

Time Poverty, Women's Labor and Catholic Social Teaching: A Practical Theological Exploration

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Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human.

John Paul II, *Dies Domini*, no. 7

You cannot get lost in the easy wind and downy flake of motherhood and then turn around, focus, and produce work. You have to be cunning, practical, and selfish. You have to steal time. Time is your enemy, your gift, your wanton desire, and you will never have enough of it.

Stephanie Brown, poet and mother of two¹

TIME IS THAT OFTEN UNNOTICED but ever present dimension of daily life. Is time an abundant gift or a scarce commodity? What are the ethical, spiritual, and ecclesial dimensions of how we live with time? As the contrast between the two opening quotes illustrates—with John Paul II's vision of time as a selfless, humanizing gift and Brown's hardnosed experience of time as an elusive object of selfish manipulation and desire—a gap exists between the church's theological vision of time and the day-to-day realities of women's experience with time, particularly at the work-family nexus. Reflection on that gap is a weak link—and a potentially rich area for development—in Catholic social teaching. Illustrating a practical theological method, this essay draws upon social scientific research on time use and feminist leisure studies for a thick description of the issue; it then brings this contemporary situation into dialogue with Catholic teaching on labor, Sabbath/Sunday, and the domestic church, with particular study of John Paul II's apostolic letter

¹ Stephanie Brown, "Not a Perfect Mother," in *The Grand Permission: New Writings on Poetics and Motherhood*, ed. Patricia Dienstfrey and Brenda Hillman (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University, 2003), 31.

Dies Domini ("The Day of the Lord").² While this apostolic letter is not often referenced in discussions of Catholic social teaching, I argue that its teaching on time, Sabbath, and the Lord's Day complements more well-known texts on labor and can contribute a richer theological understanding of the ecclesial, spiritual, and ethical implications of time poverty. At the same time, the letter does not address "time poverty" or gender directly in any detail, and thus risks distancing the theology from women's concrete experience.

While there is sizable social scientific literature on time poverty and the work-family "time squeeze," there has not yet been sufficient attention given to the theological and spiritual dimensions of time poverty in women's lives. One can make a good case that this issue deserves serious attention, particularly in a tradition that understands time as the matrix of God's incarnational life with us, structures time according to the rhythms of the liturgy, elevates contemplative time as a cherished spiritual paradigm, advocates for just work, and celebrates the family as the "domestic church." Informed by social scientific research on time poverty, I will argue that time is a social justice issue with particular, though by no means exclusive, impact on women and families. The issue of time poverty should be addressed in ways that do not further cement the existing gender complementarity imbedded in Catholic social teaching and that do not accept wholesale the commodified assumptions about time imbedded in the social science research. Time poverty also is a spiritual issue with implications for ecclesial life and spiritual practice. The Catholic tradition offers rich theological resources for a spirituality of work, family, and time. So too we can look to women's own practices and autobiographical reflections to discern practical wisdom and an authentic lay spirituality in the midst of time poverty.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AND MORAL THEOLOGY

In exploring the interrelated economic, political, social, ecclesial, and spiritual implications of time poverty, this essay aims to illustrate a practical theological contribution to Roman Catholic studies and to further dialogue between practical theology, moral theology, and spirituality studies. As "practical theology" has much in common with moral theology, and yet is less well known as a scholarly discipline in Catholic circles, some prefatory words will be useful. Practi-

² For related work that focuses more specifically on implications for theologies of the domestic church and practices of spiritual renewal, see Claire E. Wolfteich, "It's About Time: Rethinking Spirituality and the Domestic Church," in *The Household of God and Local Households*, ed. Thomas Knieps-Port le Roi, Gerard Mannion and Peter De Mey, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 254 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 127-44.

cal theology as an academic discipline has roots that are traced back at least to Friedrich Schleiermacher, who argued for the place of practical theology in the German university. As Edward Farley argues, Schleiermacher had strong influence on the shaping of the “theological encyclopedia” and the entrenchment of a “clerical paradigm” (focused on the training of pastors) for practical theology in Protestant contexts up to the present day.³ While practical theology has not attained the same visibility in Catholic theological education, various forms of “practical theology” certainly can be found within Catholicism. Some of this work happens under the name “pastoral theology,” though “practical theology” is increasingly accepted. Catholic scholars now are significant contributors to practical theology in local, national, and international levels of research and professional organization.⁴

Practical theology, shaped by earlier developments in European political and Latin American liberation theologies, underwent something of a resurgence in the 1980s, with a strong turn to a more public, church-world focus. Leading figures such as Don S. Browning, influenced by his University of Chicago colleague David Tracy, turned strongly to issues of ethics and public life in pluralistic societies, broadening the field beyond the so-called “clerical paradigm” or focus on training for church ministries. In fact, this move is already present in the Second Vatican Council’s *Gaudium et spes* (“Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World”), which redefines “pastoral” to signify concern not only with the tasks of ordained clergy but more broadly with the church’s engagement with the world. As Kathleen Cahalan observes: “the Council was pivotal in claiming ‘pastoral’ as an ecclesial discourse pertaining to the church’s relationship to the world, most notably in *Gaudium et spes*.”⁵

Indeed, the church-world question is quite central to the work of pastoral and practical theology. Just as the “pastoral” conciliar document moves toward more open ecclesial engagement with and inquiry into the modern world, so too practical theology as a discipline has moved in recent decades to highly complex, interdisciplinary forms of research on political, cultural, and economic issues seen in relationship to religious traditions and the life of faith communities. As Reformed theologian Richard Osmer writes: “Practical theologians carry out diverse research programs and make their own constructive, scholarly contribution to the theological enterprise as a

³ Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).

