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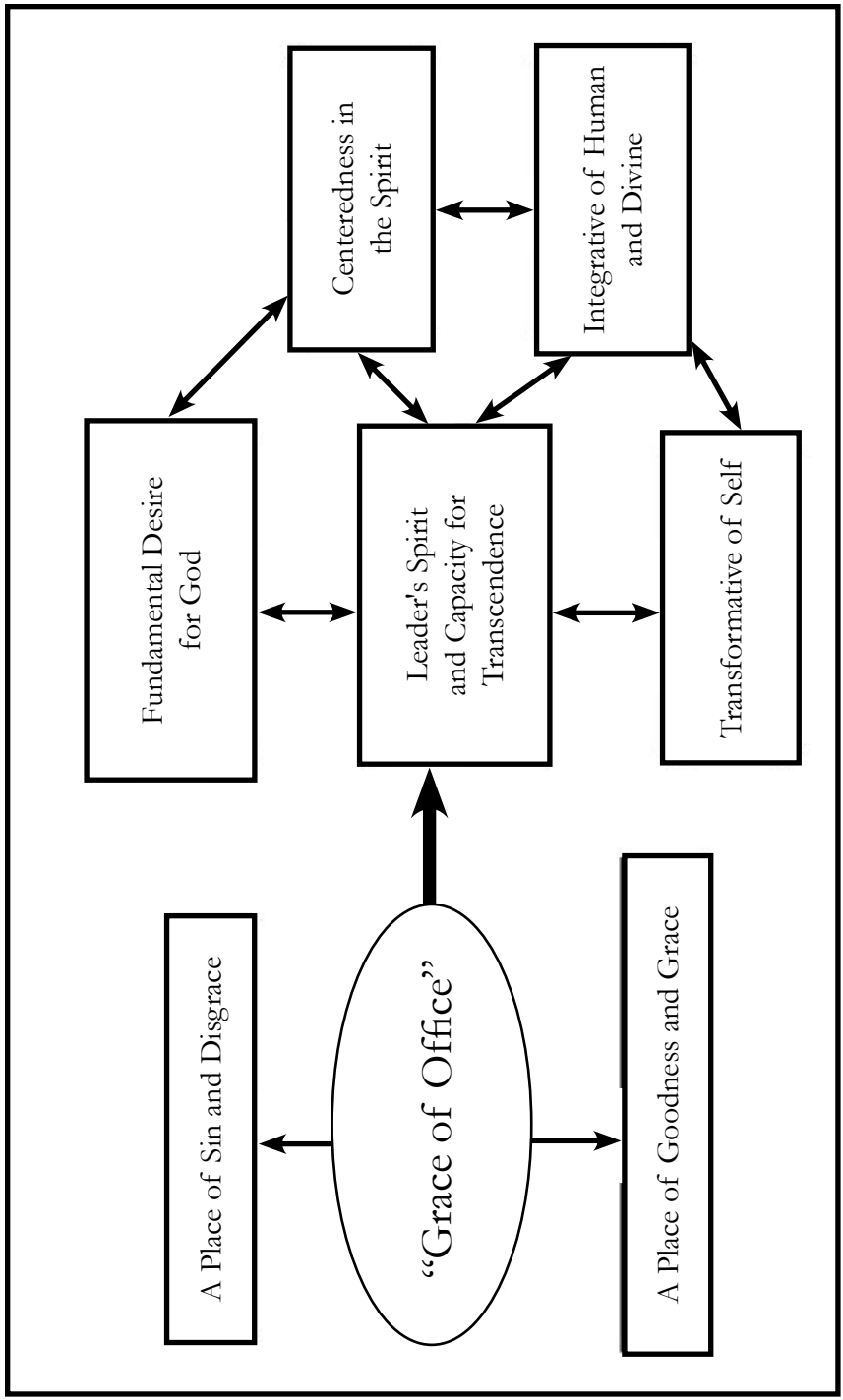
THE "GRACE OF OFFICE"
THE CALL OF LEADERSHIP AND TRANSCENDENCE

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In religious circles, the phrase "grace of office" is often invoked in the context of a superior or leader—or someone in authority—and how this person is endowed by a certain "grace" by virtue of his or her position. "Grace of office" may connote many things. It may mean, for one, a special kind of blessing given to the person who is given the mission to lead. It may refer to a special charism lodged in the position being occupied, or still, it may point to particular graces in the process of choosing the person who will lead, a process which entails communal discernment. This study explores these and other possible meanings and dynamics involved in this phrase. To assist in this process, the two terms, "office" and "grace," will be reflected on. Insights and lessons from Christian anthropology and theology of grace are drawn in to facilitate this reflection. Theologians in the history of Catholic thought, like Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, and Karl Rahner, provide languages and frameworks on "grace" that will be useful in seeking clarity and understanding of this phenomenon of "grace of office."

This study will begin by clarifying possible meanings of the two basic terms, "office" and "grace." It will then proceed to reflecting on how these two words combine into the phrase "grace of office," generating the following possible meanings: 1) the radical need for

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Centeredness in the Spirit
Integrative of Human and Divine
Fundamental Desire for God
Leader's Spirit and Capacity for Transcendence
Transformative of Self
A Place of Sin and Disgrace
"Grace of Office"
A Place of Goodness and Grace

grace in the office, given tendencies for disgrace; 2) the grace that is inherent in the office; and 3) faith in the spirit of transcendence that is given to those who hold office. On the third point, this spirit of transcendence is manifested in four things: 1) a fundamental desire for God; 2) centeredness in the Spirit; 3) integrative of humanity and divinity, and 4) transformative of self. The diagram on the previous page summarizes these ideas that are developed in this study.

Office and Grace

The term "office," in its most basic meaning, may be understood as a formal position of authority and leadership. It is "formal" in the sense that the people who "hold office" are normally those elected or appointed to the position through a process of choice or selection. The "position of authority and leadership" means a specific role in an organization tasked with the power to influence people primarily through decision-making. The "office-holder" then is essentially a leader who has responsibility over others in the organizational setting. In the context of religious organizations, those who hold "office" are called "superiors," who in turn come from different levels in the organizational hierarchy. For a religious congregation, the Superior-General is the highest superior, and the Provincial has the delegated authority of the Superior-General in the Provinces. Other "lower" positions of leadership and authority exist, like the Directors of works and institutions, Prefects of studies, Ministers of houses, and others. Hence, "grace of office" refers to the grace given to and received by these superiors and leaders in a religious organization.

