The Vision of Integral Evangelization in the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines:

Where Have We Reached So Far?

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The Catholic Church continually strives to be true to its missionary mandate. Throughout the centuries and in various ways, she continues to proclaim the Gospel to all people. In recent times, one of her efforts to be renewed in this evangelizing mission was the Second Vatican Council celebrated in 1962 to 1965 under Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI. Twenty-seven years after this council, the Philippine Church convened its local council, the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II), held in 1991 under the leadership of Archbishop Leonardo Z. Legaspi, O.P., D.D., who was then CBCP president. The proceedings of this council were published in 1992 as a document titled Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines.

The Second Plenary Council was a significant event for and in the Philippine Church because it served as a kind of evaluation of the Church's status in the Philippines. At the time of writing, it is almost thirty years since its convocation. After almost three decades, it would be good to reexamine how this local council has made a significant impact in enabling the Church's mission of evangelization to move forward. Given this, this article focuses on some key elements of renewed integral evangelization in PCP-II. It concludes with some observations as to how much these elements have been realized so far.

Key Elements of Renewed Integral Evangelization in PCP-II

The key elements of evangelization are the following: (1) evangelizers, (2) Gospel message, and (3) recipients. These are the important elements of evangelization because they constitute the three major roles in basic communication: messenger, message, and the receiver. The messenger is the Evangelizer. The message is the Gospel message. And lastly, the receiver is the Recipients.

Evangelizers

The evangelizers are the "workers of renewal." They are the agents of evangelization. For PCP-II, all the baptized are called to the mission "*all*—without exception—are called to evangelize" (PCP-II 402). This is because the council believes that everyone is called to holiness—a holiness that aims to achieve "a union of love with God and with one another" (PCP-II 402). The council traces this calling to the Holy Trinity, who sends forth the people of God to spread the Good News.

Furthermore, PCP-II does not only refer to the people who are formally involved in missionary evangelization. An important thing that the council emphasized was the concept of ecclesial communities and the various sectors of the society as potential evangelizers for the Church. These evangelizers include the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Mary, lay faithful, clergy, religious, Christian communities, extra-ordinary pastoral workers, youth, the poor, and Church. Among these, it is worth noting how the council identified the last five of the aforementioned sectors as active agents rather than mere recipients of evangelization.

Christian Communities. Groups of Christians or Christian communities are also great agents of evangelization. The Second Plenary Council mentions Christian families, Basic Ecclesial Communities, and the parish as particular groups that could render great service to evangelization.

A ***Christian Family*** is an agent of evangelization because it is "the Church in the home" (PCP-II 421). As a domestic church, the Christian family is tasked to reveal and communicate God's love to all its members. Family members should "mutually evangelize each other" (PCP-II 576). The father should become more than just a material provider but also "image [God] the Father who is holy and calls [members of the family] to be holy" (PCP-II 577). The mother is the "heart of the home" (PCP-II 578). She plays a "decisive role in the growth of [one's] children to maturity as persons and as Christians" (PCP-II 578). "Young people and children are truly the present and future of the Church" (PCP-II 581). They are the ones who will "assume responsibility in the task of evangelizing" (PCP-II 581). It is in the family "where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates" (EN 71).

Every Christian family is imbued with an evangelizing task in forming a community of persons, serving life through the procreation and education of offspring, participating in the development of society, and sharing in the mission of the Church. Every Christian family does not only exist for itself but for the greater Christian community. These factors make the family an important agent of evangelization.

In the Church, "our vision of the Church as communion, participation, and mission … is today finding expression in one ecclesial movement; this is the movement to foster *Basic*

Ecclesial Communities" (PCP-II 137). These communities are united to their pastors but are ministered regularly by lay leaders (PCP-II 138). They "consciously strive to integrate their faith and their daily life" (PCP-II 139). The council sees in BECs a great potential for evangelization and hope for the Philippine Church (cf. PCP-II 140). Moreno notes that "in PCP II, an overwhelming endorsement puts BECs as the pathway of a Church renewed in the Philippines."[1]

The ***Parish Community*** is an essential avenue for evangelization. It "continues to be the customary place where the faithful gather to grow in holiness, to participate in the mission of the Church and to live out their ecclesial communion" (PCP-II 598). The parish, as an agent of evangelization, encourages clerical and lay participation. It must foster a healthy environment for every member to grow in faith and service. "A parish should be a dynamic Eucharistic and evangelizing community of communities, a center which energizes movements, Basic Ecclesial Communities, and other apostolic groups" (PCP-II 600). The parish is the venue "where the full ministry and life of the Church is experienced by the faithful on a regular basis" (PCP-II 598).

The Philippine Church sees the Youth as its greatest resource for evangelization today because of their vigor and lively disposition. The young are great evangelizers of other young people because they understand their peers better (cf. PCP-II 651). But before they are to become evangelizers, they should first be evangelized. They must be taught at home by their family and at school by teachers, campus ministers, and chaplains. The Church must evangelize the youth and give them a voice in its institutions, for it is only after they have

1 Antonio Moreno, "PCP-II Ecclesiology: A Critical Evaluation," *Landas* 8 (1994): 47-48.

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been evangelized that they "become evangelizers themselves" (PCP-II 651).

