to occur. They do this through *story* and *memory*, not through conceptual critique. The critique is that much stronger on that account. We might ask to what extent and by what means the institution stands in need of specific human subjectivities currently sidelined: especially the multireligious, multicultural, or multiracial, in whose personal subjectivity genuinely new possibility presents itself not only to individuals but through them to the communion of the church. Can the church learn from its own members who are, in Tiemeier's crucial observation, "between" and in some sense beyond conventional identities?

These questions for comparative theologians and magisterium alike welcome the possibility of genuine learning from the concrete relationships and dialogues reported in this volume. If John Osterreicher was correct in his radio preaching into Nazi Germany that the Holy One creates all persons with an inestimable dignity simultaneously unique and equal, then this normative framework makes demands upon all, to which all can be responsible in the particularity of their own lived experiences. The friendships reported in this volume give reason to hope for a future in which such transformational human encounter is more ubiquitous than exceptional.

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EDITOR'S RESPONSE

Jim Fredericks and I talked about editing a book like this for a number of years. It wasn't until we had upcoming concurrent sabbaticals and the fiftieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* was fast approaching that we decided to commit to the project. For Jim, this was also a chance to reflect on a lifetime of work and to see one of his most important theological contributions concretized through contributors' stories of their interreligious friendships. For me, this project was important additionally as a chance to work with a mentor who himself had become a friend.

I first met James L. Fredericks ten years ago. Of course, I knew of him earlier: of his association with Francis X. Clooney, SJ, and of their development of a Catholic comparative theology that they first discussed while they were both at the University of Chicago. I knew of his work in Buddhist-Catholic dialogue. I knew of his famous call for a moratorium on the theology of religions. I knew of his contention that comparative theology was more than an intellectual exercise or a constructive theology, but rather that comparative theology could lead to a deeper engagement and to a transformative solidarity among others. And I knew of his ministry—nay, celebrity—among

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local Japanese American Catholics in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles. (Indeed, one of my aunties was, and still is, among his reverent followers!)

And then I met him. My preconceived notions weren't so much changed as they were crystallized. Those of you who know Jim know that he is quite a talker. A great storyteller who will not let anyone just stop in for a quick question or a perfunctory greeting, Jim knows everyone, has a story for every occasion, and is ever welcoming of students and colleagues in his office and home. Indeed, if it is the flashier aspects of Jim's work that get the most play in academic circles (are we *still* talking about that moratorium on the theology of religions?!), it is his friendship and his own work on interreligious friendship that have been the most influential for me in the development of my own work.

I was privileged to begin my comparative theological career with Frank Clooney, and I am equally privileged to have journeyed with Jim as he prepares for (a productive, fulfilling, and well-deserved) retirement. I learned much from Frank about comparison and deep encounter across traditions. What I learned from Jim is the priority of dialogue and friendship. If this volume honors real interreligious friendships in the concrete, editing this volume also honors Jim, his legacy, and my own friendship with him.

Reid Locklin is right to note that while the book emphasizes the interreligious friendships that emerged in the wake of *Nostra Aetate* (1965), Jim's introduction focuses on the extent to which *Nostra Aetate* itself depended on and is a product of interreligious friendships. In this regard, *Nostra Aetate* is but a moment in the long history of interreligious relationships. But it is an important moment. If we think of Vatican II (1962–65) as opening the church to the world, we can also think of it as opening the church to the concrete particulars of that world and to the concrete people of that world. It was shaped itself by personal relationships, and it even more encouraged such relationships for the church and for the world. As Locklin articulates beautifully, the Latin title *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Times) is an apt way of thinking through the volume. Interreligious friendship as a phenomenon crosses time and context, but we can now see it as well as a defining and deeply transformative characteristic of our age. I could not agree more.

Locklin notes the possible traps of overtheorization and classification without consequence (*Red Fish, Blue Fish* style, as he says). Theoretical issues definitely took a back seat to foregrounding actual friendships in our volume. Indeed, Jim and I made an explicit decision to delay any theorizing. Of course, Jim is famous for his insistence that theory can only follow practice —and only much later. But beyond our intellectual commitments, we were very concerned to celebrate our interreligious friendships as valuable in and of themselves, without instrumentalizing or systematizing them. So

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committed to their friends were our contributors that one of them belatedly withdrew in order to protect the confidences of friendship. As Meg Funk reminds us in her conclusion, friendships are always more than what we can say about them. Some things cannot—should not—be shared. Friendship requires silence. I dare say that the same can be said of theory. As to the trap of endless categorization, we certainly never attempted to pin down the definition of a friend or of the different kinds of friendships. I don't think we could have done this even if we had wanted. As Locklin importantly highlighted in his own essay for the volume, even the language of mutuality can falter. We also never examined issues like what may be "gained" or "lost" by interreligious friendships. These and many other important questions absolutely were deferred in favor of stories of encounter.

Even so, John Dadosky and John Sheveland raise important theoretical questions in light of the volume. What are the limits of *Nostra Aetate*? What are the theoretical implications of interreligious friendships? What are the methodological implications of a theology through and after interreligious friendships? These and other concerns they voice are entirely fair. I will focus here on a few issues they noted.

