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CHRISTUS IN VOBIS, SPES GLORIAE

The Eucharist, "Missionary Event," *Fons et Finis* of Mission[1]

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There is a "basic theological text" which was meant to serve as a kind of "textbook" to be reflected upon in preparation for the 51st International Eucharistic Congress (IEC) held last January 24–31, 2016 in Cebu City, Philippines. The present article is meant to be an introduction to this text.

Archbishop Piero Marini, head of the Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses, gave us a basic and comprehensive presentation on IECs and their diverse objectives. He also brought the 51st IEC into the present Asian and Philippine "Church horizon," the fruit of quite extensive and discerning research. We can assume, then, what he has so well given us (and for which we are most grateful), and we can go on from that.

The points I will take up myself are those which are "more specific" in the document of the local "theological commission" (TC/Phil) created by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) on instructions from the Holy See. The TC/Phil tried to put together a text which would more or less focus on the question "what are the

[1]From a presentation by the author (given on April 26, 2015) on the local theological commission of the CBCP (TC/Phil) text entitled "Theological Thematic for the 51st International Eucharistic Congress."

themes 'more properly, most relevantly related' to the 51st IEC?" We will choose just a few among those themes, topics which fit into one somewhat synthetic—and yet necessarily partial—view. The objective here would be to answer the question "*what is a theological perspective/vision which this IEC in Cebu 2016 can really call its 'own'?*"

Context

The Church in the Philippines is preparing to mark the 500th anniversary of the very first coming of the Christian Faith and the Catholic Church to our land. In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan landed with his ships—coming all the way from Europe!—in what we now call the Visayan sector of our country, most significantly in the place we now know as Cebu, where baptisms were performed which made a good number of our ancestors, of high and low estates, Catholic Christians. Hence were the "first beginnings" of Christianity in our land; this is the historic event we are preparing to celebrate in 2021.

Our bishops have organized a "nine year novena" for this preparation. The splendid and memorably moving visit of Pope Francis, and the 51st IEC—all unexpectedly, I believe—entered into the "novena-years of preparation" as superb and truly providential "gifts from heaven." Moreover, as the entire Church pursues all over the world, and of course also in the Philippines, the "New Evangelization," the 51st IEC also becomes an especially meaningful chapter within the effort to bring anew and more radiantly the presence of Christ Jesus and His Gospel to our people and the peoples of Asia. Surely, the 51st IEC is not just for the Philippines and Asia, but inevitably, providentially, and once again, its first impact will be in our own part of the world.

The Theme Drawn from the Letter to the Colossians 1:24–29

"*The mystery … Christ among you [Christus in vobis] … hope for glory*"—The Scripture text which was chosen, and from which the

theological thematic for the 51st IEC was drawn, is from the Letter to the Colossians 1:24–29:

> Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church, of which I am a minister in accordance with God's stewardship given to me to bring to completion for you the word of God, the mystery hidden from ages and from generations past. But now it has been manifested to his holy ones, to whom God chose to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentles: it is Christ in you, the hope for glory. It is he whom we proclaim, admonishing everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. For this I labor and struggle, in accord with the exercise of his power working within me. (Col. 1:24–29)

We realize from deeper study that the chosen passage from Colossians concerns (what we would call) "mission": it is a "missionary text"! And so it places clearly before us the perfect thematic for the 51st IEC: the Eucharist as a "missionary reality and event." Dublin's 50th IEC had as its theme the Eucharist as communion. Cebu's 51st IEC's theme follows upon it perfectly: *the Eucharist as mission: the Eucharist as "fons et finis" of mission.*

The Church as mission, for Asia and the world: this has been the overarching theme of what we might be allowed to call the "magisterial theology of the Church in Asia" since Vatican II. From the history-making visit of Blessed Paul VI in November 1970 "to all the peoples of Asia"; consistently through the thought and pronouncements of the assemblies and "meetings-cum-seminars" of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) from 1974 onwards; in the Synod of Bishops for Asia (1998) and in St. John Paul II's subsequent *Ecclesia in Asia* [1999]; in the relatively recent international mission symposium in Thailand (2006), our number one theological concern has predominantly been "mission," *the Church's essential, defining task to bring Christ Jesus, his story, his Gospel, "to all the peoples of Asia" … and the world.*