The second term, "grace," can be more difficult to define since it contains the richness—and the accompanying complexity—of Church teaching and tradition. Its depth of meaning has impelled teachers of the faith toward systematic and technical language, eliciting confusion and controversy that has characterized Church history. However, at one level, grace can be simply understood as blessing. One recognizes something as "grace" when one experiences something good, something beneficial, something life-giving. Hence

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it may be felt in terms of an increase in love, faith, hope, goodwill, beauty, truth, forgiveness, comfort, consolation. As such, grace is the presence of God Himself, since God is and gives all these blessings. As Rahner writes:

> Grace is God himself, the communication in which he gives himself to man as the divinizing favour which he is himself. Here his work is really himself, since it is he who is imparted. Such grace, from the start, cannot be thought of independently of the personal love of God and its answer in man. This grace is not thought of as a 'thing.'[1]

Grace is therefore God Himself, and the personal relationship that He initiates with human beings. This relationship reveals the nature and dynamics of grace itself. First is the giftedness, or gratuity, of grace, or as Rahner calls it, "grace as offered." Grace flows out of divine initiative, favor, privilege, providence, abundance, generosity, prosperity, and power. It need not be given, but it is, and this offer of grace makes the difference. Grace is the product of "divine condescension," God the Creator reaching out to creation, communicating Himself freely and gratuitously in love.

The other side of the relationship is the human recipient to whom grace is offered. Grace received produces "graced effects" on the person, prompting a spirit of gratitude, joy, goodness, and fruitfulness in the person's life and being.[2] This person is however free to welcome or reject this grace. Grace however becomes a radical need during experiences of "boundary" or "limit" situations integral to human life. These can be intense situations of deep sinfulness or depravity, when the radical dependence on God's redeeming and saving action is magnified. Also, grace is operative

[1]Karl Rahner, "Nature and Grace," in Joaquin Yap, *Theological Anthropology II: Grace* 4, Unpublished lecture notes (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 2009), 3.

[2]Joaquin Yap, *Theological Anthropology II: Grace* 1, Unpublished lecture notes (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 2009), 14.

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> in the experience of infinite longings, of radical optimism, of unquenchable discontent, of the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable, of the radical protest against death, the experience of being confronted with an absolute love precisely where it is lethally incomprehensible and seems to be silent and aloof, the experience of a radical guilt and of a still-abiding hope ….[3]

Beyond these basic descriptions of grace are several other ways of imagining and explaining it. These are the "theologies of grace" offered by teachers of our faith like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. They stem from specific ways of comprehending the complex human condition; they bear specific perspectives in anthropology. These will be discussed and reflected on, especially as they apply to the "office." How can these theologies enlighten our understanding of the "grace of office"?

The Radical Need for Grace in the Office

The "office" is a place where grace is badly needed. As earlier mentioned, the office-holder is a person who is given the task to lead others, particularly in a formal organizational context, and this role of leadership entails at least three things. First, it means relating with others, typically called the "members," "followers," "subordinates," or "subjects" in the organization. Leading implies influence, direction, guidance, and providing vision and inspiration to them. Secondly, leadership also requires engaging the bigger context, environment, or system which the office is part of. In religious organizations, this could be the bigger Church hierarchical structures in dioceses and in the Vatican itself, or this could be the greater secular society where economics and politics play a critical role. Thirdly, aside from relating with others and with the bigger context, leaders need to deal with their

[3]Roger Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 128.

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own inner selves, the interiority of their persons, their own internal psycho-emotional dynamics.

These three layers of relating—with others, with the bigger context, with their inner selves—make the leadership task complex and vulnerable to human tendencies of sin and self-centeredness. Adrian Van Kaam (1968) identifies three areas where these tendencies are operative: *power*, *pleasure*, and *possession*.[4] Van Kaam describes these three as instinctive human tendencies that the human species had to learn along the way as it adapts to and controls the environment, people, and things. These three constitute the innate striving of "man": power to cope with and survive the harsh environment; pleasure to seek and achieve a sense of belonging and community; and possession in order to use and enjoy things in their material world.

These three also become the loci for humanity's sinfulness and disgrace. History bears witness to how humanity has fallen due to power, pleasure, and possession, and leaders holding office have not been exempt from this "fallenness." Power is integral to leadership; the office gives leaders the power to make decisions that have impact on others. As a delicate force, leaders need to manage power well and responsibly. Those who do not learn how to do so tend to succumb to insidious ways of abuse and misuse, leading to dysfunctional and destructive behaviors like corruption, perpetuation in power, monopoly of power leading to authoritarianism and dictatorship, self-entitled behavior, sheer grandiosity and arrogance. Similarly, pleasure and possession invite self-centeredness as well. Holding office is a high-profile, public role, and it contains opportunities for unmitigated physical pleasure, unbridled acquisition of wealth, and other self-serving behavior. Left uncontrolled, the addiction to pleasure and possession has created leaders with destructive narcissistic personalities leading to sexual depravity, material aggrandizement, and self-indulgence. The combination of these three forces of unmanaged power, pleasure, and

[4]Adrian Van Kaam, *The Vowed Life: Dynamics of Personal and Spiritual Unfolding* (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1968).

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possession in the context of office or leadership has created dangerous, uncontrollable, dysfunctional leaders in history.

The office can thus be a place of possible disgrace through power, pleasure, and possession, and as such, is in need of grace. Office-holders—the leaders—radically need grace to fight the pitfalls of power, pleasure, and possession that are inherent in the office, temptations which leaders confront and contend with perhaps on a daily basis, and which become inevitable occasions for sin and disgrace. This idea of inevitability of sin is reflected on by Augustine in his theology of grace. He says that humans are saddled with "a cruel necessity of sinning" (*peccati habendi dura necessitas*), the necessity deriving "not from any physical or metaphysical determinism but from the fact that while our free will is intact, our existential condition so weighs upon it that psychologically we inevitably gravitate toward evil."[5] Augustine's concept of concupiscence describes the power and persistence of the inclination to turn away from God and "to engage in self-divinizing egoism of total self-satisfaction through the evanescent realities of the world."[6] For Augustine, in view of this inevitability toward evil, a medicinal grace (*gratia sanans*) is radically needed to heal the inherent woundedness of human beings. Augustine emphasizes this radical dependence on grace because "without God's help we cannot by free will alone conquer life's temptations." In the context of the office, leaders desperately need this healing grace to survive the inevitable moral temptations, pitfalls, and dangers of leading.

The Office as a Locus of Grace

As seen in the section above, the office is a place of inevitable disgrace, and hence the radical need for grace. The next perspective

[5]Stephen Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace: Perspectives in Theological Anthropology* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 94.

[6]Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace,* 92.

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emphasizes perhaps the opposite: the office as a place of grace, and thus it bears the presence and power of God. This perspective can be understood in two aspects. First, the office, being part of the Church, is blessed in a special way by the Holy Spirit. Secondly, grace can be understood as universal and all-penetrating, and all of reality is suffused by the gift of grace.