⁴ For more information about international research and conversation in practical theology, see the International Academy of Practical Theology (www.ia-pt.org) and the *International Journal of Practical Theology*.

⁵ Kathleen A. Cahalan, “Locating Practical Theology in Catholic Theological Discourse and Practice,” *International Journal of Practical Theology* 15 (2011): 4.

whole.... The scope of this field includes matters of public importance beyond the church, and often is directed toward shaping public policy and social transformation.”⁶ British scholars John Swinton and Harriet Mowat also emphasize the church-world dynamic: “Practical theology is critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, with a view to ensuring and enabling faithful participation in God’s redemptive practices in, to, and for the world.”⁷ Thus, some speak of a “public paradigm” in practical theology,⁸ strongly infused by theological ethics, committed to contextual analysis, attentive to practices, and engaged in church-world issues such as human rights, poverty, HIV-AIDS, and globalization.⁹ With the heightened attention to “the world” or the “public” sphere, practical theologians have drawn heavily on ethics in defining the aims, foci, and methods of practical theology.

Moral theology and practical theology share many common features, particularly given the turn to a “public paradigm” in practical theology, the rise of “practice” as a salient category across theological disciplines, and movements toward more inductive, contextual, and “applied” approaches in moral theology. In their edited volume *Gathered for the Journey: Moral Theology in Catholic Perspective*, David Matzko McCarthy and M. Therese Lysaught, for example, point to the importance of practice in shaping moral reasoning: “Excellence in Christian moral living is a skill that can be acquired only over time, through ongoing practice (and with much grace).”¹⁰ In their understanding, practice is learned through ongoing participation in a community, and they link practice closely to “formation” and bodily knowing: “[T]he practices of the Christian life—praying, attending Mass, confessing, loving one’s enemy, eating with the

⁶ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), ix-x.

⁷ John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006), 6.

⁸ See, for example, Gordon S. Mikoski, “Mainline Protestantism,” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion in Practical Theology*, ed. B.J. Miller-McLemore (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012), 563.

⁹ See, for example, several of the volumes that have resulted from the biennial conferences of the International Academy of Practical Theology, including: Edward Foley, ed., *Religion, Diversity, and Conflict* (Münster: LIT, 2011); Wilhelm Gräb and Lars Charbonnier, ed., *Secularization Theories, Religious Identity, and Practical Theology* (Münster: LIT, 2009); Elaine Graham and Anne Rowlands, ed., *Pathways to the Public Square* (Münster: LIT, 2005); and Pamela D. Couture and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, ed., *Poverty, Suffering and HIV/AIDS* (Cardiff: Cardiff Academic, 2003).

¹⁰ David Matzko McCarthy and M. Therese Lysaught, “Introduction,” in McCarthy and Lysaught, ed., *Gathered for the Journey: Moral Theology in Catholic Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 2.

poor—shape our bodies to act and respond.”¹¹ Julie Hanlon Rubio structures her work on family ethics in terms of practices. Rubio draws upon Alasdair MacIntyre, Stanley Hauerwas, Craig Dykstra, and Dorothy Bass as she defines practice as “an intentional, shared action, situated in the context of a tradition, ordinary in outward appearances but transcendent in its association with fundamental human goods.”¹² Such texts illustrate the common interests and cross-fertilization between moral theology and practical theology; practical theology’s close work with diverse theories of practice could further enhance this turn to practice in moral theology. So too, the strongly contextual focus of practical theology resonates with some recent work in moral theology. In her introduction to *Applied Ethics in a World Church*, Linda Hogan describes the “changing idiom” of moral theology, evident in the “increasingly interdisciplinary character of moral theology, as well as in the manner in which it proceeds from local cultural contexts, inductively, in dialogue with the classic articulations of the tradition.”¹³ While practical theology and moral theology both are broad fields that include a range of methods and disciplinary debates, these fields have increasingly convergent interests in interdisciplinary and inductive methods, contextual theology, attention to practice, and public engagement.

So too discipleship or spirituality can be understood as a deeply related aspect of both moral and practical theology. As I have argued elsewhere, embrace of a public paradigm of practical theology should not mean diminished concern with personal and communal spirituality rooted in ecclesial life.¹⁴ *Gaudium et spes* expresses well these more integrated dimensions of practical theology: “[T]he Church seeks but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ under the lead of the befriending Spirit.... To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.”¹⁵ This statement captures several important aspects of practical theology in my understanding—that is, theology as a hermeneutical project that involves interpretation of both contemporary culture and gospel with a pneumatological, ecclesiological, and missional dimension. I have

¹¹ McCarthy and Lysaught, “Introduction,” 2.

¹² Julie Hanlon Rubio, *Family Ethics: Practices for Christians* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 2010), 99.

¹³ Linda Hogan, ed., *Applied Ethics in a World Church: The Padua Conference* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008), 9.

¹⁴ See, for example, Claire E. Wolfteich, “Spirituality,” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, 328–36, and Claire E. Wolfteich, “Animating Questions: Spirituality and Practical Theology,” *International Journal of Practical Theology* 13 (2009): 121–43.

¹⁵ *Gaudium et spes*, nos. 3–4, www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

argued, building upon Gerben Heitink, for example, for renewed attention to the pneumatological dimensions of practical theology.¹⁶ This would include developing theological theories of action that attend to the role of the Holy Spirit and turning to spiritual practice as an object of study and potential theological source.