The ***Poor*** are essential to the Church; the Philippine Church aims to be the Church of the poor. She desires to help the poor, give them their needs and allow them to exercise their natural giftedness as evangelizers. The Church's concern for the poor is about preferential service to them and preferential reliance on them in the work of evangelization (cf. PCP-II 122-136). It is, therefore, imperative to acknowledge that much can be learned from the poor.[2]

Moreno highlights the importance of the poor in the discussions of PCP-II. He points out that "it is important to remember that the council's battle cry to become a Church of the poor is a major prophetic breakthrough in the history of the Philippine Church."[3] This is not a copied vision from somewhere else but a vision borne out of the Philippine context itself. In this way, this vision not only advances a preferential option for the temporal liberation of the poor but also underlines the natural role of the poor as evangelizers for the Church.

As ***Extra-ordinary Pastoral Workers***, many Christian faithful are also actively working in some field of service for humanity. These services are of equal importance to all the other ministerial works in society. These are those working in

2 It is good to note that in the mind of the PCP-II, it wanted to give due importance to the materially poor. However, in the same manner and weight, it also highlights that looking at poverty should not be limited to the material destitution but in the bigger perspective of the evangelical spirit of poverty. PCP-II thinks that the *Church of the Poor* "means a Church that embraces and practices the evangelical spirit of poverty, which combines detachment from possessions with a profound trust in the Lord as the sole source of salvation" (*PCP II*, no. 125).

3 Moreno, "PCP-II Ecclesiology," 47.

hospitals, formation houses or centers, Catholic educational institutions, and the media.

One of the most important ministries of Jesus was healing the sick. Those who are in the service of the sick and infirm are agents of evangelization by the very work that they do. The Church has many institutions by which she evangelizes through ministering to the sick. Evangelization in the Philippines has made use of these institutions to bring the comfort and healing of Christ to people (PCP-II 615).

Formation houses such as seminaries, centers for catechetical formation, retreat houses, and prayer centers are also excellent avenues for evangelization. They are important for providing catechism and formation for all members of the Church who are "longing to mature in the Christian life and to learn the spirit and techniques of evangelization" (PCP-II 619). Catechists and religious education teachers play vital roles in religious learning in schools. "Catholic educational institutions are among the most necessary and potent means of evangelization" (PCP-II 623) as environments where everyone exemplifies a Christian way of life, providing an experience of a Christian community (cf. PCP-II 636). Likewise, mass media and other forms of social communication are great avenues for disseminating ideas and values. "Through the mass media not only news or images but values are communicated to millions" (PCP-II 653). Thus, the Church urges that "an apostolate be established for the evangelization of mass media personnel and for their ongoing spiritual formation" (PCP-II 656).

These Church ministries mentioned above are ministries vital to evangelization. At the same time, they are particular areas where some serious work needs to be done. The

Philippine Church gives attention to them through the council and encourages that renewal be initiated or continued in them.

Gospel Message

The second key element of evangelization is the Gospel Message. PCP-II highlights three important things about the Gospel Message: its rootedness in the Word of God, its Christocentric character, and its social relevance.

The ***Word of God*** contained in Scripture is the same message that agents of evangelization should proclaim. There is "nothing and no one [who can speak] better of the Incarnate Word of God than the scriptural Word of God" (PCP-II 159). For this reason, PCP-II wishes that catechesis, worship, and social apostolate be always scripturally based. The council calls for integral evangelization to be always rooted in Scripture and for the mission to have the Word of God as its message.

Jesus Christ, the Word of God, became incarnate and lived among the people. The Word of God took human flesh and lived in history as Jesus of Nazareth. He is the Word who lived, suffered, died and rose again for the sake of all people. PCP-II teaches that the Gospel Message is Christ himself. Thus, the Philippine Church desires to refocus on Christ as the center of the Church's faith and call attention to the Eucharist as the commemoration of the sacrifice of Jesus, central to the Christian faith. The Philippine Church desires to highlight and invigorate the centrality of Jesus in evangelization, constantly reminding the faithful that they must always make Jesus the central message of evangelization. Hence, it reminds the Church always to remain Christocentric, and be continuously inspired by him who continues to live "as our contemporary" (PCP-II 158).

The Second Plenary Council also reiterated ***Catholic Social Teaching*****,** emphasizing the Philippine social condition in its discussions and the final document. The council believed that understanding the Gospel Message is not only limited to the doctrinal teachings of the Church. One must also understand the world and all the good things that it can offer for a more contextualized evangelization. For this, PCP-II aimed to respond to the Philippine social condition by emphasizing human dignity and solidarity, the universal destination of earthly goods and of private property, social justice and love, peace and active non-violence, love of preference for the poor, the value of human work, the integrity of creation, and people empowerment. These truths, as discussed by PCP-II are essential components of Gospel proclamation.

Recipients of the Gospel Message

The recipients of the Gospel Message are the ones who need to hear and receive the message of God from the evangelizers. According to PCP-II, this includes everyone. However, the council also mentions some particular people, groups of people, and other human realities that fall into this category: clergy and religious, laity, the poor, Christian denominations, other living faiths, and various aspects of society such as culture, economy, and politics.

The ***Clergy and Religious*** include all those who are ordained ministers of the Church—the Pope, bishops, priests, deacons, and the religious. They are described by the council as recipients of evangelization also—for by nature, they truly are. One has to be evangelized before one can become an evangelizer. The council calls for constant renewal in evangelization. Part of that constancy is the call for all

faithful, ordained and lay, to continually be renewed in one's relationship with Jesus—with God. In line with this, PCP-II writes about priestly and religious formation as part of an ongoing and lifelong evangelization for the ordained.

