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EDITOR'S PREFACE

C. Sunil Ranjar, S.J., decisively establishes in his article "Imitation of the Compassionate God: Luke's Theology of Mercy" that the Gospel of Luke, beginning with the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17–49), profoundly emphasizes God's mercy and compassion through both the teachings and actions of Jesus. Ranjar meticulously examines key passages and various parables, illuminating the ethical dimensions of mercy, particularly the critical importance of generosity and the dangers of self-righteousness. He compellingly underscores the necessity of repentance and the tangible rewards that come from embodying mercy, while also confronting the severe consequences of failing to show compassion. Ranjar's conclusion is striking: while it is widely recognized that Luke is the patron of physicians, it is equally pertinent to highlight that he is also the patron of artists. This dual role stems from his portrayal of Jesus as inherently warm, merciful, and compassionate. Luke astutely curates episodes and sayings from his unique source to vividly illustrate the merciful nature of both God and Jesus. Through the covenantal attribute of God's mercy evident in the Infancy Narratives, Luke powerfully emphasizes God's salvific intervention in history, manifested through Jesus, who brings salvation from enemies. Furthermore, God's "merciful compassion" leads directly to the forgiveness of sins—a quality that Jesus exemplifies in his healing ministry. Luke unequivocally presents Jesus as a practitioner of his own teachings, positioning him as the ultimate model for imitation. Jesus consistently chooses forgiveness over condemnation, healing over judgment, and inspires his disciples to adopt this same approach. Moreover, Luke firmly establishes a connection between mercy,

forgiveness, love, and generosity, providing ample and compelling examples in the Gospel—from his special source—to reinforce this vital relationship.

For Jojo M. Fung SJ, "The 'Integrality' of Integral Ecology" emphasizes the need to move away from the technocratic paradigm and instead embrace a relational paradigm. This new approach highlights the interconnectedness of all humankind and the natural world, recognizing their inherent values. The relational paradigm promotes an understanding of the intersections between cultural, economic, social, political, and spiritual ecologies, as well as the ecology of everyday life. This sense of integrality is rooted in an incarnational theology that acknowledges the divine who has embodied itself in the world, thus sanctifying and eternalizing our shared home. In Asia, this integrality is enriched by Indigenous and Igorot earth spirituality, which views *Kabunian* (the spirit or deity), land, identity, being, and life as a sacred whole, deeply connected within a cosmic framework—similar to the concepts of *buen vivir* and the Indira's String of Pearls. Ultimately, this integrality calls for a "bold cultural revolution" and a "unified moral narrative" aimed at redefining our relationship with nature to foster a more flourishing existence within our Common Home. For Fung, Integral Ecology underscores the interrelatedness of faith that seeks justice for both the poor and the Earth. In Asia, diverse civilizational oases of religious and cultural wisdom, along with ecological knowledge and everyday eco-practices, remind us that everything is interconnected and interdependent. We are all part of a sacred and integrative mosaic of life on Earth and in the cosmos.

In his article, "The Pneumatological Ecclesiology of Vatican II: The Spirit, *Sensus Fidelium*, and Synodality" Kenjie I. Cortez presents a pneumatological hermeneutic to enhance our understanding of Vatican II's renewed ecclesiology. He acknowledges both the strengths and limitations of the Council's ecclesiology in relation to the Holy Spirit. The paper examines two key insights that Vatican II has significantly recovered: the *sensus fidelium* and synodality. While the former is explicitly addressed in the conciliar texts, the latter is more of an

implicit aspect of the Council. Cortez argues that both insights are essential for receiving Vatican II's pneumatological ecclesiology. The ongoing task of embracing Vatican II's vision for a renewed Church necessitates a robust interpretive framework to clarify what this vision might mean for the Church today. This paper aims to show that Vatican II's pneumatological ecclesiology, though somewhat inchoate and incomplete, marks a significant shift in the Church's self-understanding and in recognizing the active presence of the Holy Spirit within it. Therefore, any thoughtful understanding and genuine appeal to the *sensus fidelium* must be rooted in the Council's acknowledgment of the Spirit's gift of a supernatural instinct to all the baptized (*sensus fidei*). Beyond issues of authority within the Church, a pneumatological interpretation of Vatican II's approach encourages the entire people of God to engage in ecclesial discernment, continually and progressively interpreting God's revelation in light of contemporary signs of the times. Finally, Pope Francis' call for synodality—along with its possibilities and limitations—serves as a crucial effort to enact Vatican II's ecclesiology in the Spirit. By recognizing the Holy Spirit as the driving force behind the synodal process, the Church seeks to remain open to the richness and freshness that the Spirit brings.

Emmanuel C. Marfori raises an important question in his essay "Are the Church Fathers Relevant in a 21st Century Inculturated and Contextualized Asian Theology?" He discusses the relevance of inculturated and contextualized Asian Theology in relation to Patristics. Marfori outlines several factors that contributed to the decline in popularity of Patristics during the 19th and 20th centuries. Although there was a revival of interest in Patristics (ressourcement) prior to Vatican II, this interest dwindled after the council. Marfori posits that faith and culture can serve as complementary elements in the process of inculturation, both during the era of the Church Fathers and in the present day. He emphasizes the importance of Patristics as exemplars of Tradition. But how can the teachings of the Church Fathers remain relevant today? One example provided is from Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem*, where he argues against Marcion by referencing Jesus' Transfiguration. In his argument, Tertullian highlights two key terms: *contubernium* (friendship) and *repromissio* (promise

fulfillment). These terms are translated into Tagalog as *pagkakaibigan* and *katuparan ng pangako*, respectively, in an effort to bridge the gap to Asian theology. By shifting the context from the original biblical meanings of *contubernium* and *repromissio*, which transition from the Old Testament to the New, Tertullian uses these terms primarily to advocate for the unity of Scripture against Marcion's dualism. Furthermore, he transitions from Tertullian's polemical context to a non-polemical context, emphasizing *pagkakaibigan* (friendship). Marfori concludes by acknowledging that there is still a significant journey ahead before the perennial relevance of the Church Fathers can be fully integrated into a pan-Asian inculturated and contextualized theology. There are no established pathways to follow, but he expresses optimism that, with divine providence (*Deo volente*), a small, steady spark of interest in the studies of the Church Fathers—particularly those from the first eight centuries of West Asia—can facilitate dialogue with South, Southeast, and East Asia in the 21st century. Indeed, Patristics can still be relevant in this contemporary context and connect with other cultures and theologies, such as Filipino theology.

René Pio B. Javellana, S.J., explains in his article "Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* and Popular Religiosity: Historical Perspective, Antecedents and Ramifications" that the origins of Ignatius Loyola's Spiritual Exercises (SPEX) are closely linked to his conversion and subsequent journey as a spiritual pilgrim. This journey took him to Montserrat and Manresa. In Manresa, he spent time in solitude, engaging in prayer, while occasionally venturing out to attend liturgies, seek food, and assist at the local hospital. It was on the banks of the River Cardoner that he experienced a profound enlightenment that deepened his understanding of spiritual matters. The SPEX came into development during a period in Spain marked by reform and ongoing discussions surrounding the legacy of late medieval popular religiosity. If we consider terms like "popular religion," "popular religiosity," and "popular piety" primarily as socio-cultural concepts, they are highly relevant and illuminate the dynamics that can make a religion genuinely global or universal. Sociologically speaking, Catholicism cannot accurately be termed "universal," as the term implies, unless it embraces the popular aspects of faith. In fact, popular religiosity, as Pope Francis

insightfully notes, serves as a historical manifestation and inculturation of Catholicism. However, when "popular" is viewed in a theological context, contrasting it with "institutional" or "mainstream," the term "popular religion" can take on an evaluative and judgmental tone, positioning it in opposition to institutional religion and casting it as suspect. Rather than outright rejecting "popular" as heterodox—a view that could be politically incorrect—the continuing use of the term with a theological evaluative connotation often leads to confusion instead of clarity. If we maintain that "popular religion," "popular religiosity," and "popular piety" are fundamentally socio-cultural, we can better understand the dynamics present in all world religions seeking to connect with a broad segment of humanity. This phenomenon is common across world religions, where there exists both an institutional center of control and a periphery that is often overlooked. While the center helps hold the religion together, it is frequently on the periphery that new ideas and movements arise. The periphery represents a space where the Church encounters a world eager for the Gospel, and it is there that the Church discovers its mission, becoming truly Catholic.

Salvador G. Agualada Jr., C.M.F., asserts in his paper "A Critical Analysis of *Ecclesia in Asia* and its Impact on Contemporary Asian Theology of Religions" that the 25th anniversary of *Ecclesia in Asia* on November 6, 2024 demanded an immediate and thorough evaluation of its impact and relevance. Agualada points out that *Ecclesia in Asia* represents a predominantly papal perspective, failing to engage in authentic dialogue with Asian Churches. This clearly contradicts John Paul II's claim that the document resulted from an "encounter in dialogue" with Asian bishops. Furthermore, Agualada critiques the document for ignoring critical issues highlighted by the 1998 Synod of Bishops for Asia, particularly the salvific significance of other religions. This is an egregious oversight, especially given the long-standing commitment of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) to affirm the role of various religions in God's plan of salvation. The limitations of *Ecclesia in Asia* are unacceptable. The diverse cultural, religious, and social contexts of Asian Churches require a multitude of theological and pastoral approaches, alongside a distinctive vision of Asian Christianity that is tailored to local needs. In his conclusion,

Agualada highlights the urgent necessity for Asian Churches to adopt effective methodologies of evangelization. It is essential to focus not only on "who" evangelizes, and "what" is being evangelized but also on "how" local Churches execute their evangelizing mission across the continent. The Synod is mandated to address these critical issues or draft decrees unless the Roman Pontiff has explicitly granted deliberative powers in specific cases, making it imperative for him to ratify the Synod's decisions. A critical question must be raised: Why convene a Synod if, ultimately, the Pope chooses to disregard the insights of his brother-bishops? These bishops possess invaluable familiarity with the context and situations of their respective Churches, far surpassing the Pope's knowledge or that of those he delegated to draft the Synod's conclusions. It is time to seriously consider the purpose and effectiveness of such gatherings if they are not genuinely informed by the voices that matter most.

Ramil del Rosario Marcos highlights in his essay "The Gospel of Hope: Exploring the Theological Core of the Jubilee Year 2025" that the Catholic world will celebrate another Holy Year in 2025. This jubilee promises to be a time of immense grace and conversion. The special motto for this jubilee is "Pilgrims of Hope," reflecting Pope Francis's intention to connect the celebration with the strengthening of hope in every human heart as the world moves away from the traumas of the Covid-19 pandemic and the catastrophes that occurred at the end of this crisis. There is a renewed focus on the theme of Christian hope, which, although one of the triadic theological virtues, is often the least discussed in theology. Fortunately, we do not have to search far for insight, as Pope Francis has provided the Church with his reflections on hope since the beginning of his ministry. This paper primarily explores the presentation of hope in the Pope's weekly addresses from 2016 to 2017 to uncover his theology of hope and its relevance for individuals, the Church community, and the world at large. During the pandemic, Pope Francis effectively conveyed his role as a universal religious leader with a compassionate concern for all. His thoughts on hope played a significant role in encouraging people to persevere through trials, relying on faith in a loving God and the goodness and selflessness of ordinary individuals. Now that the rebuilding process

has begun, the theme of Christian hope can inspire people to pursue human development, rooted in the Kingdom of God, where hope flourishes. This hope is anchored in the Father's promise, purified by the love demonstrated on the Cross, and driven confidently by the Spirit's guiding wind. Marcos concludes that for Francis, hope is not a passive expectation of a glorious end from the hand of God but an active pursuit of the improvement of this world guided by the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This will certainly be the unique contribution of Pope Francis in the area of the theology of hope: proclaiming hope by teaching and exhorting people to discover it, but also leading people to rebuild their lives and the world with a robust and fulfilled hope in the God who does not disappoint, in the God who comes to save all.

Dr. theol. Markus Locker, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief

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IMITATION OF THE COMPASSIONATE GOD: LUKE'S THEOLOGY OF MERCY

C. Sunil Ranjar, S.J.

Abstract. Beginning with the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17–49), the article analyzes key passages that depict both the teachings and actions of Jesus, emphasizing God's mercy and compassion in the Gospel of Luke. Furthermore, by examining various parables, the article explores the ethical dimensions of mercy, including the importance of generosity and the risks associated with self-righteousness. In addition, it highlights the significance of repentance and the rewards of demonstrating mercy while warning of the adverse consequences of a lack of compassion.

Keywords. Mercy; Compassion; Parables of Mercy; Gospel of Luke

Introduction

That mercy is a theme that permeates the entire Gospel of Luke has already been demonstrated convincingly.[1] Occurrences of the nouns "mercy." "compassion" or the adjective "merciful" are numerous in the Gospel (Luke 1,50.54.58.72.78; 6,36; 7,13; 10,33.37; 15,20; 16,24; 17,13; 18,38.39). Luke has inserted material about mercy, adapted from his special source, at key moments of the

[1] See C. S. Ranjar, *Be Merciful Like the Father: Exegesis and Theology of the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6,17-49)* (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2017).

Gospel narrative. It is for this reason that the well-known Italian poet Dante Alighieri calls Luke *scriba mansuetudinis Christi,* the scribe of the gentleness of Christ. Commenting on the portrayal of Jesus by Luke, Fitzmyer rightly notes that "the qualities of mercy, love, charm, joy, and delicacy that are part of the Lucan portrait of Jesus in the Third Gospel tend to soften the starker reality that is at times portrayed in the other Gospels. This aspect of the Lucan Gospel perhaps deprives it of some of the radical and critical character associated with Jesus in the other Gospels, but it is part of the picture Luke wanted to paint."[2] For Luke, therefore, Jesus is the manifestation of the profundity of God's mercifulness.

1. Lucan Vocabulary on Mercy

Luke, more than other Evangelists, uses varied vocabulary to denote mercy: the noun ἔλεος and its verbal form ἐλεέω; the noun σπλάγχνον and its verbal form σπλαγχνίζομαι; and the adjective οἰκτίρμων.

The neuter noun ἔλεος and the corresponding verbal form ἐλεέω[3] refers to the feeling of compassion in the face of misfortune. In the LXX, ἔλεος translates the Hebrew *ḥesed* which is used in the context of covenantal love. This love is faithful and unmerited on the part of the loved, and by extension is also denoted as divine grace and mercy. In the passages where either the noun or the verb occurs, mercy is not a mere feeling between God and his people, but it is a sentiment that motivates the well-being of others.

Another word that Luke uses is the neuter noun σπλάγχνον and its corresponding verbal form σπλαγχνίζομαι. This term primarily refers to the internal organs, the entrails, and the heart as the seat of affections, and has the significance of a deep interior movement

[2] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke: I. i-ix* (AB 28; Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1981), 257-258.

[3] Luke 1,50.54.58.72.78; 10,37; 16,24; 17,13; 18,38.39.

of compassion.[4] The verbal form σπλαγχνίζομαι occurs in three key Lucan passages: in the episode of the raising of the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7,13); in the parables of the good Samaritan (Luke 10,33) and of the merciful father (Luke 15,20). Luke also uses the combined expression "merciful compassion" (σπλάγχνα ἐλέους; Luke 1,78). The verbal form expresses an interior attitude towards the suffering person, an attitude that leads to action. The noun σπλάγχνον translates the Hebrew *raḥamim* ("womb").[5] In the Hebrew Scriptures, the entrails of the person and, especially, the womb, are considered the seat of emotions (see Exod 33,19; Hos 1,7; Isa 14,1; 54,8; Jer 33,26). The best example is the prophet Hosea who dramatically describes how God's heart skips a beat and his entrails are moved to imply God's passionate love for human beings. The adjective *raḥum* appears in the Psalms in the context of the forgiveness of sins (Ps 78,38), the protection from enemies (Ps 86,15), the remembrance of the great acts of the Lord (Ps 111,4), and the praise of God (Ps 145,8). In the background of

[4] See Frederick W. Danker et al, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021), 834. There is an interesting redactional feature in the use of the verb σπλαγχνίζομαι. It occurs only in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 5x; Mark 4x; Luke 3x), with Jesus as the subject in most of the occurrences. Mark uses it twice to report Jesus' compassion for the crowd before feeding the multitude, and Matthew follows Mark verbatim (Mark 6,34 // Matt 14,14; Mark 8,2 // Matt 15,32). Two more occurrences in Mark, which Matthew omits, are in the context of healing (Mark 1,41 // Matt 8,1-4) and exorcism (Mark 9,22 // Matt 17,14-21). Matthew adds the verb in 9,36, again to report Jesus' compassion for the crowd. In the healing of the blind man (Matt 20,29-34 // Mark 10,46-52), Matthew adds the verb to the Marcan source (Matt 20,34). The final occurrence of the verb in Matthew (18,27) is in the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt 18,23-35), which is unique to Matthew. Even though Luke retains from Mark the reports on the healing of the leper (Luke 5,12-16 // Mark 1,40-45), on the feeding of the multitude (Luke 9,10-17 // Luke 6,32-44), and on exorcism (Luke 9,37-43 // Mark 9,14-29), he omits the verb from the Marcan episodes. All three occurrences of σπλαγχνίζομαι in Luke are from his special source, and he uses them in the context of healing (Luke 7,13; 10,33) and forgiveness (Luke 15,20).

[5] See Celas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, vol 3 (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 1409-1412.

these texts, the instances of σπλαγχνίζομαι and σπλάγχνον point to profound emotions and subsequent action.

The adjective οἰκτίρμων is found only in Luke. He uses it twice in the Gospel (Luke 6,36), in a key phrase in the Sermon on the Mount. Here Jesus invites his disciples to be merciful like the Father who is the foundation and norm of human mercy. The adjective translates primarily the Hebrew *raḥum*, and appears very frequently in the Psalms, and is often used as a synonym of ἔλεος. Like the other terms, this adjective also means "compassionate," or "merciful."

2. The Call to be Merciful (Luke 6,36)

For several decades, the major theme of the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6,20-49) was considered to be the "love of enemies." However, a recent monograph proposed a concentric structure, in which the imitation of the mercifulness of God is shown as the central theme, and the love of enemies is an important constituent of God's mercy.[6] The entire Sermon is constructed around the invitation to "be merciful as your father is merciful" (Luke 6,36). Moreover, various aspects of mercy such as forgiveness, generous giving, and unconditional love are also elucidated in the Sermon. That Luke intended this as the theme is further evident from the fact that he retains from Q, the rare adjective οἰκτίρμων (twice in Luke 6,36), while Matthew seems to have changed it to the more familiar *perfect* (τέλειος, Matt 5,48).[7]

It is also interesting to note the Sermon on the Plain is the first official teaching of Jesus. Luke emphasizes its significance by placing the invitation to be merciful at its center. Furthermore, the theme of mercy is central not only in the sermon but also in the entire Gospel

[6] See Ranjar, *Be Merciful*, 44-49.

[7] It is to be noted that the adjective τέλειος occurs only in Matthew. See Matt 5,48 (2x); 19,21. It is not found in the other Gospels and Acts. In the rest of the New Testament literature, it appears 16 times. Manson observes that "in the Old Testament, the epithet 'merciful' is given to God, hardly ever to man; and the epithet 'perfect' to man, never to God." See Thomas W. Manson, *Sayings of Jesus as Recorded in the Gospels According to St. Matthew and St. Luke* (London: SCM Press, 1937), 55. Therefore, it is likely that Matthew redacted the Q text.

narrative is evident from the fact that the teachings of Jesus regarding mercy and his merciful deeds are placed at key points of the entire Gospel narrative. All these (teachings and episodes) are taken from Luke's special source.

3. Mercifulness of God in the Introductory Chapters (Luke 1,5–4,13)

With characters such as Zachariah, Elizabeth, Simeon, and Anna, the Lucan infancy narratives not only remind the reader of the several Old Testament passages but also the entire material functions as a bridge between the two testaments.[8] It is in this context, that the mercifulness of God is portrayed in various ways in these two initial chapters of the Gospel.

First and foremost, Luke not only draws a parallelism between John the Baptist and Jesus but also presents both these children as agents of God's salvation and mercy. The angelic announcements in the narrative are replete with this theme. John is depicted as the one who "will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God," and he "will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared" (Luke 1,16-17). Jesus "will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High" (Luke 1,32), and "of his Kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1,33). In the announcement of the angel, unlike Matthew (see Matt 1,21), Luke does not draw attention to the profound salvific significance of the name Jesus (God saves).[9] Jesus' identity and function as savior will unfold in his life and ministry. Nonetheless, Luke does

[8] For details see Salvador Muñoz Iglesias, *Los evangelios de la infancia: I. Los canticos del Evangelia de la Infancia segun san Lucas* (Madrid, 1990), 25-60; S. Farris, *The Hymns of Luke's Infancy Narratives: Their Origin, Meaning and Significance,* OSNT.S (Sheffield, 2015).

[9] See the discussion in Fitzmyer, *Luke.* I, 347; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1978), 67.

refer to the salvific aspect of the name in the angelic announcement to the shepherds (Luke 2,11).

3.1. *Magnificat* and *Benedictus*

Two important units within the Infancy Narratives that describe God's mercy are the two canticles (the *Magnificat* of Mary and the *Benedictus* of Zechariah) which Luke inherited and redacted from his special source. Both these canticles present a concise synthesis of the theology of the Old Testament—the allusion to the Old Testament promises to the ancestors, the covenant, the people, Abraham and his descendants, the house of David, and the prophetic attestation of the birth event.[10] Furthermore, the canticles praise the magnitude of God's mercy which is disclosed in the fulfilment of the promises.

In the *Magnificat* (Luke 1,46-55), Mary glorifies God whose "mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation" (Luke 1,50) and who "remembers his mercy" (Luke 1,54). Furthermore, the *Magnificat* accentuates one of Luke's preferred themes: the reversal of fortunes. God "has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away" (Luke 1,51-53). God's preference for the poor and the afflicted, mentioned in the *Magnificat* is elaborated in the entire Gospel narrative: the beatitudes and the woes (Luke 6,20-26);[11] the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16,19-31), the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax collector (Luke 18,10-14).

The *Benedictus* (Luke 1,68-79) is the praise of God who "has visited and redeemed his for His people" (Luke 1,68). The use of ἔλεος in *Benedictus* reminisces God's *ḥesed* towards his people (Luke 1,72). The

[10] See Pedro Cabello Morales, "Como vuestro Padre es misericordioso: La misericordia en el evangelo de Lucas," *Isidorianum* 25:50 (2016): 295.

[11] Note that several terms used in the *Magnificat* are also found in the pericope on the Beatitudes and the Woes: "he has filled" (ἐνέπλησεν; cf. Luke 6,25a) "the hungry" (πεινῶντας; cf. Luke 6,21a.25a), and "the rich" (πλουτοῦντας; cf. Luke 6,24).

Greek expression ποιῆσαι ἔλεος (to show mercy; literally, to do mercy with) is linked to God's act of "salvation" (**σωτηρία**) from the enemies (Luke 1,71), the God who has raised up a "horn of salvation" (κέρας σωτηρίας; Luke 1,69).[12] Furthermore, Luke 1,77 clarifies the mission of John the Baptist: "to give knowledge of salvation (γνῶσις σωτηρίας) to his people in the forgiveness of their sins (ἐν ἀφέσει ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν)." The close relationship between the merciful compassion of God and the forgiveness of sins highlights God's *raḥămîm*,[13] along with the covenantal *ḥesed*. Therefore, God's salvific action is the result of his "merciful compassion (σπλάγχνα ἐλέους θεοῦ)."

3.2. Preaching of John the Baptist

The ethical dimensions of mercy are expanded in the injunctions of John the Baptist (Luke 3,10-14). The first part of John's preaching is from Q (Luke 3,7-9//Matt 3,7-10), where Luke redacts the addressees as "multitudes" (Matthew has "Pharisees and Sadducees," see Matt 3,7). In John's preaching, Luke associates repentance with deeds of justice, which are further elaborated from his special source.

