

“Extraordinary tales about an extraordinary woman, each chapter focusing on a different facet of Monika Hellwig’s powerful living of the lay vocation. The effect is that of a stained glass window, with light shining through in myriad colors. Read it and laugh, weep, be inspired. Above all, take courage that such a life has been lived among us.”

— Elizabeth A. Johnson, CSJ  
Distinguished Professor of Theology  
Fordham University

“In these seven essays the shards of a life of a remarkable pioneering woman theologian, teacher, administrator, poet, and mother take form revealing the expansive Christian commitment to which each of us is called. Sophisticated yet humble, learned yet generous and accessible, Monika Hellwig was driven by a bedrock faith to serve God and her fellows. She found her vocation at the intersection of her own unique capabilities and the world’s great needs. She was as Ireneaus allowed: a human fully alive and hence the glory of God.”

— Dana Greene  
Author of *Evelyn Underhill: Artist of the Infinite Life* and *The Living of Maisie Ward*

“William James wrote that saints are ‘clearers of the darkness . . . vivifiers and animaters of potentialities of goodness which but for them would be forever dormant.’ Monika sought to communicate theological truth to the people of God while living out her vocation as mother, teacher, and spiritual guide. She cleared the darkness of our minds and animated the good in many she met. This powerful collection of essays shows the heroic virtues of a remarkable woman, the people’s theologian. Her story is ably told by the cloud of witnesses who contribute their insights to this book.”

— Terrence W. Tilley  
Avery Cardinal Dulles, SJ, Professor  
of Catholic Theology  
Chair, Theology Department  
Fordham University



# **Monika K. Hellwig**

The People's Theologian

*Edited by*

*Dolores R. Leckey and Kathleen Dolphin*



A Michael Glazier Book

**LITURGICAL PRESS**

Collegeville, Minnesota

[www.litpress.org](http://www.litpress.org)

A Michael Glazier Book published by Liturgical Press

Cover design by David Manahan, OSB

© 2010 by Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, Minnesota. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, by print, microfilm, microfiche, mechanical recording, photocopying, translation, or by any other means, known or yet unknown, for any purpose except brief quotations in reviews, without the previous written permission of Liturgical Press, Saint John's Abbey, PO Box 7500, Collegeville, Minnesota 56321-7500. Printed in the United States of America.

1        2        3        4        5        6        7        8        9

---

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Monika K. Hellwig : the people's theologian / edited by Dolores R. Leckey and Kathleen Dolphin.

p. cm.

"A Michael Glazier book."

ISBN 978-0-8146-5696-9 — ISBN 978-0-8146-5730-0 (e-book)

1. Hellwig, Monika. 2. Catholic Church—Doctrines. 3. Christianity—Philosophy. I. Leckey, Dolores R. II. Dolphin, Kathleen.

BX4705.H4625M66 2010

230'.2092—dc22

2009052627

# Contents

Preface	vii
<i>Keith J. Egan</i>	
Acknowledgments	xi
Introduction	xiii
<i>Dolores R. Leckey</i>	
Chapter 1: A Friend for Life	1
<i>Gerard Sloyan</i>	
Chapter 2: Monika as Colleague	9
<i>William C. McFadden, SJ</i>	
Chapter 3: “Affinity to the Uprooted and the Deprived”: Understanding Monika Hellwig’s Motherhood	19
<i>Evelyn Haught</i>	
Chapter 4: Welcomed to Wisdom’s Feast: Memories of Monika as Professor and Mentor	39
<i>Rosemary P. Carbine</i>	
Chapter 5: Monika Hellwig and Christian Life Communities at Georgetown University	55
<i>Lee Nelles Leonhardy</i>	
Chapter 6: The Catholicity of Monika Hellwig	69
<i>John C. Haughey, SJ</i>	

vi *Contents*

Chapter 7: Monika Hellwig, Parishioner 85

*Suzanne Clark*

Books by Monika Hellwig 97

Events in Monika Hellwig's Life 99

Index 101

## Preface

**A** unique bond between Monika and Saint Mary's College began with her formal inauguration of the college's Center for Spirituality in March 1985.

The Center began as an idea that, in the spring of 1983, I suggested to Dr. William Hickey and Dr. John Duggan, vice president/dean of faculty and president, respectively, of the college. At the time I was a faculty member at Marquette University. In interviews with these two officers of the college, it became clear that they were intent on regaining and highlighting the Catholic character of the college. The questions they posed to me: what can Saint Mary's, as a Catholic college for women, do to counteract the secularization of Catholic higher education, and, on the positive side, how can the college with its strong academic standards be an effective leader in Catholic higher education for women?

