Pope Francis and the Culture of Encounter

Angeli Francis S. Rivera

Pope Francis' political style is simple, charismatic, and other-oriented. His gestures and expressions indicate the unique influence of the "culture of encounter," his genius lexicon, which brings a spirit of inclusivity and, at the same time, exerts significant pressure on both state and non-state actors. This lexicon has frequently appeared in his addresses and interviews, earning its multifaceted meanings and interpretations.

Sections 222-237 of his political corpus, the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), points to the culture of encounter as building a "people of peace." Permanent Observer to the United Nations Archbishop Bernardito Auza affirmed this before his audience at the School of Diplomacy and International Relations, of Seton Hall University in March 2017. He said that the culture of encounter is the pope's "unifying inspiration" for all of his gestures and expressions. It also aims to produce mutual knowledge and respect,[1] which are values that are sometimes neglected at the political playground.

The objective of this article is to provide an overview of the spiritual and theological influences that Pope Francis

1 Bernardito Auza, "Pope Francis Diplomacy," School of Diplomacy and International Relations," *Seton Hall University, South Orange New Jersey*, 1 March 2017, https://holyseemission.org/contents//statements/58ba0b742bc1b.php (accessed April 5, 2018).

encountered, and the different impressions that they had on him, which led to the contouring of his "culture of encounter" in his public positions. Internal and external influences, namely, personal background and political experiences, shape a person's gestures and expressions. This glimpse into the elements that shaped the mind and heart of the present Pontiff will hopefully help us to better understand his proposed "culture of encounter," as expressed in the four guiding principles that he laid down in *Evangelii Gaudium*.

A Brief Background

Jorge Mario Bergoglio was the eldest son of Mario José Bergoglio and Regina María Sivori. He was born on December 17, 1936, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.[2] In 1958, he entered the Society of Jesus and completed his formation for a decade and a half.[3] He was nominated provincial of his order immediately after taking his perpetual vows in 1973. This position lasted until 1979.[4] He was made bishop in 1992,[5] archbishop in 1998, and cardinal in 2001.[6]

Among these series of relevant posts,[7] being Argentina's provincial was the "craziest"[8] in his own assessment. He gave to some the impression of being indifferent towards the arrest and torture of left-wing priests by the military, some of which were fellow Jesuits Yorio and Jalics. Furthermore, the province was having a hard time adapting and renewing in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, and vocations drastically fell.

He remained in authority after leaving his provincial seat.

8 Antonio Spadaro, "Interview with Pope Francis," *Speeches*, September 30, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130921_intervista-spadaro.html (accessed October 3 2019).

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However, he was unsuccessful towards the left-wing Jesuits. They took his theological approach as an inclination towards ultra-conservatism.[9] Even with the complaints against him, Bergoglio endured. He was, as George Whelan would remark, able to master his pastoral sense.[10] His theological vision, especially his inductive theology, became stable when he became the president of the Episcopal Conference of Argentina, a position which lasted from 2005-2010. He led the Conference's drafting of the Aparecida document in 2007.[11] This document was cited at least 13 times in his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium,* otherwise known as the political corpus of his pontificate.

He shares the same Aristotelian thought (with his predecessors) that politics is brought to fruition if it promotes and serves the common good.[12] What ennobles the political vocation is its transcendent dimension. After all, politics is a godly vocation.[13] Its purest essence is manifested when oriented towards the highest of all human goods.[14] All the more when the person who executes this upwells with the illustrious charism.

Bergoglio's global political influence would widen

9 George Whelan, "The Theological and Pastoral Method of Pope Francis," *RTE* 22 (2018): 104.
10 Ibid., 103.
11 Carletti, "From the Center to the Periphery," 213.
12 Thomas Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought: From Argentina to Vatican* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 135.
13 Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation* Evangelii Gaudium *on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World*, *Apostolic Exhortations*, November 24, 2013, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (accessed October 5 2017), no. 205. Or EG in the succeeding citations.
14 Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought*, 135.

dramatically on March 13, 2013 with his election as Pope. By electing him, the conclave chose someone whose personal aura, international reputation, religious affiliation, and pastoral sense,[15] they hoped, would be able to redirect the political, moral compass back to its purest essence.[16] Thus, the conclave made the landmark decision of transposing the center of global Catholicism from Europe to the Southern hemisphere.[17] Through the political style of encounter[18], PF[19] would make the headlines, reviving interest in religion once more and its contribution to peace.

PF's Spiritual Influences

After conducting a lengthy interview with PF, Antonio Spadaro concluded that human faces constituted his spirituality.[20] PF's pastoral sense coordinates with the universal assertion that he is the antipode of his predecessor, whose strength is in theology. His grandmother, Rosa, the premier catechist of the Bergoglio household, reared this pastoral sense. Through her, PF grew to appreciate the faith.[21]

15 Cool, *Francis: A New World Pope,* 8-9.
16 Pasquale Ferrara, "The Concept of Periphery in Pope Francis' Discourse: A Religious Alternative to Globalization," *Religions* 6 (2015): 46.
17 Cool, *Francis: A New World Pope,* 4-5.
18 "Culture of encounter" will be cited as "COE" hereafter.
19 "Pope Francis" will be cited as PF hereafter.
20 Spadaro, "Interview with Pope Francis."
21 Berryman, "The Argentine and Latin American Background of Pope Francis," 57.