The demands proposed by John are reasonable: "he who has two coats, let him share (**μεταδότω**) with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise" (Luke 3,11). The primary feature of mercy is the essential openness to sharing. This aspect is narratively illustrated in the common life of the early Church (Acts 2,44-45; 4,32-35). The tax collectors are exhorted to "collect nothing more than what is prescribed" (Luke 3,13). The soldiers are advised not to "extort money by violence or by false accusations" (μηδένα διασείσητε μηδὲ συκοφαντήσητε; Luke 3,14). The narrative illustrations of these ethical injunctions are recorded in the other parts of the Gospel narrative (the Centurion in Luke 7,1-10; Zacchaeus in Luke 19,1-10; Cornelius in Acts 10,1-8).

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[12] See Fitzmyer, *Luke: I*, 384.

[13] *Raḥămîm* is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek σπλάγχνον.

4. Mercy in Jesus' Ministry in Galilee (Luke 4,14–9,50)

Following the Marcan source, Luke transposes the episode of Jesus' visit to Nazareth (Mark 6,1-6a // Luke 4,16-30) to the beginning of the Galilean section of his ministry and expands it. If Mark's emphasis in the episode is the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth and the subsequent inability to do mighty works (cf. also Matt 13,53-58), Luke presents the Nazareth episode as Jesus' programmatic discourse that guides the rest of the Gospel narrative.[14] Using the Isaianic lens, Luke presents Jesus as the anointed prophet of God, who announces the "favorable year of the Lord" that is exemplified in the "proclamation of good news to the poor" (εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς), "recovery of sight to the blind" and "liberty (**ἄφεσις**) to the captives and the oppressed" (Luke 4,18-19; cf. Isa 61,1-2). This prophecy of mercy, already prophesied by Isaiah, is fulfilled in the person of Jesus (Luke 4,21).

The so-called "Little Interpolation" (Luke 6,20-8,3) inserted into the Marcan order is another significant redactional modification effected by Luke. This block of material includes the teachings of Jesus in Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6,20-49) and the episode of the healing of the centurion's servant (Luke 7,1-10 // Matt 8,5-13).[15] There are also the episodes of raising the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7,11-17) and the forgiving of the "sinful" woman (Luke 7,36-50) which are from Luke's special material "L."[16] All these episodes further reveal Jesus as the agent of God's mercy.

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[14] Several commentators highlight the 'programmatic' character of the Nazareth episode; see, for example, Darell L. Bock, *Luke: I. 1,1–9,50* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 420; Marshall, *Luke*, 178-180; Fitzmyer, *Luke: I,* 526-530; John Nolland, *Luke: I. 1–9,20* (WBC 35A; Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 195-202.

[15] While the material of the Sermon on the Plain is largely derived from Q, the rest of the material in this section is from Luke's special source 'L'. Scholars also sustain that the episode of the healing of the centurion's servant is also derived from Q which both Matthew and Luke elaborate; see the discussion in Fitzmyer, *Luke: I,* 648.

[16] There are source-critical difficulties in this episode. Some scholars argue that Luke is reporting the same event as in Mark (14,3-9) but redacts it thoroughly. A few others sustain that Matthew, Mark, and John report one single event (Matt

Luke's redaction of the story of the healing of the centurion's servant (Luke 7,1-10) gives it a new meaning. In Matthew, the centurion himself comes and pleads with Jesus to heal his servant; in Luke, on the other hand, he sends the elders of the Jews, who describe him as the one "who loves the nation" and who "built a synagogue" for them (Luke 7,4-5). The centurion's generosity, coupled with his faith and humility (cf. Luke 7,6-8), is rewarded by Jesus when he brings back to life the centurion's servant. In the episode, there is an implicit illustration of the exhortation of John the Baptist to the soldiers (cf. Luke 3,14). The healing of the Centurian's servant is followed by another gripping episode of the healing of the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7,11-17), in which the compassion of Jesus is expressed through the verb **σπλαγχνίζομαι**. The narrator's comment, "the Lord (ὁ κύριος) was moved with compassion (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη)," underscores Jesus' divine quality of compassion, which makes the people recognize "God's visitation" in him.

Notwithstanding the source-critical difficulties, the episode of forgiving the sinful woman (Luke 7,36-50) is another captivating story in the Gospel. Here Luke's perspective differs from that of the other evangelists (Matt 26,6-13// Mark 14,3-9; see also John 12,1-8). The context in Matthew and Mark is different from that of Luke. The episode in Matthew and Mark is recounted in the last part of the narrative when Jesus is in Jerusalem just before his passion and death. The focus, therefore, is to prepare his body for burial (Matt 26,12 // Mark 14,8). Moreover, the woman is reproached for wasting money on the expensive ointment (Matt 26,8 // Mark 14,5; cf. John 12,3,5). Luke, on the other hand, presents the episode early in the ministry of Jesus when he is still in Galilee. He, unlike Matthew and Mark, insists that the woman was a sinner. Whereas the focus in the other Gospels is the waste of money, in Luke the focus is the negative attitude of the Pharisee who had invited Jesus (Luke 7,39), and a greater emphasis is on the woman's remorse for her sins and on Jesus' forgiveness. This is made explicit by the verb in the passive, ἀφέωνται (Luke 7,47,49),

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26,6-13; Mark 14,3-9; John 12,1-8), whereas Luke reports a different event. See a brief discussion in Fitzmyer, *Luke: I,* 684-688.

implying divine agency of forgiveness. A clear contrast can be noticed in the attitude of the woman and that of the Pharisee in the second part of the episode. The woman shows remorse for her sins, and she is instantly forgiven. The Pharisee, on the other hand, shows self-righteousness by dismissing Jesus as a false prophet (Luke 7,39). The story shows that the self-righteousness of the Pharisee is not rewarded, and this narratively illustrates the commands laid down in Luke 6,37: "Do not judge and you will not be judged; do not condemn and you will not be condemned."

Thus, Luke's redactional modifications in the Galilean section of Jesus' ministry serve to emphasize the theme of mercy. Jesus not only teaches about mercy but also performs merciful deeds such as forgiving sins, healing the sick, and raising the dead. Nolland's comment is pertinent here: "The concern of the great sermon (6,17-49) with disciples and discipleship gives way in the next major section (7,1-50) to a concern to portray Jesus' ministry as the eschatological visitation of God heralded by John."[17]

5. Mercy in Jesus' Journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9,51–19,48)[18]

The long section of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, which includes the so-called "Big Interpolation" (Luke 9,51–18,14), also demonstrates Luke's emphasis on mercy. All the episodes that deal with this theme are from Luke's special source.

5.1. Merciful Response

While rejection of Jesus and his ministry is part of the Gospel narrative, it is striking that the Journey Narrative commences and concludes with Jesus' merciful response to rejection. When the Samaritan village refuses to receive Jesus, "because his face was set

[17] Nolland, *Luke: I,* 318.

[18] There is no consensus among the scholars regarding where exactly the journey to Jerusalem ends. A group of scholars argues that it ends in Luke 19,27, while others hold that it continues till Luke 19,48. This article considers valid the latter position.

toward Jerusalem" (Luke 9,53), James and John want the village to be destroyed. Jesus rebukes them, exemplifying the commands of the Sermon (Luke 9,54-55). Similarly, as Jesus is approaching Jerusalem, he weeps over it (Luke 19,41-44). He knows that the city has rejected and killed the prophets, and it will reject and kill him too. Jesus' response, however, is of compassionate lament, since Jerusalem "did not know the time of God's visitation."

That mercy and "doing good" surpass the mere pious observation of the Sabbath is more evident in Luke than in the other Synoptics. Already in the section on the Galilean ministry of Jesus, Luke shows Jesus' compassionate response by healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath (Luke 6,6-11).[19] Moreover, in the Travel Narrative, Luke reports two more healings on the Sabbath: the healing of the crippled woman (Luke 13,10-17) and the man with dropsy (Luke 14,1-6). These are further illustrations of Jesus' mercy and "doing good" that take precedence over Sabbath observations.

5.2. Teachings on Mercy

The ethical instructions presented in this section are similar to those in the Sermon on the Plain and are unique to Luke. Jesus already overturns the ethic of reciprocity in the Sermon (Luke 6,32-34), and now he explicates it further: "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14,12-14). Expounding

[19] In the episode of the healing of the man with the withered hand (Luke 6,6-11// Matt 12,9-14 // Mark 3,1-6), Luke follows Mark closely, retaining the question to the Jewish authorities: "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" (Luke 6,9 // Mark 3,4; cf. Matt 12,12b). However, he omits Mark's reference to Jesus' anger and thus presents Jesus as merciful and compassionate rather than angry. Houlden writes: "While Mark's Jesus proclaims among sinful men the stark challenge of the Kingdom, Luke's Jesus is the exemplar of generous and effective compassion for all in need.". see J. L. Houlden, *Ethics and the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark, 1992), 55:

further the teaching on forgiveness (Luke 6,37), Jesus exhorts his disciples to develop it as an attitude: "Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive (**ἄφες**) him; and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, 'I repent' you must forgive (ἀφήσεις) him" (Luke 17,3-4; note the different formulation in Matt 18,15.21-22).

Renunciation and almsgiving are important components of mercy. The disciples are invited to give generously without expecting anything in return (Luke 6,35.38). Jesus cautions them about covetousness: "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12,15). Instead, the disciples are not to be anxious about the future but to rely on God's providence (Luke 12,22-30). They are further instructed to seek God's kingdom which necessitates selling one's possessions and giving alms (Luke 12,33; 18,22). An essential characteristic of discipleship is the renunciation of everything (Luke 14,33).

5.3. Parables on Mercy

The journey narrative also presents Luke's impressive organization of the parables concerning mercy. Deriving from his special source, he places the parables at strategic points in the narrative: the parable of the good Samaritan at the beginning (Luke 10,29-37), the parable of the prodigal son in the middle (Luke 15,11-32), and the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax collector at the end of the Travel Narrative (Luke 18,9-14). He inserts two more parables, between these three, to warn the disciples of the consequences of not following the ethical instructions of Jesus: the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12,16-21) between the first and the second parable, and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16,19-31) between the second and the third.

i. The Compassionate Samaritan

Luke presents the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10,29-37) as an illustration of the great commandment: love of God and

neighbor.[20] The Samaritan is also an example of doing good and showing mercy. Luke breaks the stereotypes in this parable. He does not identify the injured person. On the other hand, he does identify those reluctant to help him—a priest and a Levite, who are expected to show compassion. Their religious obligation, however, prevents them from showing mercy and doing good. After the priest and the Levite, the hearer of the parable would expect a Jewish layperson as the third person on the road. However, it is a Samaritan, who is "moved with pity" (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη), and instantly helps the person and proves to be the neighbor.[21] The Samaritan, who is an outsider to the covenant community, demonstrates covenantal compassion. He "shows mercy" (ὁ ποιήσας τὸ ἔλεος; literally "does mercy") by binding up the wounds of the injured person and by donating money to the innkeeper for his sustenance. Jesus does not only redefine the neighbor as the one who is in need but also exhorts the disciples to "go and do likewise" (Luke 10,37).

ii. The Merciful Father

Luke 15 which comprises the parables of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15,3-7), the Lost Coin (Luke 15,8-10), and the Lost Son (Luke 15,11-32), is called the "Gospel within the Gospel," since it vividly exemplifies God's mercy and compassion. Scholars view the parable of the Lost Son

[20] The episode on the great commandment of Love (Luke 10,25-28 // Matt 22,34-40 // Mark 12,28-34) and the subsequent parable of the Good Samaritan have several redactional features that reflect the ethical mindset of Luke. While in Matthew and Mark, the lawyer (a scribe in Mark) enquires about the great commandment in the law (Matt 22,36 // Mark 12,28), in Luke the lawyer's question is similar to that of the rich ruler (Luke 18,18): "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10,25). Jesus' response is a counter-question: "What is written in the law?" It is the lawyer, not Jesus, who formulates the great commandment of love. Jesus commends him for the answer and reckons that the great commandment is sufficient to live (Luke 10,28). See Victor Paul Furnish, *The Love Command in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 34-45.

[21] Furnish, *Love Command*, 41: "The command to love the neighbor breaks down all barriers which divide men. Neighbor love means helping the man who needs help, regardless of who he is in relation to oneself."

as the "heart" of Luke's Gospel, placed strategically at the mid-point of the narrative. Fitzmyer regards it as "the greatest of all His (Jesus') parables,"[22] while Bock calls it the parable of "the Gracious Father."[23]

Even though traditionally it is called the parable of the prodigal son, the focus here is more on the father than the son. First and foremost, the father does not show any hesitation in dividing the property between his sons, even though what the younger son was asking was not legitimate. Moreover, when the younger son returns after squandering all his property, the father feels "gut-level" compassion for him (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη). He hurries towards him with open arms and accepts him. The sins of the son are instantly forgiven and forgotten. He is welcomed with a banquet and showered with gifts. The restoration of the ruptured relationship takes place with the initiative of the Father.[24] The parable presents the unconditional love and mercy of God towards the repentant sinners and impressively "portrays the message of Jesus, the Kingdom-preacher, especially with the Lucan stress on the divine willingness to accept the repentant sinner into that Kingdom."[25]

iii. The Justified Tax-Collector

The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18,9-14) is primarily addressed to those "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others" (Luke 18,9). Scrupulous observation of the Law is the primary concern of the Pharisee, and that makes him unpalatably self-righteous. His prayer is a thanksgiving for he is not like others, and especially like the tax collector. He brags with God about his good deeds. In contrast, the tax collector acknowledges his sinfulness and pleads for God's mercy, and consequently he "goes home justified." What Jesus emphasizes in the prayer of the tax collector is that "the attitude of the heart is ultimately what matters,

[22] Fitzmyer, *Luke: II,* 1083.

[23] Bock, *Luke: II,* 1306.

[24] Cf. Marshall, *Luke*, 610.

[25] Fitzmyer, *Luke: II,* 1085.

and justification depends on the mercy of God to the penitent rather than upon works which might be thought to earn God's favor."[26]

The above three parables are illustrative of God's mercy, and at the same time, an invitation to imitate the merciful God. Father's large-heartedness in accepting the strayed son back into his family, reflects God's forgiveness and compassion. The tax collector is justified by God's mercy because of the acknowledgment of his sinful state. The Samaritan is not only portrayed as merciful but also as an example to emulate.

5.4 The Outcome of an Unmerciful Attitude

Two uniquely Lucan parables in the Travel Narrative highlight the results of not accepting God's invitation to be merciful. Placed in the context of the teaching on possessions, the parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12,16-21) is an illustration of what happens when one trusts in one's material goods rather than God's goodness. The man is the solitary figure in the parable. There is no mention of family, friends, or acquaintances. The problem of the rich farmer is neither his riches nor the abundant crops. His problem is what he does with the yield from his fields. His question "What shall I do?" (Luke 12,17) should have evoked a positive response by sharing his goods with others.[27] Sadly, however, he thinks only about his own welfare and enlarges his barns. His self-love is evident in his speech where he does not go beyond 'my crops,' 'my barns,' 'my grain' and 'my goods.' It is at this point that he is called a fool because he thought the material goods would give him eternal happiness. He is a fool because he was concerned only about his welfare and "he was not rich towards God" (Luke 12,21).[28]

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[26] Marshall, *Luke*, 681.

[27] The question, "What shall I do" (see also Luke 3,10-14; 18,18) is not a mundane question in Luke. It is a question concerning salvation. See John Gillman, *Possessions and the Life of Faith: A Reading of Luke-Acts* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), 75; M.J. Wi, *The Path to Salvation in Luke's Gospel: What must we do?* (New York: T&T Clark, 2019).

[28] Ps 14,1: The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

Situated once again in the context of teaching on material wealth, the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16,19-31) demonstrates vividly the consequences of not being merciful. The parable presents a sharp contrast in the socio-economic conditions of the characters: the rich man[29] is clothed with luxurious purple robes, and he feasts sumptuously every day (Luke 16,19); Lazarus, on the other hand, is a poor beggar, full of sores, longing to be fed (Luke 16,20-21). It is not said that the man became rich by fraudulent means. It is quite possible that he worked hard to become rich, and that is not at all the problem. The problem is that the rich man is so engrossed in his wealth and luxury that he fails even to notice Lazarus who is at his gate. In the ancient world, including the biblical times, the gate was the place where the judges and the elders of the city gathered, and the people had their grievances addressed. That the rich man fails to notice Lazarus (or intentionally ignores him?) highlights his self-centeredness and self-absorption, which is injustice, according to Luke. The reversal of fortunes happens at death. While Lazarus is comforted in the bosom of Abraham, the rich man is left to suffer in the hades. "Because of his chosen inactivity in time, the rich man is deprived of what could have saved him, the sacrament of the poor man's touch. Without it, he was walled up inside his own wealth and all that it procured for him. His comfort and wealth numbed him to the discomfort and grave need of the other which he could have alleviated."[30] The rich man should have paid heed to "Moses and the Prophets" (Luke 16,29) and should have shown mercy by feeding Lazarus. He fails to do so, and in turn, he is not shown mercy.[31]

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[29] In Luke's parables, the rich people have no names. The only person who has a name is the poor Lazarus.

[30] John C. Haughey, *The Holy Use of Money. Personal Finances in Light of Christian Faith* (New York: Wipf and Stock, 1989), 13.

[31] This is an evident illustration of the first beatitude and the first woe: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.... but woe to you rich, for you have had your consolation" (Luke 6,20.24).

5.5 Two Contrasting Personalities

Most of the parables in Luke seem to implicate the rich. However, Luke is not against riches in themselves. His purpose is to demonstrate that unwarranted attachment to riches could divert one's attention from God (Luke 12,16-21) and one's fellow human beings (Luke 16,19-31). Towards the end of the journey narrative, Luke presents a positive model of Zacchaeus, "a chief tax collector and wealthy" (Luke 19,1-10), to show that the primary problem is not with riches in themselves but with the attachment to them.[32]

Zacchaeus' conversion is immediate as he is overwhelmed by Jesus' presence in his house, and he makes a public declaration of his conversion: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give (δίδωμι) to the poor; and if I have defrauded (ἐσυκοφάντησα) anyone of anything, I restore (ἀποδίδωμι)[33] it fourfold" (Luke 19,8). John the Baptist's call to "bear fruits that befit repentance" (Luke 3,8), and his instructions to the tax collectors (Luke 3,13) see a narrative fulfillment in the Zacchaeus episode. By declaring his intention to repent and to share his goods with others, Zacchaeus not only practices the deeds of mercy but also opens himself to God's mercy. Jesus's affirmation that "today salvation has come to this house" (Luke 19, 9), indicates in clear terms that repentance leads one to benevolent action, which, in turn, results in attaining salvation.[34]

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[32] The Beatitudes and the Woes (Luke 6,20-26) implicitly exhort the disciples to be free from attachment to riches. By presenting the Beatitudes and the Woes as Jesus' first and important teaching, Luke emphasizes the great reversal of conventional values and discards the false security of wealth. Cf. Allen Verhey, *The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 17-19.

[33] Scholars hold that both verbs in the present tense, δίδωμι and ἀποδίδωμι, should be taken as futuristic present, expressing Zacchaeus' resolve to help the poor. Hamm, for example, argues that "Zacchaeus shows himself to be a true son of Abraham in just the sort of conversion John the Baptist was calling for in Luke 3,10-14". See Dennis Hamm, "Luke 19,8 Once Again. Does Zacchaeus Defend or Resolve?," *JBL* 107 (1988) 431-437.

[34] There are further examples of generous giving in Acts. Tabitha is described as "full of good works and acts of charity" (Acts 9,36) and, as a reward for her

Placed immediately before the Zacchaeus episode, is the unedifying example of the rich ruler (Luke 18,18-23). In the former, it is Jesus who takes the initiative to dine with Zacchaeus, which consequently results in his conversion. In the second episode, it is the ruler who enthusiastically asks Jesus what he must do to attain eternal life. However, his enthusiasm is shattered when Jesus asks him to sell everything and give to the poor. He goes away sad because "he was very rich" (Luke 18,23). Salvation comes to Zacchaeus; in contrast, it becomes difficult for the rich man to enter the Kingdom of God because of his attachment to riches.

The journey narrative, therefore, is full of sayings and the parables of Jesus concerning mercy. All these are from Luke's special source and placed at important points in the narrative with the result that this theme is communicated effectively to the reader.

6. Climax of Mercy: The Passion and Resurrection (Luke 20,1–24,53)

Luke presents Jesus as merciful and compassionate even during the last stage of his life–his passion, death, and resurrection. Just as Jesus responds mercifully to the rejection by the Samaritans (Luke 9,52-55) and the Jerusalemites (Luke 19,41-44), so does he also during his Passion. He demonstrates total non-resistance when at his arrest and also reproves those who show opposition (Luke 22,47-52).

Scholars note that throughout the Gospel narrative, Luke avoids any negative characterization of the Apostles.[35] He does the same also

behavior, she is raised to life by Peter (Acts 9,37-43). The centurion Cornelius, a Gentile but a prospective follower of Christ, is "a devout man who feared God with all his household" and who "gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God" (Acts 10,2). The generosity of the disciples in Antioch towards famine-affected Judea is another example of giving (Acts 11,27-30; cf. Acts 12, 25). Paul, citing Jesus' words, "it is more blessed to give than to receive", exhorts the Ephesian elders to "help the weak" (Acts 20,35). Paul himself is presented as a model of almsgiving (Acts 24,17).

[35] See the discussion in Ranjar, *Be Merciful*, 21-26.

in the passion narrative, by presenting them as models of dedication in the ministry of Jesus. During the Last Supper (Luke 22,24-30), Jesus commends his apostles for persevering with him (οἱ διαμεμενηκότες μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ) in his trials, and assigns them the Kingdom (Luke 22,29), recalling the promise made in the beatitudes. The perfect participle of the verb διαμένω implies that this constancy of the apostles occurred during the entire earthly ministry of Jesus and that it included a willing response to his ethical demands.[36]

The fidelity of the Apostles is further demonstrated in the scene of the arrest of Jesus. While Matthew and Mark report the flight of the Apostles (Matt 26,56 // Mark 14,50), Luke omits it. Noteworthy is also the omission of Jesus' foretelling of the apostles' flight during his arrest (cf. Matt 26,31 // Mark 14,27). Instead, Luke makes a redactional modification to the text by inserting Jesus' promise of prayer for Peter that the latter's faith may not fail (Luke 22,31-32). Even though Luke retains Peter's denial from his Marcan source (Luke 22,34), he makes a further redactional change in the episode. When the cock crows, Luke has Jesus turn and look at Peter (Luke 22,61). The merciful glance of the Lord reminds Peter of the words of the Master and he weeps bitterly. Therefore, even in his Passion, Jesus shows compassion for his disciples.

The Apostles are rewarded for their endurance by the appearance of the Risen Lord (Luke 24,36-53). This scene, which is unique to Luke among the Synoptics (cf. John 20,19-23), ends with Jesus commissioning them to preach repentance (**μετάνοια**; cf. Luke 3,3.8; 15,7) and the forgiveness of sins (ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν; cf. Luke 3,3; 4,18; Acts 2,38) to all nations (Luke 24,47). The command recalls the Messianic announcement of Jesus at Nazareth (Luke 4,18-19), which the apostles continue in the early Church (Acts 2,38; 5,31; 10,43; 26,18).

Healing of the sick is an important element of mercy in the ministry of Jesus. This is seen also in his Passion. All Gospels report that one of those with Jesus cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant

[36] See Bock, *Luke: II,* 1739; E. Earle Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (London: Nelson, 1974), 256.

(Matt 26,51; Mark 14,47; Luke 22,50; see also John 18,10). However, it is only Luke who reports the healing of the servant by Jesus (Luke 22,51). Jesus' mission of mercy continues even on his way to Calvary, where the suffering and beleaguered Jesus consoles the weeping women of Jerusalem (Luke 23,27-31). This episode, which is unique to Luke, recalls another Lucan report about the women followers of Jesus (Luke 8,1-3).

