Generating Rituals for the Journey of Faith:
A Proposal toward Realized Baptismal Ecclesiology
August 12-21, 2007
Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies

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My proposal is that the churches bless the doing of Christian pastoral ritualization for the healing and support of the baptized, in order that the baptized can be who they are–the church–the covenanted priestly people of God.

I'd first like to give you *my background* for getting into this work on Generative Christian Ritualization.
Then I'll give you a case example.
I'll *identify what it is* by drawing particularly on Catherine Bell's seminal study of ritual as practice.
We'll discuss the pastoral and ritual dangers and risks, as well as the advantages and promise, to the churches of blessing and encouraging such ritualization.
And to mitigate one of the dangers, ritualization incompetently done, I'll conclude with my contribution to this area: some criteria to enable those with charisms for compassionate ritual sensibility, to conduct excellent, ritually competent Christian ritualization for the baptized..

This work on creative Christian ritualization is work I have been involved with for 20 years. For half that time, I was a lay woman in Anchorage, Alaska, a member of St. Mary's Episcopal Church; and for the other half, I have been an ordained presbyter in the Episcopal Church.

My knowledge of and motivation for creating ritual settings to enable people to change: to grow, heal, and negociate transition, came from **two sources.** The first is my formation in a worshipping community. The practice of worshipping in a liturgical church week after week really does form a person in a kind of ritual knowing that cannot be learned in any other way except by embodied, incarnate participation in ritual action. The one place I know of where one can experience the way ritual creates meaning and community, and lifts us beyond ourselves, is the practice of liturgy. It forms us. It formed me.

And the second source is my mother, who was always having dinner parties–and wedding showers–and baby showers, and anniversary celebrations, matching center pieces and door arrangements with a corsage for the bride and a name card at the table for each guest. These were some of the private ritual gatherings, along with the shared annual Labor Day picnic, the Christmas parties, and so on.
There were also the public events, when she and my Dad would organize the neighborhood for a game day with relays and prizes; and most of all was the Fourth of July Parade. All the children

decorated their tricycles with red, white and blue crepe paper, and at some loud starting noise, started down the hill behind the parade flag bearer–and soon were in front of the leader, racing down to our driveway where, with our next-door neighbors, coffee and popsicles were offered to all. The next year, my mother made a Betsy Ross costume for my sister to wear, and my father made a Betsy Ross flag and a "Don't Tread on Me" flag, the first of dozens of flags he made for the parade over the years. A neighbor hauled speakers up the telephone pole and the tricycles pedaled down the hill to John Philip Sousa. Eventually, the trikes were replaced by family floats; a flag ceremony preceded the parade; and at the end, the costumed participants were judged and awarded, along with lines of clothes-pinned children's artwork. By the time we moved, the parade was an entrenched tradition, and new neighbors learned from old ones. Last summer, that little two-street parade in a Cincinnati suburb celebrated its 50th anniversary.

You, too, have learned from your experience of ritualization– or lack thereof. What I have learned from mine is that people can make ritual. That ritual is fun as well as serious. That it makes a unity, a community, out of isolated individuals. That there's a part for everyone, whatever their age or interest.

Ritual is something that is *done,* something incarnational that impresses a memory in our bodies through the doing. Rituals are the way community is forged, the way memories are made which mark life realities which can never be taken away. Participating in such rites, whether as guest, helper, leader, host, gives a person a certain freedom and role, and confidence in belonging to the community. In the doing of ritual a person comes to *know things for sure*–it's that realized embodied knowing some call *faith*–for example, sure knowledge that you belong-- that you are loved– that these people will be there for you as your baby grows up– that your country and its history and character *matter*. That it's OK to be an invisible Martha background server at your sister's birthday party, because the day will come when it will be your turn to sit in the place of honor. And it's OK for your sister– and for you--to sit in the place of honor and receive all that exquisite attention– because that is one of the roles that we all play on each other's behalf in the course of our unfolding lives, and the next time it will be you hosting someone else's honoring. In ritual, *there is always giving and receiving*– it's simply a different kind of receiving and giving, depending upon where you sit. (or stand).

We learn, in short, who we are– and who *we* , our community of belonging– is. And we learn what is of Ultimate Concern, the implicit source and direction of our rites. We learn how the world works even as we create that world. We learn, in Clifford Geertz's terminology, a world view, but we "learn" it in an ethos, in an environment charged with a character, a spirit, an ethic.