Here I would point to resonances between discipleship-based approaches in practical theology and moral theology. Practical theologian Dorothy Bass, for example, focuses on practices as constituting a way of life and describes a "life-giving way of life" or a "way of life abundant" as the "telos of practical theology and Christian ministry."¹⁷ Kathleen Cahalan and James Nieman claim that the basic task of practical theology is "the promotion of faithful discipleship."¹⁸ So too, in his introduction to *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century*, James Keenan describes 20th century developments in moral theology as a move from defining moral theology as a "fixed science of action" to becoming a "guide" for discipleship. He writes: "[T]he nature of moral theology is to respond to the practical challenges of each period in history.... What we find in the twentieth century, then, is the enormously complex move from defining moral theology as the fixed science of human action to becoming a guide for the personal and communal development of the conscientious disciples of Christ."¹⁹

In my understanding, discipleship is a lifelong process of seeking to follow Christ shaped by concrete practices over time, rooted in prayerful intimacy (John 15), bearing fruit in just and loving acts, sustained by a community of believers in the companioning life of the Holy Spirit. In promoting faithful discipleship, moral theology and practical theology are best done in dialogue with spirituality studies and ecclesiology, with attention to issues of formation and transformation. This practical theological examination of time poverty and women's labor, then, puts into critical dialogue social scien-

¹⁶ On these points, see Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 193: "The central problem practical theology must face is the hermeneutical question about the way in which the divine reality and the human reality can be connected at the experiential level. This question focuses attention on the pneumatological basis of the theological theory of action. The fundamental choice to be made in this respect has its impact on the daily praxis in the church." See, too, my "Words and Fire, Deserts and Dwellings: Toward Mystical Practical Theologies," 2013 Presidential Address for the International Academy of Practical Theology (Toronto: April 12, 2013).

¹⁷ Dorothy C. Bass, "Ways of Life Abundant," in *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 27.

¹⁸ Kathleen Cahalan and James Nieman, "Mapping the Field of Practical Theology," in *For Life Abundant*, 66.

¹⁹ James F. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century: From Confessing Sins to Liberating Consciences* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 6-7.

tific research, moral theology and Catholic social teaching, with attention to public-ecclesial-spiritual-ethical practice.

TIME POVERTY, WOMEN, WORK, AND FAMILY

In her discussion of the time-squeeze in American family life, Marin Clarkberg notes “a growing perception of a time famine.... Between 1965 and 1992, for example, the percent of respondents saying that they ‘always feel rushed’ increased almost 50%, so that now more than one in three Americans say that they *always* feel rushed.”²⁰ David Maume describes the “overpaced American.” Noting that the pace of work has increased in recent decades, Maume also suggests that the increased permeability of work-home boundaries and work-family conflict may increase perceptions of work intensification, particularly for women. As he concludes, the pacing of work has significant effects on family well-being.²¹ In her book *No Time: Stress and the Crisis of Modern Work*, Canadian author Heather Menzies links time poverty, overwork, and an increased pace of life in highly technological societies that profoundly shapes identity and relationships.²² The experience of time poverty is widespread, with multiple contributing factors and certainly affecting men, though the focus here will be its particular impact on women and families.

From an economic perspective, time poverty is an economic calculation—the difference between time requirements and time availability.²³ When there is less time available than time needed, there is time poverty. Time is an overlooked economic resource that should be counted, some have argued, in any measure of well-being or poverty. Economist Clair Vickery developed a model for calculating time poverty in 1977 as she argued that time—and not only income—must be factored into poverty indexes. Vickery emphasized the value of home production for the well-being of families and sought to estimate the “additional female-headed families who would be counted as poor because of a deficiency of nonmarket time.”²⁴ Income measures of poverty fail to capture the value of work in the home.

²⁰ Marin Clarkberg, “The Time-Squeeze in American Families: From Causes to Solutions,” in *Balancing Acts: Easing the Burdens and Improving the Options for Working Families*, ed. E. Applebaum (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2000), 25.

²¹ Maume, David J., “The ‘Over-Paced’ American: Recent Trends in the Intensification of Work,” in *Research in the Sociology of Work* Vol. 17: *Workplace Temporalities* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2007), 251–83.

²² Heather Menzies, *No Time: Stress and the Crisis of Modern Life* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2005).

²³ Andrew S. Harvey and Arun K. Mukhopadhyay, “When Twenty-Four Hours is Not Enough: Time Poverty of Working Parents,” *Social Indicators Research* 82, no. 1 (2007): 57–77.

²⁴ Clair Vickery, “The Time Poor: A New Look at Poverty,” *The Journal of Human Resources* 12, no. 1 (1977): 27–48.

Others have built on Vickery's work. Canadian economists Harvey and Mukhopadhyay, for example, continue to argue for a redefined poverty standard that accounts for the time deprivation of working parents, noting that time deficits require additional income to purchase goods and services such as child care, home maintenance, and meal preparation. They conclude that working parents, particularly single parents (who are overwhelmingly female), are "a severely time deprived group."²⁵ Similarly, a report given at a 1993 conference on feminist perspectives on poverty critiqued the American government for failing to account for time's economic value:

Throughout its history, the U.S. government has neglected to explicitly recognize that families have basic personal time needs and that such time has value. Despite much political talk about the importance of family values and especially the need for parents to spend more quality time with their children, we neither attempt to estimate the value of such time in terms of gross domestic product nor account for it when establishing poverty guidelines.²⁶