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> I had the grace to grow up in a family where faith was lived in a simple and concrete way; but it was above all my grandmother, my father's mother, who marked my path of faith…She was a woman who explained to us, who spoke to us about Jesus, who taught us the catechism…I received the first Christian announcement, from my grandmother![22]

Rosa is "a saint who suffered so much, also spiritually, and yet always went forward with courage."[23] To him, she is the epitome of the military Church.[24] As a result of constant encounters with this matriarch, PF grew to associate his faith and actions with the simplicity and concreteness of the gospel.

The universality of the gospel was, in turn, appreciated through an encounter with an Argentinian Rabbi named Abraham Skorka, PF's close friend, colleague, and co-author of the book, "On Heaven and Earth." Rabbi Skorka belonged to the seventh-largest Jewish community in the world.[25] Their friendship was punctuated by shared convictions instead of differences. For instance, both shared the presupposition that human meaning is linked inseparably to the Source.[26] Rabbi Skorka stated that his encounter with PF made him closer to knowing himself and his God:

22 Sergio Centofanti, "The Pope, the Grandmother, and the Grandchild: Faith without Words," *Vaticannews.va*, 2 June 2019, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-06/pope-francis-romania-grandmother-grandchild-faith.html (accessed October 3, 2019).
23 Spadaro, "Interview with Pope Francis."
24 Ibid.
25 Noam Marans, "The Pope Francis Effect and Catholic-Jewish Relations," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 10 (2015): 3.
26 Cool, *Francis: A New World Pope,* 22.

> When I'm with Cardinal Bergoglio, these two lessons become one. ..We each had to take turns strengthening the bonds between us. We have transformed our dialogue into a group conversation, exposing our souls. We accept all the risks this implies, yet profoundly convinced that this is the only way for us to understand what it means to be a human being, moving ever closer to God.[27]

Their unlikely companionship underscored the centrality of God in bringing about successful encounters. Intimate and real encounters breed more on respect than compromise. PF once said:

> With Rabbi Skorka I never had to compromise my Catholic identity, just like he never had to do with his Jewish identity, and this was not only out of respect that we have for each other but also because of how we understand interreligious dialogue. The challenge consisting of walking the path of respect and affection, walking in the presence of God and striving to be faultless.[28]

Rabbi Skorka lives on the philosophy of fellow Jew, Martin Buber, on I-Thou relationships. On the other hand, PF is inclined to philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, Buber's acknowledged disciple.[29] Skorka and PF made headlines on their joint public spiritual expressions: one before the Wailing Wall and the other at the Vatican Gardens.[30]

Apart from Skorka, PF drank from the symbiotic

27 Jorge Mario Bergoglio and Abraham Skorka, *On Heaven and Earth: Pope Francis on Faith, Family, and the Church in the Twenty-first Century,* trans. Alejandro Bermudez and Howard Goodman (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), xii.
28 Ibid., xv-xvi.
29 H. Reed Armstrong, "The Theological Formation of Jorge Mario Bergoglio, S.J.," *Christian Order* (2016): 22-23.
30 Ibid.

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relationship between self and religious inquiries from the thoughts of Luigi Giussani, founder of the "Communion and Liberation" movement in Argentina. PF credited the spiritual design of personal encounters from him. On two occasions, PF presented Giussani's books publicly: *The Religious Sense* in 1999 and *The Attraction of Jesus Christ* in 2001.[31] Famous for his great trilogy of apologetics, PF noted that genuine encounters even with the most challenging peoples or institutions can occur by addressing religious inquiries first.[32] It is the same as meeting the other from soul to soul. As Keith Lemna and David Delaney commented:

> Living Christian personal witness and encounter is absolutely essential for evangelizing the unbeliever, in order that he may verify the claims of Christ; they even allow one to raise the preliminary religious questions at an appropriate pitch, that he might understand these questions bring into human consciousness the totality of existence and that Christ alone is the total response to them.[33]

However, Giusanni's critique of modern culture contrasted with PF's high regard for it. For Giussani, culture cannot be a channel of the Christian faith.[34] Giussani's perspective significantly differs from Bergoglio's favorite theme: the people of God, which emphasizes historico-cultural analysis as its method.

Nonetheless, the most definite and visible spiritual influence to PF is none other than the founder of the religious order to which he belongs: St. Ignatius of Loyola of the Society of

31 Keith Lemna and David Delaney, "Three Pathways into the Theological Mind of Pope Francis," *Nova et Vetera* 1 (2014): 44.
32 Lemna and Delaney, "Three Pathways into the Theological Mind of Pope Francis," 49.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., 50.

Jesus. From St. Ignatius, PF learned that the gospel takes ample time to mature in genuine encounters. As previously mentioned, PF's spiritual formation took a decisive turn in the series of essential positions he took as a provincial and as a rector at the seminary, at a time when the province of Argentina was adapting and renewing.

Ignatius of Loyola wrote the *Spiritual Exercises,* which has become an authoritative guide for spiritual discernment.[35] Discernment is not to be linked plainly with decision-making. According to James Martin, discernment involves a prayerful conversation with God towards a choice that He wills.[36] In other words, it employs the exercise of a properly formed and informed conscience when affronted with moral issues that require more than a day of deliberation.[37] The objective is to achieve "indifference." There are many methods for this Ignatian discernment. But for the extent of influence to the study, the researcher has outlined two points.