The ***Lay Faithful*** have a primary role for the Church: they are to become evangelizers. At the same time, they must be constantly evangelized. The laity are called to be evangelizers starting in their own family. The family, then, is a place where "all members mutually evangelize each other" (PCP-II 576). In the Philippine context, there is an urgent need to evangelize the family, "the first school of evangelization" (PCP-II 576). Nowadays, there is a progressive decadence in traditional Christian family values. Moreover, the Church calls for renewal and more centers of formation such as retreat houses, Catholic schools, hospitals, and social media practitioners. These institutions are mostly comprised of the laity who need to be evangelized, for they play a great role in society.

The ***Poor*** should be given special attention, most especially those who are characterized by material destitution. Although the Church is very hopeful that the poor, as part of the Church, can be a force for evangelization, the poor are also in need of evangelization—especially that most exploited sector of the society, which is the majority of the Filipino people: women, children, youth, tribal Filipinos, peasants, the urban poor, fisherfolk, the disabled, prisoners, etc. These are people who need to be spiritually and temporally evangelized.

The Philippine Church wants to serve the poor because she believes that "poverty in the sense of destitution is not God's will for anyone" (PCP-II 122). However, the council does not only understand "poverty" as material destitution. It understands poverty in a holistic manner, which includes

both material and spiritual poverty. To become "Church of the Poor," an expression used by Pope John Paul II, is vital for PCP-II. It is. This is because at least half of the population of the Philippines are poor, and these are the very people whom the Church is serving and they comprise the Church (cf. PCP-II 122).

Furthermore, the poor are very close to the heart of Jesus. He has a "special preference for the afflicted, the marginalized, the little ones, and sinners—the poor" (PCP-II 48). The desire of PCP-II will never be realized unless special attention and a serious move to enkindle the evangelical fire within and among the poor is realized.

In reference to other ***Christian Denominations*****,** the Church is aware that she is sent for all people, including those who belong to the Christian family but are outside Catholicism. The Church considers these people as recipients, and she engages with them in ecumenism (cf. PCP-II 216). Ecumenism is a form of evangelization that utilizes dialogue as its tool. PCP-II encourages all Catholics to engage in this dialogue and foster openness towards other Christian believers, for mutual understanding and tolerance, by occasionally getting together in prayer. The Church also wants "high-level dialogues among theologians of the Churches, and moments of common prayer among Church leaders" (PCP-II 217).

Some groups are less open to dialogue with the Catholic Church; examples are the *Iglesia ni Cristo* (cf. PCP-II 218-28), the Masons (cf. PCP-II 229-33), and other aggressive fundamentalist groups. Though it may prove very difficult, PCP-II wants the Catholic Church to make efforts in catechesis and apologetics as a response to the need for ecumenism or dialogue with other Christian denominations and groups. This

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is to say that PCP-II, although meagerly mentioning it,[4] wishes the Church to evangelize other Christian denominations, even the less receptive ones.

While the Philippines is largely a Catholic nation, there are ***Other Living Faiths*** present in the country, such as Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Islam, among others. Special attention must be given to this kind of dialogue because Asia contains the bulk of the world's oldest and most prevalent faiths. This kind of dialogue is called interreligious dialogue. People of other living faiths are also subjects of evangelization. There is a need for interreligious dialogue as part of the evangelizing mission of the Church. This is not contrary to the core belief of the Church, for it believes that salvation in Christ is for all: "God 'makes himself present in many ways … to entire people[s] through their spiritual riches.' [And the Church holds that she is the] 'ordinary means of salvation' and that she alone possesses the fullness of the means of salvation" (PCP-II 112). At the same time, the Church teaches that a "ray of [God's] truth which enlightens all men" (NA 2) is present in other religions. Evangelizing people of other living faiths, most especially the Muslims in

4 Pedro de Achútegui comments that PCP-II "has given such a meager and scanty attention to ecumenism." [Pedro de Achútegui, "Ecumenism in the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines," *Landas* 6 (1992): 180.] It is only in decrees 34, 216 and 217 that ecumenism is explicitly discussed in the whole document. Though he is also optimistic in saying that the "redeeming factor, however, for this apparent ecumenical minimalism of the council is to be found in the various, and some of them important, elements spread out along the doctrinal-pastoral part of the document." He contends that the centrality of Jesus Christ in the council "makes us closer than we think, that we already are somehow one in Christ."Other details that he proposes to have talked about ecumenism indirectly are the nuanced use of the term Christian and Catholic, unity in Baptism, the emphasis on the Word of God as common to all Christians, the idea of the Church as communion, and the concern for unity as stipulated in the council's logo which is "To unite all things in Christ."

the Philippine context, should not remain at the intellectual level. It must move to the level of dialogue of life and "on the fundamental issues of justice and development" (PCP-II 115). "PCP II makes an extra effort to be sensitive to the Muslims in particular, and urges embarking on a *dialogue of life* with them."[5]

Other Aspects of Society can benefit from the Gospel Message. The subjects of evangelization are not only people but also those realities which influence people. Some of these realities are culture, economics, and politics. Every society is composed mainly of these three realities highlighted by PCP-II. They are subjects of evangelization because, whether consciously or unconsciously, voluntarily or not, they affect persons within society. One cannot but be influenced by them. Thus, it is crucial to also see how evangelization affects these three significant aspects of society.