I moved from mediating rites at home to mediating rites at church. A lot of it is the same.
I have seen ritual make peace where there was no peace (a woman who inadvertently set her house on fire, and became alienated from house and self), enable graceful transition (from one work or status to another), and mediate deep healing (divorce, abuse in the church). This is what humans do. This is what the church does. In fact, even when households and neighborhoods and the culture forget their knowing of how we make a world to live in and how we create

community through rite, the church re-members. This is a knowing we are keeping, even when the world is not. This is one of our gifts to the world– a ritualizing way of life.

What I've shared out of my life *were not religious rituals* per se–though the Spirit of our faith pervaded them. Any religious –or non-religious–person could have done the same. But I am particularly interested in *inviting the Christian churches to notice and bless ritualization within our bounds.* Now, therefore, let us *turn to Christian ritualization with a story.*

It's the story of Paula.
After years of a rocky marriage, Jerry's blatant affair make it clear that the marriage was over. Paula had asked and asked for a ritualization, but Jerry declined. At the splitting up of the house, however, he agreed. He would bring a truck over next Saturday and remove half of the household goods. Paula would be left in the house where she had birthed and raised her children, without Jerry, with half of the signs of their common life gone. She pleaded for a rite; he agreed.
She called me, asking what they should do. In our discussion, I asked her to think of a "controlling metaphor." What is it like to have your household decimated, the signs of your life together removed? We "tried on" images from nature, from literature, from fairy tales and myths. At the point when I said, "It's like becoming unraveled…" she caught her breath. "That's it!" she breathed. "I know what has to be sacrificed for this rite. It's the dining room tablecloth. It has all these colors in it—and it covers the table where we ate, and fought, and reconciled; where our friends joined us; where the children did their homework." We had the image.
We decided on a kind of "reverse house blessing," where they would go from room to room, one of the four friends invited leading them, and he and she would each share a memory from that room; a prayer would be said, and the candle extinguished. Room to room. They would end in the dining room—and complete the unraveling of the table cloth Paula would begin this very night. The poet leader of the ritualization, friend of them both, would offer prayer and blessing, that love manifest in a new way and care for the children would continue as they parted, leaving behind their covenant of marriage and the household they have woven together.

Affirming ritualizing in the churches?

When I reflect upon Paula's situation as a priest and a liturgist, that is, from the ecclesial and academic perspectives, many questions are raised for me.

A. *Ecclesial*
1. This was a rite done by six people in their home–not in a church building. Six Christians conducted it. Was it a fitting rite for Christians to do?

2. What if the pastors had tried to devise the rite?

B. *Pastoral*

1. What if there had been no rite– would Paula have felt a victim forever?

2. Knowing her ritual need, what if the lay women she consulted had not known how to use liturgical skill for her healing?

3. Or using liturgical skill, what if, nonetheless, the rite that did not help her or him?

4. Or, (a) what if a rite had been done, on the one hand, that trivialized the situation, pretending it was "no big deal"? Or, (b) on the other hand, what if the leader had taken sides, using the occasion to place blame? In other words, what if a rite had *harmed* her or him?

B. *Theological*

1. On what theological bases would rites such as these be conducted consciously inside the ecclesia?

2. On what basis would lay persons conduct them? Who would those lay persons be?

C. *Ritual*

1. The doing of this rite was an example of what Victor Turner calls "anti-structure," a rite outside the mainstream, down on a tributary somewhere, which generates *communitas,* a close community feeling of intimacy, which itself can be part of a healing process. Should such a rite stay there, on the margins, in the limen, in the "anti-structure"? Would there be value in bringing this rite, and others like it, into the mainstream of the church? How far in? Should we claim them? If so, why? How would we know how to conduct it? or Who?

2. What would such a rite be called?

While beyond the scope of this paper, foundational to it are several theologies of the process of the Christian life which point to ongoing growth and conversion of all the baptized: *theosis* or *divinization*–growing into God*;* and *faith development*, to name two. It seems to me that Christian ritualization, through healing and bridging, can help enable the processes of theosis and ongoing growth in faith.

I will respond to the pastoral and ritual questions with reference to the ecclesial ones, the *Ritual* questions first:

What would such a rite be called?

A. From the field of ritual studies, I am calling rites that are developed for the sake of one person's need for healing or for transition *Christian ritualizations.*
I am calling rites that are developed for the sake of one person's need for healing or for transition *Christian ritualizations.*
Their purpose is pastoral, to care for one who is hurting or stuck, who would be helped by the church's mediation of ritual action.