Luke also presents Jesus as the example *par excellence* for the disciples in their quest to love their enemies and to pray for them. In the crucifixion scene, only Luke reports Jesus' prayer for his persecutors: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23,34a).[37] Furthermore, the promise of salvation to the repentant robber is found only in Luke (Luke 23,42-43).

Conclusion

A well-known fact about Luke is that he is the patron of physicians. However, there is also a less-known fact: Luke is also the patron of artists. It is because he paints Jesus as warm, merciful, and compassionate.

Luke chooses judiciously the episodes and sayings from his special source to illustrate the merciful nature of God and Jesus. Through the covenantal attribute of God's mercy in the Infancy Narratives, Luke emphasizes God's salvific intervention in history. This intervention takes place through the person of Jesus, which results in salvation from the enemies. Furthermore, the "merciful compassion" of God results in the forgiveness of sins. It is the same compassion that Jesus also possesses in his healing ministry.

[37] The prayer of Jesus (Luke 23,34a) is absent in many major NT manuscripts. However, since the prayer of Stephen (Acts 7,60) is also similar to that of Jesus, Luke must have been aware of this tradition. As Marshall argues, it is more likely that the prayer of Stephen is modeled on Jesus' prayer than the other way round; cf. Marshall, *Luke*, 868.

Luke also presents Jesus as the one who practices his teaching and, thus, is a true model to be imitated. Jesus resists condemning but instead forgives and heals, and he also exhorts the disciples to do so. Luke also links mercy with forgiveness, love, and giving. He also provides sufficient examples in the Gospel (from his special source) to demonstrate this relationship.

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THE "INTEGRALITY" OF INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

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Abstract. The Integrality of Integral Ecology calls for a rejection of the technocratic paradigm in favor of the relational paradigm that foregrounds the interbeingness of all humankind and other kinds rooted in their inherent values. This relational paradigm advocates the intersectional relations of cultural, economic, social, political ecology, spiritual ecology, and the ecology of daily life. This integrality is grounded in an incarnational theology that the God who has "earthy-fied" Godself has sacralized and "eternalized" our common home. In Asia, this integrality is enriched by Indigenous/Igorot's earth-spirituality, which identifies *Kabunian*, land, identity, being, and life as a sacred whole, steeped in cosmic interconnectedness, much akin to *buen vivir* and the Indra's String of Pearls. Ultimately, integrality calls for a "bold cultural revolution" and a "unified moral narrative" to definancialize nature to regenerate a more flourishing life in our Common Home.

Keywords. Relational Paradigm; *buen vivir;* Indra's String of Pearls; *Chi; teologia del pueblo;* transdisciplinarity; "tilling or cultivation" (*le'obdah* and *ulesomrah*); "unrestrained delusions of grandeur"; a "unified moral narrative"

The Anthropocene era has unleashed such destruction trails that leave the livability of the earth in balance. Reeling from the recent heatwaves and super typhoons, the urgency of transition from the technocratic paradigm to a relational paradigm of integrativity and integrality for life in God's creation has heightened. The life on earth has to embody a relational paradigm of interconnectivity within a sacred cosmic web of interdependent interrelations.

A Relational Paradigm of Integrativity and Integrality

As a relational paradigm of integrality, Pope Francis proposes integral ecology as "a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, educational program, a lifestyle, and a spirituality which together generate a response resistance to the assault of the technocratic paradigm" (*LS* 111). This approach "calls for rethinking processes in their entirety, for it is not enough to include a few superficial ecological considerations while failing to question the logic which underlies present-day culture" (*LS* 197). According to *Instrumentum Laboris* of the Pan Amazon Synod (*IL* 48), this "relational paradigm" is premised upon the dignity of *homo spiritus* and the inherent worth of all created life-forms (*LS* 42, 140). This relationality enjoins an added aspect of "integrality" which *Laudato Si'* alerts us, "We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*" (*LS* 49, 138) and "we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complete crisis which is both social and environmental" (*LS* 139).

This relational paradigm of integral ecology is characterized by "integrativity" so that "an adequate response to the complex questions of ecology" calls for "a deeper understanding of the natural law, which places value on the connection between the human person, society, culture, and the equilibrium of the bio-physical sphere in which the human person is incarnate," as emphasized in no. 82 of the International Theological Commission 2009 document. The same

document, "*In Search of a Universal Ethic: A New Look at the Natural Law*," further states:

> An integral ecology must promote what is specifically human, all the while valuing the world of nature in its physical and biological integrity. In fact, even if humans, as a moral being who search for the ultimate truth and the ultimate good, transcend their own immediate environment, do so by accepting the special mission of keeping watch over the natural world, living in harmony with it, and defending vital values without which neither human life nor the biosphere of this planet can be maintained (cf. Gen 2:15). This integral ecology summons every human being and every community to a new responsibility. It is inseparable from a global political orientation respectful of the requirements of the natural law.[1]

Integral ecology, as a relational paradigm, Vincent Miller posits, has a threefold dimension: a vision with a set of beliefs in nature as interconnected, a way of gazing at the world "that is attentive to our interdependence with the rest of creation and as a moral principle that guides us to act in a way that respects and nurtures these interconnections."[2] Integral ecology envisions life as a sacred web of interwoven relationships expressed in the relational principles of Genesis – "with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself (*LS* 66)" in the biblical law with other living beings (*LS* 68), a reality firmly rooted in God, the Creator-Sustainer of all things that express the infinite goodness of God, and the Trinity as its ultimate source (*LS* 240).[3]

Speaking of intergrativity, Pope Francis opines: "This very fact makes it hard to find adequate ways of solving the more complex problems of today's world, particularly those regarding the environment and the poor; these problems cannot be dealt with from

[1] Vincent Miller, "Integral Ecology: Francis' spiritual and moral vision of interconnectedness," in *The Theological and Ecological Vision of Laudato Si': Everything is Connected*, ed. Vincent J. Miller (London and New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2017), 1-11, at 21.

[2] Miller, "Integral Ecology," 1-11, at 21.

[3] Miller, "Integral Ecology," 12-13.

a single perspective or from a single set of interests. A science which would offer solutions to the great issues would necessarily have to take into account the data generated by other fields of knowledge, including philosophy and social ethics; but this is a difficult habit to acquire today. Nor are there genuine ethical horizons to which one can appeal" (*LS* 110). The glaring inconsistencies has occasioned Pope Francis to emphasize on the integrality of integral ecology, "It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted" (*LS* 91).

The "integrality" of integral ecology calls for a wheel as a metaphorical symbol with six interrelated spokes. These spokes represent the environmental ecology (*LS* 139), economic ecology (*LS* 141), social ecology (*LS* 142), cultural ecology (*LS* 143-146), the human ecology of daily lives (*LS* 147-155), political ecology (*LS* 158-159, 162). These six spokes draw their inspirational impulses from the spiritual ecology as their hub (*LS* 216, 218).

Wheel with a Hub with Six Spokes

Cognizant that the **environment** is a complex set of interconnected "relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it," integrality connotates that "we are called to recognize that *other living beings have a value of their own* in God's eyes" (*LS* 69) for "each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection" and "creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God's infinite wisdom and goodness. Humans must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things" (*LS* 69). Echoing the German bishops, "we can speak of the priority of *being* over that of *being useful*" or relational interbeingness over utilitarian usefulness to the humans. The reason is that "each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection…Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God's infinite wisdom and goodness. Humans must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any

disordered use of things" (*LS* 69) as we reject "a distorted/misguided anthropocentrism" (*LS* 69, 118,119, 122). Certainly, "nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it" (*LS* 138).

Hence, the "integrality" in integral ecology calls for due recognition of the inherent value of every created lifeform in God's creation without discrediting the value of humans whom God has created in God's image and likeness. In this vein, *Laudato Si'* speaks of "the value proper to each creature" (*LS* 16), for the "different species … have value in themselves" to the extent that "where certain species are destroyed or seriously harmed, the values involved are incalculable (*LS* 33). The values of humans and other kinds are inherent but differentiated. More importantly, "in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the word 'creation' has a broader meaning than 'nature', for it has to do with God's loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance" (*LS* 76). When the same Judaeo-Christian tradition demythologizes nature… it no longer saw nature as divine" (*LS* 78) which paths the way for financialization of nature as "profitable resources". More importantly, "different creatures relate to one another in making up the larger units which today we term "ecosystems". We take these systems into account not only to determine how best to use them but also because they have an intrinsic value independent of their usefulness" (*LS* 140).

The need to promote **economic ecology** is aimed at broadening the narrow notion of economic growth imbued with a humanism that is "capable of bringing together the different fields of knowledge, including economics, in the service of a more integral and integrating vision to overcome predictable reactions and a certain standardization with the aim of simplifying procedures and reducing costs" (*LS* 141). This transdisciplinary integrality ensures the sustainable flourishing of the environment as "an integral part of the development process" that honors the intersectionality of the "human, family, work-related and urban contexts…and how individuals relate to themselves, which leads in turn to how they relate to others and to the environment" (*LS* 141);

a regenerative economy patterned after the regenerativity of nature/earth which values the agro-wisdom and grassroots communities' eco-knowledges about the local biodiversity, the texture of the soils, multi-cropping, variety of seeds & changing weather conditions based on principles of reciprocity which involve collaborative production, shared consumption, fair trade, landscape-based, community-based and co-ownership.

This is essentially related to **social ecology** "which is necessarily institutional, and gradually extends to the whole of society, from the primary social group, the family, to the wider local, national and international communities" (*LS* 142). These social institutions foster all forms of justice, peace, inclusiveness, freedom, respect of the rule of law, resilience, and regulate human relationships "within each social stratum, and between them" (*LS* 142). These institutions need to ensure that laws are well legislated yet enforced lest "the protection of forests continue to keep silent as they watch laws repeatedly being broken" (*LS* 142). Furthermore, these institutions need to "pay heed to the interrelated consequences for reasons that drug use in affluent societies creates a continual and growing demand for products imported from poorer regions, where behavior is corrupted, lives are destroyed, and the environment continues to deteriorate" (*LS* 142).

In promoting **cultural ecology**[4], the historic, artistic, and cultural patrimony of the diverse communities has to be protected by resolutely incorporating "the history, culture, and architecture of each place, thus preserving its original identity" (*LS* 143). Moreover, attention has to be given to "the local cultures of the local communities when studying their environmental problems, favoring a dialogue between scientific-technical language" and the local knowledge related to their cultural patrimony. This dialogue ensures the quality of life is "understood within the world of symbols and customs proper to each human group" (*LS* 144). In this way, "the rights of peoples and cultures" are appreciated by ensuring that "the development of a social group presupposes a historical process which takes place within

[4] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* 143-146.

a cultural context and demands the constant and active involvement of local people *from within their proper culture*" (*LS* 144). A case in point are the indigenous peoples who should be regarded as "the principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed" as they behold their ancestral land not as "a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values and it is certainly true that "when they remain on their land, they themselves care for it best" (*LS* 146).

The **human ecology of daily lives**[5] in the rural and urban settings calls for authentic development with "efforts to bring about an integral improvement in the quality of human life" for the actual settings immediately "influence the way we think, feel and act" (*LS* 147). The derelict façade of rundown neighborhood is countered by "a network of solidarity and belonging" (*LS* 148) which fosters close and warm relationships that "weave bonds of belonging and togetherness which convert overcrowding into an experience of community in which the walls of the ego are torn down and the barriers of selfishness overcome" (*LS* 149). This creativity enriches "people's quality of life, their adaptation to the environment, encounter and mutual assistance" (*LS* 150) with concerted efforts "to protect those common areas, visual landmarks and urban landscapes which increase our sense of belonging, of rootedness, of "feeling at home" within communities where "others will then no longer be seen as strangers, but as part of a "we" which all of us are working to create" (*LS* 151). More importantly "in order not to heap suffering upon suffering" relocation must involve those to be resettled, with adequate information be given beforehand, "with choices of decent housing offered" (*LS* 152), and "systems of public transport" (*LS* 153). Above all, utmost respect must be given to human bodies with their sexual orientations for communal enrichment to ensure genuine human ecology (*LS* 155).

[5] *LS* 147-155.

Finally, the **political ecology**[6] emphasizes the art of "true statecraft [that] is manifested when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good" rather than addiction to "immediate results, supported by consumerist sectors of the population, driven to produce short-term growth" (*LS* 178). Political ecology is concerned with upholding the common good which is "the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfilment" (*LS* 156). The common good entails "respect for the human person as such, endowed with basic and inalienable rights ordered to his or her integral development. It has also to do with the overall welfare of society and the development of a variety of intermediate groups, applying the principle of subsidiarity" especially "the family, as the basic cell of society" (*LS* 157). In addition, the common good "calls for social peace, the stability and security provided by a certain order which cannot be achieved without particular concern for distributive justice" (*LS* 157). Above all, the common good is "a summon to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters" with utmost appreciation of their immense dignity (*LS* 158) and "the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor" (*LS* 2).

Furthermore, sustainable development is interlinked with intergenerational solidarity which is not optional, for "we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others and so we realize that intergenerational solidarity is "a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us" (*LS* 159). Yet we are acutely aware that "a fairer sense of intergenerational solidarity there is also an urgent moral need for a renewed and urgent sense for an intragenerational solidarity" among the "well-off" and the "worst-off" in the global and national societies (*LS* 160); second, an internationalization of differentiated responsibilities and environmental costs, as the bishops of Bolivia categorically stated that "the countries which have benefited from a high degree of industrialization, at the cost of enormous emissions of

[6] *LS* 156-159, 160, 170, 178.

greenhouse gases, have a greater responsibility for providing a solution to the problems they have caused" (*LS* 170).

An integral ecology rejects the reductionist technocratic paradigm (*LS* 106-108), the pervasive practical relativism (*LS* 123) that perpetuates the constant schizophrenia (*LS* 118) in a postmodern society. This techno-paragraph has accorded "immense power [to] those with the knowledge, and especially endowed with the economic resources to use them, thus exercising an "impressive dominance over the whole of humanity and the entire world. Never has humanity had such power over itself, yet nothing ensures that it will be used wisely, particularly when we consider how it is currently being used" (*LS* 104). More worrisome still is how this scientific paradigm "exalts the concept of a subject who, using logical and rational procedures, progressively approaches and gains control over an external object. This subject makes every effort to establish the scientific and experimental method, which in itself is already a technique of possession, mastery and transformation" (*LS* 106).

Financially, this technocratic paradigm aims "at the amassing of wealth by a few" to ensure that "human rights – personal and social, economic and political, including the rights of nations and of peoples" be fully recognized (*FT* 122). According to *Fratelli Tutti* (*FT*), this model reproduces itself "by resorting to the magic theories of spillover or trickle as the only solutions to societal problems," with "little appreciation of the fact that the alleged spillover does not resolve the inequality that gives rise to new forms of violence threatening the fabric of society" (*FT* 168). Moreover, "in addition to recover a sound political life that is not subject to the dictates of finance," *Fratelli Tutti* calls for the reinstatement of "human dignity back at the center and on that pillar build the alternative social structures" of a modern socialist China (*FT* 122). Above all, this paradigm has appropriated "technology and its development according to an undifferentiated and one-dimensional paradigm… which in itself is already a technique of possession, mastery, and transformation" (*LS* 106) that aims, "in the final analysis neither for-profit nor for the well-being of the human

race" but ultimately at "power [as]is its motive – a lordship overall" (*LS* 108).

Worst of all, technology absorbs everything into its ironclad logic, and those who are surrounded with technology "know full well that it moves forward in the final analysis neither for profit nor for the well-being of the human race," that "in the most radical sense of the term power is its motive – a lordship over all." As a result, humans financialize "the naked elements of both nature and human nature" (*LS* 108). More detrimentally, every increase in power means "an increase of 'progress' itself," an advance in "security, usefulness, welfare and vigor; …an assimilation of new values into the stream of culture," as if reality, goodness and truth automatically flow from technological and economic power as such. The fact is that "contemporary humans have not been trained to use power well" because our immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values and conscience" (*LS* 105). Most alarming of all, humankind lacks "a sound ethics, a culture and spirituality genuinely capable of setting limits and teaching clear-minded self-restraint" to curb the exercise of power (*LS* 105).

Biblico-Theological Foundations

The biblico-theological foundations of integral ecology is premised first on the assumptions in the Genesis narrative of creation that God has created all creaturely life forms in creation and pronounced creation with an inherent value of been acclaimed "good" (Gen 1, 4, 10, 12, 21, 25) and "very good" (Gen 1:26-30) in relation to God, the Creation-Sustainer who indwells in creation as the Omnipresent *Rûah* to the extent that *Rûah Elohim*'s indwelling divinizing presence in all of creation has pneumatically sacralized creation into God's Sacred Home. Through the incarnation of Jesus, God "*earthy-fies*" Godself by becoming a human, derived from *humus* in Latin which means *soil, earth, region, country* who is born a Nazarene (Matt 2:23) as he hails from Nazareth (Matt 2:23; Luke 2:39). The incarnation has given God's Sacred Home an eternal value destined for eschatological glorification. Teleologically, "the universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely"

(LS 233) so that "all things are God" (*LS* 234) and indeed "creation is projected towards divinization" and the ultimate "unification with the Creator" (*LS* 236). At the *eschaton,* "eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigures, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women who will have been liberated once and for all" (*LS* 243).

In Asia, the integrality of integral ecology is enriched with the indigenous earth-spirituality.[7] Ferdinand A. Anno explains that felt-lived bodily sense of interconnectedness relationship with the land/earth among the Igorots of northern Luzon of the Philippines:

> The land, to the *Ygollotes*, means no less than identity, being, and life. It is no mere plot that can be owned, titled, and abused at will. Believing that the land is *Kabunian*'s gift to the race and the wellspring of all life (*poon ti biag*), the Igorot revere the land as sacred. When the Igorot dies, as believed in most Cordillera tribes, she or he does not leave the land and journey to some unknown realm. The spirit of the dead remains a dweller of the land. In and through the land, the spirits of the dead/ancestors live in eternal communion with the living. The life and culture of the *Ygollotes* revolve around this physical and spiritual union with the land. This land-centered life-culture is most visible, celebrated, or communicated through the *annong*, the ritual and liturgical medium: that is, the Igorot in her/his most symbolic self (where the Igorot is able to connect through rituals to the sacred [*Kabunian/Kafunian*] and the larger reality of cosmic interconnectedness).[8]

For the indigenous communities, the agro-seasonal and human life-cycle rituals are the portals to experience and deepen the existential indigenous experience that the communities and the earth are suspended within the sacred cosmic web of interconnectedness

[7] In this section, I am indebted to the research of Fr. Lloyd V. Sabio, S.J., found in Chapter 4 Learning from the Indigenous Knowledge/Spirituality of the Igorots of his MA Thesis entitled "The Decolonization of Indigenous Spirituality as a Christian Response to *Laudato Si'*" submitted to the Loyola School of Theology, 2022, for his MA in Theology.

[8] Ferdinand A. Anno, "Indigenous Theology: Sources and Resources Perspective from the Philippines," *The Ecumenical Review* 62 (2010): 371-378, here cited 375.

of all life-forms the Creator-Sustainer God has gifted us. Anno has convincingly argued the integrality of rituals to the life of the Igorots:

> Rituals are integral to the life and work of the traditional *Igorot*. Since work is always linked to the land, and the land is revered as God's and the spirits' abode, work and ritual are a consequent cycle in everyday life. An *Igorot* does not till a piece of land, dam a stream, or cut mature trees until the guardian spirits are appeased. Planting and harvesting, building houses, and other communal events necessitate the invocation of the spirits or the ancestors, giving thanks to *Kabunian*, and the recital of stories that root the event to the beginnings of the tribe or the clan, among others. These acts are done in the forms of ritual chanting, prayers, dances, playing of indigenous instruments, and other ritual actions.[9]

In a similar vein, William Henry Scott further posits:

> The Igorot marks every event he [*sic*]considers of any significance from birth to death with formal rites, prayers, or songs of recognizably religious content, or, more accurately, every event from before birth until after death, for the welfare of the Igorot in the womb and the grave is also ceremonially considered. Sacrifices are performed in connection with his birth, his naming, his first haircut, the first time he is placed on a bed, the first time he is entered into certain areas, and at the time of various post-natal attentions such as the removal of the umbilical cord.[10]

The integrality of integral ecology necessitates the integration of indigenous local eco-knowledges in the care of agro-based communities, the harmonious and sustainable cultivation of the land and use of the resources below and above the ground in the indigenous spirit of caring-in-community. These local eco-knowledges, S.G.J.N. Senanayake postulates, are replete with "principles of holism, integration, respect for the spiritual and natural world order, and the balance."[11]

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[9] Anno, "Indigenous Theology."

[10] William Henry Scott, "Worship in Igorot Life," *Philippine Sociological Review,* 8:3 (July-October 1960): 17-21, here cited 17.

[11] S.G.J.N. Senanayake, "Indigenous Knowledge as a Key to Sustainable Development," *Journal of Agricultural Science – Sri Lanka* 2:1 (January 2006): 87-

A case in point is the need-based existence of "*buen vivir*" ("good living,")[12] that flows from the indigenous earth-spirituality, in which a ritual is celebrated in the forest which interacts with the spirit of the tree, imploring the trees for forgiveness, before cutting them down as materials for building a house.

The indigenous felt-bodily sense of interconnectedness resonates with the Buddhist's sapiential knowledge of Indra' String of pearls. It is an interconnectedness that the Japanese Buddhist monk Kukai explained by using the Buddhist metaphor called *Indra's Jewel*. Kukai explained this metaphor in relation to Dainichi Nyorai, the "Great Sun," and Dainichi, the ultimate reality originally inherent within all sentient being and nonsentient natural phenomena. Hence, Paul O. Ingram avers: "As every jewel of Indra's net reflects all others, and as all jewels are reflected in a single jewel, so existence *is* Dainichi Nyorai: seemingly discrete entities are interdependent forms of Dainichi, the one ultimate reality underlying the diversity of all natural phenomena."[13]

Referring to the *Flower Garland Sutra*, Ruben L.F. Habito elaborates on Ingram's explanation: "This is a wondrous net which stretches out infinitely in all directions, and a single bright jewel is in each eye of the net. Each jewel, in its marvelous transparency and uniqueness, reflects all the other jewels in this infinite net. And conversely, each unique jewel is likewise reflected on every other in this wondrous net."[14] Ingram further opines that Indra's jewel, in Kukai's *Sokushin jobutsu gi* ("Attaining enlightenment in this very existence"), affirms that "reality -

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94, now cited 91.

[12] Pope Francis, *Querida Amazon* 8, 26, 71.

[13] Paul O. Ingram, "The Jewelled Net of Nature," in in *Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology*, ed. Allan Hunt Badiner (Berkeley: Parallex Press, 1990), 71-88, here cited 79.

[14] Ruben L. F. Habito, "Mountains and Rivers and the Great Earth: Zen and Ecology," in *Buddhism and Ecology: the Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 166-175, here cited 171.

the way things really are - is nondual."[15] In view of this, Graham Parks remarks that this nonduality is "the harmonic interfusion of oneness and multiplicity, unity and plurality, or subjectivity and objectivity," occasioning a "mutual containment or reciprocal penetration of subject and object," an "interfusion between humans and nature."[16] This nonduality, Habito believes, offers one an everyday awareness that is heightened by the wisdom to "see all things 'as they are,' that is, as not separate from one's true self."[17] Interconnectivity, based on the Chinese philosophy of "*Chi,"* as explained by Professor Tu Wei-ming, offers a unified perspective that "the earth forms one body as a single living organism created out of the interfusion and convergence of numerous streams of vital force which together establish the wholeness and continuity of nature."[18]

The plural religiosities of the *pneuma/spirit*-world is premised a theological re-imagination, revaluation and valuation of the plural local pneumatologies "from *within their proper culture*" (*LS* 144) Such reimagination has emphasized the indispensability of the accompaniment of the other-than-human beings which *Querida Amazon* refers to the "various beings" (*QA* 42) of the ancestral and nature spirits of indigenous mysticism (*QA* 73). These various beings are known as the Creator or Grandfather, the spirits, *aru,* jinx, the deities, and demons/evil spirits. Every aspect of the world is alive with spirits. All created lifeforms communicate *to* and *with* each other. The various and diverse lifegiving ancestral and nature spirits "participate in the

[15] Ingram, "The Jewelled Net of Nature," 77.

