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Spirituality

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FOR EDWARD SCHILLEBEECKX, spirituality is not just one aspect of human life that can be singled out for particular attention. Rather, he says, for Christians spirituality is the whole of human life interpreted from the perspective of authentic Christian praxis. Although all of Schillebeeckx's works can be construed as a theology of Christian praxis, some of them focus more specifically on Christian praxis or on the conventional theme of the spiritual life.

Schillebeeckx has been influenced by the Dominican tradition in spirituality, of which he himself is both an exponent and also "a new moment." He has written on Dominic, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, and others. He has acknowledged the influence of modern Dominicans, particularly Marie-Dominique Chenu, who probably more than anyone else was Schillebeeckx's inspiration. Chenu guided his doctoral dissertation on the sacraments, and it was Chenu who introduced the phrase "signs of the times" into modern Catholic theology. A key to understanding Schillebeeckx's spirituality is the foundational idea of *présence au monde*. The term originated with the Dominican Henri Lacordaire. It was developed by Chenu, had its influence at the Second Vatican Council, and has been consciously acknowledged by Schillebeeckx as influential in his own hermeneutical project. *Présence au monde* is the grace of understanding deeply one's own times and the capacity to respond accordingly.

For Schillebeeckx, a definitive, final exposition of Christian spirituality cannot be given, since we ourselves are part of the Christian story, and it has not thus come to a close. The present provides a new moment in the history of Christian spirituality. A theology of Christian spirituality must begin with the story of Jesus, and brings that story up to date

with one's own times. Any particular Christian spirituality is valid only as a specific modality of "following after Jesus," and only insofar as it has a living relationship to the present. Schillebeeckx's theology can be seen as a bridge between an interpreted historical past and the situation in the world and church today.

Foundational to Schillebeeckx's studies of Jesus, to his reflections on ministry and preaching, to his understanding of church and hermeneutics are, as Lacordaire put it, the twofold *présence à Dieu* and *présence au monde*. This framework for understanding the spiritual life goes back to Dominic himself, who instructed his own followers to speak only to God or about God. Schillebeeckx indicates his interiorization of this in one of his homilies: "Religious life should be a *pointer to God*. . . . [I]t is towards that *speaking to* and *about* God that the Dominican life is directed" (*For the Sake of the Gospel*, 23).

In Schillebeeckx's theology, Christian spirituality is a particular way of being human. It cannot be imposed from the outside, or enforced. It never means living "only for God," with little concern for others or our history. Following Jesus can never be a mere repetition of some earlier form of Christian spirituality. Rather, it is Christian creativity in a historical context. Spirituality is always a new adventure, with Abraham and Sarah as models: "They set out on a journey, not knowing where they were going" (Heb 11:8).

There are two indissoluble elements in Christian praxis: interiority and exteriority, and they belong together; either becomes false if broken away from the other. Spirituality can never be reduced to the inner life and a circle of friends. Such a false spirituality becomes asocial, apolitical, ahistorical, and noncontextual. Christian spirituality is concerned with what it means to be human and, thus, with the whole social, political, economic, and ecological context in which human life is shaped.

Christians are aware that authentic mystical forces will be set free for humanity and greater justice only through an active participation in history. But just as Christian spirituality is not purely mystical inwardness, neither is it simply and only political and social involvement. This "new" spirituality, both contextual and political, is a reflection of Jesus himself, who identified himself with God's concern and identified God's concern with humanity. Spirituality is about God's concern for human beings.

THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD AS ABBA

For Schillebeeckx, the center of Jesus' spirituality lies in his experience of God, the "Abba experience." With a few exceptions, Abba does not occur as a way of addressing God in prayer in the Judaism of Jesus' time. Yet this seems to have been Jesus' habitual way of praying (Mk 14:36). Jesus' way of addressing God in prayer was unconventional, intimate, familial, and indicative of a religious experience of deep intimacy with God that was unique. Jesus' was an experience of God as caring and as offering a future to humanity, a God who chose to be identified with the cause of humankind, a God who gave people hope. On the basis of his experience of intimacy with God, "Jesus could bring people the message of a hope which is not to be derived from our world history" (*God Among Us*, 88).