First, to see all things in God and God in all things.[38] A discerning person needs to withstand lies and false truths through a life of prayer, constant examination of conscience, and a sense of reality.[39] Sources for reflection and the formation of conscience include the Gospel, the Church teachings, and God's promptings.[40] Discernment integrates discipline that comes from encountering God's love.[41] Just as Jesus looks

35 Kaiser, *Inside the Jesuits,* 32.
36 James Martin, "Discernment," in *A Pope Francis Lexicon,* eds. Joshua McElwee and Cindy Wooden (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2018), 48-49.
37 Martin, "Discernment," 48.
38 Kaiser, *Inside the Jesuits,* 36.
39 Massaro, "The First Jesuit Pope," 49.
40 Martin, "Discernment," 49.
41 Jim Corkey, "What Can you Expect From a Jesuit Pope?" in *the Francis Factor,* eds. John Littleton and Eamon Maher (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2014), 50.

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and loves the world differently and tends it with his unlimited compassion,[42] a discerning person is also called to behold and to love the world by affirming the values of the gospel in the culture of peoples.[43]

Second, mastery of the will. A discerning person needs to condition his/her will that it may become like Christ's.[44] Distractions to look out for include self-centeredness (pride), ambitions, greed, and self-serving pleasures.[45] He/she must not be the center, but God alone. He/she must be consoled only by God.[46] Accordingly, PF said something more or less the same in his interview with Antonio Spadaro about a Jesuit who entertains creative tensions such as center and periphery:

> A Jesuit is a person who is not centered in himself. The society itself also looks to a center outside itself. Its center is Christ and His Church. Society centers itself in Christ and the Church. It has to find points of reference for its balance and being able to live on the margins, on the frontier.[47]

In the most decisive part of his/her prayerful conversation, the discerning person hears voices or receives signs that will put him/her at opposite ends. Finally, he/she makes the right judgment. A judgment is considered wise if the discerning person feels at peace. [48] There is room for mistakes in the discernment process and these are welcomed to bring fruition into one's spiritual life.[49]

42 The Decrees and Documents of the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, decree 2, no. 15 quoted in Corkey, "What Can you Expect From a Jesuit Pope?" 51.
43 Massaro, "The First Jesuit Pope," 49.
44 Kaiser, *Inside the Jesuits,* 39.
45 Massaro, "The First Jesuit Pope," 48.
46 Kaiser, *Inside the Jesuits,* 6.
47 Spadaro, "Interview with pope Francis."
48 Martin, "Discernment," 48 and 51.
49 Matthew Ashley, "Pope Francis as Interpreter of Ignatius' Spiritual

With these brief orientations to PF's spiritual encounters, some perspectives about PF become clear. PF's inclination towards realities are taken after Rosa. His dialogical method (leading to a genuine encounter) from Skorka and Giussani, and his appreciation for time and process from St. Ignatius. These perspectives will have clear associations with the four Bergoglian principles in his political corpus: *Evangelii Gaudium.*

PF's Theological Influences

When asked about his impressions on the Vatican II Council, PF said: "Vatican II was a rereading of the Gospel in the light of contemporary culture. Vatican II produced a renewal movement that simply comes from the same Gospel. The fruits are enormous."[50]

This optimism invites attention as to how PF observes them. The Council Fathers had envisioned a real, human, and loving Church. These intentions went well with PF's public actions,[51] as James Martin commented: "Francis has not been telling us what the council means. He has been showing us what it means by his actions."[52]

PF had a rich papal history before him, being the fifth pope to implement and interpret Vatican II's ideals and visions. He was no participant of the council, but his theological formation took place in its aftermath.[53] Among its documents, *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* gave lasting impressions, since

Exercises," *Spiritus* 17 (2017): 169.

50 Spadaro, "Interview with Pope Francis."

51 Kaiser, *Inside the Jesuits,* 83.

52 Martin, "Discernment," 51.

53 Berryman, "The Argentine and Latin American Background of Pope Francis," 57.

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both confer the Church's *ad intra* and *ad extra* dimensions.

Behind these documents are two theologians, especially encountered by Pope Francis in his formation: French Dominican Yves Congar and Italian priest Romano Guardini. Besides these, there are several creative thinkers in the Council that have also influenced the current Pope. However, only Congar and Guardini will be introduced for this study.

Yves Congar had authored several books and by these had impressed several theologians and experts of Vatican II. In the Council, he was the consultant for the Preparatory Theological Commission and was a *peritus* on several commissions.[54] He was among the engineers of *ressourcement;* a term previously bombarded with suspicions from the conservatives until its integration with Scriptures, Liturgy, and the Church Fathers.[55] For this study, reform will be used to particularize the theological significance of *ressourcement.*

Historical points exist because of reforms. Reforms address faults in history. The Church's humanness proves that reform is a constant companion. It has been primarily associated with the savagery of revolution, but for Congar, reform is "normal, and even ordinary."[56] It may request for improvement or novelty.[57] On the part of the Church, the first step is self-analysis or inquiry, so that the council's wishes on positive engagement with the world may be dutifully executed.[58]

54 O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II,* 332.
55 Paul Murray, "Expanding Catholicity through Ecumenicity in the Work of Yves Congar: *Ressourcement,* Receptive Ecumenism and Catholic Reform," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3 (2011): 274.
56 Yves Congar, *True and False Reform in the Church,* trans. Paul Philbert (Collegeville: Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2011), 13.
57 Ibid.
58 Robert Royal, *A Deeper Vision: The Catholic Intellectual Tradition*

For Congar, true reform means, "those which have been made with concern for the concrete need of souls, in pastoral perspective, aiming at holiness." In other words, Congar's reform is not mainly on the structure but the Church's identity, particularly her mystery and spirituality. Hence, adaptation and revision in these areas are a matter of urgency,[59] from leadership to membership.[60] Without these, the pastoral care of souls suffer. Using pneumatological ecclesiology, Congar was able to initiate reform in the core of the Church—the people. Both the hierarchy and the laity have been distinguished without dividing or prioritizing one over the other.[61] Both maintained their differences without elimination.

