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ACTIVIST, SCHOLAR,
AND CONTEMPLATIVE IN ACTION

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Cover and text design by Patricia A. Lynch

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ISBN: 978-0-9980033-1-3

This book is a project of the Ann Ida Gannon, BVM, Center for Women and Leadership at Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois.

Anne E. Carr, an alumna of the Divinity School, was the first woman to be awarded tenure in the Divinity School—in 1977—a date within arm’s reach. Anne was a scholar of religion who took her Roman Catholic tradition as a center of gravity, but understood so well that the University context demanded—and rewarded a critical conversation between past and present. Her groundbreaking work in feminist theology and activism on behalf of women in the Roman Catholic Church remains a precious and loving legacy, even as she continues to be missed after her death in 2008.

— Margaret Mitchell¹

Anne was compassionate, especially to those in pain—a compassion learned through her own considerable suffering. She was unfailingly kind, generous, especially in praise, and appreciative of the smallest favors. She could also be quite indignant, especially at injustice in society and church.

— Lois Dolphin²

Anne Carr, Sister of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), was a highly respected theologian and woman of deep and genuine faith. Tied with bonds of affection and support to her BVM community of sisters, Anne was a trusted friend and mentor. She was a popular teacher at the University of Chicago Divinity School and a respected colleague, especially among leading male theologians of the 1970s, whose admiration for her critical mind and dedicated service changed their views of the essential role of feminism in theology and philosophy.³ A pioneer among her field, Anne was the first woman to be awarded tenure and to serve as Assistant Dean of the University of Chicago Divinity School.

A steadfast advocate for the women’s equality within the Church, Anne was invited in 1975 to serve on the Catholic Theological Society of

America (CTSA) research team that was tasked with studying the theological questions of women's role in the Church and society. According to a leading feminist theologian and one of Anne's former students, Anne Patrick, SNJM, this report "was enthusiastically received in 1978...and still rewards study today." In 1997, Anne was awarded the John Courtney Murray Award for her years of distinguished theological scholarship, the highest honor awarded by the CTSA. In 2007, she was once again recognized by CTSA with the Ann O'Hara Graff Award. This award honors CTSA members whose work places them at the "intersection of scholarship, faith, and lived experience."⁴

Anne's quiet humility drew people to her throughout her life, offering them a model for living that skillfully blended exemplary scholarship and passionate activism with the wisdom of contemplation and service. As her colleague Roger Haight, SJ, explained, Anne's convictions about her role as a leading female theologian led her to both think *with* the Catholic Church and *for* the Catholic Church, helping the Church to grow and embrace the dignity of all its members.

I realized that I admired the Sisters of Charity for their particular spirit. All the sisters I have met, especially those at Mundelein College, seemed selfless, interested in others, and above all, to have a truly spiritual attitude toward things.... BVM sisters seemed to me to be a very happy group of women whose lives are dedicated to the Blessed Mother in a special way.

— Anne Carr ⁵

Anne's Early Years

Born November 11, 1934, Anne Carr was the second daughter of Frank and Dorothy Graber Carr. Her parents were devout Catholics. The three sisters grew up in the Little Flower Parish on the South Side of Chicago. While Anne would later joke that she was the “proverbial middle child,” her older sister, Jeanne Horan, and younger sister, Patricia Zeiler, remained two of her closest friends throughout her life. Anne went to the Academy of Our Lady for high school. According to her sisters, she had an active social life as well as a number of boyfriends who were crestfallen at her decision to enter religious life. Anne was also very close to her mother and family lore says that when Anne told her that she wanted to join the School Sisters of Notre Dame, a religious community with German roots, her mother said, “Oh, Anne, you’ll have to eat sauerkraut for supper every night.” So instead, Anne chose to enroll in Mundelein College on the north side of Chicago and thus began her over fifty year relationship with the BVM community of sisters.

In 1956, Anne earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Mundelein and began teaching kindergarten in Chicago public schools. She also enrolled at Loyola University of Chicago and did graduate work in English literature. Two years later, on August 2, 1958, Anne decided to enter the BVM community. She was several years older than most of the young novices in her class. Sr. Ann Ida, then president of Mundelein College, sponsored Anne and hoped that Anne might one day follow in her footsteps. As was the custom at the time, the sponsoring sister was to assist the candidate in purchasing the wool serge that would be used to make her habit. But because of her many demands as president, Sr. Ann Ida was unable to do so and Sr. Saint Ida was privileged to companion Anne in this important symbolic event. Both of Anne’s sisters reflected on how much this had meant to Anne, and to her family, noting that “Sr. Saint Ida adopted Anne.” On February 2, 1961, Anne made her first vows and took the name of Sr. Mary Anne David. Her novitiate complete, Anne was sent to Marquette to study theology.

Three generations of students [were] witness to Anne's thoughtfulness and critical care as a teacher, adviser, and dissertation reader.

— Fr. David Tracy⁶

Anne had a sweet disposition and a keen, critical mind. She was understanding, attentive to others, and sharp in judgment.

— Roger Haight, SJ⁷

A Teacher and Distinguished Scholar

After completing her graduate work at Marquette, Anne returned to Mundelein College in 1963 to teach theology. The theology department was growing rapidly under the leadership of Sr. Carol Frances Jegen, BVM, and the curriculum reflected the new theological understandings of the Second Vatican Council. Despite her initial intention to teach at the primary school level, Anne became quite popular among undergraduate students and BVM scholastics, in particular. Anne taught every theology course Mundelein offered during her seven years of teaching there. Many of her BVM sisters, and fellow faculty members, reflected on how her experiences as a kindergarten teacher prepared her well for her role as a college professor. Jean Dolores, BVM, said Anne was “an artist as a teacher,” noting that Anne used John Updike’s *Rabbit, Run* in class. Sr. Jean, herself, said she sat in on Anne’s classes to better understand the post-Vatican II way of thinking.

