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A CORRUPTION-RIDDEN WORLD

Think Global, Respond Local, as a Filipino Church

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In a world where it has plagued all levels of local and global society, corruption has become an accursed malaise and a systemic evil as it constitutes an affront to the dignity of humankind and the glory of God's creation. The menace of corruption is a malaise deeply rooted in human hearts and mindsets. At the same time, corruption is a systemic evil due to its virulent effects on global public well-being. Corruption debilitates public confidence in the government and public institutions and incapacitates the competitiveness in the private sector with the prevalence of unfair awarding of contracts and mounting deficiency in the quality of basic public services. Corruption is covertly and overtly globalized by international institutions, including the multinational companies whose dealings are willy-nilly condoned and supported by their national governments.

Grappling with the complexity of corruption as a global menace offers the local Churches a perspective on how the local campaigns always have a ripple effect on reversing corruption worldwide. What can be done locally will eventually contribute towards the ultimate reduction of corruption. To begin unraveling this global menace, a scrutiny of the nexus between corruption and international bribery will be looked at in the first section. At the same time, corruption as both a major cause and as a result of poverty around the world will be discussed in the second

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section. The decline in democratic accountability, as the third section demonstrates, has contributed to public outcry against corruption, impunity and economic instability in the form of mass protests such as the Arab uprising and the nascent US Occupy Movement. The description of the global nature of corruption provides the "stuff" for a theological reflection on corruption based on the teachings of the Church. Lastly, the final section will showcase and explain the role of the Church in curbing corruption in the Philippines.

Globalization of Corruption and International Bribery

Corruption is a global malaise because it is a menace to both public and private sectors in the developed nations of the global North and the developing nations of the global South alike (although it has been globalized from North toward the South). Corruption is spawned by multinationals supported by Western governments and their international agencies. Donor governments and multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) are propagating "good governance" but have failed to effectively tackle corruption in terms of bribe-giving officials, wealthy multinationals, and funding agencies located in the industrialized North.

In the last decade, international bribery has increased exponentially with economic globalization. These bribes are conservatively estimated to run up to US$80 billion a year—roughly the amount that the United Nations (UN) believes is needed to eradicate global poverty.[1] Using money remitted to a Swiss bank account for Saudi agents, three UK companies—GEC, Marconi and VSEL—paid bribes to secure contracts to supply weapons systems to Saudi Arabia. The bribes ranged from three to 10 per cent on orders worth hundreds of

[1]For more information, see www.oecd.org/daf/nocorruption/faq.htm (accessed Jan. 12, 2012).

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millions of pounds.[2] The giant multinational GEC even agreed on a further similar commission for arms transactions with Poland in 1998. Globally, an average "1/3 of firms frequently bribe, though the share varies substantially across countries. For example, the share of bribing firms is much smaller in Nordic countries than in Greece or Italy."[3]

> Foreign bribery has significant adverse effects on public well-being around the world. It distorts the fair awarding of contracts, reduces the quality of basic public services, limits opportunities to develop a competitive private sector and undermines trust in public institutions. Engaging in bribery also creates instability for companies themselves and presents ever-growing reputational and financial risks. This is particularly relevant in light of recent anti-bribery reforms in a number of key countries around the world, such as in China and the United Kingdom.[4]

When foreign corruption is exported to the South, multinational corporations undermine smaller domestic businesses, circumvent local democratic processes and legislation, interfere with decision-making that supports development which benefit the few rather than the populace, and exacerbate inequality and poverty. Corruption benefits the multinationals rather than the country, damages the environment, and contributes to local conflicts through arms sales.

> At a deeper level are the policies that form the backbone to globalization. These policies are often prescribed by international institutions such as the World Bank and IMF. For years, they have received sharp criticism for exacerbating poverty through policies such as Structural Adjustment, rapid deregulation and opening barriers to trade before

[2]*The Guardian* (March 5, 1999), cited in Susan Hawley, "Exporting Corruption: Privatization, Multinationals and Bribery," www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/resource/exporting-corruption-O (accessed Jan. 12, 2012).

[3]Daniel Kaufmann, "Does Bribing 'Pay' for Corporations?" www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/0510_corporate_bribery_kaufmann.aspx (accessed Jan. 12, 2012).