In the same vein, Congar criticized ideologies for causing schisms and divisions among peoples.[62] Ideologies are the offspring of historical necessity, but they lack the mastery of the sources that properly guide reforms. Congar referred to divisions in the Church that are deficient in the proper understanding of the Sacred Scriptures and Tradition.[63] These ideologies politicized the "people of God" terminology. Congar warned against isolating reform from its Christological foundations and associations with the Church as the sacrament and mystical body of Christ.[64]

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in the Twentieth Century (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2015), 115.

59 O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II,* 78.

60 Jean Marie Gribaudo, *A Holy Yet Sinful Church: Three Twentieth Century Movements in Developing a Theology* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2015), 51.

61 James Ambrose Lee, "Shaping Reception: Yves Congar's Reception of Johan Adam Möhler," *New Blackfriars* (2016):10.

62 Austen Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2014), 142 and 193.

63 Gribaudo, *A Holy Yet Sinful Church,* 65.

64 Royal, *A Deeper Vision,* 181.

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PF shares in the same vision of reform, which underscores the evangelical revolution of the Church,[65] or in other words, the steady path of conversion and purification.[66] Reform was not really new to the Church as the Council Fathers, and pondering theologians emphasized. Yet the way PF delivers it makes it new. For instance, to shift the attention of the Church to the Gospel, he used the imagery of a missionary field hospital for the wounded souls.[67] Apart from this was his address to the Roman Curia, in which he said: "Dear brothers and sisters, it is not wrinkles we need to worry about in the Church but stains!"[68]

Other implications of Congar's hermeneutic of true reform and theology of the people[69] are mainly present in PF's *Evangelii Gaudium,* in Chapter I Subheading II and Chapter III Subheading I, respectively.

Romano Guardini was also one of the engineers of *ressourcement.*[70] This German priest-philosopher had influenced the creative thinkers of the council, among them Hans Urs von Balthasar, Karl Rahner, Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI.[71] PF came upon him while he was discerning on renewing the Jesuit province of Argentina. Guardini was

65 Massimo Franco, "The Possible Revolution of Pope Francis," *Survival* 6 (2013): 118.
66 Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga, "Reform," in *A Pope Francis Lexicon,* eds. Joshua McElwee and Cindy Wooden (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2018), 152.
67 James Bretzke, "Theological Roundtable: The Francis Effect on the *Munus Docendi* and *Gubernandi* of the Church," *Horizons* 42 (2015): 372.
68 Maradiaga, "Reform," 152.
69 Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope,* 112.
70 Murray, "Expanding Catholicity through Ecumenicity in the Work of Yves Congar," 274.
71 Michael Collins, *Francis Bishop of Rome* (SAR China: Claretian Publications Macau, 2013), 35.

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initially the topic of his doctoral dissertation. From Guardini, PF solidified his favorite theme: encounter. Guardini is uniquely connected to PF by the former's exclusive association with Martin Buber. Buber personally invited him to a series of Jewish-Christian Dialogue in Frankfurt, Germany.[72]

PF took great interest in Guardini's interpretation of modernity and his critique of Marxist and Hegelian dialectics in his *Der Gegensatz*. Guardini's solution, contra dialectics, was his theory of oppositions, otherwise known as *gegensätz*. Accordingly, one should perceive reality from the periphery to understand the whole. Opposing truths may conflict with one another, but by grasping both, one can know the fullness of absolute reality.[73]

Through genuine encounter, both sides can keep their integrity without the need for synthesizing or eliminating differences. In other words, Guardini's polar vision of reality was able to unite and connect multifaceted realities.[74] Realities, though they may differ, necessarily cause creative tensions. Encounter, as Balthasar analyzed in the legacies of Guardini, does not impose one system by eliminating differences, but recognizes the givenness, essentiality, uniqueness, and mystery of the "other,"[75] for instance, his/her laws and values.[76] The general meeting of the "I" and the "other" goes more in-depth, becomes communal, and pedagogical.[77]

Guardini creates an encounter for philosophy and

72 Royal, *A Deeper Vision,* 136.
73 Ibid., 138.
74 Patrick Gorevan, "Only Connect: Romano Guardini, *Gaudium et Spes* and the Unity of Christian Experience," *New Blackfriars* (2018): 425.
75 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Romano Guardini: Reform from the Source* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 23.
76 Balthasar, *Romano Guardini,* 25.
77 Ibid., 27.

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theology. The implication of this polar vision to people is through reform, a return to God, the Source. The only way to capture the reality about people is to look at the whole, to look at God, the single source of fulfillment.[78] Once God escapes the perspective of the person, or is devalued, the person easily becomes prey to ideologies. Only through God can one capture his/her authentic personhood.[79] Relating this with Catholicism, an understanding of the human person's reality entails a perception of the whole, in the person of Christ.

Furthermore, human reason and will devoid of truths of Revelation will make human intellect in the words of Newman, "wild living."[80] This Guardinian influence is palpable in *Evangelii Gaudium's* four principles in building a people of God, particularly the principles "unity prevails over conflict," and "the whole is greater than its part." Because of Guardini, PF grew a liking towards creating new anthropology of politics.[81] Similar to Giusanni, Guardini's critique of modern culture contrasts with Vatican II's optimism of engagement with the contemporary world.