In 1966, Anne elected to pursue her doctoral degree at the University of Chicago Divinity School in Hyde Park, a neighborhood on the south side of Chicago. The BVM congregation was well known for assigning sisters to earn their PhDs so they could serve as professors at two BVM colleges: Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa, home to the BVM

congregation, and Mundelein College in Chicago. A new style of management was just coming into religious life at the time, whereby the wishes and inclinations of the sisters were keenly considered in making their assignments. Anne was open to this academic route and pursued her doctorate with passion. The University of Chicago Divinity School provided an empirical approach to theology, one that places high priority on the religious experiences of both individuals and religious groups or associations. In keeping with that tradition, Anne focused her dissertation on the theology of Fr. Karl Rahner, SJ, an internationally recognized German theologian of the twentieth century who was widely regarded as the foremost Catholic thinker of his generation.

Determined to read his original texts in German, Anne struggled to learn the language. According to her sisters, Anne relied on the Berlitz language training program and regaled the family by singing Silent Night in German at Christmas time. Years later, when Anne finally met Fr. Karl Rahner in Chicago, she was surprised that his English was no better than her German. Three of his male contemporaries and leading U.S. theologians, Langdon Gilkey, David Tracy, and Joseph Sittler, were among Anne's dissertation advisors. Martin Marty, a Protestant observer at the Second Vatican Council, and Fr. Andrew Greeley, bestselling author and Chicago columnist, were also colleagues. According to her BVM roommates at the time, Anne wore the same sweatshirt the entire time she was working on her dissertation. As the sleeves became soiled or frayed, she would simply trim them back until they disappeared altogether! As the story goes, once Anne finished her dissertation, she passed the sweatshirt onto another BVM sister who had just begun hers.

In 1971, Anne was awarded her Ph.D. and returned to chair the newly named Religious Studies Department at Mundelein. She was later offered a position as visiting assistant professor at Indiana University and after much discernment left Mundelein to teach there. Two years later, in 1975, she was invited to teach at her alma mater, the University of Chicago Divinity School. She considered it both a huge honor and a daunting challenge. As she told her family, "I've been wooed [back]." And, it was there, at the University of Chicago, that Anne spent her career as a theologian, teacher, and writer for over 30 years. In 1977, she became the first woman to be awarded tenure in the Divinity School. She was also the first woman to serve as Associate Dean of the Divinity School. In 1997, Anne

was recognized by the Catholic Theological Society of American (CTSA) for her distinguished scholarship. She received the John Courtney Murray Award, which is their highest honor. Ten years later, she would be honored by CTSA again. Over the course of her career, Anne also received several honorary doctorates and was sought after nationally as a speaker.

Her scholarship focused on the history of Christian thought, contemporary philosophical theology, the philosophy of religion, Roman Catholic Studies, and feminist theology.⁸ During her tenure, Anne authored three books, all empirical in orientation. Her first book, *The Theological Method of Karl Rahner*, focuses on Jesus' experience of himself, in which Anne skillfully blends together Jesus' human selfhood and the divine grace that form the hypostatic union.⁹ Her second, *A Search for Wisdom and Spirit: Thomas Merton's Theology of Self*, illuminates the compatibility and complementarity of Merton's spiritual view of the true and false selves with the theological anthropology of Karl Rahner. *Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women's Experience*, her third book, became internationally recognized as a leading text on feminist theology. In it, Anne thoughtfully maintained a connection with the Church that was both traditional and revisionist. She wrote her latter two books at the same time and apparently, upon completion, told her family: "I've had twins!" Anne would also go on to edit six more books and publish numerous articles and essays. She served as the associate editor for the journal, *Horizons*, and co-edited *The Journal of Religion*.¹⁰ Anne's academic writing was always precise and well-researched. Yet, her warmth, conviction, and femininity shone through as well.

Anne's former students credited her with bringing the ecumenical spirit of the Second Vatican Council to the campus and the Divinity School, in particular. Several commented on her gift of presenting serious topics in lighter and more understanding ways. Others referenced her humility, particularly among a faculty of prestigious and nationally recognized male theologians. It was said of Anne that she "had no ambition in her bones." She was known for her leadership and patience as well as her understanding that it would take time for vowed religious and laity alike to adjust to the changes in religious life that were inspired by Vatican II. Many of her colleagues noted that Anne served well on committees, enabling others to use their gifts. Her older sister, Jeannne Horan, recalled a remark by a fellow professor at the University of Chicago: "In

Anne there is a total lack of hubris. And there is plenty of hubris around here!” Anne’s sister Jeanne added that Anne was sensitive and never sought special recognition, that she “sought to enrich the other in community life... and in her disarmingly simple way, she was [inadvertently] a threat to some people.” Helen Garvey, BVM, noted that Anne’s “keen intelligence and humble manner drew people to her.” Throughout her life, Anne remained deeply respected as a colleague and teacher as well as a loyal friend to countless students, scholars, theologians, and vowed religious, men and women alike.

God asked a lot of her.

— *Jean Dolores Schmidt, BVM*¹¹

Anne took care of everyone.

— *Margaret Mitchell & Richard Rosengarten*¹²

Personal Illness, Suffering, and Service

During her tenure at the University of Chicago, Anne suffered immensely from recurring non-malignant brain tumors. She had three significant surgeries in 1979, 1986, and 1996; the last one involving four hospitals, numerous complications, and a long recuperation period. She spent several vacations with her friend and former student, Anne Patrick, SNJM, a cancer survivor, resting and recuperating at a beach house in Florida. Together, through their pain and steadfast faith, they offered each other solace and encouragement as well as many lively rounds of the game *Scrabble*. According to Anne Patrick, Anne rarely tried to win the *Scrabble* game, but rather delighted in whatever good words she was able to build. Many of Anne’s friends and colleagues shared how much Anne

enjoyed mental challenges and playing games that tested her intelligence.