At this moment, we are told that Asia, the vast continent made up of incredibly diverse peoples, nations, cultures, and histories, has over

four billion people within its boundaries and that some 92% to 93% of these people have not yet really *significantly* encountered *Christ Jesus, his story, his Gospel, his people—his Body on earth—the Church.* Only some 7% to 8% are Christians and thus (we trust) have more fully encountered Christ Jesus in Asia.[2] Over 60% of humanity is in Asia;[3] more than 90% of them have not yet come to know Jesus Christ! And yet, "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day" (John 6:40); "I have come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Furthermore, and of immediate relevance for Cebu's IEC, every pope from Pius XI to Francis has explicitly told the Church in the Philippines that, because of its geographical location and above all its history, it has—in God's providence—a special calling and mission to "bring Jesus, his story, his Gospel, his people [his Body the Church] to all the peoples of Asia" … and (of course, also) to all the world.

Thus, the 51st IEC in Cebu must be, for all the world to see, a real "explosion of faith"—of faith and love, and hope—in the heart of Asia, from this part of the earth. It is not only fitting then but also necessary(!) that IEC 51 should have at its center *the Eucharist, "fons et finis" of mission!*

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[2]Statistics vary widely. According to the *Britannica Book of the Year 2014* (ed. Karen Jacobs Sparks [Chicago/London: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 2014], 324), there are about 365 million Christians in Asia who constitute about 8.5% of its total population of 4.3 billion. However, according to the Pew Research Center, there are 287 million Christians in Asia who comprise 7.1% of its total population of 4 billion (see http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-christians/ [accessed June 9, 2016]). The Christian population in Asia is projected to rise to 7.7% by 2050 (see http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/asia-pacific/ [accessed June 9, 2016]).

[3]Asia has 4.3 billion or 60.6% of the 7.1 billion world population (*Britannica Book of the Year 2014*, 234).

Christus in Vobis, Spes Gloriae: "Christ in you, Christ among you, your hope of glory"

Now, to return to Col. 1:24–29—at its center is "Christus in vobis, spes gloriae." The translations read "Christ in you" or preferably, as some scholars would translate Χριστὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, "Christ among you (Christ in your minds, hearts and spirit; *Christ in your midst*)—your hope of glory."

First, the person of Christ Jesus towers in the Colossians text. Chapter One, beginning at verse 15, rises to the magnificent hymn on the preeminence of Christ: "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation." Then, in Chapter Two, from verse 2, we meet that resounding profession of faith which begins with:

> … as they are brought together in love, to have all the riches of fully assured understanding, for the knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. [vv. 2–3] … For in him dwells the whole fullness of the deity bodily, and you share in this fullness in him, who is the head of every principality and power. [v. 9][4]

It seems that the Colossians were being tempted to base their beliefs and their hopes not on Christ Jesus only but on other sources as well; they were tempted to create some sort of syncretistic religious ideology.

Paul tells them, with his usual moving passion for Christ: "In Christ Jesus there indwells, bodily, the fullness of divinity." And thus, "In Christ Jesus we have everything!" This is "the mystery of God." Its revelation to the Colossians is the supreme task in the ministry Paul himself has been given, the purpose of his mighty and incessant labors, of the outpouring of all the energy—the power of the Risen Christ Jesus—"which works so mightily within me."[5]

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[4]Some real grasp of the Letter to the Colossians and its "mission theme" should be in all of us in order to enter fully into IEC 51's full significance—so I believe!

[5]The outstanding New Testament exegete, N. T. Wright, believes that so much of the doubt cast on the Pauline authorship of the Letters to the Colossians and Ephesians is because of their so strongly affirmative "high Christology and

There is so much more to say about the Colossians text itself, but all we can do now is swiftly sketch something of its message.[6] We will of course have to link all this up, this "Christus in vobis spes gloriae," this presence of Christ in you and amongst you—*link it all with the Eucharist*. But for us who believe in the Eucharistic mystery, it is not really, in faith, a difficult task!

"Christ in You, the Hope of Glory": Paul's "Reconstruction" of Israel's Understanding of Eschatological Hope[7]

Central to Jewish faith is this conviction: if Israel's God is the author of all creation, then, at the end of time, God will "put the world aright at last."

