Matrixial' meaning womb.

⁷⁹ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity."

psychoanalysis and lodged in cultural theory by the works of Freud and Lacan, but as operating as 'subjectivity-as-encounter.' Ettinger proposes a model for dealing with women's sense of embodiment, one that she names 'subjectivity-as-encounter', because for her human self consciousness is a body-affirming feeling of congruence.

We are schooled by Freudian psychoanalysis to think subjectivity through the single prism of castration, that is, through an accumulation of separations, splits, cuts and cleavages, that, captured retrospectively into the traumatizing complex that Freud named after the legendary Oedipus.⁸⁰

Ettinger's proposal doesn't concern a subject and its object, existing or lacking. Rather, it concerns "trans-subjectivity" and shareability on a partial level, and it is based on her claim concerning a feminine-matrixial difference that escapes the phallic opposition of masculine/feminine and is produced in a process of co-emergence.⁸¹ For Ettinger, the mother and baby in the womb are 'co-emerging subjects in process and in relationship'. This requires rethinking 'desire' and the 'unconscious', without reference to the usual phallic concentration. Ettinger describes 'the transgressive encounter between 'I' and 'non-I', grounded in the maternal womb/intra-uterine complex as a notion of affective economy, that avoids phallic-centrism'.⁸² The psychic layer from which Ettinger views this perspective, she calls the 'matrixial' as a stratum of subjectivisation. For her, subjectivity begins in the relationship between mother and baby in the womb, neither 'becoming mother' nor 'becoming infant' *know* their co-affecting other'.

This is not about fusion, symbiosis or any sentimentalism of a cosy togetherness, immersion or oceanic unity that often springs to mind as the opposite pole of the phallic model of separateness.⁸³

Ettinger emphasises that this matrixial 'femininity' is not the opposite of the phallic masculine, she sees it rather as the 'other' of the masculine-feminine opposition. For her the

matrixial' is a dynamic that may attach itself to bodies that are masculine or feminine; the feminine is not only accessible to women, it is accessible to anybody on the condition that it surrenders itself to its own original variation and return, intensely, artistically relived.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Pollock Griselda, "Thinking the Feminine," *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, no. 1-5 (2004).p.6

⁸¹ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity."

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Pollock Griselda, "Thinking the Feminine."p.30

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Psychological health and dysfunction had previously revolved around a tension with this primordial undifferentiated unity presumed to exist at the root of our being. The mother's idiom of care and the infant's experience of this handling, is one of the first if not the earliest human aesthetic. 'It is the most profound occasion when the nature of the self is formed and transformed by the environment'.⁸⁵ To speak about the subject is also to speak about an enlarged subjectivity. A meeting occurs between the co-emerging *I* and the unknown *non-I*. The matrix is a zone of encounter where each neither assimilates nor rejects the other, a continual negotiation of separateness and distance, within togetherness and proximity.⁸⁶ I am claiming that from this perspective 'narcissism' has not to be seen as a failure to wrest individuality from the undifferentiated matrix, because it was never thus; psychological disturbances such as pathological narcissism, are the result of the violation of relational bonds. The origin of human being is not founded on a state of, 'self-other fusion', but on a state of 'self-other relationship'. As Ettinger says,

there never was a celibate, singular subject becoming all on its own, reducing its maternal partner to mere envelope, non-human anatomy, physiology or biological/pre-linguistic environment.⁸⁷

Ettinger's model answers the problem that Julia Kristeva introduces into psychoanalytic theory with the term 'abjection', which she sees as the original moment of subjectivity, where the 'not yet I' differentiates itself from a still not fully objectified or externalised m/other. Freud, and Kristeva maintain that a child's sexual identity is formed through a struggle to separate from its mother's body. The male does this by abjecting that body, but mother cannot abject without abjecting herself. For any ethical subject to emerge, according to Kristeva, the psychosis-inducing condition of the pregnant-maternal and its body-space-memory must be denied by an interior killing; male children achieve their distinct identity by repudiating the mother. Women's own denial of their subjectivity corresponds to this male perception, she becomes in her own mind abject, an instrument, serving men as their Other.⁸⁸ Bracha Ettinger disagrees that abjection is a state brought by the nascent 'other', she says one neither assimilates nor rejects the other. If the 'feminine', says Griselda Pollock, is to gain non-phallic meaning, it must not be thought of in relation to organs, or anatomies, instead it invokes a psychic event-encounter grasped through concepts of 'border space, borderline, border linking' that are traced in the subject at all levels.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity."

⁸⁷ Pollock Griselda, "Thinking the Feminine."p.8.

⁸⁸ Kristeva Julia, "Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection," (1980).

Right from the moment in which we may speak about the subject, we might also speak of an *enlarged subjectivity*. In the Matrix a meeting occurs between the co-emerging 'I' and the unknown 'non-I'. Each one neither assimilates nor rejects the other and their energy consists neither in fusion nor repulsion, but in continual re-adjustment of distances, continual negotiation of separateness and distance within togetherness and proximity. *Matrix is a zone of encounter between the most intimate and the most distanced unknown*. Its most internal is an outer limit, and the limits themselves are flexible and variable. They are potential or virtual thresholds.⁸⁹

Kristeva claims that one reason feminist movements fail, is that they do not take up the question of maternity and its impact on women. She argues that 'real female innovation in whatever field, will only come about when maternity, female creation and the link between them, are better understood'.⁹⁰

Christianity's rationalising power, with regard to the maternal body shows itself in the doctrines of Mary; the Immaculate Conception, the Virgin Birth, and the Assumption: theology defines maternity, only as an impossible elsewhere, a sacred beyond, a vessel of divinity, a spiritual tie with the ineffable godhead and transcendence' ultimate support, necessarily virginal and committed to assumption.⁹¹

The Matrix is not about biological determinism, anatomical essentialism, or any of the fearsome theories that Feminists decry, it is about a model for human situations and processes, psychically, imaginatively and symbolically built on the primordial situation of human becoming.

It is a theory that requires an ethics of respecting in the therapeutic encounter; in some psychoanalytic traditions, quite unconsciously a mother-monster is offered to the client as the major cause for anxiety, that the arousal of unremembered early events bring about. There are three Mother-phantasies, the fear of not enoughness of mother, the fear of the abandoning mother, and the fear of the devouring mother, they represent primal phantasies that at the time have no painful-traumatic cause. In the process of therapy these anxieties irrupt in the transference relationship and may result in an endless search for a 'cause' that re-traumatises the 'I' in the locus of her becoming m/other. If, as often happens says Ettinger, instead of treating such phantasies of insufficiency and abandonment as both primordial and

⁸⁹ Pollock Griselda, "Thinking the Feminine." p.25

⁹⁰ Oliver Kelly, "Julia Kristevas Feminist Revolutions," *Hypatia* 8, no. 3 (1993).

⁹¹ Kristeva Julia, "Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection," (1980). p.237.

phantasmic, the therapist lends reality to the client's expressed feelings of anger, rage, distress about her/his actual mother's failure or menace, 'maternity, feminine sexuality and mother/daughter relations suffer serious damage.'⁹² Ettinger makes two important points, the infant meets the maternal subject via its own primary affective compassion. Compassion signals contact and connection, yet it is not reactive, but it is the psychic potential for subjective freedom, which the therapist enhances with her own affective compassion. The second point is that of respecting the parental figures of the client, holding the client by respecting their human situations and the maternal and paternal subjectivities in particular provides the holding atmosphere inside which forgiveness will grow in the process of healing. I sum up this section by claiming that the net effect of certain uncritical appropriation of anthropological data and the way it is made legitimate through psychoanalytical theory reinforces theological misogyny. I will be analysing the implications of Ettinger's thinking for those of us who pray, 'blessed is the fruit of thy womb', in chapter six of my study.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown the significance of 'relationality' in its origins in theology and psychology and how it can overcome narcissism and energise the potential for mysticism. In the 1980s two documents were issued by Pope John Paul II pertaining to the theology of womanhood as it developed in this decade. They provided the most complete understanding of theology of womanhood to date. One was on the role of the Christian family in the Modern World the other on the Dignity and Vocation of Women.⁹³ I shall return to this latter when I focus on Mary's central role in the Incarnation.⁹⁴ The new code of Canon law was promulgated in January, 1983. On 22nd June of that same year SCRIS (*The Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes*) released a text on the *Essential Elements in Church Teaching on Religious Life*. The first of these documents bears the force of law and the second, spelling out

⁹² Pollock Griselda, "Mother Trouble: 'The Maternal-Feminine in Phallic and Feminist Theory in Relation to Bracha Ettinger's Elaboration of Matrixial' in *Studies in the Maternal*, no. 1 (2009).p.23.

⁹³ Pope Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem, on the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the Occasion of the Marian Year* (Vatican City 1988).

⁹⁴ ———, "Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life as Applied to Institutes Dedicated to Works of the Apostolic," (1983).

'essential elements' that are not to vary with historical or cultural changes, contain many of the norms that continue to perpetuate 19th century directives for enclosed religious.⁹⁵ The traditional programme of Christian formation for Religious (Pre-Vatican II), tended to be influenced by 'Augustinian' inwardness and subjectivity linked to withdrawal from the world. This contributed to an anti-world spirituality that became a feature of Religious life until Vatican II. The interior self was alienated from what lay outside, this extended to the body and its sexuality and led to a view of the vows in juridical terms, what was allowed or forbidden. The conviction that human pride and rebellion are to blame for the disruption of the divine-human relationship, causing disharmony and alienation from the created order, led to an understanding of sin as willfulness, disobedience and self-love.⁹⁶ From a feminist perspective I was able to see the Anselmian model of sin and evil as problematic, because the implied model of relationship is one of unilateral power of one over another. This research into the understanding of sin in traditional orthodox theology led me to take another view of 'body' as the 'magisterium' of human consciousness, in contrast to the body as the site of sin. The 'embodied self', I discovered, is the basis for both the mystical and the relational. In the years following the Council feminists were beginning cautiously to allow the 'flesh' to reveal the 'divine', instead of pursuing a disembodied perfection.⁹⁷ The young women who came to discern their vocation to the Cenacle, and later those women who came to our workshops to learn more about human development, were prepared by those Council documents that were more incarnational than eschatological, more inclined to reconciliation with human culture, more inclined to see goodness than sin.⁹⁸

The 'full humanity of woman' takes longer than the two years of noviceship to achieve. But for those who commit themselves to a vowed life, religious community provides the opportunity for the 'divine among women' that Irigaray describes.

For every woman who is not fated to remain a slave to the logic of the essence of man, must imagine a God, an objective-subjective place or path whereby the self could be coalesced in space and time: unity of instinct and heart and knowledge, unity of nature and spirit, condition for the abode and for saintliness. God alone can save us, keep us safe.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Brennan Margaret, "Enclosure: Institutionalising the Invisibility of Women in Ecclesiastical Communities," *Concilium* 182 (1985).p.45.

⁹⁶ Darby Kathleen Ray, *Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, Abuse and Ransom*. P.34.

⁹⁷ Isherwood Lisa, "The Embodiment of Feminist Liberation Theology: The Spiralling of Incarnation," *Feminist Theology* 12, no. 2. (2004).

⁹⁸ Flannery Austin, *Documents of Vatican II. Gaudium et spes* p.903.

⁹⁹ Irigaray Luce, *Sexes and Genealogies*.p67.

I agreed with Charles Davies who thought that post-modern identity is not to be found in the realm of subjectivity, which has been supposed since the time of Descartes, but in 'inter-subjectivity'.¹⁰⁰ It was good therefore to discover the echo in Ettinger's matrixal theory of Schleiermacher's belief in a primal stage of consciousness, the religious moment before objective content is differentiated from subjective participation. Also to discover that the relationality originating in the womb with the bond between the m/other, is how we 'become' human, yet the almost exclusive phallic concentration has prevented this from influencing views of post-modern identity. For Ettinger, subjectivity begins in the relationship between mother and baby in the womb, a theory that deconstructs misogynist attitudes towards women. Having focussed on relationality as fundamental in Christian belief and praxis, I now to turn to Christology and how women are 'saved' by the man Jesus.

¹⁰⁰ Davies Charles, "Our Modern Identity: The Formation of the Self.," *Modern Theology* (1990).

1992-2002 *My Experience of Cenacle Religious Life*

In 1992 the Congregation was enriched by the work of one of our French sisters who had undertaken a theological study of the 'Cenacle: its Christological Foundations and its Spirituality'.¹ This excellent scholarship does not incorporate a Marian devotion as simply one element, it is much more comprehensive, for example, 'To Live in the Cenacle is to live with Mary'. The writer goes on to express the different ways in which we live in Mary; it means to be rooted in an expansive openness, to do one's utmost for Christ's body, above all it is to be transformed in the Spirit. Coté uses a theological method in which she places herself within the canon of aesthetic theology as introduced by Hans Urs von Balthasar.² The Congregation did not avert to this work in the Chapters of this era but that is because the compilation of the Constitutions of 1984 had been sound in their understanding of Our Lady of the Cenacle. This next chapter will further this understanding by drawing on more recent work in the fields of feminist theology and psychology in relation to Mary.

During these years we had three general Chapters. The first was in 1992 when we asked ourselves, 'How are we, as Cenacle Congregation, to follow the Spirit into the new millennium'? With this in mind the Chapter delegates assembled in Rome on June 7th 1992 to give expression to the orientations for the Congregation of the future. The mystery of the Cenacle called us to live more fully the three dimensions of our life, prayer, community and apostolate. I had been inspired by an American Jesuit, John Carroll Futrell, who described religious communities as, 'Faith Communities of Corporate Mission'. Every word in this is significant, we cannot be described as a sociological group even if that is one constituent of such a group, also, we must have come together for a common purpose, to live an incarnated faith capable of working for peace, justice and the care of creation. Our Mission integrates prayer, community and apostolate. We no longer prayed the 'liturgy of the hours' but were to be open to new forms of prayer that were creative and more spontaneous. Also there is a call to adulthood, 'It is the responsibility of the provinces, regions and communities to engage in this renewal and devise their own plans and forms of accountability'.³ This gave rise to various experiments many of which continue. A further injunction of this Chapter was the principle of 'collaboration'. For me during these years it took the form of enabling others of different Christian denominations to understand the theory and practice of the 'Spiritual Exercises'. When the delegates assembled

¹ Coté Ghislaine, *The Cenacle: Its Christological Foundations and Its Spirituality*. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1991).

² Balthasar Hans Urs von, *Explorations in Theology II: Spouse of the Word* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991).

³ Acts of the Chapter 1992 p.5.

in Rome in May 1998, we asked, 'How are we, as Cenacle, to follow the Spirit into the new millennium'? Communication on the global level is marked more and more by immediacy and universality; for example, the mobile phone, the fax machine, and especially the internet. This requires us to be open and educated about these new communication technologies.

This 1998 chapter chose a new style in which the process of deliberating was as important as the content. We had a woman facilitator who used drawings in answer to questions, imagination as well as intellect to image the Cenacle as we would like it to be today.

Significantly, there was a focus on the situation of women; we were reminded again that one of the reasons we were founded was to respond to the needs of women. This dimension of our charism required us to attend to the inequality experienced by women in the institutional Church, in the field of economics, rights within the family, and in other areas of influence within Society.⁴ The Congregational Chapters had fully embraced the Documents of Vatican II by responding positively when the Catholic Church opened her windows upon the world.

Between 1992-2002 the Cenacle Congregation grew as a responsible 'discerning body', each of us taking personal and corporate responsibility and accountability for the whole..

I had some bitter disappointments as some of the young women who had been my novices left the Congregation even after final vows. They left because they came to realise that they were not called to Religious Life, the new theology of vocation and moral freedom and responsibility, made the once unthinkable, thinkable, it was a 'sign of the times' to change one's state of life. The stigma there had once been to 'leaving the convent' vanished so that the change became culturally acceptable. These women who left us are profoundly grateful for the psychological, spiritual and professional formation they received in Religious Life. My story is about why I stayed; from a human point of view it was a bleak time, having experienced the joyous Spirit-filled enthusiasm of the Council when community, equality of discipleship in the Church, and feminist empowerment, gave a hope that now seemed slowly being stifled. Neo-orthodoxy, and Vatican re-centralisation were beginning to replace the world affirming, humane spirit of John XXIII and the Council.

It was this unrest that led me to seek a fuller understanding of the human psyche and its development. During this period I lost a close friend, Sister Elisabeth Smyth, we had lived and worked together since 1986, we had both come out of leadership roles in Grayshott, she as Superior and myself as Novice Directress. We had trained first as counsellors and then as Psychosynthesis therapists. It was now that we were able to give more time to the 'Ignatian Spirituality Course' and to travel around the country giving 'Myers-Briggs Indicator' and

⁴ Acts of the Chapter 1998p.11.

'Enneagram' workshops. One workshop that seemed to help people was the 'Inner-Child' workshop, it was demanding and required all the skills and competencies of our years of training. We both went to Ghana for three months to give retreats and workshops in a spirituality centre in Kumasi. The experience of the dire poverty was a culture shock and salutary for us. We had not been back very long when Elisabeth was diagnosed with cancer, but after surgery she was assured that the cancer had gone. Meantime, I went on sabbatical to Australia staying some time with a friend I had made in St.Louis, and working in the Cenacle in Brisbane. I also stayed some time with our sisters in beautiful New Zealand. When I returned after about eleven months Elisabeth was seriously ill and died in February 1995 aged 51 years. This was a time of great sadness, not just for me but for the whole province. She was so vibrant and a zealous apostle, as well as being greatly loved by many people. I had a good therapist who supported me during this time while I was busy with a client practice, and working on the team to train students to become Psychosynthesis counsellors. This was a real time of 'letting go'; Elisabeth was no longer there for support and sharing of life and ideas. I had to let go of my role as principle teacher on the Ignatian programme, others had replaced me while I was in Australia. I had to move from St.Katharine's Retreat Centre and with another sister work in a city centre.

Chapter 6

Christology / Relationality

6. 1 Introduction

As I have shown from the perspective of the psychoanalytic, relationality is a fundamental characteristic of our humanity from the earliest forms of human development. In the process of our growth in understanding this, we became aware that by over stressing 'self-giving love' without equal regard for self-affirmation, and the value of mutuality, we had contributed in the sociological sphere and in the Church, to maintain women's subordination. The Congregational Chapters of 1992 and 1998 reminded us all that the 'preferential option for the poor' is addressed, not just to Latin America, but to all women who are among the poorest of

the world. We were to stand in solidarity with women, not simply because they are poor, but because they are women and are powerless.⁵

This chapter will analyse the theology underpinning the degree to which women had been liberated from patriarchal moorings. First, I consider the work of those women theologians who have given much thought to Feminist Christology, freeing it from Hellenistic influence, and in doing so exposing the potential for 'Incarnation' to be the reality of all.⁶

Second, I return to the critical principle of feminist theology, exploring what it means to promote the 'full humanity of woman', claiming that it is through woman that humanity has the capacity for the divine.⁷ Although I examine theories related to 'humanity' and 'divinity', I avoid dualism by stressing the message of the Incarnation in a unifying anthropology. I draw on the work of Grace Jantzen, who uses the imaginary of 'natality' expressed in an idiom of flourishing, to further the argument for divine incarnation offered to every woman and man.⁸ Also, Irigaray, who in claiming an 'irreducible sexual difference' as her central principle, emphasises the importance of affirming women's unique embodiment, in so doing she confirms the biological foundations of women's ways of being. This sets the scene for my later argument for a Marian narrative of women's salvation.⁹ Although Bracha Ettinger's work is not in the context of Christianity, she is the third of my feminist scholars, a psychoanalyst, who supports the claim that in the flesh of woman the divine is manifest without incurring the charge of biological essentialism.

Third, I discuss the implications of the above for women and in doing so re-define the understanding of mysticism. I use theological reflection to trace how, as a Religious Congregation with a charism steeped in the *Spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, we could hold together a mission that is both contemplative, and at the same time a witness to faith doing justice. I will point to the deeply held belief in a division between spirit and flesh, which has influenced our understanding of gender, and how it has maintained a pervasive influence on women's lives in the Church and society. In this I will avoid the charge made by Arendt in which she shows the danger of desiring to be liberated from our humanity,

Escape from the frailty of human affairs into the solidity
of quiet and order has in fact so much to recommend it
that the greater part of political philosophy since Plato
could easily be interpreted as various attempts to find

⁵"General Chapter Documents," (Rome: Congregation of Our Lady of the Cenacle, 1844-2010).

⁶Isherwood Lisa, "The Embodiment of Feminist Liberation Theology: The Spiralling of Incarnation," *Feminist Theology* 12, no. 2 (2004).

⁷ Ruether Rosemary, *Sexism and God Talk*.

⁸ Jantzen Grace, *Becoming Divine*.p.157.

⁹ Beattie Tina, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate : A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation*.

theoretical foundations and practical ways for an escape from politics altogether.¹⁰

6.2 'Who Do You Say That I Am?' (Matt: 16.¹⁵)

Jesus Christ is the locus of a 'contact zone' or 'borderland' between the human and the divine, the one and the many, the historical and the cosmological....Jesus' question, 'Who do you say that I am?' is an invitation for every Christian and local faith community to infuse that contact zone with new meanings, insights and possibilities.¹¹

The reality of Incarnation and Redemption are at the heart of Christianity, it is through the person and significance of Jesus that God's love is revealed. But the doctrines that have arisen around the understanding of the Incarnation event have been constructed by men. Women have, until recently been excluded from the discussion on 'Christology', as to how Jesus could be both God and Man. Women were absent at Chalcedon (451) when Greek philosophy was used to explain the two natures in Jesus, the '*hypostatic* union'. It is significant that Karl Rahner published an article in 1954 entitled, 'Chalcedon Beginning or End'?¹² Recognising Christology as an on-going process means that continuing to examine the meaning of Jesus is essential. Women have been absent from every council of the Church except Vatican II when a few women were present as observers.¹³ Women were virtually invisible and entirely silent when decisions were made regarding important structural changes affecting all members of the Church.¹⁴ The result is that the Catholic Church lives with impaired vision. We have a Christology that identifies the maleness of the historical Jesus, with the maleness of the divine logos, and this excludes woman as representative of Christ in ministry and places her second in the order of creation and redemption.¹⁵

The question of how a male saviour can save women has been asked and answered with varying degrees of satisfaction, depending largely on the culture in which it is addressed. Ruether reminds us that Classical Christology shifted the emphasis from the biological

¹⁰ Arendt Hannah, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958).p.222.