I suggested that Saint Mary's might well build on its unique heritage as a women's college under the sponsorship of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Sr. Madeleva Wolff, CSC, president of the college from 1934 until 1961, instituted at Saint Mary's the pioneering Graduate School of Sacred Theology (1943–1970). This program granted doctoral and master's degrees in theology. This venture was then the only place where Catholic women could study graduate theology.

In the early 1980s, the women's movement in North America was gaining momentum. The Sisters of the Holy Cross who sponsor the college had in the era following Vatican II initiated summer programs for the spiritual enrichment of women religious. The convergence of the contemporary women's movement and the intense interest in spirituality made a women's college like Saint Mary's a likely and promising

place for a Center for Spirituality, with a focus on the formation of women as leaders in the church and in society. President John Duggan and Vice President William Hickey instructed me to draw up plans for a Center for Spirituality, which I presented to the board of regents, now the board of trustees, in March of 1984. The board of regents immediately and enthusiastically endorsed it and within a week the administration of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross made a significant financial contribution to it.

In the proposal was the establishment of an annual lecture on a theme concerning “Christian Spirituality, especially as this theme relates to women of the Church.” Each lecturer was to prepare a text that would be available in published form the night of the lecture. Fr. Kevin A. Lynch, CSP, president and editorial director of Paulist Press from 1968 to 1998, agreed to publish annually what came to be known as the Madeleva Lecture series—published lectures that have had phenomenal success. These lectures are a major contribution to the spirituality of Christian women; they are composed and delivered by a “who’s who” of prominent post-Vatican II Christian women.

It was now time to inaugurate formally the newly established Center for Spirituality and the Madeleva Lecture series. Not just any woman would do. With conviction in our choice, we turned to Monika Konrad Hellwig. Monika had been teaching theology at Georgetown University in Washington DC since 1967 and held the rank of full professor from 1977. She had been honored with the John Courtney Murray Award by the Catholic Theological Society of America in 1984. Monika had become a prolific author of incisive books and articles that featured a rare gift: she plumbed the depths of Catholic doctrine and yet presented her ideas in clear and compelling language.

Monika Hellwig delivered the first Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality on a stormy spring evening, March 23, 1985, to a very large crowd in the college’s spacious O’Laughlin Auditorium. After the lecture Monika graciously autographed copies of the lecture, published by Paulist Press and entitled *Christian Women in a Troubled World*. This following notation appeared facing the title page: “This 1985 Madeleva Lecture celebrates the opening of the Center for Spirituality of Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, Indiana, and honors the memory of the woman who inaugurated the college’s pioneering program in theology, Sister Madeleva, C.S.C.” Monika’s lecture was received with great enthusiasm. On

the following day, Sr. Franzita Kane, CSC, a long-time distinguished professor of English at the college, wrote to say: “Congratulations on your choice of the speaker to open the Center for Spirituality. No words are adequate to praise Monika Hellwig’s address, nor the importance of her development of the subject. The quiet and understated dignity of the details, from your poster’s presentation through the closing presentation, were all such as Sr. Madeleva would have approved, yet also in the best sense of the contemporary. Thanks for having the address printed.”

Monika returned to campus for the fifteenth anniversary of the inaugural Madeleva Lecture, when all but one of the Madeleva lecturers to date gathered for a grand reunion called “Convergence 2000.” At that time—on April 29, 2000, the feast of Catherine of Siena, saint and Doctor of the Church—these Madeleva lecturers composed and issued “The Madeleva Manifesto: A Message of Hope and Courage.” The virtues of hope and courage aptly describe the message that Monika Hellwig spoke about and wrote about incessantly with never a lost step in a life that was marked with an uncommon vitality and enduring commitments. No woman has epitomized what it means to be hopeful and to act courageously more than Professor Monika Hellwig. Saint Mary’s College will forever recall with gratitude that this gifted and courageous woman graced the first public event of the college’s Center for Spirituality.

