Course Outline
Christian Visual Faith

Rev. Dr. Roberto P. Reyes, May 11, 2007

**I Anthropological Elements of Catholic Ritual**

Society, from the most primitive to the most sophisticated has pursued and preserved the sense of the divine. Through the centuries, all cultures have developed some form of religious belief system and practice. These belief systems are codified in various ways from a religion's sacred texts to its unique forms of prayer and worship, i.e. ritual. We will discuss the elements of belief and ritual in general and the belief and rituals incorporated into the Catholic Mass in particular.

1. Universal Religious Sentiments, Instincts, Impulses…
2. Codification, Documentation, Institutionalization: i.e. recording and preservation of religious knowledge and experience through buildings, monuments, literature…Holy Books
3. Renewal, Deepening of knowledge and experience through Remembering and Re-enactment: RITUAL…(Ritual vs. Magic)
4. Development of a Religious Elite, Priests, Hierarchy vis-à-vis theologians, religious artists….i.e. Ecclesiastical Sciences (intellectual) vs. psychology, spirituality and art. Q: Should there be a conflict between the cognitive, psychological, spiritual and artistic dimensions of religion?
5. Case in point: Ritual, Catholic Liturgy, **the Mass**, i.e. using Roy A. Rappaport's discussion of the Ritual Form, p p. 23-68 in "Ritual and Religion in the making of Humanity." n.b. Images of the main parts of the Mass, prayers, gestures, the interaction of substance, form with music, art and architecture.

II Christian Symbolism in Psychology

(cf. Karl Gustav Jung re. Archetypes and Christian Art) i.e. Archetypes, Christian Art and Life.
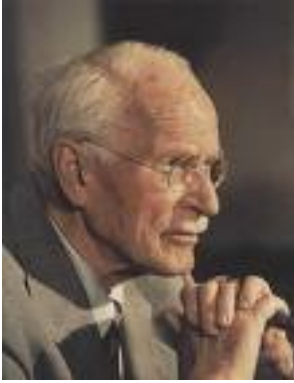
How does the religious instinct manifest itself? Do concepts or ideas precede need or human experience or vice-versa? How do societies both western and eastern use religious symbols in preserving healthy psyches and/or healing psycho-emotional, psycho-spiritual maladies?

1. The Psychic life cycle
2. Stable state of a Community of Religious believers
3. Breakdown of Religious projection
4. Important role of Icons, Images, Archetypes in psychological healing, integration, and individuation.
5. Focus on particular archetypes:
   a. Jesus as paradigm of individuating ego
   b. The Trinity archetype and the dialectic of development
   (for 1-4, a & b confer Edward Edinger, Ego and Archetype)
   c. Cult of Mary (cf. Thomas Cahill, Mysteries of the Middle Ages)

III Art, the Idea of Beauty, the Holy?

Cultures do have distinct concepts of beauty. But are these concepts always separate and independent entities? Or is beauty also part of a context, a result of evolved sensibilities and tastes? Are there historical and cultural movements that contribute to both the concept and its representation? Eco and Kleinberg separately discuss the process whereby beauty and holiness are achieved or defined. There is no such thing as a beauty or holy in itself. Beauty and holiness emerged through interaction. We will explore both the concept, the representation and the context which foments the interaction between the laity and the icons of beauty and/or holiness.

A. **Beauty,** Umberto Eco, "On Beauty, the history of a Western Idea"
Re. Eco surveys the evolution of the idea of Beauty from Ancient Greece to the 21st Century.

Present the phenomenon of the dialogue between the sacred and profane, religion and society towards the increasing relativization of once eternal, unquestioned truths and norms ie. Post-modernism, post-structuralism.

Also, what is increasingly distinct contrast between High and Popular Culture, i.e. how ordinary people create the culture of the mass, often times in subtle rebellion against elitist, dominant culture.

B. **The Holy**, **Hagiography,** the theology and iconography of Saints in the Catholic Church

1. Aviad M. Kleinberg, Prophets in their Own Country
   Esp. Chapter 1, Saints and Saintly situations, a study of the birth, evolution, creation, re-creation, preservation of Saints by the Official Church, as well as by ordinary people who developed and preserved popular cults or devotions to their favorite saint…
   N.b. for the purpose of focus we will choose a few examples;

e.g. The Immaculate Conception (Patroness of the Hong Kong Cathedral)
e.g. Sr. Francis of Assissi, Patron of Europe
e.g. St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross, patrons of Contemplative life.

2. Chittister/Lentz, "A Passion for Life" people's heroes, people's saints, People's Icons…
   Here we discuss the phenomenon of Contemporary Saints both those most likely to be declared saints by the Vatican (e.g John Paul II and Mother Teresa of Calcutta) and those popularly revered by the people.

   A presentation and discussion of the idea of Holy in Hong Kong in concrete and contextual terms in. Are there people whose sainthood are not merely a matter of ecclesiastical or canonical definition or declaration? Sr. Joan Chittister believes that a good number are saints in the people's minds and hearts. Who are some of these? Why are they considered saintly, special?
   Discussion: Some examples, Bishop Zen; Fr. Mela; Sr. Ann Grey who worked with Sex workers through the "Action four Reach Out," Sr. Maureen who got involved with aids concern.

IV Modern Technology

       The artist in time's past has shown the importance of individual genius and the role of the rich and powerful patron (e.g. the Medici of Florence). The artist did enjoy autonomy but also at times suffered from appropriation and exploitation in the hands of his patrons. With today's dizzying developments in digital technology, there is the convenience of speed and efficiency on one hand. On the other hand there is always the danger of commercialization and massification which turns art more into a manipulable seasonal product of taste and preference. How can this be either boon or bane to Christian visual faith?

       1. Digital Images, Photography
       2. Cinema
       3. Computer, the Digital Image, Ego as Icon (Blogs and personal web page); Power point presentation, computer generated paintings. Instant, Consumerist tarpolin images; billboards:
 e.g Giant billboard of H&M,Madonna designed products; Nicolas Cage; Nicole Kidman, etc.

n.b. The Catholic/Christian challenge then: to produce more attractive, evocative, intelligent and inspiring

visual arts, and multi-media presentations.

Two Contemporary Examples of the Global Impact of Catholic Imagination

   n.b. An examination of the human and catholic cultural upbringing of both Tolkien and Lewis will reveal how effectively the former has influenced and enhanced the two catholic literary giants' writing careers.

    A. Tolkien's Catholic (artistic, literary) imagination in his novel and movie, "Lord of the Rings"

    B. C. S. Lewis' (Tolkien's convert to Catholicicism)

V Conclusion: Deepening, Integration and Synthesis, Towards a Catholic Theology and Spirituality of Art

VI Bibliography:

1. Fiona Bowie, The Anthropology of Religion
2. Roy A. Rappaport, Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity
3. Aviad M. Kleinberg, Prophets In their own Country
4. Edward F. Edinger, "Ego and Archetype
5. Umberto Echo, On Beauty
6. Thomas Cahill, Mysteries of the Middle Ages
7. Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida
8. Susan Sontag, On Photography
9. John Dewey, Art as Experience
10. Michel de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life
11. Carloine Myss, Entering the Castle
12. Thomas Moore, The Soul of Religion
13. Thomas Moore, The Dark Nights of the Soul