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Edited by Declan Marmion and Mary E. Hines
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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
KARL RAHNER

Karl Rahner (1904–84) has been one of the most significant theological voices of the twentieth century. Part of this enduring appeal and legacy is his ability to reflect on a whole variety of issues in theology and spirituality. This *Cambridge Companion* provides an accessible introduction to the main themes of Rahner's work. Written by an international array of experts it will be of interest to both students and scholars. Each chapter serves as a guide to its topic and provides further reading for additional study. The contributors also assess Rahner's significance for contemporary theology by bringing his thought into dialogue with many of the issues of current concern, including religious pluralism, post-modernism, and developments in political and feminist theologies.

DECLAN MARMION is Lecturer in Systematic Theology in Milltown Institute of Philosophy and Theology in Dublin. He received his S.T.L. and S.T.D. at the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium. He is the author of *A Spirituality of Everyday Faith: A Theological Investigation of the Notion of Spirituality in Karl Rahner*, Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs 23 (Louvain: Peeters and W. B. Eerdmans, 1998).

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PETER C. PHAN holds three earned doctorates and is currently the Ignacio Ellacuria, S.J. Professor of Catholic Social Thought at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. He has authored 10 books, edited 20 books, and written 250 essays for popular and scholarly journals. His writings have received several awards from theological societies. His latest writings include his trilogy: *Christianity with an Asian Face*; *In Our Tongues*; and *Being Religious Interreligiously* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis). He is Past President of the Catholic Theological Society of America.

MICHAEL PURCELL lectures in Systematic and Philosophical Theology in the School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh, Scotland. His research interests focus on Karl Rahner's theology, the relation between phenomenology and theology, and the theological relevance of Emmanuel Levinas' ethical metaphysics. Publications include *Mystery and Method: The Other in Rahner and Levinas* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1998), and various articles, inspired by Levinas' thinking, on the nature of theology, grace, liturgy and sacraments, and the Eucharist, in *Philosophy and Theology*, *Gregorianum*, *Heythrop Journal*, *Bijdragen*, and *Louvain Studies*. He has recently completed a book on Levinas and theology, and is currently working on the theology of death in post-modernity.

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Chronology of Karl Rahner

- 1904 Born March 5, in Freiburg in Breisgau, Germany
 1922 Enters the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)
 1924–27 Philosophical Studies in Feldkirch (Austria) and Pullach (Munich)
 1927–29 Teacher in Feldkirch
 1929–33 Theological Studies in Valkenburg (Holland)
 1932 Priestly Ordination in Munich
 1934–36 Graduate Studies in Philosophy at Freiburg with four semesters in Martin Heidegger's seminar
 1936 Undertakes and completes doctoral studies in theology at Innsbruck
 1937 Habilitation in Dogmatic Theology and begins lecturing in Dogma and in the History of Dogma at Innsbruck
 1938 First (German) edition of *Encounters with Silence* published
 1939 Rejected doctoral thesis in philosophy published under the title, *Spirit in the World*
 1941 *Hearer of the Word* published
 1939–44 Work at the Diocesan Pastoral Institute in Vienna
 1944 Pastoral work in Bavaria
 1945–48 Lecturer in Dogma in Pullach
 1954 First volume of *Theological Investigations* published
 1949–64 Lecturer in Dogma and in the History of Dogma at Innsbruck; Professor in 1949
 1962–65 Theological consultant (*peritus*) at the Second Vatican Council
 1964–67 Succeeded Romano Guardini in the Chair of Christianity and the Philosophy of Religion at Munich
 1967–71 Professor of Dogmatic Theology in Münster (Westphalia)
 1969 Member of the International Theological Commission
 1971–81 Emeritus in Munich
 1972 Appointed Honorary Professor of Dogma and in the History of Dogma at Innsbruck
 1976 *Foundations of Christian Faith* published
 1981–84 Emeritus in Innsbruck
 1984 Died in Innsbruck on March 30; buried in the crypt of the Jesuit Church

Glossary

Analogy: For Rahner, the term refers to the form of our knowledge and thought about God that simultaneously underscores God's transcendence and follows the Fourth Lateran Council's assertion: "For no similarity can be said to hold between Creature and creature which does not imply a greater dissimilarity between the two." (DS 432)

Anonymous Christian: A term coined by Rahner to be judiciously used by Christians to indicate the universality of God's grace beyond the confines of Christianity. Non-Christians, by virtue of God's universal salvific will and their own orientation to transcendence, can live in a Christian manner without explicitly articulating their lives in such terms.

Apophatic: A tradition of spirituality as well as a style of theologizing that underscores the transcendence of God who cannot be circumscribed by human concepts and discourse. A consistent characteristic of Rahner's theology is its apophatic insistence on the "always greater" God and on the ineffability of the divine mystery.

Categorical (Categorial): represents the concrete, historical aspect of human reality and is often contrasted by Rahner with the term "transcendental."

Concupiscence: Though this is traditionally understood as the inclination to sin, Rahner describes it in a morally neutral way in terms of the tension between what one is (nature) and what one desires to become by free decision.

Economic Trinity: refers to the actions of the divine persons as they are revealed in history, in God's plan or "economy" of salvation.

Eschatology: traditionally understood as the doctrine of the Last Things, specifically heaven, hell, death and judgment. While the individual and social aspects of eschatology have often be overly separated, theology since the 1960s (e.g., J. Moltmann) has tried to overcome such dualism by showing how human efforts to build a better world anticipate the divine future.