[4]The TI Bribe Payers Index evaluates the supply side of corruption—the likelihood of firms from the world's industrialized countries to bribe abroad (www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/bpi [accessed Jan. 13, 2012]).

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> poorer countries are economic[ally] ready to do so. This has also created situations ripe for corruption.[5]

Global financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF are faulted for the very policies they advocate—the lowering of controls on trade, the foreign removal of the entry barriers to private industry, privatizing state firms, accelerating public sector reform in areas such as customs, tax administration and civil service—because these policies have exacerbated rather than curbed corruption. Such exacerbation is occasioned by an underestimation of costs, "especially the political costs of the process itself and the impediments it has posed to further reforms."[6]

> Under the World Bank and IMF, structural adjustment calls for reform of civil services which primarily means "downsizing" that demoralizes and undervalues civil servants instead of promoting civil services that are efficient, accountable, adequately paid and well-motivated. Rapid economic liberalization and transition to a market economy paves the way for corruption because "this reduces the incentives for probity on the part of officials and politicians, and creates a widespread social alienation from the political process."[7] Decentralization, without adequate preparation of local bureaucracies for local government and the necessary transfer of financial resources[,] only opens up venues for misgovernance and increased corruption.[8]

What becomes evident is that without a workable framework that includes the legislation of state enterprise law, national governments often fail to promote regulatory laws and arrange transparent and open bidding processes or promote regulatory laws. Apprehensive of the future and confident of escaping punishment, managers

[5]For details, see Anup Shah's article, "Corruption," www.globalissue.org/article/590/corruption (accessed Jan. 12, 2012).

[6]Hawley, "Exporting Corruption: Privatization, Multinationals and Bribery."

[7]For more detail, see B. Harriss-White and G. White, "Corruption, Liberalization and Democracy," *IDS Bulletin* 27 (1996), 2.

[8]For further detail, see T. Crampton, "Official warns Asia to fight corruption," *International Herald Tribune* 12–13 (February 2000), 13.

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and employees commonly strip the assets of the enterprises being privatized. Interested parties engage in insider trading and political manipulation of the process for their own profit. Many state enterprises have insufficient time to "become economically viable before being sold off, leading to frequent sales of industries at below market value despite heavy government spending on recapitalization."[9] Even with sufficient time, misgovernance due to lack of transparency and strong regulatory institutions leads to costly and bad privatizations, thus increasing the scope for corruption.[10]

Global governance exercised by agencies like the European Union (EU), G20, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and UN, along with international organizations and Western governments, have stepped up measures to combat corruption, enforcing convention and legislating regulatory laws to rein in bribe givers as much as bribe takers. In 1978, the US promulgated the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) which made bribing a foreign public official a criminal offence.[11] In 1997 the OECD enacted an international Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions which was finally ratified in 1999.[12] The Convention requires each signatory member

[9]Hawley, "Exporting Corruption: Privatization, Multinationals and Bribery."

[10]For more detail, see K. Malhotra, "Public Good vs. Investor Interest in Private Infrastructure Development: Whose Interests Should Regulators Protect and How?", presented at the seminar "Private Interest vs. Public Good: Governance Dimensions of Regulatory Frameworks for Private Sector Infrastructure Development," Asian Development Bank and the OECD (Switzerland, April 28, 1998).

[11]For details, see www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa/ (accessed Jan. 12, 2012); Hawley, "Exporting Corruption: Privatization, Multinationals and Bribery."

[12]See C. G. Tether, "Bribery debate is for us, too," *Financial Times* (May 21, 1976). The Convention was signed by 29 OECD countries plus Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile and Slovakia. The OECD comprises 29 of the world's richest countries, including European countries, the US, Japan, Australia, New

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country to enact national legislation that makes bribing foreign public officials a criminal offence.[13] The UN Convention against Corruption requires that member states cover both preventive measures and the criminalization of a wide range of corrupt acts, including the bribery of foreign officials. The Council of Europe's Criminal Law Convention on Corruption features comprehensive anti-bribery provisions, including a prohibition of private-to-private bribery.