¹¹ Pui-lan Kwok, *Engineering Christ: Christology in Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster: John Knox, 2005).p.171

¹² O'Grady John, "The Present State of Christology," in *Contemporary Catholic Theology*, ed. Michael A. Hayes and Liam Geardon (New York: Continuum, 2000).p.183.

¹³ Halter Deborah, *The Papal 'No'*. (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004).p.21.

¹⁴ Ciernick Helen Marie, "Cracking the Door: Women at the Second Vatican Council," in *The Annual Publication of the College Catholic Society*, ed. Mary Ann Hinsdale and Phyllis H. Kaminski (New York: Orbis Books, 1994).

¹⁵ Ruether R. Rosemary, *Sexism and God Talk*.

importance of Jesus' physical being through which he embodied his message, to stressing his transcendence and divinity. The message of Jesus is embodied in his particularity, and the message may be embodied by both men and women.¹⁶ For Ruether, Christians become 'redemptive community', not by passively receiving a redemption won by Christ alone but rather by collectively embodying this path of liberation in a way that transforms people and social systems'.¹⁷ Within this view of Christology there is no patriarchal order, just an egalitarian understanding of human nature. Ruether seeks to present Jesus without accretions of doctrine, especially those expressed in classical doctrine. She sees Jesus as the Christ, the representative of liberated humanity and the liberation of the Word of God.¹⁸ Jesus' redemptive power lies ultimately in this ideal humanity, not in his maleness, nor in a spurious identification of him with a transcendent Greek *Logos*. His maleness is significant only insofar as he renounces the privileges that accompany it. Ruether concludes that in order for Jesus' message to be effective he had to be male to reject the privileges associated with that very maleness. It is as if Ruether must inadvertently re-inscribe the historical maleness of Jesus if she is to claim him as liberator.

Brock believes we need to move beyond a unilateral understanding of power her Christology, unlike Ruether's, is not centred simply in Jesus as hero, but in relationship and community as the healing centre of Christianity. She believes that basing Christology on an historical figure confuses the concept with the phenomenon; instead of seeing Jesus as the focus of redemption we should see him as the locus of faith. So for example, in relation to the miracles we hear something about the whole community in a relationship of power equality. The characters who are the subjects of the miracle stories claimed their own power in a mutuality with Jesus. (Mk.2.⁴) Brock describes the appropriate uses of power in mutuality. Confusing 'pride' with the healing that is the grace received through legitimate anger and honesty, results in all anger being condemned as sin, yet 'anger that we integrate, rather than vent on others, leads to self-assertion and self-acceptance'.¹⁹

Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel claims that although the early reading of scripture has been buried by patriarchy, it will be recovered if we discover the embodied Christ in the stories of women who take the first step to wholeness.²⁰ For example, the woman with the issue of blood reaches out from the crowd to touch his garment and is healed (Mk. 5.^{23ff}) and the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ruether R. Rosemary, *Introducing Redemption in Christian Feminism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1998).p.93.

¹⁸ Ruether R. Rosemary, *Sexism and God Talk*.p.137.

¹⁹ Brock Rita Nakashima, *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* (New York: Cross Road, 1988).p.19

²⁰ Moltmann-Wendel Elisabeth, *A Land Flowing with Milk and Honey* (London: SCM, 1986).p.122.

Canaanite women who calls out on behalf of her daughter (Matt. 15.^{21ff}) and is persistent until Jesus heals. There is the woman who anoints the feet of Jesus (Lk.7.^{36ff}) and the one who anointed his head at a meal in the house of Simon (Mk.14.³) and those who anointed the body of Jesus after his death.(Mk.16.^{1ff}Lk.24.^{1ff}). If we focus simply on the marvel of his miracles we might miss the message of our own power in the loving communication and the mutuality illustrated in these stories. Rita Brock sees the source of this power as 'erotic power' which is the power of our primal relatedness, I claim that our 'primal relatedness' begins in the womb prior to any gender orientation.

The feminist eros encompasses the 'life force', the unique human energy which springs from the desire for existence with meaning, for a consciousness informed by feeling, for experience that integrates the sensual and the rational, the spiritual and the political. In the feminist vision Eros is both love and power.²¹

Understanding what we are being 'saved' from, is another question that feminists try to answer for themselves rather than accepting those offered by the classical doctrine of atonement. Mary Grey bases much of her feminist redemption theology on the relationality model, which claims that women develop a sense of self in relation, while men develop a sense of self in isolation. I too would choose to see redemption in terms of relationality and mutuality since it concurs with my theses that the faith community of corporate mission is where we practice 'divinity'. My thinking is in line with that of Mary Grey in terms of redemption.

If the relational process is at the heart of reality, at the heart of the great divine creative-redemptive dynamism, participating in this must be what is meant by holiness. So entering into deeper more meaningful and at the same time structures of relating that work for greater justice is the kind of redemptive spirituality needed for the transformation of the world. Sin must therefore be acting against the relational grain.²²

Grey believes that creation and redemption are linked. She sees that growth in connection can present radical challenge and carry with it more than social implications. Jesus himself had to come to his own understanding of 'salvation', as one that ties us into the cosmic divine relationality, 'resurrection power in the world'.²³ For Grey, Christ is central to the process, not a hero who offers other worldly salvation, but a Christ who releases endless creative energy,

²¹ Brock Rita Nakashima, *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power*.p.26

²² Grey Mary, *Redeeming the Dream: Feminism, Redemption and Christian Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1989).p.35

²³ Ibid.

affirming the self of woman and her capacity to embrace right relations. The issue of sin and redemption is addressed by feminist theologians in terms of women's way of being in the world which is so relational, to the extent it creates in them a deep vulnerability especially when those they love and care about suffer. This experience is sufficiently powerful that feminist theologians are using it to re-write the definition of evil. An alternative interpretation holds that the whole purpose of creation as Scripture says, (Jn.1.¹⁻¹⁸) is the Incarnation, this is God's first thought, the original design for all creation. The primacy of the Incarnation has been proclaimed by theologians throughout the centuries saying that the purpose of Jesus' life is the fulfillment of the whole creative process, of God's eternal longing to become human.²⁴ What links these contrasting views is the faith community of the Church who experience the love of Christ, both in his work of freeing us from sin and death and in the inspiration of his life and ministry. The meaning and vitality of Jesus' existence did not die with him on the cross but are resurrected and renewed by the Christian community as they receive the Spirit of the risen Christ.

Liberation theology challenges the passivity and powerlessness of human beings, subject to an active omnipotent God who has no need of us. Such an image of God can lead to isolation and the self-sufficient stance of the narcissist. Carter Heyward argues that to insist on the sole and only agent of the redemptive process is God, is to miss the point of being human and of God as God, which is to affirm, it is 'I' - and God is with me, it is God, and I am with God, 'neither one nor the other but both together in relationship',²⁵ is power that is inborn, raw innate and often fearful. This is the authority that Jesus claims.²⁶ What Jesus revealed was that the power (*dunamis*) that human beings possess is rooted in God and is the energy by which we claim our divinity. Heyward believes there is something left out of the Genesis story. The secret of humanity is to know good and evil and realise one's power to effect either. Human empowerment, in which we become like God is to claim the power to effect good and contend with evil.²⁷

The moral of the Genesis story is that it is easier to be ignorant, harder to know; easier to comply with external authority, harder to claim one's power; easier to be created, harder to create.²⁸

²⁴ The Cappadocians in the fourth century, John Duns Scotus in the thirteenth century and Teilhard de Chardin and Karl Rahner in the twentieth century.

²⁵ Heyward Carter, *The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation* (Lanham MD.: University Press of America, 1982).p.193 Appendix C.A *Feminist Critique*.

²⁶ Isherwood Lisa, *Introducing Feminist Christologies*.(p.60.citing Heyward 'The Redemption of God')

²⁷ Heyward Carter, *The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation*.p.151.

²⁸ *Ibid*.p.151.

Christian theology projects on to God the responsibility for good and evil, a responsibility that human beings were created to share with God but abdicated out of fear. Carter Heyward cites Schleiermacher in claiming that the process of creation- world history continues without a 'fall' that is in any sense a cosmic or universal event. 'Adam and Eve is one person. Each of us is he or she'. The sin that we do is 'the failure to take possession of our share in divinity; the lack of awakening to God-consciousness' is always a misuse of our free will.²⁹ 'Feeling', for Schleiermacher, was not simply sense experience 'but a feeling elevated to the nature of community and relationality'³⁰ He asked people to explore their own consciousness suggesting that there they would discover God. This theological thinking led to a shift from external to internal authority and from God as the external locus of value to the inner human experience of God consciousness. God is co-subject with the person in her own self-consciousness, together relationally, self and God, creature and creator, co-operate in on-going creation. Grace Jantzen argues that since Schleiermacher it has become possible to foster depth of 'religious feeling' and to subscribe to a spirituality that has nothing to do with the material condition of people's lives.³¹ I claim that this is not necessarily so.

We know God, says Heyward, insofar as we know ourselves, our own humanity. For her all knowledge is grounded on human experience and our reflection on it. From within the experience of being human our willingness and effort towards the building of right relations constitutes our love of God. 'The human act of love, befriending, making justice, is our act of making God incarnate in the world'.³² Heyward argues that the image of Jesus may shed light on us only if we are willing to 'de-ecclesiologise' and celebrate in liturgy a mutual passion and co-creative power among ourselves, rather than denigrate these values in favour of a 'lofty majestic powerful God, through a distant if respectful worship and admiration'.³³ Heyward is arguing for our letting go of a traditional view of Jesus with divine powers, because she believes he only matters to us if he was fully human, and if we view his Incarnation as a 'relational experience'.³⁴

²⁹ Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*.p.233.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Schleiermacher.D.Fredrick, *On Religion: Speeches to the Cultured Despisers*.(1958 New York Harper Torchbooks)

³² Heyward Carter, *The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation*.p.185.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.p.16.

6.3 Embodied Spirituality

Dominant strains within Catholic theology have not been comfortable with 'embodiment', so my argument that the body of a woman is the foundational site of revelation, as in 'matrixial trans-subjectivity',³⁵ is a direct challenge to the Catholic thinking on this. I will pursue this theme at greater depth in the ensuing pages. The Feminist scholars cited in the previous section work hard to strip away the dualisms that are embedded in the tradition, not because they want to be different, but because thinking in dualisms, for example, opposition between spiritual and material, is a divisive approach, a centuries long legacy in the development of Christian theology which identifies men with reason, and reason with spirit, and with divinity. Rationality has been characteristic of the male, and irrationality and intuition that of the female.³⁶ I critique the kind of anthropology that is evident in theological work, based on a dualistic principle that divides reality into a world of 'things', accessible to the senses and the 'true world' or the world of ideas, accessible to the intellect. Women began to realise that this 'hierarchy of being' was not simply an abstract thought pattern, but one that has a profound effect on how we are perceived in this chain of being. Women are an inferior kind of human species. 'Anthropological subordinationism' promoted by Aristotle,³⁷ Augustine and Aquinas rested on male headship within the order of creation, women were 'matter' not disposed to rationality and spirituality in the same way as men are.

Lisa Isherwood argues that Greek metaphysics, a 'fossilising imposter', has so scarred our thinking that it does not allow us to take Incarnation seriously. She questions what would happen to the doctrines of Christology and the Incarnation if we take them beyond metaphysics. Isherwood believes that we would come in line with the early believers, the Jesus movement who had a liberating vision inspired by the powerful memory of the man Jesus. If we really believed the gospel stories, of strange queer transformations all enacted through the body of a man who proclaimed 'God with us', we would experience these many changes from 'divine to flesh, and from flesh and blood, to bread and wine, and from human to cosmic spirit'.³⁸ A shield of metaphysics and exclusivity has been put around the stories making them

³⁵ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity."

³⁶ Taylor M. Laura, "Redeeming Christ: Imitation or (Re) Citation?," in *Frontiers in Catholic Feminist Theology*, ed. Susan Abraham and Elena Procario-Foley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).

³⁷ With the acceptance of Aristotelian biology in the late Middle Ages, according to which man is fertile and perfectly formed, and contributes soul to the offspring, whereas woman is infertile and deformed, and contributes body to the offspring, not only is woman a defective man, but also, in contrast to the man, who rules by nature, she obeys by nature. Allen Prudence, *The Concept of Woman* (London: Eden, 1985), 121.

³⁸ Isherwood Lisa, "The Embodiment of Feminist Liberation Theology: The Spiralling of Incarnation." p.144

stable and clear categories, 'transubstantiation' 'consubstantiation', so that they remain in our heads rather than permeate our whole being. It is through the power of God that Jesus is raised from the dead as Peter proclaims in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10.⁴⁰). This is the erotic power of which Brock and Isherwood write.³⁹ It is the memory of this power that is the gift to all of us, brought to mind in the breaking of bread, an embodied and enfleshed ritual, rooted in sensuality. It is in the Cenacle that the stunned and disheartened group of early believers came together after Jesus' death, and through shared memory and action were able to rekindle their passion to empower others. It is at Pentecost where the tongues of fire descended that the passion and empowerment of Incarnation is symbolised. Cenacle women wear a cross on which is written the words, 'I have come to cast fire upon the earth, (Lk.12:⁴⁹) Our mission is to incarnate, to embody Christ's love, so that it becomes a living reality for all. The early Christian writers were not writing about a once for all event but an awareness that unless we are fully human, embodied, we will not be able to accept our divinity.⁴⁰ They recalled the prophecy of Joel with its promise of the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh. (Acts 2.¹⁷)

I believe women have been afraid of power, especially embodied power, because of a distorted understanding of it. Rita Brock⁴¹ reclaims the 'erotic' from the narrow sexual understanding used by Patriarchy; 'agape' has been the preferred definition, a term which suggests bodiless, whereas 'eros' allows us to feel our deepest passions.⁴²

Carter Heyward⁴³ makes clear how important relating is, it is no less than the 'creative/redemptive divine process, ours as well as God's'. She believes it to be crippling if we only see Jesus as a divine person, rather than as a human being who knew and loved God, because it prevents us from claiming our own divinity, through the gift of the Incarnation. If we are to stand in solidarity with all women it is so that we may empower them to accept the gift of Incarnation, we can only do this if we have claimed that power for ourselves. But how could we not be wary of power? Eve has been set before Catholic women to show how afraid we should be of engaging with the world as she did in a truly sensual and embodied way, which then resulted in her expulsion from paradise. Any attempt to reclaim the symbolic significance of the female body as 'person' in Christian theology must begin with Eve. Christianity bears the imprint of the cultural milieu in which her story was developed, the second account of creation (Gen.2.²²) is used to affirm the secondary nature of woman,

³⁹ Brock Rita Nakashima, *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power*, Lisa Isherwood *Introducing Feminist Christologies*.

⁴⁰ Isherwood Lisa, "The Embodiment of Feminist Liberation Theology: The Spiralling of Incarnation."

⁴¹ Brock Rita Nakashima, *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power*.

⁴² Isherwood Lisa, *Introducing Feminist Christologies*.p.55.

⁴³ Heyward Carter, *The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation*.p.16.

interpreted as it is through the lens of androcentric philosophies and patriarchal social structures that give primacy to the male.⁴⁴ On account of Eve who brought about the downfall of humanity which, according to Anselm necessitated the death of the son of God to make amends, women have been heirs to a history of guilt and shame. Only one woman, Mary, in the story of salvation is given respect for her embodiment, but this respect is so conditional that I shall use the next chapter to discover what her special place is in Christian theology.⁴⁵ Mary as Eve's advocate gives us a different message about the power within women's bodies. Early feminists' efforts to reconstruct the Christ symbol for women can be roughly divided into two camps, writes Laura M. Taylor, those who focussed on the historical Jesus as liberating prophet, the leader of socio-political movement which included feminist traits such as relationality and connectedness.⁴⁶ The other group focussed more on the Christ-symbol as Sophia, the female personification of divine wisdom. More recently women's experiences around the world have engendered rich Christ images, for example, the embodied Christ, the queer Christ, the ecological Christ, the black Christ, the *mujerista* Christ.⁴⁷ But despite new images the field of feminist Christology is at an impasse because, argues Laura Taylor, the images have been unable to effectively challenge gender essentialism.⁴⁸ She attributes this in part to the 'body politic', a term used in society or the state to refer to corporate organisation. In Catholic teaching we speak of 'the Body of Christ', illustrated by Paul in the first letter to the Corinthians, where he describes the Church in terms of a human body incorporating different parts,⁴⁹ (1.Cor.12.¹²⁻²⁷) and still more pertinent for my argument that of John (14.¹²) who uses an horticultural image for the Church. Yet for the 'Vatican' (Taylor's term for the Catholic Church) the 'Body of Christ', when used either physically or doctrinally always signifies the male body. Those members that resemble Jesus physically are accorded power within the 'body' and those that do not, for example women, are excluded as they are inappropriate members of the body and cannot participate politically or sacramentally.⁵⁰ The 'Vatican' structures the 'body politic' in a manner that includes women only in minimal ways. Even if feminist theologians continue to claim the ways in which women are like Jesus in terms of their everyday ethical behaviour, they are still precluded from imitating him in those functions that pertain to his divinity, such as the ministry of the sacraments. Focussing on Jesus

⁴⁴ Beattie Tina, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate : A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation*.

⁴⁵ Boss Jane Mary, ed. *Mary: The Complete Resource* (London: Continuum, 2007).i

⁴⁶ Taylor M. Laura, "Redeeming Christ: Imitation or (Re) Citation?."

⁴⁷ Isherwood Lisa, *Introducing Feminist Christologies*.p.21.

⁴⁸ Taylor M. Laura, "Redeeming Christ: Imitation or (Re) Citation?."

⁴⁹ Ibid.p128.

⁵⁰ Taylor M. Laura, "Redeeming Christ: Imitation or (Re) Citation?."

humanity cannot break the link between his maleness and the redemptive powers that are associated with divinity.

This gender essentialism wielded by the Vatican makes the equality of women in the Church literally unthinkable. Because women are unable to resemble the physical body of Christ, they have no place in the corporate Body of Christ, except to serve at its most basic maternal and generative levels.⁵¹

In order to break the link between maleness and Christology, Karen Trimble Alliaume, offers an alternative perspective by drawing on Judith Butler's performative framework.⁵² In order to subvert the normative construction of identity, Butler presented her theory of gender as performance. She denied the existence of doer behind the deed, any essential being behind actions and any fundamental gender identity underneath the 'expressions of identity that are said to be its results through her notion of gender as 'parody,' she argued that what is perceived as original is actually constituted by performance. Identity is constructed through a history of received messages, iterated through repeated enactments, and so forming the illusion of a primary gendered self. Butler understood identity as a signifying practice rather than an essential part of what it means to be human. Over the course of a lifetime, of women's discourses, feminine ways are cited and re-cited producing gender norms associated with her sex so that repeated acts produce the appearance of sex and gender as natural and God-given. 'Citation' the way Butler uses it, unmask the artificiality, the constructed norms we inhabit as 'natural': norms of gender, of sexuality, of race, of religious identity.⁵³

The appearance of 'naturalness' is sustained only through dutiful repetition of specific gender norms, but because they can never be repeated exactly they are best understood as parody. Parodic acts never perform exactly what they signify, but they lend themselves to processes of re-signification or responses that subvert the original. Drawing on Butler's notion of gender identity as performative, Alliaume explains that Christian identity also involves the citation of specific Christian norms accepted by the Christian community that allow for a 'Christ' identity. If to perform does not require an exact copy but rather means, 'to give a rendition', women can cite the body of Christ without having to duplicate it perfectly or entirely.

A performative and citational reading is better able to account for the ways in which women already do

⁵¹Ibid.129

⁵²Alliaume T.Karen, "The Risks of Repeating Ourselves: Reading Feminist/Womanist Figures of Jesus " *Cross Currents*, no. Summer (1998).p.202.

⁵³ Alliaume T. Karen, *The Risks of Repeating Ourselves: Reading Feminist/Womanist Figures of Jesus*.

"re(as)semble" Jesus. Re(as)sembly connotes an alternative to resemblance, since the latter is understood as imitation of or representation of Jesus, a representation from which women are liable to disqualification. Re(as)sembly of Christ denotes communal performances of Jesus rather than individual women's representations.⁵⁴

Instead of having to 'match up' to a pre-existing aspect of Jesus, Alliaume argues that Christologies read as performances of Jesus, show how bodies come to be in communal citational processes. The agency for re(as)sembly she claims is not in either the Church hierarchy or in women who resist, but in the interaction between them. In the very moment when the constraints that are the result of the norms we cite, ('Jesus maleness' for example) we allow the possibility of re-citing them differently and thus re-shaping them. So, Alliaume shifts the idea of the power of redemption from bodily resemblance, to that which exists in and through our relationships as we perform our citations of Jesus. Laura Taylor concludes,

Given this performative perspective, I propose that Christologies should not be understood as hermetically sealed entities, but rather as historically constructed formations, cited, re-cited, transformed and performed anew in the pluralised identities of the Christian people.⁵⁵

It seems to me that citing and re-citing the 'work of Jesus' in our own lives offers Christian women a dynamic Christology rooted in his prophetic life- ministry. The "reality" of Jesus lies in the extent to which figurations and stories of Jesus constitute us and our lives. The kind of citation and re-citation performed as feminist Christology carries no guarantee of promise of salvation but the ongoing possibility of transformation which Lisa Isherwood names 'spiralling of Incarnation'.⁵⁶

Moreover, this Feminist Christology counters the gender essentialism of the Church that makes the equality of women depend on resembling the maleness of Jesus, so women can have no place in the corporate body of Christ. It is not that women are biologically unsuited for full ecclesial participation, it is rather that the different roles allotted to men and women derive from the mystery of Christ in relation to the Church, equal opportunities cannot apply. Only an attempt such as that outlined by Alliaume to resolve the opposition between the Church's 'body politic' and women's bodies can offer a different perspective.

⁵⁴ Taylor M. Laura, "Redeeming Christ: Imitation or (Re) Citation?." p. 135

⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 140.

⁵⁶ Isherwood Lisa, "The Embodiment of Feminist Liberation Theology: The Spiralling of Incarnation."

I wish to draw on this perspective to go beyond a narrow Christological focus to a more encompassing vision of Incarnation that explores the divinity of women. What did Jesus reveal of 'divinity'? I need to address these questions to further my argument for women's divinity shown through everyday mysticism.