When the First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587/586 BC because of the idolatry of the priests in the Temple, the *Shekinah*, the glory of God which had stayed in the Temple since Solomon's time, vanished. But when the Temple is rebuilt, the *Shekinah* will dwell again in it. The *prophecy of returning glory* was widespread in later Jewish literature. But it is not only the glory of God himself which is to be restored in the coming new age, when God will bring his mercy and judgment to bear on the world again. It is also the glory of humankind, made unto the image of God—"the glory of

high ecclesiology"! He considers these Letters truly Pauline (see N. T. Wright, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary* [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986], 31–34). On the authorship of the Christological hymn in Col. 1:15–20, see N. T. Wright, "Poetry and Theology in Colossians 1:15–20," in *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (London: T&T Clark Ltd, 1993), 119.

[6]But you are challenged to "dig into it" so as to set your minds and hearts on fire!

[7]Here I follow and borrow heavily *from the Pauline studies of N. T. Wright*, in some places using his very own words. I believe all of us must make what follows in some way our own!

Adam"—which will be restored and renewed; this glory will pour out to fill and fulfill humanity: thus God will dwell amongst his people.[8]

In 2 Samuel 7, King David proposes to build a house for the Lord. But it is the Lord who will "build himself a house," a physical Temple where his glory can indwell. But God will give David a son, a new king to sit on David's throne. This son will turn out to be "God's own son." The physical Temple will only be a sign and symbol pointing to this king. This king will be himself the real Temple wherein God will dwell anew among his people.

This is the background for Psalm 2, and for the hymn of "the all-sufficient Christ" in Colossians (Col. 1:15–29; cf. Col. 2:9–15): "In Christ the fullness of deity resides in bodily form. Yours is a share in this fullness, in him who is the head of every principality and power" (Col. 2:9–10). *The long awaited return of the Shekinah is, for Paul, in Christ Jesus, son of David and God's own Son.* Christ Jesus himself is the fulfillment of the hope of Israel that God's glory would return, dwelling in the restored Temple. *Jesus is himself the new Temple*; in him the *Shekinah* indwells *fully and bodily*, for "God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' … has shone in our hearts to bring to light the knowledge of the glory of God on the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

The mystery of God is Christ Jesus crucified and risen; in him is revealed, not only the glory of the one Creator-God, but the true glory of all humankind (the "glory of Adam") which was lost in the Fall. The coming, long-awaited restoration of God's glory has now been accomplished in Christ Jesus**:** *"the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"* (2 Cor. 4:6).

"*Yours is a share in the fullness [of deity] in him* …" (Col. 2:9). It is not only in Jesus where God's glory is revealed, but also in his Body, the

[8]This "glory of Adam," to be fulfilled by the sharing in "the glory of God in Christ Jesus," is a significant theme in the Pauline eschatological vision. See N. T. Wright, "Adam in Pauline Christology," in K. H. Richards, ed., *SBL Seminar Papers 22* (Chico: Scholars' Press, 1983), 359–389; N. T. Wright, "Poetry and Theology in Colossians 1:15–20," 99–119.

Church.[9] In the Church as a whole, in Christian communities and in individual Christians, in their "shared Christ-life," there is also shared this indwelling of God in Christ (Eph. 3:17: "… that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith"; v. 19 " … that you may be filled with all the fullness of God").

Do we glimpse now the real content of Paul's "Christus in vobis, spes gloriae," "Christ in you, Christ among you, your hope of glory"?

Let me end this by citing Bishop N. T. Wright directly and more fully:

> For Second Temple Jews, the hope of glory was the hope that God's own glorious presence would return to the Temple in Jerusalem, thus exalting the people of Israel over the nations. For Paul, this hope has been realized in Christ Jesus and the Spirit.
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> But in Paul, it [the hope of glory, the hope of the return of God's glorious presence to the Temple of Jerusalem] has been turned over completely inside out. For Paul, the whole of creation is now God's holy land, hearing the good news of the victory of the creator God over all the powers of evil. The eschatological truth, for Paul, the thing God always intended to do in the end, but had kept secret up to this point, is that instead of coming to live in a Temple made of stone, located in one particular city, *God has now decided to dwell, not just in Jesus Christ, but in his people spread throughout the world* [italics mine]. The church is the strange fulfillment of the ancient Jewish promise, but it is a fulfillment for and among all the nations of the world. Because the Messiah lives in the hearts, lives in the worship of the people, whoever they are, that people constitutes the true eschatological Temple, the place where the glory of God is revealed.
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> The hope of glory in Col. 1:27 is not only the hope of glory for the whole church (Rom. 5:2), but also the hope of glory for the whole world (Rom. 8:21). The whole creation will share "the freedom of the glory of the children of God." God's presence in the end will be manifest throughout his creation, and the life of the church in the present time is the advance sign of that, and perhaps also the means toward it. Paul reworked the eschatology of the glory of God in the light of Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, and the gift of the

[9]Rom. 9:22–24; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 1:18; Col. 3:4; 1 Thess. 2:11–12; 2 Thess. 2:14.