Likewise, the World Bank has stepped up anti-corruption campaigns since 1999 by helping to design and support national anti-corruption strategies. In addition, the Bank emphasizes "anti-corruption in the design of economic reforms, and press[es] for strengthened governance and public sector management," and encourages support for anti-corruption agencies.[14] An annual budget of US$3 million is allocated for anti-corruption measures, including support for anti-corruption agencies. Some $5 billion of its $29 billion annual lending goes for "governance" which calls for "civil service reform, budget management, tax administration, legal reform, judicial reform and institution-building."[15] In 1997, the IMF took "a more proactive approach" in trying to "eliminate opportunity for rent seeking, corruption and fraudulent activity."[16] The IMF also demands

Zealand, Finland, Mexico, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Korea. Based in Paris with an annual budget of $200 million, the OECD calls itself a "club of like-minded countries" which believe in market economics and pluralistic democracy. It provides a forum for discussion on economic and social policy issues for governments, as well as producing research, policy papers, and international treaties and agreements (www.oecd.org/about/general [accessed Jan. 12, 2012]).

[13]See detail of the text at www.oecd.org/document/20/0,3343,en_2649_34859_2017813_1_1_1_1,00.html (accessed Jan. 12, 2012).

[14]Hawley, "Exporting Corruption: Privatization, Multinationals and Bribery."

[15]Hawley, "Exporting Corruption: Privatization, Multinationals and Bribery."

[16]Hawley, "Exporting Corruption: Privatization, Multinationals and Bribery."

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that "borrowing governments draw up anti-corruption action plans and strategies" and "good governance" is to be a feature of the IMF's new Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (which is to replace the much-criticized Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility).[17]

Enhanced enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) and the OECD's Convention "would collectively raise the costs of bribery for all multinationals" on the one hand, but on the other, when multinationals band together in their anti-corruption, they will make international bribery history in years to come. Over and above legal initiatives, there can be successful complementary measures such as "increasing the reputational cost of bribery by investigating and prominently featuring cases of corporate corruption" in the media, as the recent public disclosure of IKEA in Russia has effectively indicated.[18] Noteworthy are efforts by multilateral development banks (the MDBs, namely the World Bank, the African, Asian and Inter-American Development Banks, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development [EBRD]) to cross-debar firms found to have engaged in bribery or corruption on MDB-funded projects.[19]

Corruption Exacerbates Poverty

The globalization of corruption highlights one deplorable salient feature: corruption exacerbates the plight of the marginalized because corruption hurts the poor first and foremost, whether in the donor countries or in developing and aid-receiving countries. From the financial scam at Wall Street to the scandal in Britain of Westminster council leader Dame Shirley Porter selling public housing for votes (at a loss of £27 million to the council) to the pilfered aid resources

[17]Hawley, "Exporting Corruption: Privatization, Multinationals and Bribery."

[18]Kaufmann, "Does Bribing 'Pay' for Corporations?"

[19]Kaufmann, "Does Bribing 'Pay' for Corporations?"

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in India, the poor get approximately 15 per cent of the total budget of most financial aids.

> It is they who get squeezed out of decision-making and pushed to the political margins in situations where money buys influence. It is they who lose out when money that could have been spent on improving services or basic living standards is diverted to big expensive projects with lucrative "commission" potential. It is they who end up themselves having to pay bribes for basic services or who lose out because they can't afford to. As British Member of Parliament Hugh Bayley noted in a speech to the House of Commons:
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> "The cost of bribes falls primarily on the poor. When a corrupt contractor from this or some other rich country pays a 15 per cent bribe, he adds that to the price of his contract. His power station or irrigation scheme will cost more, and the little people—those who buy the electricity or the water to irrigate their crops—will pay the price of that bribe. Bribery is a direct transfer of money from the poor to the rich".[20]

There is no denial that bribes hike up the prices of projects and mega-projects such as dams. When these projects are financed by international funding agencies, a country's external debt begins to add up and ordinary people "end up paying this back through cuts in spending on health, education and public services. Often they also have to pay by shouldering the long-term burdens of projects that do not benefit them and which they never requested."[21] Such is the case with the construction of the nuclear plant in the Philippines that incurs payment of US$170,000 per day in interest on the part of the current government having to service the loans. Such money "should have gone to basic services like schools and hospitals for the poor."[22]

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[20]Kindly refer to the House of Commons, Hansard Debates Column 274 (February 25, 1998), cited in Hawley, "Exporting Corruption: Privatization, Multinationals and Bribery."