6. 4 Divine and Human Becoming

Love of God....shows the way. God forces us to do nothing except *become*. The only task, the only obligation laid upon us: is to become divine men and women, to become perfectly, to refuse to allow parts of ourselves to shrivel and die that have the potential for growth and fulfilment.⁵⁷

In what follows I bring together philosophical theories on 'natality', and psychoanalytic theories of sexuality and motherhood. Each of these discourses contributes an important dimension to the mystery of Incarnation. The 'task' of becoming divine will require critical and imaginative self-awareness, says Jantzen in her philosophical approach, it will begin by problematising the self, because subjects are treated as rational autonomous egos.⁵⁸ It will be clear from my previous writing pertaining to 'self', that I do not see human subjectivity as a singular gift, a simple given, selfhood is achieved in relationship. Psychoanalytical theory of subjectivity implies that the achievement is socially and historically constructed. I shall add that the foundation of 'selfhood' begins in the womb, not as 'autonomous egos' or 'full humanity', but constructed in the late stages of pregnancy in relationship with m/others so that thereafter m/others continue to give life and promote self-hood.⁵⁹

Jantzen uses the imaginary of 'natality' expressed in an idiom of 'flourishing' to open the way to a different horizon which 'celebrates alterities and furthers the aim of the divine incarnation of every woman and man'.⁶⁰ 'Natality' for Jantzen is not simply a psychological characteristic, but a philosophic symbolic category, operating as a contrast to death (necrophilia) which so strongly pervades the mind-set of humankind.⁶¹ The commitment to women's flourishing, based on an ethic of natality necessitates the choice to follow the path that leads to fullness of

⁵⁷ Irigaray Luce, *Sexes and Genealogies*.p.68

⁵⁸ Jantzen Grace, *Becoming Divine*.p.27.

⁵⁹ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity."

⁶⁰ Jantzen Grace, *Becoming Divine*.p.157.

⁶¹ Ibid. note p.131.

life rather than that to death. Necrophilia is a pre-occupation with death an underlying belief that relies heavily on rationality, 'desire' being the 'other' of rationality. Traditionally passion and desire are linked with the irrational and with the female and the body. Necrophilia for Jantzen is fascination with death, with a dread of death; it is the rational that allows the continuous involvement with war, waging wars, planning wars, building colossal armaments to defend against war. At the same time there is a denial of death, spending time, money and effort to ward it off.⁶² Jantzen then uses a strategy of 'double reading', a technique developed by Jacques Derrida,⁶³ that on the one hand pays close attention to the text and in doing so discloses a rupture destabilising it and allowing for a different reading. It is to attend to the denied 'other' in the binary, for example, birth and death, natality and mortality. This is in fact a deconstructive approach, one aspect of which is an attempt to discern the suppressed or denied 'other' which in this symbolic is 'natality' to give the creative possibility for flourishing. Jantzen makes clear that it is no part of a feminist agenda to deny death nor does she deny the importance of the depth of religious reflections on mortality. However, her 'double reading' of the human symbolic recognises natality as the unacknowledged and un-theorised 'other' of death. The obligation to become divine is less about preparation for life after death, it is in the possibilities of life before death, possibilities to create a new horizon for human flourishing. It is on the basis of underlying wants and desires that beliefs are formed. I introduce this point in Jantzen's argument agreeing with her that it would be a great day when philosophers of religion paid as much attention to desires as to beliefs. 'Desire has been an under-acknowledged ingredient in thinking of the divine', but not for the medieval mystical writers who believed that lack of desire for God keeps us from the divine.⁶⁴ Attending to desires can interrupt gendered understandings of what it means to be women and men in relation to the divine, and is supported by a way of reading against the grain of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Not all desires promote life, it is through prayer and reflection that we shed light on those to be followed and those to be relinquished.

There can be no other selves than those born of a woman, to become divine is to become an embodied, gendered situated self.⁶⁵ Natality is a fundamental human condition which according to Arendt should be considered as the condition of human possibility, it is the foundation of freedom.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Derrida Jacques, *The Mystical Foundation of Authority*, ed. et al Drucilla Cornell, Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice (London: Routledge, 1992).

⁶⁴ Jantzen Grace, *Becoming Divine*.p.131

⁶⁵ Ibid.

If action as beginning corresponds to the fact of birth, if it is the actualisation of the human condition of natality, then speech corresponds to the fact of distinctness and is the actualisation of the human condition of plurality, that is of living as a distinct and unique human being among equals.⁶⁶

'The core of our destiny', claims Luce Irigaray 'is to generate the human, the divine, within us, and among us'. 'What holds women back from becoming divine she asks? If we are to become woman and not the 'other' of the ideal male, Irigaray contends, woman needs a 'god who is the figure for the perfection of *her* subjectivity'. In her discussion of women becoming divine.,Irigaray calls for a projection of the divine according to our gender. She asserts that the attributes projected on the divine have traditionally facilitated only male 'becoming', so it is urgently necessary for women to do some conscious projecting of our own.⁶⁷

Irigaray has been accused of essentialism and feminist interpretation made at the level of the symbolic and the abstract, however she does have respect for the integrity of women's experiences and lifts us out of our position within language, recognising the particular constructs of value and meaning and belief from which they come. Her method of deconstruction gives rise to a scepticism that allows her to uncover ideological functions that conceal, displace or repress. Irigaray describes 'irreducible sexual difference' as her central principle, claiming that difference is denied in phallocentrism, where woman is represented as the 'Other' of the phallic same and 'female' is the inferior term of the binary opposite pair, male and female.⁶⁸ So Irigaray's work is the construction of a female symbolic order equivalent to the male symbolic order. She points out the serious difficulty in Christian theological tradition, that woman becomes divine through her son; she has no *woman* God.

No female trinity: mother, daughter, spirit. God is represented as a male trinity and a virgin mother who can only become through her son, she has no mother-daughter relation over against Father –Son; she is without a divine husband, she only has her God man son.

To disrupt the masculine symbolic, we need a new imaginary she argues, not based on the 'name of the Father' but on new ways of conceiving and being which enable women to be subjects as women,

We have no female trinity. But as long as woman lacks a divine made in her image she cannot establish her subjectivity or achieve a goal of her own. She lacks an

⁶⁶ Arendt Hannah, *The Human Condition*.p.178.

⁶⁷ Daggery Jenny, "Luce Irigaray and Divine Women: A Resource for Feminist Theologies." *Journal of Feminists Studies in Religion* 1991 no.7.

⁶⁸ Irigaray Luce, *Sexes and Genealogies*.

ideal that would be her goal or path in becoming...if she
is to become woman.⁶⁹

Irigaray's writings on the mother-daughter relation refer back to the destruction of maternity at the origins of the patriarchy and also to the 'swallowing' up of all mothers, daughters and women in the function of 'mothering' in the contemporary world. She believes this lack of representation of 'excess' to maternity can miss the potential for the divine.⁷⁰ Comparing Irigaray and Ruether's anthropologies, Irigaray's principle of irreducible 'sexual difference' is in contrast to Ruether's making common humanity the context rather than sexual difference.⁷¹ So Irigaray maximises and Ruether minimises the difference between the sexes. Ruether takes issue with theories that she considers rely on biological essentialism and counters this by stressing the common humanity of women and men. Irigaray argues we are not 'yet born women', but are guardians of human kind, helping the incarnation of man, his becoming in relation to his man-God,⁷²

Thus women are traditionally the guardians of the
multiform embryo, of the growing child, of the suffering
man. This is apparently the role women must fill in the
redemption of the world. And it seems that women go
to heaven only once the son has ascended in glory and
comes back to lead his mother on high.⁷³

Ruether places the struggle of women towards full humanity in the context of the struggle of all oppressed groups, so she uses all the resources of the male symbolic order in her theology. The question posed by Ruether, 'Can a male Saviour save women?',⁷⁴ is raised again by Irigaray's work. Ruether resolved the issue by locating Christ in a common humanity, with her normative principle for critiquing patriarchy, the 'liberal prophetic biblical tradition'. Irigaray's work suggests 'common humanity' lies beyond the union of female and male at both divine and human levels.⁷⁵ But that cannot happen she claims until we have a symbolisation of the female that will develop autonomy-oriented feminism. By appropriating Irigaray's argument that women are still and

always between different incarnations and devoted to
the task of assisting [man] in his incarnation.....fostering

⁶⁹ Ibid.p.63.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Daggery Jenny, "Luce Irigaray and Divine Women: A Resource for Postmodern Feminist Theology," *Journal Of Feminists Studies of Religion* 7 (1991).

⁷² Irigaray Luce, *Sexes and Genealogies*.p.66.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ruether Rosemary, *Sexism and God Talk*.p116.

⁷⁵ Daggery Jenny, "Luce Irigaray and Divine Women: A Resource for Feminist Theologies."

his growth aiding him to develop in relation to his established gender, his Man-God.⁷⁶

The answer is in the revelation of the Incarnation, that with Mary and Jesus there begins a new age for the history of humankind, the divine is discovered and brought to birth in the flesh of a woman. Christine Battersby appeals to the 'ontological significance' of birth, she sees it as the basis of a philosophical understanding of female subjectivity.⁷⁷ Birth is the basis of every person's existence, 'natality' is as Grace Jantzen says, (citing Adriana Cavarero,) to a fundamental human condition,

maternal power extends itself between two sequences of infinity; the infinity of a maternal continuum that lies in the past of every human born, male or female; and the infinity of a maternal continuum that presents itself as a future possibility when a woman generates a daughter. Both infinities, past and future, origin and perpetuation always exist through the feminine. This Feminine is not an abstract form: it is a portion of infinity that humans can sustain, and where each discrete individual takes root and finds meaning.⁷⁸

I see birth as the basis for a psychoanalytical understanding of female subjectivity but female embodiment entails a relational, fluctuating sense of identity:

For a woman, "self" and "not-self" are sub-contraries not contradictories, when considered in logical terms...it might be possible, (when pregnant) to be both self and not-self. "Self" is capable of interpenetration by "otherness".⁷⁹

Ettinger believes that subjectivity is formed in relationship rather than in difference, she takes the intra-uterine meeting as a model imprinted on the psyche for later encounter events, human situations and processes in which 'non-I' is not an intruder but a partner in difference.⁸⁰ 'Matrixial' is built on the primordial model of human becoming in which subjectivity is shown to be distinct from that generated post-natally under the phallic logic of castration with its necessary separation from and abjection of the maternal as in Kristeva's theory.⁸¹ Ettinger has

⁷⁶ Irigaray Luce, *Sexes and Genealogies*.p.66.

⁷⁷ Battersby Christine, *The Phenomenal Woman: Feminist Metaphysics and the Pattern of Identity*. (Cambridge Polity Press, 1998).p.34

⁷⁸ Jantzen Grace, *Becoming Divine*.p. 150. Jantzen is citing Adriana Cavarero. *In Spite of Plato*, (Cambridge Polity Press 1995)p.60.

⁷⁹ Battersby Christine, *The Phenomenal Woman: Feminist Metaphysics and the Pattern of Identity*. p.38.

⁸⁰ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity."p.216.

⁸¹ Kristeva Julia, "Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection."

dared to speculate about the potential significance, for human subjectivity, of pre-natal re-experience of 'becoming-human' opening up a new field of encounter as a basis for another dimension of subjectivity, that is not at all about the physical organs.

The pre-maternal subject is a becoming- mother as a result of the encounter with the 'not yet' known subject to come. Moreover, mother herself was once in a comparable severality as a pre-natal subject, co-affecting with and co-affected by, an unknown m/other who she was 'maternal-ising just as she was being 'humanised'. Ettinger emphasises the primordial potentiality in motherhood, imagining what she calls subjectivity as 'seduction into life'.⁹⁵ I believe Ettinger's model offers the possibility of there being humanly significant meaning in what she names 'the feminine', not as an attribute of woman defined as the opposite of man, but as a succession of shifting layers of human subjectivity and meaning.⁸² This layer of 'becoming' is gift to us all, irrespective of later gender and sexual orientation and it begins in the womb, with the 'feminine'. Irigaray is looking for some new relationship between mother and child that accepts the body of both parties and moves towards a new imaginary and a new symbolic. Ettinger is proposing a new symbolic in her matrixial trans-subjectivity, a model that avoids from the start ideas of violent separation, there is instead an imaginative potential for trans-subjective co-emerging and co-affecting compassion. This principle of compassion which is the core of the matrixial maternal feminine, is also the essence of the Christian gospel and relational theology.

The Catholic Church has usurped the discourse on 'mother' by its title of 'mother church', while the world finds itself with a secular phallic of science and technology that reduces this matrixial dimension of human meaning and affectivity. But what are the implications of these theories for women, especially Cenacle women? We who are celibate are to seduce others into life, through the Holy Spirit as did Mary at Pentecost. I contend that the Ignatian approach to prayer enables Cenacle women to do this by entering into the mysteries of Christ's life to cite and re-cite the glorified Jesus and in so doing to inhabit our place in the body of Christ in the Johanne sense. (Jn.14.¹²) The *Spiritual Exercises* written in the sixteenth century need to be read against the grain to access the depth of their meaning for women and this can be achieved by strategies developed by Jacques Derrida.⁸³ Derrida's strategy is to strengthen the secondary or binary opposite, privileging that at the bottom of the

The abject marks the moment when we separate ourselves from the mother, when we first recognize a boundary between the self and the other. We must abject the maternal, the object which has created us, in order to construct an identity. This means that on a subconscious level the maternal is horrifying.

⁸² Pollock Griselda, "Mother Trouble: The Maternal-Feminine in Phallic and Feminist Theory in Relation to Bracha Ettinger's Elaboration of Matrixial." p.13.

⁸³ Derrida Jacques, *Writing and Difference*. trans. Alan Bass, (London, Routledge)

hierarchy. Grace Jantzen applies this double reading to a text, and in so doing discovers a rupture within it, destabilizing it and causing the reader to think differently. Derrida applies the strategy to binary opposites, privileging the binary that has been at the bottom of the hierarchy. Jantzen cites an important aspect of Derrida's deconstruction is its attempt to discern the suppressed or denied 'other' which is essential to the discourse in question.⁸⁴ For example, 'where are women located in the text and in the social spaces the text reinforces? In relation to the *Spiritual Exercises*, although women are excluded in the text, the very exclusion is inviting a women's interpretation to be drawn from her own experience, she is free to hear what the Spirit is saying in her personal and social situation.

6.5 'Everyday Mysticism'

When considering 'embodied spirituality' I referred to 'anthropological subordinationism', in which women are identified with the 'matter', while 'knowledge' in its highest forms was the prerogative of men, any women with spiritual knowledge were classified as honorary males.⁸⁵ Strict adherence to the male -defined doctrines and practices of the Church was (and is) expected of any women who claims spiritual authority. In the history of Christian spirituality, mystical union seen in terms of private individual subjective psychology, is post-enlightenment thinking, foreign to the great medieval spiritual mystics. What was meant by 'mystical' throughout the early centuries was 'discernment of Christ's message in scripture and sacraments and in the permeation of that discernment in all the dimensions of life'.⁸⁶ The 'mystical' therefore, was not private and individualistic but communal, public and political in its interconnections with integrity and justice. Mysticism has little to do with psychic phenomena as such, or extraordinary extra-sensory gifts, which may or may not occur. Nor has it anything to do with ineffability, because in any case God is beyond description even if our experiences are not. Ignatius describes three experiences of consolation (mysticism), the first two are affective (conscious) experiences, and the third he describes as an increase of faith, hope and charity, that is, a knowing, loving and serving God even in the absence of feeling.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Jantzen Grace, *Becoming Divine* (Manchester: MUP, 1998).p.10.

⁸⁵ ———, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*.p.51.p.327. Jantzen cites Aristotle, 'the woman is as it were an impotent male'.p.41.

⁸⁶ Jantzen Grace, "Could There Be a Mystical Core of Religion," *Religious Studies* (1990).

⁸⁷ Puhl Louis, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*.para.316.

As we saw in the previous section Grace Jantzen asks, 'What would happen if we, like the medieval mystics, relinquished the preoccupation with rational justification for our beliefs and followed instead the path of desire, to or for the divine'?⁸⁸ She questions on what basis we could trust such desires; which of them should be fostered and which subdued. Jantzen claims that desire has been a significant, but an under-acknowledged ingredient of our concept of God. In calling attention to the significance of desire within religion she saw desire as providing 'an opening for thinking differently', which could lead to creative possibilities.⁸⁹

The practice of daily discernment according to Ignatian principles enables us to test the spirits in relation to our desires. Because 'discernment' is an important element in understanding my whole thesis, I pause here to examine briefly the process of individual discernment without which there can be no communal discernment. My description of discernment is not simply the experience of the 'thirty-day retreat' which is offered through the *Spiritual Exercises*, it is rather the application of the 'discernment of spirits', which is an essential element of such a retreat. 'The decisive, the crucial, the radically Ignatian element in the *Exercises* is the "immediacy of creator and creature".⁹⁰ This 'immediacy' was integral to the *Exercises* throughout the centuries, but as I noted in the early part of this study, in the pre-conciliar era there was hostility to the idea that 'experience' could be theologically significant.⁹¹ This 'immediacy' is also the foundation for the practice of daily discernment which I claim to be another name for 'everyday mysticism'. The process of attaining the 'total spiritual' freedom, expressed by Ignatius in the *Spiritual Exercises* as, to 'make ourselves indifferent' (free) is through the prayer of '*id quod volo*', by which we ask God for 'what I want and desire'.⁹² Philip Sheldrake, citing De Certeau,⁹³ says that the *id quod volo*⁹⁴ provides the starting point for the 'unfolding of the deepest and most passionate human longings and engagements'.⁹⁵ The,

often confusing mass' of wants, needs and longings' obscures the 'Great Desire' at work below them; the process of discernment 'is a journey through a multitude of desires to get from surface desires, to our deepest desire which holds all that is true and vital about ourselves'.⁹⁶

⁸⁸ Jantzen Grace, *Becoming Divine*. p.86.

⁸⁹ Ibid.p.88.

⁹⁰ Edean Philip, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*.citing Annot. 15 of, Puhl Louis, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*.p.6.

⁹¹ Edean Philip, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*.p.226.

⁹² Puhl Louis, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. Para.48. p.25.

⁹³ Certeau de Michel, *The Mystic Fable* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992).

⁹⁴ Latin for 'what I want and desire'.

⁹⁵ Sheldrake Philip, "Unending Desire De Certeau's Mystics," *The Way Supplement* 102 (2001).

⁹⁶ ———, *Befriending Our Desires* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2001).p.34.

For de Certeau, mysticism was bound up with 'desire', which is a key word in his writings; desire summarises the heart of the Ignatian spirituality that formed de Certeau.⁹⁷ Sheldrake claims that for both the mystic and the 'postmodern', desire expresses a certain kind of drivenness, and intensity, movement ever onwards inspired by what is not known, not possessed, not fixed, not final.⁹⁸ Desire is also a reminder of embodiment in which the unstable and incomplete 'self' is being built through her need to move out to encounters with those other than herself.

The process of 'discernment of spirits' refers to the practice of observing the inner impulses and feelings, recognising those that are from the good Spirit or those that are narcissistic, and thus to choose to act out of one or the other. Discernment then involves a prayerful sifting through felt needs and desires, impulses and conflicting reactions to the events of life. But there is more to spiritual practice than ritual and feeling consoled! It also means sifting through theory and praxis in relation to justice and peace and the integrity of creation. 'This self-awareness is something different in kind from cognition wherein one's own 'I' can be conceptually made the focus of a mental act'.⁹⁹ It is, claims Egan, (citing Rahner, and Schleiermacher), non-conceptual awareness which takes place in the intuitive function of consciousness. When Karl Rahner says, 'Tomorrow's devout person will either be a mystic- someone who has "experienced" something- or else they will no longer be devout at all',¹⁰⁰ he is referring to God's self-communication, which he believed may at times be deepened and intensified, to a greater or lesser degree. Rahner argues that the concept of 'mysticism' is identical with belief in the Holy Spirit. In other words mystical experience is not specifically different from the ordinary life of grace as such. The extraordinary experiences of the great saints are intense instances of a deepening and radicalising of the normal life of faith.¹⁰¹ To Rahner, the more deeply we experience God, the more deeply we experience our own identity. He writes,

The history of the experience of self, one's own interpretation of one's self as achieved in freedom, is in fact the experience of the history of God as well, and *viceversa*.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Sheldrake Philip, "Unending Desire De Certeau's Mystics," *The Way Supplement* 102(2001).p.39.

⁹⁸ Sheldrake Philip, "Unending Desire De Certeau's Mystics."p.39.

⁹⁹ Egan Harvey, *The Spiritual Exercises and the Ignatian Mystical Horizon*. p.38.

¹⁰⁰ Endean Philip, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*.p.63.

¹⁰¹ Egan Harvey SJ, ed. *Mysticism and Karl Rahner's Theology*, Theology and Discovery: Essays in Honour of Karl Rahner (Wisconsin Marquette University Press,1980).p.151.

¹⁰² Rahner Karl, *The Dynamic Element in the Church*, trans. W.J. O'Hara (London: Burns & Oates, 1964).p.142.

Rahner spoke of an immediate experience of God that is available in ordinary human living to provide guidance in human choice, 'the key experience is one in which the dark content with God present in all experience, emerges into reflective awareness'.¹⁰³

Between 1992-2002 our self-understanding as a Congregation was formulated as, 'An Apostolic Discerning Body' echoing the experience of the early believers gathered with one heart and mind awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1.¹²⁻¹⁴. 2.¹⁻⁴.) The decisions made through communal discernment contrasts with the consensual agreements that Habermas recommends at the level of reason, here there is a belief in discernment as the Holy Spirit empowers the intellect and will.¹⁰⁴ The Congregational Chapter of 1992 addressed the question of the ordination of women to the priesthood and its implications for the Community, although we were not adequately prepared theologically to pursue the discussion then, we concluded, 'Therefore, it seems important to us that we remain attentive and open to the theological research taking place now and to the evolution of this question in the Church'. There was no evolution, subsequently it was forbidden to discuss the issue, because in October 1995 'a formal declaration, explicitly stating what is to be held always, everywhere and by all, as belonging to the deposit of faith' was issued.¹⁰⁵

The theme of the 'communal' is addressed by Dorothee Soelle. She reminds us that the concepts of mysticism and community exist in a complex tension; inevitably the principle of individuation seems to be the orientation for the mystic, 'God and the soul'.¹⁰⁶ But mysticism enables community even when it is shown to be individualistic, every community has an inwardly directed significance. The 'charism' makes the whole more than the sum of its parts', for example the Holy Spirit in the Cenacle, effects our communion, to the degree that we are mystics, to that degree are we a community. Soelle believes the spiritual difficulties in our modern situation are partly the result of the 'the inner connection between globalisation and individualisation'.¹⁰⁷ She describes the ways in which corporate world dominance collaborates with 'unrelenting individualisation', and claims we require another vision of life that would nourish resistance. A 'mystic' who lives in communion with God and with everything else in creation, discovers through action the connection of mysticism and resistance, not as cause

¹⁰³ Endean Philip, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*.p.133.