Three important ways these two theologians have made an impact on PF's theology can be observed. First, from Guardini's favorite theme on encounter, PF quotes predecessor Benedict XVI on the return of ethics as an event of encounter. The encounter that springs from, "love that then also knows how to create corresponding actions,"[82] and further his version of encounter as a constant calling that

78 Ibid., 44.
79 Royal, *A Deeper Vision,* 143.
80 Ibid., 144.
81 Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer,* 197-98.
82 Benedict XVI's *Renewal of Moral Theology* quoted in Alessandro Rovati, "Mercy is a Person: Pope Francis and the Christological Turn in Moral Theology," *Journal of Moral Theology* 2 (2017): 54.

strikes anywhere and anytime, and helps the person become more humble like Christ.[83]

The creative tension from Guardini's polar vision of reality is what PF upholds in balancing Vatican II's *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento*.[84] PF advances the image of the Church as the face of God's mercy and communion,[85] one that treats every situation as an encounter with Christ himself, all humility and openness. [86] This image is also faithful to the council's intention of an encounter with Christ as a person and a concrete reality.

This first observation is connected in a way to the second observation, which is the Church's positive engagement with the world. PF's evangelical reform, attuned with Congar's true reform, speaks of the task to bridge the doctrinal and pastoral mindsets. There were two instances in which PF reechoed this task. First, on the occasion of the International Congress of Theology in 2015, he said: "What gets generated is the false opposition between theology and thinking pastorally, between believing reflection and believing life."[87] Bridging both mindsets is no longer the responsibility of the hierarchy alone but by everybody. Taking from Congar's pneumatological ecclesiology, the task of reflecting the "signs of the times," is imperative to all members of the Church.

83 Jorge Mario Bergoglio, *Open Mind, Faithful Heart:* Reflections on Following Jesus, trans. Joseph Owens (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 2013), 9-10.

84 Alessandro Rovati, "Mercy is a Person," 56.

85 Richard Gaillardetz, *Vatican II, Pope Francis and the Renewal of Catholicism* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2015), 119.

86 Alan Falconer, "Mercy as the Essence of the Gospel: Key Themes in Walter Kasper and the Ministry of Pope Francis," *International Journal for the Study of Christian Church* 15 (2015): 251.

87 Pope Francis' recorded message on the occasion of the International Congress of Theology in Buenos Aires Argentina in September 2015 quoted in: Ashley, "Pope Francis as Interpreter of Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises," 165.

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Second, on leading the production of the document by the International Theological Commission (ITC) in 2014.[88] The said document underscored *sensus fidei fidelis* on the following ideas: 1) the differences between the personal and ecclesial senses of faith, 2) the task of a "listening magisterium,"[89] and 3) the Holy Spirit as the Organ of the Church's Living Tradition.[90] Previously, PF's apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* prompted the discussion on this condoned personal dimension of *sensus fidei*: "The flock itself has its sense of smell to find new paths."[91] This thinking communicated the significance of the conciliar teaching on *sensus fidei* to PF's theology.

Third observation, PF learned and expounded collegially from the council, the "theology of the people" concept. Together with the Argentine school of theology, PF explored this theology. The section below will discuss this developed post-conciliar concept briefly.

The Argentine School of Liberation Theology

PF encountered Theology of the People's Lucio Gera and Juan Carlos Scannone in the series of the Latin American Bishops Conferences (CELAM). Their contributions make up the impressions that PF continues to bring into his political style. For this study, only Lucio Gera and Juan Carlos Scannone will be reviewed.

88 Bretzke, "Theological Roundtable," 378.
89 Ibid., 380.
90 International Theological Commission, "Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church," 2014, *Congregations, http*://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20140610_sensus-fidei_en.html (accessed October 1 2019), no. 20. Or *ITC* in the succeeding citations.
91 EG, no. 31.

Lucio Gera is hailed the father of the theology of the people (TP) and the Argentine School of Liberation Theology. He was a consulted expert at Medellin and one of the principal drafters of the San Miguel Declaration.[92] He drifted apart from fellow liberation theologians in 1967, after refusing the inclusion of his name in the list of the signatories of the Third World Priests' final document in 1967.[93] The main reason was his resistance to Marxist ideology.

Gera's contribution was the championing of the concept of *el pueblo* (the people) against the Marxist idea of people caged in class struggles and passivity. *El pueblo* refers to active agents of salvation history [94] and encompasses the simple and the poor who have their creative ways of incarnating the gospel to their culture.[95] They are fruitful sources of theological reflection and pastoral direction.[96] *El pueblo* is Gera's take from the council's 'People of God,' while focusing on the themes of 'community' and 'tradition,' which were both rejected by Marxism.[97] Gera declined in influence just as liberation theology weakened in the mid-80s. However, Bergoglio would organize a conference in 1985, which incubated his ideas.[98]

Juan Carlos Scannone is until now, PF's mentor and spiritual advisee. He belonged to the spearheads of the Argentine School of Liberation Theology. He fused the ideas of *el pueblo* with phenomenology, particularly Emmanuel

92 The San Miguel Declaration was an attempt to apply the ideals of Medellin. See Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer,* 111.
93 Ibid., 99.
94 Ibid., 112.
95 Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought*, 73.
96 Ibid.
97 Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer,* 101.
98 Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought,* 78.