> Spirit. The result is *a cosmic eschatology of future glory, anticipated in the fact of his church* [italics mine].[10]

"Christ in You, Christ among You": The Presence of Christ Jesus in Christian Life, in the Life of the Church, and in Christian Worship

It has been said above that applying this theology of "Christ in/among you" directly to the Eucharist would not really be difficult for us who accept in faith the mystery of the Eucharist. At this point, therefore, we can turn to the worship of the Church and the "mystery of faith" present in that worship and in the sacred liturgy. We now turn to the sacramental presence which might be called the "culminating presence" (*fons et finis:* finis), the "Eucharistic Emmanuel-presence": our Lord with us in the Eucharist—sacrifice, sacrament, and "real presence." In the Eucharist, we have Jesus Christ in whom dwells the fullness of divinity in bodily form—"in the flesh," dwelling with us, one *with us. "Fons et finis" of mission, we have said. This presence is, in truth and depth, the final fulfillment of mission.*

In the teaching of the Church, we also have in the Eucharist Jesus Christ's presence "in action," in the reality of his entire Paschal Mystery. We turn for this, conveniently, to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1084 to 1099). CCC 1085 reads:

> In the liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present. During his earthly life Jesus announced his Paschal mystery by his teaching and anticipated it by his actions. When his Hour comes, he lives out the unique event of

[10]This text from Bishop Wright I have cited at length so we may grasp the real and full breadth of what "Christus in vobis, spes gloriae" truly means, and not read into Paul's words and thought some narrow understanding we have picked up from sermons. See N. T. Wright, "'Christ in You, the Hope of Glory' (Col. 1:27): Eschatology in St. Paul," in Demetrios Trakatellis & John Chryssavgis, eds., *In the Footsteps of St. Paul: An Academic Symposium—Papers Presented at the Pauline Symposium, October 11–16, 2008* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2011), 19–36.

> history which does not pass away: Jesus dies, is buried, rises from the dead, and is seated at the right hand of the Father "once for all." [The] Paschal mystery is a real event that occurred in our history, but it is unique: all other historical events happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past. The Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all that Christ is—all that he did and suffered for all men—participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection *abides* and draws everything toward life.[11] (CCC 1085)

This chapter in the CCC will be something of a "revelation" to most of us. Implicit in it is the basic theological insight of the *Mysterien-theologie* (the "Mystery theology") proposed by Dom Odo Casel, a Benedictine monk and scholar at Maria Laach. Casel's liturgical/theological reflection—later taken up, developed, "corrected," and modified—was yet considered by Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) as perhaps the most fruitful theological theme raised up in the 20th century.

Furthermore, a prior and complementary text, taken from Vatican II's *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (on the priesthood), no. 5, reads thus:

> The other sacraments, as well as with every ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate, are tied together with the Eucharist and are directed toward it. The Most Blessed Eucharist contains the entire spiritual boon of the Church, that is, Christ himself, our Pasch and Living Bread, by the action of the Holy Spirit through his very flesh vital and vitalizing, giving life to men who are thus invited and encouraged to offer themselves, their labors and all created things, together with him.

We must note that CCC 1085 affirms a theology—more a *Church teaching*—not much known or grasped even by many priests, and surely not by most of the faithful. We have learned that it is not even much taught to our people. It is profound and thus "difficult to grasp." But it is surely worth our time and effort to come to some understanding and "experience" of this reality. The catechesis (and prayerful reflection) for

[11] This CCC text is, I believe, an invaluable "theological treasure" for reflection.

the IEC 51 might fruitfully serve as a way we can make this teaching known and grasped more widely among us.

The "event" that is the Paschal Mystery (even this term, so much taken up in the Church after Vatican II, is frequently not understood!) is an "event"—a "single mystery"—understood as a "doing of Jesus," a "doing by" Christ Jesus done for us, for our sakes. Going back to CCC 1085, because Jesus Christ is and acts as the Son-made-flesh, everything he does "participates in the divine eternity."

