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Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality, Volume 16, Number 2A, Fall 2016, pp. 118-135 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/scs.2016.0055>



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ROSSANO ZAS FRIZ DE COL, S.J., PONTIFICAL GREGORIAN UNIVERSITY, ROME

Communication between spirituality scholars can certainly not aspire to be univocal, like a mathematical exchange, but it is opportune for them to find a common language and horizon in order to share their research. I think that it is not only appropriate, but also somehow vital to work towards this goal when we consider the phenomenon of the globalization of knowledge.

In effect, globalization embraces us all and is virtually impossible to avoid unless one makes a conscious choice of going into isolation. This means global contact and communication, where the distances and technical difficulties, which previously prevented contact, can no longer be used as a pretext for avoiding it. It implies the exchange of ideas, which in the case of the academic study of spirituality, brings about dialogue between people with different spiritualities and cultures, not in order to reach a mathematical conformity or the dominance of one tradition of spirituality over another, but rather to further mutual interaction that helps to increase knowledge and maybe even to reach common ground.

This article is the first step towards that dialogue between scholars of different languages and cultures, in this case centered on the North American English-speaking world and the Latin-European one (Spanish and Italian-speaking). To that end, by presenting the work of authors who have had an impact in their own linguistic group, we are propounding a comparison that will establish affinities and divergences between them. In this way, we hope to reach and clarify the position that offers the possibility of shared research.

Traditionally, it has been affirmed that Latin-European *Spiritual Theology* is a theological discipline that considers the phenomenon of spirituality in a broad sense, from the perspective of theological reflection, while scholars in the English speaking North American context tend to adhere to a perspective of *Christian Spirituality*, which does not start out from this kind of reflection, but rather from an approach of theological neutrality.

Today it no longer seems possible to hide behind such prejudices—heritage from a pre-globalized world—in order to justify one's unawareness of the other. This essay attempts to overcome the prejudices and preconceptions and hopes to achieve this goal, simply owing to greater communication starting

from the more distinctive authors. For the moment the working theory—which will later be substantiated or not—is that the divergences are not as numerous as the preconceptions and prejudices make them out to be, but, to the contrary, the number of affinities could be surprising.

In this section, there will be a very brief review of the publications from the two continents, starting from the 1990s up until the present-day. The following section will compare the distinctive authors from the two respective areas.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY IN NORTH AMERICA

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According to Professor Bruce Lescher, the creation of the *Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality* in 1992 was a great step forward in establishing spirituality as an academic discipline in North America.¹ Two topics immediately captured scholars' attention: the role of the researcher's self-implication in the discipline, and Christian spirituality's place in the university. The first topic, self-implication, means that the scholar cannot be "objective" to the research subject-matter but is somehow involved in it.²

With regard to the second topic, three different approaches emerged:³ The first is theological and centered on faith and its growth.⁴ The second is an anthropological-hermeneutical approach in which spirituality informs a basic dimension of human experience, which must be interpreted and personally appropriated.⁵ The third approach is historical and contextual in nature. This approach argues that the anthropological approach alone cannot suffice, as all spirituality is rooted in particular social and historical contexts.⁶

Owing to a lack of space, it can be briefly stated that these were the guidelines for research in the 1990s and have continued to be developed in time,⁷ as have the relationship between spirituality and theology,⁸ the hermeneutical approach,⁹ and the historical-contextual one.¹⁰ However, scholars are in agreement that spirituality is intrinsically interdisciplinary.¹¹

In his introduction in the *Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, Arthur Holder comes to the conclusion that Christian Spirituality "is no longer merely [emerging] as a discipline, but has clearly arrived."¹² The foundation of his claim has a double basis: On the one hand, the fact that the academic development of Christian spirituality responds to the requirements of what a discipline actually is.¹³ While on the other hand, the fact that scholars of Christian spirituality—including those whose writings are included in the volume he published—have accepted and applied Walter Principe's demarcation of three different but related levels as the distinct levels for the study of spirituality.¹⁴ Furthermore, the authors in his publication are in accord that the study of the discipline is centered on experience, and that this is intrinsically interdisciplin-



Trees in the water, part 2 © Maria Georgiadou

ary. Despite these basic agreements, Holder acknowledges the fact that the authors retain differing points of view regarding important topics.