The first point stems from Church tradition, where "offices in the Church" are seen as specially endowed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. These offices continue the work of Jesus, and Jesus, in His final discourse in the Gospel of John, equips His disciples with the special gift of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit which will be with them and the Church that they will build, forever. In Acts 1:8, the disciples receive the power of the Holy Spirit, and its work and presence in the Church continues and is guaranteed. This continuing indwelling of the Spirit in the Church is grace, and thus the "offices" that ensure its life and continuity are graced. Corollary to this is the privilege of being chosen and anointed, as in 1 Peter 2:9 ("You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people"), and 1 John 2:20 ("You have been anointed by the Holy One"). This act of choosing and anointing God's people can also be understood as bestowing grace. Grace thus dwells among God's people in a special way, and in the representatives and leaders of the people who hold "office." Even in the contemporary era, leaders of the Church are given special, privileged attention in prayer, ritual, and worship. Constituents or members of the organization engage in "communal discernment," which are intensive exercises to seek the will of God for their leaders through collective prayer and conversation. Leadership is a distinguished mission and ministry in the Church, as manifested in the importance of the sacrament of orders. The offices of leadership are thus inevitably graced.

The second point is how Augustine calls grace as a "comprehensive ambiance." For Augustine, grace is inescapable, wholly prevenient, embracing the totality of his being and suffusing him with gratitude and joy: "every movement of his heart, every initiative of his will is

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preceded by God who calls and sustains his holy restlessness."[7] This comprehensiveness of grace is echoed in Karl Rahner's view of the universality of grace. For Rahner, grace in the world is all-embracing, all-penetrating, all-inclusive:

> Because of the universal presence of grace, then, Christians cannot see the secular world as a hostile arena. Sin notwithstanding, there is no purely secular reality over against grace …. The confidence of the Christian does not stem from naivete in the face of evil, but from the consciousness of having been grasped by a reality that transforms everything.[8]

With these perspectives of grace from Augustine and Rahner, the office is not just a place of inevitable sinfulness and disgrace (as discussed in the previous section); it is at the same time a locus of divinity and goodness, a place of comprehensive grace where the possibilities of moral leadership abound. The world is witness to such through leaders at different levels—local, national, global—whose lives have shown a lot of goodness and grace. They lead with responsibility, competence, and character. Their lives mirror integrity and ethics. They are able to lead from a deep source within themselves, a spirituality that enables them to sacrifice and give their lives in generosity to others. They build communities of hope and strength in places where hardship and struggle are commonplace for people. These leaders carry the "grace of office" that theology claims as pervasive amid the tendencies for sin and disgrace.

Faith in the Leader's Capacity for Transcendence

We have thus far reflected on two ways of understanding the phrase "grace of office": firstly, the office as a place of disgrace and thus the radical need for grace, and secondly, the office as a place of grace and

[7]Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace,* 82.

[8]Duffy in Joaquin Yap, *Theological Anthropology II: Grace* 4, Unpublished lecture notes (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 2009), 7.

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spirit, containing possibilities for goodness. There is a third way of interpreting the phrase, and it might be the belief in the leader's capacity to transcend. By "transcend," we mean to overcome or go beyond one's self toward a new level of consciousness and ability. Concretely, "grace of office" may refer to one's faith and confidence that the person in position can actually transcend his tendencies toward sin or disgrace, and thus avoid the pitfalls of power, pleasure, and possession. No matter how strong the temptations may be, grace will allow the leader to transcend his very self and realize the vast possibilities of goodness which are also inherent in the office.

How can such process of transcendence happen? What characterizes this grace? How is such grace operative? This grace can be described in four ways: 1) a fundamental, natural desire for and disposition toward God; 2) centeredness in the Spirit; 3) integrative of human and divine aspects; and 4) transformative of the self.

A Fundamental Desire for God

The beginning of transcendence is a natural disposition toward the supernatural, a fundamental desire for God. This dimension of disposition and desire precedes action; it is the *a priori* of things, the primary orientation which affects the direction and quality of thought and action. Theologians claim that this is present in everyone. It is the work of the internal movement of grace making possible "one's coming to believe," or *initium fidei*. Hence, a person holding office may be exposed to several distractions and temptations toward disgrace and sin, but deep within him, at the level of his interiority and intentionality, dwells a natural movement of grace.

This fundamental force is described by theologies of grace in different but consonant ways. Thomas Aquinas calls it *desiderium natural*, a fundamental urge and propensity toward being. By nature we are made for grace, hence by nature, we yearn for the supernatural. This may also be the underlying meaning and spirit of Augustine's famous statement, *et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te*: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart knows no rest until it rests in you." The Second Council of Orange in 529 AD describes grace as

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the very beginning of desire and will, in order to believe and think as required and as compatible to God's own will.

The scholastics and neo-scholastics call this desire and disposition as "obediential potency" (*potentia obedientialis*), or the "conditional openness in human nature, humbly and passively waiting for grace."[9] It is the potency for receptivity, a basic openness to God and His elevating action in our lives. Martin Luther's "justification by faith alone" underlines this dimension of grace as basic receptivity in faith. Sinful humanity is justified by grace through faith, on account of Christ. Luther's tenet of *sola fide* stresses the primacy of faith: God declares us just, "not on the basis of a divine gift of infused grace or of good works, but solely on the basis of the alien and extrinsic righteousness of Christ received by [the] sinner through faith."[10] Karl Rahner re-imagines *potentia obedientialis* as *supernatural existential*. The attraction to the supernatural is due not so much to human nature but to human existence. The supernatural permeates the entirety of human existence, creating a supernatural disposition to union with God: "Whatever one does, one remains interiorly ordered to absolute communion with God."[11]

Applied to the context of the office, what these theologies essentially say is this: we are propelled toward the supernatural, the divine in our lives, and thus, we can trust that this grace is present and operative in the interiority of those who hold office as they confront occasions of both grace and disgrace in their exercise of leadership and power. The potential for good, moral leadership and governance exists because of this intrinsic human desire for God and transcendence. Leaders have a capacity to connect to God, a *capax Dei*, and hence a capacity

[9]Duffy in Yap, *Theological Anthropology II* 4, 1.

[10]Joaquin Yap, *Theological Anthropology II: Grace* 3, Unpublished lecture notes (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 2009), 24.

[11]Duffy in Yap, *Theological Anthropology II* 4, 5.

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to discern God's will in their work of leading and governing others. Belief in this is one way of understanding "grace of office."

Centeredness in the Spirit

The path of transcendence entails a process of decentering away from self and ego, and a centering toward Spirit and God. The instinctive forces of power, pleasure, and possession were earlier discussed as potentially destructive to the office-holder since they feed one's ego and self-centeredness, pulling the leader toward grandiosity, narcissism, and self-indulgence. The same forces of power, pleasure, and possession can however be used in the opposite direction, toward goodness and grace. This entails a re-imagining of power, pleasure, and possession as centered not in the self or ego, but in God and the Spirit.