Keith J. Egan



## Acknowledgments

This biography of Monika K. Hellwig is truly a collaborative effort. The Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University and the Center for Spirituality at Saint Mary's College at Notre Dame, Indiana, together conceived the project and brought it to fruition. In addition to the time and talent of Sr. Kathleen Dolphin, PBVM, director of the Spirituality Center, Saint Mary's provided the funding for the book. It also hosted a symposium where the authors presented their particular contributions to the book, *The People's Theologian*. The Woodstock Theological Center was represented in the project by senior fellow Dolores R. Leckey.

In a very real sense the book can be called a *collaborative biography* because each of the seven authors wrote from intimate knowledge of some aspect of Monika Hellwig's life. Their labors were motivated by deep respect for Monika and the desire to share her story far and wide. Woodstock and Saint Mary's are grateful for their early and continuing commitment to this project.

We have been blessed with the editorial and technical expertise of Paula Minaert in all phases of actually bringing the book into being. She is a gift to the publishing world.

Finally, Liturgical Press believed in the book when it was still an idea coming to life. We are grateful for the enthusiastic guidance of Hans Christoffersen, editorial director at Liturgical Press, which has carried us through to this moment. We are delighted that the book bears the Michael Glazier imprint. Michael was an important figure in Monika's life.



# Introduction

**M**onika K. Hellwig: *The People's Theologian* is the story of a woman whose life spanned two continents and two centuries and who was formed by two of the major events of the twentieth century: World War II and the Second Vatican Council.

She was born in the German town of Breslau, the eldest of three girls of mixed ancestry, Jewish and Catholic. As anti-Semitism grew in Germany, Monika's mother sought refuge for her daughters and herself in the Netherlands. (Monika's father had died earlier in an auto accident.)

When war actually broke out, Monika and her sisters (Marianne and Angelika) were sent to Scotland and England for safety and for education. An unexpected gift was the experience of a loving foster family, which proved formative for them. The Hellwig girls were "rescued" from boarding school to live in the care and companionship of Barrett and Winefride Whale, both of whom were professors. Later Monika wrote about these generous people: "If a council of wise and compassionate men and women had searched all over England and Scotland they could not have found a better set of second parents for us than Barrett and Winefride Whale."<sup>1</sup>

Away from homeland and home, Monika learned at an early age that her personal experience was valid knowledge. This became the foundation of her life, and in particular of the integrity of her vocation as a theologian.

1. Monika K. Hellwig, "The Mandalas Do Not Break: A Theological Autobiographical Essay," in *Journeys*, ed. Gregory Baum (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1975), 133.

The Jesuit Bernard Lonergan was one of the first theologians to recognize that God's revelation is embedded in the personal narrative. The concrete stories of women and men carry within them the traces of the divine. As we come to know flesh-and-blood people in all their mystery, and all their ordinariness, we come to know more of the Creator and Redeemer and Sustaining Spirit. So it is with Monika Hellwig, whose story is told in these pages by men and women who knew her well in the many roles that constituted her rich life lived in response to the Gospel. As the Carmelite poet Jessica Powers noted, to live in the Spirit of God is to be a listener.<sup>2</sup> Monika listened deeply and well. She first heard the Spirit's call as a vocation to the Medical Mission Sisters. Then, inspired by the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and her own introduction to the world of theology, she encountered a different but fully authentic call, to live the life of a layperson as envisioned by the council. All the evidence points to her free embrace of the vocation rising within her. Everything that followed in her life—her academic work, her career as a teacher and later an administrator, becoming a single parent of adopted children, her insertion into communities that nurtured lay life (her parish and a prayer group modeled on the Jesuit Christian Life Communities)—are all of a piece. She enacted the life of a committed layperson by fully participating in those expressions of the wider church. It was as if the documents of the Second Vatican Council animated her inner life.

When Sr. Kathleen Dolphin, PBVM, director of the Center for Spirituality at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana, and I were wondering how best to tell the story of Monika K. Hellwig, it came to us that many voices were needed. I thought of a story told by the memoirist and poet Patricia Hampl. It's a story about a bus ride—on a Greyhound bus—when Hampl saw a beautiful golden-haired young man bid a passionate good-bye to a rather plain middle-aged woman. The woman, wearing a flowered housedress that zipped up the front, boarded the bus and took her seat next to Hampl, clutching her bags piled high on her lap. After a few moments she turned to Hampl and said that everyone thinks, at first, that the god-like creature throwing kisses to the

2. Jessica Powers, "To Live with the Spirit," in *Selected Poetry of Jessica Powers*, ed. Robert Morneau and Regina Siegfried (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1999).

departing bus must be her son. But no, she continued, he's my husband; we're very happy. Then she added, almost to herself, "Oh, I could tell you stories." And then she fell asleep. The woman didn't say I *will* tell you stories, because, says Hampl, her story, their story, was too big for mere telling.<sup>3</sup>

One could say that about Monika's story. It is too much (as is usual with those who love well and deeply) for any one account. Something more is needed—many voices. And that is what we have rendered in this book, something like a choir of voices of people who knew Monika well in different facets of her life. The members of this assembled choir are, in truth, primary sources: they speak (or sing) of Monika from first-hand experience.