The book's first chapter is entitled "Approaches to the study of Christian Spirituality," and is by Sandra Schneiders. She describes the academic discipline of Christian spirituality as "primarily the research discipline whose specific objective is the expansion of our knowledge and understanding of the God-human relationship." The discipline studies "the lived experience of Christian faith, the subjective appropriation of faith and living of discipleship in their individual and corporate actualization(s)," or in other words "This life of faith and discipleship constitutes the existential phenomenon that Christian spirituality as a discipline studies." It is research regarding spiritual life "as it is and has been concretely lived."¹⁵

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In view of the discipline's situation, Schneiders believes that it is best to start out from a broad idea of spirituality and then subsequently narrow the definition to a specifically Christian spirituality. Her definition of spirituality, in general, from an anthropological viewpoint is "the actualization of the basic human capacity for transcendence and will be defined for the purposes of this essay as the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the horizon of ultimate value one perceives."¹⁶

In a Christian sense, the horizon of the academic study of spirituality is the Trinity revealed in Jesus Christ, of which the Scriptures give a normative testimony, and whose life is communicated to the believer by means of the Holy Spirit making him a son of God. The Church's community of believers sacramentally celebrates the new life in the Spirit, which is lived as a mission in the world for the coming of the kingdom of God.¹⁷ Theology, as a discipline, can be conceived as the reflection starting out from the experience of faith, and that which the study of spirituality actually specifies is the lived experience of faith in the Church by means of the testimony of the faithful in the course of history and not the reflection regarding its contents.

The subject matter of experience is central in this standpoint. Overlooking the problems regarding the sense and meaning of experience, it is sufficient to contend that it still represents the subjective consciousness of something and, therefore, remains fundamentally incommunicable even when it is expressed by means of texts, which become the study "material." The fact that the author compares this type of study to psychology is interesting: just as her subject matter is anxiety, but her formal subject is the lived experience of anxiety, Christian spirituality does not study prayer but rather the concrete lived experience of prayer.¹⁸ The subject of Christian spirituality is undoubtedly the human being as a whole, with all his/her dimensions (corporeal, psychological, cultural, ecological, economic and political).¹⁹

Schneiders distinguishes between *theological spirituality* and *spiritual theology*. The first implies an approach to the practice of spirituality that is associated with the contents of Christian Faith: “because of its relationship to the creed, code, and cult of the church’s tradition.”²⁰ The second focuses on spirituality and not theology, and she states the following regarding theologians who follow this approach:

They start with religious experience rather than with premises or propositions. They are certainly not exclusively focused on the “interior life,” but very aware of the holistic character of the human subject and her or his religious experience. Furthermore, they recognize that all Christians are called to mature in the spiritual life and that they share this calling with non-Christians. Finally, although they use the basic coordinates of Christian theology to organize their work and accord these coordinates a normative role in their analyses and criticism of spiritual experience, they do not deduce the content or dynamics of the spiritual life of the individual or the community from inarguable theological premises.²¹

The characteristic of this approach is the emphasis on experience and the development of a theological methodology that is apposite to the subject of study. She asserts that the challenge this approach faces is not to close in on itself but to open up and embrace a broader, interdisciplinary study. In fact, the complex reality of spiritual lived-experience cannot only be embraced from the theological standpoint as it:

[Involves] elements and aspects which can only be investigated adequately by the use of other disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, art, rhetoric, or science. The interdisciplinary character of the contemporary field of spirituality is not simply a trendy postmodern methodological choice but a response to the nature of religious experience and human knowledge in the contemporary context.²²

The roots of the anthropological approach are found in the acknowledgment that spirituality is a constitutive dimension of the human being before being historically characterized in one of its concrete forms. Therefore, the most suitable methodology is the hermeneutical one.²³

This involves understanding and explaining the topic, while at the same time appropriating it subjectively. This approach has a special trait that Schneiders describes as the researcher’s self-implication in the study of spirituality.

According to Schneiders, by virtue of this self-implication, it is necessary to take one’s personal interests in the discipline into consideration. On the one hand, for example, there is the matter of how to bring personal experiences into the classroom or lecture hall, as well as whether the classroom is the

right place to “undergo” spiritual experience. On the other hand, the study of spirituality undoubtedly has transformative potential, or in other words, it has an impact that leaves a mark on those who study it and furthers a process of personal transformation.