Although Jesus' own personal experience of God was unique, his relationship with God was something he envisioned for his disciples. Jesus wanted those who followed after him to have the same relationship with God. The distinction in the fourth gospel between "my Father and your Father" (Jn 20:17) manifests postresurrection Christian theology. Schillebeeckx maintains a distinction between Jesus' experience of God and his disciples' experiences, but not between Jesus' intimate relationship with God and that into which he invited his disciples.

The Abba experience for Christians is, then, one of God as personal. God challenges and talks with human beings, and is even confrontational. In his own spiritual life, Schillebeeckx acknowledges speaking personally to God as to a friend. "If you don't talk to God first, you can't talk about him" (*God Is New Each Moment*, 125). This latter insight reflects not only Schillebeeckx's Jesus research, but also his own appropriation of Dominic's aforementioned exhortation to "speak only to God or about God."

At the foundation of spirituality, for Schillebeeckx, is Jesus, who is a "parable of God and paradigm of humanity" (*Jesus*, 626). Through Jesus, we come to know both God and the human being. Thus, the secret and source of our own life and ministry must be our own experience of God as one who cares for us and for humankind, our own continuing intimacy with God in prayer, our own solidarity with God and experience of God as love.

Grace permeates Schillebeeckx's writings, from his early reflection on Christ as the primordial sacrament in *Christ The Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (1963), through the second volume of his project in christology, *Christ* (1980), to the later works on ministry, *Ministry* (1981) and *The Church with a Human Face* (1985). All his writings on christology, the church, sacraments, ministry, and spirituality are an unfolding of a theology of grace, of God as the one who saves, and of Jesus Christ as the one through whom salvation is revealed.

Grace in the New Testament means the benevolent, free, merciful, and sovereign love of God for humanity, God's bending toward the human, and God's presence to humankind. God is always the one who loves humanity. The whole of the New Testament affirms that Jesus of Nazareth is the supreme sign of this grace and love. Jesus' life and love, to the point of death, reveal God as being in solidarity with people, especially with those who suffer and are victims of injustice. "God's name is 'solidarity with my people.' God's own honor lies in the happiness and salvation of humanity" (*Christ*, 639). God is revealed as a God of human beings.

Our relationship with God, grace, renews and recreates us at the deepest level of our self-identity. Grace is a new possibility for human life, a new mode of human existence. It is a new way of life offered us by God, a call to live community with God and others. This understanding of grace undergirds two typical ways in which Schillebeeckx speaks about God: as concerned for humanity, and as new each moment. The chief concern of God is for humankind. God loves us, and our concerns are God's concerns. Already in 1972, Schillebeeckx spoke about God in this way: "In the life of Jesus it became manifest that his God was a God who is concerned for human beings" (*God Among Us*, 132).

This way of speaking about God is so prominent in Schillebeeckx's writings that it is hard to think of any insight more central. God's rule is centered on the well-being of humankind (see *Jesus*, 237, 239, 240, 241, 652). The connecting link between God and humanity is Jesus. Jesus' cause is God's cause (Jesus' Abba experience), and God's cause is the cause of humanity (the proclamation of the reign of God). "For Jesus, his mystical Abba experience is the source of his prophetic activity" (*Church*, 181).

This emphasis keeps recurring in Schillebeeckx's essays and homilies. In 1978, he described God's glory as "the happiness and the well-being

of humankind in the world" (*God Among Us*, 94). In 1979 he wrote, "I am quite clear that to take the part of those in trouble means to follow God himself, God as he has shown his deepest sympathy with human beings in Jesus" (*God Among Us*, 114). This way of speaking continues throughout his writings in the eighties (see *God Among Us*, 174, 197, 82). In 1989, in *Church: The Human Story of God*, the third volume of his trilogy, Schillebeeckx even emphasized a theme that had been emerging among other theologians of the "defenselessness" and "vulnerability" of God, of God's power as a power of love (90). In the late 1980s and since, however, Schillebeeckx has also emphasized that "God is not just a God of human beings" (236, see also 234-46), for there is a unity to all of God's creation. God is a God of creation, a graced creation, and there is more to creation than humanity alone. There is a cosmic dimension to God's reign. God, creation, and humankind all stand together at the center of the Christian life, whose stories are interwoven and inseparable.

