

March 4th, 2021, Bern

In Memory of Prof. Emer. Dr. Martien Parmentier (1947-2021)

Prof. Emer. Dr. Martien Parmentier passed away on the morning of March 1st, 2021 at the age of 73. In 2000, Martien Parmentier was called to be the successor to Herwig Aldhoven in the tenured professorship of Systematic Theology at the Christian Catholic Theological Faculty at the University of Bern, which became a department of the Christian Catholic and Protestant Theological Faculty in 2001. Parmentier made connections between dogmatic perspectives and contemporary theological questions in his teaching and research, including, for example, the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. His work was shaped by an ecumenical approach. These characteristics of his work are owed to the Old Catholic paradigm, which seeks to contribute to ecclesiastical renewal and unity on the basis of the early church.

Martinus Franciscus Georgius Parmentier was born on May 7th, 1947 in Leiden (Netherlands), son of Frans Parmentier and Jacoba van der Veer. He graduated school in Utrecht. After his theological studies at the Old Catholic Seminary in Amersfoort and the Theological Faculty at the University of Utrecht (1965-1971), Martien Parmentier achieved his doctorate in 1974 at the University of Oxford (D.Phil.) in the subject of the role of the Holy Spirit in the work of St. Gregory of Nyssa (*St. Gregory of Nyssa's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*). His work was supervised by Kallistos Ware. He was ordained to the holy orders as a priest in 1971 by the Archdiocese of Utrecht. At that time, he worked in the Anglican Parish of Wolvercote (Oxford) and became acquainted with the charismatic movement. The subject of the Holy Spirit is said to have accompanied his research and spirituality his whole life long, especially in relation to its healing role. After Oxford, he led his way into the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey and at the Old-Catholic University Seminary of the University of Bonn, where he continued his ecumenical and patristic education. Subsequently, he worked as pastor at the Parish of Saints Anna and Maria in Haarlem (Netherlands) from 1978-1982. From 1980 to 2002, he taught as lecturer for patristics and history of dogmatic theology at the Old Catholic Seminary, which had been relocated from Amersfoort to the University of Utrecht in 1969. As of 1983, he acted as researcher and university lecturer for early church history at the Catholic Theological College (later, University) Amsterdam (KTHA). He further executed the aforementioned occupation beginning in 1992 as lecturer of church history and history of dogmatic theology of early medieval theology and its sources at the Catholic Theological University of Utrecht (KThU); from 1992 to 2000 he combined this with a non-tenure professorship for the Theology of Charismatic Renewal at the Theological Faculty of *Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*.

In the Winter Semester of 1993-94 and 1997-98, in the scope of substituting for Prof. Herwig Aldenhoven as well as for Prof. Urs von Arx, Parmentier was already active at the Christian Catholic Theological Faculty in Bern. In the Winter Semester of 2000-01, he was called to serve in Bern, where he held the tenured professorship for systematic theology and ecumenical theology at the Department of Christian Catholic Theology. From 2002 to 2006, he was provost of the Department of Christian Catholic Theology and from 2004 to 2006 dean of the Faculty; as he had already fallen ill, Vice Dean Walter Dietrich and Wolfgang Lienemann actively stood by his side. In the course of his active vocational life,

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Parmentier had suffered from a Parkinson's, which he faced for 23 years. In 2007, he was placed on medical leave, and he moved to Hilversum. In the Netherlands, he served within the Church on a non-stipendiary basis for several years.

With great resolve, he tried to work against ever greater constraints, even within his scholarship and in his work in the Church. His wife, Annemieke, a Reformed pastor, and his whole family stood by his side. In his works pertaining to the Holy Spirit and its role in the service of healing, he reflected in great depth on the tensions between his own illness and the subject of 'healing.'

Parmentier's university activities were always connected with his ecclesiastical engagement: for the Old Catholic Church in the Netherlands, of which he had been a member since 1995, including his service as Dean of the Cathedral Chapter in Utrecht in 2009-2013; for the charismatic movement in the Netherlands, in which he played a very active role; and for various ecumenical bodies. He represented the Old Catholic churches of the Union of Utrecht from the early 1980s until 2008 on the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and was a member of the Ecumenical Council of Churches working group for the Syrian Orthodox Church. He also concerned himself as a patristics scholar with the Orthodox tradition, among other things, in an Orthodox-Old Catholic consultation on the question of women's ordination, which surprisingly, in 1996, arrived at a common conclusion that there are no convincing theological arguments to the contrary. His broad scholarly curiosity and his multifaceted ecclesiastical engagement led to a multiplicity of publications. Alongside his dissertation, his published works include: *Vincentius van Lerinum, de beide Commonitoria* (1989), *Heil maakt heel. De bediening tot genezing* (1997), *The Ecumenical Consistency of the Porvoo Document* (published 1999), and *The Book of Steps. The Syria Liber Graduum* (together with Robert Kitchen, 2004). In the final years of his work, Parmentier dealt with early Christian confessions of faith, upon which he published several essays.

On the occasion of his 65th birthday, Martin Parmentier was honoured with the commemorative festschrift: *Vele gaven, één Geest. Meedenken met Martien Parmentier op het gebied van oecumenica, patristiek en theologie van de charismatische vernieuwing* (Gorinchem: Ekklesia, 2012). His stature in Old Catholic Theology within the ecumenical context was recognized in 2015 with the conferment of the Blaise Pascal Award of the Old Catholic Seminary Foundation (University of Utrecht). From 1990 to 2011, he was member of the editorial commission of the journal *Internationale Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, which is published in Bern.

The funeral will be held among close family and friends on Friday, March 5th at 1:00pm in the Parish Church of St. Vitus in Hilversum (Netherlands). The service is accessible over Livestream: <https://youtu.be/6l4QX019pgo>