Perhaps we in turn might put it this way: the divine eternity flows into all that the Son-made-man is and does. In some true way, it assumes all of it, takes all of it up, into the life of God. But the events which make up the Paschal Mystery, as the Church has always believed, in the most eminent way "abide in eternity" in such a way that in them the Lord does take up our lives and our deeds, offered to Him, and then are by Him (in and by the Spirit) joined to His own passion, to His redeeming death and resurrection, so that they may be redeemed and in a true way participate in His own saving mystery.

Our Faith tells us, and the Church teaches us, that this is what happens in our worship, in the Church's liturgy first of all—pre-eminently in the Eucharistic sacrifice and in "the Supper of the Lamb." This "takes place" at every Mass. Jesus takes us up into His saving action "here and now" so that that action becomes present to us and we become present "in it" and become "part of it"; its transforming grace flows into our lives to make us more one with Him, more conformed to Him, to make our lives and deeds "instruments" of His saving work in the world. This is the Eucharistic presence of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." *Surely it is a "presence"—a "Christifying presence"—particularly significant for the Cebu Eucharistic Congress, and its opening out to "mission" for Asia, for our "new age and our new world."*

May I end this with what I believe is an important remark: this grasp of the "mystery" is not so much the "work of words and our own thinking"; it is grace given us by the Lord: *given to us in grace*, through our truly and fully opening up of our spirit to the presence and action within us, and in our lives, of the Spirit of Jesus.

The Eucharist: *Fons et Finis* of Mission

Before we complete our reflection on the theme of "Christ in you, Christ among you" as *spes gloriae*, "hope of glory," we have to take up some clarifications on the understanding of "mission" today, especially in the Asian context.

For the Asian bishops, above all in the FABC statements, mission of course involves proclamation—proclamation of Jesus, his story, his Gospel, yes! But proclamation is done by means of dialogue. There are different modes of dialogue, but the most basic of all is the "dialogue of life."[12]

The "dialogue of life"—this notion came to the FABC originally through Pope Paul VI's encyclical, *Ecclesiam suam*.[13] The Indian bishops

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[12]The document *Dialogue and Proclamation* of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (1991) enumerates various forms of dialogue: e.g.,

> (a) the *dialogue of life*, where people strive to live in an open and neighborly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations; (b) the *dialogue of action*, in which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people; (c) the *dialogue of theological exchange*, where specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages, and to appreciate each other's spiritual values; (d) the *dialogue of religious experience*, where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for God or the Absolute. (no. 42)

[13]Paul VI's encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) does not use the term "dialogue of life," but the notion can be found in section no. 87:

> Since the world cannot be saved from the outside, we must first of all identify ourselves with those to whom we would bring the Christian message—like the Word of God who Himself became a man. Next we must forego all privilege … and adopt the way of life of ordinary people in all that is human and honorable. … Then, before speaking, we must take great care to listen not only to what men say, but more especially to what they have it in their hearts to say. Only then will

first highlighted it for Asia. Through it, we Christians live and rub shoulders with people of other religious traditions, "other faiths," and other world-views and even ideologies. Through it, people in their diversities get to know each other, respect each other, and learn from each other.

Other ways of dialogue are: a) through joint involvement in tasks for community-building, social justice, and peace; b) through "the dialogue of religious experience," through coming together to pray, each in his/her own way, and lastly, c) the dialogue—among "experts"—of theological exchange.

The "SVD theology of mission" stresses mission as prophetic dialogue.[14] This means we proclaim our beliefs regarding God's vision of humanity and the world as revealed in "the person and story of Jesus." But we share our beliefs primarily the way God himself did it in Jesus: through his presence, his "being with" us, his loving self-giving, with respect, with patience, and by way of humility and service (Francis' "culture of encounter"). Mission as prophetic dialogue derives from the presence of Jesus among us, in some true way in ourselves and in every human person (cf. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 14), and it moves forward "toward the Kingdom of God" and toward the fullness of humanity. This, "the glory of Adam" (we believe), is truly realized by entering into the "fullness of shared divine life" in and

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we understand them and respect them, and even, as far as possible, agree with them.

Cf. also no. 97 (dialogue with mankind).