[16] Graham Parkes, "Voices of the Mountains, Trees, and Rivers: Kukai, Dogen, and a Deeper Ecology," in *Buddhism and Ecology: the Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 112-128, here cited 171.

[17] Habito, "Mountains and Rivers and the Great Earth: Zen and Ecology," 171.

[18] Tu Wei-ming, "The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature," in Callicot and Ames, *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought* (Albany: State University of New York, 1989), 67-78; Steve Odin, "The Japanese Concept of Nature in Relation to the Environmental Ethics and Conservation of Adlo Leopold," 104.

primordial power of the Creative Spirit of sacred sustainability" and "are arguably the spirits of sacred sustainability, as their spirit-presence and power enable the local communities to conserve and manage the human and nonhuman worlds."[19] Furthermore, "these localized water-spirits mediate the divine/sacred power of *Rûah Elohim*"[20] to the local communities through their reputable shamans and healers.[21] These lifegiving nature spirits who participate in the Spirit-power of *Rûah Elohim* constitute what Matthew Eaton (2019, 633) calls "a fellowship of the Holy Spirit" here on Earth, and this pneumatic fellowship orients the Earth towards becoming an "eschatologically minded community (cf. 2 Cor 13:13)."[22]

Hence the entire cosmos is awashed in God's eternal presence to the extent the cosmos is "shot through" and thus suffused with the power of *God's Spirit* or and plural religiosities of the *pneuma/spirit*-world *Rûah Elohim*. The Cosmos God created and sustained is basking in a state of "*Spirit-ful-ness*" and "*Rûah-presence-ness*." To this end, the Cosmos has been created by God to become God's sacred dwelling and divine home. Each human is called to become a sacred cosmic spirit who basks in this state of "sacred eternity", experiencing that s/he is an eternal cosmic spirit suffused, sacralized and sustained in this cosmic web of "*Spirit-ful-ness*" and "*Rûah-presence-ness*" in which humans are situated.[23]

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[19] Jojo M. Fung S.J., "Sacred Encounter of the Living Spirit-Narratives and Living Faith in Ruach Elohim," *Asian Horizon* 13:4 (2019): 655-667, cited here 664-655.

[20] Fung, "Sacred Encounter of the Living Spirit-Narratives and Living Faith in Ruach Elohim,"665.

[21] Fung, "Sacred Encounter of the Living Spirit-Narratives and Living Faith in Ruach Elohim," 607-618.

[22] Matthew Eaton, "An-Archy and Awakening, The Ethical and Political Temporalities of Christology and Pneumatology," *The Heythrop Journal: A Bimonthly Review of Philosophy and Theology* 60 (2019): 624-64, at 633.

[23] Personal journal entry dated September 22, 2018.

Ethical Ramifications

Integral ecology calls for "serene attentiveness," which is capable of being fully present to someone" (*LS* 226), exemplified in Jesus gazing on the rich young man with love (Mk 10:21), which has to be extended to all created things in the web of interrelations in the more-than-human world. Hence, for St. Francis who is in love with God and creation, "each gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals, he burst into song, drawing all other creatures into his praise" (*LS* 11).[24] This is attentive gaze that *Laudato Si'* invites economics, science and technology to engage in a transdisciplinarity (*LS* 137) which is mutually beneficial to science and religion (*Lumen Fidei* 34). Last of all, integral ecology serves as a moral principle "for the right ordering of the eco-social networks of the world so that they may best serve the common good (*LS* 23-26, 156-58)"[25] for reasons that the global/universal solidarity (*LS* 14) as social interdependence envisaged among humans has to become "human interdependence with the rest of creation."[26] Even the moral laws governing human life and the bodies (*LS* 155) have to include life in "all its forms" (*LS* 230) so that any encounter with other humans and myriad life-forms who/which are different will enrich this tripartite relationship in the web of life.

This vision, gaze and moral principle, entail a radical "break from the ideology of the technocratic paradigm and the concomitant culture of consumerism" of the globalization project and a shift to the project of initiating "a bold cultural [*counter*] revolution" (*LS* 114).[27]

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[24] Miller, "Integral Ecology: Francis' spiritual and moral vision of interconnectedness," 15.

[25] Daniel P. Castillo, "Integral Ecology as a Liberational Concept," 363.

[26] See Miller, "Integral Ecology: Francis' spiritual and moral vision of interconnectedness," 19.

[27] Daniel P. Castillo opines that "Francis echoes Gutierrez's call for a cultural revolution away from the dominant ideologies of the time. Whereas Gutierrez rejected the specter of the one-dimensional man, Francis calls for a radical break from the ideology of the technocratic paradigm and the concomitant culture of consumerism. Indeed, for Francis these deadens one's senses to the cries of

This project draws its inspiration from the *teologia del pueblo* of the Argentinian school of liberation theology that has influenced Pope Francis. The end goal is the transformation of the normative values proliferated by the globalization project that regard the Earth as "simply a mechanistic collection of atoms to be rearranged and exploited in in ever-more efficient and productive ways."[28] This project is premised on the aforementioned "technocratic paradigm" (*LS* 106-114) inherent in neoliberal capitalism. Central to this project is "that every increase in power means an increase of progress" that purportedly funnels downwards "goodness and truth" of progress (*LS* 105), promises unlimited growth based on "infinite supply of the earth's goods" (*LS* 106), vies for "short-term gains and private interest" (*LS* 184), only to further diminish "alternative creativity" (*LS*108) and perpetuate a global culture of consumerism that induces indifference in individuals to the interrelated cries of the poor and the earth (*LS* 49, 203).

This revolution to counter the "technocratic paradigm" calls for a spirituality of "healthy humility/sobriety" with a theological vision in which humans knows their places in relation to God and God's plan of salvation-redemption for creation, the poor and all nonhuman creatures.[29] God calls humans to uphold their "till and keep" ethical responsibility to the Earth in which, Deane-Drummond avers, "tilling or cultivation (*le'obdah* and *ulesomrah*) which means keeping, tending, or caring for the garden in which humanity is placed by God."[30] With reference the second story of creation (Gen 2:15), which Claus Westermann believes "is a decisive verse for the whole understanding

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the earth and the poor, and "bolsters complacency and a cheerful recklessness" (*LS* 59). Thus, in his use of the language of liberation Francis' call takes on the immediacy of Gutierrez's own exhortation for *metanoia*." See Castillo Ibid., 370. *Emphasis is mine*; also see Deane-Drummond, "*Laudato Si'* and the Natural Sciences, 401.

[28] Castillo, "Integral Ecology as a Liberational Concept," 366.

[29] Castillo "Integral Ecology as a Liberational Concept," 368.

[30] Deane-Drummond, "Laudato Si' and the Natural Sciences, 405; also see Castillo, "Integral Ecology as a Liberational Concept," 368-9.

of Gen 2-3,"[31] this account undergirds the special mission for humanity (*LS* 66) "of keeping watch over the natural world, living in harmony with it, and defending vital values without which neither human life nor the biosphere of this planet can be maintained."[32]

In a similar vein, the story of Abel and Cain informs humans of their mission to their neighbors, for "disregard for the duty to cultivate and maintain a proper relationship with my neighbor, for whose care and custody I am responsible, ruins my relationship with my own self, with others, with God and with the earth… and life itself is endangered (*LS* 70)." Only such an integrative-relational paradigm, in the words of Castillo, "provides the human person with the firm ground out of which to cultivate a culture capable of bearing witness to an integral ecology" [33] in which the love of God, incarnated through the Son, made possible through the power of *Ruach Elohim*, entails at the same time, the love of the poor neighbors and all created creatures.

As a liberationist concept, Castillo further argues, the pontiff's call for "a bold cultural revolution" (*LS* 114) extends far beyond the realm of the consumeristic culture. His call for integral ecology stops nothing short of "the radical conversion of the entire global system."[34] The ensuing strategies "demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature (*LS* 139)."[35] In the post-*Laudato Si'* era, the urgent call is for dialogue "among religions, between science and religion, between technological (and technocratic) know how and ancient wisdom, among paradigms" and among all peoples of faiths

[31] See Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 220, cited in Daniel P. Castillo, "Integral Ecology as a Liberational Concept," 369.

[32] Deane-Drummond, "*Laudato Si'* and the Natural Sciences, 405.

[33] See Castillo, "Integral Ecology as a Liberational Concept," 369.

[34] See Castillo, "Integral Ecology as a Liberational Concept," 371.

[35] Castillo "Integral Ecology as a Liberational Concept," 363.

and goodwill.[36] This dialogue needs to engage in a process of communal discerning that honors the collective intuitive and consensual sense of those in dialogue, as all concertedly seek for "practical paths toward social and cultural transformation" amidst the complexities of the current hegemonic global capitalist system.[37]

Furthermore, Deane-Drummond contends, this revolution "amounts to a change in philosophy that is encouraged by slowing down and looking at the world around us differently, a return to values of a prior age, and liberation from 'unrestrained delusions of grandeur' (*LS* 114)."[38] She further opines that this revolution calls for "an intense dialogue between science and religion" (*LS* 62) and a way of doing science that takes into account other fields of knowledge, "including philosophy and social ethics"(*LS* 110), without any "absolutization of its own field of knowledge (*LS* 201)."[39] This transdisciplinary dialogue will have to counteract the "false and superficial ecology" (*LS* 59) of sustainable development that Herman Daly contends is "identified with sustained economic growth," an identification that "allows for the continued legitimization of the very structures and ideologies of the globalization project that Francis denounces."[40]

The sustainable way forward will be the articulation of what Deane-Drummond suggests, an "a theological earth charter" that incorporates faith, hope and love.[41] For her, religion can enrich science "by encouraging a type of wondrous humility" which is "Christianity's

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[36] Preface to Pope Francis' Encyclical on Climate Change, available at https://slowfoodusa.org/preface-to-pope-francis-encyclical-on-climate-change-by-carlo-petrini/ (accessed November 18, 2016).

[37] Castillo, "Integral Ecology as a Liberational Concept," 371.

[38] See Celia Deane-Drummond, "*Laudato Si'* and the Natural Sciences: An Assessment of Possibilities and Limits," *Theological Studies* 77:2 (June 2016): 401.

[39] Deane-Drummond, "*Laudato Si'* and the Natural Sciences," 401.

[40] See Castillo, "Integral Ecology as a Liberational Concept," 374.

[41] See Deane-Drummond, "*Laudato Si'* and the Natural Sciences," 403.

inmost secret," as Guardini remarks, premised on Jesus' kenosis, the "supreme power converted into humility."[42] Deane-Drummond calls for constant openness "to reality in all its inexhaustible richness" for faith "awakens the critical sense" that spins science out of its "formulaic whirlpool" to realize that "nature is always greater" (*LS* 199 & 141).[43] Such a faith engenders in the dialogue partners a "profound joy as mixed with hope" (*LS* 244) as they resolutely engage in the common struggles and concerns for our Common Home.[44] Most important of all, Deane-Drummond advocates an embodied sense of gratuitousness/giftedness, that "all is a gift from God" which is countercultural to the profit-oriented enterprises in the spheres of economy, science and technology.[45] This sense of giftedness governs our multiple relationships with the Earth, diverse ecosystems, myriad of life-forms, fellow humans, leading to greater mercy and communion, respect for the sovereignty *of* and subsidiarity *at* the local communities, promoting full flourishing of the common good of all lives.

By and large, as Austen Ivereigh avers, integral ecology offers a "unifies moral narrative" and "a vision of social and economic organization underpinned by the gift of logic of Christian tradition

[42] Austen Ivereigh avers, "Guardini observed, God had revealed true power., which is the power of service, in which freedom is subject to and constrained by the essence of things and the limits of human nature. Jesus' unmasking of the false power of domination and violence was the triumph of the Cross, his kenosis, which Gaurdini calls, "supreme power converted into poverty" in Chapter Seven "Saving Our Common Home" of his book *Wounded Shepherd*, 212 & 213. See also Bergolio, "Necesidad de una antropoloiga politica," in *Reflexiones en esperanza* (Madrid: Romano, 2013) 257-88 and Romano Guardini, *The End of the Modern World* (Washington, Del.: ISI Books, 1998), 73-74.

[43] Deane-Drummond, "*Laudato Si'* and the Natural Sciences," 404.

[44] Deane-Drummond, "*Laudato Si'* and the Natural Sciences," 404.

[45] See Celia Deanne-Drummond, "Technology, Ecology and the Divine: A Critical Look at New Technologies through a Theology of Gratuitousness," in *Just Sustainability: Technology, Ecology and Resource Extraction*, eds. Christina Z. Peppard and Andrea Vicini (New York: Orbis Books, 2015), 145-156, now cited 152.

as an alternative to dominant technocracy."[46] This narrative exhorts humankind "to be a custodian of creation, rather than its arrogant overlord; human creatures were a fellow species, interconnected with and biologically dependent upon God's other creatures" thus placing the global Church "at the heart of the drive to respect the divinely gifted design of love and truth in every 'environment,'" be it the natural world, the family, or urban spaces, offering "a lens with which to judge the misuse of human autonomy and the idolatry of power."[47] In line with integral ecology, the evangelizing mission of the Church is "to reveal a loving Creator whose son gave his life," in a manner that *Gaudium et Spes* 2 avers, "so that the world might be fashioned anew according to God's design."[48]

Conclusion

Integral ecology emphasizes the interrelatedness of a faith that does creation justice for the poor and the earth. In Asia, the plural civilizational oases of religocultural wisdom and ecoknowledges and everyday ecopractices alert our communities that everything is indeed connected and interdependent as we are all part of the integral and integrative sacred mosaic of life on earth and in the cosmos. We need to integrate the sacred wisdom and the sacred spirit World of the plural Asian oases of mysticism so that we translate this relational paradigm into the ethics of alterity grounded in a corporeal pneumatology in an emerging era of wisdom/Sapientialocene and Spirit/ pneumatolocene.

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[46] See Austen Ivereigh, *Wounded Shepherd: Pope Francis and His Struggle to Convert the Catholic Church* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2019), 213.

[47] Ivereigh, *Wounded Shepherd*, 209.

[48] Ivereigh, *Wounded Shepherd*, 213.

based on more than two decades of theologizing on his immersional experience, field research, and engagement among the indigenous communities in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand.

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THE PNEUMATOLOGICAL ECCLESIOLOGY OF VATICAN II: THE SPIRIT, *SENSUS FIDELIUM,* AND SYNODALITY

Kenjie I. Cortez

Abstract. The paper articulates and advances a pneumatological hermeneutic to Vatican II's renewed ecclesiology. Recognizing both the legacy and the limits of the Council's *ecclesiology in the Spirit*, the paper explores two key ecclesiological insights that Vatican II has decisively retrieved: namely, the *sensus fidelium* and synodality. While the former is explicitly treated in the conciliar texts and the latter is an implicit dimension of the Council, the paper argues that both are crucial in the reception of Vatican II's pneumatological ecclesiology.

Keywords. Holy Spirit; Vatican II; *sensus fidei*; *sensus fidelium*; synodality; Pope Francis

Some Preliminaries

While the Second Vatican Council[1] was primarily preoccupied with ecclesiological concerns, Richard Gaillardetz points out that "one cannot find in the [conciliar] documents a single systematic and comprehensive

[1] Hereafter, it shall be referred to as Vatican II.

treatise on the Church."[2] This important lacuna has led some quarters within the post-conciliar Church to openly criticize, if not completely reject the Council.[3] Nonetheless, Sally Vance-Trembath asserts that the problem "does not lie in the [conciliar] texts."[4] While there are varying reasons for the so-called stalemate in the implementation of Vatican II, she makes a pensive point that "the conflicting interpretations of the legacy of Vatican II are the result of the failure to establish theologically that the Council did update the life and structure of the Church as well

[2] Richard Gaillardetz, "The Ecclesiology of Vatican II," *The Oxford Handbook of Vatican II*, eds., Catherine Clifford and Massimo Faggioli (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023), 167. Similarly, Ormond Rush maintains, "While all the council's sixteen documents address ecclesiological themes in some way, they do not present a systematic treatise on the Church. Oftentimes, some ecclesiological treatments contain statements that deftly juxtapose the juridical 'Bellarminian' ecclesiology with perspectives from the ecclesiologies of more recent decades." See "Roman Catholic Ecclesiology from the Council of Trent to Vatican II and Beyond," *The Oxford Handbook of Ecclesiology*, ed., Paul Avis (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 282.

[3] In one of the six heuristic tools he employs to assess the reception of Vatican II, Gavin D' Costa notes that a particular interpretation of Vatican II – which he refers to as "conservative narrative" – uses the internal consistencies of the conciliar documents and the various underdeveloped themes, including ecclesiology, deny doctrinal legitimacy of the Council. See Gavin D' Costa "The Second Vatican Council," *The Oxford Handbook of Catholic Theology*, eds., Lewis Ayres and Medi Ann Volpe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 793-794. In addition, historical theologian Massimo Faggioli argues that "in truth, we can see that, in the fifty-year history of the debate on Vatican II, the real challenge to the legitimacy of the council came not from the ranks of the theologians who made it possible, but from the small fringe within the broader 'council minority.' This fringe contested not the effects of the council's reception but the very existence of Vatican II as a legitimate council in the tradition of the Church." See Massimo Faggioli, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2012), 20-21.

[4] Sally M. Vance-Trembath, *The Pneumatology of Vatican II with Particular Reference to Lumen Gentium and Gaudium et Spes* (University of Notre Dame, 2003), available at https://curate.nd.edu/show/xk81jh36p9m, 17 (accessed 05 March 2024).

as our theological understanding of it."[5] As such, she forefronts the possibility of looking at the "primary pneumatology" of the Council – both implicit and explicit in the conciliar documents – to identify its "primary ecclesiology."[6] Thus, she contends that if one intends to use Vatican II's pneumatology as an interpretive key, one has to pay attention not only to the pneumatological insights expressed in the texts but also to the "competing understandings of the Holy Spirit" during the Council– both of which influenced Vatican II's ecclesiology.[7] This approach can be seen in parallel to or an application of Gaillardertz's claim that "when considered diachronically, as the council texts were develop over the course of the council, and synchronically, as we consider their many intertextual connections, it is possible to draw from the council's work a deeply coherent theological vision of the Church."[8] This paper follows this way of proceeding. Since Vatican II, as Hermann Pottmeyer describes, is like "a building site"[9] – an ecclesiological project that is being completed as it is being received,

[5] Vance-Trembath, *The Pneumatology of Vatican II,* 25.

[6] She further argues that "once the underlying dominant pneumatology has been determined, it will serve as a principle of interpretation for the documents themselves and thus contribute to a deeper understanding and reception of the Council. See Vance-Trembath, *The Pneumatology of Vatican II,* 2.

[7] Vance-Trembath, *The Pneumatology of Vatican II*, 1.

[8] Gaillardetz, "The Ecclesiology of Vatican II," 167.

[9] Hermann Pottmeyer, *Towards a Papacy in Communion: Perspectives from Vatican Councils I & II*, trans. Matthew O'Connell (New York City: Crossroad, 1998), 110. In addition, Pottmeyer writes, "Despite all the theological expertise that is gathered at a council and accompanies its work, a conciliar text is not controlled by a unified systematic intention. Vatican II does indeed achieve the already mentioned insight and new assessment of relative values in not a few doctrinal areas; these, however, are only beginnings. But even juxtaposition is progress, because by being complemented the older thesis is relativized as one-sided and bearings are given for further development in understanding of the faith. The needed synthesis is a task that the Council sets for the Church and for theologians; it is a task of reception, which is far from being a merely passive process." See "A New Phase in the Reception of Vatican II: Twenty Years of Interpretation of the Council," *The Reception of Vatican II*, eds., Guiseppe Alberigo, Jean-Pierre

an articulation of Vatican II's treatment of the Spirit in relation to its vision of the Church can give birth to a "hermeneutic that does justice to the Council."[10]

The Spirit

The Holy Spirit in the Church: A Century before Vatican II

Veli-Matti Karkkainen notes that Vatican II was decisively instrumental in "the new Catholic pneumatological renaissance."[11] Although before the Council, there were already remarkable developments in pneumatology in general and the Holy Spirit in relation to the Church in particular, Jos Moons argues that Vatican II "rediscovered the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church."[12] According to him, in the late nineteenth up to the early twentieth century, there was a relatively virtual silence on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church.[13] As Elizabeth Groppe also observes, "The ecclesiology of this period paid minimal attention to pneumatology."[14] Thus, the Holy

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Joshua, and Joseph Komonchak (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 38.

[10] Pottmeyer, "A New Phase in the Reception of Vatican II," 43.

[11] Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2002), 74. For a good introduction to Catholic pneumatology, see Thomas Joseph White, "The Holy Spirit," *The Oxford Handbook of Catholic Theology*, eds., Lewis Ayres and Medi Ann Volpe (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 183-197. Also, Monika Hellwig, "In Spirit and In Truth: A Catholic Perspective on the Holy Spirit," *Quarterly Review* 8:2 (1988): 36–48.

[12] Jos Moons, "The Holy Spirit in Pre-Conciliar Ecclesiology: The Beginnings of a Rediscovery?," *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 74: 3 (July 2013): 240.

[13] Moons, "The Holy Spirit in Pre-Conciliar Ecclesiology," 240-241.

[14] Elizabeth Teresa Groppe, "The Contribution of Yves Congar's Theology of the Holy Spirit," *Theological Studies* 62:3 (September 2001): 452.

Spirit was primarily understood as the guarantor of the Magisterium's teaching authority. As illustrated in Leo XIII's *Satis Cognitum*:

> And, since it was necessary that His divine mission should be perpetuated to the end of time, He took to Himself Disciples, trained by himself, and made them partakers of His own authority. And, when He had invoked upon them from Heaven the *Spirit of Truth*, He bade them go through the whole world and faithfully preach to all nations, what He had taught and what He had commanded, so that by the profession of His doctrine, and the observance of His laws, the human race might attain to holiness on earth and never-ending happiness in Heaven.[15]

In addition, although theologians like John Henry Newman (1801-1890) advanced the notions of the Spirit's indwelling in the Church or the Church as the visible "temple of the Holy Spirit," such pneumatological ecclesiologies were marked largely by a desire to defend papal primacy and papal infallibility.[16] Such an attitude toward the Holy Spirit paved the way for the identification of the Church as "the keeper of the eternal truths that modernity disregards."[17] Consequently, this also contributed to the swift rise of Ultramontanism.[18] As the Jesuit historian John O'Malley explains:

> The papacy's search for a response to the enemy [liberalism] helped generate one of the most important yet little commented-upon changes in Catholicism in the modern era: the popes became teachers. Or, better put, they became teachers in a newly professed and more expanded

[15] Leo XIII, *Encyclical Letter on the Unity of the Church (Satis Cognitum)*, 29 June 1896, Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_29061896_satis-cognitum.html, no. 3.

[16] Ormond Rush, "Roman Catholic Ecclesiology," 269. See also John Henry Newman, "The Papal Supremacy," *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1960), 158-174.

[17] Moons, "The Holy Spirit in Pre-Conciliar Ecclesiology," 241.

[18] See John O'Malley, "The Limitations and Hermeneutical Implications of Vatican I's Prophetic Mode," *Theological Studies* 83: 1 (March 2022): 48–53. Also, "The Millennium and the Papalization of Catholicism," *Catholic History for Today's Church: How Our Past Illuminates Our Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 7-13.