I borrow the term "ritualization" from Catherine Bell. In contrast to the terms "rite" or "ritual," a "ritualization" does not assume that it will happen more than once; it does not assume it will

eventually appear in a prayer book or occur on Sunday morning. Rather, the term"ritualization" suggests something innovative, perhaps conducted only one time, never repeated, quite personal, and devised for a specific situation.

According to Bell, ritualization is "not 'an action' or 'a type of action' that is a constant category, but rather *a way of acting* in a particular context which strategically privileges or frames certain behaviors over others, resulting in empowerment (even though participants may not recognize that this is occurring)."[1]
In Paula's case, by laboring over and participating in this ritual house-breaking, her victimhood was mitigated by agency. In the enactment, she was enabled to claim what was happening to her– to affirm (by choice) the situation, which was empowering. Her ex-husband was brought within the circle of what was real: he also participated in a non-denying ritualization of the honest consequences of his actions, but without blame. It was the truth of the circumstances, and the truth of the ongoing care of friends for each of them, and of God for them, mediated to him– so that he need never feel he was divorcing the friends or the Holy One.

The term "ritualization" is helpful because it frees us from presuming whether or not there is a full liturgy occurring, whether or not there is a large number of people *vs.* one or two, and whether or not there is an ecclesially-designated person in charge. It frees us to think broadly about the huge variety of circumstances in which power may be shifted from person to person or God to person, and to attune us to a wider apprehension of ritualizing activity. To flesh this out, let's look at how ritualization works..

If one reads the literature one soon learns that ritual not only cannot be analyzed as a category, it cannot be *defined* as a category (in spite of many attempts to do so) (my list of 17). Bell's important contribution moves us from seeking categorical definitions to descriptions of the way ritual works *as practice.* Bell identifies and names four aspects of practice (and thereby ritualization) as *situated* (context-dependent), *misrecognized*[2] (as Tillich said, to be conscious of a symbol's or ritual's power is to find that power lost or broken– like Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, we can't both experience and watch it at the same time), *strategic, redemptively hegemonic*. We'll address the last two.

Catherine Bell talks about ritual and ritualization as *strategic* to refer to "a way of acting that specifically establishes a privileged contrast" (*RTRP* 90). Ritualization can be a part of any activity as it is practiced. It is not an isolateable thing, object you can identify and analyze. Rather, "ritual activities, in their doing, generate distinctions between what is or is not acceptable

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[1] My paraphrase from Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford, 1992), 81-85 and passim.

[2] *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 81-85 and passim.

ritual." (*RTRP* 80.

To exemplify a privileged contrast, Bell gives the example of the Christian eucharistic meal and an ordinary meal. Both are meals; but the Christian eucharist is distinguished from a common family meal, for example, in the usually much larger number of people who come to dine; in the configuration of the table and chairs; in its frequency (weekly or daily instead of several times a day); and in its amount of food (inadequate amount for sustained bodily nourishment). In these ways (and others), the eucharist is "set apart" from an average meal, such that it bears meaning and power that ordinary meals do not. She notes that such ritualization privileges *this* meal over others, and gives it power, symbolic dominance, privilege, significance, meaning. In her words:

> Theoretically, ritualization of the meal could employ a different set of strategies to differentiate it from conventional eating, such as holding the meal only once in a person's lifetime or with too much food for normal nourishment [like Thanksgiving dinner]. The choice of strategies would depend in part on which ones could most effectively render the meal symbolically dominant to its conventional counterparts. The choice would also depend on the particular "work" the ritualized acts aimed to accomplish in a situation. Given this analysis, ritualization could involve the exact repetition of a centuries-old tradition or deliberately radical innovation and improvisation, as in certain forms of liturgical experimentation or performance art.[1] (*RPRT* 90-91).

So its strategy is the "basic principle of privileged differentiation"[2]: this meal is set apart and thus made holy because the way we do it is special, distinct, extraordinary, and thereby Other. This creates a strategic distinction from, and relationship with, the particular time and place and situation in which it serves as contrast.

Second, Bell generates the phrase *redemptive hegemony* to describe that power moves in the course of acting. In the privileging of some actions over others, power and importance are mediated in the contrast. "[R]itualization is first and foremost a strategy for the construction of certain types of power relationships effective within particular social organizations".[3] This

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[1] *RTRP*, 90-91.