- Fr. Gerard Sloyan writes of meeting Monika when she began theological studies at The Catholic University of America as a Medical Mission Sister. That experience was an opening into what would later become a whole new life for Monika.
- Fr. William McFadden, SJ, who was head of the Georgetown University theology department in the late 1960s, hired her as the first woman to teach theology at Georgetown in what might be referred to as an act of faith. In a sense they were both pioneers.
- Undertaking this new and exacting job somehow led her into another aspect of her deepening lay vocation: motherhood. This important chapter by Evelyn Haught, who over the years was a close friend of Monika's, answers the question of why she undertook the major responsibility of motherhood.
- Monika was, by every account, a "master teacher" and one of her former students, Rosemary Carbine, now a theologian herself, writes about her effect on so many of her students and how unself-consciously she mentored them.
- Monika's role in bringing the Christian Life Community's method of prayer and faith-sharing to the Georgetown University campus is recounted by a member of that group, Lee Leonhardy, who also

3. Patricia Hampl, *I Could Tell You Stories: Sojourns in the Land of Memory* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000).

describes Monika's humble search for deeper commitment to the spiritual life.

- Chapter 6 describes what the author, John Haughey, SJ, refers to as Monika's *catholicity*. He sees her as a steward of the mysteries of God, one who is a leader of the People of God. She is a leader not by appointment or office or election but simply through the authenticity of her being. Honoring her theological achievements and intellectual competency, Fr. Haughey goes beyond these qualities to the gift of insight, which she shared generously with those around her.
- The final chapter, by Suzanne Clark, sketches Monika's life as a parishioner, in particular as a parishioner in the last parish to which she belonged, St. Rose of Lima in Gaithersburg, Maryland. Monika, like legions of laity, found the parish to be an anchor in what was sometimes a chaotic life. There she could offer simple service (like tending the garden) and receive the ministrations of the pastor and the pastoral team. In some ways the parish brought together the strands of her life.

One piece of Monika Hellwig's story is *not* included, namely the years when she served as executive director of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (1996–2005). It was a time of tension in the U.S. church as college presidents and bishops grappled with the implications of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, especially in regard to academic freedom. At a later time, Saint Mary's College and the Woodstock Theological Center hope to facilitate a dialogue about her role as administrator and ambassador of Catholic higher education. This volume, however, highlights Monika as a premier lay theologian and as a model for commitment to the lay vocation.

The seven authors did not consult one another about their individual contributions. Yet we see some recurrent themes in the chapters: wisdom, pastoral sensitivity, her innate sense of nourishing, her intellectual rigor, her wholeness—a harmony in the choir. We also see in these pages how Monika incorporated her artistic, intuitive self into different parts of her life. She wrote poetry (and some of it you will find here); she wrote spiritual reflections; she spoke a language that could reach not only the realm of reason but also the realm of the heart, what

St. Ignatius of Loyola called *interiority*. That's what she brought to the people beyond the boundaries of the academy. Truly, Monika Hellwig was *The People's Theologian*.

Dolores R. Leckey, General Editor  
Senior Fellow, Woodstock Theological Center

*The communes that are religious communities sometimes work supremely well, and in the most tangible way provide eschatological witness. They demonstrate that neither possessions nor expertise, nor yet family connections, need be the basis for personal dignity or identity or relationship with others. Community is constituted by the simple will to accept others and to subordinate personal goals to the common goals. Because of my experiences of religious community life, the vision of the reign of God among men seems to be quite realistic and functional.*

— from “The Mandalas Do Not Break:  
A Theological Autobiographical Essay”  
by Monika K. Hellwig

## Chapter 1

# A Friend for Life

*Gerard Sloyan*

I first met Monika Hellwig in a classroom at The Catholic University of America in the fall of 1954. She was then Sister Mary Cuthbert of the Society of Medical Mission Sisters and fresh off the boat from Liverpool, having come to Washington DC from a house of formation of her congregation in South Shields in England. Accompanied by another sister, a Dutch woman, she had been sent to the States to earn a master's degree in religious studies. The academic department of religious education in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at CUA was the setting of a graduate course in the gospels in which she was enrolled. The students were five or six in number. Sister Cuthbert was alone among them in bringing to the first class her Greek New Testament. I later learned that she had earned a degree in law after secondary school, a European possibility that meant that she was twenty-one or so when she entered her religious community.