Furthermore, the new situation that has come about involving scholars from different disciplines and religious traditions has given them a broader outlook that goes beyond the Christian confession or creed. For that reason, the challenge that must be faced “is to keep the specifically Christian character of the discipline in focus and to resist the postmodern lure of universal relativism, nihilistic deconstructionism, rejection of all tradition and authority, and suspicion of personal commitment.”²⁴

The path that Schneiders outlines attains qualified acknowledgment in David B. Perrin’s book *Studying Christian Spirituality*.²⁵ The strongpoint of this approach is the development of self-implication in research, so as to mediate between the researcher’s subjectivity and the objectivity of the research.²⁶ It is a question of being aware of the influence of the sciences and not to undergo this unconsciously. If we consider the sciences as partners in research, they can help to position Christian spirituality in the more extensive field of the humanistic sciences. In this way, “they provide research methods that can assist, for example, in doing quantitative surveys and analysis of current approaches in Christian spirituality. In this way, we can establish patterns and trends, or situate isolated examples of Christian experience in the broader range of human experience, in order to avoid drawing premature conclusions.”²⁷

Perrin not only wants to build bridges between Christian spirituality and the humanistic sciences, but also wants to go further in order “to create a single field for the study of all aspects of Christian spirituality. Christian spirituality, as an emerging field of study, is well positioned to take advantage of all the expertise accumulated in the past 150 years, that is, since modern methods of research developed in the social sciences and the humanities in the mid-nineteenth century.”²⁸

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF SPIRITUAL THEOLOGY IN LATIN-EUROPE

Taking the 1990s as a reference point and in parallel with Professor Bruce Lescher’s description, the period has been defined as the decade of maturation for the field of spiritual theology throughout Europe. In fact, starting from the first years of the decade, academic output improved in detail and clarity, and continued to do so for the rest of the period, for which we can cite articles, textbooks and treatises. All this output from the 1990s has led to what might be described as a harvest of spiritual theology in the subsequent decades.²⁹

In fact, the year 2000 marks a watershed, due in particular to the International Congress of Spiritual Theology, organized by the *Teresianum* Pontifical

Institute of Spirituality. The meeting provided an overview of the discipline's development since Vatican Council II and indicated the prospects for future developments. In such a brief report, we can only cite a small part of the successive output regarding textbooks and the meetings between specialists.³⁰

The new decade, which began in 2010, brings hope for further in-depth developments in this discipline. Starting from 2011, the Pontifical Salesian University Institute of Spirituality has organized a conference covering specific subjects. Furthermore, the organization of the *National Forum of Italian Scholars in Spiritual Theology*, held every September since 2012, has given further impetus to the academic life of spiritual theology in Italy.³¹

Drawing on Moioli and his disciples' consideration, Jesús Manuel García affirms, "that the problem of the identity of spiritual theology becomes the problem of theology and vice versa." Therefore, the author takes a very different stance from those who "want spiritual theology to be a distinct discipline from theology" because in his opinion "the most suitable definition to describe spiritual theology specifically can only be the one used for theology itself."³²

With this premise, and seeing theology as the topic, then "the starting point can only be the acceptance of faith as an experience."³³ In fact, faith and experience "are coextensive, with each needing the other and they both develop in the same process of transcendence and lead to the viewpoint that both experience and faith always correspond to coming out of oneself, an expropriation of the subject."³⁴ An objective dimension, the Revelation of God and its cognitive comprehension, as well as a dimension that is subjective, the awareness of the personal lived-experience of this Revelation, characterize the experience of faith. In this way "the subject of theological reflection is therefore the experience of faith consisting in the Divine You and the human me being inseparable."³⁵ The Christian experience is the experience of faith and is expressed in two different languages: the propositional one of knowledge (dogmatic theology, systematic theology) and the appropriative one of personalization (spiritual theology).

In this context, García defines spiritual theology as the theology of the Christian spiritual experience, but it could also be defined as the theology of the spiritual lived-experience or Christian life. In any case, he considers it a "theological discipline founded on the principles of the Revelation, and which applying its own method, studies the Christian spiritual experience in the lived-experience qualified as sanctity, emphasizing its cognitive-practical constants which characterize and shape the Christian's human life in its development until the fullness of life in Christ."³⁶ As can be appreciated, this is a definition with which spiritual theology lays claim to autonomy regarding systematic theology but not from theology itself. We will return to this further ahead.