[21]Hawley, "Exporting Corruption: Privatization, Multinationals and Bribery."

[22]Hawley, "Exporting Corruption: Privatization, Multinationals and Bribery." The Philippines' Treasurer Leonar Briones recently commented: "it is a terrible burden which never fails to elicit feelings of rage, anger and frustration in me.

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In the final analysis, corruption affects most the poorest in both the rich and poor nations, and undermines the integral and sustainable development of society, including democracy and the environment. Good governance will ensure that loans negotiated for the development of social services are used to empower the poor to invest in their future as they avail of cutting-edge technologies, high-yield seeds, better soil management, and proper row planting.

Corruption Spawning a Global Protest Movement

The menace of globalized corruption and secretive governance is not unrelated to the Wall Street-induced global financial crisis. Compounded by other related issues, misgovernance has spawned a global unrest that imploded in a movement for change, from the mass protests in Tunisia and Cairo's Tahrir Square, *indignados*'s protests in Spain and the uprisings in Libya, Yemen and Syria, to the protests engulfing Wall Street and cities across America. These mass protests sent shockwaves around the world in 2011 because they are public outcries against corruption, impunity and economic instability, inequality, corporate greed, lack of jobs and equal access to benefits.

> The 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index shows that public frustration is well founded. No region or country in the world is immune to the damages of corruption[:] the vast majority of the 183 countries and territories assessed score below five on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 10 (very clean.) New Zealand, Denmark and Finland top the list, while North Korea and Somalia are at the bottom.[23]

We're talking of money that should have gone to basic services like schools and hospitals" (A. Easton, "Philippines to scrap nuclear albatross," *The Guardian* [September 7, 1999], 15). See "Westinghouse Electric—Peace in our time between Westinghouse and Manila," *Power in Asia* (October 30, 1995).

[23]The 2011 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) depended on assessments and opinion surveys conducted by independent and reputable institutions. These surveys and assessments included questions related to the bribery of public officials, kickbacks in public procurement, embezzlement of public funds,

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There are also protests in developed countries. The ordinary citizens of the North Atlantic are the worst hit and they took to the streets, inspired by the Arab spring.[24] Though diverse in backgrounds, their messages are similar: more transparency and accountability are needed from our leaders because "the 'system' has failed, and [because of] the conviction that even in a democracy, the electoral process will not set things right—at least not without strong pressure from the street."[25]

> "This year we have seen corruption on protestors' banners be they rich or poor. Whether in a Europe hit by debt crisis or an Arab world starting a new political era, leaders must heed the demands for better government," said Huguette Labelle, Chair of Transparency International.

There is a common theme, expressed by the nascent Occupy Movement, which evolved and

> rebounded in multiple forms, reclaiming foreclosed homes, occupying banks, shutting down ports, interrupting university trustee meetings and political speeches at the Iowa Caucuses, and forcing people on the streets, in Congressional corridors and at city halls to address how the one percent's wealth and power has created a stranglehold on the 99 percent.[26]

There is no denial that global protest movement demands that public sector governance puts the interests of its citizens first since it is a responsibility that transcends borders. Governments must act for

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and the effectiveness of public sector anti-corruption efforts. Perceptions are used because corruption is to a great extent a latent activity hard to measure. Over time, perceptions have proved to be a reliable estimate of corruption. See Transparency International, "Demand for Better Government must be Heeded," www.cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011/results/ (accessed Jan. 12, 2012).

[24]See Anup Shah's article, "Trade, Economy and Related Issues," www.globalissues.org/issue/1/trade-economy-related-issues (accessed Jan. 12, 2012).

[25]See Joseph E. Stiglitz's article, "The Globalization of Protest," www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/stiglitz144/English (accessed Jan. 13, 2012).

[26]See Judith Scherr's article, "A Movement Evolves to Occupy the Future," www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=106394 or www.globalissues.org/news/2012/01/09/12388 (accessed Jan. 12, 2012).