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Levinas' 'alterity.'[99] Taking from *Gaudium et Spes* and Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi,* Scannone crafted the four characteristics of Argentine school of liberation theology: 1) its source is God, 2) it favors unity over conflict, 3) it is richly expressed in popular religiosity, and 4) it prioritizes the evangelization of cultures.[100]

Theology of the People (TP)[101]

The characteristics described above are also present in his and Gera's Theology of the People, which was demonstrated lately in PF's *EG.* "Theology of the culture" was similarly reputed in the exhortation, particularly in this paragraph:

> The People of God is incarnate in the peoples of the earth, each of which has its own culture. The concept of culture is valuable for grasping the various expressions of the Christian life present in God's people…culture embraces a totality of a people's life...The human person is always situated in a culture. Grace supposes culture, and God's gift becomes flesh in the culture of those who receive it.[102]

TP belonged to Latin American Liberation Theology's four currents[103] and was led by Argentine thinkers Gera, Scannone, and Rafael Tello. Previously, mainstream liberation theology[104] was inspired by Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio,*

99 Lemna and Delaney, "Three Pathways into the Theological Mind of Pope Francis," 31 & 33.
100 Ibid., 34-35.
101 "Theology of the People" will be cited as *TP* hereafter.
102 EG, no. 115.
103 Juan Carlos Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People" *Theological Studies* 1 (2016): 124.
104 "Liberation Theology" will be cited as *TL* hereafter.

particularly by the notion of "development." Its theological foundation was the exodus liberation nonetheless.[105]

But what makes TP different from TL is its resistance to the Marxist methods of social analysis, understanding, and strategies.[106] While TL used the economic theory of dependency,[107] TP explored TL's hermeneutic in creating an inculturated theology.[108] TP began showing its fragments from the Declaration of the Argentine Bishops in San Miguel in 1969, a pastoral application stipulated by the Medellin Conference in 1969.[109] Its theology was sourced years later when, on September 1996, a group of Latin American theologians and experts collaborated with the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith (CDF) to develop the four themes of TL. One of the topics was the theology of culture, assigned to Carlos Galli, Lucio Gera's student, and follower.[110]

TP explored *Lumen Gentium'*s 'People of God' found in paragraph no.9[111] and was interweaved with *Gaudium et Spes*' 'culture,' in no. 53,[112] leading to the idea of the people as subjects of history and culture.[113] According to Philip Berryman, the turn to the people as a theological theme was the motivation of the populism of Peronism in Argentina and of the Third World Priest movement[114] with which Gera

105 Berryman, "The Argentine and Latin American Background of Pope Francis," 58.
106 Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 124.
107 Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought,* 62.
108 Lemna and Delaney, "Three Pathways into the Theological Mind of Pope Francis," 32.
109 Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 119-120.
110 Ibid., 125.
111 Berryman, "The Argentine and Latin American Background of Pope Francis," 69.
112 Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 122.
113 Ibid., 120.
114 Berryman, "The Argentine and Latin American Background of Pope

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refused to be associated. Albert Methol Ferré, an Uruguayan intellectual whom PF met personally in 1978,[115] said that the historical vision of Paul VI's "development" concept (rather than sociological) would provide a classical and holistic truth of the people.[116] The historical vision of development was Ferré's reaction against the ideas of Enlightenment, which rejected the role of religion and traditions in the development of peoples.[117] He also supported TP as the remedy for the downfall of the political ideologies (especially Marxism) in the late 20th century.[118]

TP moves beyond historical and sociological associations to reflect the "signs of the times" and the role of the people in the sense of faith.[119] Thus, the complete—and multi-faced—definition of the people (which PF applied extensively in *EG* 116) composed of those: 1) with a shared culture, 2) with natural history, and 3) with the shared vision towards the good.[120] As TP diverged from TL, Gustavo Gutiérrez commented that TL does not need a change in direction but a deepening of the political and socio-economic discussions with the inclusion of culture.[121]

TP reached stability with the rest of liberation theology currents on the occasion of the fifth conference of the Latin American Bishops (CELAM V) at Aparecida Brazil in 2007. It successfully directed *all* liberation theologians back the

Francis," 69.

115 Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer,* 234.

116 Barbara Diaz and Ramiro Podetti, "Catholicism and the building of Latin American Culture: The Reflections of Alberto Methol Ferré," *Religion Compass* 11 (2017): 7-8.

117 Diaz and Podetti, "Catholicism and the building of Latin American Culture," 3&7.

118 Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer,* 234.

119 Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 121.

120 Ibid.

121 Ibid., 125.

ideals of Medellin[122] and perhaps of Puebla's socio-economic leanings.[123] PF was the president of the conference and the main drafter of the Aparecida document. Thus, TP was staged at the center of CELAM and of TL. The Aparecida document defined the general characteristics of TL: 1) The Trinitarian theology as the groundwork, 2) communion as the ecclesial framework, and 3) revival of the sense of dignity in cultures and peoples.[124]

The word "culture" was mentioned 97 times while "encounter with Christ" was mentioned at least 48 times. Aparecida's effect on *EG* was apparent. It was cited in the footnotes at least 13 times.[125] The overall influence of the Argentine school was discernible in PF's theology, especially in his accentuation of the historical value of the Incarnate Word in the culture and of the people of God.[126]

Evangelii Gaudium, the Corpus of PF's Political Thought

The Year of Faith reached its closure with the release of PF's first papal document, the apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (the Joy of the Gospel).[127] The said document was

122 Berryman, "The Argentine and Latin American Background of Pope Francis," 68.
123 Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought,* 79.
124 Lemna and Delaney, "Three Pathways into the Theological Mind of Pope Francis," 37.
125 Antonio Pernia, "A Missionary Church: Introduction and Chapter One of *Evangelii Gaudium," International Review of Mission* (2015): 160.
126 Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought,* 78.
127 Explanatory note: The Year of Faith concluded on the Solemnity of Christ the King, on 24 November 2013. A close reading of the last paragraph (EG 288) of *Evangelii Gaudium* shows that it was released on the exact same date as the conclusion of the Year of Faith.