> way. Their principal vehicle for doing so was the papal encyclical. They used that medium to propose, expound, and elaborate theological and doctrinal positions in a manner unprecedented. By definition an encyclical is a circular letter, and as such it was used by popes and others from ancient times. But in the nineteenth century its significance changed to such an extent that it emerged as virtually a new genre.[19]

Furthermore, Pius XII's 1943 Encyclical Letter *Mystici Corporis Christi* – which explicitly identified the mystical body of Christ with the Catholic Church – described the Holy Spirit in two ways: "the Holy Spirit is part of the final phase of the founding of the Church" and the One who sustains the Church and its unity.[20]

> Such human societies, and in the first place civil Society, are by no means to be despised or belittled; but the Church in its entirety is not found within this natural order, any more than the whole man is encompassed within the organism of our mortal body. Although the juridical principles, on which the Church rests and is established, derive from the divine constitution given to it by Christ and contribute to the attainting of its supernatural end, nevertheless that which lifts the Society of Christians far above the whole natural order is the Spirit of our Redeemer who penetrates and fills every part of the Church's being and is active within it until the end of time as the source of every grace and every gift and every miraculous power.[21]

Ormond Rush contends that while Pius's encyclical underscored "the spiritual dimensions of the church as Christ's mystical body, nevertheless, [he] continued to emphasize that the church is a perfect

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[19] O'Malley, "The Limitations and Hermeneutical Implications of Vatican I's Prophetic Mode."

[20] Moons, "The Holy Spirit in Pre-Conciliar Ecclesiology," 244. For a more comprehensive study of the Pneumatology of Mystici Corporis, see Moons, *The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Pneumatological Renewal: Mystici Corporis, Lumen Gentium and Beyond* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2022), 42-70.

[21] Pius XII, *Encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ (Mystici Corporis Christi)* 29 June 1943 Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi.html, no. 63.

society."[22] As a consequence, the Pope "conceived the role of the Holy Spirit mainly in hierarchical terms."[23] In other words, the Holy Spirit and the hierarchy are both gifts from Christ to complement each other. As Pius XII asserts, "There can, then, be no real opposition or conflict between the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit and the juridical commission of Ruler and Teacher received from Christ, since they mutually complement and perfect each other."[24] Synthesizing the overarching pneumatology of *Mystici Corporis*, Moons writes:

> As Christ is the main theological foundation of the church and the hierarchy, the Spirit's role matters considerably less. The Spirit's role is only highlighted in certain instances e.g., as a pneumatological-Pentecostal elaboration of Christ's grace (MC 54-56) or in defending the church's unicity, as it has a divine principle of unity (MC 60-61). Moreover, even in those instances, the Spirit's role is conceived in the context of Christ, whose body the church is. Finally, there is neither need nor space to develop the Spirit's concrete contribution to the church, because in the actual functioning of the church the hierarchy holds centre stage. As a consequence, the Spirit – much like Christ – is 'banished' to abstract roles, such as being the general principle of the church, or as acting in a general manner and dynamizing in a general manner, or to clarificatory argumentative function. Does this explain the remarkable fact that the hierarchy is not the privileged addressee of the Spirit? For while it remains true that Pius XII seeks to uphold the church's hierarchical dimension and that the Spirit is part of the way he does so, at other moments – and indeed more frequently – he relates the Spirit to the faithful in general or the church.[25]

Moons argues that the pneumatological developments in pre-Vatican II ecclesiology can be seen as "a modest beginning of a

[22] Rush, "Roman Catholic Ecclesiology," 267. In addition, Moons argues that as the apologetical vis-à-vis ultramontane ecclesiology remained influential up to the eve of *Mystici Corporis Christi*, "The Church was understood as a *societas,* and the stress was on her visible, hierarchical organization." See "The Holy Spirit in Pre-Conciliar Ecclesiology," 242.

[23] Moons, "The Holy Spirit in Pre-Conciliar Ecclesiology," 244.

[24] Pius XII, *Encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ (Mystici Corporis Christi),* no. 65.

[25] Moons, *The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Pneumatological Renewal,* 72-73.

rediscovery of the Holy Spirit's role in the Church."[26] Given the concerns and needs of the Church before the Council, the pre-conciliar Church's understanding of "the Holy Spirit was generally limited to guaranteeing the efficacy of the sacraments and reliability of church teaching."[27] Hence, "in the century prior to Vatican II, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was confined either personal, private piety or to juridical power bestowed with clerical office."[28] As Monika Hellwig concludes:

> The association of the Holy Spirit with sacramental efficacy and with the rulings of hierarchic church authority has emerged from continuous reflection upon historical experience. Although Catholic piety and theology at no time denied the prophetic experience of the Holy Spirit, it must be admitted that until the Second Vatican Council, there was a certain tendency to attempt to domesticate the power of the Spirit, and to see that power as operating almost exclusively through official ecclesiastical channels.[29]

The Holy Spirit in the Conciliar Texts

According to Gaillardetz, "We can locate the beginning of the council's recovery of pneumatology with Pope John XIII who, from the preparatory period all the way to his address at the close of the first session of the council, would express the hope on numerous occasions that the council might become a 'new Pentecost.'"[30] Despite this, Jesuit Jacques Dupuis contends that "the Church of Vatican II must in all humility admit its partial failure to do justice to the function

[26] Moons, *The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Pneumatological Renewal*, 248.

[27] See Richard Gaillardetz and Catherine Clifford *Keys to the Council: Unlocking the Teaching of Vatican II* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2012), 57.

[28] See Vance-Trembath, "The Pneumatology of Vatican II," 106.

[29] Hellwig, "In Spirit and In Truth," 37.

[30] Gaillardetz, *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II, Pope Francis, and the Renewal of Catholicism* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2015), 61.

of the Spirit."[31] As such, John Randall Sachs asserts that Vatican II's texts do not present "a systematically developed pneumatology."[32] Nonetheless, one can argue that this is due mainly to the reality that the conciliar texts prove Vatican II to be "a transitional Council."[33] While the texts represent both a stylistic and substantive shift in the overall consciousness of the Church, the texts carry with them various issues that gave birth to Vatican II. Despite the seeming "ambivalence"[34] in the conciliar texts, one cannot deny the Council's

[31] Jacques Dupuis, "Western Christocentrism and Eastern Pneumatology," *Jesus Christ and His Spirit: Theological Approaches* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1977), 25.

[32] See John Randall Sachs, "'Do Not Stifle the Spirit!': Karl Rahner, the Legacy of Vatican II, and Its Urgency for Theology Today," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 51 (February 1, 2013), available at https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ctsa/article/view/4114, 17. Similarly, Yves Congar observes, "It would be tedious to go through every document and every conciliar discussion in search of references to the Holy Spirit. There are at least 258 of them in the conciliar texts! An enumeration of them would not, however, be sufficient as a basis for a pneumatology." See *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. I, trans. David Smith (New York: Crossroad, 1997), 167.

[33] Pottmeyer argues that "Vatican II can best be described as *a transitional council*.… For this reason, Vatican II is a challenge to its interpreters. The rules customarily applied in interpreting dogmatic texts, especially those of the modern period, do not work here. The texts, even those that are doctrinal in character, lack the conceptual precision, the unambiguous definition of positions, the technical form, and the unity of literary genre to which Trent and Vatican I had accustomed us. Passages using the language of the Bible as no previous council had used it alternate with historical expositions, analyses of the contemporary situation, and, not least, citations of previous councils (half of them from Trent and Vatican I) and references to papal teaching (half of them to Pius XII). No wonder, then, that the interpretations given during the first twenty years after the council present a bewildering picture and display a great deal of insecurity." See "A New Phase in the Reception of Vatican II," 27.

[34] Systematic theologian Richard McBrien explains the "ambivalence" in conciliar texts as: "The drama of Vatican II consisted mainly in the historic struggle between the forces of change and the forces of conservatism, between proponents of essentialist thinking and the practitioners of historicist thought. But the underlying issues were not always resolved. And these unresolved conflicts

robust pneumatological understanding of the Church.[35] Right at the beginning of the *Lumen Gentium (LG)*, Sachs argues that one "find[s] a pneumatological perspective that widens the Christological focus of traditional ecclesiology and provides a new context for the Church's self-understanding."[36] As Gaillardetz similarly notes, "[E]ven as the council insisted on the centrality of Christ, it avoided as well as reductive ecclesial christomonism by also recalling the mission of the Holy Spirit."[37] This allows for the possibility of seeing the Spirit at work even "beyond the official structures and ordained ministries of the Church."[38] Employing the theology of Karl Rahner as an interpretive key, Sachs states that the Council's pneumatology has redefined its notion of being a Church.[39] In conclusion, Sachs maintains that the Church's reception of Vatican II demands a renewed pneumatology. Hence, this means a "theology [that] is never about the Spirit [but]… something done in the Spirit and by the Spirit."[40]

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are the basis of the council's theological ambivalence." See *Church: The Continuing Quest* (New York, NY: Newman Press, 1970), 25-26.

[35] Rush argues that "throughout the four years of conciliar debate, there was a growing pneumatological awareness among the bishops. That growth in awareness within the church has not stopped developing since the Council. See *Still Interpreting Vatican II: Some Hermeneutical Principles* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2004), 71-72.

[36] Sachs, "'Do Not Stifle the Spirit!'," 17.

[37] Gaillardetz, *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II*, 83.

[38] Sachs, "'Do Not Stifle the Spirit!'," 15.

[39] Sachs notes six important achievements in the Council's pneumatological ecclesiology – namely – the universal transcendental revelation in the Spirit; the Spirit's categorical mediation in the history of religions; the universality of Spirit and the normativity of Christ; the Spirit in ecumenism; the Spirit and interreligious dialogue, and the charismatic character of the Church. See Sachs, "'Do Not Stifle the Spirit!'," 19-33.

[40] Here, Sachs follows Rahner's idea of openness to the Spirit which entails a need for "a new imagination, a keener awareness of the Spirit whose 'inspiration is not merely confined to the official pronouncements and directives of the

In response to Sachs, theologian Catherine LaCugna asserts the need to distinguish further the "vast difference between *talking about the Spirit* and *doing theology in the Spirit*."[41] While she agrees with Sachs that a renewed appreciation of the Holy Spirit is key to the renewal of the Church, LaCugna claims that there remains a dangerous tendency "to proceed as if one knows already what a church animated by the Spirit should be like."[42] Thus, she criticizes Sachs' needless distinction of the official Church – with its structures and ministries – as opposed to the entirety of the Church. For LaCugna, such a way of proceeding often further neglects Vatican II's basic insight that "the Christian community as a whole has ultimate responsibility to say who will act on its [Spirit] behalf."[43] Hence, LaCugna claims that doing theology in the Spirit allows all believers – with distinct gifts – to live and work together for the building up of the Church.

> The Spirit never exists as an individual but only as a person in communion…. The Spirit is always the bridge person: … the One who admits us into the life of the incomprehensible, ineffable God; who overcomes boundaries, differences and divisions among all persons, divine or human; *who unites all believers without vitiating differences or excluding diversity;* who brings us into communion with God, with other persons and with all the goods and creatures of the earth. We do not worship the Spirit alone, but always 'together with Father and Son.' To speak otherwise of the Spirit does not highlight what is distinctive about the person and mission of the Spirit, but in the end depersonalizes the Spirit by making the Spirit stand out as a solitary figure, rather than as a unique divine person who would not even exist apart from the relationship to the other persons."[44]

Church, or the holders of official positions' in it." See Sachs, "'Do Not Stifle the Spirit!'," 37.

[41] Catherine Mowry LaCugna, "Response to John R. Sachs," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 51 (February 1, 2013), available at https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ctsa/article/view/4115, 39.

[42] LaCugna, "Response to John R. Sachs," 40.

[43] LaCugna, "Response to John R. Sachs," 40.

[44] Italics are mine. LaCugna, "Response to John R. Sachs," 43.

Following Sachs and LaCugna, one can say that vestiges of a theology in the Spirit are present in the conciliar texts. In particular, Gaillardetz and Catherine Clifford articulate in three interrelated points how Vatican II presents a pneumatological theology of the Church. First, they assert that the conciliar texts reflect a strong recovery of the biblical notion of "*koinonia*."[45] Thus, they observed that "the term *koinonia* expressed the fundamental connection between participation in the life of God and participation in Church."[46] As Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI) also points out:

> The definition of the Spirit as 'communion'… opens up pneumatology in the direction of ecclesiology, or we might say, vice versa, that it opens a connection from ecclesiology back into theo-logy: becoming a Christian means becoming 'communion' and, thus, entering into the mode of existence of the Holy Spirit. That can, however, in turn take place only through the Holy Spirit, who is the power of communication, its element of mediation, of enabling, and who is as such himself a Person.[47]

Since the Spirit has made the Church both a sign and an instrument of communion (*LG* no. 1), this communion possesses a two-fold dimension. Through baptism, all the faithful are not merely a people in communion with one another; rather, they constitute the people of God (*LG* no. 9). As Gaillardetz and Clifford insist, "to be baptized is to be baptized in Christ. [But] baptism [also] establishes our Christian identity by initiating us into the life of the church."[48] Thus, this horizontal-vertical notion of communion is intrinsically linked and expressed in the Council's eucharistic ecclesiology.

> This eucharistic ecclesiology is developed in the writings of St. Augustine, who explains the each time we receive the Eucharist, the reality that we receive through the sacramental signs of bread and wine is at one and the same time the Body and Blood of Christ *and*

[45] See 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 2 Cor. 13:13; 1 Jn. 1:2-3 and Acts 2:42.

[46] Gaillardetz and Clifford, *Keys to the Council,* 60.

[47] Joseph Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion,* trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco, USA: Ignatius Press, 2005), 20.

[48] Gaillardetz and Clifford, *Keys to the Council,* 60.

> the unity of the church…. Augustine carries forward the Pauline line of thought that holds together the eucharistic Body and the ecclesial Body. They are two indivisible aspects of one and the same reality. We become more deeply incorporated into Christ through the eucharistic memorial. For the central meaning of the Eucharist is love, the love of Christ poured out for us in the paschal mystery, the same love in which we share each time we set aside our own self-interest and reach out in concern for others. This is why Augustine contended that the Eucharist was a pedagogy in Christian living where we learn that love of God and love of neighbor are not separate realties. The experience of God's love widens our capacity to love others.[49]

Second, Gaillardetz and Clifford note that Vatican II's ecclesiology in the Spirit is defined by a renewed theology of charisms. As Dominican Yves Congar writes: "One of the most important ways in which the holy Spirit has been restored to the pneumatological ecclesiology of the Council was in the sphere of charisms." [50]

> Since the Protestant Reformation, Christianity had suffered through an ongoing polemic between Protestant and Catholic scholars over whether the early church was founded primarily on stable church offices (the hierarchical structure of the church) or on charisms given to all believers. From the Catholic side, any reference to a decisive role for the Holy Spirit risked sounding too 'Protestant.'"[51]

Vatican II insists that the Holy Spirit – who dwells in the Church and in the hearts of individual believers – bequeaths both hierarchical and charismatic gifts.[52] By asserting that the Spirit is the source of all gifts in the Church, the Council offers a middle ground where the official Church ministers and the lay faithful can work together for the

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[49] Gaillardetz and Clifford, *Keys to the Council*, 67-68.

[50] Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. I, 170.

[51] Gaillardetz and Clifford, *Keys to the Council*, 57-58.

[52] Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*, 21 November 1964, Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, no. 4.

building up of the Church. As Gaillardetz claims, "In *LG* 4 the council contended, however, that both church office and individual charism find a common source in the work of the Holy Spirit."[53] This important achievement in the conciliar teaching received further emphasis in the Council's *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*:

> For the exercise of this apostolate, the Holy Spirit Who sanctifies the people of God through ministry and the sacraments gives the faithful special gifts also, 'allotting them to everyone according as He wills' in order that individuals, administering grace to others just as they have received it, may also be 'good stewards of the manifold grace of God', to build up the whole body in charity. From the acceptance of these charisms, including those which are more elementary, there arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of men and the building up of the Church, in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who 'breathes where He wills'. This should be done by the laity in communion with their brothers [and sisters] in Christ, especially with their pastors who must make a judgment about the true nature and proper use of these gifts not to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold for what is good.[54]

To a greater extent, the Council's theology in the Spirit – as Congar asserts – "describe[s] the impact, in the context of a vision of the Church, of the fact that the Spirit distributes his gifts as he wills and in

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[53] Gaillardetz, *By What Authority: Foundations for Understanding Authority in the Church* (Collegeville: Minnesota, Liturgical Press, 2018), 181.

[54] Vatican II, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (Apostolicam Actuositatem),* 18 November 1965, Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html#, no. 3. In the same token, the Council's *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests* underscores the responsibility of the ordained to nurture the gifts of the faithful. "While trying the spirits to see if they be of God, priests should uncover with a sense of faith, acknowledge with joy and foster with diligence the various humble and exalted charisms of the laity." See *Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests (Presbyterorum Ordinis),* 7 December 1965, Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_presbyterorum-ordinis_en.html, no. 9.

this way builds up the Church."[55] Thus, its stance on charisms highlights "the shared dignity and consequent equality of all the baptized in the church."[56] As the bishops assert: "It is not only through the sacraments and ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God and enriches it with virtues, but… He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank."[57] Accordingly, priority is given neither to charism nor office but to the baptismal dignity that both the lay and the ordained share. For Gaillardertz, this common identity in the Spirit and co-responsibility in the Church can be seen as part of Vatican II's "noncompetitive theology of the Church."[58] Here it merits citing him at length:

> [T]he council's noncompetitive ecclesiology concerns the relationship between the ministry of the ordained and the exercise of charisms received by all believers at baptism. The years immediately before Vatican II had seen a great burst of activity on the part of the laity that often found its form in what came to be known as Catholic Action. In 1927, Pope Pius XI characterized this initiative as 'the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy.' In spite of the real contributions of the many Catholic Action initiatives, we see the same problematic way of imagining the ministry and other forms of ecclesial life. To the clergy alone belonged the prerogative of actively furthering the work of the church. The laity could only do so as a kind of auxiliary to the clergy.
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> The solution came, once again, by way of the council's recovery of the pneumatological conditioning of the church and its appropriation of the biblical understanding of charism…. In [the] council teaching, charism and office are not opposed to one another since both have the Spirit as their origin. The council was effectively acknowledging that the Holy Spirit was constituting, with Christ, both institutional and charismatic

[55] Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol. I, 156.

[56] Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II: Its Fundamental Principles* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2019), 260.

[57] Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium),* no. 12.

[58] He argues that "[although] the term noncompetitive is not found in the council documents… the term aptly describes the way the council overcame the hierocratic church's tendency to pit key ecclesial elements in competitive, oppositional relationships." See Gaillardetz, *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II*, 91.

> elements in the church. In this way it affirmed both that church office could not function properly unless it was informed by the Holy Spirit and that charisms could not survive unless they submitted to an ordering which sought the good of the whole church.[59]

Finally, Gaillardetz and Clifford claim that Vatican II's ecclesiology in the Spirit has revitalized the notion of charisms within the realm of consecrated religious life. Despite the belabored debates during the Council over the nature and purpose of religious life, they maintain that the bishops were conscious of the need for a renewed understanding of professed religious life.[60] The Council acknowledges that "[religious] institutes have their own particular characteristics and work."[61] Hence, Vatican II summons members of various religious communities to explore and rediscover both the visions of their founder/s and the unique charisms of their communities (*Perfectae Caritatis* 2). In doing so, "the council continued to affirm contemplative communities while also celebrating the important contributions of religious engaged in apostolic work."[62] In the words of Joachim Schmeidl, "For the council, 'renewal' [in religious life] is not a uniform process but must reflect

[59] Gaillardetz, *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II*, 102-103.

[60] They point out: "On the one hand, many bishops [during the Council] advocated a primarily monastic vision of professed religious who dedicated their lives to prayerful contemplation in enclosures far removed from worldly concerns. Those who emphasized this perspective saw the apostolic work of noncontemplative or semicontemplative communities as an anomaly at best and a threat to the very integrity of religious life at worst. On the other hand, others had come to accept the dramatic emergence of apostolic religious communities from the sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries as a great gift to the church." See Gaillardetz and Clifford, *Keys to the Council,* 63.

[61] Vatican II, *Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life (Perfectae Caritatis),* 28 October 1965, Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_perfectae-caritatis_en.html, no. 2.

[62] Gaillardetz and Clifford, *Keys to the Council,* 63-64.

'catholic diversity.'"[63] This diversity in religious orders is brought about and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit who calls all faithful to participate in the divine life the Father offers in Christ (*LG* 40).

Both the Council's teachings on communion and charism, as important features of its pneumatological ecclesiology, articulate the Holy Spirit's *involvement* in the life and mission of the Church.[64] Nonetheless, the Council left it to the post-conciliar Church to clarify the concrete meaning and practical implications of such *involvement*. On the one hand, Amado Picardal concludes that "the understanding of communion in Vatican II is indeed broad. It refers to the various levels of communion…. How these levels of communion may be interpreted and concretely realized is one of the questions that have to be answered during the post-conciliar period."[65] On the other hand, Moons claims: "One senses both satisfaction with the fact that the Council spoke about charismas and dissatisfaction with the quality of that speech…. The issue is more fundamental than the number of references to charisma and consistent practical elaboration. The documents give mixed signals on where to 'locate' charismas ecclesiologically, suggesting thereby that the Council's conception of charismas is not very clear."[66]

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[63] Joachim Schmeidl, "Church Governance and Forms of Christian Vocation," *The Oxford Handbook of Vatican II*, eds., Catherine Clifford and Massimo Faggioli (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023), 227.

[64] Moons observes that LG alone, the bishops make one hundred eight-four "Spirit propositions." Thus, he classified such propositions as whether the Spirit is actively, passively, or somewhat involved in the Council's vision of the Church. See *The Holy Spirit, the Church, and Pneumatological Renewal,* 107-125.

[65] Amado Picardal, *A Vision of a Church Renewed: Living the Ecclesiology of Vatican II & PCP II* (Quezon City, Claretian Communications Foundations, Inc., 2022), 36.

[66] Moons, "'The Holy Spirit Leads the Church through Charismas' (*LG* 12): The Conciliar Doctrine on Charismas and Its Significance for the Laity's Active Involvement in the Church," *The Letter and the Spirit: On the Forgotten Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Annemarie Mayer, BETL (Peeters Publishing, 2018), 239-241. Similarly, Jesuit John Haughey states, "there is a considerable uncertainty

In conclusion, Nereo Silanes points out, "The pneumatology of Vatican II constitutes a point of arrival as much as a point of departure."[67] Thus, the achievements and limitations of its pneumatological ecclesiology open up to what Rush calls "reception pneumatology," which he describes as the "dreadful burden and the God-given responsibility of being active, creative and imaginative receivers."[68] Whatever is taught or proposed by the Council, demands both a thoughtful appreciation and a thorough appropriation. Given the need to elucidate further the implications of the Council's pneumatological ecclesiology, the following sections explore two key theological insights that Vatican II retrieved – namely – the *sensus fidelium* and synodality.

The *Sensus Fidelium*

According to the International Theological Commission (ITC), "From the beginning of Christianity, all the faithful played an active role in the development of Christian belief."[69] For Rush, "The origins of the *sensus fidelium* lie in the origins of the church."[70] As such, Wolfgang Beinert describes *sensus fidelium* as "a basic means of understanding the faith and as such exercises a truth-finding and truth-attesting

about exactly where… charismas fit ecclesially. See Haughey, "Charisms: An Ecclesiological Exploration," *Retrieving Charisms for the Twenty-First Century* edited by Doris Donnelly (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 3.

[67] Quoted in Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II,* 79.

[68] Rush, *Still Interpreting Vatican II,* 79.

[69] International Theological Commission, *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church, 2014*, Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20140610_sensus-fidei_en.html, no. 72. For a comprehensive survey of the historical development of *sensus fidelium* prior to Vatican II, see Daniel Finucane, *Sensus Fidelium: The Use of a Concept in the Post-Vatican II Era* (Bethesda, Maryland: International Scholars Publications, 1996), 17-208.