In addition to the God whose cause is the cause of human beings, Schillebeeckx's God is a constant source of "new possibilities." On both counts God is the source of hope. New possibilities play a central role in Schillebeeckx's spirituality. The birth of a child is the beginning of a new possibility in our history. This is the basis for belief in eternal life as well: there is no end to the possibilities with which God can surprise us. The future of history remains open. God is always caring and ever new.

The gospel itself can only be handed on through new experiences of it. Schillebeeckx's understanding of tradition is that it is "a living gospel," always new, receptive to those new moments that keep it ever alive, those moments of our own contemporary experience that are something of "a fifth gospel." Tradition calls for new experiences, if it is to be handed on as a living reality (see chapter 4).

*Becoming a Christian . . . means having one's own life story inscribed in the family story of the Christian community so that as a result one's own life story takes on a new, "converted," orientation and at the same time continues the thread of the Christian story in its own way. Insofar as it is truly Christian, action of this kind makes our own life part of a living gospel, a "fifth" gospel (*God Among Us*, 127).*

“In the end we have here the convergence of two stories, the story of the gospel tradition of faith and the story of our personal and social life which in the best instances has itself as it were become ‘gospel’: a fifth or umpteenth gospel” (*Church*, 34). Our own new experiences of God are part of the living tradition of the gospel that draws us into following after Jesus and the praxis of the reign of God. God as “ever new,” “a living gospel,” experiencing God and the gospel, our stories being part of the Christian story, hope from the future—all of these are repeated themes in Schillebeeckx’s writings.

FOLLOWING AFTER JESUS

Schillebeeckx’s spirituality comprises not only the experience of intimacy with God, but also a “following after Jesus.” Jesus, whose very own spirituality is thoroughly Jewish, becomes himself the cornerstone of a spirituality for those who follow him—both before his resurrection and throughout the centuries since. Following after Jesus consists in what Schillebeeckx frequently refers to as “the praxis of the reign of God.” Indeed, one can say that spirituality for Schillebeeckx is praxis, and specifically orthopraxis, which Schillebeeckx defines as action in accord with the reign of God, or action on behalf of humankind. Orthopraxis, rooted in one’s experience of God, is a following of the praxis of Jesus.

Orthopraxis implies an essential relationship between theory and practice. We cannot have one without the other. Schillebeeckx was already insisting upon this in the late 1960s. The basic problem of theology is not that of the relationship between the past (scripture and tradition) and the present, but rather that of the relationship between theory and practice. How theory manifests itself in praxis is a critical test of the theory. Theology stands under the critical primacy of praxis. The preoccupation with orthopraxis raises the question of how to bridge the gulf between theory and practice. The earthly Jesus’ argument with religious authorities was not over a lack of orthodoxy, but over an attitude in which theory and practice had drifted apart, and they had lost sight of God’s solidarity with the people. Jesus’ refusal to sanction an orthodoxy separated from orthopraxis was the foundation of his critique of Sabbath observance, the Law, and the Temple.

If Christian life or following after Jesus comes down to the praxis of the reign of God, in what does such praxis consist? Only a theology of Jesus reveals this; hence Schillebeeckx’s extensive Jesus research. The praxis of the reign of God is manifest in Jesus’ proclamation of God’s forgiveness and love, in Jesus’ healings, in Jesus’ table fellowship with outcasts and sinners, in Jesus’ approach to the Law, and in his enigmatic parables.

Jesus not only told parables, he was a parable, one of God in solidarity with people. Jesus’ sharing table with the disreputable is symbolic or parabolic action—the praxis of a God whose cause is humanity. Jesus did not oppose Torah or Law; rather, he interpreted the Law in a way that centered on human well-being. He insisted that the two great commandments of love of God and love of neighbor were inseparable; they took priority over and relativized cultic and ritual regulations (*Jesus*, 253–54). As there must be an integral link between theology and practice, so there is an integral link between one’s human experience of God and the praxis of the reign of God.