¹⁰⁴ Habermas Jürgen, *Theory of Communicative Action; Reason and the Rationalisation of Society*.

¹⁰⁵ Helman A. Ivy, *Women and the Vatican; an Exploration of Official Documents*.p.2006.

¹⁰⁶ Soelle Dorothee, *The Silent Cry; Mysticism and Resistance*.p.157.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.p.191.

and effect but as unity.¹⁰⁸ Soelle wonders if there are any effective forms of resistance left. Has the spirituality of mysticism itself from which resistance could emerge, already become an aspect of the market against which we thought we would be protected? Soelle argues that the perspective offered by the early believers in the New Testament did not depend on a sociological movement, the masses or the individual, but on the groups that set out on a new way. Throughout the course of the history of Christian mysticism it seems in every attempt to resist the *status quo*, Christians looked back to a time in when it was not a patriarchally ordered hierarchy, who decided what 'belonged to God and what belonged to Caesar', it was the groups themselves, the 'laity' who appealed to the justice of God against that of the Emperor. These first Christians opposed the dominant culture and were prepared to die for their witness to Christianity. It seems the question of authority and who decides what is of God and what is of 'Caesar,' is more than ever an issue needing both individual and communal discernment.

6. 6 Conclusion

My reflection on this decade led me to a deeper understanding and a clearer expression of the discourses I use throughout my thesis. The sociological problems that preoccupied the delegates at the Congregational Chapters during this time were also reflected in the Church and the wider Society. The need for a more equitable sharing of goods and resources was made evident in the large scale deprivation in the African countries where war and famine led to many deaths. So the 'option for the poor' was an evangelical counsel made more urgent by reality. Our own experience of poverty was felt by the whole Congregation as we experienced diminishments through death or through those who left the Cenacle, our numbers decreased and we had to let go of some of our Retreat Centres, leading us to experience actual poverty. In analysing feminist Christologies, I drew on those using the optic of 'liberation' to make their case for the reality of Incarnation as understood and experienced by women. This research strengthened my claim that the divine and human in the person of Jesus is equally on offer for all humankind. The 'maleness' of Jesus seems to sabotage the application of this to women, so I apply my research to those writers who shed light on overcoming the problem. It becomes clear that to have the mind and heart of Christ transcends the gender difference, citing and re-

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

citing Jesus through prayer and action enables the Christian woman to embody within herself the psyche of Jesus. She will do this in her own uniqueness and according to her own personal call and will be able to say, 'I live now, not with my own life, but with the life of Christ who lives in me'. (Gal. 2.¹⁹) The absence of this feminine presence within the Catholic Church is a glaring omission in its representation of Christ to the world. My thesis is to highlight the consequences of this for Church. The absence of the female dimension in the Institution of the Church is the absence of the mystical, and is the result of narcissism. I draw on the understanding of a psychoanalyst who believes in the power of the maternal experience beginning in the womb and continuing in the psyche through life. This latter has bearing on my next chapter where I will argue for a stronger and more authentic image of Mary. I will claim, she is the 'full humanity' of woman. I will substantiate this claim by reference to Ettinger's 'matrixial trans-subjectivity', Mary is humanising others to divinity, just as Jesus is divinising others to full humanity. My conclusion is the Incarnation is spiralling throughout history, it is not a 'once upon a time' event.¹⁰⁹ The mission of Cenacle women is to enhance Incarnation by manifesting a realistic feminine dimension rather than the idealized and imaginary model projected on to Mary, and therefore to all women, by an emotionally emasculated Church guarding the patriarchal status quo.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Isherwood Lisa, "The Embodiment of Feminist Liberation Theology: The Spiralling of Incarnation," *Feminist Theology* 12, no. 2 (2004).

¹¹⁰ Collins Gregory, "Giving Religious Life a Theology Transfusion," in *A Future Full of Hope?*, ed. Gemma Simmonds CJ (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2012). p.32.

2002-2012 My Experience of Cenacle Religious Life

In this decade the pace of change accelerates, or is it my aging process causing the apparent speed? I celebrate my eightieth birthday in July of 2002 with a couple of eventful parties. At our many community meetings during this ten years we are conscious that we are living in a world marked by the positive and negative effects of globalisation, systems of travel, information technology, migration and economics all of which brought us into ever greater contact with 'difference'. In 2001 we had witnessed the terrible spectacle of the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York and the world was asking itself why? The new millennium had begun with such hope. We asked ourselves how the Cenacle mission might bring healing to a wounded society or indeed how had we contributed to this wounding! The Chapter of 2004 would invite us to communicate an appreciation of 'difference' as a richness rather than obstacle.

The Chapter of 2004 could be summarised by two words, realism and dynamism; our ideal is to be an 'International Apostolic Discerning Body', we reflect more deeply on what it is to live 'Incarnated spirituality'. We 'ground' this by exploring new ways of living our economic reality and of offering to others ways of living our charism so that they too may be part of the Cenacle family. It is at this Chapter that the sisters mandate the general leadership team to study structures that will enable our more effective service to the world, for example, unifying our three European regions, France (including Togo), Italy and England/ Ireland, by becoming a single Province. The Acts of the Chapter report that participants did not hide our reality, diminishment, aging, difficult interpersonal relationships, at the same time they perceived through diversity (sometimes felt as divergence) an unexpected unity giving rise to a dynamism having its source in the promise of the Spirit, 'nothing is impossible with God. (Lk.1.³⁷) I feel satisfaction in the way our Congregation is fostering maximum participation of the sisters in all significant decisions and being transparent in the process.

I liked the way at the closing of the Chapter the sisters recognised in what had occurred during these weeks a similar movement of the Spirit to that of the experience of Mary. The double and unique mystery of the Annunciation and Pentecost had marked the journey of the Chapter. Like Mary, our sisters had begun by asking 'How can this be?' and had heard again, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you'. They asked each other, 'How is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?' (Acts.2.⁸) and had heard the response 'I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh'. (Acts.2.¹⁷) There had been a climate of seeking to understand each other, of interest in how the 'other' lives and of accepting those differences.

In November 2007 there is a meeting in Brazil with a focus on 'Formation', sisters came together to look at this aspect of our life from a more contemporary perspective. Fr. Joannes

Baptista Libanio S.J. a liberation theologian, addressed three issues, each of which was given time for serious study, the reality of Society, the reality of the Church, and the reality of Religious Life. The outcome pointed to our need to pay particular attention to multi-religious and multi-cultural reality and the need of a holistic formation for candidates to the Cenacle where all dimensions of the person are taken into account. I note the need to develop a stance in life 'marked by critical consciousness and a discerning heart'.

A significant meeting in the Spring of 2008 is that of the International Meeting of the younger sisters this time in Rome, it included the General and Regional leadership teams. At the close of their meeting this group asks the General Chapter to consider making concrete and creative choices that will lead to re-founding; this will necessitate restructuring and a real sharing of our human and financial resources so that we are indeed 'one' international discerning body. The Apostolic Meeting that followed in this same month brought together sisters from different countries to share the particular needs of the people of their nation and the resources that each had to offer. The loudest call heard was to those on the margins especially the young, the poor, 'women' and those who are outside the Church and Society. There was a proposal to set up an international community either in Asia or in Latin America; such a project would involve some houses closing to allow for sisters to move to new pastures. My own involvement internationally was with our meeting in Turin in January 2009 the intention of which was to bring European sisters together to know each other, because the plan to unify provinces into one European Province was in the process of becoming a reality. I was present at the communal decision in our house in Rome in November of 2010 where a very creative ritual enabled a corporate 'Yes' to be said to the unification of the three provinces. When I entered the community in 1945 there were sisters from ten different nations in the group so I do not fear difference, I just wish I had taken seriously the recommendation to learn to speak French, because communication is of greater importance now than in the days when silence was the order of the day!

Preparation for the 29th General Chapter in 2010 had been a lengthy one with the various meetings at International and European level. The letter convoking this Chapter was sent on the first Sunday of Advent 2008 and as Yolande Guiraud announced it, she reminded us of the 'power line' that had developed throughout the six years since the 2004 Chapter. This 'power line' consists of wider participation of all the sisters in the discernment processes, an empowerment that is the gift of the Spirit to the whole Congregation. In this the final preparation we embarked on the prayer of the 'Spiritual Exercises' asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten us and to bring us to that spiritual freedom that will enable us to desire and work

only in accord with our charism. Each sister is asked to talk to the delegates from her region so that they could convey their reflections and experience when they assemble in Rome as an apostolic discerning body at the service of the world.

This Chapter is a chapter of election that is to say that the delegates need to choose a new leader for the Congregation, the French sister, Yolande Guiraud has animated the Congregation very creatively since the 1998 Chapter, her title is, 'Superior General'. To our great delight a member of our Province an Irish sister is appointed, Patricia Byrne, a onetime novice of mine! Patricia has been on the General leadership team for the last twelve years, and is familiar with the affairs of the Congregation. This Chapter builds on what has gone before and yet takes a step forward. The inspiration in 2010 is taken from the Acts of the Apostles, the 'voice of the Spirit is whispering, put all in common and dare to go out'.¹ Patricia's closing talk includes a quotation from the Constitutions; 'with confidence in the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in our world, we participate in the spiritual renewal of the human heart so that peace and justice may reign'.²

Our world is in great need of our prayer because in 2008 an era of high spending and high lending has ended in financial disaster causing the current global economic crisis; it seems it was triggered by a complex interplay of valuation and liquidity problems in the banking system. I don't understand it fully, but enough to know there was a lot of greed involved both on the part of banks who lend, and borrowers who borrowed above their ability to pay back. In May of 2010 the British people voted to change the government, they were disillusioned with the politics. As a result they did not give an overall majority to any political party so we have a parliament of coalition struggling to cope with our great debt.

The other crisis in this decade is that within the Church, revelations about the abuse of young people by priests and others was a testing time for all of us. Timothy Radcliffe addressing the Irish clergy claims that 'the Lord is demolishing our clerical pretensions to grandeur so that the Church may be a place where we encounter God more intimately'.³ Although Benedict XVI's visit to Britain was deemed a great success 'he deftly avoided the issues that haunt relationships between the Roman Catholic Church and modern British culture and politics, for example, questions about homosexuality, abortion and women's ordination'⁴ Tina Beattie suggests there was a veiled reference to relativism which the Pope sees as the greatest threat to our secular democracies. Benedict XVI places the Church's social teaching in the context of

¹ "General Chapter Documents."

² Sisters, *The Constitutions of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Cenacle*.

³ Radcliffe Timothy, *Towards a Humble Church*, *The Tablet* January 2010

⁴ Beattie Tina, "Shared Endeavours," *The Tablet* September, no. Special Souvenir Edition (2010).

the modern world in a wonderful manner in contrast to his thinking on sexual ethics which takes little account of life today.

In December 2008 Cardinal Franc Rode ordered a wide-ranging investigation, an 'apostolic visitation' of American women Religious conducted by Mother Clare Millea, an American Superior General. I feel a great deal of indignation about this on behalf of our sisters in America because of the high-handed manner of the somewhat intrusive investigation, and the secrecy surrounding the final report. The stated aim of the investigation is to look at the way women's orders are run and why numbers of vocations are falling; but as Sandra Schneiders argues the health of Religious life has less to do with numbers and more to do with how deeply committed we are to the reign of God's love in the world.⁵

Meantime, in London the rented accommodation we have enjoyed, courtesy of the Carmelite Friars, is no longer available to us. This is the third rented house I have lived in since leaving Grayshott in 1986; each time we have been grateful for the reduced rent, courtesy of those who offered it. First, the Mirfield priests offered us a cottage in the grounds of St. Katherine's retreat centre which we used for seven years. Then the 'Oblates of Mary' a missionary order for men, generously let us have rooms for a couple of years. At the Province meeting in the spring of 2005 we agree to have a property of our own in London, so in the autumn we purchase this four bedroom house in Surrey Quays. Because our ministry is in the city, we choose a strategic position with easy access to central London and yet pleasant for walks by the river Thames. Until 2008 I am working at the Psychosynthesis and Education Centre on the training team as a supervisor for students who are beginning to practice counselling and I am a facilitator for group therapy. This is in addition to work as a therapist with a private practice and as a 'spiritual director'. However, the significant change I make in 2008 is discerning to let go of this work and to write my memoirs of sixty-five years in religious life, I feel the changes through which I have lived have been so dramatic it is important to record them. This idea began as the writing of a book then developed into a possible Ph.D, so that the theology and psychology underpinning these changes could be analysed. Having met the Director of Studies for Feminist Theology, who is a Roman Catholic professor, in Winchester University, a Christian foundation, I feel I will get the right support for the project.

⁵ Schneiders Sandra, "Religious Life as Prophetic," *National Catholic Reporter* 2010.

Chapter 7

The Marian Key

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I analyse the events of the last decade as they were reflected in the congregation; especially the post-conciliar theology about Mary. First, I shall explain how 'Our Lady of the Cenacle' has been for Cenacle women a resource and inspiration in ways that it is not possible to glimpse in the canonical texts. Elisabeth Johnson examines three major positions regarding religious symbolism; 'symbolic reductionism' which sees religious symbols as existential projections of real or ideal states of human experience; 'symbolic realism' which understands religious symbols as non-literal representations of transcendent realities, they mediate the reality that is communicated through the symbol; and 'symbolic formism' which holds that religious symbols are imaginative constructs, that neither project human experience nor mediate transcendent reality, but they form a world of meaning and value that shapes human reality. The position of symbolic realism, is more representative of the views of religious communities who care for religious tradition and this is the approach I take in my first section as I write about our understanding of the Cenacle.⁶

Theological statements about Mary have a symbolic structure, that while they refer immediately and obviously to this one woman, they reach their intended theological reference when interpreted as statements about the Church.⁷

The first chapter of Luke's gospel includes a story told by men about a woman saying 'Yes', to a request from God, in a most intimate conversation. (Lk.1.²⁶⁻³⁸) There had come a day for each Cenacle woman when she had entered the mystery personally in prayer, to identify with Mary's 'Yes'.⁸ We each experienced an 'Annunciation', (a call from God), 'Rejoice so highly favoured! The Lord is with you'. (Lk.1.²⁹) We responded by an act of consecration through our vows made to God in a faith community. Once this mystery had taken hold of us, we saw in Mary our own freedom for God's purpose and offered our procreative womanhood to God. Our vocation, is not a higher call, just a different one in contrast to the expectations of a society that perceives woman's vocation is to raise a family.

⁶ Johnson A. Elisabeth, "The Symbolic Character of Theological Statements About Mary," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 22, no. Spring (1985).p.320.

⁷ Ibid.p.313.

⁸ Moore Sebastian, *The Contagion of Jesus* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007).

As I analyse this story, I will not be able to avoid the collision between the divine myth⁹ of the virgin birth and human biology that arises within the Christian mystery, except through prayer and a tolerance of ambiguity. But I shall examine the evidence given by scripture scholars and Christian teaching, whilst noting the principles that determine hermeneutics, especially hermeneutics of suspicion. First, I need to be aware that the biblical text itself is not neutral, it is, like other historical documents written by those who wish to be the 'winners' or heroes of the story they write. Women who have not written the biblical stories are 'historical losers' with the result that they are marginalised, when they are not omitted altogether; for example, they are presented as they are seen by and function for men, downgraded by projection, or trivialised as non-participants in the situation of male activity that is considered of more significance. We are given a picture painted by men, which corresponds to the male understanding of women and their place in society at the time of writing.¹⁰ Second, the interpreters of the biblical text have never been objective in the sense of being ideologically unbiased. Those appointed to teach and preach over the centuries have usually been gender blind to the injustices that are shown through the literature. As Sandra Schneiders writes, 'The "hermeneutic advantage" of the oppressed is precisely this ability to see from the margins of social reality, what is second nature to those who are the beneficiaries of the social system'.¹¹ I shall remember that the only access to a relatively unbiased approach will be to become aware of my social location and the historical consciousness to which it has contributed and to neutralise as much as possible its ideological effects. I hope to find a way of retrieval of that which is liberating in the history of the forgotten and oppressed.¹² I shall be mindful that the concept of 'patriarchy' does not mean simply the rule of men over women, but with Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza know that it is better described as 'kyriarchal' because it refers to 'a complex social pyramid of graduated dominations and subordinations'.¹³ I will explore the basis for Mary's title of 'Virgin and Mother' and claim that when this doctrine is accepted in faith, it satisfies a universal psychological need, as witness the world-wide expressions of her influence.¹⁴ I shall draw on the work of Karl Rahner who understands Mary

⁹ Batto Bernard, "Myth," in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Mary Collins Komonchak A. Joseph, Dermot Lane (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1987). 'Myth' may be broadly defined as a narrative concerning fundamental symbols which are constitutive of or paradigmatic for human existence.

¹⁰ Schneiders Sandra, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1999).p.182.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Fiorenza Schussler Elisabeth, *Jesus: Miriam's Son, Sophia's Prophet*, Critical Issues in Feminist Christologies (New York: Continuum, 1995).p.14.

¹⁴ Moore Sebastian, *The Contagion of Jesus*.p82.

in salvation history as having a distinctive and unique role in redemption.¹⁵ To further develop my argument, that it is through Mary's conscious agency that the transformation of humanity is achieved, I return to a theory I have already outlined, linking the theory of psychoanalyst, Bracha Ettinger of pre-maternal/pre-natal 'severality' to which she gives the name 'Matrix'.

Mary's role in the incarnation cannot be seen as changing the world for women forever (which it does) unless we say something of Mary psychologically that would make her an active and knowing, not a passive and unknowing, participant in the Incarnation. Woman's power to change culture would have to be somehow foreshadowed for her in Mary's 'Let it be done to me'. Thus we seek some sort of psychological conditioning in Mary which would make it possible for 'the girl next door' to say 'Yes' to the transformation of humanity, for the visit of the angel to constitute 'her moment come'.¹⁶

My final theme will draw all together under the attribute of prophecy as indicated in Luke's portrayal of Mary proclaiming the *Magnificat*. In this song Mary proclaims the 'good news' to the poor and is shown as a revolutionary figure, Mary is here the authoritative voice of woman. It is this image of Mary that could change attitudes to women in the Church and Society. I will claim that the Spirit of God is breathing life into human becoming in the womb, just as at the beginning of creation; 'God saw all that he had made, and indeed it was very good'. (Gen.1.³¹) Ettinger's theory permits a theoretical breakthrough from the imagining the subject as coming into being through separation and opens up the possibility within the human psyche of a sexual difference that she names 'subjectivity as encounter'. She takes the intrauterine meeting as a model for human situations and processes in which 'non-I'(the m/other) is not an intruder, but a partner in difference.

7.2 Contemplating Mary in the Cenacle

An alternative title to this section is, 'Mary in the Cenacle at the birth of the Church'.(Acts 2) The text names eleven leading men in the group, and then continues, 'All these joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers'. 'There were about a hundred and twenty persons in the congregation'. Acts.1¹⁴⁻

¹⁵) The Pentecost story begins, 'they were all together in one place'. Biblical scholars

¹⁵ Boss Jane Sarah, ed. *Mary: The Complete Resource*(London: Continuum, 2007).

¹⁶ Moore Sebastian, *The Contagion of Jesus*.p.88-89.

presume¹⁷ that the 'all' refers back to the earlier list of Jesus disciples in the upper room, so Mary is present when, 'They were all filled with the Holy Spirit....' (Acts 2.¹) Both the Gospel and Acts begin with the promise of the descent of the Holy Spirit, on Mary with the birth of Jesus in the Gospel, and on the community of believers at the birth of the Church in the Acts.¹⁸ As stated by Johnson, theological statements about Mary have a symbolic structure, so while they refer in an obvious way to the Jewish mother of the man named Jesus, they ultimately refer to the Church; speech about Mary is speech about redeemed humanity.¹⁹ Prior to Vatican II we interpreted the stories of Mary as historical at root, for example, that it was Mary who told St. Luke all the details contained in the infancy narratives. Nevertheless, even if speech about Mary is speech about 'redeemed humanity' the evidence starts with scripture and the early believers.

The paucity of historical material about Mary means that explicit events and personal characteristics do not ground her symbol in the way that is true of Jesus Christ; it is the community of disciples in which she participates that creates the symbol, and sees itself reflected in it. To the degree in which the symbol evokes a similar response in the faith-filled disciples, to that degree do they benefit from it.²⁰ Johnson offers an understanding of symbol;

A symbol is a species of sign which carries a fullness of meaning going beyond what can be explicitly and exhaustively stated. It characteristically introduces us in to realms of awareness not usually accessible to discursive thought, giving participatory rather than simply speculative knowledge.²¹

Women of the Cenacle understood Mary of Pentecost as symbolising appropriately their manner of building up the reign of God, through retreat work, specifically the giving of the *Spiritual Exercises* to women.

Our Constitutions read,

To live in the Cenacle is to live with Mary in the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, and to share in her giving of Christ to others. The privileged role of Mary in our Congregation stems from the deliberative act of our founders who expressly gave the Congregation to Mary.

¹⁷ Raymond E. Brown., Fitzmyer A. Joseph S.J., and Murphy Roland.).Carm., eds., *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: Cassell,1991).

¹⁸ Johnson Elizabeth, *Truly Our Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints* (N.Y.: Continuum, 2003).p.298.

¹⁹ Boss Jane Sarah, *Mary: The Complete Resource*.

²⁰ Johnson A. Elisabeth, "The Symbolic Character of Theological Statements About Mary." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*,vol 22 Spring 1995.p.320.

²¹ Ibid.