Following her third surgery, Anne returned to the BVM home in Dubuque where she spent five months in Marian Hall resting and healing. She later returned to Chicago to do the same for another two months. Of that time, she wrote: "I literally have holes in my head but am now recovered once again, driving and teaching as usual but have also learned to slow down."¹³ True to her abiding sense of compassion for those who suffer, Anne participated in a clinical pastoral experience as a hospital chaplain. According to her former student and current Dean of the Divinity School, Richard Rosengarten, Anne developed an acute interest in geriatric nursing. She also dedicated a part of each summer to assisting the sick and elderly BVM sisters at Marian Hall. Anne found joy in being with and serving others, particularly those who knew and experienced physical suffering as she had.

In this way, through her many acts of service, the cities of Dubuque and Chicago were integral to Anne's life. Nestled in a bend in the Mississippi River, Dubuque has been the home for the BVM community for over 175 years. It is a place of contemplation and restoration. The soft flow of the river hosts countless bald eagles that swoop down toward the water and then back up toward the sky. Anne knew its solace well. Similarly, in her Chicago neighborhood of Hyde Park, Anne had a community of friends and colleagues that nourished her spirit and also honored her need to be alone and contemplative. She was an active member of St. Thomas the Apostle Church and volunteered in the soup kitchen of St. Ambrose parish. She befriended a group of elderly women, including the mother of one of her dissertation advisors, and drove them where they needed to be, frequenting McDonald's or Dunkin' Donuts after daily mass. Her friend, Lois Dolphin, BVM, described Anne as a "lively conversationalist, a voracious reader, and an avid worker of crossword puzzles."¹⁴ Another friend shared how they'd get together to drink wine, play bridge, and talk about theology and life. Ann herself wrote, "I feel I have not only some good friends but a new mother too."¹⁵

Much like the bridge that crosses over from Iowa to Illinois, Anne's unadorned manner of directness and simplicity brought her great healing and a rich community that sustained her during her illnesses. At her funeral mass, Fr. Lee O'Donovan, SJ, former president of Georgetown University and one of Anne's many colleagues, said simply: "We all adored her."¹⁶

The particular value of Carr's contribution ... lies in her method of dialectical retrieval: like Rahner, she attempts to receive, reformulate, and reappropriate some of the major Christian symbols from within the context of faith.

— Declan Marmion¹⁷

An adequate feminist interpretation is dialectical: it is suspicious as it unmasks the illusory or ideological aspects of symbols that denigrate the humanity of women and it is restorative to retrieve the genuinely transcendent meaning of symbols as affirming the authentic selfhood and self-transcendence of women.

— Anne Carr¹⁸

An Exemplar Theologian: Rooted in Experience

Anne's theological approach throughout her career was focused first and foremost on experience, or starting with the human.¹⁹ To begin with ourselves and our own personhood—either individually or as members of a group (i.e., women, immigrants, economically disadvantaged)—when we think about God is to invent and practice what is known as *theological anthropology*. For Anne, experience in theological terms was highly charged with the presence of God, signals of transcendence²⁰, and the mystery of the incarnation. In her first book, *The Theological Method of Karl Rahner*, Anne focuses primarily on the experience of Jesus in so far as his unique experience resulted from the convergence of both his humanity and his divinity—that it is possible for God to become human without forfeiting God's essential divine prerogatives, and it is possible for a human being to be divine without giving up his or her essential humanness. In her doctoral dissertation, Anne elaborates on Rahner's blend of the transcendental and historical approaches to Jesus. She illuminates how Jesus could enjoy the beatific, or immediate, vision of God in his consciousness and still engage with the full range of ordinary hu-

man experiences, including learning, forgetting, doubting, and simply not knowing.

In this unconscious and unthematized way, Jesus in his human self-awareness grasped the presence of God as his father and, as Anne writes, “his not-knowing (*nescience*) was the condition for the possibility of the risk and freedom his life involved.”²¹ The extraordinary state of Jesus’ existence and identity was incarnated in the ordinariness of a daily life full of surprises, discoveries and disappointments. The experience of Jesus was, for the most part, the experience of an ordinary man of his time and place—with divine revelation wrapped in the complexities of human consciousness, history, language, and interpretation. Such theological anthropology, however, as Anne observed, would remain too narrow and truncated if it did not fully embrace the theology of women and correct the distortions that were based solely on male experiences and perspectives.²² Rahner was aware of the need for a spirituality that would incorporate the specific experiences of contemporary women.²³ He, however, did not see it as his task to develop one. Anne did.

As a systematic theologian whose focal point was experience, Anne understood well that her understanding of God grew out of her experiences as woman and her experience of God in other people. In her second book, *Transforming Grace*, Anne skillfully “reinterprets traditional formulations of the doctrine of God in light of women’s experiences.”²⁴ She invites women to be responsive to the movements of transforming grace in the Church and in the world in which they live. Specifically, she explains that “no image or symbol is an adequate picture of God.”²⁵ Anne quotes her good friend and former BVM, June O’Connor:

*Because feminist theology takes seriously the full humanity and value of women, the affirmations that women and men alike are made in the image and likeness of God, are called to responsibility and salvation in Christ, and are one in Christ...there is no theological significance in Jesus’ maleness....*²⁶

In response, Anne strives to reimagine important symbols and major Christian doctrines. To retrieve them dialectically as a theologian is to reinterpret them in light of the Holy Spirit’s contemporary movement, to embrace both a critical correlation of the contemporary experience of

women on the one hand and with Scripture and tradition on the other. For example, Anne wrote incisively about the Blessed Mother of God. She acknowledged her as a symbol of “enduring power in the tradition,” and worked dialectically to retrieve that image in lieu of the woman Mary was and the life she led. Anne argued that the way in which the patriarchal Church was depicting Mary was “part of the history of the human thought about a woman, a history of errors....”²⁷ Specifically, Mary was presented as docile and obedient and reinforced a model of female submission to male authority.