Monarch Butterfly. Courtesy Sunny M5

As I have argued previously, spiritual theology must achieve “a minimum common horizon for theologians to use as a point of reference in our discipline. It consists in considering spirituality as the study of the lived experience of transformation. Upon this shared and indispensable minimum horizon, other dimensions or dynamics can be added according to the needs of each individual theologian.”³⁷ Spirituality then, as it is a human phenomenon, is the lived-experience of human transcendence strengthened by the presence of the Mystery, which brings about an inner transformation.³⁸ But in referring to Christian spirituality, this is the lived-experience of transcendence strengthened by the Presence of the Holy Mystery, which brings about an inner transformation. “Presence” in the sense that “it regards the preparation for, the consciousness of, and the reaction to what can be described as the direct presence of God.”³⁹ That Presence is the Holy Mystery, the auto-communication of God that makes himself an historical Presence, in an objective sense, in the incarnated Presence of Jesus of Nazareth, and also subjective Presence in the interior Presence of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰ The inner transformation is the outcome of the interaction between the divine Grace and human will and leads to the perfection of love, because as St. John of the Cross says, it is “a complete transformation in which each surrenders the entire possession of self to the other with a certain consummation of the union of love. The soul thereby becomes divine, becomes God through participation, insofar as is possible in this life.”⁴¹ He calls it participant transformation.⁴²

This conception of Christian spirituality is combined with what is called the phenomenal-cognitive method. The central idea is that Christian lived-experience can be analyzed synchronously and diachronically.⁴³ The first is disposed on five levels, which are psychologically continuous, while the second normally develops in six moments over time.

The synchronic analysis is based on the assumption that every spiritual experience involves preparation and arises at an auspicious moment brought about by the advent of the Presence of the Holy Mystery. This first level is the phenomenal/mystery, the “site” where the Mystery becomes the subjective presence in the subject’s inner experience. The subject acquires consciousness of the Presence in a psychological sequence, by means of a personal reaction that is initially emotional and then cognitive. This is the phenomenological-hermeneutical level, which is followed by a critical reflection, which searches for the meaning of the lived-experience, the critical/cultural level.

Here, on the one hand, contemplation that regards the subject’s personal history, focused on finding the meaning of the experience, is possible. On the other hand, there is a critical reflection, which presupposes the former and attempts to comprehend the experience lived within the scientific or religious tradition of belonging. This second type of critical reflection is not necessary

in order to achieve the aim of the first, which reads the meaning of the experience according to one's personal history. This reflection is followed by a fourth decision-making moment.

In fact, at this point, after acknowledgement of the experience and having contemplated on its meaning regarding one's personal history, a decision must be made, which can more or less initiate an explicit relationship with God, which determines the fifth level known as the theological approach. It is in guiding and accompanying others down the same path that the Christian testimony in life has its roots, as does the mystagogical dimension.

For example, every authentic Christian conversion arises from something that has happened (phenomenal-mystery experience) in which one acquires consciousness of the Presence of the Mystery (phenomenological-hermeneutical level). One reflects on this in order to comprehend its meaning in our personal life (critical-cultural level). This reflection leads to the making of a choice faced with the Presence (decision-making level) and beginning to deepen the relationship with the Presence (theological approach level).

Experiences are lived over time and the previous ones influence the subsequent ones. Therefore, it is not enough to simply analyze a single experience, but it becomes essential to analyze the experiences over time. To this aim, we can employ the framework drawn up by Federico Ruiz, which presents the normal development of Christian life in six stages. (1) The onset pertains to the experiences that lead to conversion (2), followed by personalization of the faith in order to (3) gradually interiorize it. According to Ruiz, this interiorization is generally followed by (4) a moment that is more or less a crisis (the dark night of the soul and night of the senses), to then give way to (5) the relative maturity that can be reached before (6) glorification. Experiences from all the single moments can be analyzed with the phenomenological-cognitive method, so in studying the most significant experiences along a Christian path, which coincide with the most important decisions the believer has made, his spiritual profile can be defined.⁴⁴

The meeting of the believer or faithful person with the Holy Mystery initiates and brings about a transformative process, which, in the course of time, enables the believer to gain consciousness and convey such encounters in personal language in order to reflect and make decisions regarding his theological approach. This is his own way of thinking, feeling and behaving in the presence of the Holy Mystery, while the development of this transformative lived-experience of the theological approach "verifies" the authenticity of the Christian lived-experience.

The approach Garcia develops helps to carry out this verification, even though he does not refer to it explicitly. His advice regarding the method of spiritual theology is interesting: "this must take into account the complementa-

rity of the approaches to contemplation on faith, without obscuring the unitary principle they originate from: faith that imparts unity to knowledge, and which is attained with it.”⁴⁵ The problem regarding the identity of spiritual theology and of theology itself, which was previously mentioned, surfaces once again.⁴⁶

Garcia puts forward a method for *integral and unitary* theological research based on three stages or phases of research that mutually presuppose and are linked to each other where the aim is to “integrate the different aspects or elements of the Christian lived-experience into a single work programme.”⁴⁷