This report also finds that working parents, especially single parents, are more vulnerable to poverty due to lack of time. Feminist scholars also have argued that time is a form of political capital, and women are disadvantaged by their lack of it. Valerie Bryson writes: "Many feminist writers on citizenship see time as a scarce political resource that women have less of than men, and argue that 'time poverty' continues to act as a constraint on their citizenship.... Such problems are compounded in developing nations, where women's 'time poverty' is bound up with acute economic and educational disadvantage."²⁷

How does women's market work impact time availability? How is work and leisure shared among dual earner parents? In her influential 1989 book *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home*, sociologist Arlie Hochschild argued provocatively that within dual-earner households, women clock an additional month of work in unpaid domestic tasks (the "second shift") as compared to their partners.²⁸ Some researchers have disputed Hochschild's claim as exaggerated and based on dated data. One study found that when unpaid and paid work hours are combined, there is much less of a differential between men and women than Hochschild suggested, for

²⁵ Harvey and Mukhopadhyay, "When Twenty-Four Hours Is Not Enough," 57-77.

²⁶ Robin A. Douthitt, "Time to do the Chores?: Factoring Home Production Needs into Measures of Poverty," presented at the conference, "Poverty: Feminist Perspectives" (University of British Columbia, School of Social Work: November 18-20, 1993), 2.

²⁷ Valerie Bryson, "Time-Use Studies: A Potentially Feminist Tool," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 10, no. 2 (June 2008): 135-6.

²⁸ Arlie Hochschild, *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1989).

while women do more unpaid work, men on average do more paid work hours.²⁹ Of course, women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid labor impacts their ability to maintain paid work, attain pay equity, and seek professional advancement.

While the exact extent of the differential is a complicated question, the overall picture of a disproportionate time bind affecting employed mothers seems clear. In a study of 29 countries, Jonas Edlund notes: "It can be observed that the work-family time squeeze is in most countries a problem more pertinent to women than to men." Women in the United States had the most unequal work-family load as compared to any other country studied.³⁰ Australian time use data showed as of 2006 that motherhood "markedly intensifies gender inequities in time allocation by increasing specialization and women's workload." This study argues that any calculation of women's time use must attend to multi-tasking—e.g., women typically do more than one thing at a time, and women's time given to childcare alongside another "primary" activity such as shopping or recreation may be overlooked in time use research. And while men are doing more child care than in the past, they are not as often solely responsible for the children; women may be present as well. Hence, men's increased child care work does not necessarily free up mothers for leisure activities.³¹ Indeed, a study that tested Hochschild's claims about the "second shift" found that employed mothers of preschoolers in the United States had nearly seven fewer hours of leisure per week compared to their employed partners: "In households with both parents employed fulltime, mothers enjoy less adult-only free time, less active leisure and watch less TV than fathers.... Full-time

²⁹ A team of researchers tested Hochschild's claim in their own study of American mothers of preschoolers, for example, finding that women employed full-time in dual-earner couples worked an extra week-and-a half per year, rather than a full extra month. See Melissa A. Milkie, Sara B. Raley, and Suzanne M. Bianchi, "Taking on the Second Shift: Time Allocations and Time Pressures of U.S. Parents with Preschoolers," *Social Forces* 88, no. 2 (2009): 487-518. See too Lyn Craig, "Is There Really a Second Shift, and If So, Who Does It? A Time of Diary Investigation," *Feminist Review* 86 (2007): 149-70. See also Suzanne M. Bianchi, John P. Robinson, and Melissa A. Milkie, *Changing Rhythms of American Family Life* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006).

³⁰ Jonas Edlund, "The Work-Family Time Squeeze: Conflicting Demands of Paid and Unpaid Work Among Working Couples in 29 Countries," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 48, no.6 (2007): 451-80.

³¹ Lyn Craig, "Children and the Revolution: A Time-Diary Analysis of the Impact of Motherhood on Daily Workload," *Journal of Sociology* 42, no. 2 (2006): 125-43. On this point about father's involvement in child care, for a study in the American context see too M. J. Mattingly and S.M. Bianchi, "Gender Differences in the Quantity and Quality of Free Time: The U.S. Experience," *Social Forces* 81 (2003): 999-1031.

employed mothers also experience a large deficit in community and socializing activities."³²

Working class families face particular issues, such as the impact of shift work on family life, the difficulty in synchronizing work schedules for shared leisure, less control over working hours, and fewer resources to pay for child care, elder care, and household maintenance.³³ Low-income families face distinct issues in managing time—for example, in organizing child care (often dependent on family members' schedules), medical visits, social service appointments, erratic employment, and urban transportation schedules.³⁴

FEMINIST LEISURE STUDIES

Feminist leisure studies add to this picture a critical analysis of time use research methods and a more textured picture of women's subjective experiences of time. First, scholars argue that traditional methods used to record time use (e.g., time diary) fail to accurately capture women's multitasking and subjective experience of time. For example, women who are watching television may be recorded as enjoying leisure time, when in fact they simultaneously are supervising children and folding laundry; their labor and caretaking responsibilities go unrecorded. Rosemary Deem describes "the greater time fragmentation and time scarcity apparently experienced by some women in their experiences of leisure and their attempts to capture time and space free from work and household obligations. These attempts are often frustrated by the existence of responsibilities which do not disappear even when they are apparently engaged in leisure."³⁵ Indeed, women on vacation with their families report levels of labor and fatigue not typically noted in time use research. One study of women's experiences of vacations, for example, noted that some mothers came back "as tired and stressed as they had been before departure." Holidays entail sometimes more intensive time with

³² Milkie, Raley, and Bianchi, "Taking on the Second Shift: Time Allocations and Time Pressures of U.S. Parents with Preschoolers," *Social Forces* 88, no. 2 (2009): 502-3. See too Kei M. Nomaguchi, Melissa A. Milkie, and Suzanne M. Bianchi, "Time Strains and Psychological Well-Being: Do Dual-Earner Mothers and Fathers Differ?" *Journal of Family Issues* 26, no. 6 (2005): 756-92.