That community had been founded not far from the university in the Brookland area of Washington by Anna Dengel, an enterprising Austrian physician who had learned that Indian women in what was later the Republic of Pakistan could not be treated by male doctors. She decided to do something about it. Sister Mary Cuthbert might have thought that in joining this congregation she had embarked on a medical career, because professional health care was its work. But the initial studies in which she was enrolled as part of her formation as a member of her institute determined that her career was to be a theological one.

That year was my fifth on the university faculty, which I had joined at age thirty. The academic religious education department offered the undergraduate courses in the study of religion; all students (except

those in engineering, architecture, and nursing) were required to take eight semesters in this study. The department also had had MA- and PhD-granting power going back to the mid-1930s. There were no offerings in religious pedagogy, as the department's name might suggest, only biblical and formal theological studies. Nonclerics of both sexes were ineligible for pontifical (that is to say, Roman See-approved) degrees in the adjacent School of Sacred Theology. That might lead one to think that many sisters, brothers, and priests preparing to be college teachers of religion (a few were beginning to call it theology) were crowding the graduate school to prepare to teach in the colleges their diocese or congregation conducted. But this was not so.

Theology in Catholic colleges was being taught largely by regular and secular priests on the basis of their seminary education, while a few sisters and brothers with doctorates in philosophy or history were acting as instructors in religion. The significance of this situation for Sister Cuthbert was that the other candidates for the MA in the program were all engaged in high-school teaching. But not this lively, intellectual Englishwoman. She was being groomed for the small faculty of her congregation's school in the Fox Chase section of Philadelphia, which was teaching candidates at the college level through its relation to The Catholic University of America.

Sister Mary Cuthbert Hellwig completed the course work and wrote a thesis for the master's degree within a year and a summer and left Washington, to return for graduation the following June. It was not long before she was sent to the University of Notre Dame, over the course of five summers, for another master's degree, this time in the study of the liturgy. After that came some nondegree summer courses in linguistics at the University of Oklahoma, probably to give her a foundation in Urdu to be shared with the sisters she was teaching—because throughout all this time, Monika was on the faculty at Fox Chase. She was fast becoming a polymath. In the early years of her teaching she returned to Washington for a semester to sit in on one of my undergraduate courses for both its content and mode of presentation. I was humbled by her presence, for she was already a star. Seated in that assembly of youth, I recall, was a Jersey Cityite who had interrupted his college years to do his army service: Philip Bosco, later to be much employed on stage and screen. Seated next to him was a flaming redhead named Nancy Dunkle. Her later employment in life was to be mother of their seven children.

When the time came for Sister Hellwig (this term is much later Catholic vocabulary) to profess her final vows, she asked me to be the homilist at the public rite. I was pleased to be part of that happy day. Later, during or immediately after the four sessions of the Second Vatican Council, Monika in her position as dean of her small faculty—actually, director of studies—invited me to be one of several speakers to address the sisters who were at Fox Chase for their summer community days. She proposed for a topic any aspect of the sixteen documents promulgated by the 2,500-plus council fathers. My remarks were followed attentively by these intelligent women, especially the one on *Perfectae Caritatis* (28 October 1965), which was devoted to the renewal of the vowed life of men and women living in community. In the floor exchange that followed, the question of the religious habit was raised. I do not recall having spoken of it. Their congregation, the Medical Mission Sisters, wore a quite simple slate-gray dress belted in the same cloth with a blue, tending toward violet, veil over a starched linen cap pointed in front. I ventured the opinion that perhaps it was not wise to continue in this religious habit, not because it was obviously Christian in a Muslim sea but because it was Western. The memories of colonialism and the British raj were still very strong in the East. Better the sari and cloth pants beneath, I said, or whatever the dress of the local women. At that point the American superior of the congregation rose to chide me for presuming to make such a suggestion. She reminded me in vigorous terms “how much we love our habit,” and any such proposed adaptation was ill-originated if it came from the council (it hadn’t). As I was leaving, this good woman thanked me at the door for my service that day and Monika caught me as I walked to my car. She apologized gently for the vigor of the superior’s response to my suggestion. I came away thinking that some of the decisions of the assembled bishops at the council, although not in that matter, were perhaps not so popular at Fox Chase 19111, headquarters of the Medical Mission Sisters.