As a feminist theologian, Anne strove to reclaim and re-envision Mary as a symbol of strength and transformation. In particular, she sought to redefine the Church’s teaching about the virgin birth. “A woman need not be totally defined by her relationships with men,” she wrote. “Virginity can be a symbol of integral female autonomy.”²⁸ Anne argued that Mary’s discipleship was deepened through her own struggles and through the often agonizing choices she made in response to the events in her life. In that way, Anne offers Mary to a new generation of women as a symbol that “signifies autonomy and relationship, strength and tenderness, struggle and victory, God’s power and human agency—not in competition but in cooperation.”²⁹ Anne further argued that Mary is an apt symbol for the Church itself. “The theology of Mary,” she concluded, “may be a way that helps in the self-understanding of the Church.” Like Mary, Anne perceived that the Church needed to continually ponder the teachings and traditions that challenge its very life and identity. For Anne, as well as other feminist theologians, Mary became a “female symbol of the created freedom and the final transformation of the world for which women hope.”³⁰

In her writings, Anne also meditates on the word “friend” as an apt designation for God, quoting from fellow theologian, Sally McFague: “a friendship revealed in the parables of the lost sheep, the prodigal son, the good Samaritan . . .”³¹ Anne knew well that Rahner saw God as the Incomprehensible, the Holy Mystery, and “the incomprehensible horizon of Holy Mystery.”³² His later designations placed God beyond all analogies with human beings, including any suggestions regarding gender. For Anne, though, God is first and foremost our friend—God is the unfathomable mystery at the heart of being itself. According to her former student, Nick Patricca, Anne understood that that mystery communicates

with us, not only the truths of faith but in self-discovery as well, such that God gives herself to us so that we can give ourselves back in return. Anne's designations of God are different from the paternal references the Church uses for God. Anne believed that the Church must find new forms appropriate to the present and the future if it is to hand on its permanent message authentically and effectively to the coming age.

In addition to friendship, Anne uses other designations for God, including a liberating God, an incarnational God, suffering God, future God, and crucified God.³³ She found the idea of liberation compelling, writing that "the idea of a liberating God is liberating in itself."³⁴ In her writings, she further observed how our understanding of obligation and obedience to God has often blocked our respect for our own freedom, spontaneity, and God's call for autonomy and authenticity. Anne bids all Christians to reconsider this and to work on the polarity in our lives between heeding God's law as well as God's call to become all that we are. Powerfully, she writes: "Christians know that human freedom is the bearer of divine freedom in the world."³⁵

In her forward thinking, Anne was drawn to Thomas Merton's contemplative movement, specifically his hermeneutical project to retrieve monastic experience and piety and reinterpret it for the twentieth century and beyond.³⁶ Her book on Merton is different and independent from her book on grace and feminist theology. *A Search for Wisdom and Spirit* deftly illuminates the evolution in Merton's doctrine of the two selves: the true self (or inner self) and the false self (or empirical self). The two selves are derived from the mystical literature of the Church. Monastic in derivation, the true self is the inner self. The false self, or the outer self, is the fabric of our projections and distortions in response to our daily lives. The contemplative discovery of the true self, as Anne and Merton explain, is the core phenomenon in the spiritual life as the true self is the "summit of the soul" and the heartland of our prayer, personal transformation, and spiritual activity.

The point of connection for Anne, Merton, and Rahner is their emphasis on the personal experience of God, specifically our relationship to God and to the world. In her skillful analysis, Anne places Merton's theology of self within the contemplative tradition of the Church, noting that mysticism is a dimension of all prayer and prayer is present as a horizon in all of Christian experience. Specifically, as Anne details, in Merton's

doctrine of two selves, the inner self is in constant communion with God. This communion is incomplete as we live in this world so we search for the wisdom and the Spirit to bring it to completion. The empirical self, which can be sidetracked and often forgets or ignores God, is basically the outer manifestation of the inner self. As the outer self, this false self is not to be discarded, but rather it is to become our face to the world as an expressive persona. Of note, Merton and Anne suggest that the inner and outer selves are not enemy selves. They are meant to work in harmony. This central theme of her book is also exemplified in her own life.

My religious community has long provided a context of love, debate, and support for my conviction that the movement of women is indeed a transforming grace in our time. ... While feminism presents a challenge to Christianity today, it is a challenge that is a powerful grace in its call for the Church to be faithful to its own transcendent truth, to the deepest meaning of its symbols, its great tradition and the new experience of over half the members.

— Anne Carr³⁷

Anne played a major role in the continuing post-Vatican II reforms of her splendid reforming order, the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She gave special attention to the deeply painful crises [the Church] has experienced over the years since Vatican II.

Fr. David Tracy³⁸

A Pioneer for Women: Priesthood and Women's Rights

In addition to her exemplary scholarship, Anne was known as a pioneer for women's rights within the Catholic Church.³⁹ Consistent with liberal theology and the spirit of the Divinity School, Anne was a revisionist theologian who, as such, remained faithful to tradition in the ordinary sense, but insisted that respect for tradition required forward movement, change, and transformation. For Anne, being faithful to the Church meant becoming an agent of change and envisioning better and more inclusive expressions of the beliefs and practices she held dear. According to her former student and current Dean of the Divinity School, Richard Rosen-garten, Anne understood that tradition not only reaches into the past but also stretches forward into the future. Several of her colleagues described a sense of urgency in her feminism and an equipoise, or a balance, in the tension between her position as a scholar and her activism on behalf of women. Another added that Anne was always "true to tradition."