Another fact about Jesus is that he attracted to himself disciples and companions—those who went after him—and that he sent some of them forth to proclaim and practice the coming of God. The praxis of Jesus became that of his disciples, of the post-Easter communities that came together in his name, and eventually of the church. This orthopraxis of Jesus is the criterion by means of which a community or church can name itself Christian. The praxis of the reign of God is constitutive of the nature of the church. “The living community is the only real reliquary of Jesus” (*Christ*, 641), for it is in the living community where the praxis of God is continued.

Schillebeeckx’s theology is very clearly grounded in human experience, both of God and of suffering, of a “no” to the world as it is and an “open yes” to hope. We have already reflected upon the experience of God. This is God as “pure positivity,” who promotes all that is good and opposes all that is evil (see chapter 3). As human beings, however, we also have the experience of suffering, even an excess of suffering and evil, “a barbarous excess which resists all explanation and interpretation” (*God Among Us*, 149). Theology reflects on our human experience of God, and the purely positive existence that God wills for humanity as a contrast to this history of human suffering.

What are we to make of this contrast between the negativity in our world and the positivity of God? Jesus' own experience of the radical contrast had a constructive moment to it, for the negative contrast experience offers a moment of critical awareness. The experience of contrast is at the basis of Jesus' prophetic self-awareness. "Jesus' interpretation of suffering is connected with his deep personal relationship with God, the heart of his life. God and suffering are diametrically opposed; when God appears, evil and suffering have to yield" (*Christ*, 695). "One positive element in this fundamental experience of contrast is invincible human indignation at injustice and innocent suffering" (*For the Sake of the Gospel*, 47). The experience of contrast yields a critique of the history of suffering and holds forth hope for the future.

The prophet, the theologian, the Christian, all who follow after Jesus must have a "critical memory" of this history of human suffering. Although the excess of suffering is an incomprehensible mystery for all, it becomes especially problematic for the person who believes in God. The history of religion and the history of Christian theology have struggled with this memory. One can recall Israel's struggle with suffering and Israel's protest against it, the Hindu insight that each religion is a point of reference pointing to the truth, the Buddhist starting point with the fact of suffering, and even the Enlightenment effort to confront suffering rationally as a problem. Yet in humankind's history, there has never been a successful rational theory to account for all suffering (which is either trivialized or reduced to a particular form).

Since the powers of human explanation fail when they come up against the history and reality of human suffering, the only meaningful response to this is resistance. Thus we come back to orthopraxis. In practice, the people of God must refuse to allow evil the right to exist, for God is the author of good and the opponent of evil. For the person of faith, then, the critical memory of human suffering is a contrast experience that results in hope. The God of Jesus wants humanity's salvation and a victory over suffering. Christianity, however, does not attempt to explain suffering. Followers of Jesus "do not *argue* against suffering, but tell a *story*" (*Christ*, 698), and that story is the story of Jesus: the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus bore witness to a certainty he felt regarding the salvation given by God, that the "making whole" of human life is possible. Faith in Jesus makes it possible to affirm both evil and suffering, and also salvation or a final good

in a way that allows us to give the last word to well-being and goodness, "because the Father is greater than all our suffering and grief and greater than our inability to experience the deepest reality as in the end a trustworthy gift" (*Jesus*, 625).

Given the awareness of the history of human suffering, those who follow Jesus necessarily involve themselves in the struggle for justice. Christian spirituality seeks a radical integration of the themes of eschatological salvation and human liberation—one theme not to be neglected at the expense of the other, for God's very own foremost concern is humankind.

POLITICAL HOLINESS

Christian love and holiness are, therefore, necessarily a "political love" and a "political holiness." In the struggle against injustice, the believer is not only responding to the prior grace and experience of God, but also continues to experience the God of Jesus. This political form of love of neighbor is an urgent form of contemporary holiness.