This has shaped our history and marks our community
and apostolic life.²²

I pause here and consider what I understand by 'Holy Spirit' since I am claiming it is through the power of the Spirit that Mary gives inspiration to the Congregation. Ghislaine Cote writes that there are some forty references to the 'Spirit' in the Constitutions of the Cenacle, which are the basis of our charism. She notes that they are not literary devices but symbolic, existential realities.²³ The Hebrew word *ruah* as used in the earliest biblical texts, simply means blowing of the wind. To the activity of *ruah* is attributed those interventions that surprise by their suddenness and force.(Ex.14.²¹) *Ruah* is the air outside and also the air inside human beings; in this sense it is viewed as the vital breath of God, 'spirit' is the vivifying principle communicating life to every living thing. When the two creation narratives in Genesis are set side by side, the spirit of God in humanity is seen to image the divine spirit; the inbreathing of the divine breath or spirit in (Gen.2.⁷)corresponds to the creation of women and men in the divine image in (Genesis 1.²⁷) Ultimately, we knew ourselves to be drawn into the profound harmony of creation as it originates in the very depth of the Trinitarian life, the 'Father' indwells creation through the reality of the Holy Spirit, the one who unites Father and Son in love. The mystery of Sophia- God or/ Sophia-Sapientia was not uppermost in use in our charism²⁴but we claimed full ownership of our human identity as *imago Dei* and *imago Christi* and therefore we were unconsciously holding to a commitment to women's flourishing based on an ethic of natality, which of course is the message of the gospel, to promote life, "I' have come to make you more and more alive'.²⁵ (Jn.10.¹⁰)Acts.1.⁶⁻¹⁴ is the basic text that conveys the inspiration for our vocation and our mission, it is a text that is linked to the conclusion of the gospel of Luke 24: ⁴⁴⁻⁵³. The Ascension at the end of Luke's gospel marks the hidden but real triumph of Jesus exalted to the glory of God; in Acts 1, the Ascension is the leave-taking of Jesus as seen from the point of view of the future now available to humanity through the Spirit, Jesus's new mode of presence. It was customary prior to Vatican II for us to have the time between the Ascension and Pentecost as a time of retreat, by ordinary measurement this space is brief but it represents an epoch, it is the time before the new creation. Article 2 of the Constitutions provides a preface of all that follows in the Constitutions;

The mystery of the Cenacle expresses our mission in the
Church and the significance of Mary in our spirituality. It
is the mystery of prayerful expectation and waiting in

²² Sisters, *The Constitutions of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Cenacle*.p.14 para.37.

²³ Coté Ghislaine, *The Cenacle: Its Christological Foundations and Its Spirituality*.p.84.

²⁴Fiorenza Schussler Elisabeth, *Jesus: Miriam's Son,Sophia's Prophet*.

²⁵ Moore Sebastian, "Meditation on Mary the God-Bearer."2007 (blogspot.com)

retreat by the first assembly of the Church with Mary,
directed to that outpouring of the Spirit which sent the
apostles to the ends of the earth, "clothed with power
from on high" (Acts 1.⁸; Luke.24.⁴⁹).

This is the inspiration for integrating the three dimensions of our mission: prayer, community, and apostolic service.²⁶ In the Acts we are assured that this group of believers were persevering in prayer with Mary the mother of Jesus. The Spirit who comes from above is the Spirit of renewal and rebirth. (Jn:3) To be born of God is to be surrendered to the Spirit, as both Mary of Pentecost and Thérèse Courderc, our Foundress, were.²⁷ The prayer of the Cenacle reflects this understanding, and appreciates that the presence of the Mother of Jesus is more than an example, she is more that the 'Mother of all believers'.²⁸ The infancy narratives in Luke 1-2, convey Mary's significance in the mystery of salvation, from the moment of her 'yes' at the Annunciation, to which I referred earlier,²⁹ to the events and rituals of Jesus birth, 'Mary, 'treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart'.(Lk.2.¹⁹)

Our practice of discerning the Spirit in our lives is the vital link between the mystery of Pentecost and the *Spiritual Exercises*, providing us with a creative way to serve our contemporaries. Mary is there for us in this mission so that the Word may again be made flesh, and the divine breath, may bring others to life. We may call it a Marian way of being, because of our graced power to bring life and maturity, in other words, she makes us able to become as human as possible. This mystery, in which we see the Spirit transforming the apostles into eager witnesses and messengers of Jesus Christ sheds light on our whole life and orders it to the apostolic service of retreats and education in faith. We must ourselves be caught up by the love of Jesus Christ since our lives, far more than our words, must speak clearly of Christ.³⁰ One of the most dynamic mysteries for the Christian life is the mystery of the Cenacle. Invited to 'stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high', Jesus's disciples and we with them receive the gift of being associated with his work. 'You will receive power and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Act. 1.⁸) The whole life of Mary has been the extension of this sole task; the conceiving of her Son in the world, and we are to do the same; the point about Marian theology is not to recite the wonders of Mary, but like her to work towards the fullness of the reign of God.

²⁶ Sisters, *The Constitutions of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Cenacle*.Art.2.p.5.

²⁷ Stogdon M.Katharine, "The Risk of Surrender".

²⁸ Gaventa Beverly, '*All Generations Will Call Me Blessed*': *Mary in Biblical and Ecumenical Perspective*, A Feminist Companion to Mariology(2002).

²⁹ Moore Sebastian, "Meditation on Mary the God-Bearer."sebastianmoore.blogspot.com.2007.

³⁰ Sisters, *The Constitutions of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Cenacle*.Art.2.

The picture I paint of Cenacle religious life is obviously very idealistic and we have been far from achieving it, but it is our aim and is the foundation of our piety and devotion, yet we were often unaware of the 'patriarchy' that underpins the icon of Mary presented by theology and the Church during this era. I believe however, that Mary is even greater than the image given to us prior to Vatican II. In discussing the collision between divine myth and human fact, Sebastian Moore claims, 'Nowhere is the divine more divine or the human more recalcitrantly human, than in the virgin's womb'.³¹ The nature of the Marian symbol governs the interpretation of thought which emanates from it. Mary is both an individual and a collectivity, what is said about her is being said about humanity. According to Karl Rahner, '

It is quite possible to say that when we are involved in our Marian devotions, we are engaged in a Christian understanding of the human situation. It is God's word concerning us that we are there concerned with, a blessed and holy understanding of our own life'.³²

7.3 'Born of a Woman'

In this section I argue that Mary is an example of what God intends for all women, she is not simply an exception as we have been led to believe. As Tina Beattie puts it,

Instead of Mary being the body who safeguards Christ's humanity in a way that makes her an inclusive symbol of all human kind and women in particular, she becomes the body who safeguards his divinity, in a way that makes her an exclusive symbol.³³

Staying with the 'exclusive symbol' I learn that for the early Church Mary's virginal maternal body is a symbol of life, not a symbol of sexual denial. Her body thought of as pure vessel containing Christ, only later did this lead to a denigration of the female body, Mary becoming the unsullied mother, while every other woman is trapped in the language of corruption and death, associated with Eve, who in the 'natural' order symbolises sexuality and motherhood.³⁴ We need to understand the figure of Mary in the light of the history of Israel, and those biblical women before her, who give us clues pointing to the 'power of God', to

³¹ Moore Sebastian, *The Contagion of Jesus*. (London DTL 2007)p.79

³² Rahner Karl, "The Ecumenical Unburdening of the Mariological Problem," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 26 (1989).

³³ Beattie Tina, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate : A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation*.p.131.

³⁴ Ibid.p.131.

whom nothing is impossible. The barren women who gave birth, Sarah, ((Gen1.¹⁶), Hannah, (Sam.1.²⁰), Elizabeth (Lk.1.¹⁴), prepare us for a virgin to conceive (Lk.2.⁷) Mary, is an image of the faithful people in whom God dwells, so the statement, 'God becomes flesh in Jesus', requires another to complete it theologically, 'God is born of a woman'.³⁵

Raymond Brown says both the rationalist and the traditionalist must be open to an honest attempt to survey the evidence for the Virginal conception. The issue does not add to, or take from, my argument, since I base it on the psychic processes at the end of pregnancy, rather than the moment of conceiving. Ivone Gebara and Maria Clara Bingemer³⁶ encapsulate aspects of patristic theology in their understanding of Mary's virginal motherhood, which they describe as;

A radical break in the chain of human genealogies in order to make way for the Spirit who comes into history with a creative breath and makes life spring forth where it was impossible. This is the same Spirit who changes dry bones into a military army (Ezek. 37:¹²⁻¹⁴).....the virginal conception of Jesus in Mary opens the horizon to a new birth for men and women of all ages. (Jn 1:¹⁻¹⁴)

Raymond Brown describes the virgin birth as an 'extraordinary action of God's creative power, as unique as the initial creation itself'.³⁷ Irenaeus (178) writes of that 'intercircling which traces back from Mary to Eve. For what is knotted up together cannot be untied except by undoing the whole series of knots'. Irenaeus is referring here to what is known as the 're-capitulation' theme. Jesus is the new head of the human community, he re-establishes God's image and likeness and he reintegrates all dimensions of creation, physical and spiritual in his person in such depth and totality that he is able to draw other persons into his own unity, undoing the destruction of original sin.³⁸ Tracing back from Mary to Eve might reveal Eve as a liberator. I tend towards Phyllis Tribble's re-reading of Genesis 2-3, and believe that Eve, throughout the myth, is the more intelligent one, the more aggressive one, the who takes a responsibility, of which she is fully aware, and in so doing brings humankind to another level of consciousness and adulthood.³⁹ Eve has instead been identified with what is termed carnal and sinful, with the implication that all other women inherit similar disgrace. In contrast to Eve's disobedience Mary is the obedient perfect disciple untainted by this original history.

³⁵ Gebara Ivone and Maria Clara Bengemer, *Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor*.p 42.

³⁶ Ibid.p.56.

³⁷ Brown Raymond, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977).p.531

³⁸ Hellwig Monika, "Jesus, Saviour and Son of God," in *Contemporary Catholic Theology*, ed. Michael A. Hayes and Liam Gearon(New York: Continuum, 1998).

³⁹ Tribble Phyllis, "Eve and Adam: Genesis, Reread.," in *Womanspirit Rising*, ed. Christ Carol and Judith Plaskow(New York: Harperand Row, 1979).p.74.

It seems clear says Raymond Brown, that the two Evangelists traditionally known as Matthew and Luke, writing in the era A.D. 80-100, believed that, in conceiving Jesus, Mary remained bodily a virgin and did not have intercourse with Joseph. We know so little about the sources from which these stories are drawn and the presence of the virginal conception in the infancy narratives carries no proof of historicity; Christology developed backwards, 'God had exalted this man Jesus from the dead' (Acts 3.¹⁵) By the power of the Holy Spirit then, God must have brought him to birth with that same Spirit, so the writers of the infancy narratives have moved their story back to Jesus infancy in Mary's womb. Matthew is using a literary genre called 'midrash' creating Jesus infancy story on the model of Moses' birth narrative, Exodus 1-2 which is filled out already by popular tradition. Jane Schaberg, however, argues that the accounts concerned with the origin of Jesus do not depict a miraculous virgin birth;⁴⁰ instead they recount the oral tradition that Jesus was conceived outside marriage. Matthew and Luke's accounts are based on an oral tradition of illegitimacy but each concentrates on explaining why Jesus had to be an illegitimate child in theological terms. Jane Schaberg does not identify anything in Matthew that can be interpreted as indicating a virgin birth. The text of 'the virgin will conceive' (Matt.1.²³) is a reference to Isaiah (7.¹⁴) where the proffered sign to the people is that of a future King, Hezekiah, son of Ahaz. Nevertheless Schaberg does see that Matthew is preoccupied by the fact that God can transform the normal to the divine.

The virgin betrothed and seduced or raped is, in the great Matthean paradox, the virgin who conceives and bears the child they will call Emmanuel. His origin is ignominious and tragic. But Matthew's point is that his existence is divinely willed and even protected.⁴¹

Luke's account shows the focus is on the close relationship between Mary and Elizabeth. The unwed pregnant Mary does not remain alone but seeks support from another woman and the two women rejoice at God's liberating action, who exalts the violated and makes the fruit of illegitimacy holy.⁴²

The gospels came into being starting with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and through oral, form, and redaction processes they became faith documents. Their intent is not historical or biographical but, 'missionary and community building'. The traditional Mariology I was taught, provided a synthesised view of Mary by creating a narrative of her life even adding

⁴⁰Schaberg Jane, "Infancy Narratives of Matthew," in *A Feminist Companion to Mariology*, ed. Levine Amy-Jill (London: T&T Clark International, 2005).p.15.

⁴¹ Okland Jorunn, *The Historical Mary and Dea Creatrix*, in *A Feminist Companion to Mariology* ed. Levine Amy-Jill ((London: T&T Clark International, 2005)p. 148.

⁴² Johnson A. Elisabeth, *Jesus: Miriam's Child Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*. (New York Continuum, 1994).p.186.

post-biblical doctrines, such as the Immaculate Conception' at the beginning of her life, and the Assumption at the end. As Rahner argues, 'Mary's Immaculate conception directs attention to the goodness that already pervades creation, he writes that

the dogma of the Assumption belongs to the article of faith that " Christ was born of the Virgin Mary", which directs us to a saving event for the whole world, one which took place in and through the flesh of Mary, so much so that our salvation depends on Christ's having been born of her.⁴³

Pope Paul VI claimsthat believers can identify with her as a woman who has a history like our own, she may be seen as 'truly our sister'⁴⁴. The space left in the historical narrative in Scripture has given scope for imaginations, Mary of Nazareth has been depicted in so many different ways from a 'lowly handmaid' to the 'Queen of Heaven'. Mary's virginity for some Latin American women functions as a symbol of autonomy, signaling that a woman is not defined by her relationship with a man.⁴⁵ Her specialness as 'virgin' is rooted in the infancy narratives (Mt. 1¹⁸⁻²⁵; Lk 1.²⁶⁻³⁸) which have fascinated Christians through the centuries, the pinnacle of which was Mary's 'Yes' to Gabriel. Just as Mary says 'yes' to God, to be whatever he needs, so she says 'yes' to women of all nations to become the woman they need her to be. For the Philippino woman, she is the mother of a revolutionary. In Sao Paulo, Mary is a transvestite, singing and dancing political and carnival songs. In a gay pub in Rio de Janeiro she is the 'Virgin of Dietrich', Marlene Dietrich as the Dolorosa.⁴⁶ Schüssler Fiorenza claims that these diverse and resistant discourses of feminist practices around the world challenge universalistic claims that all women have a feminine nature in common that defines them as 'others' or as 'subordinates' to men.⁴⁷ She argues that feminist scholars must situate their theological discourses within the emancipatory movements of women around the globe, in this they will with Mary announce the reign of God.

⁴³ Rahner Karl, "Interpretation of the Dogma of the Assumption," in *Theological Investigations* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965). Vol.1.

⁴⁴ Pope Paul VI, "Maria Cultus," in *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Rome: Vatican Press, 1974).para.56.

⁴⁵ Johnson Elizabeth, *Truly Our Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints*.p.31.

⁴⁶ Althaus-Reid Marcella and Lisa Isherwood, *Controversies in Feminist Theology* (London: SCM, 2007).p.78.

⁴⁷ Fiorenza Schussler Elisabeth, *Sharing Her Word: Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Context* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989).p.134.

7.4 Mary as 'Privileged'

Phyllis Tribble has shown how in Hebrew the word for woman's womb and the word for compassion are cognates, both related to the verb, 'to show mercy' and the adjective merciful.

In its singular form the noun *rehem* means "womb" or "uterus". In the plural, *rehamim*, this concrete meaning expands the abstraction of compassion, mercy, and love.....Accordingly, our metaphor lies in the semantic movement from physical organ of the female body to a psychic mode of being.⁴⁸

I shall refer to the womb as 'matrix', the 'privilege' that all women possess and in which human beings start life. We can greet all mothers with, 'blessed is the fruit of thy womb'.

I turn now to an understanding of Mary's privilege and in this I am influenced by Karl Rahner's thinking in an essay he wrote regarding the mystery of Mary's Immaculate Conception.⁴⁹ She is 'particularised', 'singled out' to make transparent a view that has something to say to all women. Because of the shape and creative potential of their own bodies, women know the pain of bringing new life into the world, God shares the gift of creation with them.

Mary's singularity is that from the first moment of her conception she is preserved from all stain of 'original sin'. Mary's original grace must point to the fact that we are all born in original grace. Philip Endean states, 'pre-conciliar (and post-conciliar) accounts of original sin certainly need to be complemented by a doctrine of even more original grace'.⁵⁰ This sin is removed from us when we are baptised, but the dogma cannot simply be saying Mary's original sin was removed earlier in her case than in ours. No, Mary's relationship must point to a significant relationship to sin and grace that has a message for the rest of us. Her privilege is that she was chosen to be the earthly mother of God's Son. But that did not mean that she had to accept, she had the freedom to agree or to refuse. Endean summarises a complex argument,

Had Mary said 'no' to the invitation represented by Luke's angelic message to her, had God's saving will not included Mary's consent, Jesus Christ quite literally would not have existed. This cannot be said of any other creature. Peter and Judas, to say nothing of countless later Christians, may reject Christ,..... But their rejection would not bring about the withdrawal of the promise which Christ, crucified and risen represents for us; "in every other case, Christ could exist and be predestined

⁴⁸Tribble Phyllis, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).p.33.

⁴⁹Rahner Karl, *The Immaculate Conception*, vol. 1, Theological Investigations (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961).

⁵⁰Endean Philip, "How to Think About Mary's Privileges."

by God without its being necessary for the individual concerned to be one of the redeemed". Mary by contrast, "stands within the circle of Christ's own predestination".⁵¹

Just as what makes Jesus distinctive, is not that God is more present in him than the rest of creation, but that he alone reveals that presence definitively. We receive the message that sin is overcome through Jesus. Similarly, says Rahner, Mary does not simply receive the message, her saying 'yes' is a constitutive element within the message.⁵² Karl Barth understood Catholic doctrine in regard to Mary;

In the doctrine and worship of Mary there is disclosed the one heresy of the Roman Catholic Church which explains all the rest. The 'mother of God' of Roman Catholic Marian dogma is quite simply the principle, type and essence of the human creature co-operating servant-like in its own redemption, on the basis of prevenient grace, and to that extent, the principle, type and essence of the Church.⁵³

I believe that Mary is 'cooperating servant like in her own redemption' the doctrines of the 'Immaculate Conception' and of the, 'Assumption' are ways the Holy Spirit has high-lighted Mary as privileged and Mary as co-redeemer. My argument is to claim that the message of these two doctrines 'highlights' for all women that they too, are to co-operate in the work of redemption on the basis of having been graced to do so from the moment of their conception. In this understanding of redemption Mary is co-redemptrix, the promise that God made in Christ that sin is overcome, is true so far as he is essentially dependant for his very existence on Mary. Mary is not merely the most perfect recipient of redemption, but is a constituent part of its proclamation.

Karl Rahner explains privilege as the sense that Mary alone, apart from Jesus, enjoys this state of salvation or anticipates what can only emerge later for the rest of us. So what is stated in the doctrine of the Assumption is not an occurrence exclusive to Mary since as a matter of fact 'it happens to all the saints',⁵⁴ what happens to Mary belongs to her in a special way because of her role in salvation history and is therefore more readily perceived by the Church's faith consciousness than in the case of other human beings.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Barth Karl, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, trans. T. Thomsom D.D. & Harold Knight D.Phil., vol. 1/2, The (Edinburgh T&T Clarke, 1956).p.143.

⁵⁴ Johnson A. Elisabeth, "The Symbolic Character of Theological Statements About Mary."p.333.

⁵⁵ Rahner Karl, *Theological Investigations*. Open Questions.vol 9— —, *Theological Investigations*.

Similarly, with the 'Immaculate Conception' in order for Mary to consent to the wholly 'new' she had to be unencumbered by the weight of 'original sin', she was then free to consciously assent to and actively co-operate in God's work of salvation done by the man, Jesus. In Luke's gospel there is a suggestion of just one consent to life over death, made first by Mary in response to the angel Gabriel, 'Be it done unto me according to your word', (Lk.1.³⁸) and later by Jesus to the angel in his agony, 'Not as I will but as you will'.(Lk.22.⁴³) First the woman says 'yes' and then the man says 'yes'. What the new doctrine was securing was the conscious agency of Mary in the coming of the new and inextinguishable human life.

Mary's origin in grace, discloses one aspect of human existence which is valid for all. It is a symbol of the efficacy of grace, more powerful than human guilt; consequently, it carries truth about the nature of human salvation.⁵⁶

The one fact that cannot be disputed is that Jesus was born of a woman. The first known reference to Jesus' mother is by Paul who was in personal contact with the earliest circles of Jesus' followers, including his family. The one reference that Paul makes is Gal.4.⁴, 'when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law'. An insight that has significance for me as a result of this study comes through Philip Endean's commentary on 'How to Think About Mary's Privileges'; he is of course a disciple of Rahner's. I am citing the passage in full;

Too easily we think we need to choose between Christ as divine and Christ as human, 'Mary as Mother of God' or 'Mary of Nazareth the perfect disciple'. One of the reasons why standard Mariologies appear either too extravagant or too reductive is that we imagine revelation as a divine message to Godless humanity. We need instead to think of the world as bathed in grace from the start; revelation in one sense changes nothing, although by giving us the assurance of God's irrevocable love it changes everything.⁵⁷

7.5 'Blessed is the Fruit of Thy womb'

'Christianity created shock and outrage in the philosophical milieu of the ancient world by insisting that God had chosen to be born of a woman', writes Tina Beattie, 'it confounded all

⁵⁶ Johnson A. Elisabeth, "The Symbolic Character of Theological Statements About Mary."p.332

⁵⁷ Endean Philip, "How to Think About Mary's Privileges." Cited in 'Mary, A Complete Recourse' Sarah Boss.

previous beliefs about human generation so that it is neither matriarchal nor patriarchal but a profound reconciliation between the two'.⁵⁸ Maternal symbolism is a valid but an under explored medium for understanding the divine so I argue for a more recent theory of motherhood in relation to Mary and Incarnation. I see Ettinger's theory as an exciting new paradigm shift occurring within the study of psychoanalytic theories, because there still remains reluctance for scholars to reach beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries and specialisms and to reconsider the psyche in relation to the body.⁵⁹

Ettinger's work calls us to a radical notion of divinity conceived of as matrixial rather than phallic. Human generation is normally measured from the moment of conception but I will contend with Ettinger that the later stages of pregnancy are where subjectivity is formed. Her model challenges the idea of a discrete single subject formed by established boundaries that distinguish it from an oceanic, undifferentiated sense of the maternal body or of the world. Ettinger proposes pregnancy 'as a state of being alive in giving life' and she argues that in giving life, the maternal subject wants to live beside that given life. The Maternal feminine Ettinger understands as a source of meaning; it is a thinking apparatus for human subjectivity that goes beyond the process of giving birth.⁶⁰ She challenges psychoanalytical orthodox theory by her belief that dimensions of subjectivity can be both partial and what she calls 'co-emerging' and 'co-affecting' along 'shared borderlines' that always admit of minimal differences, but don't actually sever or submit to binaries.⁶¹ Instead the original baseline, 'subjectivity' is already several and capable of generating trans-subjective effects. Psychoanalysis has developed along two theoretical paths: the classical Freudian path which addresses the decisive structure of the early stages of subjectivity through the Oedipus complex, or, the post Kleinian school of 'object relations' which we explored earlier in this study in which subjectivity is formed through the first stages of mother/infant relationship.⁶² Ettinger is pushing back the theoretical back wall of earlier speculations to focus on the potentialities of the intra-uterine events as co-events with two or more subjective clusters involved. Subjectivity is formed in relationship rather than in opposition, or in loss. According to this theory the mother and baby in her womb are co-emerging subjects in process and in relationship and this intrauterine meeting is a model for human situations and processes in

⁵⁸ Beattie Tina, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate : A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation*.p.93.