In the Old Testament, "grace" can be seen as having a variety of meanings[12] and these can provide insights in re-imagining power, pleasure, and possession. Pleasure can be reconceived away from physical indulgence; it can be appropriated as *charis*, which is spiritual delight, joy, beauty, elegance, charm, attractiveness, affection, and care. Possession can be re-imagined away from "possessiveness" or "materialism"; it can be appreciated as *beraka*, which is gift, given to others, evoking gratitude and thanksgiving from the recipient. In place of the tendency toward acquisitiveness is the idea of fullness of riches, or holy prosperity, shared and given to individuals for the good of community, or *charismata*. Power can be reconsidered away from its abusive and dominating properties; it can be held as *baruk*, the idea of being blessed, inviting praise, glory, gratitude and thanksgiving. Power, pleasure, and possession can thus be reconceived as blessings, as sheer graces, and are therefore centered in God and the Spirit, rather than in self and ego.

These alternative ideas on power, pleasure, and possession are contained in Augustine's theology of grace. One is drawn to God by

[12]Yap, *Theological Anthropology II* 1, 1ff.

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delight (*delectatio*). Delight is akin to attraction to sweets and pleasure, and it has transforming power: it enables conversion into freedom, new life, new understanding, new spontaneity.[13] In terms of power, God's love is the *counterweight* to sin. "Concupiscence draws downward and scatters; love reverses the pull and leads us inward and upwards" to our appropriate place.[14] As Augustine says:

> Things out of their place are restless; put them in their proper place or order and they are quieted. My weight is my love …. By thy gifts we are set afire and carried upward; we burn within and move forward.[15]

Augustine's theology is one of "ordered loving" (*ordinate caritate*), a right way of loving that is ordered by the love of God "above all and in all." As Duffy comments, "the whole point of life is to turn the total self, mind and body, to what is better by means of an ordered love."[16] He adds that this order develops both vertically and horizontally, in time. By this it can be understood that this order is created by and through a relationship, the personal relationship of one with God, a relationship nurtured throughout one's lifetime. Grace can thus be understood as this primary relationship with God in our life.

The "grace of office" can thus be understood as the capacity of leaders to be ordered according to this primordial love of God. This love serves as the gravitational force, the "weight" that pulls us toward the center, a center that is the Spirit, and away from the center of ego and self-indulgence. The forces inherent in the office—power, pleasure, possession—are thus ordered and transformed into spiritual blessing, delight, and generosity. Leaders carrying these gifts of blessing, delight, and generosity are thus graced.

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[13]Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace,* 102.

[14]Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace,* 102.

[15]Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace,* 103.

[16]Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace,* 94.

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Integrative of the Human and Divine

The presence and movement of grace in the office is further described as one of integration. What are integrated are the two dimensions, the human and the divine, or the dynamics of the person and the dynamics of God. The term "integration" means that one dimension does not negate, counteract, or remove the other. God's grace does not take over the scene and cancel out human dimensions, nor does human will assert its dominance over divine providence. Rather, both are needed and assimilated into the process. Humanity and divinity interact and merge. Transcendence happens through both human and Spirit, and never without the other.

This dynamic of integration is seen strongly in the theological discourse on grace and freedom. How does God's presence and action—grace—interact with the human nature, particularly the human condition of freedom? First of all, grace grounds itself in our human nature and condition. Thomas Aquinas describes the action of grace as *elevating* (*gratia elevans*) human nature toward a transcendent end. This elevating grace, along with healing grace (*gratia sanans*), show that grace does not destroy nature but rather perfects it. Such process of grace perfecting nature, however, does not cancel out human freedom. Grace and freedom are *complementary*; they do not oppose each other, as Rondet says: "Grace frees man and creates in him an ever greater freedom …. The more grace there is, the more there is of freedom."[17] Journet explains the divine action of grace in relation to human action as "*envelopment*": divine action gives rise to human action.[18] Stevens characterizes this relationship as *subordinative*: man's action is subordinate to the divine transcendent action. It is thus "not only God *and* man, grace *and* freedom, but God *through* man, grace *through* freedom."[19] As Duffy, in interpreting Augustine, writes:

[17]Yap, *Theological Anthropology II* 3, 35.

[18]Yap, *Theological Anthropology II* 3, 34.

[19]Yap, *Theological Anthropology II* 3, 35.

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> Grace and true freedom are not at war; the former is the *condition of possibility* for the latter. The irresistible will of God operates in and through human wills, not substituting for them, but drawing them from within so that they become instruments of the divine will.[20]

Augustine differentiates between free will (*liberium arbitrium*) and freedom (*libertas*): "Freedom is not indifference before alternatives; it is free will put to proper use, fulfilling the innate desire of a restless heart to rest in God. Only that person is truly free who is in love with God and all else for the love of God and hence by conversion is freed from the shackles of sin."[21] Freedom is thus not passive, but active. It actively seeks and loves God. Freedom thus needs to cooperate with grace. This is implied in a central teaching from the Council of Trent, opposing what seems to be the Lutheran view of passivity under grace, that we are justified *sola fide*. Human cooperation with grace is needed, and this involves disposing the self not just in faith, but also in living in hope, and ordering ourselves in God's love. Loving and following God and our discernment of His will facilitate our openness and receptivity to God's action, which is essentially grace.

These theological understandings of grace and freedom shed light on the process of self-transcendence of office-holders or leaders. The term "self-transcendence" itself signifies the interaction of the self or the human with the force of transcendence or the divine. The process, therefore, does not deny the human in inviting the divine; rather, the process engages everything in the human as it welcomes the divine. Concretely, the very human, instinctive propensities for power, pleasure, and possession could be the same areas, as earlier discussed, where the Spirit can dwell, and thus, where transcendence can happen. What happens is the integration of psychology and spirit: the psychological dynamics of leaders with the divine intervention of grace. Psychological dynamics particularly of power, pleasure, and

[20]Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace,* 99, italics mine.

[21]Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace,* 99.

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possession become the foundation and possibility for grace and its gifts of transformation.

How does this process of psycho-spiritual integration happen? First is the starting point of self-awareness and self-mastery. Leaders need to know more deeply and accept more courageously who they are, both the strengths of their character as well as the weaknesses and limitations which they can often deny. Next is an insight on patterns of inconsistencies, conflicts, and contradictions which make them desire for something more in their lives, something that opens them up to transcendent forces, and ultimately something that disposes them to grace. This "something more" may be in the direction of desiring to become better persons and better leaders. This can lead them to choice or decision, like opting for change and transformation in thought and behavior. In the process there is a realization of one's radical need for and dependence on grace, the action of God and His Spirit, which will provide strength and faith in this process of change and renewal. We see in this process that God enters not a vacuum, but a real human condition, with tendencies for sin and disgrace, yet open and receptive to grace and redemption. The psychological human dynamics therefore become the entry points for the divine work of grace, the "grace of office" made available to leaders, and this work of grace is transformative of the human, to be discussed in the following section.

Transformative of Self

In asserting Catholic particularity against Reformist teachings, the Council of Trent stressed the necessary renewal or transformation of the person as part of justification. The Council declares that justification is

> not the remission of sins alone but the sanctification and renewal of the interior man through the voluntary reception of grace and of the

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> gifts, whereby from unjust man becomes just, and from enemy a friend, that he may be 'an heir in hope of eternal life.'[22]

Thus, justification through grace does not only cause remission of sins, but more positively and constructively, it facilitates the transformation of the human. Grace is thus received actively, not passively: the person can hope to emerge from the process with self renewed and his being renovated.