Christianity does not explain suffering. It neither condones injustice nor rationalizes the existing social order. Although Christian history gave rise to a "mysticism of suffering" that emphasized one's personal suffering and in which the cross became a symbol for the legitimization of social abuses, political holiness recognizes Jesus' definition of holiness, which was grounded in his understanding of God. Christian holiness does not legitimate but opposes injustice, because our very understanding of God is at stake.

For Schillebeeckx, in Christian life there is both a political and a mystical dimension. This integral relationship between mysticism and politics, neither of which can be discounted, is rooted in Jesus, who is both parable of God and paradigm of humanity. Both mysticism and politics have the same source: the experience of contrast between God and history, the story of a suffering humanity.

For the follower of Jesus, the spiritual life cannot be reduced to "personal holiness" alone. Nor can social and political life be reduced to their social and political components alone. For Schillebeeckx, "mysticism" is an intense form of the experience of God. "Politics" is an intense form of social engagement, not restricted to professional politi-

cians. Politics without prayer or mysticism becomes barbaric; mysticism without political love becomes sentimental interiority. Christian involvement in the world is a religious praxis, rooted in a particular interpretation of the world, drawing upon the experience of the holy. "Christian politics" is both specifically religious and practically effective, making impossible an idealization of any particular form of the world and, at the same time, forbidding escapism from the world.

Moses, a political leader who brought his people liberation, was a mystic "who spoke to God face to face." For Jesus, the mystical experience of God was the heart and soul of his mission on behalf of the poor. True mysticism has its own intrinsic value, which cannot be located only in its social or political consequences, although it always does have such consequences. Mysticism can become either a flight into inwardness without social awareness or a prophetic mysticism. "Bourgeois religion" attempts to separate religion and politics, salvation and liberation, whereas authentic Christian salvation implies wholeness. True mystics are prophetic, and true prophets are mystical.

Christian life and spirituality are intimately tied up with one's concept of salvation, one of Schillebeeckx's enduring concerns. "Salvation means being whole" (*Christ*, 717), and salvation becomes less than whole if one emphasizes only one dimension of the human—whether this be the sociopolitical or the personal. Social liberation is an integral ingredient of the eschatological salvation offered by God. "Personal salvation" is only partial. Likewise, if sociopolitical liberation claims to be total, it becomes a new form of servitude. Human liberation and Christian redemption are not alternatives, but are both constitutive elements of Christian hope.

The process of liberation, even without being specifically Christian, can be a form of Christian love. In political questions, faith ought not play too large or too small a role. Christian faith is politically relevant, yet it does not absolutize any political system. The gospel moves Christians toward political action, yet does not of itself present us directly with a specific program.

The mystical dimension of faith itself can take the form of political love. There can be no dualism between interiority and exteriority, between love of God and love of neighbor; nor can one be subordinated to the other. "Love of humanity as a disinterested commitment for fellow human beings is at the same time the hallmark of the truth of love towards God" (*On Christian Faith*, 70). Mysticism is possible not

only in silence and in contemplation, but also in prophetic struggle. At the same time, the active mystic still needs moments of explicit praise and Eucharist.

The dangerous memory of the life and execution and resurrection of Jesus is the basis not only for liturgical action, but also for political action. Christian faith is not neutral with respect to social and political problems, yet it promotes the autonomy of political reason. It does not give a blueprint for the economic, social, and political order; these pertain to the art of government, the lessons of history, and the social sciences. At the same time, this does not imply that Christian faith and the gospel have nothing to do with the social order. Christian faith has political relevance precisely because Christian salvation implies human liberation. Churches must at all times challenge injustice. Yet social responsibility does not mean that churches take the government of the world into their own hands, or that they ally themselves with one particular political or economic system. The gospel provides the basis for a critique of the world, and this includes the social and political structures of the world. Not to criticize actual injustice in a concrete social order is to make a secret compromise with injustice—to which the God of Jesus says a final "no."

THE SPIRIT, THE CHURCH, AND THE WORLD

Christology was clearly at the center of Schillebeeckx's writings, with the publication of his *Jesus* and *Christ*, but christological concerns had undergirded his theology even prior to the Second Vatican Council. In 1959, he published the Dutch edition of *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, which brought into a new focus the profound connections between christology, ecclesiology, the sacraments, and human life. His early theology spoke of a sacrament as an ecclesial act. Jesus Christ is the primordial sacrament of grace. What we ordinarily think of as sacraments are ecclesial acts, in which the Christian encounters God as present.