The first stage is historical-critical-phenomenological: the scholar’s consciousness of the testimony he/she analyzed, on two levels: objective (what was investigated) and subjective (how it was investigated). The second stage is critical-hermeneutical-theological: the scholar commences a critical-theological contemplation regarding the first stage, which “compares the lived-experience with ecclesial lived-experience.”⁴⁸ The third and final stage is the planning stage: “this is the moment of methodological application in the life of the believer, in order to advance the Christian lived-experience to maturity. This is a complex operation as it supposes to reconcile the experience of faith with the tasks and requirements of everyday life: work, economy, co-existence, culture, language.”⁴⁹ Therefore, the theologian has to be open and receptive to the contribution of the different human sciences. Furthermore, “people who have lived a powerful life-experience of God are fundamental in this methodological process, as well as people who are able to transmit and put these experiences of faith into practice in the present-day. In fact, even today the saint must continue to speak and to provoke. This is the job of the spiritual theologian.”⁵⁰

Regarding interdisciplinarity, which so far has only been cited, Garcia devotes a whole chapter of his publication to the interdisciplinary character of the theology of the Christian spiritual experience. The author starts out from the view that it is both the content and the method of this theology that establishes it as a distinct theological discipline, still within the broader field of reference of theology itself. But, this autonomy will “be possible and effective in so far as it is coupled with the interdependence of the disciplines.” In fact, it is clear that according to the author:

The imparting of knowledge occurs in so far as the theologian opens up his discipline to a confrontation and collaboration with other disciplines, both sharing and acquiring the results of new research in the field. The necessity for theology of the Christian lived-experience to be interdependent and confer, not only with the theological disciplines but with the human sciences as well, gives increasing clarity to its epistemological statute. Intra and interdisciplinarity will find their unifying centre in the experience of faith.⁵¹



Inside Hallgrímskirkja Church © Feldore McHugh

Interdisciplinarity must be complemented with the specificity of the spiritual experience, which Garcia regards as “the continuous, exhaustive personal appropriation of God and his acts on the individual’s innermost self. In this outlook, the religious-spiritual experience is an affective experience that ensues from a ‘natural’ desire for God. This is a combination of devoutness, emotions and feelings regarding God perceived as a desire. In brief, this is every man’s capacity for self-transcendence towards spiritual realities.”⁵² For this reason, all the individual’s features or characteristics (cognitive, emotional, personal, social and so on) interact in the oneness of the individual, as it is possible to distinguish them but not to separate them. This affects the need for:

[An] intra and interdisciplinary approach, in order to present spiritual theology as a [concise point of view] of theology, seeing as the [lived-experience] that is the subject of study of spiritual theology cannot be divided up, or as a [critical point for dogmatic theology] (Theobald) or even as its [ultimate horizon]. It can be affirmed that spiritual theology becomes a discipline whose function is to unify what the other components of theology propound.⁵³

AFFINITIES AND DIVERGENCES BETWEEN THE TWO APPROACHES

On the basis of the authors we have considered, coming from two different cultural worlds, it could be claimed that both are characterized by an anthropological approach to spirituality, a genuinely Christian one, providing a wide-ranging definition that is not centered in academic theology, and with an interdisciplinary engagement that starts out from the roots of the discipline. It is important to underline that the two parties are in complete agreement about this argument, even though this agreement remains largely unrecognized, due to the lack of communication between them. But, even if this is true, it is also true that there are some problems. Maybe the main one is the manner in which the discipline employs an interdisciplinary approach.

Interdisciplinarity is not merely a matter of building a natural bridge between spirituality and humanistic sciences, but as Perrin affirms, “to create a single field for the study of all aspects of Christian spirituality”⁵⁴: a field that is not exclusive to religion, with a dialectical relationship with theology, whose subject is the experience which is contextualized historically and culturally, and supported by a hermeneutic theory. Could the two cultures ever be party to a project such as this?

In any case, a task for the future is definitely to clarify the terms of the relationship between the intelligence of faith and the lived-experience of faith more effectively, as it is crucial in establishing an agreement that will provide greater harmony in the relationship between the approaches of Christian

spirituality and spiritual theology. However, the fact that the methodological problem of spirituality is the same as the methodological problem of theology is highlighted again here. Resolving this problem in a satisfactory manner for both parties would provide the opportunity to establish a common methodological foundation from which begin to collaborate more effectively.⁵⁵

Creating greater harmony between the two approaches, as mentioned above, presupposes that there are effectively numerous and important affinities between the two positions: the two approaches are in agreement that the aim of the discipline is to broaden knowledge regarding the relationship with God and are focused on the lived-experience of faith. They also agree that the discipline recognize a holistic character to the lived-experience of faith and concentrate on the day-to-day life of the faithful around the world, as it must affect all the aspects of public and private life (the “planning” aspect). The use of hermeneutics as a methodology, even with different undertones, is another aspect in which both parties are in full agreement.