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the common good and "citizens need to continue demanding better performance from their leaders."[27]

Toward a Theological Reflection on Corruption

This "thick description" of corruption serves as the context for a discerning theological reflection in the light of the social teachings of the Church that condemn corruption as a "structure of sin" and call for accountability, transparency, the common good, a "new humanism," and the building of an inclusive and humane society for future generations.

Corruption is an evil which has a multidimensional reality. At the personal level, corruption infects the heart of the greedy with an insatiable need to gratify the egotistic self incrementally. In its interpersonal and communal dimensions, corruption becomes an evil that exercises a seductive and addictive power over the morally weak. It is a structural evil that wrecks the system of governance, undermines the common good as the greedy pilfer the financial allocation for the marginalized, debilitates the latter's human spirit, and oftentimes crushes their hope for a more sustainable and dignified way of earning a living. The evil of corruption operates so insidiously that it taints and tarnishes every system of corrupt governance. In this sense, corruption is a systemic evil that infects the major institutions and processes of the state in which most people have no alternatives for dealing with the corrupt situation. Such a systemic evil *participates in* and becomes *reinforced by* the mystery of evil. This mystery of evil, which is independent of the contribution of human choices, "retains its identity as an ontological evil or mystery."[28]

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[27]For more information, see www.cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011/results/ (accessed Jan. 12, 2012).

[28]See Judith A. Merkle, "Sin," in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, eds. Judith A. Dwyer and Elizabeth L. Montgomery (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 885.

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Corruption constitutes an affront against the gratuitous God who freely offers all a good life that promotes human flourishing for all citizens, especially the suffering poor and powerless. This affront involves the greedy making inward decisions—that is, acting with certain knowledge and freedom, succumbing to the addiction of corruption, and thus sinning against others and God. In this way, the corrupt "miss the mark" (*het', hatta't* in Hebrew)[29] in their covenantal fidelity to God (Exod. 19:4–5) through the concomitant failure to morally sustain and promote right relationships with others (Isa. 58:6–7) in the world and with God.[30] When the sins of corruption become structuralized in the "institutionalized sets of interdependent human relationships that influence social behavior and regulate the life-chances of people at a given time and place" as noted by John XXIII and Vatican II (*Mater et magistra* 59–67; *Gaudium et spes* [GS] 25),[31] there exist "structures of sins" that provide the greedy with further inducements to sins of corruption.[32]

Although the corrosive power of the structures of sins impacts human existence embedded in a corruption-ridden world, all is not lost because grace abounds in any situation of sin. Though tainted by sin, human nature is also graced by God's indwelling presence. With strenuous efforts assisted by grace (GS 22), believers will be able to promote the principle of the common good. However, the concrete realization of the principle of the common good requires the correlational promotion of particular virtues. It means that the individual persons in the community will have to "en-flesh" virtues in their dispositions and attitudes; and in their interpersonal and

[29]Merkle, "Sin," 883.

[30]Merkle, "Sin," 885.

[31]Merkle, "Sin," 886. Also see M. O' Keefe, *What Are they Saying About Social Sin?* (New York: Paulist, 1990).

[32]See no. 193 in *Compendium of Catholic Social Doctrine of the Church* (Strathfield: St. Paul's Publications, 2004), 99.

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communal relations, live out the interrelated virtues of governance, transparency, and accountability in an effort to imbibe the overarching moral virtue of integrity in a given society and populace.[33] Only the embodiment of the three "propping" virtues of the one predominant virtue of integrity ensures the realization of the principle of the common good in the world at large.

The virtue of *good governance* alerts elected officials and corporate leaders about the related attitudes and dispositions of six principles: (i) participation that encourages free and fair election, including the freedom of association, (ii) effectiveness and efficiency that calls on officials to utilize resources in the best way possible, (iii) responsiveness which requires serving the stakeholders in reasonable time frames, (iv) consensus-building of diverse interests, (v) equity and inclusiveness that ensure inclusion, particularly of minorities, and (vi) mandating the Rule of Law that enforces the legal frameworks of equality and justice for all.[34]

Complementary to good governance is the virtue of accountability that disposes elected officials and corporate leaders to be answerable to those affected by decisions, especially in the use of public monies. A case in point is Archbishop Franklin from Luanda who called on the foreign oil companies to make public what they pay Angola's government in fees and taxes:

[33]Christopher P. Vogt argues for "far more balance between the use of principles and virtues as two complementary approaches to Catholic social thought … toward the concrete realization of the vision set forth in Catholic social teaching" in a manner that virtues "would force us to think carefully about what a disposition toward solidarity and the common good would look like in individual persons." See his article, "Fostering a Catholic Commitment to the Common Good: An Approach Rooted in Virtue Ethics," *Theological Studies* 69 (2007), 394–417.