Not long after that, Sister Mary Cuthbert was assigned to the staff of the general house in Rome with no time-consuming duties. She immediately joined a network of Americans there, among them some diocesan priests doing graduate studies, at Jesuit Fr. Riccardo Lombardi’s Movement for a Better World center in Rocca di Papa, across Lake Albano from Castel Gandolfo. The movement engaged laypeople, religious sisters and brothers, secular and regular priests, and bishops, who try to serve the renewal/transformation of the whole Western church.

When I learned by correspondence of her relative liberty, I already was well aware of her gifts as an academic. So I asked the rector of The Catholic University of America to write a letter of invitation to Monika's major superior, asking that she be released for PhD studies with a view to serving on the CUA faculty. That was the way things worked in those days. If a school or department was interested in having a priest, sister, or brother leave one academic position for another in Washington, a letter would be sent to the person's bishop or religious superior. Normally the individual would not be sounded out for willingness. This was to avoid disappointment if the answer were no but, even more, to avoid the appearance of the individual scheming to leave the local scene if a college president did not want to see a gifted teacher depart. This arrangement seems fairly bizarre but that was the way it worked fifty years ago. In this case, it resulted in a negative response, rather sharply written. The large university preying on a very small congregation indeed!

But by that time Monika knew that the game was afoot. Some weeks later she wrote me a letter that was a complete surprise, saying that she was resigning from her sisterhood and asking if the offer were still open. It was, and she came. In a close-packed year of course and credit pursuit, the now Miss Hellwig added to the academic capital of her earlier MA studies and began to search out a dissertation topic. I missed at first-hand what followed because after twenty-one years of study and teaching at the university, interrupted by three years as a parish assistant in my diocese, I accepted with my bishop's permission a position at the Commonwealth-related Temple University in Philadelphia, named for its founder's church, the Baptist Temple.

In my first weeks there I learned from Monika of two important developments in her life. She had been accepted for dissertation direction by Professor Roger Balducelli, an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales, and she had applied for and been awarded a full-time appointment at Georgetown University. Her gender was a help in that, because the undergraduate college of the university, an all-Jesuit enterprise, had not long been coeducational in student body and instruction. Monika and a Protestant layman and shortly a rabbi chaplain-teacher in that department broke new ground.

I had come to know her in my last full-time year at The Catholic University of America in a graduate seminar populated by some highly gifted candidates for the PhD. The seminar took the form of an exposi-

tion of the masterwork of a variety of influential religious thinkers: Strauss, Feuerbach, James, and the like. One of Monika's two subjects that year was August Comte's *Système de politique positive*, which she dissected in elegant oral prose. I got to know well that year her giftedness, but above all her talent for friendship. My decision to bring her aboard as a CUA instructor was fully validated. When she wrote me in early fall of her move to Georgetown, she made clear that it was not a betrayal of trust but done out of economic necessity. She had to have a source of income after that first year's scholarship benefits ran out and her enrollment continued. It could have been extended a second year on its meager terms but two birds in the bush were better than a meager bird in hand. She had made the best of the present *kairós*, as Ephesians recommends.

I visited frequently with Monika during her early years at Georgetown, both in Philadelphia and Washington. Sometimes the visits were in writing—she was an excellent correspondent—and from them I learned of her hope to marry. She kept me abreast of one warm friendship but then fell silent when it came to nothing. It was probably at that point that she began to explore adoption possibilities, which worked out very well. I was invited to be the minister of baptism of her first child, Erica, in a Georgetown area church and began to receive reports of the joys of early motherhood. She also called on me for the sacramental celebration of her first son but when she adopted his brother (none of the three are birth siblings), I was not out of touch but I was off the East Coast. In all those years, Monika served regularly as a minister of the Mass on Sunday, first at Dahlgren Chapel of Georgetown University and later in the parish church of St. Rose of Lima in Gaithersburg. The clergy in both places were deeply appreciative of her sacramental participation, both for its dependability and her skill in the execution of various roles. Her long-term association with the priests of *La Compañía de Jesús* at her university resulted in a warm affection for them corporately. Once, when we served together on a committee of external evaluators of the theology department of another university conducted by the Jesuits, I tried in the framing of the final report to indicate several weaknesses. Monika would have none of it. The fathers could do no wrong.