Regarding ***culture,*** it must be noted that the Philippines "is a pluralist society and a prime factor of our pluralism is the diversity of our cultural heritage" (PCP-II 18). This cultural pluralism can either hinder or aid evangelization. The Philippines has Pre-Spanish, Spanish, and Islamic characteristics. Despite this rich and varied cultural influx, the Philippines has a "common culture and a common social structure that we can truthfully call Filipino" (PCP-II 19). This is the very evident "structuring of social relations based on the family and its well-being, which antedate contacts with Muslim and Christian traditions" (PCP-II 19). But this cultural value—family-orientation—is also often the cause of a bigger cultural problem. It can create factionalism within the larger society and effect a lack of a more universalistic outlook for the nation. Thus, Filipino culture needs to be

5 Moreno, "PCP-II Ecclesiology," 48.

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evangelized.

The ***economy*** is another important factor. PCP-II recognizes that in the Philippine context, the economy is problematic. "The poverty and destitution of the great mass of our people are only too evident, contrasting sharply with the wealth and luxury of the relatively few families, the elite top of our social pyramid" (PCP-II 24). The country's social and economic problems "prevent the living of a life reflective of the Kingdom and thus cause the greatest anguish" (PCP-II 239). This reality directly contradicts the Gospel values that the Church teaches. In economics, there has emerged a structure of sin that the council confronts as the sin of greed for an *all-consuming desire for profit.* Clearly, this has to be transformed by Gospel values; it has to be evangelized.

Lastly, ***politics,*** like the economic aspect of the Philippines, needs to be addressed immediately: "Power and control are also elitist, lopsidedly concentrated on established families that tend to perpetuate themselves in political dynasties" (PCP-II 24). Also, "the entrenched few are not willing to give in to reforms that will redound to the greater good of the many" (PCP-II 25). Political problems also create difficulties in living for Filipinos. Gospel values must counter the sin of greed, which is manifested as the thirst for power among politicians. Thus, similar to economics, Philippine politics must be evangelized.

Characteristics of the Key Elements of Missionary Evangelization in PCP-II

Renewed and Integral Evangelization

The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines envisions

that all evangelizers, the Gospel Message, and its recipients need to be *renewed* and *integrated*. As we have already seen, one can find key elements of evangelization in PCP-II. However, they are not directly pointed out by the council, which are presented as important aspects that need renewal. Second, the council also names two aspects that would make evangelization integrated: "the unity of the two tasks of *evangelization* and *temporal liberation* is what we usually refer to as integral evangelization or integral liberation or integral salvation" (PCP-II 245).

On the one hand, PCP-II avers that these three key elements must be *renewed*. The renewal that it talks about is not necessarily a total change, although it is in some cases. In general, it simply means a rekindling of missionary fervor or a deeper desire for certain aspects of evangelization. In short, there needs to be a refocus. On the other hand, PCP-II says that all these elements need to be *integrated*. This means that the three elements are all essential, interrelated and complementary and the absence of any of them would render evangelization incomplete. Moreover, the council underlined that "this *renewed* evangelization is characterized by the clarity of its *goals*, and by the *newness of its fervor*, *methods*, and *expressions*" (PCP-II 186). In line with this, PCP-II highlights particular aspects that need special attention and renewal: catechesis, worship, social apostolate, and renewed fervor and methods of missionary evangelization.

Renewed Catechesis. Regarding catechesis and religious education, PCP-II takes them as an integral part of a "renewed integral evangelization."[6] The council asserts that there is a need for renewal in the catechesis of the Philippine Church,

6 Joseph Roche, "Catechesis/Religious Education in the Spirit of PCP II," *Landas* 6 (1992): 146.

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which does not necessarily mean that there is an error here. Renewal is needed because the context has changed and is changing. The content of evangelization remains the same, but the focus and manner of communication have to complement and cope with the present context.

PCP-II says that catechizing includes the need for conversion. It says that "conversion is a turning to God, a surrender to Jesus, a taking on of the mind and attitude of God. Without this conversion, evangelization is fruitless" (PCP-II 189). It is only in conjunction with this conversion, which is necessarily a grace from God, that effective catechesis could be done. The council then suggests that catechesis has to take on the following renewals: (1) it must return to Christ, that is, be more Christocentric; (2) it must be rooted in the Word; (3) it must be authentically Filipino, be inculturated; and (4) it must be systematic.

Fostering ***Renewed Worship*** means seeing to it that this aspect of the Church functions fully and effects transformation or development in the believers' lives. However, in the Philippines, it is often observed that worship and religious life are separated, with Filipino Catholics viewing worship "as one department of life without an intimate connection with social, economic and political life" (PCP-II 167). Thus, there is an urgent task to tell Filipino believers that the whole of life is an act of worship (cf. PCP-II 167). "We cannot worship God in our churches and shrines and then disregard him in the daily business of life" (PCP-II 168).