Dadosky wonders what the goal of comparative theology is, and what the relationship is between comparative theology and systematic/constructive theology. Even as he is amenable to comparative theology, he asks what precisely we are doing when we do comparative theology, and why. These penetrating questions hit me at my core. I have asked myself these questions many times and have yet to come up with good answers. To be honest, I am not sure that we know what we are doing. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that we do not agree. There are strong confessional and ecclesial dimensions in much of Catholic comparative theology that are not entirely shared across the spectrum of comparative and interreligious theologies. Self-identified comparative theology isn't always confessional or constructive, and it isn't always comparative, at least in a technical sense. Thus there are numerous comparative theologies with various goals, methods, and orientations to broader theological and religious studies.

If I reflect on what Jim and I were thinking when we conceived and articulated the project (while recognizing that our contributors would not necessarily agree with us), the volume is an example, I suppose, of a narrative and relational comparative theology. In light of Bernard Lonergan's functional specialties (and since Dadosky invokes his Lonerganian context), I am inclined initially to key in on Research and Interpretation, where the transcendental emphases are on attentiveness and intelligence. But I wonder if Jim and I are doing something different in our own volume. I will never forget my dear professor Frederick Lawrence, who taught me about the priority of

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Love in conversion to the Word. In prioritizing love and friendship, I wonder if what Jim and I are doing is moving directly from our love to Communications (where again the emphasis is on attentiveness) and then suggesting a way backward through the rest of the specialties (Systematics, Doctrines, Foundations, Dialectic, History, Interpretation, Research). That is, it is possible that the emphasis on love, friendship, and story in such a comparative theology may suggest another complementary dynamic in Christian theology.

Additionally, it seems to me that one of the implications of such a narrative and relational comparative theology is that we are not in control of the story. This is not a monologue. And if what we are doing is not monological but truly dialogical, the partner creates as much of the story as we do. This gets to my general distaste for language of hospitality when Christians speak of religious diversity. Talk of hosting others does not really change the terms of the conversation; there is still a "home turf," a position of power from which Christians "graciously" make space for others. A relational comparative theology turns the tables to ask whether we are willing to be hosted. Getting back to a Lonerganian framework, how has love for our friend transformed our entire person and our very categories of analysis? How have we been changed through love? Are we ready to be vulnerable? Can we allow someone else to make space for us? I am struck that Locklin, Dadosky, and Sheveland all highlight essays that discuss the extent to which the language of friendship says less about how we host others than about how others host us, and about how our vulnerability to others is utterly transformative. A narrative and relational comparative/interreligious theology, then, is not about how we understand others but rather about how we are changed, and truly so, by others. We are not always the host; indeed, we cannot be nor ought we be. Reflecting on interreligious friendship and its implications therefore is helpful, as it pushes us to reframe our entire interreligious and comparative theology in light of our transformative love of concrete persons.

Second, throughout the volume Sheveland notices ambivalence, even brokenness, in religious identity. In this regard, the volume's particularity contrasts with the (perhaps overly) optimistic and abstract language in *Nostra Aetate*. For Sheveland, comparative and interreligious theologies that stress personal encounter in dialogue are, like political theology, better equipped to meet concrete histories, communities, and persons in all their complex and unique realities. This seems right to me. Whereas *Nostra Aetate* provides an initial framework for Catholics to begin to dialogue with their neighbors, it also sets up its own demise. For in the very invitation to collaborate and dialogue with others, *Nostra Aetate* invites us all precisely to move beyond generalities and metanarratives. (Incidentally, this paradox is

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also why my first-year students attending one of Loyola Marymount University's *Nostra Aetate* events last year were profoundly underwhelmed by the document. Without appreciating the place of *Nostra Aetate* in history, my students found the document to be an antiquated, overly general relic that held no relevance to their experiences of living alongside diverse religious peoples. Simply by growing up in Los Angeles and having religiously diverse friends, many of my students felt they knew more about world religions, and were more deeply engaged, than *Nostra Aetate* itself. Whether or not that was true, it was an interesting reaction for me to see.)

In addition to Sheveland's astute observations on religious identity, particularity of dialogical encounter, and *Nostra Aetate*, I see another interesting religious identity issue emerging from a narrative and relational comparative theology. Comparative and interreligious theologies sometimes expect people and religions to fit into easily identifiable categories for comparison and dialogue. And when trying to protect traditions from co-optation, we sometimes create fixed religious borders in overly rigid and problematic ways. (I know I am guilty of this charge, particularly when trying to convince students that not all religions are the same and that religious/cultural appropriation is not a neutral activity.) So theologians have complex and decent reasons for trying to place people and religions into clear frameworks—but, in reality, people frustrate those categories and have very ambivalent views about them. In foregrounding personal stories and relationships, comparative theology in a narrative and relational mode blurs boundaries as much as it makes them clear. This makes our job more difficult, but it is also much more true to the multiplicities and ambiguities of religiosity.

In the end, Jim and I would like to emphasize how fun it was to edit this volume. Our experience of this work was very much like that of a group of old friends sharing stories. It was also a chance for all of us involved in the project to pause for a moment and honor the people who have been so important to us in our life and work.

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