[70] Rush, *The Eyes of Faith: The Sense of the Faithful and the Church's Reception of Revelation* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 1.

function that has as its special characteristic that it takes into account the faithful's experience in the world."[71] Moreover, "the *sensus fidelium* is an ecclesiological reality, because it assures epistemological continuity in the church's reception of revelation throughout history."[72]

Nonetheless, Bradford Hinze and Peter Phan point out that "before the [Vatican II] council it was commonly assumed that it was the bishops in union with the pope that articulated authentic church doctrine and it was expected the faithful would adhere to it."[73] While Daniel Finucane asserts that the notion of agreement of the whole Church as a measure to ascertain the truth of the faith was already invoked in the time of Tertullian, he notes in the later centuries preceding Vatican II, "the hierarchy moved decidedly toward centralization, following a pattern emphasized since the Council of Trent."[74] Assessing the overall ecclesiological climate leading up to the Council, Gaillardetz writes, "For almost four centuries Catholicism had rallied around the authority of church office (e.g., pope and bishops) while classical Protestantism stressed the indispensability of charisms given to each of the faithful."[75]

According to Rush, one decisive moment during the Council that led to the recovery of the notion of *sensus fidelium* was the bishops'

[71] Wolfgang Beinert, "Sensus Fidelium," *Handbook of Catholic Theology* eds., Wolfgang Beinert and Francis Schussler Fiorenza (New York: Crossword, 1995), 656.

[72] Rush, *The Eyes of Faith,* 2. In addition, Gaillardetz and Clifford make it clear that "each believer, by virtue of baptism, has a supernatural instinct or sense of the faith (sensus fidei) that allows each to recognize God's word and to respond to it. The individual exercise of this instinct is not, of course, infallible. Nevertheless, this spiritual instinct makes an important contribution to building up the faith of the church." See Gaillardetz and Clifford, *Keys to the Council,* 42.

[73] Bradford Hinze and Peter Phan "Introduction," *Learning from All the Faithful: A Contemporary Theology of the Sensus Fidei* eds., Bradford Hinze and Peter Phan (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), ii.

[74] Finucane, *Sensus Fidelium,* 4-15, in 7.

[75] Gaillardetz, *By What Authority,* 181.

deliberate rejection of the preparatory document on the Church – *De Ecclesia*.[76] In particular, the bishop of Bruges, Emiel De Smedt, criticized "the draft's three decisive shortcomings: (1) the tone of the document was *triumphalist*; (2) it presupposed a *clericalist* view of the Church; and (3) its account of the Church was excessively *juridicist*."[77] As a result, by departing from this ecclesiology, the bishops veered away from the so-called pyramidal vision of the Church – one which "at the top, the pope, bishops, and priests who preside, teach, sanctify, and govern, possessed of authority and power; at the base, the Christian people, passive receipts who seem to occupy a clearly inferior and secondary place."[78] Moreover, the motion to come up with a revised document paved the way for other significant developments in the Council's understanding of the Church, such as the emphasis on the People of God and the restructuring of the document's sections. In turn, Edmond Dobbin claims that "Vatican II's definition of the church as 'The People of God' has initiated a corrective to this virtual marginalization of the 'faithful.' The Council prefers the term *sensus fidei* (sense of faith) but explicitly includes the faithful in this *sensus*."[79] In conclusion, Rush writes:

> This change in chapter order arguably constitutes one of the most significant shifts in the history of Vatican II. When compared with the dominant self-understanding characterizing the church across the whole of the second millennium, the change constitutes nothing less

[76] Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II,* 260. Gaillardetz also points out that despite the "fresh theological currents surfacing in the first half of the twentieth century… Catholic ecclesiology during this period was marked by the dominance of the manual tradition." As a result, even the preparatory document on the Church, by and large, was shaped by such a theological framework. See Gaillardetz, "The Ecclesiology of Vatican II," 168.

[77] Gaillardetz, "The Ecclesiology of Vatican II," 168.

[78] See Bonaventure Kloppenburg, *The Ecclesiology of Vatican II* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), 311.

[79] Edmund Dobbin, "*Sensus Fidelium* as a Source for Theology," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* (1988), available at https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ctsa/article/view/3492, 113.

> than a reconfiguration of the Catholic imagination regarding the nature of the church…. Consequently, in the intratextual and intertextual interpretation of *Lumen Gentium* and of the documents derived from it, overall hermeneutical priority is to be given to the fundamental revisioning of the church conveyed by this radical structural change.[80]

According to John Burkhard, Vatican II's teaching on the *sensus fidelium* is most extensively presented in *LG* 12.[81] Here, the Council treats the idea of *sensus fidelium* alongside the notion of *sensus fidei* that individual believers received at baptism.[82] In *LG* 12, one reads:

> The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One, cannot err in matters of belief. They manifest this special property by means of the whole people's supernatural discernment in matters of faith when 'from the Bishops down to the last of the lay faithful' they show universal agreement in matters of faith and morals. *That discernment in matters of faith is aroused and sustained by the Spirit of truth.* It is exercised under the guidance of the sacred teaching authority, in faithful and respectful obedience to which the people of God accepts that which is not just the word of men but truly the word of God. Through it, the people of God adheres unwaveringly to the faith given once and for all to the saints, penetrates it more deeply with right thinking, and applies it more fully in its life.[83]

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[80] Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II,* 262.

[81] John Burkhard, "The *Sensus Fidelium*: Old Questions, New Challenges," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 70 (August 19, 2015), available at https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ctsa/article/view/8751, 36.

[82] Andrew Benjamin Salzmann underscores that "while this *sensus fidei* is, therefore, a communal prerogative, this communal dimension of the sensus fidei is rooted in the gift of the Holy Spirit to each member of the Body." See "The *Sensus Fidelium* in Augustine," *Learning from All the Faithful: A Contemporary Theology of the Sensus Fidei* eds. Bradford Hinze and Peter Phan (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), 16.

[83] Italics are mine. Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*, 21 November 1964, Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, no. 12.

Moons notes that there are at least five interrelated points affirmed in this paragraph. Specifically, he claims that in *LG* 12, the Holy Spirit's role is underscored as the One who both anoints the faithful and arouses and sustains their *sensus fidei*.[84] Nevertheless, Moons contends that there are significant ambiguities in the paragraph's treatment of *sensus fidei* in relation to the Holy Spirit.[85] Consequently, the lack of clarity on the place of *sensus fidei* in *LG* has led theologians to pay less attention to its pneumatological character.

> Although most theologians share the conviction that the Holy Spirit is the source of the *sensus fidei*, few have drawn the conclusion that pneumatology should be a foundational aspect of any reflection on the matter. Pneumatology appears only marginally in Burkhard's overview articles, as it does in Daniel Finucane's survey of the use of the concept of *sensus fidei* in the post-conciliar period. To state that '[a] theology of the *sensus fidelium* must begin by attending to the role of the Holy Spirit in divine revelation,' as Ormond Rush did in his 2009 monograph *The Eyes of Faith*, is thus an exception, not the rule."[86]

Moons concludes that a more nuanced understanding of *LG* 12's articulation of the *sensus fidei* in light of the Council's pneumatological ecclesiology should be less interested in discussions on authority and obedience in the Church and more "on discerning what the Spirit is saying to the Church in our time."[87] While it is crucial to underscore that it is the Holy Spirit who guarantees the "infallibility in believing," the Spirit remains to be "the principle of reception" – the One allows every baptized (lay and clergy alike) through their "lived sense of the

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[84] Moons, "'Aroused and Sustained by the Holy Spirit?: A Plea for a Pneumatological Reconsideration of *Sensus Fidei* on the Basis of Lumen Gentium 12,'" *Gregorianum* 99: 2 (2018): 273.

[85] For example, Moons points out that while the *sensus fidei* of all the baptized and charisms given to individuals share some "ecclesiological and pneumatological similarities," treating these two in a single section is hard to justify. See "'Aroused and Sustained by the Holy Spirit?,'" 276.

[86] Moons, "'Aroused and Sustained by the Holy Spirit?,'" 273.

[87] Moons, "'Aroused and Sustained by the Holy Spirit?,'" 291.

faith" to participate in the Church's *active* reception of revelation.[88] As Gaillardetz and Clifford note:

> The sense of faith given to each believer in baptism may be understood in two ways. First, it can refer to a capacity of individual believers to understand God's revelation addressed to them in love. In this regard we might think of the sense of faith as a kind of spiritual instinct or sixth sense. It is in this capacity that allows a believer, almost intuitively, to discern what is of God and what is not. But the sense of faith might also be thought of, not only as a capacity, but also as an actual perception or imaginative grasp of divine revelation.
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> The best analogy may come from our appreciation of art. When we encounter a piece of art like a beautiful sculpture or a moving musical composition, it has an effect on us; we apprehend the art from our own particular perspective. Our own life story, our storehouse of life experiences, inclines us to understand the work of art in a particular way. The work of the artist is completed in our viewing or hearing of the work. We bring something of ourselves to the work of art. The *sensus fidei* functions similarly.[89]

Arguably, *LG* 12's treatment of the *sensus fidelium* as an expression of Vatican II's ecclesiology in the Spirit is reinforced in *Dei Verbum* (*DV)*. Although the Constitution does not explicitly employ the phrases *sensus fidei* and *sensus fidelium*, its profound pneumatological notion of revelation highlights the believers' active reception in faith. As the ITC underscores:

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[88] See Rush, *The Eyes of Faith,* 15. Also, "*Sensus Fidei*: Faith 'Making Sense' of Revelation," *Theological Studies* 62:2 (June 2001): 231. In *LG* 9, the Council teaches, "Moving forward through trial and tribulation, the Church is strengthened by the power of God's grace, which was promised to her by the Lord, so that in the weakness of the flesh she may not waver from perfect fidelity, but remain a bride worthy of her Lord, and moved by the Holy Spirit may never cease to renew herself, until through the Cross she arrives at the light which knows no setting."

[89] Gaillardetz and Clifford, *Keys to the Council,* 43. In the same token, Rush writes, "*Sensus fidei*… is such an imaginative capacity which, within their daily reception of God's self-communication, Christians, in some relatively adequate way (at least adequate in terms of salvation), 'make sense of' their lives and 'make sense of' the God reaching out to them in their lives through Christ in the Spirit." See Rush, *The Eyes of Faith,* 66.

> *Dei Verbum* says that the apostolic Tradition 'makes progress in the Church, with the help of the Holy Spirit'. 'There is growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on.'… Although this passage does not name the *sensus fidei*, the contemplation, study, and experience of believers to which it refers are all clearly associated with the *sensus fidei*…. When this text is read in light of the description of the *sensus fidei* in *Lumen Gentium* 12 as a supernational appreciation of the faith, aroused by the Holy Spirit, by which people guided by their pastors adhere unfailingly to the faith, it is readily seen to express the same idea. When referring to 'the remarkable harmony' that should exist between the bishops and the faithful in the practice and profession of the faith handed on by the apostles, *Dei Verbum* actually uses the very expression found in the definitions of both Marian dogmas, *'singularis fait Antistitum et fidelium conspiratio."*[90]

In a reflection he offered during the last assembly of the Synod of Bishops, Rush likewise noted:

> In *Dei Verbum*…divine revelation is presented as an ongoing encounter in the present, and not just something that happened in the past. The event of God's self-revealing (always in Christ, through the Holy Spirit) and God's offer of relationship, continues to be a living reality here and now. That doesn't mean there can be some new revelation of who God is. But, the same God, in the same Jesus Christ, though the enlightenment and empowerment of the same Holy Spirit, is forever engaging with, and dialoguing with, human beings in the ever-new here and now of history that relentlessly moves humanity into new perceptions, new questions and new insights, in diverse cultures and places, as the world-church courses through time into an unknown future until the eschaton.[91]

As Vatican II shifts from a static to a dynamic and from a proportionalist to a personalist understanding of revelation (*DV* 2), the Council highlights the creative role of the individual's *sensus fidei* and the Church's *sensus fidelium* in giving expression to the Father's

[90] International Theological Commission, *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church*, 46.

[91] Rush, "Synod: Fr Ormond Rush's Theological Reflection on Synthesis Report," 23 October 2023, Vatican News, available at https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2023-10/synod-fr-ormon-rush-theological-input-on-synthesis-report-a.html.

offer of love through Christ in the Spirit.[92] Unequivocally, the Council departs from the so-called "illuminationist theology of revelation," which posits a trickle-down movement – "a framework in which God communicates a divine message through doctrines that are taught by the magisterium and passively received by the Christian faithful."[93] In the words of Ratzinger:

> The Council's intention in this matter was a simple one…. The fathers were merely concerned with overcoming neo-scholastic intellectualism, for which revelation chiefly meant a store of mysterious supernatural teachings, which automatically reduces faith very much to an acceptance of these supernatural insights. As opposed to this, the Council desired to express again the character of revelation as a totality, in which word and event make up one whole, a true dialogue which touches man (sic) in his totality, not only challenging his reason, but, as dialogue, addressing him as a partner, indeed giving him his true nature for the first time.[94]

[92] Ratzinger echoes this personalist or relational approach to revelation in his first encyclical letter as Benedict XVI. He writes, "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. See Benedict XVI, *On Christian Love (Deus Caritas Est)*, 25 December 2005, Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html, no. 1.

[93] Gaillardetz, "Building on Vatican II: Setting the Agenda for the Church of the 21st Century," *Theoforum* 44:1 (2013): 69. One may also recall Pius X's 1906 encyclical letter where he asserted that "the Church is essentially an *unequal society*, that is, a society comprising two categories of persons, the Pastors and the flock, those who occupy a rank in the different degrees of the hierarchy and the multitude of the faithful. So distinct are these categories that with the pastoral body only rests the necessary right and authority for promoting the end of the society and directing all its members towards that end; the one duty of the multitude is to allow themselves to be led, and, like a docile flock, to follow the Pastors. See *Encyclical Letter on the French Law of Separation (Vehementer Nos)*, 11 February 1906, Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_11021906_vehementer-nos.html, no. 8.

[94] Ratzinger, "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Origin and Background," *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, (vol. III) ed., Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 172.

Rush concludes that "Vatican II retrieves this long-held belief regarding the reality of the *sensus fidei* in the faithful, but recontextualizes the teaching by treating it within its discussion of the whole People of God's participation in the 'prophetic office' of the church."[95] Since the Council has applied the so-called *tria munera* schema not only to the ordained but primarily to all Christ's faithful (*LG* no. 10), its treatment of the prophetic office in the Church is directed to all baptized – as individuals and a community. Anointed by the Spirit at baptism, all Christ's faithful bear a responsibility for the Church's faith and teaching.[96] The entire people of God (as *fidelis and fideles*) "share a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Church."[97] In the final analysis, Gaillardetz maintains, "[The] pneumatological ecclesiology of the council further underscored the active participation of all the faithful through the exercise of their supernatural instinct for the faith (*sensus fidei)*."[98]

Synodality

Richard Lennan claims that part of the challenges in the Church's reception of Vatican II is the reality that most Catholics remain "unskilled in discerning and negotiating possibilities for change. More specifically, there was no lived memory of how the dynamics of the

[95] Rush, *The Eyes of Faith,* 4. In his more recent work on Vatican II, Rush writes: "The vision of Vatican II brings into the foreground of its ecclesial self-understanding the individual baptized believer and his or her singular importance in the mission of the church, without downplaying the communal and social dimension of the church." See *The Vision of Vatican II,* 274. See also Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making: Lumen Gentium, Christus Dominus, Orientalium Ecclesiarum, Rediscovering Vatican II* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2006), 45.

[96] Rush, *The Eyes of Faith,* 175-214.

[97] Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*, no. 32.

[98] Gaillardetz, "The Ecclesiology of Vatican II," 173-174.

sensus fidei [sensus fidelium] might operate as the Council had advocated."[99] It is in this context that Rush suspects Pope Francis invites the Church "into a new phase in the reception of Vatican II."[100]

According to Hinze, "Synodality is a central unfinished agenda of Vatican II."[101] Commenting on the recently concluded assembly of the Synod of Bishops (2023), Faggioli argues that it is clear by now "that synodality is *not* an experiment…. It is a moment of *ressourcement* in the tradition of the Church – a reconnection with an important and very real part of its past."[102] In addition, Francis' intuition on synodality in 2015 is notably comparable to John XXIII's intuition when he called for Vatican II in 1959.[103] Not to mention the fact that Vatican II "spoke

[99] Richard Lennan, "*Roman Catholic Ecclesiology,*" The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church eds., Gerard Mannion and Lewis Mudge (New York: Routledge, 2008), 243.

[100] Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II,* 543. Similarly, Faggioli observes that although "Francis has quoted Vatican II less than his predecessors," he "inaugurated a new phase in the reception of Vatican II, partly due to the disappearance of traditionalist issues from his agenda, which affected his handling of liturgical and other matters." See Faggioli, *The Liminal Papacy of Pope Francis: Moving Toward Global Catholicity* (New York: Orbis, 2020), 28. See also Gaillardetz, *An Unfinished Council,* 115-136.

[101] Hinze, "Transforming Priestly Identity and Ministry," *Priestly Ministry and the People of God: Hopes and Horizons* eds., Richard Gaillardetz, Thomas Groome and Richard Lennan (New York: Orbis, 2022), 64.

[102] Faggioli, "The Synodal Journey Continues: But Course Corrections are Needed," *Commonweal*, 08 November 2023, available at https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/synodality-faggioli-francis-vatican-ii-global-catholicism.

[103] Following Jesuit theologian Christoph Theobald, Faggioli notes striking similarities between Vatican II and the ongoing Synod on Synodality. See "The Synod: An Early Assessment of the 2023 Assembly in Rome," Recorded 02 November 2023, Youtube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQ1Gn3QNCY4.

of itself both as a council and a synod," the Council was celebrated in a synodal way.[104] As Moons succinctly narrates:

> Prior to the Council, in a worldwide consultation, bishops, religious orders and congregations, and Catholic universities were asked for themes that the Council should deal with. Unfortunately, their input did not play a major role in the preparation of the first drafts; thus, the first opportunity for synodality was (largely) missed. This changed when some 2,000 bishops gathered in St Peter's for the First Session of the Council. They turned out to have ideas of their own (that were often inspired by their theological advisors). Embracing John XXIII's proposal for a more positive attitude towards modernity and for another, pastoral style, they criticized the approach that characterized the prepared drafts. As a result, almost all drafts were rejected.
>
> What was at stake went beyond theological content or style; it was about participation. The Council fathers wanted to have a say in the conciliar process, the Council's texts and its direction.[105]

In its 2018 document, the ITC notes: "Although synodality is not explicitly found as a term or as a concept in the teaching of Vatican II, it is fair to say that synodality is at the heart of the work of renewal the Council was encouraging."[106] However, Rush points out that synodality – as far as Vatican II's texts are concerned – is largely and primarily understood in the context of papal primacy and episcopal collegiality.

> The Vatican II documents never once use the word 'synodality,' nor the adjective, 'synodal.' The noun 'synod' is found 136 times. In many of those instances, the council is referring to itself as a 'sacred synod,' seeing 'council' and 'synod' as synonyms that are just Greek (s*ynodos*) and Latin (*concilium*) transliterations. So, by implication, 'synodality'

[104] Moons, "A Comprehensive Introduction to Synodality: Reconfiguring Ecclesiology and Ecclesial Practice," *Annals of Theology (The Learned Society of Catholic University of Lublin)* 69: 2 (2022), 75.

[105] Moons, "A Comprehensive Introduction to Synodality," 75-76.

[106] International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, 2018, Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html, no. 6.

> here means simply 'conciliarity': all bishops meeting with the bishop of Rome to govern and teach the church…. In other words, strictly speaking, for Vatican II – when one looks at the explicit statements of the final texts – synodality is much more an element of its intention to balance papal primacy with episcopal collegiality (by calling for more dialogical and collaborative structures between the pope and the episcopal college) than it is a promotion of an 'upward' direction in the teaching, sanctifying and governing aspects of the Catholic Church.[107]

Arguably, establishing the Synod of Bishops in 1965 proved to be an important reception of the Council's teaching synodality vis-à-vis collegiality. In *Apostolica Sollicitudo*, Paul VI expressed the conciliar fathers' desire "to establish even closer ties with the bishops in order to strengthen [the Pope's] union with them 'whom the Holy Spirit has placed… to rule the Church of God."[108] Thus, O'Malley observes, "'The synods since Vatican II have functioned precisely according to the model Pope Paul VI set down, with even their advisory function often seemingly inoperative.'"[109] It is within this context that Pope Francis calls for a more intensive and extensive application of the conciliar notion of synodality. In his 2015 Address, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the synod of bishops, Francis spoke of his vision of "a synod Church." Thus, the Holy Father describes such a vision as "the faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit… to know what [the Spirit] 'says to the Churches.'"[110] Given such remarks,

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[107] Rush, "Inverting the Pyramid: The *Sensus Fidelium* in a Synodal Church," *Theological Studies* 78:2 (June 2017): 304.

[108] Paul VI, *Apostolica Sollicitudo: Establishing the Synod of Bishops for The Universal Church*, 15 September 1965 Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19650915_apostolica-sollicitudo.html.

[109] O'Malley, "Family Gathering: Rediscovering the Role of the Synod of Bishops," *America* 213:2 (July 20, 2015): 21.

[110] Francis, *Address on the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops*, 17 October 2015 Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html.

Rush argues that "Francis is foregrounding conciliar motifs such participation, the Holy Spirit, *sensus fidelium*, and dialogue and bringing the conciliar vision to a new synthesis, one that is faithful to all the principles that the council expounded."[111]

According to Rush, the idea of synodality as a new synthesis of Vatican II can be understood and justified in two ways. First, Francis likens a synodal Church to "an inverted pyramid."[112]Amanda Osheim points out that before Vatican II, the pyramidal vision of the Church "effectively divided the church – not only notionally, but also frequently in practice – into the teaching church (*ecclesia docens*) and the learning church (*ecclesia discens*)."[113] As such, this pyramidal notion of the Church lies at the heart of the debates and discussions during the drafting of *LG*. In the end, by treating theme of the people of God before hierarchy, *LG* articulates "a reconfiguration of the Catholic imagination regarding the nature of the church."[114] In the words of O'Malley, "The symbolism of the change was potent: the first reality of the church is horizontal and consists of all the baptized, without distinction of rank. Only then comes the vertical reality, hierarchy."[115] Consequently, this radical development also paved the way for the bishops "to attribute to all the *fideles* participation in the so-called three offices of Christ, something formerly attributed to the hierarchy alone."[116] In the final analysis, Osheim notes that Francis' analogy of an inverted pyramid redefines authority in the Church as being dependent on reception – its ability to listen to the Spirit and learn from all its members. As Francis writes in *Evangelii Gaudium* (*EG)*:

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[111] Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II,* 543-544.

[112] Francis, *Address on the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops*.

[113] Amanda Osheim, "Stepping toward a Synodal Church," *Theological Studies* 80:2 (June 2019): 371.

[114] Rush, "Inverting the Pyramid," 307.

[115] O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II,* 178.

[116] Rush, "Inverting the Pyramid," 309.

> In all the baptized, from first to last, the sanctifying power of the Spirit is at work, impelling us to evangelization. The people of God is holy thanks to this anointing, which makes it *infallible in credendo*. This means that it does not err in faith, even though it may not find words to explain that faith. The Spirit guides it in truth and leads it to salvation. As part of his mysterious love for humanity, God furnishes the totality of the faithful with an instinct of faith – *sensus fidei* – which helps them to discern what is truly of God. The presence of the Spirit gives Christians a certain connaturality with divine realities, and a wisdom wisdom which enables them to grasp those realities intuitively, even when they lack the wherewithal to give them precise expression.[117]

Second, synodality – as Francis' reception of Vatican II's ecclesiology – puts forward key dimensions of the Council's *communio* ecclesiology. As Rush argues:

> Vatican II speaks of the church *ad intra* as a communion in basically three ways: the hierarchical *communio* within the college of bishops (*communio hierarchica*); the c*ommunio* between local churches constituting the catholic church (*communio ecclesiarum*; and the *communio* among all the faithful (*communio fidelium*).
>
> One of the great achievements of Vatican II is its teaching on episcopal collegiality. The doctrine attempts to complete the unfinished work of Vatican I, with its teaching on the jurisdictional 'primacy' of the pope.