[34]See *Study Guide Series on Peace and Conflict*, "Governance, Corruption, and Conflict," United States Institute of Peace, www.scribd.com/doc/38920029/Governance-Corruption-Conflict-Study-Guide (accessed Jan. 12, 2012).

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> "This would be good for the country, good for the people, because this money doesn't belong to the government or to a particular political party, but to all the people of Angola … the people shouldn't be living in misery when the government is taking in so much money."[35]

Indeed the virtue of accountability informs believers that to be answerable to the citizens derives from a faith that remains loyal to God through the love of the lowly neighbor (1 John 4:20–21).

The virtue of transparency calls for a disposition on the part of elected officials and corporate leaders to guarantee the right of the citizens' access to information about the proposed and expended budgets of the governing authorities, including a public disclosure of the acquired assets of elected officials. Transparency is the virtue that encourages elected officials and corporate leaders to exercise an openness that guarantees free and independent media and the judiciary so that these institutions can conduct public scrutiny of the activities of all those in governance. It is in this light that the US Conference of bishops, in their 2011 statement, undergird the need for transparency as the Conference calls on individuals and corporations involved in the extractive industries to "adopt transparency in operations and financial accountability" to ensure that the legitimate enterprise of extracting resources "does not contribute directly or indirectly to corruption, conflict and repression."[36]

The embodiment of the threefold virtues of good governance, accountability and transparency and the ensuing conscientious practice of such virtues make the principle virtue of integrity credible in the sight of all citizens. Integrity is a primary virtue that reflects a right

[35]Archbishop Damião Franklin, in "Angolan archbishop calls for increased transparency of government," Catholic News Service/U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (June 8, 2002); also quoted in a position paper entitled "Transparency: A Christian Concern: Catholic Social Teaching and the Case of Transparent and Accountable Practices in Extractive Industries," CIDSE, Pax Christi International and Caritas Europe (September 20, 2003), 12.

[36]"A Call to Solidarity with Africa," U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference (November 14, 2001).

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relationship with God and with others, so much so that the interests of others are always prioritized above one's selfish interests. Faith in, and fidelity to, God dispose elected officials who have integrity to live a life vis-à-vis the governed in a manner where people come first before profit, where their aggregate needs come before one's selfish gain, and above all, where creation is seen as God's gift and not as any earthly Caesar's possession.

This theological reflection on the "enfleshment" of the virtues prepares the ground for the gradual flourishing of "a new humanism" envisaged by Benedict which embraces the needs of future generations.[37] This horizon is necessary for translating the social ethics of the Catholic social teachings into "*enfleshable*" particular virtues. In this way, the ethics of the common good becomes a realizable vision which the Church shares with the world so that responsible citizens transform the world into a more corruption-free community.

At the same time, it is important that this process of "theologizing" motivates the Church in the Philippines to respond more effectively to this malaise of systematic corruption that plagues Filipino society.

Proposed Ecclesial Strategic Responses

Corruption continues to plague societies everywhere, the Philippines no less, a nation whose ranking, according to Transparency International, is sandwiched between Thailand (3–4) and Indonesia (2), repeatedly getting a rating between 2.4 and 3.[38] The Philippines is considered to have historically high levels of political and bureaucratic corruption due

[37]The address of Pope Benedict posted on January 13, 2012, entitled "Young People Key to Overcoming the Global Crisis," is available on Vatican Radio, www.oecumene.radiovaticana.org/EN1/index.asp and www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=44392&wf=rsscol (accessed Jan. 13, 2012).

[38]See Mark Jorgensen Farrales, "Bureaucratic Corruption in Southeast Asia: A Comparative Analysis of the ASEAN 5," www.papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1740009 (accessed Feb. 14, 2012), 3.