[14]"Prophetic dialogue" is the understanding of mission proposed by the 10th General Council of the Society of the Divine Word; see *In Dialogue with the Word No. 1* (Rome: SVD Publications, 2000), 31; Stephen B. Bevans & Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants and Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 281–398, esp. 348; Stephen B. Bevans, "Mission as Prophetic Dialogue," https://www.relforcon.org/sites/default/files/Transform_Wkshp-MISSION_AS_PROPHETIC_DIALOGUE-final.pdf.pdf (accessed June 12, 2016).

through Jesus and his Spirit. "Christ in you, Christ among you, your hope of glory."

Mission as prophetic dialogue rejects "proselytism." Both John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio* and Francis (in several statements[15]) have warned us against proselytism[16] as hypocritically hidden within dialogue. Prophetic dialogue proclaims Jesus, fosters encounter with the presence-and-story of Jesus, fosters the "values of the Gospel," and moves toward the fullness of the truly human, toward the fulfillment of authentic humanity and authentic human community (go back to what we said earlier about Paul's "reworked eschatology," especially in Colossians/Ephesians).

If the Eucharist is the "real symbol," given to us and for us, of Jesus' presence, of the presence of his Paschal Mystery (CCC 1085), then it is a "missionary event"; it is the source of mission and the fulfillment of mission. It quite simply embodies Christ in all his preeminence ("in whom dwells the fullness of divinity" which he wills to share with us), in his presence and action, in his "here-and-now" sharing of the divine life with us—the purpose for which he came (John 10:10).

For what we have called the "SVD theology of mission," two very meaningful images of mission today are table fellowship and foot-washing (service)—the "Holy Thursday" images.

Table fellowship was the theme of several parables of Jesus, the object of meals he shared with sinners and outcasts.

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[15]*Message of Pope Francis on World Mission Day* (May 19, 2013), no. 4: "The Church's missionary spirit is not about proselytizing, but the testimony of a life that illuminates the path, which brings hope and love." See also the *Address of Pope Francis to the Catechists* on the occasion of the International Congress on Catechism (September 27, 2013), no. 1.

[16]The word "proselyte"—from the Greek προσήλυτος ("new comer")—refers to a convert from pagan religion to Judaism (Mt. 23:15; Acts 2:11; 6:5; 13:43). In modern usage, however, the word "proselytism" has acquired a pejorative connotation of attempting to convert people to a religion by using means, and for motives, which do not safeguard the freedom and dignity of the human person.

> Through this image [table fellowship], Jesus announced that God, whom he personally experienced as compassionate love, was inviting everyone—everyone without exception—to communion with him. This required, however, personal conversion as well as social transformation. For only when human persons begin to live in communion with one another as brothers and sisters, will communion with God—as Father, Son, Spirit—become possible and real.[17]

Foot-washing, in turn, is the moving image of God's own Son coming to serve (kneeling before us!), coming in unconditional love to share and give his life to us and for us.

These two "Holy Thursday images" are also "communion-images" (the Gospel of John signifies the "Eucharist as communion" with this foot-washing image). Holy Thursday's "communion-images" also become "images of mission" simply because communion is the fount of mission "from which mission flows," and communion is also the fulfillment of mission in which and for which mission comes to its term (how striking that, in a true sense, Holy Thursday becomes a "day of mission"!). A citation from former SVD Superior-General Fr. Tony Pernia:

> The Eucharist epitomizes our mission by demonstrating what "communion" is all about, and anticipating the final, ultimate communion in the Kingdom of God. The Eucharist is the core, the heart of the community, the embodiment of what community is, and of what community is called to be. And thus, in this sense, *the Eucharist is Mission*.[18]

Christ Jesus, the "Hope of Glory": But What of the Cross?

Paul's reworking of the understanding of the eschatological hope of glory—"already … but not yet"—would seem to be a rather

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[17]Antonio Pernia, *The Eucharist and Our Mission, Following the Word 7* (Rome: SVD Publications, 1996), 38.

[18]Pernia, *The Eucharist and Our Mission*, 38.

triumphalistic vision. But, confronting present realities in the lives of Christians, in the life and history of the Church—the Church as one and universal, and in its local communities—what about the failings, the shortcomings, the all-too-obvious divisions and scandals (e.g., of sexual abuse and financial corruption)? What about so much pride, power-seeking and power-abuse, and rampant sin and evil in the lives of church people, of its ministers and leaders—so much "ugliness and shame" which only recently filled the public media and shattered the image of the Church in so many countries?