These ecclesial concerns continued to be significant as Schillebeeckx took up problematic areas such as lay preaching, liturgy, and ministry, all with an eye toward a deeper understanding of the human. His christology, ecclesiology, and spirituality all move with that

foundational concern—the desire to specify theologically what it means to be human.

The risen Jesus bestows God's own Spirit, through which the believer enters into a relationship with God and, following after Jesus, into radical service to the world. The world is as much of a concern to Schillebeeckx as the church, if not even more so. His ecclesial questions relate the church directly to the world. Salvation takes place "in the world," in human history: "outside the world, no salvation" (*Church*, 5). Schillebeeckx's developing theology has become a theology of creation. Yet the church is of importance, not because the religions and the churches are salvation, but because they are sacraments of the salvation that God brings about in the world. As Schillebeeckx explains: "Churches are the places where salvation from God is thematized or put into words, confessed explicitly, proclaimed prophetically and celebrated liturgically" (*Church*, 13).

Being church is ministering to and in the world, but God's salvation is available wherever good is promoted and evil resisted. The church and world cannot be defined in opposition to each other. What is present "outside the church," wherever people give their consent to God's offer of grace, even though they do not do this reflectively or thematically, is audibly expressed and visibly perceptible in the church. "The church must therefore be the sphere where, following Jesus, the praxis of the kingdom of God becomes visible, so that it is clear to everyone through this praxis that despite everything there is ground for hope" (*God Among Us*, 120). The church follows after Jesus in the world, where such following is a visible sign of hope.

The church is vitally concerned with both mysticism and human liberation. Mysticism, liturgy, and worship without an essential concern for liberation constitute pseudomysticism, and, likewise, a church that promotes human liberation but has no mysticism is only half itself. In the church, as in the praxis of Jesus, God and the world come together in such a way that God is seen, experienced, proclaimed, and praised as one whose cause is the cause of humankind. The church is a community of "people of God" gathered around "the God of people," as revealed in Jesus Christ (*On Christian Faith*, 47). God reveals God's very own self as being for the sake of our salvation—which cannot be separated from our awareness of the history of human suffering. God, Jesus

Christ, and the church are all postured toward the human and have a human face: Abba, Son, and Spirit. God is a God who loves humanity.

God's universal love for human beings, revealed in the story of Jesus Christ and continuing to be proclaimed through the power of the Spirit, pushes the human (the *humanum*) to center stage in Schillebeeckx's continually developing theology. Salvation is always that of human beings. God's salvation does not turn our gaze away from us, our world, and our experience. Our God is a God who loves us. An ongoing theological concern for Schillebeeckx is: "In what does salvation consist?" Salvation can never be severed from its relationship to the human. God's very own choice has been for an authentic humanism, a religious humanism, even a "humanism of the rejected." Christian salvation comprises both God's redemptive acts and the historical human struggle for liberation. Salvation, however, cannot identify itself with either one to the exclusion of the other. God is always and absolutely for humanity.

Christian salvation is meant as salvation from God, but for human beings. Thus Christian salvation and spirituality are concerned with human beings becoming human. Salvation or spirituality cannot be related solely to a personal holiness alone, or to political or ecological appeals alone, or to an eschatological hope alone, or to a nonhistorical or mystical perspective alone, to the exclusion of the other aspects of the human. Christian salvation, for Schillebeeckx, is not simply a matter of "saving souls." It must be experienced by concrete human beings as saving. Salvation refers to human wholeness, human well-being in all its dimensions. It implies the solidarity of Christians with the processes of human liberation, even when the church has nothing in particular to gain from the liberation movement. Defining the content of full human liberation remains impossible. It is that toward which we strive. In the end, it involves the presence of the living God in the lives of the people, and the presence of the people to their history, the world, and all of creation.