⁵⁹ Carrette Jeremy and Richart King, "Critical Perspectives on Religion and the Body," *The Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 19, no. Spring (1998).p.143.

⁶⁰ Pollock Griselda, "Mother Trouble: The Maternal-Feminine in Phallic and Feminist Theory in Relation p.13.

⁶¹ Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrix and Metamorphosis."

⁶² Ibid.

which the 'I' and non-'I' (co-event) is not an intruder but a partner in difference.⁶³ The almost exclusive phallic concentration has prevented us from theorising the importance of this.⁶⁴ We need to keep reminding ourselves that this model justly asks us to consider the potential implications for subjectivity in the unique situation of human becoming. I have recourse to Griselda Pollock who interprets Ettinger with the clarity needed to understand the languageshe uses to convey new ideas.

'Feminine' is *not* to be understood as 'of women' (a gendering term signifying a negative difference within the phallic semantic universe). Nor is it in any sense derived from our currently gendered ascriptions of qualities to such 'women' (positively or negatively). It is a logical proposition of a dimension of psychic structuring by which all subjects, irrespective of later, Oedipal sex/gendering as boy or girl, and later sexual orientations, are potentially subjectivised: thus it is *feminine* in a non-phallic, non-Oedipal, non-gendering redefinition of a dimension of the subjectivising processes.⁶⁵

Freud's thesis takes as its starting point birth, separation from the carrier mother who is thus relegated to being merely a bearing body, the ground on which the masculine figure is traced. This initial separation 'trauma' becomes the first of a series of splitting; weaning is another, motor development, spacial and language skills are all caught up in and defined by the final cut. But Ettinger's argument invites us to consider human subjectivity not as the result of the castrative cut but as operating in a shifting parallel as encounter; 'subjectivity as encounter' implies that aspects of subjectivity from its inception is plural.⁶⁶ Because Ettinger's starting point, is 'subjectivity as encounter, subjectivity as primordially several', we need to think of the pre-maternal, pre-natal as a shared event whose impact is different for each partial subject.

The pre-maternal subject is a becoming- mother only as a result of the encounter with the unknown pre-natal subject to come. Yet she was herself once in a comparable severality as a pre-natal subject co-affecting with and co-affected by an unknown pre-maternal subject whom her own prenatal becoming was, as it were, maternalising just as the maternalised m/other' was effectively humanising her.⁶⁷

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Isherwood Lisa, Elaine Bellchambers, ed. *Through Us, with Us, in Us: Relational Theologies in the Twenty-First Century* (London: SCM,2009).p.242. Relational Theology Mary Condrón on Bracha Ettinger.

⁶⁵ Pollock Griselda, "Thinking the Feminine." P.26.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ ———, "Mother Trouble: The Maternal-Feminine in Phallic and Feminist Theory in Relation to

Ettinger's trans-generational theme has implications for most of the symbolic in the infancy narratives, as both Matthew and Luke draw on the traditions that have their roots in the history of Israel. What then are the implications for the 'matrixial' experience of Mary when she was in the late stages of pregnancy with Jesus? An example of, 'subjectivity as primordially several' would have to include Mary's parents, Joachim and Anna, also, the four women in Matthew's genealogy have significance, they are said to share with Mary a certain irregularity with respect to their social roles! Tamar, Rahab and Ruth are women who employ ways outside of marriage to serve family and household.⁶⁸ The wife of Uriah is not named, it is the misbehaviour of David that is irregular, but Matthew could be reminding his readers that the four women in the genealogy are instruments of the Holy Spirit who play an active part in moving the messianic line forward even though there is something 'suspect' in the manner of their producing heirs.⁶⁹ It seems that her influence is vital and consistent throughout his life, The mother's idiom of care and the infant's experience of this handling is one of the first if not the earliest human aesthetic. It is the most profound occasion when the nature of the self is formed and transformed by the environment.

The uncanny pleasure of being held by a poem, a composition or a painting, or for that matter, any object, rests on those moments when the infant's internal world is partly given form by the mother since he cannot shape them or link them together without her coverage. The aesthetic experience is not something learned by the adult, it is an existential recollection of an experience where being handled by the maternal aesthetic made thinking seemingly irrelevant to survival.⁷⁰

The matrixial is trans-generational. It takes the situation of pregnancy to imagine the capacity in the human being to create a space and apprehend and process vibrations.

The Matrix is not the opposite of the Phallus; it is rather a supplementary perspective. It grants a different meaning. It draws a different field of desire. The intrauterine feminine /pre-natal encounter represents, and can serve as a model for, the *matrixial stratum of subjectivisation* in which *partial subjects* composed of co-emerging 'I's and *non-I's* simultaneously inhabit a shared borderspace, discerning one another, yet in mutual ignorance.⁷¹

Bracha Ettinger's Elaboration of Matrixial.p.8.

⁶⁸Schaberg Jane, "Infancy Narratives of Matthew."

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰ Pollock Griselda, "Thinking the Feminine."p 28, Citing Christopher Bollas 1987. *The Shadow of the Object*. New York Columbia Press.

⁷¹ Bracha Ettinger Metramorphic Borderlinks and Matrixial Borderspace in John Welchman (ed) *Rethinking Borders* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press 1996) p.125.

A further example of what Ettinger calls 'co-eventing' can be recognised in the Visitation (Lk. 1.³⁹⁻⁵⁸) Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth and these two women are empowered to speak with prophetic voices. This is an example of Cenacle ministry, women's ability to interpret God's word for other women. The illustration of 'trans-generational' pre-natal can be glimpsed in the wonderful 'Magnificat' about which Dietrich Bonhoeffer preached in 1933,

It is at once the most passionate, the wildest, one might even say the most revolutionary Advent hymn ever sung. This is not the gentle, tender, dreamy Mary whom we sometimes see in paintings; this is the passionate, surrendered, proud, enthusiastic Mary who speaks out here. This song has none of the sweet, nostalgic or even playful tones of some of our Christmas carols. It is instead a hard, strong, inexorable song about collapsing thrones and humbled lords of this world, about the power of God and the powerlessness of humankind. *These are the tones of the women prophets of the Old Testament that now come to life in Mary's womb.*⁷²

Another echo in theology of the matrixial is the theme of mercy, God's mercy to the oppressed people, it is a mercy that is proclaimed in the song of the Magnificat with praise for divine loving-kindness towards a marginalised and oppressed woman and then extends to all the poor of the world. Ettinger's work addresses the issues of com-passion arising from the becoming mother's potential for enlivening and solace resulting from the matrixial web and borderspace. This com-passion is engrained in all humans as a result of shared trans-generational human becoming. It takes the situation of pregnancy to imagine the capacity in the human to create space and to apprehend and process vibrations. Mother plays back to baby a less chaotic world, she can 'trans-subject', she has the psychic capacity to take baby's signs to herself re-interpret them, then give them back in a less frightening form. Ettinger suggests we each imagine every encounter as a kind of pregnancy where we are sharing not defending the 'I' but engaging in a fragile share-ability through our memory traces of primary compassion when partial 'I' met non-'I' and each one neither assimilated nor rejected the other. This is a psychic capacity that goes into hiding in adult subjectivity where it is ruled out because the phallic strategy is easier to recognize.⁷³ The incident at Cana in Galilee is uncanny until it is read as 'co-eventing', Jesus tells Mary, 'My Hour has not yet come' and Mary says to the servants, 'Do whatever her tells you' and of course the water is turned into wine. (Jn. 2.⁵⁻⁶)

⁷² Weber Manfred, ed. *Sermon Preached by Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the Third Sunday of Advent in 1933, The Mystery of the Holy Night* (New York: Cross Road, 1996).

⁷³ Griselda Pollock, "The Maternal-Feminine in Phallic and Feminist Theory in Relation to Bracha Ettinger's Elaboration of Matrixial" *'Mamsie' Studies in the Maternal* (2011).

Has Mary a memory of the intrauterine time when she was 'humanising' Jesus and he was 'divinising' her?

Or, is Mary calling Jesus to attend to his role of host, 'one who can save from ruin'⁷⁴ Luke in the infancy narrative says 'As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart'. (Lk.2.²⁰) Mary has the psychic capacity of one who listens to the primitive vibrations of the time with Jesus in her womb. The old prophets Anna and Simeon are also listening to the traces and vibrations from the Holy Spirit 'enigmatic signifiers transmitted to the psychically premature infant' brought into the temple.(Lk.2.²²⁻³⁸)

Similarly at the foot of the Cross, 'Woman, this is your son'. 'Then to the disciple he said, "this is your mother."' (Jn.19²⁷) Is this scene a 'co-eventing' of Jesus memory of 'womb misericordiality-mercy-as pregnancy-emotion' standing for compassionate hospitality in living inter-with-in-beside the almost Other'? For Ettinger the maternal feminine is a source of meaning, understood as a thinking apparatus that goes well beyond the process of generating little humans.⁷⁵ As Christian women we have been defending an embodied memory that runs counter to the traces of primary compassion in the matrixial theory. We have been programmed to believe we have inherited the sin of the first woman Eve, she who disobeyed and generated in humankind a similar misuse of freedom. Ettinger's theory of trans-subjectivity affirms the discovery of cellular biology which opened up a new psychic maze of elegance, complexity and intelligence.⁷⁶ The cell in the body acts with empowering wisdom it holds within the body, memories of pre-natal existence and as each cell develops it works in communion with others finding its identity through immersion with the greater whole. Cells have a distinctive sense of mindfulness, 'they know what is going on and can respond with subtlety and suppleness'.⁷⁷ If women have had imprinted on their memory from pre-birth the negative messages of 'original sin', that we are meant to suffer as a consequence of Eve's tempting Adam, and 'Adam' is not letting us forget, it is likely to interfere with the healthy growth of our body and mind. It is hard to imagine what the psychic wounding over centuries has meant for the spiritual journeys of women. Serene Jones describes six dimensions of feminist theories of oppression,⁷⁸ she refers to personal and social forces that diminish and deny the flourishing of women. The current oppression is that of 'trafficking' young girls being groomed to be the objects of sexual abuse, bought in one country and sold in another. There

⁷⁴ Saracino Michele, "Moving Beyond the 'One True Story'," in *Frontiers in Catholic Feminist Theology*, ed. and Elena Procaro -Foley Abraham Susan (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).

⁷⁵ Pollock, "The Maternal-Feminine in Phallic and Feminist Theory in Relation to Bracha Ettinger's Elaboration of Matrixial".p.13.

⁷⁶ O'Murchu Diarmuid, *The Transformation of Desire* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007).p.94

⁷⁷ Ibid.p.95.

⁷⁸ Jones Serene, *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology*.p.71.

is the 'respectable' domestic oppression within the family, not to be disclosed as violence because it is so easily justified in the name of 'love'.⁷⁹ Irigaray argues that Freud's failure to attribute significance to the mother's role in the origins of life is the precondition for an abstract and disembodied value system constructed around masculine norms, a patriarchal culture that is 'based on sacrifice, crime and war'. In fact the whole economy demonstrates a forgetting of life, a lack of recognition of the debt to the mother, of maternal ancestry, of the women who do the work of producing and maintaining life.⁸⁰ Irigaray interprets the journey of Plato's prisoner from the cave to the world outside as a journey away from the fire of the cave towards the sun as the only source of light so that seeing daylight becomes the singly cause of origin so that the originating role of the womb (cave) is eradicated. Its capacity to represent the otherness and difference of the maternal/female body is denied and instead becomes hostage to paternal forms of representation.⁸¹

We need to find, rediscover, invent the words, the sentences that speak of the most ancient and most current relationship we know- the relationship to the mother's body, to our body, sentences that translate the bond between our body, and her body and the body of our daughter. We need to discover a language that is not a substitute for the experience of corps-à-corps as the paternal language seeks to be, but which accompanies that bodily experience, clothing it in words that do not erase the body but speak the body.⁸²

7.6 Conclusion

'It Was you Who Created My Inmost Self; and Put Me Together in My Mother's Womb'.

(Ps.139)

My reflections on the scriptural and doctrinal beliefs about Mary the mother of Jesus, together with new findings in psychology leave me with an immense gratitude for the gift of 'womanhood'. The Mary I have uncovered is certainly 'feminine' when I see her responding to the Spirit with her strong and dramatic 'yes'; using the disciplined theological imagery of the bible 'spirit/shekinah', I image her as wisdom and mother. As mother she has the capacity not

⁷⁹ Althaus-Reid Marcella and Lisa Isherwood, *Controversies in Feminist Theology*, Controversies in Contextual Theology Series (London: SCM Press, 2007).

⁸⁰ Beattie Tina, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate : A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation*.p.90.

⁸¹ Irigaray Luce, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993).243-353.

⁸² ———, *Sexes and Genealogies*.p.18-19

only to bring Jesus to birth she is also able to influence all those who are willing to use what Ettinger calls 'psychic capacity' that I translate as the gift of Holy Spirit. As Ettinger shows in her elaboration of matrixial, theory, 'relationality' is built into our human becoming. Mary at Pentecost is endorsing this principle as she once again says 'yes' to the Holy 'Ruah' of God who breathes life into the prophetic heart of the community.

Johnson suggests that the resonance of some ancient language and symbols indicate that it is appropriate to speak of Spirit in metaphors which evoke female images. For example, of the work of women in 'bringing forth and nurturing life', so neglect of the Spirit and the marginalising of women have a 'symbolic affinity and may well go hand-in hand'.⁸³ We saw that the Hebrew word for spirit, *ruah* is of grammatically feminine gender but not necessarily to indicate maleness or femaleness of the object, while the greek word *pneuma* is neuter, and the Latin term *spiritus* is masculine, however, St. Jerome (4th Century) concluded that God transcends all categories of sexuality and indeed Spirit.⁸⁴ Most significantly for my argument is the word of the psalmist, 'It was you who created my inmost self; and knit me together in my Mother's Womb'. (Ps.139.¹³) There are numerous maternal images for spirit, such as the symbol of bird or dove, 'The Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove'. (Lk.3.²²) or hovering like a nesting mother bird over the egg of 'primordial chaos' in the beginning (Gen.1.2.) or sheltering those in difficulty under the protective shadow of her wings. (Ps.17.⁸ 36.⁷).

I have found another, even more explicit way of speaking about the mystery of God is the biblical figure of Wisdom which is consistently female, casting her as sister, mother, female beloved, here she symbolizes transcendent power ordering and delighting in the world. She pervades the world, both nature and humanity interacting with them all to lure them along the right path.⁸⁵ In the Hebrew Scriptures, Wisdom is personified and her teachings lead to right ordering in accordance with God's intention, wisdom governs the natural and moral spheres and is often personified as a female figure. But says, Sarah Boss there is good reason to understand the instinct which led people to see a connection with Mary and Holy Wisdom.⁸⁶ The new creation in Christ is formed through his mother, who takes on the mantle of Holy wisdom through whom God does the work of creation. As we have seen Ettinger offers an interpretation of 'feminine' not as the opposite of masculine but rather as a supplementary, shifting stratum of human subjectivity and meaning; a stratum that is delivered to us all,

⁸³ Ibid.p.131.

⁸⁴ *Adversus Jovinianum* the earliest translator and biblical scholar among the 'Patristics'.

⁸⁵ Boss Jane Sarah, *Mary: The Complete Resource*.

⁸⁶ Ibid.p.116

irrespective of later sexual orientation, a truly new creation. The most significant and exciting of my findings is that of Mary's role in the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption, to see that she 'is quite simply the principle, type and essence of the human creature co-operating servant-like in its own redemption'.⁸⁷

Mary is not there for us to admire from afar, she is signposting for all women that the female body is fundamental in the story of salvation. It is through Mary's conscious agency that the transformation of humanity is revealed, she was active and knowing, not a passive unknowing participant in the Incarnation. Mary is showing all women that we are liberated, we simply need to believe that the feminine is fundamental to the building of the reign of God. Ettinger's feminine applies to both women and men since through the matrixial we are all seduced into life.

⁸⁷Barth Karl, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, trans. T. Thomsom D.D. & Harold Knight D.Phil., vol. 1/2, The (Edinburgh T&T Clarke, 1956).p.143.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

I am puzzled that a species that has subjected virtually the entire universe to its analytic gaze and that has penetrated to the tiniest constituents of matter still knows next to nothing about how to become human.⁸⁸

My conclusions are significant and exciting because they offer a whole new paradigm that sheds light on the full mystery of Incarnation ('enfleshment'.) If divinity became flesh in Jesus the world became the place where God resides, both hidden and revealed, in the whole of Creation.⁸⁹ We are essentially spiritual beings, our problem is how to be human that is why God models the answer in Jesus. The first and basic insight, that of 'relational anthropology' confirms an understanding of the 'Christ event', as the embodiment and Incarnation of relational power. The human person understood as 'relational' was not the dominant viewpoint in the early twentieth century, we were still under the influence of the Enlightenment which tended to narcissism because it encouraged individualism, each person was to think self-responsibly for him or herself. Now I argue with supportive evidence, that the sources of the self are to be found in relationality.⁹⁰

The insight that the 'Feminine' ('matrixial'), is the foundation of all life, male and female, that 'Feminine' precedes gender in the womb makes the essentialist/ constructivist debate irrelevant. It has huge implications in other ways too, especially Christian theology. If the basic symbolic is matrixial, not phallic as we have been led to believe there is no need to compete for equal status between the sexes, men and women each have a privileged origin. Nor do we need to replace the phallic with the matrixial, this theory is not about the bodily organs of penis or womb, it refers to a psychic experience that begins in pregnancy and continues to reverberate throughout life. Pre-natal humans are like tuning forks that pick up a tone which resonates through life. This is why the reproductive process is given to us in this unique way so that we can experience the reciprocal character of love?⁹¹

⁸⁸ Wink Walter, *The Human Being: Jesus and the Enigma of the Son of Man* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002).

⁸⁹ Isherwood Lisa, "The Embodiment of Feminist Liberation Theology: The Spiralling of Incarnation."

⁹⁰ Taylor Charles, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁹¹ Rohr Richard, *Adapted from The Cosmic Christ*. Centre for Action and Contemplation. (CD. March 19th 2013)

My argument that mysticism liberates women, overcoming the domination of the phallic symbolic is affirmed by the trans-subjective matrixial.⁹² Of itself this theory is based on the psychic resonances of human becoming in the reproductive process, but the Christian mystery of the Incarnation reveals the greater reality. God becomes flesh in Jesus, and of equal theological significance, God is born of a woman.⁹³ These findings have profound implications that substantiate my proposition, that mysticism offers freedom to all women.

The intention in this concluding section is to reprise my work by analysing the underpinnings of the theory and practice of spirituality (mysticism) and psychology (narcissism) during sixty-five years of community Life. My purpose is to show the development of those themes that either support or subvert my argument, feminism, experience, authority, relationality, and the full humanity of woman as exemplified in Mary of Pentecost.

First, I need to reiterate my stance as a woman Religious committed to the Catholic Church, at the same time believing that 'feminism' is a major resource for the transformation of humanity and history. With many Catholic women I have asked if the patriarchy is divinely revealed and therefore divinely sanctioned? Does the bible teach the maleness of God and the inferiority of women? Is women's inferiority, a self-emptying *kenotic* pattern of life as demonstrated by Christ in the paschal mystery? I have discovered some answers to these questions that are satisfying but, because they are, like all discoveries to be tested, they await further research.

'Authority and Experience'

My narrative begins with the pre-Vatican II Church with its resistance to Modernism, which in turn was a reaction to the rigid propositional theology of the seminary textbooks and the narrowing, ahistorical mentality induced by them. I needed to illustrate the way the Christian message was proclaimed to the 'faithful' in these years, because the 'Good News' could not be proclaimed through the rational concepts of doctrine only, the other side of Catholicism, its intuitive side expressed through its rich liturgy, celebrations of the Eucharist and many prayerful 'devotions' and processions in honour of the Eucharist and 'Our Lady'. The first implication of relational anthropology is that it unifies, overcoming dualism, for example, opposition between spirit and matter, rational and the intuitive, a division common to ancient Greek thought, that still lingers in the culture's unconscious.⁹⁴ The male is identified with rationality, and believes he is closer to divinity, while the female is identified with irrationality

⁹² Ettinger L.Bracha, "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity."

⁹³ Gebara Ivone and Maria Clara Bengemer, *Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor*.p.42.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

and intuition, and therefore a lesser mortal. The Incarnation confirms for us that what became transparent at a point of time in history is God's love as organic to creation. This unifying anthropology takes as its starting point one single history, not claiming two histories one against the other, as if there were a divine history and a human history each totally separate.⁹⁵ The pursuit of the 'will of God' is one way of expressing our desire for union with God and during my early years was recognized externally, by subjecting the individual's will to the will of God, in submission to superiors and clergy. One of the reasons for the Vatican's distrust of modernism was the omission of this power and status of the hierarchy. This led me to illustrate how women Religious were controlled by Canon Law, and the 'Roman Curia'.⁹⁶ We knew what God's 'will' was for us every hour of the day through fidelity to the 'rule', even if we did not always comply with it. It became evident as I reflected on this absolute monarchical power, filtered down through the hierarchy, that the criteria for holiness tended to shift personal responsibility from the individual and on to the shoulders of the persons in authority. Only prayer and our desire for God purified our motivation in submitting to this. Feminist claims for a woman's need for autonomy and self-empowerment seem to question the validity of the vowed life, with its essential element of community.⁹⁷ But relational anthropology shows the vowed life to be a corporate expression of each of these qualities; it is not possible to achieve them as an individual, our very beginnings as human beings set the template for our need of others if we are to achieve 'autonomy and power'. As I have shown in chapter five, self-agency can only be achieved in union with the 'other'. This is true for the wider faith community, Christians are closely related to one another through baptism, it is the ecclesial community who becomes the divine agent for the discovery of God's will. Relational anthropology means that the need to choose between autonomy and heteronomy, is resolved in the gap between the individual and the community and is closer than we believed. The gap between the individual and the rest of creation is closer still.⁹⁸

Relational anthropology has huge implications for the concept of 'experience' which before the Council was held to be highly suspect, because, according to *Pascendi Gregis* subjective experience of God was 'inclined to pantheism' by its doctrine of divine immanence.⁹⁹ I show that according to Karl Rahner's anthropological analysis, human beings are dynamically structured towards God, 'the personal history of the experience of God signifies, over and

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Later called the 'congregation for the Defence of the Faith' (CDF)

⁹⁷ Stoddon M. Katharine, "Religious Life and Second Wave Feminism," in *A Future Full of Hope?*, ed. CJ Gemma Simmonds (Dublin: Columba Press, 2012). p. 71.