For sure Paul knows this (as all of us do also!). His vision "has taken it on board": he is clear that the "eschatology of glory" has begun, but that "it is emphatically not yet completed, and stands in enormous tension with the continuing realities of present existence"[19] and history. This tension was only too obviously present in Paul's own apostolic life. He wrote *Colossians* and *Ephesians* while in captivity; he wrote of the appalling sufferings he had to bear. Col. 1:24 precisely speaks of "my sufferings for your sake[,] and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the Church." In 2 Cor. 6:9, he says of himself: *"* … dying, and behold we live," and that we "bear about in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also appear in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:10). Somehow, through the suffering of the apostle, the glory of God abounds (2 Cor. 4:15). At the heart of 2 Corinthians is the profound and paradoxical Pauline theme, the weakness of man through which God's power is revealed. Unveiling God's glory in the apostolic ministry requires suffering undertaken not merely as an accompaniment but as a necessary means. In Paul, as in the Gospel of John, God's eschatological glory was revealed in the self-giving death of Jesus, in the form of uttermost love.

In the vision of faith, in the realities of all earthly existence—all Christian existence first of all—the glory of God and the Cross of Jesus are not opposed; on the contrary, they belong together. To speak

[19]Wright, "'Christ in You, the Hope of Glory' (Col. 1:27): Eschatology in St. Paul," 29.

of glory is not to ignore the cross, which is God's radical response in the face of radical evil. For the Christian, taking evil seriously means seeking hope in God's promise of glory.

New Testament scholars tell us that what may be seen as hinted at in the earlier Scriptures regarding the glory (*kavodh*) of God comes to full manifestation in Jesus. God's saving self-revelation, his self-giving mercy, appears in a unique way in him. In Jesus is revealed to us what God's "true godliness" really is: it is his saving mercy; it is his compassion.

> Through an astounding diversity of voices, the New Testament proclaims that central to the experience of God's glory is the Paschal Mystery: the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. The essential paradox of the figure of Jesus reaches its climax in the utter poverty, powerlessness, [and] suffering of the one who claimed to speak with unheard-of authority, of the one who was conscious of a unique intimate relationship with God (*abba*), and yet who is nailed unto death on a cross. It is there on that cross that the truest glory of God is revealed. The cross of Christ as the end and fullness of a life lived completely "from God for others" is the revelation of God's majesty and power as self-emptying love.
>
> That such apparently powerless love is, in reality, the absolute power of God, becomes visible, of course, only in the light of the resurrection.
>
> In their essential unity, the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the revelation of the glory and majesty of a love stronger than all the power of sin and death, a love greater than which, it is impossible to conceive. It is precisely God's glory (*kavodh*) that God, while remaining God and Lord of all, is "powerful" enough to enter into sin and death which has disfigured God's creation … and from within, in loving solidarity and sharing, to save his own beloved world.[20]

Thus it has also been said that the Paschal Mystery of Jesus reveals to us that within God's glory (*kavodh*), within his godliness, lurks what we might call "the Divine Pity"—a vulnerability which is, ultimately,

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[20]John R. Sachs, "Glory," *The New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, & Dermot A. Lane (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1987), 418f.

his love. In *Deus Caritas Est*, Benedict XVI likes to speak of "Jesus as the incarnate love of God …. His death on the Cross is the culmination of that turning of God against himself in which he gives himself in order to raise man up and save him. This is love in its most radical form."[21]

Thus "Christ in us, Christ among us, the hope of glory," in earthly existence and life, is most visible to us in Jesus—in his Paschal Mystery, in the compassion of God manifest in Him, and it is expressed in our lives after the life-pattern of Jesus, in the deeds of our own compassion towards our brothers and sisters. It is through compassion also that the process of our grace-transformation into the likeness of Christ Jesus is most realized. Our compassion, joined to that of Jesus' own, is therefore also our own deepest sharing in the glory of God in our lives, and the truest access for us to the glory of God's kingdom. "Christ in us, Christ among us … our hope of glory."