Christian spirituality is, thus, concerned with what it means to be human. In the end, it is a theology of the human. Jesus is paradigmatic of the human, and Jesus discloses that being human, or being whole, involves both an experience of God as intimate and the praxis of the reign of God. Authentic Christian praxis is both mystical and political. Political love, or the political shape that love of neighbor necessarily

takes in our world today, constitutes a particular understanding of holiness—an image of God as a God of people, a God whose concern is humanity. To be holy is to be concerned with human beings. Holiness never legitimates an escape from the world, but rather necessitates a *présence au monde* and its struggles for human liberation.

The human, which is God's innermost concern, is not definitively definable and is only fragmentarily found. It is best expressed in symbolic language, or metaphorical speech. Three great metaphors from the New Testament suggest the complete *humanum* (*God Among Us*, 161–62). First is the definitive salvation, or radical liberation, of all men and women for a sisterly and brotherly community or society that is no longer dominated by master-servant relationships: the metaphor of the reign of God. Second is the complete salvation and happiness of the individual person within this society: the metaphor of the resurrection of the flesh. Third is the perfection of the ecological environment necessary for human life: the biblical idea of the new heaven and the new earth.

In *Church: The Human Story of God*, Schillebeeckx adds a fourth, the real significance of Jesus ultimately becoming transparent to all in the midst of so many world religions: the metaphor of the parousia, or second coming of Jesus (133–34). These four metaphorical visions of the eschatological future are the source within Christian spirituality of Christians' power and joy (134).

Again we are reminded that spirituality is not just one aspect of human life that can be singled out. It is the whole of human life, and the making of human life whole. It is following the praxis of Jesus, the praxis of the reign of God, an orthopraxis both deeply mystical and necessarily political. It is an intimate involvement with a God who loves people and all of creation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

The most complete collection of Schillebeeckx's homilies, essays, and lectures in the area of spirituality is found in *God Among Us: The Gospel Proclaimed* (New York: Crossroad, 1983). To explore further the aspects of Schillebeeckx's approach to spirituality highlighted in this chapter, see especially "Jesus the Prophet," 33–44; "You Are the Light of the

World (Lk 2:19–32)," 85–90; "I Believe in the Man Jesus: The Christ, the Only Beloved Son, Our Lord," 103–15; "Liberation from Panic (Easter Faith)," 122–27; "Introverted or Turned Towards the World?" 164–74; "How Shall We Sing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land? (Ps 137:4)," 180–87; and especially "Dominican Spirituality," in which his own experience as a Dominican is the basis for his reflections, 232–48.

Later homilies and spiritual writings have been collected in *For the Sake of the Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1990). See especially the reflections on Christmas, 45–49; Pentecost, 70–75; John XXIII, 130–40; and the 8 May Movement in the Netherlands, 151–64, the latter in particular exemplifying the increasingly prophetic character of Schillebeeckx's preaching.

For the fuller christological foundations of Schillebeeckx's spirituality, see *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* (New York: Seabury, 1979), especially 229–71. Schillebeeckx's discussion of God's opposition to human suffering can be found in *Christ: The Experience of Jesus As Lord* (New York: Crossroad, 1980), 670–743. His understanding of "political holiness" and the relationship between mysticism and politics, as well as liturgy and social justice, can be traced in *Christ*, 762–821; *On Christian Faith: The Spiritual, Ethical, and Political Dimensions* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 47–84; and *Church: The Human Story of God* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 66–99, 179–86.

Parts 5 and 6 of *The Schillebeeckx Reader* (Robert J. Schreiter, ed. New York: Crossroad, 1984) contain significant excerpts from his writings on the relationship of church and world and spirituality, some portions of which cannot be found elsewhere in English translation. An easily read introduction to Schillebeeckx, which offers rich insight into his own spirituality, is his conversation recorded in *God Is New Each Moment: Edward Schillebeeckx in Conversation with Huub Oosterhuis and Piet Hoogeveen* (New York: Seabury, 1983). Schillebeeckx's most recent articulation of Dominican spirituality is to be found in the text of his unpublished lecture, "Dominicaanse spiritualiteit," delivered at the Dominicaans Mariaconvent in Berg en Dal, 19 March 2000.