This renewal and transformation process, in the language of theologians, can be understood as *divinizing* grace. The nature and direction of change is toward becoming more and more like God. This so-called doctrine of deification (*theosis*) finds its basis in 2 Peter 1:4: "… he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature." God sent His only Son so we might receive adoption as sons (Galatians 4:4–7) and as children of God (1 John 3:1–2). Jesus empties Himself and becomes poor for our richness (2 Corinthians 8:9, Philippians 2:5–11).[23]

Central to the teachings of many masters of the faith is this theme of divinizing grace which allows persons to become "partakers of divine nature." Augustine writes, "The Word became what we are that we might become what we are not. To make humans gods, God became human." Duffy summarizes Augustine's view of grace as deification through the phrase "grace is the mystery of the exchange of natures," and this exchange "accomplishes a real change in the human being: rebirth, justification, adoption, divinization, participation in divine life."[24] This theme of "interchange of places" (*admirabile commercium*) or "exchange of natures" is echoed in Thomas Aquinas, and even

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[22]Jacques Dupuis, ed., *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church* 7th ed., rev. (Bangalore, India: Theological Publications in India, 2001), 810.

[23]Joaquin Yap, *Theological Anthropology II: Grace* 2, Unpublished lecture notes (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 2009), 5–7.

[24]Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace,* 79.

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more recently, by Pope Benedict XVI: "This exchange consists of God taking our human existence on himself in order to bestow his divine existence on us, of his choosing our nothingness in order to give his plenitude."[25] This does not imply pantheism, nor does it claim humanity's co-equality with God, as in the New Age tenet of "man is God." On the contrary, this exchange is grounded on the essential "asymmetrical relationship" between God and person, whose nature and substance remain distinct and on different planes. The exchange happens only through the person's reception of grace from God ("We become gods, not by nature, but by grace"), becoming sons by adoption and gods by participation.[26]

How does this renewing grace happen? From Duffy's commentary on Thomas Aquinas' teaching on grace, one can detect at least two important dimensions: right relationships and virtuous habit. Grace corrects one's relation with God (*sanatio mentis*) and eventually the relation of one's inner world with his outer world (*sanatio carnis*). Grace engenders thus a transformation that is multi-dimensional: inner and outer, personal and social. As Duffy observes, "the garment of grace is not only patchless but seamless." Furthermore, Thomas characterizes the process of healing one's relation with God—*sanatio mentis*—as instantaneous, and one's personal integration—*sanatio carnis*—as developmental. Hence, healing and transforming grace can happen in different ways, immediately or gradually, through the stages of one's life. Whichever the case, grace cultivates right relationships: with God, with others, with one's own self. In the process, virtuous habits are formed, which, for Thomas, are required for three reasons: for uniformity and consistency of action, for ease and spontaneity (with minimum of deliberation), and for pleasure and enjoyment.[27] While the passions pull a person toward new possibilities, habits determine

[25]Yap, *Theological Anthropology II* 2, 4.

[26]Yap, *Theological Anthropology II* 2, 11ff.

[27]Duffy, *The Dynamics of Grace,* 198.

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and specify who the person will be. Virtuous habits create the *virtuoso* in the person: grace fuses with the person, and like the ballerina in her expertise in dance, the movement becomes "graceful."

Becoming "graceful" is perhaps the objective of the self-transcendent leader as he embraces the grace inherent in his office. This leader, ultimately, is called to, and propelled toward, transformation. The pattern of transformation is, as described above, multi-dimensional: the correction of relationships into "right relationships" founded on one's primary relationship with God, and the formation of virtuous habits. Leadership is essentially a relational act; it thus entails a cultivation of a relationship with God, and the integration of one's intrapersonal (within one's self) and interpersonal (with others) relationships. It makes leadership altogether a spiritual, personal, social undertaking. Furthermore, the Christian leader is called to a pattern of transformation that is Christic: emptying of self (*kenosis*) and humble obedience to God and His will for one's life. Thus, the leader's self, emptied yet filled and transformed by grace, acts in a specially graced and "graceful" manner according to God's will. Disposing and surrendering to this will, in confidence and humility, is the Christian path to transformation and transcendence.

Summary and Conclusion

To summarize, this study tried to make sense of the phrase "grace of office" from the perspective of Christian anthropology and theology of grace. The "office" was reflected on as a place of both grace and disgrace, sin and goodness. It invites instinctive human tendencies of power, pleasure, and possession which become the loci for both self-indulgence and self-transcendence. The "grace of office" refers to both the radical need for grace and the belief that grace abounds in the office. It also refers to faith in the capacity of the office-holder—the leader—to transcend or to overcome one's self toward the directives of God and the Spirit. Power, pleasure, and possession can be re-imagined as spiritual blessings, delight, and giftedness to be shared to others.

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The self-transcendence of leaders is characterized and facilitated by four main things. One is fundamental desire of persons for God, or the natural yearning for the supernatural. Second is centeredness in the Spirit, and not on the self or ego. Third is the integration of human and divine dimensions, or the complementarity of human freedom and divine intervention, and the necessity of psycho-spiritual integration. Fourth is the transformation of the self through divinization, or the process of persons partaking of the divine nature. Leaders are called to a pattern of Christian life, transformation, and transcendence. As such, leaders follow the leadership example of Jesus and how he emptied and transcended His very self for others. This becomes the basis for moral, ethical, and spiritual leadership badly needed in the world today. Through the "grace of office," we believe that this is possible and attainable.

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PARISH PRIEST IN A WAR ZONE
LETTERS FROM FR. ARTHUR SHEA, S.J.
Annotations by John J. Carroll, S.J.

The town of Bayug, Zamboanga del Sur was truly a war zone in the mid-1980's. It lies in a valley with mountains on three sides, and the military, the New People's Army, and the Tadtad—a fanatical sect used by the military against the NPA—were engaged in a lethal game of hide-and-seek. The chief victims, however, were ordinary poor farmers caught in between the armed groups.

Fr. Arthur Shea, S.J., a Jesuit well into his 70's, was parish priest of Bayug, and I recently dug out a file of letters from him which I and Fr. Kenneth Bogart, S.J. had had the foresight to save. They give a vivid picture of life in the midst of a guerilla war, and incidentally of the remarkable personalities of Fr. Shea, his assistant Fr. Francisco Montecastro, S.J., and Bishop Federico Escaler, S.J., in whose prelature Bayug lay. What follows are quotations from the letters, with occasional explanatory notes.

John J. Carroll, S.J.

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I am spending more money than I ever had to spend before in so short a time; it comes from the Bishop rebuilding a barrio burned by the Military back in March. The Bishop got past [sic] of the fund out of the Army. The project crowds my schedule.