Despite the affinities, according to the texts referred to, maybe the biggest difference regards self-implication. In fact, European spiritual theology has not explicitly elaborated on this in the way that American Christian spirituality has, but there are a few implicit references in mentioning the theologian’s experience of the faith in studying the details of the development of Christian life, as well as in mentioning the subjective appropriation of the data objectively revealed. Another difference is the emphasis given to the concept of transformation, which is present in both approaches, but, while for some of the Latin-European authors, it plays a central role in understanding the subject being studied (the lived-experience of faith), the English-speaking authors develop it as an aspect of the researcher’s awareness of their own bias and interest, so that he or she is not unconsciously thinking that pure objectivity has been achieved.

CONCLUSION

On the one hand, the aim of this study has been to present the prejudices underlying the English speaking outlook of Christian spirituality in the United States, and those of the Italian and Spanish speaking Latin-European authors who work in spiritual theology. While on the other hand the aim has been to display their respective work over the last decades, and to attempt, on this basis, to establish a means of communication in order to overcome these prejudices by studying significant authors.

As was considered at the beginning of this article, recent research illustrates how the affinities between the two contexts are more numerous and qualitatively important than the divergences or differences. However, for greater integration, two points must be clarified: the relationship between

the reflection of faith and the experience of faith with an interdisciplinary approach; and to set out the latter's relationship to theology to establish the parameters of a methodological pluralism for the reflection of faith as experienced. These seem to be the problems that must be solved in order to achieve greater unity (not uniformity) between the two approaches. An undertaking like this, focused on the reflection of the lived-experience of the faith, implies being conscious of one's self-awareness, cultural and spiritual traditions, as well as awareness of other viewpoints in the same dimension as self-consciousness is exercised. In this way, the understanding of other contexts helps our own self-knowledge and vice versa. Cultures differentiate, the human condition unites, and the Spirit inspires and transforms them both.

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NOTES

1. Bruce Lescher, "Spirituality in the English-speaking World Since Vatican Council II. An Overview," *Mysterion* 8.2 (2015): 140–152. Originally read at the Fourth National Forum of Italian Scholars in Spiritual Theology, September 17–19, 2015, Gregorian Pontifical University (Rome). I am grateful to Professor Lescher for his indications about the English bibliography.
2. Sandra M. Schneiders, "The Study of Christian Spirituality: Contours and Dynamics of a Discipline," in Elizabeth A. Dreyer and Mark S. Burrows, eds., *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 18.
3. Bernard McGinn, "The Letter and the Spirit: Spirituality as an Academic Discipline," in Elizabeth A. Dreyer and Mark S. Burrows, eds., *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005) 25–41; also J. Matthew Ashley, "The Turn to Spirituality? The Relationship between Theology and Spirituality," in Elizabeth A. Dreyer and Mark S. Burrows, eds., *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 159–170.
4. Bradley C. Hanson, ed., "Modern Christian Spirituality: Methodological and Historical Essays," *AAR Studies in Religion* 62 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1990), 50.
5. Sandra M. Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy," *Theological Studies* 50 (1989): 676–697.
6. As Professor Bernard McGinn states: "spirituality as an experience rooted in a particular community's history rather than as a dimension of human existence as such. . . ." McGinn, "The Letter and the Spirit," 33.
7. Nathan Ng, "Spirituality and Theology: A Review and Perspective of Their Relationship," *Theology* 104 (2001): 115–122; David B. Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007).
8. Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology: Christian Living and the Doctrine of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998). Also: "Spirituality and Its Critical Methodology," in Bruce H. Lescher and Elizabeth Liebert, eds., *Exploring Christian Spirituality: Essays in Honor of Sandra Schneiders, IHM* (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 15–34; Mark A. McIntosh, *Mystical Theology: The Integrity of Spirituality and Theology* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998); Part IV "Theology and Christian Spirituality" in Arthur Holder, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality* (Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publications, 2005), 175–285.