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to political interference in the appointment of bureaucrats, relatively low wages, weak direct monitoring of civil service, a weak judiciary, and a slack police force.[39] Corruption is so deep-seated that it is "one of the causes of abject poverty" in the Philippines.[40]

Given such deep-seated corruption, the Church in the Philippines needs to engage in multilevel actions to reduce the level of corruption; these actions include civil collaboration, cultural transformation, ecclesial empowerment of the base and finally, the promotion of a transformational spirituality of the greater good.

Civil Collaboration. The Filipino Church is a national institution that will do well to press for reform entailing (i) a conscientious implementation of a stringent merit-based and non-politicized recruitment system to guarantee competency and independence of civil bureaucrats; (ii) higher wages and a clear and transparent promotion system which can discourage officials from engaging in corrupt behavior; (iii) a strong, unified and ever-present anti-corruption monitoring agency which will raise the likelihood that corrupt officials will be caught, charged and dismissed.[41] Such collaboration widens

[39]Farrales, "Bureaucratic Corruption in Southeast Asia: A Comparative Analysis of the ASEAN 5," 21, 24. Kunio Yoshihara hastens to add that the Philippine judiciary and police are "corrupt to the core." For more details, see his book, *The Nation and Economic Growth: The Philippines and Thailand* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[40]Francisco F. Claver, *The Making of a Local Church* (Manila: Claretian Publications and Jesuit Communications, 2009), 96.

[41]In the Philippines, despite the constitutionally mandated existence of the Ombudsman's Office, each succeeding president often sets up a different and separate anti-corruption agency such as the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) and the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PCAG), which are ineffective due to the lack of a unified enforcement strategy.

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"the avenue of participation" for creating a less corruption-ridden state and society.[42]

At the same time, the Church needs to lend its moral authority to the Ombudsman Office which has the popular support of the Philippines' vibrant and active civil society through its Corruption Prevention Units/CPU program. Once accredited as CPU, these units "act as 'watchdogs' or extra 'fire alarms' to help the Ombudsman detect malfeasance in the public sector."[43] With 361 accredited CPUs nationwide, an increase from 175 at the end of 1998, the Filipino Church and the Ombudsman Office need to work collaboratively to bring about corruption reform by pressing the government for more transparency and accountability.[44]

Cultural Transformation. The Church needs to culturally transform the strong familism of Filipino society, that strong family-centeredness which militates against "a stronger sense of the common good."[45] In no way does this suggest that familism has fostered self-centered Filipinos; "it's rather that the moral universe of their loyalty does not readily expand to the national community and their sense of solidarity

[42]Aloysius Lopez Cartagenas, "The Diakonia of an Ecclesia to the Res Publica: Prospects of the Philippine Church in Transforming the Filipino Polity for the Common Good," *Landas* 23 (2009), 107.

[43]Farrales, "Bureaucratic Corruption in Southeast Asia: A Comparative Analysis of the ASEAN 5," 2.

[44]Farrales, "Bureaucratic Corruption in Southeast Asia: A Comparative Analysis of the ASEAN 5," 2. Among the CPUs are the Concerned Citizens of Abra for Good Government (CCAGG), Procurement Watch, Inc. (PWI), the Fellowship of Christians in Government (FOCIG), and the Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN). Also see Eduardo T. Gonzalez and Magdalena L. Mendoza, "Anticorruption Initiatives in the Philippines: Breakthroughs, Limits, and Challenges," in Vinay Bhargava and Emil Bolongaita, eds., *Challenging Corruption in Asia: Case Studies and a Framework for Action* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2004), 109.

[45]Claver, *The Making of a Local Church,* 59.

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is difficult to apply to fellow citizens when mediated by policies, structures and institutions."[46] So it is incumbent upon the Filipino Church to begin educating the families in civic consciousness so that there are "families that are as socially conscious as they are family centered."[47] Second, the Church needs to challenge the "*laissez-faire* attitude of most Filipinos who regard corrupt practices" as standard operating procedure that legitimizes the corrupt officials' enrichment of themselves as "their reward for winning an election or appointive job."[48] The Church needs to support the anti-corruption movement known as "Ehem" in order to bring about attitudinal change from deeming corruption as "the spoils of privilege" to condemning it as stealing of public monies for self-gain.[49]

Ecclesial Empowerment of the Base. In the spirit of the *aggiornamento* of Vatican II, the anti-corruption campaign has to be part of the renewal that will substantially take place at the base where "our people are getting more conscious of the work the Spirit is doing among them, with them, in their base communities."[50] In base communities where the people imbibe and exercise participative discernment, learning and doing discernment on the nexus between their own faith and corruption, the Spirit guides the base communities to arrive at a consensus to stand up against corrupt practices. In this participative discernment, the communities posture that "we do what we can where we are with little we have and in solidarity with other little people like

[46]Cartagenas, "The Diakonia of an Ecclesia to the Res Publica," 101.

