

## Summary of the Dissertation

### **„Es war schon in mir“. Biography and Theology in the work of Raymund Schwager, SJ**

This dissertation plumbs the depths of the “it” of which Schwager spoke when he told his friend, Józef Niewiadomski, that Girard’s Mimetic Theory was already in him (“*Es war schon in mir*”). This dissertation not only demonstrates that Schwager had already independently formulated key elements of Girard’s theory prior to reading *La violence et le sacré* in 1973, but that his early writings and biography indicate the inspiration and the sources for his own reflection on the problem of violence and conflict in the Church

First, this dissertation synthesizes a well-documented biography of Schwager’s pre-Innsbruck years. It accomplished multiple goals concurrently including the exposition of the three background conflicts regarding location, confession and vocation, the examination of Schwager’s education in terms of institutions, curricula, teachers, and relationships as sources for his thought, his formation as a Jesuit from novice to doctor of theology, noting the influence of the his novice master’s vision of the vocation, and a survey of his pastoral and literary achievements.

Second, the dissertation shows the coherence of Schwager’s early major writings as a progressive engagement with the problem of conflict and violence under the term of drama. Starting with his dissertation, he treats conflict in the life and writings of Ignatius of Loyola, then in the life of the Church in general in his second book, and then finally, in a global perspective in terms of the encounter of the Gospel with the West in his third book. This line of thought from these three sources – and two early articles – eventually matured into the research program, Dramatic Theology.

Third, this dissertation explains the origin and meaning of drama for early Schwager. Tracing its genealogy from Fessard’s work on the *Spiritual Exercises* to Barthes and Bataille’s description of the *Spiritual Exercises* as a dramatized discourse, it concludes that though Schwager did borrow the term and its meaning from these French literary critics, he uses it for other purposes. Schwager’s distinctive use of

drama came into greater relief in the comparison between him and Freytag and by its contextualization within a twentieth-century Jesuit tradition of considerations on dialectics, showing Schwager's indebtedness to Przywara, Fessard, Moingt, Stierli and von Balthasar even as he developed his own distinctive theology.

Lastly, this dissertation draws sources from Schwager's life and early writings to summarize his observations on conflict within the Church. Schwager recognized that pluralism best described the way in which the community of believers should manage variety and difference, which result from God's transcendence and its limitations on human knowledge and the diachronic and synchronic aspects of the lifecycles. These differences lead to divergent perceptions of reality and the pursuit of goals that easily clash. This plurality of experiences, means and goals demands authorities to minimize disorder. However, since the authorities themselves are subject to the same limitations as everyone, they can also be the source of disorder, which gives rise to scandal and division as well as the urgency to address such failures in terms of fraternal correction. For this to be successful, the Spirit must be the principal agent of this correction as the Spirit operates in individuals, the community of believers, and finally, the world. Synodality describes this process of communal discernment, which enables fraternal correction and conversion, through a common struggle to listen to Word of God anew, free from prejudgments and social conditioning, which leads to a consensus, a feeling and thinking together around God parallel to Ignatius' *sentire cum ecclesia*. Synodality furnishes motives of credibility because follow Jesus authentically confirms the transformative power of the Gospel in the creation of saints, who need not resort to violence when obstacles and difficulties come. Instead, they act with wisdom and patience in caring for one another and the world.

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