[2] *RTRP*, 91.

[3] *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 197.

fourth attribute of practice involves "the motivational dynamics of agency, the will to act".[1]

In ritualization, then, a person or community can literally be empowered. And as such, redemptive hegemony

> [denotes the way in which reality is experienced as a natural weave of constraint and possibility, the fabric of day-to-day dispositions and decisions experienced as a field for strategic action.[2]
> In sum... the redemptive hegemony of practice]
> "does not reflect reality more or less effectively; it creates it more or less effectively."[3]

Bell shows us that **Ritualization "*does things*"[4] which need doing and *cannot be done in other ways*.**

If, as Chauvet says, we live in a matrix of Christian living (every day), and the story of our faith (in Scripture), and in sacrament, the holiness of sacramental/ rituality, then does it not make sense to claim the compassion and competence of sacramentality–Christian ritualization– in everyday living? We are moving out of Christendom, into a much more diverse post-Christendom culture where Christianity, as in the early church, is no longer privileged. For 1700 years, politics, arts, time, food, ethics, scholarship were wedded with the Christian faith. This is Christendom- which operated out of a clerical ecclesiology.
The baptized are living in the world where young people are murdered for the jogging shoes, or for no reason at all. How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

If ritualization does things which cannot be done in other ways, and if the baptized now need to claim and be claimed by a church moving if not to minority status, at least to no-longer-privileged status, much like the early Church, then let us claim ritualization for and by the baptized that they might live Christian lives in the Christian story– as part of a post-baptismal catechetical process.

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[1] *RTRP*, 83.

[2] *RTRP*, 84.

[3] *RTRP*, 85.

[4] *RTRP*, 111. Roland Delattre calls this "going through motions," which is "spiritually formative" for persons. "Ritual Resourcefulness," 282.

To ritualize, or not to ritualize?

However, there is a proper conservative reservation in the liturgical churches about the "multiplication of rites." There are good reasons to be generative about ritualization; and there are good reasons to be conservative.

WHY BE CONSERVATIVE?

1. For those in the liturgical churches, Orthodox, Roman, Anglican, and less so Lutheran and Methodist, rites are *authoritative.* They are authorized by bodies and bishops. Liturgy is not free form; it has a structure, an ordo. This means that rites in Books of Worship, and even rites in supplemental books, such as the Episcopal *Book of Occasional Service* and the Roman Catholic *Book of Blessings* have been tested through multiple processes:
–against history, that it is consistent with the tradition
–against theology, its consistency and integrity with what we believe.
–against experience.
In contrast, *Generated ritualizations are not tested–they can't be– they are one-time events. There is a risk that they might fall short theologically, or prove inadequate experientially.*

2. We know that worship is about *God.* We count on the presence of the Holy Spirit in worship. While liturgical historian Paul Bradshaw has firmly eliminated any idea that there is or ever was a "the liturgy," still, we intend a certain historic continuity in the spirit if not the letter of what we do. Liturgy is handed down; it bears tradition. In other words, as Paul says in I Corinthians (11:23), we hand on what we also *receive.* We want our liturgy, for all its very human involvement, to be less "made up" than "received" –because we understand that *God acts* in liturgy, in worship. Worship is foremost about God, the giver of all, the One to whom all our worship and praise are (mere) *responses* to God who has already loved and saved us.
There is a concern that tempering with liturgical action makes it seem to be about *us.* That we're somehow "making it up."

In contrast, *Ritualizations generated in the margins or the mainstream are unabashedly new; they are not received or handed down in the same way.*

3. *Ritual is powerful and it can do harm.*

1) *Pastorally,* it can **fail to help** the person through ineptitude or incompletion.
--the focal people may not be able to bring the fullness of their reality (issue, feelings, truth) to the rite rendering it incomplete, what Grimes refers to as "gloss", partial.

Worse, it can **cause harm** through manipulation by a cleric or lay person who misuses power, or who misses the actual issues at stake for the person.
The leader may have inadequate sensitivity to the needs of the persons

Or botch the rite through incompetence.

2) Structurally, it can be incomplete.
It can fail to be worshipful, lacking prayer, or Scripture, or symbol.
It can confuse rather than help.

3) *Theologically,* it can communicate something other than the Gospel.
For example, it can miss a chance to gather up a person's pain into the heart of Christ, into the cross and resurrection.
It can put words into the mouths of worshippers that violate the Truth of God's power and forgiveness, freedom and love.