[47]Claver, *The Making of a Local Church,* 59.

[48]Claver, *The Making of a Local Church,* 56.

[49]Claver, *The Making of a Local Church,* 63. "Ehem" is a project initiated by Jesuit priest Fr. Albert Alejo to educate people on what they can do to lessen corruption in public life in Philippine society.

[50]Claver, *The Making of a Local Church,* 187.

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us"[51] in order to weaken the fringes of the web-like cancer and thus weaken the center of corruption. At the same time, the participative discernment opens the communities to the power of the Spirit that allows the values of the reign of God to transform the cultural values of acceptance and tolerance of corruption to the point of "abhorrence of it as a sin and a crime" and thus promote the common good.[52]

Transformational Spirituality of the Greater Good. Through leadership modular sessions, regular retreats and weekend seminars, the Church is in a position to communicate a spirituality that opens the hearts of participants to the transforming intimacy of the triune God. The everyday and oftentimes profound experience of the intensity of God's intimate love for creation and particular individuals overflows the individual heart and gradually weans the heart of its insatiable needs for material gains. Once weaned of its addiction, the heart finds that perennial love of the triune God who is in everything and is everything (Col. 3:11) that the heart needs. Once transformed by God's intimate love, the heart is able to prioritize God and the aggregate needs of the community first because the common good represents the greater good. The life of Zacchaeus (Lk. 19: 1–10) amplifies this spirituality. As a tax collector, Zacchaeus' heart is addicted to possessions (Lk. 18:24–27). Once transformed, his heart is weaned from addiction and overflows with generosity (Lk. 19:8). The gospel has demonstrated that a heart converted and ruled by God will become the seat whereby particular individuals are influenced to adopt the right disposition and attitude that ensure the practice of the three supporting virtues of good governance, accountability and transparency in the one dominant

[51]Claver, *The Making of a Local Church,* 167.

[52]Claver, *The Making of a Local Church,* 167. Bishop Claver remarked that the base communities "are creating and living a spirituality of communion: discerning, acting in solidarity, inculturated—an authentic indigenous spirituality that results from the continuous efforts they make at harmonizing their cultural values with those of the reign of God" to the point that "they will bring about the changes Vatican II hopes for the Church Universal—in God's own time" (168).

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virtue of integrity. This transformational spirituality of the greater good which grounds virtue ethics will have a ripple-effect in a corruption-ridden society. Only such grounding in virtues provides social ethics the concrete realization of the principle or value of the common good in society that reverses the virulent tide of corruption.

Conclusion

The prevalence of corruption in the public and corporate sectors warrants that the Church lend its voice and moral authority to anti-corruption campaigns so that the respective government is obliged to improve its governance, budget transparency, and accountability to the people. Only greater transparency ensures greater democratic accountability, better policy choices and effective service delivery. In this way, the common good of society is consistently promoted so that the poor do not have to bear the brunt of a corruption-ridden nation. The well-being of the public and private sectors encourages the integral development of the human ecology which in turn ensures harmony with environmental ecology. The Church exerts its moral influence to ensure an increasingly corruption-free society through civil collaboration with anti-corruption agencies and movements, through sustained involvement in the process of cultural transformation of the populace, and especially through the ecclesial empowerment of base communities in doing participative discernment for collective actions. The transformational spirituality of the greater good is a process of ensuring the "enfleshment" of particular virtues of good governance, transparency and accountability; this process bolsters the primary virtue of integrity that ensures gradual human flourishing in a less corrupt world. These multileveled pastoral strategies enable the Church to be a more effective pastoral agent in the shaping of a burgeoning open society governed by open institutions and national government.

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