⁹⁸ Heiding Fredrik SJ., *Ignatian Spirituality at Ecclesial Frontiers*.

⁹⁹ Pope Pius X, "Pascendi Dominici Gregis," (Rome: Vatican Publishing, 1907).

above itself, the personal history of the experience of the self' each mutually conditions the other.¹⁰⁰ Only after Vatican II was human experience accepted as a resource for doing theology, feminist reflection could now draw on the lived experience of women which had been neglected over the centuries as an essential element in theology.¹⁰¹ Experience begins with 'woman', she is the source of being for both the male and female of the species. Moreover, matrixial trans-subjectivity proposes that a variety of significant others are internalized within the psyche in the process of becoming human, suggesting that community is our beginning and is our destination.¹⁰²

Ecclesiology

My findings show that the whole Christ event is the embodiment and incarnation of relational power in action, and is the basis for Christian community as described in the Acts of the Apostles (Ch.2) and the Fourth gospel (Ch.15). All experience of God is mediated within the communal context of the doctrines of Creation, Incarnation and Salvation, and yet doctrine if never false, is never final. (Jn 16.¹³⁻¹⁵) The Catholic Church now seeks to preserve the balance between transcendence and immanence by bringing all of life, history and experience within the orbit of ecclesiology. But only when justice becomes the mark of unity within the Catholic community will it witness to full humanity. Not a justice that implies 'secular democracy', (although that would be a step forward) but a justice that ceases to privilege a priestly caste to the exclusion of half the Church community.¹⁰³ The priesthood of all the believers and the need of the Church to be purified, was declared by Vatican II when the bishops inverted the hierarchical order and put the 'people of God' before the ministry of the leaders in the document *Lumen Gentium*.¹⁰⁴ In Ch.3 I conveyed something of the excitement of *Gaudium et Spes*¹⁰⁵ founded as it is on the view of the Holy Spirit is present in all people and encountered in the most 'secular' society. In face of the flat rejection of the 'modern world' by Pius XII's *Pascendi*¹⁰⁶ the Council's shift in perspective may well be called revolutionary. My study seemed to ape the experience of the Council, how radical could I be? I am still a Catholic

¹⁰⁰ Rahner Karl, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, trans. William Dych (New York: Seabury, 1968).p.129.

¹⁰¹ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II. Dei Verbum* para.8.

¹⁰² Ibid. *Dei Verbum* para.8.

¹⁰³ Abraham Susan, "Justice as the Mark of Catholic Feminist Ecclesiology."

¹⁰⁴ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II Lumen Gentium* 28 p.350.

¹⁰⁵ Tanner Norman, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*, vol. II, Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990). *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*.

¹⁰⁶ see Ch.1.

woman trying to live the evangelical vows in community. In chapter 5,¹⁰⁷ I used images of the Church, on the one hand the 'body politic' and on the other hand, the 'body of Christ' (1.Cor.12.¹²⁻²⁷) but in the Council the principles behind both images appear unsteady as the bishops struggle to keep their hold on the foundational plank of Vatican II's agenda the 'doctrine of collegiality', that claimed 'the Church is governed by the college of bishops with, and under the Pope'.¹⁰⁸

To everyone's surprise the straw poll taken in 1963 showed a unanimous vote in favour of collegiality. The conservative minority spurned the argument of the majority 'that collegiality would strengthen, not diminish the Pope's authority'. Just as the bishops were beginning to breathe more easily the Pope dropped his bombshell – an explanatory note (*nota explicative praevia*) issued on his express wishes was to be appended 'on higher authority' to make sure of the way this principle was to be interpreted. This was a papal act outside the proceedings of the council that was never debated or voted on. When later Paul VI established the Synod of Bishops it was thought that this would constitute a sort of 'permanent council in miniature' but in fact the synod was to be 'directly and immediately under papal authority' so that in practice it has come to function like a rubber stamp. I see this as the 'body politic' at work, suggesting the victory of narcissism over mysticism. The Cartesian ego with its splendidly separate sense of self is the idealised self image of the narcissist.¹⁰⁹ This episode in the Council contradicts my reference to Foucault when I call on his interpretation of 'power' as that exercised as 'disciplinary and strategic' in contrast to pre-conciliar days when it was 'sovereign and judicial', fifty years on, it is the latter.¹¹⁰

In Ch.4, I show that after Vatican II the Catholic Church is no longer like the 'walled village of the nineteenth century', it retains its clear boundaries, but now the 'walls' are more permeable, porous and fluid. The notion of Church as sacrament of God's grace allows for this grace to reach beyond the boundaries of the Catholic Church. *Lumen Gentium* claims that the saving act of God in Christ reaches to all who act according to their conscience.¹¹¹ Although, I claim an 'everyday mysticism', I retain the belief that one of the privileged places to become conscious of this is in the ecclesial community. There is a whole new level of appreciation of the Trinity brought about by science especially quantum physics and cosmology, affirming the

¹⁰⁷ For what follows I am indebted to John Wilkins former editor of the Tablet. This edition is 31st Dec.2011.p.8.

¹⁰⁸ see Ch. 2.5.

¹⁰⁹ see Ch 4..2

¹¹⁰ see Ch.3.1.

¹¹¹ Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II. Lumen Gentium ch.2.para. 13.*

use of the old language about the mystery.¹¹² It is clear that reality is relational and all the power is between the relationships themselves, not in the particles and the planets, but in the space between the particles and planets.¹¹³

Religious women align themselves with the ecclesiology of the Church as the People of God expressed in *Lumen Gentium*, a 'discipleship of equals' who are one with all other Christians. To build up the 'body of Christ' is to be a communion, able to change and grow together in understanding through discussion and debate and then through a prayerful discernment process come to a consensus.¹¹⁴ This ecclesiology goes back to Jesus not Constantine. This is the vision of the Church that came to expression in *Gaudium et Spes*. The tension between Religious and the hierarchy, is at its core a struggle to follow the directive of John XXIII to 'read the signs of the times' and to sustain and promote the renewal inaugurated by the Vatican Council. As I reflect on these years I become aware that *aggiornamento*¹¹⁵ in Religious life occurred at a greater pace than in the Catholic Church generally, the result of the speed with which women Religious embraced enthusiastically the Council's directives.

Since I am claiming (with Karl Rahner)¹¹⁶ that a Christian of the future will be a mystic I needed to engage with the theology of the early Church, who struggled to articulate how Jesus could be both divine and human. In analysing 'human becoming' original sin reared its ugly head, especially in relation to Eve's disobedience. I add to my argument Tina Beattie's thinking¹¹⁷ in which she claims (with Irenaeus and Tribble) that Eve could be seen as the prototypical human being who experiences a radical moment of decision and encounter in the Garden of Eden marking the onset of consciousness and the beginning of history. There is it seems, a place for disharmony in the frontiers of the Church. In drawing a distinction between the 'Kingdom of God' and the Church, John Sobrino uses the metaphorical language of "frontiers".

By "living on the frontier" I mean that the Religious exists where there is greater scope for Christian imagination and creativity to experiment; where the risks are greater; where there is need for prophetic activity in order to shake off the inertia that is continually immobilizing the Church as a whole, or in order to denounce sin more energetically.¹¹⁸

¹¹² O'Murchu Diarmuid, *Quantum Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 2004).

¹¹³ Rohr Richard, "The in-between-Things," *Centre for Action and Contemplation*, no. May (2013).

¹¹⁴ see Ch. 5.8.

¹¹⁵ 'Aggiornamento' updating was what the Church was asked to do by John XXIII.

¹¹⁶ Rahner Karl, *The Church of the Future*, trans. Various, 23 vols., vol. 20, Theological Investigations (London/New York: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961).

¹¹⁷ Beattie Tina, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate: A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation* (London: Continuum, 2002).p.181.

¹¹⁸ Sobrino Jon, *The True Church and the Poor: Religious Life in the Third World*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (London: SCM Press, 1984).p.323.

Karl Rahner speaks to a modern Jesuit in the role of Ignatius and states clearly that criticism can be ecclesial, the Holy Spirit may inspire criticism, especially in those Christians who speak as loyal members of the community. Loyalty and criticism can go hand in hand. 'There is no principle that says that the convictions.....of Christians at large and of office holders should fit together without friction'.¹¹⁹

It is at the ecclesial frontiers, When individual Christians find themselves clashing with office holders, even their dissent is rooted in a fundamental acceptance of shared assumptions, a fundamental shared contact with the reality of grace- a reality which the inherited tradition and its official office holders symbolize but do not exhaust.¹²⁰

It could be that the Holy Spirit is using some modern 'Eve' at the frontiers of the Church to heighten consciousness of the fact that the Church is in need of unity. The Holy Spirit hovers over the frontiers of the Church seeking to witness the love of the triune God.

Everyday Mysticism

Karl Rahner speaks of the 'God of my daily drudge' to describe a profound reality called 'mysticism'¹²¹ and it became clear to me that mysticism is not a special extra gift to Christians, but is bestowed with the gift of life and accepted in baptism. In order to 'democratise' mysticism I found I first needed to deconstruct the concept, there was so much written about it and with such a range of judgments. I had lived in awe and admiration of the great saints who had been acknowledged by the Church as 'mystics', usually a couple of hundred years after their death! I noticed in the research, that women were considered to have the disposition for mysticism, but Grace Jantzen put her finger on the problem warning us not to be blind to the social construction of mysticism seen as private and subjective, suited to women while disregarding urgent issues of social justice. There were writings I could draw on that reduced mysticism to extraordinary phenomenon, 'outward signs of inward grace' that sometimes hinted at mental instability. There could be some acceptance of this latter, mystics like women, or the mad, represent a kind of 'otherness' on the social margins that can

¹¹⁹ Endean Philip, ed. *Karl Rahner: Spiritual Writings*, Modern Spiritual Masters Series (New York: Orbis Books, 2004).p.167.

¹²⁰ Heiding Fredrik SJ., *Ignatian Spirituality at Ecclesial Frontiers*.p.140.(Heiding is citing Endean Philip, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*, trans. Philip Endean from the German(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹²¹ Endean Philip, ed. *Karl Rahner: Spiritual Writings*, Modern Spiritual Masters Series (New York: Orbis Books, 2004).

challenge the centres of power and privilege.¹²² I noted that Jantzen, in her plea for a different understanding of mysticism claims that women need to trust their desires; this afforded me the opportunity to introduce the practice of discernment that will 'test the spirits to see if they are from God' (1.Jn.4.¹) Given vast amount of literature on mysticism, I needed to have a focus and I found it in the Ignatian tradition of 'befriending desires'.¹²³ 'Desire' is for De Certeau an expression of embodiment in which an incomplete 'self' is forever searching outwards towards encounters with the 'other' it is a form of social practice or relationality. In claiming that the practice of daily discernment as understood through *Ignatian Spirituality* is how prayer and action meet, Ignatius made clear that this was an apostolic spirituality. Nevertheless, it would be easy to interpret this practice as stressing interiority with techniques and methods that evoke 'religious experience' seeming to centre on the individual and her needs. But this practice disposes the person for grace, it does not evoke grace; 'experience' in this context is an encounter between the Holy Spirit, and one with a capacity to be conscious of the encounter. It seems 'consciousness and will' are the two functions that dispose a person for God; awareness of inner affective movements followed by a choice of what to do with them. Conflicting desires are to be tested against the background of loving relationships. It all sounds very introspective but the practice of daily discernment is never about radical interiority, because there is always a response to be made to the 'other'. The 'will of God' is rarely to be found exclusively in the individual, or exclusively in external authority but nearly always in the relationship between the two.¹²⁴

Mary 'as the air we breathe'¹²⁵

Gerard Manley Hopkins continues this poem by, 'Mary mothers each new grace/That does now reach our race'. If these lines were in prose they would be deemed heresy, and yet ? 'Chalcedon was the beginning', the question then was, 'How could Jesus be both human and divine'? Hence 'Christology', but it is male/female who image God. (Gen.1) Female was missing from the formulation of 'Christology' in the early Church. But both Jesus and Mary together answer the Chalcedon question. It is in their relationship that God reveals divinity. I am claiming that the roots of relationality begin in the womb with m/other and baby; the mother of Jesus generates both human and divine in giving birth to her son. 'God is revealed in

¹²² Foucault Michel, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, 3 vols., vol. 1 (London & New York: Penguin Books, 1980).

¹²³ Sheldrake Philip. *Befriending Our Desires*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2001.

¹²⁴ Heiding Fredrik SJ., *Ignatian Spirituality at Ecclesial Frontiers*.

¹²⁵ Hopkins Gerard Manley, *The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe* (OUP 1958 Penguin Poets)

the mediation between divine and human.' ¹²⁶ Mary mediates both human and divine to us equally with her son. Language about Jesus as the 'Christ' is primarily a male symbolic, we need another language that is inclusive of Mary, one that includes a female symbolic. In contrast to Ruether's claim that there was no historical example of the 'full humanity of woman' I had declared that the Virgin Mary was such an historical example. However, it was not until I turned to psychoanalytic theories and the issue of 'subjectivity' that I could show evidence of this claim. I was delighted to find a psychoanalyst who claimed that subjectivity began in the relationship between two or more subjects in the later stages of the pregnancy in the 'matrixial' web. Furthermore, this experience effects the psychic development of both mother and child. Through her experience as an artist, psychoanalyst and feminist theorist Ettinger explains the trans-subjective process in the womb (matrixial) as an instance of the symbolic level of a recurring process in the psyche that is the underside of many situations in life. Mary is a becoming mother only as she is initiating the becoming of Jesus, the 'flesh is becoming word' ¹²⁷ in the real, the symbolic and the imaginary. ¹²⁸ I recognise our theological images have often reinforced the abjection of women and in so doing the capacity for relationship. 'The abject' marks what Kristeva terms a 'primal repression', one that precedes the start of the subjects relation to the m/other from whom is required total separation. ¹²⁹ It is at this stage also that my reading of 'feminist theology, raised questions about Mary's place in Christian theology. Rahner argues that Redemption was accomplished because Mary gave her consent at the Annunciation, she was chosen to be the Mother of God but was free to accept or not. Motherhood as proposed by Bracha Ettinger is the originary 'feminine' that pre-exists the phallic gendering structure, and one of the questions this posed for me was how to give a different reading to traditional Biblical sources that might once have nourished us but may now need to be interpreted differently? I revisit certain biblical passages that shed new on the familiar stories and they reveal Mary to be so much more than the familiar icon that tradition has painted. She is a woman telling every other woman, not how she ought to be, but how she is! Woman is human and divine there is no other way except through the feminine to show God's unconditional love.

I need to ask what this research on Mariology has added to my self- understanding as a Cenacle woman, and to my argument as a student; the first finding is that theological

¹²⁶ Abraham Susan, "Justice as the Mark of Catholic Feminist Ecclesiology." p.126.

¹²⁷ Isherwood Lisa, "The Embodiment of Feminist Liberation Theology: The Spiralling of Incarnation." p148.

¹²⁸ Lacan Jacques, *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977).

¹²⁹ Kristeva Julia, "Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection."

interpretation of female identity is the centre of gravity for discourse about the divine.¹³⁰ Like some of the first Christians I believe that the most effective way to challenge philosophical dualism is through an appeal to the maternal body and its relationship to the Incarnated Christ.¹³¹ It was confirmed for me anew that the agency of Mary in our redemption is confessed by doctrine but does not show up in practice in the institutional Church. The ambiguity about distorted images of Marian devotion to Mary, lies precisely in the fact that she has served as a strong source of life for me and for countless other women through the ages. The people have imaged her in amazing ways because she is an answer to all their strange and wonderful needs. For me, as with Mary 'I ponder all these things in my heart', there is a much deeper appreciation of the Holy Spirit's action in women revealed fully in the mystery of Our Lady of the Cenacle. I have learned too, that simply identifying the Spirit with stereotypical 'feminine' won't do because it boxes actual women into a restrictive ideal.¹³² But as we have seen Ettinger offers another interpretation of 'feminine' she sees it not as the opposite of man but rather as a supplementary, 'shifting stratum of human subjectivity and meaning'; a stratum that is delivered to us all, irrespective of later sexual orientation.

Mysticism or Narcissism?

With the interface of theology and the psychoanalytic I make this significant discovery, that reveals a radical recuperation of the notion of divinity begins as matrixial rather than phallic! Mary and all women carry the memory of trans-subjectivity in the unique situation of human becoming, either as giving birth or as being given birth. The potential for 'mysticism' is given in the relational context of the womb to women and men. Ettinger's theories offer the hope that identities might not have to be achieved either sacrificially or at someone else's expense. So often the Catholic Church claims its identity at the expense of others; for example, the official Vatican response to the recent clerical abuse, supports clerical sub-culture and monarchical government promoting the narcissistic attitude that its image and power are more important than the welfare of the victims of the their own wrong doing.¹³³ Similarly, those of us who experienced pre-conciliar Catholicism as autocratic believed Vatican II offered hope and liberation when it spoke of its liturgical rites radiating a 'noble simplicity'. The new translation, both in its content and the way it has been imposed represents a retreat from the style and mood of Vatican II.

¹³⁰ Johnson Elizabeth, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*.

¹³¹ Beattie Tina, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate : A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation*.

¹³² Johnson Elizabeth, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*.

¹³³ See The Tablet 24 July 2010. *Too Little ,Too Late*. Thomas Patrick Doyle.

My research serves as a reminder that the coming into being of a human person does not happen in an instant it is a gradual process, not only in terms of the biological process of fertilisation, but also in terms of the developing consciousness of the mother and her relationship to the child. But these are complex issues, how could celibate men who comprise the hierarchy make authoritative statements about matters that pertain only to women? This is another example of the Church defending male identity. Foucault furthers my argument by stating that history read narcissistically confirms a false sense of identity by holding on to theories and values and suppressing any potentially disruptive awareness of difference. It seems the patriarchy is not listening to the reverberations transmitted from their time in the womb when they were seduced into life by mother. Pope Francis has recently challenged the Cardinals in Rome, 'A Church that does not go out of itself, sooner or later, sickens from the stale air of closed rooms.' He went on to say, in the process of 'going out' the Church always runs risks of running into accidents. He said, 'I prefer a thousand times a Church of accidents than a sick Church'.¹³⁴ Francis and Ignatius lived by a transcendence of self and not by the narcissistic seductions of control, power and success. Before the conclave Cardinal Bergoglio cited Henri De Lubac's meditation on *The Splendour of the Church* in which he identified the danger of a Church trapped in 'spiritual worldliness', claiming it is a self-referential Church, refusing to go beyond itself.¹³⁵ We look forward to a Church that is a discipleship of equals and to be a Christian will be to be a mystic.

¹³⁴ Staff, Editorial. "LCWR, Approaching Critical Crossroads." *National Catholic Reporter* April, (2013)

¹³⁵ Hanvey James SJ, "Because You Give Me Hope," *Thinking Faith; Online Journal of the British Jesuits*, April (2013).

Bibliography

- Abbot Rupert of Deutz. "Incarnation as God's Response to Sin." In *The Christian Theology Reader*, edited by Alister E. McGrath. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Alliaume T.Karen. "The Risks of Repeating Ourselves: Reading Feminist/Womanist Figures of Jesus ". *Cross Currents*, no. Summer (1998).
- Abbot W. M, ed. *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, Documents of Vatican II. New York: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966.
- Abelard Peter, *Exposition to the Epistle to the Romans*. Translated by Eugene r. Fairweather. Edited by 'Exposition to the Epistle to the Romans. A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham. New York: Macmillan, 1970.
- Abraham Susan and Elena Procario -Foley, ed. *Frontiers in Catholic Feminist Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.
- Alberigo Guiseppe and Jean-Pierre Jossua and Joseph A. Komonchak, ed. *The Reception of Vatican II*. Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press., 1985.
- Althaus-Reid Marcella, & Lisa Isherwood. *Controversies in Feminist Theology*, Controversies in Contextual Theology Series. London: SCM Press, 2007.
- Arendt Hannah. *The Human Condition*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.
- Arraj James. "The Church, the Council and the Unconscious." New York: Inner Growth Books, 2006.
- Assagioli Roberto. *Psychosynthesis: A Manuel of Principles and Techniques*. New York: Viking Publishers. 1971.
- Balthasar Hans Urs von, *Explorations in Theology II: Spouse of the Word*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991.
- Barth Karl. *The Doctrine of the Word of God*. Translated by T. Thomsom D.D. & Harold Knight D.Phil. Vol. 1/2, The Edinburgh T&T Clarke, 1956.
- Battersby Christine. *The Phenomenal Woman: Feminist Metaphysics and the Pattern of Identity*. Cambridge Polity Press, 1998.
- Batto Bernard. "Myth." In *The New Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Mary Collins Komonchak A. Joseph, Dermot Lane. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1987.
- Beattie Tina. *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate : A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation*. London: Continuum, 2002.
- . *New Catholic Feminism : Theology and Theory*. London ; New York: Routledge, 2006.
- . "Shared Endeavours." *The Tablet* September, Special Souvenir Edition (2010): 16-17.
- Becker L. Kenneth. *Unlikely Companions; C.G. Jung on the Spiritual Exercises* Leominster, Herefordshire Gracewing, 2001.
- Benjamin Jessica, ed. *Recognition and Destruction: An Outline of Intersubjectivity*. Edited by Neil J. Skolnick & Susan C. Warshaw, Relational Perspectives in Psychoanalysis. New York: Analytic Press, 1992.
- . *Shadow of the Other: Intersubjectivity and Gender in Psychoanalysis*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Bernauer James, Jeremy Carrette. *Michel Foucault and Theology; the Politics of Religious Experience*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.
- Boersma Hans. *Nouvelle Theology and Sacramental Ontology*. Oxford: OUP, 2009.
- Boss Jane Sarah, ed. *Mary: The Complete Resource*. London: Continuum, 2007.
- Bremond Henri. *A Literary History of Religious Thought in France*. Translated by L. Montgomery K. New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1930.
- Brennan Margaret. "Enclosure: Intsitutionalising the Invisibility of Women in Eccesiastical Communities." *Concilium* 182, (1985): 38-48.