In 1975, Anne spoke at the first ever Catholic Women's Ordination Conference,⁴⁰ despite an order of silence from the Vatican on the issue of women's ordination. For Anne, women's ordination was not a matter of custom or tradition, but rather a matter of justice—one that required her faithful dissent. Speaking at the conference, Anne presented a compelling as well as a scholarly and historical argument for the ordination of women priests,⁴¹ stating that women's full personhood would not be recognized or respected by the Church until women were ordained. Moreover, Anne argued that "the correlation of the church's tradition with the experience of women might result in a new understanding of the Church as sacrament."⁴² By exercising its moral leadership and honoring women's equality and their role in priestly ministry, she believed that the Church would become "a sacrament of its own tradition, of its fidelity to the Gospel, and to its times."⁴³

In alignment with the Second Vatican Council, Anne further outlined how it has always been part of the church's tradition to break with certain positions, including revising or reversing its stands on many issues over time, such as usury, persecution of heretics, the vernacular liturgy, slavery, war, capital punishment, and racism. She noted that tradition does not have to mean betrayal, but rather continuity and preservation. As such, she advocated that the Church, in faithfulness to its deeper val-

ues and mission, should reject its misogynist traditions and affirm women's right to priestly ordination, a ministry she perceived women "were already fulfilling." Given how educated, competent, and capable women were of priesthood, she went on to say that the ordination of women would be "a sign of the Church's attentiveness to the concrete experience of its people." And to those who felt threatened by such dramatic change, she countered: "The ordination of women cannot be a stumbling block to faith because an authentic faith must recognize the full personhood of women, that they are not lesser human beings."⁴⁴

In her scholarship on the Trinity, Anne also established a moral urgency in allowing the ordination of women in the Church. She described how the liberation of women was occurring in all professions and around the world; yet, the Catholic Church remained a force that sought to restrain women's rights and freedom. Inspired and supported by other leading feminist theologians, Mary Daly and Rosemary Reuther, Anne knew well that women felt called by God to the priesthood. In her systematic theology, she argued that the Church was failing to exhibit the equality and mutuality of love within the Trinity by maintaining its intransigent and harmful refusal to ordain women. Speaking in careful and caring terms, Anne did not merely claim the right to ordination for herself or for her qualified colleagues. But instead, spoke out of a deep and abiding regard for the Church as she called upon the Church to become what God intended it to be. In the same way that Pope John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council into session with the prophetic outcry: "The love of God impels us...", so Anne called upon the Church to honor the love within the divine Trinity and ordain women.

Interestingly, many of her BVM sisters agreed that Anne would have made an excellent priest. Mary Donahey, BVM, shared that she once told Anne how much she wanted to receive the Sacrament of the Sick before undertaking serious back surgery. Anne then went into the kitchen and returned with a bottle of olive oil which she used to anoint Mary and bless the spot on her back. Similarly, another group of BVM sisters shared how they were once discussing church and spiritual matters over bread and wine. One of the sisters commented, "This is just like sharing Eucharist together." And Anne replied: "This is sharing Eucharist." As the story went, they all stopped to pray and reflect upon communion with Christ and with one another. Someone asked the question: "Is this really

a mass?" And Anne said, "Well, we will just have to let God decide the answer to that question."

Anne's student, the present dean of the Divinity School, Margaret Mitchell, noted that Anne was "never not a feminist," that Anne saw her feminism as a necessary and legitimate development of Church tradition and of the Church itself. In fact, in keeping with Anne's belief in the need to transform tradition, Anne's sisters shared that when the BVM community relinquished wearing their habits and began wearing ordinary professional attire, Anne spent a great deal of time losing her nun's pallor by getting a sun tan in her younger sister's backyard. It was the summer of 1967, and family lore has it that Anne's young nieces and nephews wanted to know what happened to her habit. They asked her, "Where are your clothes?" Whenever she was asked this question, Anne answered by saying she hadn't the vaguest idea what had become of her religious habit. The transforming grace by which the Church's traditions were brought into the present day was what Anne lived by and understood all too well. For her, it was always a matter of justice that women be fully recognized within the Church.

In 1984, Anne took another radical stand. She added her name to an advertisement published in the *New York Times* which stated that a diversity of opinions existed among U.S. Catholics regarding the morality of abortion.⁴⁵ Specifically, it stated that the Church's doctrine which condemns abortion as morally wrong in all instances was "not the only legitimate Catholic position."⁴⁶ Printed as *A Catholic Statement on Pluralism and Abortion*, the full page statement called for further dialogue within the Church. It was signed by 97 reform-minded theologians, priests, women religious, and members of Catholic institutions, including 24 nuns, Anne among them, and U.S. theologians: Daniel McGuire, Marjorie McGuire, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Margaret Farley.

The advertisement ignited much controversy as it advocated for a woman's right to choose a legal abortion in good conscience. Developed by the organization, Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC), it argued for the value of pluralism within the Church, noting that several U.S. Catholic theologians considered abortion in extreme cases to be an acceptable moral choice and that only 11 percent of surveyed Catholics believed abortion to be wrong in all circumstances. At the time, Geraldine Ferraro, a Catholic vice-presidential candidate who supported pro-choice legisla-

tion, was running for office with Walter Mondale. The advertisement was intended to help strengthen Ferraro's acceptability among Catholic voters.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops denounced the advertisement as contrary to the teachings of the Church, specifically, that the teaching that abortion is immoral. The Vatican vigorously pursued public retractions and reprimands for all those who were subject to Church authority, including Anne and her fellow vowed religious who came to be known as the *Vatican 24*. Her friend and former student, Christine Athans, BVM, described Anne's perspective: "[Anne] signed the letter, which basically called for further dialogue, but what struck me most was that she maintained such peace and serenity through it all. She didn't go into it seeking publicity. She wasn't an attention-seeker. She did what she did because she believed in it."⁴⁷ All of Anne's colleagues and friends agreed about Anne's motivations. In our telephone interview, Roger Haight noted that Anne was stunned by the Vatican's response and that anyone could object so strongly to women's equality within the Church. Other BVM sisters shared that Anne was shaken by the criticism and the intensity of public controversy.