One particular area of concern that the council gave special focus on was *popular piety*, which is one of the most powerful resources for evangelization. Popular piety and other religious practices manifest a "thirst for God and enable people to be

generous and sacrificing in witnessing to their faith" (PCP-II 172). Popular piety can be rich in Gospel values, but it can also manifest or contain an erroneous understanding among the faithful, who might easily distort it, leading to malpractice of the faith. Thus, there is a "need to foster these popular religious practices in such a way that they do not become distortions of religion or remain at the level of superficial forms of worship, but become rather true expressions of faith" (PCP-II 173). They need updating or renewal: "This renewal process is necessary because 'practices that are good in themselves' are sometimes 'no longer responsive to the new social, cultural, or even economic status of the people.'"[7]

The council also paid attention to *Sunday Eucharist* as a very important but taken for granted venue of evangelization, noting that to some, "it is the chief occasion when they experience the Church [and] get some spiritual nourishment" (PCP-II 180). Thus, priests should give much attention in preparation for this sacramental event: "Priests in the ministry should continue to develop their preaching skills and art of presiding meaningfully in Eucharistic celebrations" (PCP-II 180).

In understanding a ***Renewed Social Apostolate***, one realizes that evangelization is about preaching the Good News and preaching through action. To evangelize is to effect change in society. To preach the Good News is "to promote human development, justice in society, and peace" (PCP-II 165). Quoting *Justice in the World* (JW), PCP II reaffirmed that to promote these things is "a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel" (JW 6).[8]

7 James Kroeger, "Discovering the Rich Treasures of Popular Piety: Theological-Pastoral-Missiological Insights," *Landas* 29 (2015): 39.

8 World Synod of Catholic Bishops, *Justice in the World* (1971), https://

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Furthermore, "evangelization is not complete without temporal liberation" (PCP-II 243). It is the flipside of spiritual liberation. Spiritual and temporal liberations are the two tasks of integral evangelization. Part of the mission of the Church is to become a "spiritual force that needs to critique the social, political and cultural fields in order to affirm, denounce, purify, or reinforce them in the light of the Word of God" (PCP-II 248). But in the Philippines, to become a spiritual force that is socially involved is a difficult task. "Our socio-economic and political problems prevent the living of a life reflective of the Kingdom" (PCP-II 239). The Philippine society's economic and political dimensions still greatly need to embody the values of the Kingdom of God because it would seem that at present, these social dimensions are greatly influenced by dis-values such as greed for profit and power. Therefore, the social aspect of evangelization is urgent and necessary for the Philippine Church.

In line with this, the council emphasized that the Church and the political community are not isolated entities. Hence, the Church must rightly participate in the political arena. However, this does not mean that the two entities will have to become one even though they serve the same purpose. There must still be autonomy. What is essential is cooperation in addition to being autonomous. For cooperation "is the basic relationship between two institutions which both serve the people but are independent of each other" (PCP-II 337).

PCP-II also affirms that the clergy must not directly engage in partisan politics. The clergy are the "foci of unity in Church communities of all levels" (PCP-II 343). What PCP-II asserts is that "it is the part of pastors to enunciate moral principles

www.cctwincities.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Justicia-in-Mundo.pdf (accessed July 5, 2020). Hereafter JW.

regarding the political order and action while it is the laity's to act in direct political action according to those principles" (PCP-II 341).

The council firmly believes that the Church must get involved whenever moral and Gospel values are at stake. The Church cannot but become the conscience of the society and help in "enhancing, encouraging, supporting what is good in Philippine society; criticizing, condemning, doing all that it can to lessen what is bad in it" (PCP-II 347). The Church, therefore, aims to recover and profoundly claims her authority to act in public service and the political arena. Because of this, the laity's involvement and leadership in politics are important since it is through them that the Church is directly involved in politics. PCP-II urges the "lay faithful to participate actively and lead in the renewing of politics in accordance with values of the Good News of Jesus" (PCP-II 350).

Faith and Ideology are also addressed by PCP-II: "Individual Christians and groups of Christians can adhere to any particular ideology they believe is best to bring about the common good in society" (PCP-II 368). Nonetheless, one must be very critical and always vigilant in asking to what extent a particular chosen ideology favors and promotes "a true and integral development of individuals and people in modern society" (PCP-II 370). The Church reminds her followers that it is permitted to follow a certain social ideology so long as it does not contradict any Church's teachings.

Special Sectors of the Society also enter into the Church's mission. In PCP-II, part of the temporal liberation aspect of integral evangelization is considering the following special sectors of society (cf. PCP-II 375-401): tribal Filipinos, children and youth, women, peasants, the urban poor, fisherfolk, and the disabled. These groups are the most vulnerable and neglected sectors of society. PCP-II suggests

that in the effort to achieve an integral evangelization, special attention must be given to them.

Renewed Fervor and Methods. The Church has never stopped doing mission in this constantly and rapidly changing world. To evangelize it, PCP-II acknowledges the need to renew certain aspects of the Church's missionary efforts (cf. PCP-II 193-201). Aside from those already discussed above, PCP-II proposes that new fervor for and new expressions of missionary evangelization are also crucial needs of the Church today. The council says that evangelization in the Philippines cannot continue unless new methods are used: "new not in the sense that they were not previously known or used before but in the sense that they are given renewed emphasis" (PCP-II 193). These various methods include: *witnessing*, *active participation*, and a *team-approach*.