9. Belden Lane, "Writing in Spirituality as a Self-Implicating Act: Reflections on Authorial Disclosure and the Hiddenness of the Self," in *Exploring Christian Spirituality*, 53–69; Elizabeth Liebert, SNJM, "Practice," in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, 496–514; Ann Taves, "Detachment and Engagement in the Study of 'Lived Experience,'" *Spiritus* (Spring 2003): 186–208.
10. Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, 5 volumes. (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1991–2012).
11. For an overview see Judith A. Berling, "Christian Spirituality: Intrinsically Interdisciplinary," in *Exploring Christian Spirituality*, 35–52.
12. Arthur Holder, "Introduction," in Arthur Holder, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality* (Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publications, 2005), 10. Philip Sheldrake "Spirituality and Its Critical Methodology," states: "On the one hand, I believe that the academic discipline of spirituality has reached a sufficiently advanced stage that, methodologically, it should no longer need to concentrate its energies on self-defense. On the other hand, the nature of theology and its *raison d'être* is an increasingly contentious issue. In my view, the developed discipline of spirituality now has a unique capacity to help in the renewal of theology in constructive and refreshing ways," 16.
13. Holder, "Introduction," 10.
14. Holder, "Introduction," 2.
15. Sandra Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," in Arthur Holder, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality* (Oxford, UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publications, 2005), 16–18.
16. Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 16.
17. Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 17.
18. Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 18.
19. Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 17.
20. Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 24.
21. Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 24–25.
22. Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 25.
23. Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 26.
24. Schneiders, "Approaches to the Study of Christian Spirituality," 28.
25. Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality*.
26. Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality*, 9.
27. Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality*, 6.
28. Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality*, 5 (emphasis added).
29. For example: Ciro García Fernández, "¿Qué es la 'Teología Espiritual'? Intentos de Nueva Recalificación," *Burgense* 34 (1993): 303–319; Angelo Bertuletti, Luca Ezio Bolis, and Claudio Stercal, *L'idea di Spiritualità* (Milan: Glossa, 1999); Giovanni Moioli, *L'esperienza Spirituale: Lezione Introduttive*, ed. Claudio Stercal (Milan: Glossa, 1992); Saturnino Gamarra, *Teología Espiritual* (Madrid: BAC, 1994); Luciano Fanin, *La Crescita nello Spirito: Lineamenti di Teologia Spirituale* (Padua: Messaggero, 1995); Daniel De Pablo Maroto, *El Camino Cristiano: Manual de Teología Espiritual* (Salamanca: Caja Salamanca y Soria, 1996); Antonio M. Sicari, *La Vita Spirituale del Cristiano* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1997); Rossano Zas Friz De Col, S.J., "Latin-European Scholarship in Spiritual Theology (1954–2013)," *Studies in Spirituality* 25 (2015): 1–19.
30. *La Teologia Spirituale* (papers given at the Order of Discalced Carmelites (OCD) International Conference held in Rome from April, 24–29, 2000) (Rome: Edizioni del Teresianum, 2001); Charles André Bernard, *Teologia Spirituale* (Milano: Paoline, 2002) and *Teologia Mistica* (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2005); Carlo Laudazi, *L'uomo chiamato all'unione con Dio in Cristo: Temi Fondamentali di Teologia Spirituale*