We had a funeral Monday of a man killed the night before by allegedly unknown persons, though everybody knows. He had received four warnings to pay his workers and to give the gatherers of rattan a fair break. I do believe he was a scoundrel, an exploiter of the weak, but it sets the program to be followed by the Right when they are in the mountains and the Left is in Malacañang, Camp Crame and is running Bicutan. When will the Civil War end?

Sunday Nov. 24

The body of my slain worker Gregorio Inso[1] was brought to the Church to lie in state for a week. Different parish groups watched each night. I said Mass [at] about 4 a.m. before the watchers returned home. My days were occupied hearing confessions in the public schools, [and with] preparation[s] for Christmas. One day a barrio fiesta.

The funeral mass was scheduled for 10 a.m. We had to wait for the arrival of the Bishop.[2] He would be the final judge of the route of the procession. About nine, word was brought to me that the police carrying rifles were guarding the corner. I went there. I was angry though in control of my anger. In as loud a voice as I could raise, I inquired the purpose of their being there and asked to see the man who was in authority. I was talking to the Chief of Police. I actually felt ashamed that I did not know the Chief of Police. I had no reason

[1]Gregorio Inso, a farm laborer, was a parish worker and chair of the Justice and Peace Committee of the parish. He followed up the burning of houses by the military in Barrio Sigacad, and on the insistence of the Bishop the military provided some money for rebuilding, which Inso supervised. The officer responsible for the burning was disciplined, and it was commonly believed that it was he who later shot and killed Inso in the latter's house.

[2]Bishop Federico Escaler, S.J., Prelate of Ipil.

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to be. He was from out of town and had assumed office only during the past week. He asked me to talk peacefully. I thundered that I would not talk peacefully while surrounded by rifles. My voice was my only weapon. He ordered the armed men to a distance and we had a peaceful talk. He was acting under orders from the Mayor. He asked me to go to the Mayor. The police were there for our security. I assured him that the only threat to our security was the Mayor; I could not appeal to him. He was startled when I told him I hoped he used the tear-gas the police had prepared. I was not supposed to know about that. I proceeded as far as the municipio, pointing an accusing finger at every rifle; there were only 19. Enough to kill a lot of people. The Mayor had very foolishly said that the banning of the procession was to avoid another Escalante. Several weeks ago in Escalante, Negros, the police fired on the demonstration of unarmed farmers killing more than twenty people. Coming from the lips of the Mayor sending out police armed, that was a threat.

Bayog has no fire department. The fire truck from Buug, 19 km. distant, rolled in bringing police reinforcement too. So they had the water cannon ready for us. I realized that W.S. Gilbert could have written the libretto, but the bullets were for real.

The Bishop arrived about 9:45. We drove right to the house of the Mayor. The Chief of Police was with the Mayor. We discussed for about fifteen minutes. The Mayor protested that we had no permit for the procession. The Bishop replied that no permit was required for a funeral procession. Deadlock. The Bishop asked for a piece of paper and wrote out a request for the procession going by the Mercado and the Municipal Hall. The Mayor refused to sign. The Bishop demanded that he sign his refusal to grant the permit and told him that his signed refusal would be in the hands of authorities in Manila in a few days. The Mayor backed down and signed the permit.

And now it is hard for me to believe that Gregorio Inso will not be at the desk in the office tomorrow. I have lost relatives and close friends whom I loved more deeply than I loved Greg. But the course of our lives had kept us physically distant for years; and the loss, however deeply felt, made no change in one's everyday order. I will never get a

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better man and Christian qua man and Christian to serve me. About the month before the murder I spoke to him about the danger to his life. Yet he never considered stopping or suspending his service. He was in the strictest sense a 'Martyr of Christ.'

March 8, 1986

I have heard of self-fulfilling prophecies but never before of self-thwarting scenarios. The earlier letter of the bishops would never have been written if they had not read the scenarios and their truly revolutionary second letter was possible only as a follow-up of the first.[3] There could have been no revolution without that second letter. The Bishops have demonstrated to the episcopacies of the world that action in politics is not a Petrine privilege.[4] And the Holy Father may come to realize that Orders does not dispense priests from the obligation God imposed when he made man societal.

And what will the Holy Father think when he sees the Madres on the Betamax? And the Madres around the world! I am no enthusiast for Madre-lib but I suspect that their participation in the local Revolution will boost the global Sisters Revolution.

As was foreseeable in Bayog at least, the Cory supporters immediately split into two factions. One leader is a model specimen of our old politicians; when he was defeated for re-election back around 1970 or before, the municipio was burned that night. Can Cory find enough honest candidates for government on the provincial and local levels to change any effective campaign against corruption?

March 10, 1986

[3]Reference is to the "scenarios" produced and distributed by the Institute on Church and Social Issues before the "snap election" of February 1986, and to the statement of the Philippine Bishops following the election and characterizing the latter as fraudulent and as providing no moral basis for the Marcos regime's remaining in power.

[4]A humorous expression, meaning that it is not reserved for the Pope.

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Yesterday I was talking to a farmer who is in a position to estimate and whose judgment is quite reliable. He estimates the NPA in this area to be over 500. "This area" is a vogue term. It would include the mountains of Bayog, Lakewood along Sindangan, a town on [the] northern coast, an area 20 or 25 kilometers long. At any rate there are many more than I estimated.

July 16, 1986

On May 22nd, a detachment from a distant town, commanded by Col. Garcia, with no notice to the local Commanding Officer of his presence here, descended upon Sigacad. The houses were strafed. The people fled. The soldiers camped there for the night and left the next day. The people returned and found two carabaos (each worth a fortune by local standards) had been killed. Their chickens had been killed for food. Seed and fertilizer had been scattered, kitchen utensils, tools and nails were missing. The wood for finishing the houses had served as firewood. Two women had given birth during their flight. One of the babies died.

We documented the case. That "we" now includes Municipal Government and the Church. Such team work would have been unthinkable before the Edsa Revolution. The Bishop carried the report to higher authorities and arranged for a "Dialogue" of the area's Brass with the offended parties.

So yesterday morning soldiers poured into Bayog. A war tank came with them. The road from the National Road up to Bayog was guarded. Then the Brass arrived by helicopter. The "Dialogue" was held in the Town Hall. The Mayor and Col. Kalupig who is in command of this part of the Province co-chairpersoned the meeting. Some 20 odd residents of Sigacad had special chairs provided for them. I studied the faces of the other officers there including Col. Garcia. They were all unsmiling. At a dialogue a year ago, attending officers would sit there like jurymen. Now they bore the countenance of prisoners in the dock. I was frightened most of the apparent low IQ's of some. A low IQ in command of armed men is dangerous.

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It was thrilling to see uneducated farmers standing up and giving witness before such brass of what the soldiers had done. The male witnesses were sedate, factual and unemotional. Then women witnesses got into the act and reported dramatically and emotionally other abuses of the Military. The local CO lost his cool and had to learn that you cannot argue with a woman. The other officers had to persuade him to stop waving his arms and sit down. Happily it was a comic interlude that relieved tensions.