[117] Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium*, 24 November 2013, Vatican Archive, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html, no. 119. In his address on the Opening of the Synod on Synodality, Francis expressed: "May this Synod be a true season of the Spirit! For we need the Spirit, the ever-new breath of God, who sets us free from every form of self-absorption, revives what is moribund, loosens shackles and spreads joy. The Holy Spirit guides us where God wants us to be, not where our own ideas and personal tastes would lead us. Father Congar once said: 'There is no need to create *another Church*, but to create *a different Church* (True and False Reform in the Church). For a 'different Church', a Church open to the newness that God wants to suggest, let us with greater fervour and frequency invoke the Holy Spirit and humbly listen to him, journeying together as he, the source of communion and mission, desires: with docility and courage." See *Address on the Beginning of the Synodal Journey*, 09 October 2021, Holy See Press Office., (accessed 05 March 2024).

> Vatican II goes on to affirm that bishops, in succession with the 'college' of the apostles, likewise constitute a college. This college relates in a *communio hierarchica* with and under the bishop of Rome. This new notion of *communio hierarchica* enabled the council to avoid to some extent the traditional, juridical distinction between *ordo* and i*urisdictio* in the original *De Ecclesia*, and to reformulate it in the language of *communio*.[118]

Francis' notion of synodality draws from and develops Vatican II's *communio* ecclesiology. On the one hand, without diminishing the Council's teaching on the pope as "the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of bishops and of the whole company of the faith"[119] (*sub Petro*), he has made strides in accentuating that he is the pope primarily because he is the bishop of the local Church of Rome (*cum Petro*). As journalist Cindy Wooden observes: "From the moment he was introduced to the world after his election, Pope Francis has emphasized his identity as 'the bishop of Rome.'"[120] Thus, Francis strongly pointed out in *EG*: "It is not advisable for the Pope to take the place of local Bishops in the discernment of every issue which arises in their territory. In this sense, I am conscious of the need to promote a sound 'decentralization.'"[121] On the other hand, Francis' view of synodality rearticulates the Council's notion of *communio* as he "is, at least implicitly, retrieving Vatican II's ultimate ordering of the church as a *communio fidelium*, a *communio ecclesiarum*, and finally a *communio hierarchica*."[122] As the ITC also maintains:

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[118] Rush, "Inverting the Pyramid," 313.

[119] Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium),* no. 23.

[120] Cindy Wooden, "Did Pope Francis Really Drop the 'Vicar of Christ' Title?," *Catholic Herald*, April 3, 2020, available at https://catholicherald.co.uk/did-pope-francis-really-drop-the-vicar-of-christ-title/.

[121] Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium*, no.16. See also no. 32. Commenting on these paragraphs, Gaillardetz writes, "If, in fact, Pope Francis is serious about papal decentralization, then this turn to ecclesial subsidiarity may represent this most profound effort at *ressourcement*." See Gaillardetz, *An Unfinished Council,* 128.

[122] Rush, "Inverting the Pyramid," 320.

> Synodality as an essential dimension of the Church is expressed on the level of the universal Church in the dynamic circularity of the *consensus fidelium*, episcopal collegiality and the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. On this basis, the Church is asked from time to time to respond – in fidelity to the *depositum fidei* and in creative openness to the voice of the Spirit – to particular circumstances and challenges; she is called to set in motion a process of listening to all the subjects who together form the People of God in order to agree in discerning the truth and on the missionary path to take.[123]

Francis' hope for a synodal Church is fundamentally rooted in Vatican II's renewed vision of the Church. Specifically, the Council's ecclesiology in the Spirit laid the groundwork for what Rafael Luciani calls "the *synodalization* of the whole Church."[124] On the one hand, the emphasis of the synodal process on *LG* 12 underscores the reality that the Spirit anoints every baptized to share in the prophetic role of the whole People of God. This renders the *sensus fidelium* – as Moons describes it – "a source of truth and revelation [as] it is one of the ways in which the Spirit speaks to the Church nowadays."[125] On the other hand, synodality, as a reception of the *communio* ecclesiology, makes it more apparent – as Gaillardetz notes – that "it is the Holy Spirit that acts as the divine agent of that communion (see *LG* 13, 25, 49; UR 2; AG 19)."[126]

Some Concluding Thoughts

By all means, the reception of Vatican II's vision of a renewed Church remains to be an ongoing task. Thus, having a potent interpretive key to flesh out what such a vision might mean for the Church today is both urgent and necessary. In this paper, I aimed to

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[123] International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, no. 94.

[124] Rafael Luciani, *Synodality: A New Way of Proceeding in the Church* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2022), 31.

[125] Moons, "A Comprehensive Introduction to Synodality," 80-81.

[126] Gaillardetz, *An Unfinished Council,* 94.

show how Vatican II's pneumatological ecclesiology – while, to an extent, inchoate and incomplete – signifies a significant shift both in the Church's self-understanding itself and of the Spirit present and at work in it. Consequently, any careful understanding of and genuine appeal to the *sensus fidelium* must grounded in the Council's acknowledgment of Spirit's gift of a supernatural instinct to all baptized (*sensus fidei*). Beyond the question of authority in the Church, a pneumatological reading of Vatican II's treatment of the former summons the entire people of God to ecclesial discernment – continuously and *progressively* receiving God's revelation in light of the signs of the times. Lastly, Francis' invitation to synodality – with its possibilities and limitations – is yet another decisive attempt to implement Vatican II's ecclesiology in the Spirit. Recognizing the Spirit as the protagonist of the synodal process, the Church strives to be more open to the richness and freshness that the Spirit brings.

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ARE THE CHURCH FATHERS RELEVANT IN A 21ST CENTURY INCULTURATED AND CONTEXTUALIZED ASIAN THEOLOGY?

Emmanuel C. Marfori

Abstract. Is Patristics still relevant in the 21st century? The paper states some factors for the decline of the popularity of Patristics in the 19th – 20th century, and while the Patristics ressourcement happened before Vatican II, but after Vatican II, Patristics studies dwindled. Faith and culture as ingredients of inculturation then and now, in the Church Fathers' era and the present era can become complementary in doing theology in Asia, as the importance of Patristics as examples of Tradition is recalled. How can Patristics still be relevant? An example is given from Tertullian's *Aduersus Marcionem,* where he argues against Marcion by citing Jesus' Transfiguration. Two terms singled out from the citations, *contubernium* (friendship) and *repromissio* (promise fulfillment), are rendered as *pagkakaibigan* and *katuparan ng pangako*, respectively, in an attempt to cross over to Asian theology in Tagalog. Having changed the circumstances, from the original context of *contubernium* and *repromissio* in the Biblical event itself, where both terms crossed over from the Old to the New Testament, Tertulian uses both terms to argue mainly in favor of unity of Scripture against Marcion's Scriptural ditheism. Another cross over is done from Tertullian's polemical context to a non-polemical context, that of *pagkakaibigan*

(*contubernium*) and *katuparan ng pangako* (*repromissio*), where both terms are considered as two faces of love (*pag-ibig*). In this doing theology, Tertullian's sample lines, far from being out of place, act as a bridge in order to understand love in its facets of friendship and fulfillment of promises, and can even provide as a deepening of an understanding of the Transfiguration event as a historical event in Jesus' life which also teaches us the value of friendship and fulfilling promises. The paper hopefully invites the reader to discover and engage with the Church Fathers here and now.

Keywords. Patristics; Asian theology; Transfiguration; *contubernium; repromissio; ressourcement;* Tertullian; Marcion; friendship; promise; *pagkakaibigan; pangako*

Introduction

In this 21st century, where here at the Loyola School of Theology, for example, doing theology in context is a constant clarion call, *can Patristics again be relevant? And if so, how?* The present paper aims to answer both questions as it proposes an initial articulation of the possible collaboration between two historical epochs in Theology, one ancient, the other, contemporary; one from mostly west Asia (or Near East, depending on whose vantage point) and Europe, the other, from southeast Asia; one, quite not that popular nowadays, the other, taken up by everybody. Two but seemingly with the same basic underlying issues before them, *mutatis mutandis* regarding the specific issues for each era: about man, about the cosmos, and about God. Next, we try to describe the elements which make up the title, in order to enunciate the possibility of a twenty-first century Patristic repurposing.

Church Fathers

Who are the Church Fathers? Needless to say, the Church Fathers (from the second to the eighth centuries) are the persons who in the history of the Church and of theology have tried to verbalize and write on the Christian faith. Are the Church Fathers studied up to

now? On the one hand, in the curricula of most Catholic seminaries, an introduction to them and their writings (mostly the titles of their writings) exists, and is usually called *Patrology*. On the other hand, the Pontifical Patristic Institute *Agustinianum* in Rome offers postgraduate courses on the Licentiate and Doctoral degrees, on *Patristics,* which is a deeper study of the teachings of one or more Church Fathers, either author-centered or topic-centered. Few centers around the world, like the Pontifical Faculty of Theology at St. Augustine's Seminary, in Toronto, Canada, to date, offer specialized, post-graduate courses on Patristics.

Even though one of the theological movements which were instrumental in bringing about the fresh breeze which was to be Vatican II was the *ressourcement*, the going back to the sources, a theological *hugot* we may nowadays say with the Pinoy slang, there has been a general downhill drive in studying Patristics worldwide. What may have caused a dwindling of the number of those who are willing to study and learn Patristics, beyond the basic seminary course on Patrology? We can name a few, together with possible solutions.

First, a *negative, almost unspoken bias* against the Church Fathers, often labelled as "antiquated," "pre-Vatican II, " "too remote." This would sound ironic, since, as we have mentioned before, one of the movements before Vatican II was a ressourcement, to the sources of Theology, one of which was Tradition, a part of which was the legacy of the Church Fathers. The Church Fathers are often connected to Church Tradition. (Yves Congar, OP has written magnificently on "Tradition nnd Traditions," but we digress.) Tradition itself, in some sectors of the ecclesiastical academe is sometimes frowned upon, and is often classified mistakenly as Traditionalism or even radical Traditionalism. There is a famous Tagalog saying, "*'Pag gusto, maraming paraan; 'pag ayaw, maraming dahilan"* (If one wants, tactics abound; if one doesn't, excuses abound.) How does one address this bias? It seems that it is ultimately a question of human will and openness to venture into uncharted territory, "*baka naman puwede"* (it just might work).

Second, a *lack of linguistic preparation* for the teaching and study of the Fathers. Admittedly, a highly scarce number of people in the Church who study Greek and Latin (beyond the Greek alphabet and some Latin maxims!), except for those studying Scripture (be it Scriptures *per se* or Biblical Theology), has greatly contributed to the very, very few people studying Patristics. Neither is Patristic Latin like the Neo-Vulgate Bible, nor Patristic Greek like the Koiné Greek of the New Testament. Fewer still are those who know Syriac, for example, to read the Syriac Fathers in the original. So, what do we do now? One can perhaps start with the translations into the modern languages of some Patristic works, then, if there is time (although this may better be described as a long-term learning, or re-learning across generations), to learn Greek and Latin to be able to read the Church Fathers. On the other hand, classical Greek and Latin (referring especially, in this context, to non-Christian writings in Greek and Latin) seems to be starting to be of interest to more and more people, at least in the USA and in some countries in Europe. There are even onsite and online immersive courses both in classical Greek and classical Latin, and for the online courses and videos, there are plenty of resources in the Internet.

Third, an *ignorance of the importance and relevance* of the Church Fathers even in the third millennium. This may be partly due to the bias or bad publicity described above. And partly, too, because of the lack of exposure to Patristic texts, not only in the original, but even in any of the extant translations. What ought one to do then? After one's personal motivation is identified and clarified, one can search the Internet. In the World Wide Web, there are many educational videos on the Church Fathers in the English language, and as was mentioned above, one can start from there. Something very much connected to this is a seeming ignorance nowadays among the general reading populace of Christians about what is called *Patristic exegesis*, a very recent branch of Patristics which focuses on what the Church Fathers, or in a broader sense, the early ecclesiastical writers, have to say about Scriptural passages. Of course, the historico-critical method of Scriptural exegesis was of general use starting from the twentieth century, and it is certainly a very useful method. But does this mean, to use a verb famous nowadays, that using the historico-critical method

means "cancelling" the Patristic exegesis, just because it has another methodology, and moreover, just because it is chronologically way earlier than the historico-critical method?

Fourth, an *lack of exposure to the sources and translations* thereof of the extant works of the Church Fathers, as have been mentioned above. However, there are more resources (in this context, in English) readily available now not only in the World Wide Web, but also in specialized programs (and apps!). It is never too late to start reading or watching or listening and getting to know the Church Fathers, their contexts, personalities and the context of their writings. There are many translations of the writings of the Church Fathers, mostly in European languages. In English, a series of Patristic Scriptural commentaries is published under the heading "Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture" edited by Thomas C. Oden (InterVarsity Press) which is, in fact, a wonderful ecumenical project.

Fifth, a *lack of opportunity* to explore the engaging connectivity between the culture during the time of the Church Fathers and the twenty-first century culture, inculturation and theology here in Asia. We will get back to this after we have described inculturation and theologizing in Asia today.

Culture, Faith, Inculturation

By inculturation, we usually understand a symbiosis of Christian faith and culture. When did inculturation begin? Of course, the present-day usage of the *term* "inculturation" began only in the twentieth century. However, this does not mean that inculturation only began in the twentieth century.

Why so? It is because culture is part of the human reality. There is culture because there is man. We can even say that man is a cultural being. But before we go on along this line, let us make a short digression by clarifying what we mean by culture.

Culture

When we say "culture," we do not have in mind primarily, say, "cultural dances, " like the *Tinikling* during the *Buwan ng Wika*. As is known, *cultura* means, cultivation, and its *scope* is everything man can do with the use of his awareness, knowledge and freedom. What are some *types* of culture? Culture is not only relatable to the arts (music, painting, sculpture, etc.) nor only to trade and craft (agriculture, aquaculture, pisciculture, etc.) but also to man's habitual acts (culture of studying, sports and recreation culture, political culture) and most importantly, man's habitual moral acts (culture of life, culture of death; here, we can perhaps offer "culture" as a synonym in the phrase "social structures of sin" to render it as "social cultures of sin"). We haven't included here, for brevity, what are called *subcultures*, which are more particular types of cultures. Suffice it to give a few examples: subculture/s in a Seminary, or among parish organizations, or within a religious Order.

Culture can also be related to a certain *country or continent*, and that is why we speak of Asian culture, European culture, Filipino culture, German culture, Mexican culture, Vietnamese culture, etc. Each culture can further be divided into subcultures, like for Filipino culture: Visayan subculture, Tagalog subculture, Ilocano subculture, etc. Looking into the Catholic Church, we can also see *intra-ecclesial* cultures and subcultures: for example, culture among parish choirs, or among parish organizations. So, in this sense, culture is almost synonymous with *group*. And this may give a *static* implication. In order to balance the situation, thereby giving it a *dynamic* dimension, and to mention another characteristic of a culture also based on its etymology, culture is *cultivation, repetition, development* of something, be it *material* or *immaterial or spiritual*.

To further characterize culture, and to underline something we have earlier affirmed, culture is *human*. It's interesting to note, perhaps, that both human and culture are related to the soil.

Christian Faith

By "Christian faith," we mean the entire corpus of Christian belief as it is revealed by God, and is rooted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and transmitted through the centuries in the reflection on the faith which is Theology. Faith as an ingredient *sine qua non* in doing theology – with the help of God's grace, indeed – is also an ingredient *sine qua non* for the process of inculturation. And in relation to Christian faith, we can say that a person who does inculturation, if he or she is a Christian, it is basic for him or her to have faith. By having faith, we understand here what is classically called "supernatural faith," understood as *fides quae* (that is, the articles of faith we profess in the Christian Creeds) as well as the *fides qua* (our personal adherence to God, faith as a personal response to God's Self-Revelation). This is not the place to go over one by one all the articles of the Christian faith. However, what is important here is for the Christian to know and to love his or her Christian faith, before, during and after the process of inculturation. In the human experience of doing inculturation, whether it be on a dimension of discovery, of discernment, or of dialogue, of the other person's culture or of another group's or society's culture/s, indeed, a Christian might think, on the one hand, that a "neutral" attitude towards the faith is instrumental in order for the inculturation to be "objective," that is, free from any bias or pre-conceived idea. However, on the other hand, being "neutral" in the sense of "pretending not to be a Christian" may not help in the culturation. Nevertheless, this doesn't mean "not listening" to the other, as if one were to virtually cover one's mind and ears to other thoughts and feelings. Rather, I see no reason for a Christian to be aware of one's identity as a Christian, and at the same time, to be listening to the other, to the thou. Needless to say, inculturation does not mean imposing one's idea or beliefs to the other, even while being aware that in the past, there had been many instances of "forced Baptism," "forced indoctrination," and "proselytism" in the pejorative sense. But, this must not, however, mean going to the other extreme, that of nonchalance regarding one's faith. Again, balance is the key. There is no reason for one's Christian awareness of one's identity, to be incompatible with one's full listening to the other.

Inculturation

We had said that while the term inculturation had started to be in use only in the twentieth century, inculturation, *de facto*, had been happening. God has been revealing His plan in actions nad in words (*gestis verbisque*, cf *Dei Verbum*, 2), not in an epistemological vacuum devoid of any concreteness and reality, but in *history*, that is, in a certain time and in a certain place, and therefore, in a certain *culture*.

We can also affirm that man is not only a historical being, but a cultural being. Culture and history mutually refer to one another, in the sense that what happens in a where and in a when (history) may be cultivated, encouraged, cherished, celebrated (culture).

We can consider inculturation as a kind of "*hugot*" between the Christian faith and culture, a symbiosis, "life with."

Inculturation implies a *mutual expression* between (Christian) faith and culture, be it through verbalization, or through visuals, for example. And this mutual expression calls for a *mutual listening* between faith and culture. But listening not merely to know what and how to reply, but listening in order to understand not only what is said, but also to grasp what remains unsaid, and ultimately, to behold the other with respect due to any person.

We can mention two general *types of settings or situations of inculturation*. A *pastoral setting of inculturation*, with "pastoral" taken in its original, literal meaning of relating culture to agriculture, shepherding, and a metaphorical meaning, as in "pastoral theology," "pastoral application or situation," covers preaching, learning an indigenous or foreign language, getting to know one's culture and another culture.

Another setting is an *academic setting of inculturation*, where one seeks to express (verbally or non-verbally) the symbiosis between the Christian faith and a certain kind of culture. This academic setting is mainly *theological*, but not exclusively so, since it is most advantageous to have an *inter-disciplinary setting* (*and approach*), including philosophy (which, in turn, includes a philosophy or philosophies of culture),

sociology, history (especially of culture and religion, aside from the history of countries, continents, and Church History). When we speak of a *theological setting of inculturation*, we can perhaps make use of the outlines of the so-called "branches" of theology to map out the connections: Scripture, dogmatics, sacramentology, morals and spiritual theology, with the classical tripartite theological sources as an important support in each of the branches (Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium), and of course, the important tools in doing theology – languages (not only the "languages" in the sense of either ancient and modern languages, but also in the sense of the use of "language" as an important medium for doing theology), history (in the quadri-epochal aspects: Patristic, Medieval, Modern, and Contemporary, with the addition of national or continental ecclesiastical histories, like Philippine Catholic Church History, etc.; and, last but not the least, the so-called current events, which are an important factor in discerning the application of the Church's social doctrine), sacred arts, human psychology, anthropology and experience. An *inter-disciplinary setting of inculturation* is usually to connect further the already intra-theological (academic) inter-disiciplinary setting to an *extra-theological plural* (not to be confused with pluralist/ic) *setting* of different realities and worldviews: for example, sciences (natural and human), values, realities in mission and in sectors of the society (for example, persons in the fringes, migration, poverty, justice, with a long etcetera of social, political, moral and economic issues), other religions, other Christian denominations, non-theistic and agnostic expressions, post-Christian society.

What are some *methods* of inculturation? The following methods are meant to be considered simultaneously while doing inculturation. A primary method useful in doing inculturation is *mutuality*. Christian faith and culture both may and ought to listen to one another, since both are important in inculturation. There is a movement, borrowing from Martin Buber's lexicon, from the I to the thou and from the thou to the I, as well as from the I to the it, and from the it to the I; and finally, the movement from the I to the Thou, and the Thou to the I. Last, but not the last, from the I to the we (we may perhaps add, in both nuances: inclusive, *tayo*, and exclusive, *kami*). A second method

connected with the first is *dialogue*. Dialogue is important, because it presents two important factors to take into account in the entire process of inculturation: *respect and openness*. A third method is to see and contextualize the first two methods in *synodality*, the *synodal method*. A fourth very important method for doing inculturation is made up of *five sub-methods*: *awareness, acceptance, purification, development, giving* (AAPDG). A fifth method is to consider the difference between *ideas and reality*, "expectation versus reality", as people would say nowadays. A sixth method is to always take into consideration *balance*, which is not to be understood as mediocrity, but the highest point between two extremes.

Asian Christian Theology Today

There are two main descriptions of theology in that subtitle: 1) theology in Asia, and 2) (theology in Asia) today. When we say "theology in Asia," it is a broad term encompassing both space (geographical location, whether literally or topically) and time (from Christian antiquity to now, the third millennium). Here is not the place to enumerate the Christian theologies in Asia (south Asia, southeast and east Asia, and also countries in the Middle East and the Near East) that have existed and exist up to now. Maybe an example will suffice, not because it is 100% identical to other cultures, but that it is a phenomenon of a part of doing mission, a part of which is to introduce and to explain the Christian faith, which in turn is what doing theology is, or expressing the faith in a certain part of Asia: the development of the first *Vocabvlario de lengva tagala* in Castillian Spanish and Tagalog, by Fray Pedro de San Buenaventura, O.F.M., published in Pila, Laguna, in 1613, but had been a work in progress from the 1590s. It was an exercise of comparative lexicography, now within a new branch of linguistics called missionary linguistics. Here, one can discover many things about the late 16th c. (or even earlier) of southern Tagalog culture in a *bayan* or town, from where the friars learned first the indigenous language, and through that, they tried to communicate and meet the people, and tried to make themselves understood, and also tried to communicate to them the Christian faith. An exercise in inculturation in a part of the Philippines. Centuries before the phrase

"Filipino theology" was even coined. Admittedly, it was not that there were theological treatises in Tagalog already at that time, but the Tagalog lexicon was and is a rich, fertile ground for sowing the seeds of the faith, the seeds of the Word (*logoi spermatikoi*). To this miniscule but important example we can add the many other theologies about Asia and in Asia, both by Asians and non-Asians, in a myriad of languages, also both Asian and non-Asian.

Can Patristics Still Be Relevant Nowadays? A Case in Point

This is an attempt to answer the second question formulated at the start of this paper: If Patristics can still be relevant in the 21st century, how? Maybe a starting point may be an event in Jesus' life as recorded in the Gospels. Like the Transfiguration.

Jesus' Transfiguration, early on in the Latin-speaking part of the early Church, has had a very important role in answering to one particularly tough yet interesting heterodox teaching prevalent at that time, towards the end of the second century *anno Domini*: dualism, and precisely, in one of dualism's forms: Gnosticism, that is, a teaching which preaches salvation not through practicing virtues but by knowing the secret passwords of salvation. Who would at once deny that salvation is a hot topic, then and now? Who would not want to be saved? The thing is that, given that the yearning for salvation is legitimate, the next question would be: how would one be saved? What must one know, and believe?