Thankfully, while some of those who signed recanted their affiliation with CFFC and two others left their religious orders, Anne felt supported and deeply respected by her BVM sisters and her superiors within the congregation. She did, however, feel pressured to relinquish her position on the women's advisory committee tasked with assisting the U.S. Bishops in writing a pastoral letter on the role of women in the Church. Helen Garvey, BVM, president of the BVM congregation at the time, explained that the Vatican demanded that Anne either make a public retraction or face dismissal from the congregation. Over the next year Helen and Anne met often and Helen observed the following:

Anne demonstrated a profound love for the Church and for the Congregation, a sense of humor and self-giving that always placed the Congregation before herself. She clearly stated that she was willing to leave the Congregation if her actions would cause the Congregation harm. At the same time, Anne possessed an integrity which would not change words or ideas in order to be safe. She worked hard to achieve the compromise which honored both her conscience and the teachings of the Church.

*Although the New York Times incident brought both challenge and conflict into my life, it also created the opportunity to know Anne Carr. I am grateful for that relationship.*⁴⁸

Similar to Helen Garvey, Anne's colleague, friend, and fellow theologian, Fr. David Tracy, acclaimed Anne's spiritual position as being that of Thomas Merton: "a contemplative in action for justice." Tracy noted that Anne "never hesitated to expose the sexism of the Christian tradition as well as to retrieve overlooked resources of the experiences and theology of women."⁴⁹

To attend to the meaning of "God is love" is to think of Jesus and the Spirit, and to approach the mystery that is Trinitarian life. In thinking of the Trinity we refer to the mystery of perfect activity and receptivity, the mutuality and reciprocity that is God's own threefold life. It is this very life in which we participate in grace.

— Anne Carr⁵⁰

The Third World, at home and abroad, is the world of women and children as the poorest of the poor.

— Anne Carr⁵¹

Liberation Theology

True to her abiding compassion for those who suffer, Anne was quick to present the strong connection between the infinite love of the Trinity and the plight of women around the world, many of whom live in impoverished countries that do not honor women's equality. She reminded the Church that it has a mission to the world, and not only to itself. In her writing, she recognizes and develops a correlation between the liberation theology of the late sixties and the growing movement of feminist theology. Specifically, liberation theology, which grew out of the reflective and prayerful theology of Latin America, brought the cries of the oppressed into collaboration with the rest of the world. As Anne understood well, liberation theology involved "the empowerment of those who have no power, the people [leading liberation theologian] Gustavo Gutierrez has described as non-persons."⁵² Liberation theology advocated for the right of the oppressed to speak out on their own behalf, to organize and fight, even militarily, and to claim their right to decent living conditions, education, and health care. Moreover, it called upon the Church to lead the way in securing these human rights as an integral part of spreading the Gospel.

For Anne, this call for transformation within the Church shared common cause with the feminist movement in the United States and Europe. She understood well the need for women's voices to be heard and honored around the world. Women everywhere can be seen as poor and oppressed in that they are not accorded their full dignity as persons and as citizens. In matters of their own reproductive freedom, women are urged in both movements to make their own choices. Equal pay for equal work and equal access to jobs in higher management are to be accorded to women. Men are to take an equal part in doing domestic chores and caring for children. Women are to have voices that are in accord with their dignity in the home, in the workplace, in churches, and in all other areas of social concern. In the Catholic Church, women are to be ordained as priests and to have access to higher ecclesiastical offices. In her book, *Transforming Grace*, Anne observed: "Women's equal participation in church life is recognized by feminists today to be connected to a cluster of issues, not all of which immediately appear to be related to the question of women in the church at all."⁵³

We have been blessed to have her among us for so many years—a single theological scholar of Christianity who is, mirabile dictu, a real live Christian. Anne Carr’s theological vision and her way of life are one. This union of vision and way is rare for a modern thinker, and clearly, Professor Anne Carr is one of those rare modern thinkers.

— Fr. David Tracy⁵⁴

In its widest meaning, spirituality can be described as the whole of one’s spiritual or religious experience, one’s beliefs, convictions and patterns of thought, one’s emotions and behavior in respect to what is ultimate, or to God. Spirituality is holistic, encompassing all one’s relationships to all of creation – to the self and to others, to society and nature, to work and leisure. ... As such it is a dimension of life that is generally unexamined, resting on convention, upbringing, or conformity to social and religious expectations.

— Anne Carr⁵⁵

An Enduring Legacy

Anyone who knew Anne Carr understood the depth of authenticity and conviction from which she lived and worked. She had gifts of marvelous talent. Her life was full of opportunity, and lasting friendships as well as great suffering and physical illness. The experience of providence was a matter of her existential self-understanding as well as a consistent theme in her work. In her early writings, including the article, “The God who is Involved,” Anne shows her nimbleness and thoroughness, versatility and virtuosity, as she assembles an array of theological experts who present God in multiple ways.⁵⁶ In her characteristic style, she then makes her own breakthrough with a picture of a compassionate God who directs the world by luring it persuasively onward and also allowing for human contributions, including our errors,

distortions and monstrous aberrations.

Twenty years later, Anne reveals the intimate connection between providence and our own freedom. Specifically, in the article, “Providence, Power, and the Holy Spirit,” she contends that providence not only sets the stage for our freedom to decide and act in the world, but it also includes the difference we ourselves make with our own unique life choices.⁵⁷ Our freedom of choice and creativity are part of God’s plan. According to Anne, God wants the world to be our creation as well. In that spirit, the legacy of Anne’s own life choices compels us to model our lives on her example as we move into a future in which the Church still struggles to promote greater equality. We are invited to act in ways that spread compassion and justice and also honor the contemplative wisdom and spirit in which Anne lived. A private person in many ways, Anne attracted the admiration, affection, and even adoration of those who knew her well. A pioneering theologian, she challenged the Church to transform its traditions. Her devotion helped the Church to grow and learn to embrace more of the experiences of women.