I was proud of that of the church. Bishop Escaler was immediately responsible for the Dialogue. But he had behind him the power of the Basic Christian Communities. There the poor learn to stand together to defend themselves. Note that the witnesses were 7th Day Adventists trained by Catholics.

July 17, 1986

Freddy[5] fascinates me when I see him in action, so simple, so familiar, so unassuming, so assuredly in control of events. He has the power which a Bishop can have if he is up to it, but it is the family background which taught Freddy how to carry such power.

August 25, 1986

Last Monday when I came home from hearing confessions, the parish secretary was documenting the testimony of an excited man. He had been to the Chief of Police, the Chief sent him to the Mayor, the Mayor sent him to the Commanding Officer of the Military who could not give the precise action the man wanted.

His mother and father had been coming down from a mountain barrio, ten km. distant. They were met by many heavily armed men. The armed men gave her the purse of the father and ordered her to go on. When she had gone about 100 meters she heard three shots.

[5]Bishop Federico Escaler, S.J.

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She did not go back. People coming down the same trail shortly after reported that the dead body of her husband lay at the side of the road. The son wanted help in retrieving the body.

On Tuesday at 5:45 a.m., as I was preparing to say Mass, two farmers came to me. The Vice-Mayor had gathered a group of men to accompany him to get the body. They were willing to go but afraid to go unless the Padre was with them. So I postponed my Mass and went along. The spot of the killing was about 6 km. up. But it involved a steep climb of about 800 feet. It took me nearly an hour and a half to reach the spot. Rigor mortis had set in. I had forgotten to bring a camera. Maybe just as well. The limbs were stretched in that last second of agony he must have felt as he fell to the ground. There was a note from the killers. They charged the victim was a "bad" man who did much "harm" to society.

The face and clothes of the corpse testified to his status, that of a poor farmer. There were complications. Poverty had left him ignorant. He certainly believed that he had oil which rendered him invulnerable. So he was a member of and I suspect a leader of a fanatical group who are used by the Military to harass the NPA. So that would be one reason for the charge of the NPA. He had worked hard all his life, had lived frugally and had saved money. So though by ordinary social standards here, he would have been classed with the poor, he was a usurer, loaning money at a high rate of interest. In Bayog the rate of interest can reach 30% per month. That might be the second reason for the charge of the NPA.

Capital punishment in capitalistic countries is reserved for the poor. The rich can usually avoid it. The Marxist pattern in Bayog is similar. When I say that I do not mean to recommend that they begin on the bourgeois pillars of the parish. Any plan to reform society by liquidation of the evil men is diabolical, creative of its own hell, here and now.

Why did the farmers fear to go out without a priest? Was it superstition only? Perhaps partly. But Military have told them so often that the priests are communists, that that alone would make them think that we must be friendly to the NPA. They know too that priests go

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freely into rebel territory. It is public knowledge that we give clothes to the cold and medicines to the sick including the NPA. So quite apart from faith or superstition, they figured that if the priest were with them the NPA would not shoot civilians. I should note that I would not have dared to go myself with a police or a military escort.

October 22, 1986

Two weeks ago, the NPA executed another "bad" man. He had been summoned to the mountains (I presume for a warning) and refused to go. So he was shot at home. Now I have heard no one say a good word for him. Such complaints as were voiced hardly deserved capital punishment. He had a PA system and he would allow no PA systems from outside to be used at dances in the barrio. And at dances he would not allow anyone to go home at midnight, they had to stay until 3 am. Those responsible for the dance would have a permit only to midnight. I suppose that these can be taken as signs that he was in his own way an oppressor. But if we proceed to purge society in this way, the last survivor will have to be a suicide.

October 23, 1986

My Sunday afternoon quiet was broken by the appearance of a youth. His hushed tone left me, a deaf man, impatient. It was hard for me to get him to raise his voice. He wanted Php3150 for a friend of his in a hospital in Pagadian who would not be permitted to leave until the bill was paid. His answers to my questions were quite vague. I suspect that he might be feeble-minded or a simple "operator." So I told him that I did not know him and I must have him identified. I asked him if there was anyone in Bayog who would identify him. He immediately gave two names, both active in Church activities. He alleged that he had stayed in the house of one, a woman, since his arrival on Saturday. I told him to call her and I doubted that he would return. He was back within minutes with the worker, a Mrs. Gacer.

She testified that he was genuine, he was from a barrio here. He was now 19 years of age. When he was seven their house was strafed by police. The target was his father who happened to be in Lanao at

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the time. His mother and a brother were killed. He was wounded but survived. His father returned from Lanao and was shot. So he ended up an NPA. His companion in the hospital was the same.

Mrs. Gacer was visibly happy when I suggest[ed] that he sleep in the *convento*. She was glad to get him off her hands but she could not refuse him admittance to her house when he needed it. This is an example of personal relationships, a force that will frustrate any totalitarian regime here. She had known his parents, she had known him as a little boy, she could not refuse him hospitality.

His personality was amazing. When at ease he no longer talked in those hushed tones but his natural voice was soft and musical. His innocence, his guilelessness was hard to reconcile with his profession. I asked him whether he believed in God. He seemed surprised by the question and answered: "If there were no God, there would be no world." Is that a ratiocination from the "causa incausata"[6] or an intuition? I asked him about his companions and he went on to say that they pray and spoke of praying if they go by a chapel. Anyway I got him on his way to Pagadian on the first trip of the jeepney with more than he had asked for and some clothing I had which fitted him.

November 10, 1986

On All Saint's Day there were reports from up above that there had been an encounter in Sigacad the day before, nothing definite. On Sunday, All Soul's Day the reports had it that one soldier and many NPA had been killed. [On] Monday a Major confirmed this and reported an operation involving 5 battalions, one from Bayog, the others from Zambo Del Norte and a mountain town to the east, Midsalip.

On Tuesday morning Monte[7] left before dawn for Sigacad, an hour's ride for the first 18 km and the 14 km hike. What did he learn about the encounter? On Friday morning there was a group of 7 NPA

[6]Uncaused cause.

[7]Fr. Montecastro

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near Sigacad. Three were resting in a nipa hut, four had gone on an errand elsewhere and left their weapons with the three. The Military came upon them. By accident? Or because of an informant? I am not sure but it could be the latter. In that "encounter" one soldier and one NPA were killed. On Saturday and Sunday the Military were still around requisitioning food and chickens[;] a carabao wounded in the encounter was slaughtered. On Monday morning with no NPA in sight, cannons were brought into the action. Ten shells were fired, one was a dud, two of these landed close to the barrio terrifying the people.

Late Tuesday afternoon Monte noticed some NPA passing the house. They came back in about an hour. They had executed an informant. She was a woman in her late twenties, the mother of three small children. They left a letter of explanation for the husband and one for the barrio lieutenant. The charge: she had been an informant for three years in the pay of the Military. She had been warned three times and had not listened. She was blamed for the death of the NPA on Friday morning. Monte hiked back the 32 km on Wednesday.