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PF's tribute to all the modern popes.[128]

EG, according to John Allen, is PF's "core signature phrase."[129] A joy of its kind, the document captured PF's directness, warmness, and simplicity.[130] Even PF himself remarked the document is as strong and as pragmatic as he is and accentuates his style and methodological approach.[131] The document echoes tradition and innovation put together. It carries with it the Argentine School's 'theology of the people,' Guardini's 'theory of opposites' and Congar's true reform.[132]

EG gave birth to COE as PF's political proposal[133] and solution to the weakening political, moral compass. The weakening was the offspring of separation between the human person's nature and mission.[134] COE repackages the catholic social principles of solidarity and subsidiarity by bridging the "I" and "we" to bring about a 'culture of alliance.'[135] COE begets dialogue, friendship, and inclusivity to those in the frontiers.[136] It gets its inspiration from an encounter with Christ, [137] the only Source that brings joy to an encounter with others.

COE adopts one model: the polyhedron. A polyhedron is comprised of discriminable facets, but make up a unified truth/reality. Though discriminable, each side is equally

128 Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer,* 211.
129 Stephen Bevans, "Becoming Prophets of Encounter," *Verbum SVD* 4 (2018): 340.
130 Martin Pérez Millán, "Politics for Francis," *Politics and Religion* 2 (2017): 176.
131 Ibid.
132 Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer,* 211.
133 Millán, "Politics for Francis," 182.
134 Ibid., 186.
135 Ibid., 183.
136 Bevans, "Becoming Prophets of Encounter," 341.
137 Meghan Clark, "Pope Francis and the Christological Dimensions of Solidarity in Catholic Social Teaching," *Theological Studies* 1 (2019): 112.

essential.[138] COE is a model of mutual reciprocity without the threat of compromise.[139] In other words, it observes Guardini's theory of opposites in such a way that it never synthesizes or eliminates other truths that make up a holistic perspective of reality.

EG had a total of 142 pages and contained the four principles that build a people of peace. These four principles were in nowise new. The first, second, and fourth were used in his address in 1974, and the third in 1980. All principles were used in PF's lecture at the 13th Annual Archdiocesan Meeting of Social Teaching and Pastoral Ministry in 2010.[140] PF's principles are his remedies to the dividing power of ideologies and believed these principles to contain the "special wisdom" of the faithful.[141] These principles are: 1) time is greater than space (nos. 222-225); (2) unity prevails conflict (nos. 226-230); 3) realities are more important than ideas (nos. 231-233); and 4) the whole is greater than the part (nos. 234-237). These four principles are the backbone of PF's diplomacy of peace, from his encounters with the people who have affected him greatly spiritually and theologically, to bring about building a people of peace, trust, and dialogue. They are, in the words of Guardini, tensions that makeup one reality:

Time is Greater than Space

This principle shows the tension between time and space. PF said: "Giving priority to time means being concerned about initiating processes rather than possessing spaces."

138 Victor Manuel Fernández, "Encounter," in *A Pope Francis Lexicon,* eds. Joshua McElwee and Cindy Wooden (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2018), 61.
139 Ibid.
140 Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 128.
141 Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer,* 142-43.

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(EG, 223)

Prioritizing time does not entail the complete elimination of spaces. What PF conveys is the reality of investing time if the goal is to build better peoples and societies. Bringing immediate results is the way of people who fail to see the long-term.[142] Fast-tracking results compromise healthy development, including the appreciation of the good and the bad, which only occur during processes. As PF said: "This principle enables us to work slowly but surely, without being obsessed with immediate results. It helps us to patiently endure difficult and adverse situations, or inevitable changes in our plans." (EG, 223)

Thomas Rourke interpreted that the best and satisfying results materialize in mastering the art of patience.[143] Similarly, Victor Manuel Fernández said that what happens in between is enriching.[144] To come across different perspectives can make up a unified perspective without the danger of synthesizing them. Enrichment occurs in the company of discernment. As Scannone said, making the right decisions at the ripest time will help.[145] PF did say in his interview that discernment with the Lord helps to attain the goal of true reform:

142 Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought*, 94.
143 Ibid.
144 Fernández, "Encounter," 62.
145 Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 128.

> Many think that challenges and reforms can take place in a short time. I believed that we always need time to lay the foundation for real, effective change… Discernment is always done in the presence of the Lord, looking at the signs, listening to the things that happen, the feeling of the people, especially the poor.[146]

Unity Prevails over Conflict

This principle shows the tension between unity and conflict. While one quickly categorizes both in the extremes, the words of PF would say otherwise: "In this way, it is possible to build communion amid disagreement, but this can only be achieved by those great persons who are willing to go beyond the surface of the conflict and to see others in their deepest dignity." (EG, 228)

Manuel Paul Christopher underscores the capabilities of a peacemaker at a maximum,[147] who sees conflict as an opportunity for unity and as a "link in the chain of new processes."[148] Scannone nurses a similar interpretation, adding a profound theological meaning again to a peacemaker whose capabilities are sourced from the concept of TP.[149] A peacemaker sees conflict in the lens of diversity, which is not a black or white concept: "Diversity is a beautiful thing when it can constantly enter into a process of reconciliation and seal a sort of cultural covenant resulting in a reconciled diversity." (EG, 230)

Unity begets cultural covenant upon recognition of the different realities possessed by every person. The acceptance

146 Spadaro, "Interview with Pope Francis."
147 Christopher, "How the Theological Priorities of Pope Francis Inform His Policy Goals," 30.
148 EG, no. 227.
149 Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 129.