- (Rome: OCD, 2006); Domenico Sorrentino, *L'esperienza di Dio: Disegno di Teologia Spirituale* (Assisi: Cittadella, 2007); Manuel Belda, *Guidati Dallo Spirito di Dio: Corso di Teologia Spirituale* (Rome: EDUSC, 2009); José Luis Illanes, *Tratado de Teología Espiritual*, revised ed. (Pamplona: EUNSA, 2007); Francesco Asti, *Teologia della Vita Mistica* (Vatican City: LEV, 2009); Paolo Martinelli, ed., “Esperienza, Teologie e Spiritualità: Relazioni al Seminario di Studio sulla Teologia Spirituale promosso dall’Istituto di Spiritualità della Pontificia Università Antonianum di Roma e dalla Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule di Münster,” supplement in *Italia Franciscana: Rivista della Conferenza Italiana dei Ministri Provinciali Cappuccini* 3 (2009); Mihály Szentmártoni and Fabrizio Pieri, *Spiritualità e Teologia: Simposio in occasione del 50° Anniversario dell’Istituto di Spiritualità della Pontificia Università Gregoriana (1958–2008)* (Rome: G&B Press, 2010).
31. Bruno Secondin, *Inquieti Desideri di Spiritualità: Esperienze, Linguaggi, Stile* (Bologna: EDB, 2012); Rossano Zas Friz De Col, *Teologia della Vita Cristiana: Contemplazione, Vissuto Teologico e Trasformazione Interiore* (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo 2010); Rossano Zas Friz De Col, *Iniziazione alla Vita Eterna: Respirare, Trascendere e Vivere* (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2012); Rossano Zas Friz De Col, “Identità e Missione della Teologia Spirituale: Bilancio e Prospettiva dal Vaticano II ad Oggi,” in Paolo Martinelli, ed., *La Teologia Spirituale Oggi: Identità e Missione* (Bologna: Dehoniane, 2012) 15–52, also in *Mysterion* 5.2 (2012): 158–192; Rossano Zas Friz De Col, *La Presenza Trasformante del Mistero: Approccio di Teologia Spirituale* (Rome: G&B Press, 2015); Jesús M. García, *Teologia Spirituale: Epistemologia e Interdisciplinarietà* (Rome: LAS, 2013); Jesús. M. García, ed., *Teologia e Spiritualità oggi: Un Approccio Intradisciplinare*. Atti del Simposio Organizzato dall’Istituto di Teologia Spirituale dell’Università Pontificia Salesiana (Rome: December 9–10, 2011), (Rome: LAS, 2012); Jesús. M. García, *Mistici nello Spirito e Contemporaneità* (Rome: LAS, 2014); Jesús M. García and Rossano Zas Friz De Col eds., *Contemplare Oggi* (Rome: LAS, 2015); First Forum: “La Teologia Spirituale nel contesto Teologico Italiano: Presentazione di diversi Programmi di Teologia Spirituale in Italia,” *Mysterion* 5.2 (2012): 48–157; Second Forum: “Fede Vissuta, Fede Professata,” *Mysterion* 6.2 (2013): 134–190; Third Forum: “Teologia Spirituale e Concilio Vaticano II: Temi, Problemi e Prospettive,” *Mysterion* 9.2 (2014): 159–286; Fourth Forum: “Teologia Spirituale e Concilio Vaticano II: Recezione e Prospettive,” *Mysterion* 11.2 (2015): 140–312.
 32. Jesús M. García, *Teologia Spirituale. Epistemologia e Interdisciplinarietà* (Rome: LAS, 2013), 218.
 33. García, *Teologia Spirituale*, 219.
 34. García, *Teologia Spirituale*, 219.
 35. García, *Teologia Spirituale*, 220.
 36. García, *Teologia spirituale*, 225–226.
 37. Rossano Zas Friz De Col, “Spirituality and the Search for a Triple Unity. Disciplinary, Intra-disciplinary, and Inter-Disciplinary,” in *Studies in Spirituality* 24 (2014): 1–23.
 38. Zas Friz De Col, *La Presenza Trasformante del Mistero*, 163–168.
 39. Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism. Origins to the Fifth Century*, (Crossroad: New York, 1999), xvii.
 40. Karl Rahner, “The Concept of Mystery in Catholic Theology,” in *Theological Investigations* Vol. IV, Kevin Smith, trans. (Baltimore and London: Helicon Press and Daton, Longen & Todd, 1966), 36–73.
 41. *The Spiritual Canticle* 22.3 in *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD and Otilio Rodríguez, OCD, trans. with introductions by Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD (Washington D.C.: The Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1973), 497.
 42. *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* 2, 5, 7, in *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, 117.

43. For a detailed development of the method see, Zas Friz De Col, *Teologia della Vita Cristiana*, 69–128; and Zas Friz De Col, *La Presenza Trasformante del Mistero*, 117–157.
44. F. Ruiz, “L’uomo Adulto in Cristo,” in B. Morricone, ed., *Antropologia Cristiana* (Rome: Città Nuova, 2001), 509–560; F. Ruiz, “Diventare Personalmente Adulti in Cristo,” in *Problemi e Prospettive di Spiritualità* (Brescia: Queriniana, 1983), 277–301. See also, Rossano Zas Friz De Col, “Radinarsi in Dio: La Trasformazione Mistica di Sant’Ignazio di Loyola,” *Ignaziana* 12.2 (2011): 162–302.
45. García, *Teologia Spirituale*, 236.
46. García, *Teologia Spirituale*, 241–250.
47. García, *Teologia Spirituale*, 241.
48. García, *Teologia Spirituale*, 78.
49. García, *Teologia Spirituale*, 246.
50. García, *Teologia Spirituale*, 246–247.
51. García, *Teologia Spirituale*, 265–266. For an interdisciplinary approach see: Francesco Asti, *Le Odierne Sfide Della Mistica Cristiana* (Rome: Aracne, 2015).
52. García, *Teologia Spirituale*, 343.
53. García, *Teologia Spirituale*, 268–269.
54. David B. Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 5.
55. Sheldrake, “Spirituality and Its Critical Methodology,” states: “Undoubtedly, the contemporary discipline of spirituality depends on some kind of distinction from doctrine, but this is not the same as an distinction from theology,” 25.