³³ Tracey Warren, "Class-and Gender-Based Working Time? Time Poverty and the Division of Domestic Labor," *Sociology* 37, no. 4 (2003): 733-52.

³⁴ K. M. Roy, "Don't Have No Time: Daily Rhythms and the Organization of Time for the Low-Income Families," *Family Relations* 53, no. 2 (Mar 2004): 168-78. See too S. Jody Heymann, "Low-Income Parents and the Time Famine," in Hewlett, Rankin, and West, eds., *Taking Parenting Public: The Case for a New Social Movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 103-16, and Peggy Kahn, "The Work-Family Time Binds of Low-Income Mothers: Nurse Aids Struggle to Care," *Journal of Women, Politics, and Policy* 27, nos. 3-4 (2005): 97-111.

³⁵ Rosemary Deem, "No Time for Rest? An Exploration of Women's Work, Engendered Leisure and Holidays," in *Time & Society* Vol. 5 (1996): 6.

children and partners, a hectic pace, and some degree of labor for preparing and facilitating the family's enjoyment. "The existence of time hierarchies often meant prioritizing the needs of some family members over others; this process rarely seemed to give high priority to mothers."³⁶ Women's roles in creating leisure time for others often means that women's labor goes under-noticed and their own leisure under-supported even in time demarcated as "leisure."

Mattingly and Bianchi use the language of "time contamination" (a phrase that calls out for theological response) to describe women's "triple burden:" "Women have less free time. The free time that they have is often contaminated by other activities or the presence of children, and their free time is not as beneficial to them as men's in terms of reducing feelings of time pressure."³⁷ The leisure gap is most accentuated for women who are both full-time workers and mothers, according to a Canadian study: These women "have the least time for leisure.... They feel the burden of their manifold responsibilities and have a hard time getting them off their mind long enough to enjoy leisure. Working mothers are the most fatigued among women because of their double-day."³⁸

Feminist leisure scholars thus critique traditional methods of time use research, pointing out that this research fails to detail women's multi-tasking and to explore women's subjective experiences of time, work, and leisure. Women's distinctive experiences of time are intimately related to their multiple, overlapping work and their family responsibilities—with the resulting time deprivation and fatigue that accompanies their abiding "ethic of care."³⁹

Catholic Social Teaching: Women's Labor, Time, and the Domestic Church

What emerges from this social science research is a picture of time poverty as a real economic and political disadvantage with gendered dimensions. This highly concrete analysis is lacking in Catholic social teaching around women, labor, and the domestic church. The full realization of Church teachings about just work and the dignity of labor and family require an understanding of time as economic and political resource with advocacy for structural changes to alleviate time poverty among those most vulnerable to its effects. For those most vulnerable, one could even consider this as an extension of the "preferential option for the poor."

³⁶ Deem, "No Time for Rest?," 17.

³⁷ Mattingly and Bianchi, "Gender Differences," 999-1031.

³⁸ Maureen Harrington, Don Dawson, and Pat Bolla, "Objective and Subjective Constraints on Women's Enjoyment of Leisure," *Society and Leisure* 15, no. 1 (1992): 217.

³⁹ Harrison, Dawson, and Bolla, "Objective and Subjective Constraints on Women's Enjoyment of Leisure," 217.

At the same time, while practical theology is informed by social science research to develop a “thick description” of an issue, social science also carries implicit and explicit norms and so must be incorporated critically. In this case, in light of Catholic theologies of labor and time, one must problematize the wholesale instrumentalization and commodification of time taken for granted in time use research. Time is not only economic commodity—but also, more fundamentally, a sacred gift offered to all by the Creator. Right relationship with the Creator entails a just enjoyment of that gift. Moreover, one would situate feminist leisure studies within a theological exploration of “Sabbath” and “Sunday,” a liturgical participation in time, and an appreciation for contemplation as ancient spiritual practice. We are interested not only in gaining “leisure” but in accessing the full range of spiritual practice and theological knowing into which all human beings are graciously invited.

This section highlights several points of key documents on labor and family as it frames time poverty as social justice issue. The following section turns to the apostolic letter *Dies Domini* and articulates its related significance for a practical theology of time.

The Second Vatican Council revived an ancient understanding of domestic church—a key affirmation of the ecclesiological significance of the family and household practices. The family, “so to speak, the domestic church,” is the matrix in which the people of God is nurtured, formed, and from which they are sent.⁴⁰ This explicit attention to the ecclesial dimension of the family is part of a larger move to affirm the lay apostolate as encompassing domestic, economic, and political spheres (see, for example, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 7); laity from their ordinary contexts of family and social life are to sanctify the world “from within as a leaven” (*Lumen gentium*, no. 31). Conciliar documents such as *Gaudium et spes* and subsequent Catholic social teaching such as John Paul II’s *Laborem exercens* (1981) affirm a high theology of work as constitutive of lay vocation and holiness, a calling, means of “humanization,” and even a form of “co-creation.” The dignity of work is linked to its significance for the family—particularly in supporting basic needs and education. Ideally, work and family together partner in developing persons in community who respond generously to God’s calling and whose dignity also is protected.