Meanwhile, ***new expressions*** of the Gospel Message enhance missionary evangelization: "Today there are tremendous possibilities of transmitting the Good News through the means of social communication" (PCP-II 200). Through social media, evangelization could reach new heights and greater scope, but only if this is handled correctly and more productively. For this, there is a need for a "continuing spiritual and professional formation of Catholic mass media practitioners" (PCP-II 200). Furthermore, "new expressions will also mean the use of symbols and languages understood by the people, expressions and words which touch their minds, hearts and souls" (PCP-II 201). This could mean using the vernacular or the use of the more relevant images or practices that resonate more effectively with Filipino people.[9] This is where the creativity of evangelizers comes in.

9 It has been pointed out by Pedro Sevilla that one expression of Filipino Christology needs renewal or a good catechesis. He says that "it has been pointed out by some religious sociologists that the Christ for many Filipinos, especially the men, is the scourged, defeated and humiliated Christ (in the image of the *Padre Jesus Nazareno* carrying the cross) or even the dead Christ (in the image of the *Santo*

Above all, ***witnessing*** is pivotal. PCP-II asserts that the "first and most potent means of renewed evangelization [is] witnessing to others of the working of God's grace in our lives" (PCP-II 194). This is not to say that explicit teaching of doctrine is relegated to a level of lesser importance. It remains an indispensable means of evangelization. However, borrowing the lines of Pope Paul VI, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses" (EN 41; cf. RM 42). This witnessing is exercised in two ways: living a Gospel-inspired life and giving testimony to our experience of God's grace (cf. PCP-II 194).

Goal-Oriented Evangelization

Clarity of goals is one important characteristic of missionary evangelization that PCP-II desires. This explains why the council itself presented a good number of goals. Some of these goals are: to become a true embodiment of the Church of the poor (cf. PCP-II 122-36), have a vision of a people and nation renewed (cf. PCP-II 250-5), a transformative social apostolate (cf. PCP-II 256-61), a spirituality for social transformation (cf. PCP-II 262-82), and formation of social conscience (cf. PCP-II 283-89). These goals are indicative of the characteristics of missionary evangelization espoused by PCP-II.

True Embodiment of a Church of the Poor. One important goal that renewed evangelization seeks is that the Church truly become a *Church of the Poor*.[10] PCP-II envisions "a Church

Entierro)." This is to say that Filipino Christology often fails to preach the resurrection of Jesus. This is a characteristic of Filipino faith which needs to be renewed. It should be expressed differently, not necessarily a totally new expression, but perhaps a changed expression.

10 A "Church of the Poor" is one in which members and leaders have love and preference for the poor. This love enables them to never discriminate against the poor because of their poverty.

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that embraces and practices the evangelical spirit of poverty" (PCP-II 125). This is to say that its members must be poor in spirit and exercise justice and humility for all. Justice helps every Christian to give others their rights to the goods of the earth. Humility as a byproduct of the spirit of poverty allows everyone to live humbly and not in extravagance.

The Church promotes a ***Vision of a People and Nation Renewed***; she aims at transformative discipleship to renew every Filipino in one's conviction for self-renewal. This personal renewal should then go out of one's self and move towards building a nation which is "*maka-tao* [pro-people], *maka-bayan* [pro-country], and *maka-Diyos* [pro-God]" (PCP-II 251) where respect, justice, participation and harmony are nurtured. This is so that the Philippines would become a "civilization of life and love" (PCP-II 255).

The Church engages in the ***Social Apostolate Focused on Transformation***. At the micro-level, as seen in some dioceses and even in parochial BECs, the social apostolate of the Church has been garnering relevant results. However, the "social action apostolate has seemingly not produced the

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Instead, they "will give preferential attention and time to those who are poor, and will generously share of their own resources in order to alleviate their poverty and make them recognize the love of the Lord for them despite their poverty" (*PCP II,* no. 129). The Church of the Poor is a collaboration of all members of the Church, rich and poor alike. No one is excluded.

A "Church of the Poor" is a Church that actually champions for the poor. Poverty is a byproduct of structural sin and social injustice. PCP-II envisions a Church which fights against "today's forms of exploitation of the poor, the Church cannot remain silent" (*PCP II,* no. 131). The Church must defend and speak for and with the poor "even when doing so will mean alienation or persecution from the rich and powerful" (*PCP II*, no. 131).

A "Church of the Poor" is one in which the poor themselves would feel comfortable in the Church. It is a Church where the poor could claim that they themselves are evangelizers. It is a Church where "the poor will feel at home in her, and will participate actively, as equal to others, in her life and mission" (*PCP II,* no. 136).

desired social impact on the macro-level as evidenced by our national situation" (PCP-II 260). This is most probably an effect due to the "social system [which] obstructs rather than promotes life" (PCP-II 256). The Church aims to make these parochial results translate into the national level.

PCP-II likewise promotes a ***Spirituality of Social Transformation***. One of the goals of a renewed evangelization is the "formation of Catholics in a properly integrated spirituality" (PCP-II 187). A spirituality should drive true social transformation. The Church's spirituality is no other than Christian spirituality. It is a Christ-driven desire for transformation, because according to John (Jn 14:6), as quoted by PCP-II, Jesus Christ is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (PCP-II 275). He is, "our way of life—our spirituality—for social transformation is nothing more and nothing less than a following of Jesus-in-mission" (PCP-II 277). This spirituality must be a desire driven by "our fidelity to his Gospel of justice and love" (PCP-II 262) for the poor. Besides being Christ-centered, this spirituality also confronts sinful social structures and aims at personal and societal conversion.