Existential: A term derived from Martin Heidegger to designate a characteristic of human existence or "being-in-the-world." For Rahner, these characteristics or existentials refer to the human person as transcendent, free, historical, and threatened by sin and guilt.

xiv Glossary

“Existentiell” Christology: In contrast to an abstract theoretical Christianity, the term refers to the process of personal appropriation and actualization of a Christian’s personal relationship to Jesus Christ.

Extrinsicism: refers to the tendency, noted by Rahner and others, to separate grace from nature, revelation from experience, and to rely on external authorities (e.g., official teaching or the eternal divine will) as the sole warrant for theological claims.

Gnoseological Concupiscence: A term coined by Rahner to refer to a legitimate pluralism within contemporary theology where there are competing and legitimate perspectives that cannot be simply harmonized.

Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556): Spanish (Basque) Founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), famed for his *Spiritual Exercises*, a four week guided reflection aimed at discerning how one can best serve God.

Immanent Trinity: refers to the interaction between the divine persons *within* the Trinity.

Mystagogy: refers to a process of initiation into the sacred, into the experience of the mystery of God. For Rahner all forms of Christian initiation need a mystagogical dimension alongside the more doctrinal aspects.

Mystery: For Rahner, not so much to be understood negatively in terms of truths that are provisionally incomprehensible but, more positively and primordially, referring to the human person, as a being of unlimited transcendence, who is confronted by mystery, or, more precisely, by the incomprehensible mystery of God.

Nature: refers to the permanent structure or principle of a being. For Rahner, human nature, by virtue of its transcendent orientation, is open to a possible self-communication of God (grace).

Nouvelle Théologie: A term (generally employed pejoratively in official circles) from the 1940s to describe an attempt by mainly French theologians to renew traditional theology, particularly in the light of new developments in science (e.g., evolution theories), biblical and patristic research. While official documents (e.g., the encyclical *Humani Generis*) issued warnings, the underlying aim was to render traditional Christian teachings more credible.

Phantasm: For Rahner, following Aquinas and in dialogue with Kant, all knowledge comes from the senses, or, in Thomistic terms, a turning of the intellect towards the phantasm (image).

Potentia Oboedientialis: refers to the disposition of a person to receive and accept the gift of God’s self-communication, which leads to the fulfillment of his or her spiritual nature.

Transcendental: The term refers to a metahistorical, a priori disposition of the human person, who asks after the question of being, and who thereby experiences him or herself as a being with an unlimited horizon, open to the mystery of God.

Quasi-formal Causality: In God's self-communication (grace), what is really communicated is God in God's own being. Following Aristotle, formal causality makes something the kind of being it is. Rahner uses the prefix "quasi" so as not to conflate the human and the divine, while stressing that God's grace is fully given and fully efficacious in the human person.

Realsymbol: In the context of his theology of sacraments, particularly sacramental causality, Rahner shows how sacraments are intrinsically real symbols (in contrast to mere signs) genuinely effecting what they signify. Rahner also applied his anthropology of symbol to the theology of the Trinity and to Christology.

Sapiential: The sapiential task of theology aims at discovering wisdom for practical Christian living. Rahner saw all his writings as sapiential and spiritual in this sense rather than strictly scientific treatises.

Supernatural Existential: In the context of Rahner's theology of grace, this term refers not only to its gratuitous character (supernatural) as a result of God's universal salvific will, but also to a characteristic (existential) of each person's consciousness whereby they are open, or disposed, to the offer of the divine self-communication.

Uncreated Grace: refers to the self-communication of God to a person, which can be experienced; it forms part of Rahner's attempt to retrieve a more existential understanding of grace.

Vorgriff (Pre-apprehension of Being): A capacity of the dynamic self-movement of the spirit, whereby a particular object of knowledge in each act of cognition is grasped in its limitation and against a background of an infinite, unlimited horizon.

Abbreviations

- DS* H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (Freiburg: Herder, 32nd edn., 1960).
- FCF* K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*. Trans. W. Dych (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978).
- HW* K. Rahner, *Hearer of the Word*. Trans. J. Donceel (New York: Continuum, 1994). This work exists in two German editions, the original 1941 edition and a second modified edition edited by J. B. Metz in 1963. For the first edition in English, see *Hearer of the Word*, trans. J. Donceel (New York: Continuum, 1994); for the second edition, see *Hearers of the Word*, trans. M. Richards (New York: Herder, 1969). Contributors normally refer to the 1994 edition unless otherwise indicated.
- ITS* Innsbrucker Theologische Studien (Innsbruck/Vienna: Tyrolia, 1978–).
- LThK* *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*. 10 vols. Ed. K. Rahner and J. Höfer. (Freiburg: Herder, 2nd edn., 1957–65).
- SaW* *Karl-Rahner: Sämtliche Werke*. 32 vols. (approx.). Ed. K. Lehmann, J. B. Metz, K.-H. Neufeld, A. Raffelt and H. Vorgrimler (Freiburg: Herder, 1995ff.).
- SM* *Sacramentum Mundi. An Encyclopedia of Theology*. 6 vols. Ed. K. Rahner, A. Darlap, et al. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968–70).
- SW* K. Rahner, *Spirit in the World*. Trans. W. Dych (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968, 2nd edn., New York: Continuum, 1994).
- TI* K. Rahner, *Theological Investigations*. 23 vols. Various translators (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961–84). In the US, vols. I–VI were published in Baltimore by Helicon Press; vols. VII–X in New York by Herder and Herder; vols. XI–XVI in New York by Seaburg Press; vols. XVII–XXIII in New York by Crossroad.