⁴⁰ *Lumen gentium* (“Dogmatic Constitution on the Church”) reads: The family is “so to speak, the domestic church. In it parents should, by their word and example, be the first preachers of the faith to their children; they should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each of them” (no. 11), www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

Catholic social teaching ascribes value to women's unpaid domestic labor and advocates for structures that accommodate market work to the needs of families. In many ways, there is a synchronicity here between the theological arguments of, for example, *Laborem exercens*, and the economists who advocate for measures of economic well-being that take time—and not only income—into account. Over-reliance on market measures of value obscures the value of time and labor in the home and risks undermining family well-being. At the same time, the valuing of unpaid labor and time in Catholic social teaching often is linked to essentialist assertions of mothers' special vocation to the home and family. *Gaudium et spes* asserts that work should be adapted to the needs of the person and domestic life, "especially in respect to mothers of families" (no. 67). John Paul II's *Laborem exercens* strongly affirms women's domestic (specifically, mothering) labor and asserts the primacy of mothering labor as compared to market work:

Experience confirms that there must be a social re-evaluation of the mother's role, of the toil connected with it... It will redound to the credit of society to make it possible for a mother—without inhibiting her freedom, without psychological or practical discrimination, and without penalizing her as compared with other women—to devote herself to taking care of her children and educating them in accordance with their needs, which vary with age. Having to abandon these tasks in order to take up paid work outside the home is wrong from the point of view of the good of society and of the family when it contradicts or hinders these primary goals of the mission of a mother.⁴¹

The 1981 apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio* similarly prizes women's "maternal and family role" over all other public contributions and calls for a renewed theology of work that affirms women's domestic labor (no. 23).⁴² This gendered theology of work and family is integral to assertions of the family's ecclesial task and significance as a "specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion" (no. 21). In short, arguments for a just valuing of women's labor and arguments for the ecclesial nature of the family depends on a theology of complementarity that bounds a mother's mission or vocation as located first and foremost within the home, relies on women's time availability in the home for children's care and education, critiques social and economic structures that undercut

⁴¹ *Lumen gentium*, no. 19.

⁴² John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio_en.html.

women's domestic roles, and only then offers a qualified affirmation of women's public work beyond the domestic sphere.

Moral theologians such as Barbara Hilkert Andolsen have made the case that women's unpaid domestic labor is a social justice issue.⁴³ So too time poverty can be framed more explicitly in Catholic social teaching as a social justice issue. The dignity of women's labor in market and domestic spheres is rightly affirmed by Catholic social teaching, and this teaching logically extends the "preferential option for the poor" to those women and families who are most vulnerable to the effects of time poverty. As the 1987 papal encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* ("On Social Concern") notes: "[T]his love of preference for the poor, and the decisions which it inspires in us, cannot but embrace the immense multitudes of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without medical care" (no. 42). Poverty in this document is defined broadly, not simply as a lack of material goods:

[I]n today's world there are many other forms of poverty.... The denial or the limitation of human rights - as for example the right to religious freedom, the right to share in the building of society, the freedom to organize and to form unions, or to take initiatives in economic matters - do these not impoverish the human person as much as, if not more than, the deprivation of material goods? (no. 15)⁴⁴

So too one could include time poverty among the most vulnerable as a real form of poverty. I emphatically do not include here the time poverty that results from an overabundance of choice and opportunity; this time poverty too is a problem but in no way should be equated with the suffering of the poorest of the poor.

Moral theologian Christine Firer Hinze has argued that theories of gender complementarity are interwoven with Catholic social teaching on labor in ways that unnecessarily link the two and undercut the Church's agenda to promote social justice for workers.⁴⁵ Building on Hinze's argument, I would assert that the resolution of the problem of time poverty cannot restrict women's sphere of labor

⁴³ Barbara Hilkert Andolsen, "A Woman's Work is Never Done: Unpaid Household Labor as a Social Justice Issue," in *Women's Consciousness, Women's Conscience: A Reader in Feminist Ethics*, ed. Barbara Hilkert Andolsen, Christine E. Gudorf and Mary D. Pellauer (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985), 3-18. See too Barbara Hilkert Andolsen, *The New Job Contract: Economic Justice in an Age of Insecurity* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1998).

⁴⁴ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis* ("On Social Concern"), nos. 15, 42, www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jpii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis_en.html.

⁴⁵ See Christine Firer Hinze, "U.S. Catholic Social Thought, Gender, and Economic Livelihood," *Theological Studies* 66 (2005): 568-91 and "Women, Families, and the Legacy of *Laborem Exercens*: An Unfinished Agenda," *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 6, no. 1 (2009): 63-92.

to the home, based on essentialist gender theories— but rather needs to work for more just sharing of time between market and family spheres and between women and men. Economic arguments for re-defined measures of poverty—ones that take into account the value of time and the serious impact of time poverty on families—go hand in hand with Catholic social teaching on the dignity of both domestic and market work as a dimension of full humanity and spiritual calling.

TIME, SABBATH, AND THE LORD'S DAY

As much as time use research usefully expands an understanding of the social and economic realities of time poverty, one also can bring a theological critique to some of the working assumptions and implicit theologies embedded in this social science literature. For example, the framing of time as economic commodity that can be “contaminated” by the presence of children works against a much richer understanding of time as sacred gift that is so central to many religious traditions and certainly seen in Catholic Christian liturgical and spiritual traditions. On the one hand, time must be seen as an economic and political resource in order to adequately measure well-being and ascribe value to unpaid labor. At the same time, as Catholic social teaching rejects the instrumentalization of the worker—insisting on the priority of the worker as subject—so too it rejects the reduction of time to money or any other instrument of exchange (nor does it see time as an “enemy,” to return to the opening quote by Stephanie Brown). The practice of liturgy—the marking of the liturgical calendar, the liturgy of the hours, the celebration of Sunday—these shape the community’s imagination of and, indeed, its bodily knowing of time as sacred arena of God’s own creative and salvific work among us.