The ***Formation of Social Conscience*** is another crucial goal in evangelization. Along these lines, "it is evident that Christian discipleship or a spirituality for social transformation demands a properly formed social conscience" (PCP-II 283). The council stressed that "the formation of a mature Christian conscience in relation to socio-economic and political problems is, therefore, indispensable" (PCP-II 286). One way to nurture this Christian conscience is to inform it with the social teachings of the Church, which, when interiorized, "becomes the wisdom of the heart" (PCP-II 289). The formation and maturity of Christian conscience are very important to have a more effective "moral force to bear upon the social environment" (PCP-II 288).

Renewed evangelization is goal-oriented. It sets certain goals which converge in the vision that the Philippine Church become a community of people with an integrated spirituality and a Church for the Poor.

PCP-II's Vision of Integral Evangelization: Some Observations

The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines' vision of integral evangelization is "so that all may have life" (PCP-II 253) — life in Christ.[11] This vision is operative in all of the key elements of missionary evangelization: the agents of evangelization, the Gospel Message and the recipients of missionary evangelization.

The vision that missionary-evangelization of PCP-II wants to pursue is to have life—a life in Christ that integrates both spiritual and temporal life. In line with this vision, "we are challenged to re-discover Jesus Christ, to re-tell his story, and celebrate our discipleship."[12] The Philippine Catholic Church has explicitly set earnest goals in this effort;[13] it wants to be the "Church of the Poor" (cf. PCP-II 122-136); a Church of communion (cf. PCP-II 89-97), of participation (cf. PCP-II98-101), and mission (cf. PCP-II 102-115); a Church that is priestly (cf. PCP-II 117-118), prophetic (cf. PCP-II 119-120), and kingly

11 PCP-II, though it does not directly quote from the Gospel of John, most probably based this claim from John 10:10: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

12 CBCP, "Journeying towards the Third Millenium: 'Walking in the New Life with Christ,'" *CBCP Online*, 1997, http://cbcponline.net/journeying-towards-the-third-millenium-walking-in-the-new-life-with-christ/ (accessed June 22, 2020).

13 Quevedo, "PCP-II on a Renewed Church." In this article, Quevedo speaks of six fundamental components of the vision of PCP-II: a Church of authentic disciples; a Church of communion; a participatory Church; a Church engaged in integral evangelization; an inculturated Church; and a Church of the Poor.

(cf. PCP-II 121 and 137); an inculurated Church (cf. PCP-II 160-162). All these goals are in view of the teaching, witness, example, and life of Jesus Christ.

The desire to become the "Church of the Poor" remains a valid goal for today.[14] Some bishops, theologians, priests, and lay collaborators believe that this noble aspiration has yet to be achieved.[15] However, they remain optimistic despite the slow and little developments that the Philippine Catholic Church has done to implement this goal.[16] One critical commentary on this seeming failure or slow achievement of this goal is that perhaps "the delegates to PCP II have in mind a Church of the Poor different from the one understood in Latin America in those days."[17] Understanding what truly is the Church of the Poor is very crucial in achieving it.

Similarly, Luis Antonio Tagle and Pablo Virgilio David find certain inadequacies in the Church's efforts of becoming

14 Cf. Eleanor Dionisio, ed., *Becoming a Church of the Poor: Philippine Catholicism after the Second Plenary Council* (Quezon City, Philippines: John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues, 2011).

15 Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines*, Church Renewal: Proceedings and Addresses of the National Pastoral Consultation on Church Renewal* (Manila: CBCP, 2001).

16 Cf. Eric Marcelo Genilo, et al., eds, *The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines: Quo Vadis?* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2015).

17 Denis Murphy, "Too late for a 'Church of the Poor'?" *Inquirer.net*, July 21, 2015, https://opinion.in quirer.net/86897/too-late-for-a-church-of-the-poor (accessed June 22, 2020). This commentary suggests that when "the delegates saw the Church of the Poor primarily as a place where rich and poor Catholics could meet, pray together, get to know each other and help each other, they failed to seriously take into consideration of the magnitude of corruption and greed plaguing the country. For at that time, the Philippines was at peace and its economy was improving. This relative calm hindered the achievement of truly becoming the Church of the Poor for such Church "can only take root in a society that knows it is rotten with corruption and greed and thinking that by simply making the rich and the poor know each other cannot singly and truly facilitate the aimed goal."

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the Church of the Poor. About understanding what the Church of the Poor is, Tagle suggests that an assessment be made on the level of reception of the teachings of the Philippine Church.[18] On the level of *official interpretation* as part of the reception of PCP-II's teaching on the Church of the Poor, Tagle believes that the efforts are outstanding. But, on the level of *movement*, he doubts that most people were driven to embody what they have supposedly understood.[19] Moreover, David comments that "we have to honestly admit that twenty years after PCP-II, the majority of our poor Filipino Catholics still have no access to the Word of God, either by hearing or by reading."[20] He says that this is constitutive of the non-achievement of truly becoming the Church of the Poor; for if the Word of God does not evangelize the poor, then how can they become conscious evangelizers themselves? These critical assessments on becoming the Church of the Poor affirm that the goal of PCP-II of becoming the Church of the Poor continues to be valid and remains a priority until today.