Before he left there was a meeting in the barrio hall. There was a cry that soldiers were approaching. Mothers gathered their little children to run. Monte told them to stay there, he would meet the soldiers. He went out to meet them as they approached. A woman at his side shouted: "*Ato sila,*" or "They are ours." All fear vanished, the meeting went on. Those two words reveal what the people in that barrio think of the Military and of the NPA. And this was the morning after execution of the informant.

The execution of the informer increases my confusion. I still preach that such an execution is murder. But I grow less certain of my position. I believe that the NPA are waging a just war. If that be so, is not the execution justified? Or must I conclude that a "just war" is a contradiction in terms? If that be so, why does not the Church denounce all Military Establishments? Now I see that is an exaggerated simplification. But I do believe that the American people sin greatly, to be more technical "gravely" when they consent to or tolerate an Administration's supplying arms for either side in a civil war. However

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much it helps the American economy, it is blood money and participation in murder. God is just and God will repay them in kind.

December 24, 1986

On December 4th Fr. Montecastro took the two Switzers, International Red Cross workers to Sigacad for a rendezvous with the NPA. He brought back 2 NPA who wished to surrender. They left with the approval of the comrades. This is noteworthy since the papers report that men suspected of planning surrender are executed. We hid the two in the *convento* until after Cease-Fire. They would not dare go to the public market. They and I feared not the Military but the Tadtad.

On December 6, NPA visited two barrios not far from Sigacad and killed seven men. A sentence of capital punishment by an NPA court is usually, I admit not always, reserved for informers. Were all 7 informers? I doubt it. There is one report that they went to the barrios to warn the Tadtad. The Tadtad relying on their invulnerability attacked. Their bolos were no match for rifles. I attach high credibility to this report. I admit that I am a biased appraiser.

On the following day the Tadtad retaliated. They went to a barrio adjacent to Sigacad and killed four men. Were these NPA? Of course not. They were poor farmers just like themselves.

A mass evacuation from three barrios involved followed. As of now there are over 700 refugees in Bubuan and there are more in other barrios.

Fr. Montecastro wired his Red Cross friends immediately. And both the Philippine Red Cross and International have helped the refugees in a big way. As of yesterday the refugees still feared returning to their farms. They fear that the Cease-Fire will not hold, that hostilities will break out soon and they will be caught in between. They live in and depend for their sustenance on a true "No Man's Land."

December 29, 1986

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Things are looking brighter today in Bayog. General Maderazo came here this morning to look into the disturbing situation and alleged violations of the Cease-Fire. Bishop Tobias[8] was with him.

There had been no violation of the Cease-Fire since the killings here on December 8th and 9th. The NPA killed seven Tadtad on the 8th in two barrios, the Tadtad killed 4 in an adjoining barrio on the 9th. The three barrios are empty, the people evacuated, the houses in one of the barrios were burned only a few days ago. So though the Cease-Fire has been honored, the society is in turmoil.

Father Montecastro represented the Church & I was able to set the records straight on who killed whom and when & back up the Mayor on his request for the removal of the Captain & his *verdugo*. He is the one I suspect of having arranged the murder of my secretary a year ago. We thought we were rid of him 6 months ago but he was brought back.

Now we have a promise that he will be removed. That will do away with fear of the Military and people may be willing to tell what they know about several killings. Fear of the Tadtad will remain. The formation of the Tadtad was fostered by the Military & now the people need the Military to protect them from the Tadtad.

And they will fear a ceasing of the Cease-Fire & they will be living again in a No Man's Land.

No one complains that life hereabouts is dull.

Three Kings 1987

The Tadtad in the southern part of our Parish had been quiet but the New Year's brought greetings from their captain in one barrio. Several Church workers were threatened by name and he promised to have my assistant Fr. Montecastro chopped up before the year is out.

[8]Antonio Tobias, Bishop of Pagadian.

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Alas there was no threat to flatter the writer. Actually I fear more for the lives of the lay workers than I do for that of Fr. Montecastro. I was not killed; my secretary was because he was documenting cases of the violation of human rights for me.

March 21, 1987

Wherever my sympathies lie, my sermons are honest. Murder is a recurring subject, and I condemn murders by the NPA and name them as often as I do murders by the Tadtad. And in the first forty years of my priesthood I never thought murder as important enough to be made the subject of a sermon.

March 21, 1987

Last Dispatch from Bayog

Is one's virtue of poverty in inverse ratio to the weight of *cargamento* a professionally poor man carries with him? Or is the weight in direct ratio to one's scrupulosity? My Malaybalay experience taught me the folly of abandoning a good library, folly that would be a materially grave violation of the first vow. Even now I groan with pain as I gaze upon the treasures I'm leaving behind on the shelves.

I am telling the people that I will leave after Holy Week. I need not tell them that I steal away immediately after the Encuentro Easter Sunday morning.

You are not the first to pick me up on the statement that the NPA were fighting a just war. I fall back on a cautionary introduction and/or peroration I have often used. "Do not expect me to be consistent." Maybe only fanatics are consistent. Our feelings lead us to conclusions that the intellect on reflection might reject. It is Pascal's "The Heart has its reasons that the reason may not know."

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Certainly, on the one hand, I reject the just war theory for our day and age. Perhaps it was valid in mediaeval times. Luther's vigorous adoption of Thomas' theses on the just war surprised me when I read of it in Pelican. But at the same time I so felt the rightness of the young men who went to the mountains that I still feel the need to justify them.

My feelings reveal to me where my sympathies lie. Since the Cease-Fire, the leaders of the NDF have shown themselves grossly incompetent. I cannot take joy in their mistakes. Nor am I saddened by their mistakes. I am simply angry. I feel that the men in the mountains have been betrayed by such leadership.

The situation here is far from idyllic. Three weeks ago I helped pick up and bury the body of a man who had been stabbed to death five days before. Probably the victim of some personal feud. Last Sunday, Monte went off on a similar errand. The man had been longer dead, body mutilated by animals and burned. Burning may have been indeliberate, caught in the burning of a "kaingin." The body had been decapitated and head lay outside the burned area. The full set of teeth suggests that the victim was a young man. Decapitation rules out the NPA as suspects. It suggests that the Tadtad were the agents.

Two days ago in broad daylight armed men executed a Subano farmer. He had been campaigning and organizing a group of Tadtad in the barrio where he was killed. I presume that the NPA were the agents. All of these occurred relatively close to the *poblacion*.

The Military here has promised to remain open for a dialogue with the leaders of the local NPA until the end of this month. They have been patrolling and on one occasion they came upon and killed two NPA. But it seems to me that both sides have been avoiding encounters. Father Montecastro is the liaison between the Military and the NPA. Monte has been awaiting word from his contacts for two weeks at least. Are they going to let him down? I don't know.

I've rambled on much longer that I expected. I must add that your Tertian Jack told me that mine was the most pessimistic report he had heard. I rejoined: "All others are wishful thinkers."

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