John Paul II’s 1998 apostolic letter *Dies Domini* (“The Day of the Lord”)⁴⁶ is seldom connected with Catholic social teaching on work and family, although theological reflection on time is highly relevant to theologies of labor and the domestic church—and certainly to the problem of time poverty. *Dies Domini* offers a vision of time that is liberative, contemplative, humanizing, and ecclesial. Rooted in Jewish Sabbath theology, the document moves to recover the “meaning of Sunday,” the “Lord’s Day.” Sabbath is not only a remembrance of creation but in some sense a continuation of it: “The rest decreed in order to honour the day dedicated to God is not at all a burden imposed upon man, but rather an aid to help him to recognize his life-giving and liberating dependence upon the Creator, and at the same

⁴⁶ Quotations from *Dies Domini* taken from the following translation: www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jpii_apl_05071998_dies-domini_en.html.

time his calling to cooperate in the Creator's work and to receive his grace. In honouring God's "rest," man [*sic*] fully discovers himself" (no. 61). *Dies Domini* describes the practice of Sabbath as a kind of contemplative, lingering (or leisurely) practice that imitates a creative God, who on the seventh day lingered "before the 'very good' work (Gn 1:31) which his hand has wrought, in order to cast upon it *a gaze full of joyous delight*. This is a 'contemplative' gaze which does not look to new accomplishments but enjoys the beauty of what has already been achieved" (no. 11).

These reflections further develop Catholic social teaching on the dignity of labor; theologies of work and theologies of Sabbath are necessarily interconnected and complementary. *Dies Domini* also offers tantalizing visions here of a theology of time that stands in stark contrast to the reality of time poverty. This is a liberative understanding of time as gift, rest as integral to humanization and authentic self-discovery, Sabbath as joyous, delighted contemplation in imitation of a creative God. The letter also focuses quite specifically on the theological/ecclesiological significance of time. "In Christianity time has a fundamental importance": that is, time is the arena of creation, Incarnation, salvation, and the eschaton. "In Jesus Christ... time becomes a dimension of God, who is himself eternal" (no. 74). "Christ is the Lord of time; he is its beginning and its end; every year, every day and every moment are embraced by his Incarnation and Resurrection, and thus become part of the 'fullness of time'" (no. 74). As the "weekly Easter," Sunday is the day that reveals the meaning of time (no. 75). The practical significance of time gets focused in this letter around one particular practice: celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday. Christians are exhorted to give time to Christ and to the Church through participation in the Eucharistic assembly on Sunday, for: "The Eucharist is not only a particularly intense expression of the reality of the Church's life, but also in a sense its 'fountain-head.' The Eucharist feeds and forms the Church" (no. 32). Indeed, "the *dies Domini* is also the *dies Ecclesiae*" (no. 35). Thus, the practice of "giving time" is essential to the church. To rediscover Sunday means that we "open our time to Christ, that he may cast light upon it and give it direction" (no. 7).

Dies Domini laments cultural forces that have weakened the meaning of Sunday in people's lives but does not provide a detailed analysis of changing economic, social, and cultural dynamics. Yet while gender complementarity features significantly in Catholic social teaching on labor, gender receives scant attention in Catholic teaching about time, Sabbath, and Sunday—even though it clearly plays a role in how time is practiced and experienced. John Paul II is not alone here; most Christian and Jewish authors (both male and female) writing on Sabbath—from Abraham Joshua Heschel to Marva Dawn, Dorothy Bass to Norman Wirzba—give little attention to

women's labor and time poverty as they explore practices of Sabbath keeping.⁴⁷ Closer attention to the gendered dimensions of such religious practice is an important next step. Here the time use research and feminist leisure studies can fruitfully inform a fuller practical theological treatment of labor, family, and time.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE IN TIME POVERTY

Clearly Catholic teaching on Sabbath and the Lord's Day seeks to announce "good news" about time and, by extension, about work. Time is sanctified as the arena for God's creative, redemptive, and sanctifying activity. Time is the liberative, humanizing, and contemplative gift of Shabbat—a gift given not only to the people of Israel, but to all. Christ is the "Alpha and the Omega," the "Lord of time;" time is not far from God but is the arena of God's life with us, even part of God's eternal self in Jesus Christ. Through our own gift of time back to Christ and through our ecclesial Eucharistic assembly on the day of the Lord, we are made one with the church as it feeds on Christ in the Eucharist, celebrates the Resurrection, and anticipates the "Sunday which will never end." This is abundant good news: It is about time.

Yet, a gap yawns between women's experience of time poverty and this magisterial theological vision, as we have seen through time use research and feminist leisure studies. Women's autobiographical reflections and devotional literature also reveals this gap and its implications for spiritual practice. In her book *The Busy Mom's Guide to Spiritual Survival*, Kelly Trujillo describes the effects of time poverty on her spiritual practice as a new mother. Upon opening a book about spiritual disciplines: "I was excited at first and so ready to deepen my spirituality life; yet as I turned each page, I felt worse and worse and worse. I can't do any of this, I realized, I don't have the time.... [T]he discouragement became overwhelming."⁴⁸ Similarly, in focus groups of Catholic women conducted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 50 American dioceses from 2002-2004, women described the spiritual effects of their being "stretched thin" when balancing the responsibilities of family and work life. A

⁴⁷ See, for example, Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1951); Marva Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); Dorothy C. Bass, *Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2000); and Norman Wirzba, *Living the Sabbath: Discovering the Rhythms of Rest and Delight* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 1996). One text that does offer fascinating first-person reflections on Sabbath practice from an Orthodox Jewish woman's perspective is Blu Greenberg, *How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983).