What we can learn lastingly from Anne is the importance of our own experiences as Spirit-laced sources of growth for our own learning, teaching, and being in the world. Women and men alike can learn the importance of women’s roles in the Church. We can learn to listen to women as prophets, emblazoned with royal gifts of leadership and priestly ministry. And, we can honor in the women we know and love, the wisdom of contemplative silence and dedicated service, the passion of activism and all-embracing love that Anne so beautifully embodied.

Author's Note

My sweetest memory of Anne Carr took place on Trinity Sunday in 1970. Fr. Rudy Breunig, ST, and I were the resident Trinitarian priests in our improvised house of formation on the Loyola campus. A dozen of our seminarians were invited to a celebration at Wright Hall, also known as the BVM Scholasticate, which housed BVM students and sisters of all ages. The BVM community was honoring the Trinitarians for our service to Wright Hall and to the sisters and their colleagues at Mundelein College. I had the privilege of delivering the homily with Anne in attendance.

At the time, I was taking a course in Paul Tillich's theology. And, as I recall now, some forty-five years later, the homily envisioned the Trinity in Tillichian terms as the estrangement of the divine threesome in terms of their separate roles in the created world—and, then the overcoming of the estrangement in terms of the supporting love that each holy member has for the others. I talked about how the rhythm of our human existence and of our ever-changing relationships with one another is a rhythm of estrangement and overcoming estrangement. And that our sinfulness, or alienation from one another, is also taken up into the eternal estrangement of the Trinity and is overcome as Trinitarian love dynamically and eternally forgives us all.

After Mass, Anne came toward me and paid me a lavish compliment right in front of some of the most critical and discriminating members of the Mundelein faculty! The seminarians with whom I resided and whose respect I had to continually earn, or so it often seemed to me, were also within earshot. The twinkle in Anne's eyes told me she knew exactly what she was doing and exactly what it meant to me. I loved her for it.

Thank you forever, Anne and all those BVMs!

When I arrived in Chicago in 1969, Anne was writing her doctoral dissertation. The excitement and enthusiasm for Vatican II was still effervescent. It was the best time ever to be a Catholic, or so we thought. Non-Catholics as well as Catholics expected great things to come from the Church. But some disillusionment had begun to set in. In 1968, Pope Paul VI issued an encyclical letter, *Humanae Vitae*, which reaffirmed the

Church's teachings on birth control despite the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council's commission. It seemed as if the fear of innovation had become a form of backlash from the Church, which appeared to be both overwhelmed and unprepared for the changes being asked of it. Happily, however, many men and women vowed religious—Anne among them—who understood the Council and anticipated the change, were enthusiastic about all that Vatican II had accomplished and what it promised for the future.

On one occasion, Anne, who took notice of my avidity for studies both philosophical and theological, invited me to attend one of the seminars she was taking at the University of Chicago. It was being conducted by Fr. David Tracy. He sent my head spinning with ideas, enlightening and puzzling, about the philosophies of Edmund Husserl, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Bernard Lonergan. The common theme among them was that of hermeneutics, which involves the theory of understanding and the method of interpreting texts. I shall never forget that long wintry afternoon and how it enriched my thinking.

I knew Anne better than the above recollections suggest. We shared uncannily similar interests in Karl Rahner, the University of Chicago School of Divinity, Thomas Merton, and eastern philosophy, not to mention many of the same friends! We met briefly several times in Chicago, when I lived there, and twice at the American Academy of Religion meetings. I knew of her continued helpfulness to my own Trinitarian religious community, and especially to my friend Fr. Austin Walsh, who knew Anne better than I, and who grew in his knowledge of the church and theology because of Anne. Anne also visited my home in California. My wife, Jackie, is a former BVM and still enjoys close contact with the BVM community, where memories of Anne flourish.

It was both an honor and a privilege to conduct the interviews that informed this monograph. (A list of contributors follows.) Many times during those conversations, I gained insight into Anne by gaining insight into God and into the friend or colleague with whom I was speaking. At those moments, when they spoke theology to me, we were in the realm of what Anne meant by experience: Getting to know another human be-

ing entails getting to know God as well. And, that was exactly what the interviews and this project were all about!

Following Anne's death, I wrote a poem for her that was read by Ann Harrington, BVM, at the vigil Mass. It was printed in the program for Anne's funeral and reads as follows:

A WOMAN OF GRACE AND WISDOM

Searching for true self with graceful determination,
finding a method anthropological,
You, Anne, ever starting with the human,
continuator of the work of Rahner,
ever beginning again and venturing forth --
Your spirit and wisdom test the productive tension,
between patience and impatience, action and contemplation,
testing old and new at odds, as opposites in mutuality,
viewing in an ancient gospel the light of novelty.

In you, nature and grace came close together,
reason and revelation meshed.
You, dedicated both to questioning and speculation,
lived a mystery not unintelligible, but beyond ordinary intelligence.
With sifting and shining mind you thought your way into
places where nature opens out and reaches toward transcendence,
meeting there the Holy Mystery, beyond the grip of grasping.
You'd think, discuss, teach, and learn,
and lead proud reason humbly to the brink of mystery,
understanding the world first, from there undertaking the method of
grace,
with activation and surrender, to welcome the feminine divine.

Before your mind, some alleged miracles shrank, embarrassed,
 when they finally found their explanation –
 cogent, valid, sound, strong, probable, consistent,
 or none of these, if that truth must be faced.
 All issues probed for evidence and inference,
 never left unexamined the claims of gospel and theology,
 the claims of life beyond, that must, that must, dissolve in wonder.
 Your reason is with you, never to be stripped away,
 comfortable in a future of even greater faith.