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of difference without compromising anything creates a culture of shared passions.[150] Rourke said that the 'harmonizing of diversities' is made possible by the unifying action of the Holy Spirit.[151] Peace is present when Christ is present in every person. He is a sign of unity and reconciliation.[152]

Realities are More Important than Ideas

This principle shows the tension between realities and ideas. PF said: "This principle has to do with incarnation of the word and its being put into practice…at the same time, this principle impels us to put the word into practice, to perform works of justice and charity which makes the word fruitful." (EG, 233)

PF's concept of reality echoes Guardini's inclusiveness, which recognizes both the good and the bad, and the structures that both ideas result to it.[153] Ideas that bear fruit in actions are based on Christ; the Word made flesh. Not only did Christ teach necessary moral precepts, but he also performed them.[154] Apart from ideas that remain suspended in the air, PF also warns against ideas that become ideologies, which estrange people instead of uniting them.[155] Here he reechoed the opposition of Congar against ideologies.

150 Fernández, "Encounter," 62.
151 Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought,* 94.
152 EG, no. 229.
153 Christopher, "How the Theological Priorities of Pope Francis Inform His Policy Goals, 31.
154 Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought,* 94.
155 Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 129.

The Whole is Greater than the Parts

This principle shows the tension between the whole and the parts. PF said: "We constantly have to broaden our horizons and see the greater good which will benefit us all. But this has to be done without evasion or uprooting." (EG, 235)

This principle is analogous with the previous, on the invocation of inclusivity as part of the whole reality. Working for the common good for Christopher are 'shared obligations;'[156] in Rourke, the flow of obligations from personal to communal, and from local to global;[157] and in Scannone, the responsibilities that arise from being historical, cultural, and religious.[158] The parts come together as a unified whole through the polyhedron model:

> It is a polyhedron, which reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness…it is the convergence of peoples, who within the universal order, maintain their own individuality; it is the sum total of persons within a society which pursues the common good, which truly has a place for everyone. (EG, 236)

Since PF is a product of the Argentine school, his take on peoples and shared obligations are historical, cultural, and theological. PF then invokes the virtue of generosity which appreciates any contribution regardless of how big or small they may be: "The virtue of the large and small is magnanimity. Thanks to magnanimity, we can always look at the horizon from the position that we are."[159]

156 Christopher, "How the Theological Priorities of Pope Francis Inform His Policy Goals, 31.
157 Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought,* 94.
158 Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 130.
159 Spadaro, "Interview with Pope Francis."

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Conclusion

This article presented significant persons in the life of PF who have contributed to the enrichment of his COE and public positions affected by this method. It demonstrates the model of the polyhedron, where every piece matters in rationalizing the reality of the whole. The four principles of COE are PF's remedies to the weakening political, moral compass that has isolated and categorized people in the process.

Time is greater than space. PF's affinity with time communicated the influence of St. Ignatius, who has made him a discerning person appreciative of the process and growth happening during encounters.

Unity prevails over conflict. The art of genuine encounter integrates openness towards conflict. PF had been influenced to welcome oppositions creatively by Skorka, Giussani, and Guardini. Guardini, in particular, forenamed the other (a person or embodiment of conflict) as a carrier of truth, but warns against synthesizing or compromising difference. He solidified all perspectives of truths on their basis to the Source of all truths (God). As a Jesuit called to put God at the center and reach the outskirts of the society with his creativity, PF's perspective towards polar opposites propels his leadership faithful to Vatican II's *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento.*

Realities more than ideas. Rosa, his grandmother influenced PF's approach towards the simplicity and concreteness of the Gospel. His grandmother's witnessing enabled him to appreciate the concreteness of the Word in cultures and peoples. Gera and Scannone, the great thinkers of the Argentine School, contributed to solidifying PF's theology towards the people who are both historical and active agents of salvation in the ordinariness of their human lives. PF's

ideas on reform are not afloat but are faithful to Congar's evangelical reform, one that creates a partnership between the communal and personal senses of being Church.

The whole is greater than its parts. It was Guardini who made PF value the perspective of the whole. COE does not allow the elimination of differences but welcomes the influence of the opposite head-on as a part of understanding the whole. In the same manner, it propels the perspective that those in the peripheries have something to give.

This paper not only invokes a modest understanding of how COE is developed but also recommends the perspective of looking at East Asia as a fertile frontier for this advocacy of PF. East Asia had long been in the peripheries. PF did give a hint of the diplomatic venture and focus in the region when he said, "We must go to Asia!" to his private audience after the World Youth Day at Rio de Janeiro in 2013.[160] These words he left were a fulfillment to what John O'Malley wrote in his book, *What Happened at Vatican,* that those in Asia—the peripheries—who have autonomy over their faith experiences have something to give to the enrichment of the faith.[161]

160 Paolo Affatato, "The Pope in Asia in 2019, Between Reality and Secret Dreams," in *Vatican Insider World News,* https://www.lastampa.it/2018/10/26/vaticaninsider/the-pope-in-asia-in-between-reality-and-secret-dreams-gTMD3Hbtx98GsRQuY4NF7I/pagina.html (accessed April 5, 2019).

161 O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II,* 298.

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