⁴⁸ Kelly Trujillo, *The Busy Mom's Guide to Spiritual Survival* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan, 2007), 15.

young Catholic mother noted: "I find it hard to commit time to prayer; I'm rushed in the mornings and tired at night."⁴⁹ Of course, this is not a new problem. Francis de Sales counsels many laywomen about the need to leave aside their spiritual disciplines with indifference when the needs of others in their household call.⁵⁰ Even Teresa of Avila struggled with time poverty as she tries to carve out time for writing amidst the busyness of her apostolic work: "I have to eat and sleep and carry on business and talk with everyone.... How is it that when there is so little time left over to enjoy Your presence You hide from me?"⁵¹ Dialogue between spiritual classics (including women's spiritual autobiographies), Catholic social teaching, and social science research can open up new layers of theological reflection on women's experience and time poverty.

As Teresa well understood, the compression of time makes contemplative practice more difficult. This is important in a tradition that cherishes contemplation as spiritual practice and frames Sabbath as an imitation of God's delighted contemplation of creation.

Moreover, time poverty may impinge on women's (and their families') practices of Sunday observance, including Eucharistic assembly, and thus undercut the ecclesial significance of time that John Paul II so emphatically asserts. Freeing time from the "time bind" is an ecclesial imperative. This entails as well some internal church reflection: the church which relies on women's volunteer labor needs to take time poverty more seriously as it asks for women's "gifts" of time to fuel the work of the local church. To the extent that the time bind is chosen and/or culturally driven—reflecting consumerism, workaholism, avoidable overscheduling—then Catholic social teaching also calls here for countercultural conversion. The Catholic tradition and imagination proposes practices of resistance: observing Sabbath/Lord's Day, Eucharist as eschatological feast that re-members the body of Christ, contemplative practice, markings of alternative time rhythms through the liturgical year.

Without dulling the call for justice and reaffirmation of the sacrality of time, one also can look to women's lives for practical wisdom and theological knowing around time. What practical wisdom do women cultivate in the constant balancing of labors and care? Surely, there are involved here constant practices of discernment and

⁴⁹ Quotes are taken from the focus group reports of specific dioceses—here, from Rockville Center, New York. For a summary and interpretation of the first phase of the focus groups, see also Bishop Edward Cullen's article, "Women's Spirituality in the Workplace," *America* 189, no. 8 (September 22, 2003).

⁵⁰ See Francis de Sales and Jane de Chantal, *Letters of Spiritual Direction* (New York: Paulist, 1988) and Francis de Sales, *Introduction to the Devout Life* (New York: Random House, 2002).

⁵¹ Teresa of Avila, *The Book of Her Life* (Washington, DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1976), 327.

the development of virtues. Is there a spirituality of time asceticism—a new desert spirituality—to be seen not simply as lamentable but also in some cases as the fruitful outworking of women’s fuller lay vocation? One might consider alternative theological visioning and practices of time which emerge from women’s spiritual life in the midst of time poverty. The USCCB focus groups of Catholic women show that along with laments about loss of contemplative time, women also express great creativity in adapting prayer practices in the time bind. The experience of time as *abundant* gift offered to all persons, spoken of so eloquently in *Dies Domini*, is more elusive. Like Stephanie Brown in the opening quote, several women in these focus groups described time as sparse, sought after, desired. They “make” time and “catch pockets of time,” and in those short moments, they adapt prayer to places such as subways, bathtubs, workplaces, and treadmills. Women’s reflections reveal the diversity of ways in which they “give time to Christ” in their ordinary spheres of labor, including in the home. And some reflect how the practice of Eucharist yields new knowing. For Deborah Smith Douglas, for example, an employed mother struggling “against the entropic forces that regularly disintegrate her life,” Eucharistic practice revealed grace in fragmentation: “As I watched, the priest... proceeded to break the consecrated wafer... into pieces... my life is like that, I realized... by a miracle of grace, by the grace of God—I can come to see myself not as meaninglessly disintegrated but as broken and given like bread, poured out like wine.”⁵² A practical theological reading of time poverty would look here too—to the embodied practice of Eucharistic spirituality in the quotidian—for “signs of the times” and for “good news.”

CONCLUSION

Catholic social teaching can offer powerful and liberating theological visions of labor and time. A critical step is to harness the critical, countercultural and justice implications of such a vision for women and families—and to relate the vision to concrete practice and experience. Time poverty should be seen as a social justice issue to be addressed structurally and theologically, with a “preferential option for the poor” extended to the most vulnerable. Theologies of time—embodied in liturgical practice and Sabbath observance—can be interwoven with teachings on the dignity of labor and the imperatives of social justice to yield a powerful argument for better working conditions and family policies for women. All created beings are given the gift of time, to be stewarded, enjoyed, and shared with justice. All should be able to rest from their labors and worship. Shaped over time in the life of the faith community, religious practice can become

⁵² Deborah Smith Douglas, “Broken Pieces,” *Commonweal* 118 (May 3, 1991): 292.

a site of resistance, alternative imagination, new knowing, and creative fidelity in the midst of social change. **M**