Mother Mary Frances Clarke, I'm sure,
 taught you ways of serving womanhood,
 a lesson you embodied and amplified for later times,
 pointing to novel paths of liberating grace.
 Living in two cherished worlds or orders,
 the order of creation and the order of redemption,
 one order they became for you as incarnation:
 God born into every woman, learning, leading.

No method succeeds to find the path you divined,
 emergent still, while verging on eternity.
 Time is full of eternity, the source containing every time
 before time comes to be, yet leaving each time free
 to shape only for itself the novel joy of every moment.
 Enjoy now all your moments, enjoy the question you still cherish:
 how to transcend all answers in the difference that you make,
 as all things conspire and converge
 to make you in very holy ways the woman who you are.

— *Robert E. Doud*

List of Contributors

Many people contributed to this monograph—lifelong friends of Anne, former students, eminent theologians and noted colleagues, members of the BVM congregation, family members, and her earliest BVM roommates at Mundelein College. For their generous insights and perspectives on her life, I remain deeply grateful.

Christine Athans, BVM, Professor Emerita at the School of Divinity of the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Lois Dolphin, BVM, taught physics, chemistry and other science-related courses at the high school level for 38 years. Sr. Lois lived in Hyde Park with Anne for many years and was known for her fabulous dinner parties.

Mary Donahy, BVM, professor at Mundelein College. Sr. Mary Donahy specialized in philosophy of religion and ethics. She served on the faculty at Mundelein with Anne.

Ann Ida Gannon, BVM, former president of Mundelein College in Chicago. She provided hospitality and comments during interviews at the BVM Generate in Dubuque, Iowa.

Roger Haight, SJ, a Jesuit priest and distinguished theologian. Roger taught formerly at Boston College. He studied at the University of Chicago and served as a parish priest in Hyde Park.

Ann Harrington, BVM, Professor Emerita of 19th and 20th Century Japanese History at Loyola University Chicago. She lived with Anne in her early days teaching at Mundelein College.

Jeanne Horan, older sister of Anne Carr.

Marianne Litttau, mathematician and former BVM, she lived with Anne in her early days teaching at Mundelein College.

Margaret Mitchell, Shailer Mathews Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Literature at The University of Chicago Divinity School. A former student and Dean of the Divinity School, Margaret followed in Anne's footsteps.

June O'Connor, novitiate classmate of Anne Carr; professor of Religious Ethics at the University of California, Riverside. She was the past editor of *The Journal of Religious Ethics*.

Lee J. O'Donovan, SJ, former president of Georgetown University. Fr. O'Donovan pursued his post-doctoral work at The University of Chicago Divinity School. He gave the eulogy at Anne's funeral.

Kateri O'Shea, teacher of Spanish language and literature and former BVM, she lived with Anne in her early days teaching at Mundelein College.

Nick Patricca, theologian and playwright. A former student of Anne's, he taught at Mundelein College at her invitation.

Anne Patrick, SNJM, Laird Professor of Religion and Liberal Arts Emerita at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. A student of Anne's, she is a well-known feminist theologian. She and Anne also spent time together recuperating from their respective illnesses.

Richard Rosengarten, Dean and Associate Professor of Religion and Literature at The University of Chicago Divinity School. Richard is also a former student of Anne's.

Susan Ross, professor of theology at Loyola University Chicago. Susan was also a former student of Anne's.

Jean Dolores Schmidt, BVM, served as Assistant to the President of Mundelein College, Sr. Ann Ida Gannon, BVM, and later to Fr. Michael Garanzini of Loyola University.

Mary Alma Sullivan, BVM, professor at Mundelein College. Sr. Mary Sullivan taught in the Communications Department. She served on the faculty at Mundelein with Anne.

David Tracy, Andrew Thomas Greeley and Grace McNichols Greeley Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Catholic Studies and Professor of Theology and the Philosophy of Religions at The University of Chicago Divinity School. He served as Anne's doctoral advisor.

Pat Zeiler, younger sister of Anne Carr.

Acknowledgments

I would also like to mention several people who helped and encouraged me as well as expressed a keen interest in the preparation of this monograph. My wife, Jacqueline Powers Doud, gave me great encouragement and supplied important contacts in the process of composition. Marie Flynn Brude, a fellow novice and sacristan with Anne, is someone to whom I am grateful. Margie Fieweger McEnery is another former BVM with whom I shared conversation about Anne. Kathleen O'Brien Wicker, an actual roommate of Anne's in the Pratt apartments, read the monograph and supplied comments. I'd also like to thank Janet Sisler and the staff at the Gannon Center for Women and Leadership at Loyola University for their sponsorship and support. Finally, I mention Betty Pre-vender, now deceased, who was a longtime friend and editorial adviser to Anne.

— *Robert E. Doud*

Endnotes

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22. Carr, *Transforming Grace*, 220.
23. Marmion, *A Spirituality of Everyday Faith*, 346-57.
24. *Ibid.*, 350.
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33. Carr, *Transforming Grace*, 143-57.
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert E. Doud graduated from Claremont Graduate University in 1977 with a Ph.D. in Religion. The subject of his doctoral dissertation was Karl Rahner's *Christology: A Whiteheadian Critique*. He is now professor emeritus of philosophy and religious studies at Pasadena City College, Pasadena, California.

His usual project in writing is to bring together philosophy and poetry, using poetry as material offering insight to philosophy, and using philosophy as a tool in the interpretation of poetry. The philosophers he makes use of in this project are usually Whitehead and Heidegger.

His articles have appeared in *Process Studies*, *Review for Religious*, *The Journal of Religion*, *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *Philosophy Today*, *The Thomist*, *Thought*, *Religion & Literature*, *Horizons*, *Soundings*, *The Way*, and *Existentialia*.