The Eucharist: The Fulfillment, "Finis" of Mission

As we end, we return to the end-term (*finis*) and fulfillment of mission. We may therefore fruitfully turn to two final images of God's kingdom both promised and to come.[22]

First is St. Augustine's image of Adam—fallen, broken up, and scattered in pieces all over the earth but, in the divine mercy, picked up, piece by piece, fitted together, and made one—and living—once again. It is "the great Artist" who does this, God himself, remaking the New Adam, Christ Jesus.

Augustine gives the names of the four parts of the earth—Anatolia (East); Dusis (West); Arctus (North); Mesembria (South)—their first letters spelling out the name ADAM.

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[21]Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* 12.

[22]This conclusion is drawn from "The Eucharist, Call to Mission," Jaime Cardinal Sin's conference at the Seville IEC (1993).

> Adam is scattered throughout the globe. Set in one place, he fell, as it were broken into small pieces, he has filled up the whole world. … But the divine mercy gathered up the fragments from every side, forged them in the fire of love, and welded into one what had been broken.[23]

God is the "master artist," who

> knew what to do … an immense task indeed, but think who the artist was: the Great Artist who remade the broken Adam, was himself the Maker. … Thus God in his mercy welded the pieces together into the New Adam … into the Christ.[24]

Secondly, one of the great themes of mission is *catholicity*—Augustine's "catholica unitas," the catholicity of the Church, the ultimate gathering together of the nations as God's Holy People.

The end-term of history, in Old Testment imagery, is *that of the eschatological pilgrimage of the nations* to the Holy Mountain of God. The end-term of mission is imaged as the great Messianic Banquet, the worship of the Gentiles on the Holy Mountain.

> And on this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees […] and he will destroy on this mountain the face of the covering that is cast over all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will destroy death forever. (Isaiah 25:6–8)[25]

> There, upon the Holy Mountain, all peoples shall hold festival before the Lord. They shall be, all of them, God's chosen peoples. They shall behold the face of their God, and they shall be his people … they

[23]Augustine, *On Psalm 95(96)* (P. L. Migne, xxxvii, 1236); cf. Jaime Sin, "The Eucharist: Summons and Stimulus, Call and Challenge to Evangelization: The Eucharist as a Missionary Event," in *Christ, Light of Nations: Eucharist and Evangelization, Conferences of the International Eucharistic Congress of Seville* (Sherbrooke, QC: Edicions Paulines, 1994), 116–117.

[24]Augustine, *On Psalm 95(96)*; cf. Sin, "The Eucharist: Summons and Stimulus, Call and Challenge to Evangelization: The Eucharist as a Missionary Event," 117.

[25]Sin, "The Eucharist: Summons and Stimulus, Call and Challenge to Evangelization: The Eucharist as a Missionary Event," 134.

> will proclaim God upon cleansed lips. "For thou art great, thou doest wonderful things, thou who art God alone." (Ps. 86:10)[26]
>
> And God responds as the peoples worship him. He pronounces the amazing blessing, transcending all national boundaries: "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel, mine inheritance." (Isaiah 19:24)[27]

From these great images, we can envision the Eucharist now as, in a true sense, "the sacrament of mission fulfilled." All mission reaches its term at the Lord's table. At the great banquet on the Holy Mountain, all peoples are God's holy people; all are brothers and sisters. At the Eucharist, God's love embraces all peoples' ultimate dream and desire: oneness in God's life, *catholica unitas*, where God shall be all in all.

Are not International Eucharistic Congresses foreshadowings of the end-time's great Messianic Banquet? Is not the Eucharist here at IEC its summons and fulfillment, promise and presence, *fons et finis*? We lift up our eyes and see, looking all about us, the coming-to-realization of that amazing blessing, where upon each one, and upon each people, falls that amazing grace whereby each of us, and every race and nation among us, hears our own name, spoken in the symphony of the spirit which is the Church, "sacrament of the oneness of all humankind," and which is proclaimed at the Eucharist, "sacrament and promise of God's coming kingdom."

Listen, listen and hear! Blessed be China, my people; India, Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar, each one my people, each the work of my hands … *and blessed be you, Filipinas, Filipinas—blessed, my own, my people, my inheritance! Amen, Amen!*

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[26]Sin, "The Eucharist: Summons and Stimulus, Call and Challenge to Evangelization: The Eucharist as a Missionary Event," 134.

[27]Sin, "The Eucharist: Summons and Stimulus, Call and Challenge to Evangelization: The Eucharist as a Missionary Event," 134–135.