
Diversity Profiles "Mine, Yours, and Ours"

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*
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Among my favorites is comedienne Bette Midler's quip: "Enough about me! Now what do *you* think about me?" Similarly St. Paul seems ego-driven when he boasts: "If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, Hebrew born of Hebrews ... under the law, blameless." So far this reads like TMI "too much information" we say nowadays.

But then the apostle claims it's all for the sake of this holy identification:

Yet whatever gains I had, these I ... regard as loss ... because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus ... and [being] found in him, not having a righteousness of my own ... but one that comes through faith in Christ. (Philippians 3:4-9)

Elsewhere he clarifies: "To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews ... To those outside the law [Gentiles] I became as one outside the law ... I have become all things to all people ... for the sake of the gospel." (1 Corinthians 9:20-23)

So he participates in diversity profiling for the sake of a "Christic profile," so to speak; as if to say: "Enough about you and me" unless we intend to say what we have forfeited or foregone in order to be identified as more universally Christ-like."

On the one hand the apostle prefers "to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2) On the other hand he endeavors "using his own background and also that of his ever more inclusive constituency" to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27)

For my part, I'm proud of the riches of my personal diversity. Take my name. As a religion professor introducing myself to Emory college students every semester I playfully explain how it got progressively shortened to "Thee" from "Theophus," and further from St. Luke's "Dear Theo-philus" = friend or lover of God (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Shamelessly I apply to myself the pun theo-logian to make sure they get the word associations. Finally I conclude with a bit of mystical megalomania, suggesting I was predestined for my career by my parents naming me thus (... hmm).

But "enough about me!" How about *us*? How about our diversity profile here at the Cathedral of St. Philip! In that connection you may be inspired by my university's new "Diversity Profile." (Search www.Emory.edu)

It's evident for example that our Cathedral dean espouses and has fostered a rich culture of diversity among us. Thus our parish enjoys the ministries of women canons, African-American priests, and a spectrum including ages and other backgrounds and lifestyles among all staff. But beyond our leadership profile there are engaging variations among our parishioners that also deserve celebration and respectful exploration!

To what end?" self-congratulations or alternately castigations? Neither! Rather that among us, and with respect to varied categories of ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, religious heritage, disability, countries of origin, etc., we may "make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Let's augment that glory by ever more intentionally expanding the diversity profile of our parish life, thus becoming all the more universally Christ-like!

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