--finally, the sum of all are the two biggest dangers: that the rite be **unTrue.** This is the greatest flaw. The second is like unto it: **Community not be formed.** What we proclaim does not occur.

WHY BE GENERATIVE?
With all these caveats, should we take the risk?

1. Liturgy is a gift. It is *leitourgia,* which implies work– but it is God who gives, who acts. We play with fire every Sunday. The danger and risk of daring to make Eucharist and proclaim Word is not new to us. We may not wear crash helmets as Annie Dillard suggests, but we are schooled in making ritual, in living community, in worshipping God together, in holy humility, we come in holy humility, together, throwing our vulnerable selves at the feet of the One we most trust.
The church has a liturgical way of living– and Christian ritualization is a way to extend this gift beyond Sunday, beyond the prayer book.

2) *Jesus did it.* He healed strange people (lepers, Samaritans, women) at strange times (on the Sabbath) in unusual ways (*e.g.*, proclaiming forgiveness, casting out demons).

3) *The world needs it.* The world is hurting and in need of healing. The church exists in the world. If we have compassion, we must offer all the resources at our disposal; and offering our care will in turn cultivate our compassion.
Not only that, the newspapers are full of stories of the way the church has failed the world. If there are rites on the margins which can help all of us practice *competence and accountability* to heal and be reconciled, we better be about appropriating those ritualizations.

4) *We, the church, must attend to these ritualizations for our own sake.* The Church needs strengthening right now. It has been a generation since the last renewal, and here, on the cusp of

Christendom and post-Christendom, we need to again remember why we exist, and who constitutes the church.

5) *Some pastoral needs are best met near the margins, and not at the center.* For example, Paula's story was one of divorce. You will not find an order for the blessing of a divorce in the *Book of Blessings* or the *Book of Occasional Services.* At the center, we are about forgiving sinners, but not blessing the sin.
However, Methodists with their liturgical freedom have taken a lead in acknowledging the truth of Christian life--which is our faith that God loves us even in the midst of our deepest pain and darkest secrets. It is there where the light of truth and love needs most to shine.
Thus, in the *United Methodist Book of Worship,* there are resources for many pastoral needs, including divorce (p. 626)—but even there, we find a prayer and some Scripture suggestions, but no ritualization.

Who will go for us? Whom shall I send?
In general, not the clergy, whose work is within the institution, minding the store–though there are exceptions. It is the primary body of Christian people– the baptized—who are there knowing and loving the people who are divorcing, whose pets are dying,[10] who are hurting in ways beyond any norm or imagination. Why should not those lay persons with vision, compassion, and theological understanding, be equipped with ritual competence to offer such ritualizations?

In short, I understand the blessing of Christian ritualization by the churches to be a critical step not only toward baptismal ecclesiology (the Church is the baptized), but to practicing it, making it real, here now: toward *realized baptismal ecclesiology.*

Ritual Competence.
Not everyone is called to offer, or plan, or lead Christian pastoral ritualizations. It seems to me that whether lay or cleric, a person would need several attributes for this practice:
liturgical formation,
empathic compassion,
theological grounding,
pastoral sensitivity, and
ritual competence.

[You need God to do this. :-)]
This may seem impossible to find– but we spend tremendous energy trying to form people in just such character– should we be so surprised when our efforts succeed and we find many folks like this around us– or *teams of folk* who *together* have these attributes?
[Jim Fowler– reserved Stage 6 for Mother Teresa, but later realized more Stage 6 folks around than he originally anticipated–quietly operating in the world.]

It is criteria for ritualization in the name of **ritual competence** that I finally want to offer.

[10] See Karen Westerfield Tucker, "Creating Liturgies 'In the Gaps'", *Liturgy* 22:3 (2007), 65-71.

I draw this term from Roland Delattre who calls for *ritual resourcefulness,* and Regis Duffy who calls for *symbolic competence*. I suggest that it is possible to identify some criteria which can serve as touchstones for those called and capable of generating ritualizations for transition and healing among the covenanted people of God. Today I offer you 6.

1. *The starting point for ritualizations in the baptismal process is the focal person(s) for whom the ritual will be designed.* The motivational and intentional starting point of post-baptismal Christian ritualization should be not only theological principles, but the experience and/or felt need of the focal person.