Other goals of PCP-II concerning the vision of having life in Christ is to become a Church of communion, participation, and mission: "Christ calls [everyone] to form a Christian

18 Cf. Antonio Tagle, "What Have We Become?: Ten Years After PCP II," *Landas*, 16 (2002): 108-111. Tagle based this commentary on Yves Congar's framework of reception. This framework suggests that reception is of two levels; the first one is the correct official interpretation and the next level is movement. Official interpretation is done by the experts and in the case at hand, by bishops, priests, theologians and learned lay collaborators. This is usually an official work done by the officials of the Church. On the other hand, reception as movement is the "elaboration—in ordinary life, in attitudes, in values, in relationships, in priorities, in lifestyle—of the renewed self-understanding and the renewed sense of mission." Tagle affirms that this is more difficult to assess than reception as interpretation.

19 Cf. Tagle, "What Have We Become?," 105-117.

20 Pablo Virgilio David, "Being Rooted in the Word of God: PCP-II and Sacred Scripture," in *The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines: Quo Vadis?*, edited by Eric Marcelo Genilo, et al., (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2015), 25.

community" (PCP-II 89) that is patterned after the Trinity. PCP-II wants that Christian living should embody a unity and equality reflective of God's desire within the believer's community. Christian life is also a life of participation in the life of the Church. "In the body of Christ, each has a gift from the Spirit to share, and each has a need of the others' gifts for the building up of the body and for the fulfillment of its mission" (PCP-II 98). This means that each one is encouraged to participate in the Church. A life in Christ does not stop gathering as a people and actively participating in that gathering; "the Church is a Communion in a state of mission" (PCP-II 103). Having a Christian life is about following Christ and going into the world to proclaim and witness for Christ as his priestly, prophetic, and kingly people.

Lastly, PCP-II speaks of an inculturated Church as one of its goals in view of following Christ's vision and having the fullness of life in Him. This is to say that PCP-II wants an authentically Filipino Church so that the Gospel Message may be appropriated in the local language and culture, becoming more relevant and easily acceptable to the Filipino people (cf. PCP-II 160-162). This is to make the life of Christ resonate more profoundly to Filipinos.

Nonetheless, most of these brilliant and inspiring ideas have remained ideas and continued to gather dust in the bookshelves. It would even seem that not every priest is familiar with PCP-II and its contents. For instance, in this researcher's whole seminary formation, more particularly during his formal academic formation, there was never a time when the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines was explicitly discussed. The researcher only came to know of such an important event in the Philippine Catholic Church's life when he accidentally found a copy of the proceedings in a thrift

store. It was only then that he started to read up on PCP-II. This experience might not be true for all priests and seminarians. Still, it is nonetheless valid to assert that not every Filipino Christian now enjoys the great wealth of wisdom that PCP-II offers, and this is truly unfortunate.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle suggests, in his article on PCP-II published in *Landas* in 2002, that one way to gauge the effectiveness of the Church's evangelization efforts is to look at the important national and political events in the country in view of the values that the Catholic Church upholds and teaches. He suggests using Yves Congar's framework of reception.[21] Congar has said that reception is of two levels: interpretation and movement. On the one hand, reception of PCP-II as official *interpretation* "involves primarily an interpretation of the documents, the texts, and the decrees of the council."[22] This is usually an official work done by the leaders of the Church. On the other hand, reception as *movement* is the "elaboration—in ordinary life, in attitudes, in values, in relationships, in priorities, in lifestyle—of the renewed self-understanding and the renewed sense of mission."[23] Tagle affirms that the latter is more difficult to assess than the former. These two levels of reception may be used to evaluate the impact of missionary evangelization, universally or nationally. What do the current events happening in our nation today tell us about how we have lived out the vision of PCP-II?

21 Cf. Luis Antonio Tagle, "What Have We Become? Ten Years after PCP-II," *Landas* 16 (2002): 108-111.
22 Tagle, "What Have We," 109.
23 Tagle, "What Have We," 110.

Conclusion

PCP-II is a rich resource for missionary evangelization, full of valuable insights as it expounds on the key elements of evangelization in a comprehensive, detailed, and contextualized manner. PCP-II may well also have great relevance for and value to the universal Church. Unfortunately, many Filipino Catholics have yet to discover and appreciate PCP-II as a valuable missionary manual that can guide them in their evangelization endeavors, which is an essential aspect of their baptismal calling.

One recommendation that the author would like to suggest is the formation of national and diocesan committees to evaluate how we do evangelization. Aside from the present National Pastoral Consultation on Church Renewal (NPCCR), the author suggests setting up a committee that would conduct a nationwide and diocesan assessment on evangelization. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) may also tap academic bodies to conduct surveys that would inform their interventions. A diocesan mission evaluation should also be conducted. This evaluation is necessary to assess the effectiveness of current missionary programs and check whether there are existing diocesan programs that are consciously and actively working for such a purpose. Meanwhile, aside from being a healthy self-examination, a national mission evaluation would also serve as an avenue for the sharing of best practices as well as the assessment and analysis of contemporary problems. In line with this, our 2021 celebrations of both the 500th year of Christianity in the Philippines and the 30th anniversary of PCP-II could be a very opportune time for this reassessment.