Throughout her Georgetown University teaching years, which were close on thirty, this extraordinary woman was busy about two matters related to her classroom teaching but achieved apart from it. One was

the publication of some twenty books. The first was *What Are the Theologians Saying?* in 1970. Monika had asked me to write a foreword to this book, which went into six printings within three years. One of her last books, *Guests of God: Stewards of Divine Creation* (2000), is concerned with the social morality of discipleship, including the demands of ecology, and is deftly illustrated by pen sketches done by her daughter Erica Hellwig Parker. All can be described as adult catecheses—popular theology, if you will—of the highest order. A number of the titles came into being through friendship with the Irish-born publisher whose firm bore his name, Michael Glazier. The editing of two collections under the latter imprint absorbed much of her energies in the 1970s and 1990s. Those collections were *The Message of the Sacraments Series* and *The Theology and Life Series*. Paulist Press also published some of Professor Hellwig's output, three titles in fact: *The Eucharist and the Hunger of the World*, *What Are They Saying About Death and Christian Hope?* and perhaps her most well received of all, *Understanding Catholicism*. The second extra-classroom activity was summer-session teaching in several locations, most often St. Michael's in Winooski, Vermont, an Edmundite Catholic College.

In the midst of all that, and the serious obligations of parenting her three adopted children, she managed to serve as the second woman president of the Catholic Theological Society of America (1986–1987), a position that is not honorary. The duties of the preceding year and the year of the presidency are not light. It may have been Monika's reception of the John Courtney Murray Award of that Society in 1984 that prompted the officers to put her name in nomination not long after. In any case, she won the office by elective vote.

When I came back to Washington after twenty-five years away, I expected to be in more regular touch with Monika and her family than when we were separated by one hundred and a quarter miles. I was present at Erica's wedding but there was not much socializing otherwise. Monika's resignation from the Georgetown faculty came in the spring before my beginning as an adjunct professor there, so regular contact on that campus was not to be. Her executive directorship of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities was fairly time-consuming and involved visits to member institutions in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. I stopped by once at the association's offices on Dupont Circle and found her in the midst of a few executive decisions about painting, carpeting, and plumbing. It was only when I attended a dinner held to honor her

retirement from that highly responsible position that I learned from a number of spoken tributes how effective she had been in office—especially in conveying to the Roman See the difficulties large universities experience in retaining their Catholic character in exactly the ways expected by the curial authors of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (15 August 1990). That evening’s celebration of Monika’s skill in that position was the last time I was in her company. Neither of us, of course, could have imagined it to be such. But so it was when a legion of friends and admirers around the country and around the world learned of her relatively sudden departure from our midst. As Shakespeare said, “This fell sergeant, death, / is strict in his arrest.”

Those who learn of a person’s life and achievements either in print or by hearsay are inclined to say, inwardly, yes, but what was she like? Who was the person behind all this doing and achieving? Monika Hellwig was a loving, caring, frightfully intelligent woman of faith and action. She was matter-of-fact in speech and totally modest in bearing. Her accent had tones of her Liverpool upbringing, not Oxbridge, and the precise and moderately clipped speech of the British was Americanized slightly over the years. Her faith was, of course, trust, absolute trust in God’s providence. It took the form of certainty that whatever needed to be done could be done. Many times she would mention in utter calm the latest challenge in the life of one of her children, something that might seem to an outsider impossible to cope with successfully. Not Monika. She carried on with a blessed assurance. All this is to say that she was a happily incurable optimist. At the same time, or as part of it, she was thoroughly charitable in speech, putting the best face possible on the actions of others. This did not mean, however, that she could not make critical judgments on such actions when necessary.

Monika was a serious person, not a jokester or loud laughter, which does not mean she could not see the fun in things. Her disposition was lively and upbeat, not dull or heavy. Above all, she was a faithful and true friend. The best way to sum it up is to say that, gifted by nature and grace, she was utterly faithful to the terms of her baptism in infancy as she came to know them. This made her a good and kind and thoughtful person, as it should any of us. Prayer was her secret. And her model, I suspect, though she never told me this, was Winefride Whale who, with her husband, had raised three little girls from Germany.