That is, when Paula called, one could have begun with a juridical legalism, such as "I don't think you should ritualize the failure of your marriage." Or an institutional response, like "I don't recall seeing such a rite having been performed in the past–and it's not in the Prayer Book." Etc. :-)

Rather, we began with her experience, as the focal person. (Source of term.–all sacraments but Eucharist.)

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2. *In planning a Christian ritualization, one must bear responsibility for making the Church present.* This is the part about bringing the marginal rites into the practice of the church– not into juridical groups, or sacramentaries, but into our pastoral, compassionate heart. How can the connection with the body of Christ, the blessing of the church, be made manifest? Examples:
*the presence of the congregation. When members of the congregation are present, the congregation is represented. In the case of Paula and Jerry, there were 4 persons present.
*the priest, pastor, or minister might conduct the rite within his or her role on behalf of the Church.
*the rite may be held in the churchhouse, or other designated and/or sanctified space.
*elements of the rite may symbolize the church's presence: readings from Scripture, repetition of common church practice, refrain from songs or psalms or prayers, the presence of symbols, etc. In this case, prayer was offered, and the "strategic contrast" from the houseblessing rite and the eucharistic table were manifest.
*the intent of the participants to represent the church, to operate within the ecclesial matrix. It was to her church friends that Paula turned– and to whom else should she turn? And they responded.

3. *The Paschal Mystery in the person's life and situation is identified as already present by the grace of the Holy Spirit.* In the case of even such brokenness as divorce, our pastoral theological trust is that *God is there; God is always working* in and for and among us. Persons and communities can be deeply torn apart. Part of caring for them ritually, as well as pastorally, is to help identify the signs of God's presence, or (as Chauvet says) the signs of the presence of God's absence.

4. *The full mystery of death and life is incarnated in the ritualization through the juxtaposition*

of contraries. Gordon Lathrop. This is about ritual honesty. The most important part of any Christian ritualization is that it be *true.*
There is so much background pain and distrust and distress in our culture today that many people are coping by denying and ignoring. But our faith is that it is real death that is redeemed; that real resurrection follows real death. It is the *Truth* that makes us free.
Here is the power of the ritualization, the redemptive hegemony.

Our work is to speak the truth in love. The truth includes sin and death–and if this is not present, the ritualization fails. But the other side is also true. As my colleague puts it, if the truth is *not spoken in love, it is not the truth.* It is our work to name grace, as Mary Catherine Hilkert puts it–and to allow its enactment as it redeems sin and suffering.

5. *Because Baptism is the keystone sacrament*[11] *and point of departure for post-baptismal ritualization, the relationship of the action to baptism should be clear in the ritual symbolization and enactment.*
In our example, Baptism was implicitly present. The purity that we are given in the baptismal water, as we are united with Christ, is still there, no matter how badly tainted we become. A ritualization can privilege the truth of our primary identity in Christ– and call us back to it.

6. *Draw from the church's wealth of story, rite and symbol to awaken cultic memory and connect with the communion of saints. When these do not fit (and sometimes when they do), use a <u>controlling metaphor</u> to create poetic ritual unity.*

We remember Paula and her reverse house-blessing, and the controlling metaphor: unraveling of tablecloth.

We have a cultural tendency toward psychologizing, and a growing tendency toward the "virtual" and away from the embodied and personal. (Just try getting an actual human person to talk to you when you try to call Bank of America, for example.)
Yet we know that it is the power of Incarnation by which we are saved– the Incarnation of Christ on earth, and our call to be, to enact, to mediate the continuing Incarnation of Christ on earth.
By "we" I mean all those Baptized in the name of the Trinity, into the death and resurrection of Christ.

We who have eyes to see the grace and power of sacramental action on each other's behalf have the privilege and obligation, I contend, to find ways of offering that gift for the building up of the body.

I call upon those with eyes to see, to recognize in themselves or in one another, charisms and formation for the offering, planning, and leading of Christian pastoral ritualization–and quietly, in loose but real connection with the *ecclesia,* through symbol or place or pastor or participant,

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[11] Theodore Eastman, *The Baptizing Community* (NY: Seabury Press, 1982). Cf. Susan Marie Smith, "Rites of Healing Along the Baptismal Journey", *Liturgy* 22:3 (2007), 49-56.

begin to strengthen and love the baptized, covenanted people of God through ritualizations of transition and healing–that the baptized will realize– and enact–their narrative of ethical, holy lives on the earth.