- Brock Rita Nakashima. *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power*. New York: Cross Road, 1988.
- Brown Raymond. *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977.
- Brown., Raymond E., Fitzmyer A. Joseph S.J., and Murphy Roland.). Carm., eds. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. London: Cassell, 1991.
- Butler Judith. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Byrne Lavinia. *Woman at the Altar*. London: Mowbray, 1994.
- Butler Judith, *Gender Trouble*. N.Y.: Routledge, 1992
- Carr Anne, *Transforming Grace; Christian Tradition and Women's Experience*. 2nd ed. New York: Continuum, 1988.
- Callaghan Brendan SJ. "Then Gentle Mary Meekly Bowed Her Head". *New Blackfriars* 77, no. September (1996): 400-16.
- Carrette Jeremy and Richart King. "Critical Perspectives on Religion and the Body." *The Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 19, no. Spring (1998).
- Certeau de Michel. *The Mystic Fable*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992.
- Christ P. Carol and Judith Plaskow, ed. *Spiritual Quest and Women's Experience*, Womenspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979.
- Ciernick Helen Marie, ed. *Cracking the Door: Women at the Second Vatican Council*. Edited by Mary Ann Hinsdale and Phyllis H. Kaminski, The Annual Publication of the College Catholic Society. New York: Orbis Books, 1994.
- Collins Gregory OSB, ed. *Giving Religious Life a Theology Transfusion*. Edited by Simmonds Gemma, A Future Full of Hope? Dublin: The Columba Press, 2012.
- Coriden A. James, ed. *Women in Canon Law*. Edited by The Canon Law Society of America: A Text and Commentary, Canon Law Society of America. N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1975.
- Coté Ghislaine. *The Cenacle: Its Christological Foundations and Its Spirituality*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1991.
- Daggers Jenny. "Luce Irigaray and Divine Women: A Resource for Postmodern Feminist Theology." *Journal Of Feminists Studies of Religion* 7, (1991).
- Daly Mary. *Beyond God the Father*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1974.
- Darby Kathleen Ray. *Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, Abuse and Ransom*. Cleveland Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1998.
- Davies Charles. "Our Modern Identity: The Formation of the Self." *Modern Theology* (1990).
- Derrida Jacques. *Writing and Differance*. Translated by Alan Bass. London: Routledge, 1967.
- Derrida Jacques. *The Mystical Foundation of Authority*. Edited by et al Drucilla Cornell, Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice. London: Routletledge, 1992.
- Downey Michael, ed. *Postmodernity*. Edited by Michael Downey, The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993.
- Dupré Louis and Don E. Saliers, ed. Vol. 18, *Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern Theology*, New York: Crossroads, 1989.
- Egan Harvey. *The Spiritual Exercises and the Ignatian Mystical Horizon*. St. Louis Mo.: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1976.
- Egan Harvey SJ, ed. *Mysticism and Karl Rahner's Theology*. Edited by Kelly William J, Theology and Discovery: Essays in Honour of Karl Rahner. Wisconsin Marquette University Press, 1980.
- Endean Philip. "How to Think About Mary's Privileges." *Priests and People* 7/5, no. May (2003): 190-5.
- . *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*. Translated by Philip Endean from the German. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- , ed. *Karl Rahner: Spiritual Writings*. Edited by Robert Ellsberg, Modern Spiritual Masters Series. New York: Orbis Books, 2004.

- Erikson H. E. *Childhood and Society*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1950.
- Ettinger L.Bracha. "Matrix and Metamorphosis." *Differences* no. Special Issue: (1992).
- . "Matrixial Trans-Subjectivity." *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 2-3 (2006): 218-22.
- . *Woman-Other- Thing: A Matrixial Touch*, Matrixial Borderlines. Oxford: Museum Of Modern Art 1993.
- Faggioli Massimo. *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning*. Rome: Paulist Press, 2012.
- Faith, Congregation for the Doctrine of the. "Inter Insigniores; Declaration on the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood.", edited by The Roman Catholic Church. Rome: The Vatican, 1976.
- Farley Wendy. *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy*. Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1990.
- Fiorenza Schüssler Elisabeth. *Discipleship of Equals*. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994.
- . *In Memory of Her*. London: SCM, 1983.
- , ed. *Jesus: Miriam's Son, Sophia's Prophet*, Critical Issues in Feminist Christologies. New York: Continuum, 1995.
- Fiorenza, Francis Schüssler. "Schleiermacher and the Construction of a Contemporary Roman Catholic Foundational Theology." *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 89, no. No. 2 (1996): pp. 175-94
- Fiorenza Schüssler Elisabeth. *Sharing Her Word*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998.
- Firman John and Ann. *The Primal Wound*. N.Y.: State University, 1987.
- Flannery Austin, ed. *Documents of Vatican II*. Third Edition ed. Vol. 1, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents. N.Y.: Costello, 1975.
- Flax Jane. *Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West*. Berkeley University of California Press, 1990.
- Foucault Michel. *The Archeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A Sheridan. London: Tavistock, 1972.
- . *Discipline and Punish*. London: Penguin, 1975.
- . *The Foucault Reader; an Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. Edited by Paul Rabinow. London: Penguin, 1984.
- Foucault Michele, *Afterword; the Subject and Power; Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Edited by Dreyfus H. and Paul Rabinow. 2nd. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- . *The History of Sexuality*. Translated by Robert Hurley. 3 vols. Vol. 1. London & New York: Penguin Books, 1980.
- Foucault Michel. *Power /Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. Translated by Colin Gordon. N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1980.
- Freud Sigmund. Translated by James Strachey. 24 vols, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works. London: Hogarth Press., 1953-1974.
- . *Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays*. Edited by J.strachey. Vol. 23, Standard Edition. London: Hogarth Press, 1964.
- . *On Narcissism: An Introduction*. Translated by J.Strachey. Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud ed. 24 vols. Vol. 14. London: Hogarth Press, 1914.
- Gadamer Hans-George. *Truth and Method*. Translated by Joels Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. London: Continuum, 2004.
- Gaventa Beverly Roberts, ed. *'All Generations Will Call Me Blessed': Mary in Biblical and Ecumenical Perspective*. Edited by Levine Amy-Jill, A Feminist Companion to Mariology. Sheffield: Academic, 2002.
- Gebara Ivone and Maria Clara Bengemer. *Mary, Mother of God, Mother of the Poor*, Liberation Theology. Tunbridge Wells UK.: Orbis Books, 1989.

- "General Chapter Documents." Rome: Congregation of Our Lady of the Cenacle, 1844-2010.
- Graham Elaine. *Theological Reflection: Methods* Edited by Heather Walton and Frances Ward Elaine Graham. London: SCM, 2005.
- Graham L. Elaine, ed. *Grace Jantzen; Redeeming the Present*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.
- Grey Mary. *Redeeming the Dream: Feminism, Redemption and Christian Tradition*. London: SPCK, 1989.
- Habermas Jürgen. *Theory of Communicative Action; Reason and the Rationalisation of Society*. 2 vols. Vol. 1. Boston: Beacon Press, 1984.
- Halter Deborah. *The Papal 'No'*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004.
- Hanvey James, *Henri Bouillard*. Edited by Flynn Gabriel and Paul Murray, Ressourcement. Oxford: OUP, 2012.
- Hanvey James SJ. "Because You Give Me Hope." *Thinking Faith; Online Journal of the British Jesuits*, no. April (2013).
- Hayes A. Michael and Liam Gearon, ed. *Contemporary Catholic Theology*. New York: Continuum Publishing, 2000.
- Hebblethwaite Peter. *The Next Pope*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1995.
- Heiding Fredrik SJ. *Ignatian Spirituality at Ecclesial Frontiers*. Oxford: OUP, 2012.
- Helman A. Ivy. *Women and the Vatican; an Exploration of Official Documents*. New York: Orbis Books, 2012.
- Helmer, Christine. "Mysticism and Metaphysics: Schleiermacher and a Historical-Theological Trajectory." *The Journal of Religion* 83, no. 4 (2003): 517-38.
- Heyward Carter. *The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation*. Lanham MD.: University Press of America, 1982.
- . *Touching Our Strength; the Erotic as Power and Love of God* San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989.
- Hollywood Amy. *Sensible Ecstasy; Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Irigaray Luce. *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- . *Sexes and Genealogies*. New York ; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Isherwood Lisa. "The Embodiment of Feminist Liberation Theology: The Spiralling of Incarnation." *Feminists Theology* 12, no. 2. (2004): 141-56.
- , ed. *Feminist Spirituality*. Edited by and Dorothy McEwan Isherwood Lisa, An a to Z of Feminist Theology. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
- . *Introducing Feminist Christologies*. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001.
- Isherwood Lisa Elaine Bellchambers, ed. *Through Us, with Us, in Us: Relational Theologies in the Twenty-First Century*. London: SCM, 2009.
- Jacob, Needleman. *Lost Christianity*. Dorset: Element Books, 1990.
- James William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1902.
- Jantzen Grace. "Could There Be a Mystical Core of Religion." *Religious Studies* (1990): 59-71.
- . "Necrophilia and Natality." *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 19, no. Spring (1989).
- Jantzen Grace. *Becoming Divine*. Manchester: MUP, 1998.
- Liotard. Jean-Francois, *The Postmodern Condition, a Report on Knowledge*. Translated by G. Bennington and B. Massumi. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- Johnson A. Elisabeth. *Jesus: Miriam's Child Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*. New York Continuum, 1994.
- . "The Symbolic Character of Theological Statements About Mary." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 22, no. Spring (1985).
- Johnson Elizabeth. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. N.Y.: Crossroads, 1992.

- . *Truly Our Sister: A Theology of Mary in the Communion of Saints*. N.Y.: Continuum, 2003.
- Johnson W.A. *A Study of Theological Method in Schleiermacher and Nygren*. Netherlands: Brill, 1964.
- Jones L. Gregory. "Alasdair Macintyre on 'Narrative, Community and the Moral Life'." *Modern Theology* 4, (1987): 53-69.
- Jones Serene. *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000.
- Joy Morny. "Equality or Divinity." *Journal of Feminists Studies* 6, no. Spring (1990).
- . *God and Gender: Some Reflections on Women's Invocations of the Divine*. Edited by Ursula King, Religion and Gender. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
- Keller Catherine. *From a Broken Web*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986.
- . *Seeking and Sucking*. Edited by Chopp Rebecca and Sheila Davaney, Horizons in Feminist Theology. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Kemp Sandra & Judith Squires, ed. *Feminisms*. by Waugh Patricia, Modernism, Postmodernism Gender; a View from Feminism. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Kernberg Otto. *Object Relations and Clinical Psychoanalysis*. New York: Jason Aronson, 1976.
- Kerr Fergus. *Twentieth- Century Catholic Theologians*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Kohut Heinz. *The Restoration of the Self*. New York: International Universities Press, 1977.
- Komonchak A Joseph, ed. *Humani Generis and Nouvelle Theology*. Edited by Flynn Gabriel and Paul Murray, Ressourcement. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Kristeva Julia. "Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection." (1980).
- Küng Hans. *My Struggle for Freedom; Memoirs*. Translated by John Bowden. Vol. Continuum. London 2002.
- Lacan Jacques. *Ecrits: A Selection*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Tavistock, 1977.
- Lakeland Paul. *Postmodernity in a Fragmented Age; Guides to Theological Inquiry*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Lallement Louis. *The Spiritual Doctrine of Father Louis Lallement S.J.* Edited by Alan McDougall. London: Newman Bookshop, 1946.
- Lash Nicholas. *Theology for Pilgrims*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008.
- Lonergan Bernard. *Method in Theology*. London: DTL., 1972.
- Loughlin Gerard. *Nouvelle Theologie: A Return to Modernism?* Edited by Flynn Gabriel and Paul Murray, Ressourcement. Oxford: OUP, 2012.
- Luke. "Acts of the Apostles." 1 v.12-14 2;1-5.
- Lundy Damian. "Corpus Christi College." 1980.
- Lyons Kathleen. "Creator Spirit in Modern Theology." 1-61. Nottingham Nottingham University, 1972.
- Maaik, de Haardt. "The Marian Paradox: Marian Practices as a Road to a New Mariology." *Harvard Theological Review* 19, no. 2 (2011): 168-81.
- Macintyre Alistair. *After Virtue; a Study in Moral Theology*. Notre Dame IN: Notre Dame Press, 1981.
- . *Narrative Community and the Moral Life*, Modern Theology 1987.
- Maggiolini Allesandro. "Magisterial Teaching on Experience in the Twentieth Century: From the Modernist Crisis to the Second Vatican Council." *Communio: International Catholic Review* 23, no. Summer (1996).
- Mahler Margaret. *The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant*. New York: Basic Books, 1975.
- McClintock Fulkerson Mary. *Changing the Subject : Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.
- McFague Sallie. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*. London: SCM Press, 1993.
- . *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.

- McGrath E. Alister. *Historical Theology; an Introduction to the History of Christian Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998.
- Mchoul Alec. *A Foucault Primer*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Meissner W. *Ignatious of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Metz Johann Baptist. *Faith in History and Society*. New York: Seabury, 1980.
- Moltmann-Wendel Elisabeth. *A Land Flowing with Milk and Honey*. London: SCM, 1986.
- Moltmann Jurgen. *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.
- Moore Sebastian. *The Contagion of Jesus*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007.
- . "Meditation on Mary the God-Bearer."
- Mulligan Suzanne, Jim Corkery, Gerry O'Hanlon. *Repairing the Harvest: Fifty Years after Vatican II*. Dublin: The Columba Press, 2012.
- Murray, Flynn Gabriel and Paul D., ed. *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology*. Oxford: OUP, 2012.
- Nichols Aidan. *The Shape of Catholic Theology*. Edinburgh: T&T Clarke Publishers, 1991.
- Noel Gerard. *Pius XI. The Hound of Hitler*. London: Continuum Press, 2008.
- O'Leary Daniel. "Brightest Presence in the Darkest Places." *The Tablet* no. September (2012).
- . "Creation Made Flesh." *The Tablet* July, (2010).
- O'Malley John W. *What Happened at Vatican II*. Cambridge US: Harvard University Press, 2008.
- O'Malley W. John. "Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?" *Theological Studies* 67, (2006). ——.
- O'Murchu Diarmuid. *Consecrated Religious Life*. York vols. New Orbis, 2006.
- . *The Transformation of Desire*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007.
- Okland Jorunn, ed. *The Historical Mary and Dea Creatrix*. Edited by Levine Amy-Jill, A Feminist Companion to Mariology. London: T&T Clark International, 2005.
- Oliver Kelly. "Julia Kristeva's Feminist Revolutions." *Hypatia* 8, no. 3 (1993): 94-114.
- Paul VI. *Humanae Vitae*, Encyclical Letter. Vatican Rome 1968.
- Polanyi M, *Knowing and Being*. Edited by Marjorie Grene. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.
- Pollock Griselda. "Mother Trouble: The Maternal-Feminine in Phallic and Feminist Theory in Relation to Bracha Ettinger's Elaboration of Matrixial." *Studies in the Maternal* 1, no. 1 (2009).
- . "Thinking the Feminine." *Theory, Culture & Society* 21, no. 1-5 (2004): 1-62.
- Pope Pius XI. "Casti Connubii." edited by Vatican. Rome: Vatican Publishing, 1930.
- Pope John Paul II. "Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life as Applied to Institutes Dedicated to Apostolic Works" (1983).
- . "Familiaris Consortio on the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World." (1981).
- . *Mulieris Dignitatem, on the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the Occasion of the Marian Year*. Vatican City 1988.
- Pope Paul VI. "Inter Insigniores." In *Vatican Documents*, edited by Congregation for the Defence of the Faith. Rome, 1976.
- Pope Pius X. "Pascendi Dominici Gregis." Rome: Vatican Publishing, 1907.
- Puhl Louis. *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*. Chicago: Loyola Univ. Press, 1951.
- Pui-lan Kwok. *Engineering Christ: Christology in Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*. Louisville: Westminster: John Knox, 2005.
- Rahner Karl. "Basic Theological Interpretation of Vatican II." *Theological Studies* 40, no. 4 (1979).
- . 'the Church of the Future'. Translated by Various. 23 vols. Vol. 20, Theological Investigations. London/New York: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961.
- . *The Dynamic Element in the Church*. Translated by W.J. O'Hara. London: Burns & Oates, 1964.

- . "The Ecumenical Unburdening of the Mariological Problem." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 26, (1989): 681-96.
- . *Foundations of Christian Faith*. Translated by William Dych. New York: Seabury, 1968.
- . *The Immaculate Conception*. Vol. 1, Theological Investigations. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961.
- . "Interpretation of the Dogma of the Assumption." In *Theological Investigations*, 217. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965.
- . *Theological Investigations*. 23 vols. Vol. 3. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961-1992.
- Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Theology*. Edited by Flynn Gabriel and Paul D. Murray & Patricia Kelly. Oxford: OUP, 2012.
- Ruether R. Rosemary. *Introducing Redemption in Christian Feminism*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1998.
- Ruether Rosemary. *Sexism and God Talk*. London: SCM Press, 1983.
- Ricoeur Paul, ed. *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays on Hermeneutics*. Edited by Ihde D. Evanston. Vol. 111. New York: North West University Press, 1974.
- . *Life in Quest of Narrative*. Edited by David Wood, On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Rohr Richard. "The in-between-Things." Centre for Action and Contemplation, no. May (2013).
- Rousseau J. *A Discourse on Inequality*. Translated by Cranston M. London: Penguin 1755, 1984.
- Sagovsky. *On God's Side; Life of George Tyrrell*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Saracino, Michele, *Moving Beyond the 'One True Story'*. Edited by and Elena Procaro -Foley Abraham Susan, *Frontiers in Catholic Feminist Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.
- Schaberg Jane. *The Illegitimacy of Jesus*. New York: Crossroads, 1990.
- . *Infancy Narratives of Matthew*. Edited by Levine Amy-Jill, A Feminist Companion to Mariology. London: T&T Clark International, 2005.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *The Christian Faith*: [S.I.] : T Clark, 1928 (1976).
- Schneider Sandra, *Contours and Dynamics of a Discipline*. Edited by & Mark Burrows Dreyer E, *Minding the Spirit*. London: John Hopkins University Press, 2005.
- Schneiders M. Sandra. *Beyond Patching: Faith and Feminism in the Catholic Church*. New York: Paulist Press, 2004.
- . *Beyond Patching: Faith and Feminism in the Catholic Church*. New York: Paulist Press, 1991.
- Schneiders, Sandra. *Finding the Treasure*. N.Y.: Paulist Press, 2000.
- Schneiders Sandra. "Religious Life as Prophetic." *National Catholic Reporter*, 2010.
- . *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1999.
- Schor Naomi, Whitford Margaret, Carolyn Burke,, ed. *The Essentialism Which Is Not One, Engaging with Irigaray*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Sheldrake Philip. *Befriending Our Desires*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2001.
- . "Unending Desire De Certeau's Mystics." *The Way Supplement* 102, (2001).
- Sheppard Lancelot, ed. *Augustinianism and Modern Theology*. New York: Crossroad, 2000.
- Shults F. Leron and Steven J. Sandage. *Transforming Spirituality; Integrating Theology and Psychology*. Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Publishing Group, 2006.
- Sisters, Cenacle. "Acts of the General Chapter." edited by Cenacle Congregation. Rome, 1998.
- . *The Constitutions of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Cenacle*. Chicago 1983.
- Sobrinho Jon. *The True Church and the Poor: Religious Life in the Third World*. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. London: SCM Press, 1984.
- Soelle Dorothy. *The Silent Cry; Mysticism and Resistance*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001.

- St Anselm. *Cur Deus Homo in St. Anselm: Basic Writings*. Translated by S.N.Deane. La Salle, Ill.; Open Court Publishing, 1962.
- Stern Daniel. *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.
- Stogdon M. Katherine, *Religious Life and Second Wave Feminism*. Edited by CJ Gemma Simmonds, A Future Full of Hope? Dublin: Columba Press, 2012.
- Stogdon M.Katharine. "The Risk of Surrender." University of Manchester., 2004.
- Symington Neville. *Narcissism*. London: Karnack Books, 1993.
- Tanner Norman, ed. *Documents of Vatican II* Vol. II, Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils. London: Sheed & Ward, 1990.
- Tatman Lucy, *Sin*. Edited by Isherwood Lisa and Dorothea McEwan, An a to Z of Feminist Theology. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.
- Taylor Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Taylor M. Laura, *Redeeming Christ: Imitation or (Re) Citation?* Edited by Susan Abraham and Elena Procaro-Foley, Frontiers in Catholic Feminist Theology. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.
- Terme Stephen. "Anthology of Congregational Documents." *Letters of 1833* (1985).
- Thandeka. "The Discovery of the Self That Kant Lost." *Harvard Theological Review* 85, (1992).
- . *The Self between Feminist Theory and Theology*. Edited by Chopp S.Rebecca and Sheila Greeve Davaney, Horizons in Feminist in Feminist Theology; Identity, Tradition and Norms. Minneapolis: Fortess Press, 1977.
- Trible Phyllis. *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.
- Underhill Evelyn. *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1961.
- Pope Paul VI. "Maria Cultus." In *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*. Rome: Vatican Press, 1974.
- Weaver Mary Jo. *New Catholic Women; a Contemporary Challenge to Traditional Religious Authority*. London, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985.
- Weber Manfred, ed. *Sermon Preached by Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the Third Sunday of Advent in 1933, The Mystery of the Holy Night*. New York: Cross Road, 1996.
- Wheeler L.David. *A Relational View of Atonement*. New York: Peter Lang, 1989.
- Williams Rowan. "Lead, Radical Light. Vatican II Fiftieth Anniversary." *The Tablet* no. December (2012): 24-25.
- Williams Dolores. *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk*. New York: Orbis Books, 1993.
- Williams, Robert. "Schleiermacher and Feuerbach on the Intentionality of Religious Consciousness." *The Journal of Religion* 53, no. 4 (1973): 424-55.
- Wink Walter. *The Human Being: Jesus and the Enigma of the Son of Man*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.
- Winnicott D.W. *Playing and Reality*. London: Tavistock, 1971.
- Wittberg Patricia. *Pathways to Re-Creating Religious Communities*. New York: Paulist Press, 1996.
- Wulff M David, ed. *Psychology of Religion*. Second Edition ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997.