Here is where Marcion's teaching is crucial. One of the teachings Marcion taught which, on the one hand, was not mainstream, orthodox Christian teaching, but on the other hand, was not quite easy to pinpoint where the falsehood was, since it seemed to be based on Scripture, at first. Marcion's main contention as far as God is concerned was that in Scripture, the God depicted in the Old Testament was a cruel God, unlike the God depicted in the New Testament, who for him was good. On the one hand, Marcion generally mentioned the instances in Scripture when God's actions were depicted in what would later

be called anthropomorphic terms, like being angry at humankind, so much so that He inflicted punishments on human persons who were erring. And on the other hand, Marcion praised the merciful God in the New Testament, who seemed not to do anymore the acts done by the God in the Old Testament. And so, it appeared that there were two gods! Dualism.

The person who confronted Marcion's teachings was the North African Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (Tertullian, for short) who, in his longest work, *Aduersus Marcionem* (Marc.), mentioned the Transfiguration event in order to refute the teachings of Marcion. To Marcion's attempts to divide or separate Scripture, Tertullian replies, using the Transfiguration event as the context, that there is unity in Scripture, shown by the familiarity among Christ and Moses and Elijah.[1] Not only this, but Tertullian, using the same unity argument, also manages to introduce unicity of God, when Tertullian asks what is more fitting to the Creator's Christ, than to manifest himself to those who preached about Him (i.e. Moses and Elijah)?[2] The very phrase "Creator's Christ" already implicitly unites the Old Testament (Creator) with the New Testament (Christ), thereby contrasting with Marcion's belief that the Creator had nothing to do with the Christ.

Regarding Moses' and Elijah's presence with the Christ, Tertullian says that Peter recognizes a legitimate intimacy (*contubernium*) among Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Tertullian employs a special word for intimacy, *contubernium,* a possibly more concrete description of the *familiaritas* among the Christ, Moses and Elijah mentioned above. It means that they did not just happen to be there, but they have a very close and unique relationship, as unique as the word chosen to depict the said friendship. Again, here, if the three persons are close friends, it follows again that the Old Testament and the New Testament must not be

[1] Cf. Tertullian, *Marc IV* 22,2, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (CCSL) 1, Brepols, 1954, 600.

[2] "*[Q]uid tam Christi Creatoris quam secum ostendere praedicatores suos?*" (Tertullian, *Marc IV* 22,3, 1, *op. cit.*, 601).

seen as conflicting (as Marcion would understand it), but rather as complementary to each other.

Moving a scene further, regarding the Voice which spoke about His Son, Tertullian adds after "this is my Son" the words "whom I have promised anew" (*quem repromisi*).[3] The phrase "whom I have promised anew" was placed by Tertullian in the Father's mouth, so to speak, in order to make a Biblical "throwback," thereby mentioning again a link between the Old Testament (have promised) and the New Testament (anew).

Before we mention what the promising again (*repromissio*) is about, we can already mention here, regarding the Christ, Moses and Elijah being together, that Tertullian's point is that the Christ does not make the Old Testament irrelevant, much less antagonistic to the New Testament. Rather, there is a transfer (*decessio*) and succession (*successio*) from the Old Testament (the Law and the Prophets, represented by Moses and Elijah) to the New (represented by the Christ). Again, the hermeneutics of continuity (to paraphrase Joseph Ratzinger) instead of Marcion's hermeneutics of discontinuity. Moreover, this transfer and succession is not something out of the blue, since in Tertullian's mind, the Creator God of the Old Testament is the same Father of the Christ mentioned in the New Testament.

Now, about the *repromissio* implied in the words "whom I have promised anew." It is the Voice of the Father speaking. This audiophany makes a throwback to the time when Moses was still alive on earth, he had requested the Lord to show him His glory (cf Ex 33:18), which he was denied, lest he die. Now, that unfulfilled wish would come true in Christ's Transfiguration. This also states that if that wish was granted by the Lord by making Moses present with Elijah beside the Christ, then it means that the Christ and the Lord of the Old Testament are one and the same. Later on, Christian theology would say that the Father and the Son are consubstantial (*homoousios*), one essence (*mia ousia*) divine.

[3] Tertullian, *Marc IV* 22,9, *op. cit.*, 602.

The above is just a sample of what aspects of the Transfiguration narrative were helpful to Tertullian in his attempt to answer some aspects of Marcion's teaching. I think it is remarkable that even though we find ourselves in the very first babbling of the early Church grappling for terms and loving the Bible very much, despite not yet having chapter and verse numbers in the Scripture back then, and even though Tertullian had his own personal struggles, which led him to Montanism, an event such as the Transfiguration of Jesus would be able to be a firm introduction to faith seeking understanding (as what St. Anselm would much later formulate), faith seeking words, in the face of a formidable opponent such as dualism and Gnosticism. Early on, a New Testament pericope was used in order to refute heterodox teachings.

Two terms that had come to light in Tertullian's refutation of Marcion's Scriptural ditheism are *contubernium* and *repromissio*, the former as friendship or a special type of camaradierie originally in the military context but re-contextualized or inculturated by Tertullian into the context of Jesus, Moses and Elijah; the latter as a term to designate two separate but related events in Moses' life – his unfulfilled wish of seeing the Lord, a wish fulfilled in his apparition with Jesus Christ in His Transfiguration.

Connecting the above with an Asian culture, Filipino culture to be exact, for the typical Tagalog-speaking Filipino, Jesus' friendship and reecounter with His friend Moses both are, aside from the primary and practical reason of Tertullian, two sub-arguments which are under the argument of Jesus' Transfiguration, two ideas which underlie a part of the Transfiguration narrative which may pull the heartstrings of a Filipino: love of God as befriending (*contubernium*) His witnesses and the love of God as giving a person a second chance (*repromissio*) at meeting Him. And so, Jesus' Transfiguration may transmit ideas like friendship and promise fulfillment, within the general context of Jesus' Transfiguration, which can thereby be described as an event about God's love shown in friendship and faithfulness, as well a Jesus-centered event. Do these two terms in Latin ring a bell to Tagalog-speaking Filipinos? Maybe not the Latin, but possible Tagalog

renderings like *pagkakaibigan* (friendship) and *katuparan ng pangako* (fulfillment of a promise, in the sense of the fulfillment of the *palabra de honor,* so ingrained in the Filipino culture). Both are expressions of love: friendship and fulfillment of a promise. *Pagkakaibigan* can even be characterized as a special kind of *pakikipagkapwa*, especially because friends have something in common, something shared together, *may pinagsamahan.* We can say that a reason why Moses and Elijah were with Jesus was that they were united especially in view of God's plan in Jesus' life, a preview to the imminent *exodus* to His Passion. As for the *repromissio*, *pangako* (promise) is a keyword in the lexicon of love for Filipinos. To fulfill a promise indicates a word of honor, *palabra de honor*, observing honor, which is as a hallmark of love as is *pagkakaibigan.* We can even link both words by saying that a special kind of social relationship (*pakikipagkapwa*) is friendship (*pakikipagkaibigan*), related textually to Jesus, Elijah and Moses, and a hallmark of this friendship, and therefore of love, is the fulfillment of the promise (*katuparan ng pangako*), originally said of the Father's fulfillment of Moses' ancient request, by subsequently seeing Him in the Son. Abstracting a bit both *contubernium* and *repromissio* from the original Synoptic contexts, we can say that both are means to show love, both are dimensions of love: social and fulfilling, presentializing, if we may say so. Love, *pag-ibig*, is also a key entry in the Filipino love lexicon. By first mentioning that there may be possible renderings of terms in Patristic writings like *contubernium* and *repromissio* into Tagalog terms like *pagkakaibigan* and *katuparan ng pangako*, and secondly, by linking the latter pair with other key terms in Filipino culture like *pag-ibig* and *kapwa*, and thirdly, by seeing the difference of contexts of the words in question in that of the author (polemical, in Tertulian's situation, and not necessarily political from the viewpoint of the Filipino culture I have mentioned above), one can then abstract the terms and try applying them to other contexts, and thereby making it possible to connect them to the Christian faith seeking understanding, by saying that God, in Jesus' Transfiguration, shows us the importance of friendship and fulfillment of a promise, but also shows us that Jesus Christ values friendship and fulfilling a promise, not only in the greater plan of the Paschal Mystery, but are also valuable in the daily Christian life, which is, all of it, a work in

progress to enflesh *pakikipagkaibigan* and *katuparan ng pangako* which, for a Christian, are not merely academic, anthropological characteristics of a Filipino, but are characteristics of Jesus Christ inculturated in the Philippines, with all its possible connections with Scriptures, liturgy, moral life, prayer, dealings with others.

The above method of relating two terms from Tertulian's reflection on the Transfiguration event, mutatis mutandis the original polemical context aduersus Marcionem, and after having related them to two terms in Filipino culture, can be said of the other pericopes mentioned not only by Marcion, but in fact by other early Christian authors as well. We have just cited aspects of Tertullian's argument against Marcion using the Transfiguration event as a case in point where he was able to contextualize something that happened in the time of Jesus, in order to face something in Tertullian's context. And with the above application of the two terms into Filipino culture and faith, we have tried to suggest connections which han be had with regards to the rest of the Church Fathers and even ecclesiastical authors. For more information about a Transfiguration Theology in the Latin Fathers, see this link to my Dissertation: (LST Monographs number 4 https://lst.edu/articles/lst-launches-its-new-publication-the-loyola-monographs/).

Conclusion: Are the Church Fathers Relevant in a 21st Century Inculturated and Contextualized Asian Theology?

As was stated in the first part of the paper, one possible factor in the dwindling number of those studying and learing about the Church Fathers is a *lack of opportunity to explore the engaging connectivity* between the culture where the Church Fathers were in, and the twenty-first century culture we are in, especially here in (Souheast) Asia.

Of course, the connection of the Church Fathers with culture and inculturation is not at all about merely scouring the Patristic texts for entries with "cultura" and its related words and concepts, however important the latter may be. More importantly, the said connection of

the Church Fathers with culture and inculturation may be seen in *the Patristc text and context*. Is it not to unnecessarily go back to obscurantism and anachronism? On the one hand, it might just sound like that, were the Patristic texts to be read and interpreted as if they were literary ecclesiastical archaeological artifacts, without hinting at any connectivity and perennial commonality and importance of the Church Fathers themselves, their texts, contexts and lives to the third millennium we are in. But on the other hand, if the Patristic texts would be considered not only in their contexts "outside"` of the *personae* of the Church Fathers, but also in the manner the Church Fathers had responded to concrete life-situations during their time, which were not absolutely different from those of our times, if set apart the phenomenon of technology and its huge effect on our everyday lives from the nineteenth century onwards for the time being, then can one perceive, glean and value not only the *commonality* of the questions and issues the Church Fathers then and the Catholic Church worldwide now have, but also the *practicality* of learning from the Church Fathers. Patristics, as any branch of history–which in Patristics enrichingly crosses back and forth often among ancient history, history of the Church in antiquity, theology and philosophy–is not only about the past, but about the present, since Tradition is essentially *traditio*, what is bequeathed and inherited from the forefathers, and ultimately, from Christ Jesus and the Apostles, to benefit the Church for all time, and is about the future, for the challenges, perennial or otherwise, which await us Christians in this twenty-first century.

Indeed, there is still a long way to go before a conviction of the perennial relevance of the Church Fathers systematically takes flesh in a pan-Asian inculturated and contextualized Theology. There are no ready roads to tread on. But at least, a conviction might just providentially, *Deo volente*, start a small steady spark on studies of the Fathers of mostly west Asia from the first eight centuries who could, so to speak, be made to dialogue with south, southeast and east Asia, in the twenty-first century. Yes, Patristics can still be relevant in the twenty-first century, and can be connect with other cultures and theologies like Filipino theologies.

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IGNATIUS LOYOLA'S *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES* AND POPULAR RELIGIOSITY: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, ANTECEDENTS AND RAMIFICATIONS

René Pio B. Javellana, S.J.

Abstract. The genesis of Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* (SPEX) is intimately tied to his conversion and subsequent journey as a spiritual pilgrim, which brought him to Montserrat and Manresa. In Manresa, he spent time as a recluse in prayer, going out of his cave shelter to attend liturgies, to beg for his sustenance and to assist at the local hospital. At banks of the River Cardoner, he received an enlightenment that made him understand spiritual matters in a profound way.

As his chroniclers narrate, the substance and structure of the SPEX were written down in 1522 and 1523, but Ignatius continued to revise and restructure the SPEX until 1541, and later in 1546, when the SPEX was being prepared for Papal approval. The Latin version of the SPEX (1546 manuscript in ARSI) gained Papal approval in 1548. Papal approval of the SPEX ratified the *Compañía de Jesus*, founded on the principles and experience of the SPEX, whose Institute was approved in 1540 by Paul III, the same pontiff who approved the SPEX.

Between 1521, his conversion, and 1527, when he left Spain for Paris, Ignatius was not adept at Latin, the academic language of his days. Thus, his acquaintance with the Gospels, cited in the "Mysteries of

the Life of Christ" (SPEX 261-312) came through secondary sources, namely, the popular *Vita Christi* of the Carthusian, Ludolph of Saxony and the *Legenda Aurea* (Lives of Saints) by the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine. Thomas a'Kempis' *Imitatio Christi* (formerly attributed to Jean Gerson, and referred to as Gerson by Ignatius) also informed Ignatius understanding of Christ. Through these sources, in particular Ludolph, Ignatius was placed in touch with Patristic writings. The *Vita* and the *Legenda* overlap in subject matter at some points and both share with the romances, like *Amadis di Galle* that Ignatius was fond of, the figure of the chivalrous knight on a quest to do great deeds for the honor of a highborn lady, who, because of her exalted status, was unreachable as an object of romance.

The roots of the SPEX in the popular religious works of its time show the SPEX growing out of popular religiosity. In addition, the centrality of the Passion, a recurring theme of the SPEX, and the concern about salvation are rooted in late medieval popular religiosity. Despairing those repetitive acts, like novenas, pilgrimages, vocal prayer could guarantee salvation, Martin Luther's adage that "faith alone [in Jesus] saves" brought many to the Protestant cause. The more intellectual were drawn to Eramus of Rotterdam's teaching of moral moderation; while others, in Spain, were drawn to contemplation according to the teaching of the illuminists (*alumbrados*), who believed that they were guided by the Spirit and could not err on the path to salvation.

While Ignatius and, consequently, the SPEX were suspected and investigated for being sympathetic to Luther and Erasmus and for being illuminist, Ignatius was exonerated of all charges. And while owing much to the popular religiosity of his time and its call for reform, Ignatius forged his own way of renewal, which answered the popular anxiety about salvation while remaining faithful to the Catholic tradition, in particular its teaching about faith and good works, and the sacramental system that animated that Faith.

Key Words. Alumbrados (illuminists), Biographies of Ignatius, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Erasmus' *Enchiridion*, Diego de Lainez (1512-

65), Dominican Melchor Cano, Geronimo Nadal (1507-1580), Gian Pierro Maffei (1533-1603}, Ignatian spirituality, Ignatius Loyola, Juan Alonso de Polanco (1517-1576), Martin Luther (1483-1546), Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1527-1611), Preached retreat or "Mission," Sources and influences on SPEX, Spiritual Exercises, various approaches

Presentation:

Does it make sense to contrast sharply Ignatius Loyola's Spiritual Exercises (SPEX) with popular religiosity as the title of this paper seems to suggest?

1. *Status quæstionis*: Clarifying Terms

The terms popular religion, popular piety, and popular religiosity are often used interchangeably. I would like to introduce some distinctions at the onset to finetune the argument of the paper.

Popular religion: When the substantive "religion" is paired with the descriptive "popular," this is often used to contrast it with "mainstream" or "institutional" religion. Defined this way, popular, mass-based expressions of religiosity outside the control of religious authorities stand in contrast to the organization and even the hierarchical control of mainstream religion. Such religious manifestations and their myriad expressions exist parallel to the mainstream institution's sanctioned liturgies and acts of common worship, its doctrinal and moral control. Popular religion's genesis comes from people's long-standing practice and customs, or from a charismatic person who gains sizable adherents.

Popular piety: By "popular piety," I refer to specific rites and forms of worship, and religious demeanor practiced by a broad spectrum of a community. Popular religion is one end of the spectrum as organization, and popular piety is the other end as expression.

Popular religiosity: In between, I use "popular religiosity" as a cluster of ideas, pious practices, and behaviors that could be embedded in mainstream religion that is ignored, tolerated, even encouraged by the mainstream, if it promotes the objective and mission of the mainstream and does not harm or contradict it.

To repeat. Does it make sense to distinguish between the SPEX and Popular religiosity?

2. Genesis and Source Criticism of the SPEX

The genesis of the SPEX shows that it too is an expression of popular religiosity, gaining official sanction in 1548 after the approval of its Latin version by Paul III, eight years after the same pope approved the Institute of the Society of Jesus.

The SPEX. The genesis of the SPEX is deeply rooted in the spiritual experience of Ignatius Loyola, from his conversion while convalescing at the family home, Casa-Torre de Loyola, in 1521, his journey to the Marian shrines of Aranzazu in his home province Guipozcoa, to Monserrat where he held vigil on the eve of the Marian feast of the Assumption, to Manresa all the way to 1541, when the official Latin version of the SPEX was finalized. Expressed in the autobiography dictated to the minister of the *casa professa* of the Gesù, Gonçales da Camara, by Ignatius Loyola is the image of the "pilgrim" by which Ignatius called himself in the autobiography.

"Pilgrim" suggests that the SPEX undergoes development as Ignatius treads the pilgrim's path. To trace that development, the rest of this section follows closely Terence William O'Reilly's 2021 publication *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Contexts, Sources, Reception*.

In the "Foreword," Thomas M. McCoog praises O'Reilly's work for avoiding what Philip Endean, S.J. called "Jesuit fundamentalism" and for using the tools of historico-criticism, applied successfully and fruitfully to Scriptures, to the SPEX. O'Reilly's work, catalyzed in part by the 2006 Jesuit celebrations, called by Fr. Gen. Hans Kolvenbach, "to celebrate the five-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Francis Xavier (1506–52) [and] … the 450th anniversary of the death of Ignatius of Loyola (*c.*1491–1556" [McCoog, "Foreword" in O'Reilly 2021, xiii]) comes to its apex in this book. McCoog writes:

> Under O'Reilly's analysis, the Ignatian *Exercises* are not Platonic ideas or transcendental categories, but products of a particular period and

> culture, but his emphasis on the "reception" of particular cultural, religious, and spiritual influences allows significant originality to Ignatius (O'Reilly 2021, xv).

Although O'Reilly's twelve chapters repeat facts and assertions, betraying its origin as independent essays, nine previously published in journals such as *Heythrop Journal*, *Journal of Jesuit Studies* and *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* as the author acknowledges (O'Reilly 2014, xxix), nonetheless, it is a convenient, one-stop source for knowing the "backstory" of the SPEX.

O'Reilly, who worked on Spanish prayer manuals, turned his attention to the SPEX, resulting in several published essays, eventually compiled as a book and published in 2021.

3. Overview

Chapter 9, "Joseph Veale and the History of the *Spiritual Exercises*" is a useful roadmap and summary of the previous eight chapters of the compilation. The Jesuit Veale (1921-2002), after his formation and long-time ministry of teaching, in 1972, retired in 1972 at the age of 51 and "devoted himself to giving retreats, training directors, and writing and lecturing on Ignatian spirituality." (O'Reilly 2014, 213). He noted a shift in the interpretation of the SPEX "from the anti-mystical to the mystical, from a stern to a stern ascetical regime to something more contemplative" (Ibid.)

The fulcrum for this shift was Vatican II, specifically *Perfectae caritatis,* the *Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life*, promulgated by Pope St. Paul VI on 28 October 1965. The decree stated that, for the renewal of consecrated life, all religious and other vowed communities should return to the original sources of their charism. When applied to the Society of Jesus, this meant a re-examination of Ignatius and his legacy, a task already begun before Vatican II by Spanish Jesuits like Ignacio Iparraguirre and Candido Dalmases, although as O'Reilly remarks these Jesuits did fall into becoming apologists for the received understanding of Ignatius. Far from presenting Ignatius as an "outlier," providentially sent by God at a time of spiritual crisis in the Catholic

Church, Ignatius appears as one historic figure against other historic figures involved in reform.

Veale noted that Vatican II's *Perfectæ Caritatis* or the Decree on Consecrated Life (1965) called for "the religious orders to return to the spirit of their founders" (Ibid., 215). The Jesuits were prepared to do so because "earlier in the century their foundational documents had been edited in *Monumenta Historica*, a series begun in 1894 that by the time of the council ran to nearly one hundred volumes" (Ibid.). Printed were the Jesuit Constitutions; Ignatius Reminiscences, "first edited in 1904;" his Spiritual Journal, "first edited in 1934, and his letters, which filled twelve substantial volumes" (Ibid) or some 7,600 letters in total, kept in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI).

Around the same time as the Council was the restoration of "the practice, common in Ignatius' time, of giving the Exercises to one person in solitude, over more or less thirty days. Though never forgotten, this had come to be seen as exceptional, and preached retreats to groups had taken its place" (Ibid, 216). This practice of the "one-on-one, directed retreat" showed that "Ignatius did not hand on to his followers a theory of prayer or spirituality. Instead, he 'apprenticed' them to an art, which they acquired 'in a living tradition'" (Ibid.).

Published in *Monumenta Historica* volume 100 with a critical edition of the SPEX was a summary of modern research into the literary sources of the text to date (1969). It showed that Ignatius was influenced by "the devotional literature available in Spain during the 1520s, and by three popular works in particular: the *Life of Christ* by Ludolph the Carthusian (*c.*1300–78), the *Golden Legend* of Jacob of Voragine (*c.*1230–98), and the *Imitation of Christ* of Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471)" (Ibid., 217).

Earlier studies of the SPEX's sources "tended to be philological in character: it sought evidence of direct textual borrowings, and of these it found few" (Ibid., 218). Furthermore, a conservative view of Ignatius strove to emphasize his originality "by emphasizing his independence of the spiritual currents of his time" (Ibid.). Veale turned his attention not to the letter of the text but to the "theological

traditions that Ignatius apparently knew." This is the approach of recent work on the SPEX. "[I]t has argued that his [Ignatius'] originality lay in how he made, from what he received, something uniquely his own. This has opened up new lines of research" so that

> At a conference on the sources of the *Exercises* held in Loyola in 1997, a number of specialists drew attention to parallels between the language and theology of the *Exercises*, the writings of the fathers of the church, and the monastic traditions of East and West in which the patristic inheritance was preserved. The apparent debt of Ignatius to both Origen (184–253) and John Cassian (*c.*360–*c.*445) was underlined, and parallels between the Exercises and Orthodox spirituality were explored. Scholarship since then has developed these insights. It has yet to engage fully, however, with their implications for our understanding of the stages in which the Exercises were composed. According to Ignatius's early companions, he wrote a draft of the text at Manresa in 1522 that contained its main components in a rudimentary form. At the time he could not have read the fathers directly, for he did not know Latin, and few of their writings were available in the vernacular. How then did he become familiar with patristic images and themes? Was it through the *Vita Christi* of Ludolph, where the fathers are cited often, and if so, which features of their theologies did Ludolph transmit? Or was it through the writings of García Jiménez de Cisneros (1455–1510), abbot of Montserrat, whose *Exercitatorio de la vida spiritual* (Montserrat: Juan Luschner, 1500) is a *florilegium* of medieval monastic texts?

Veale saw the originality of the SPEX in "bringing together two distinct traditions, first, "*discretio* [discernment]: a sensitivity to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in everyday life, and the associated experience of 'finding God in all things'" (Ibid., 217). The second tradition was

> mediated by Ludolph [of Saxony] the Carthusian, in whose work he encountered the four stages of monastic *lectio divina*, as Guigo the Carthusian (1140– 93) had described them in the twelfth century: *lectio*, *meditatio*, *oratio*, and *contemplatio*. Ignatius, however, changed the terms. *Lectio* became *historia*, the account of the subject for meditation delivered by the giver of the Exercises to the one receiving them; *meditatio* was what the *Exercises* mean by *contemplación*; *oratio* became the *coloquio*, or colloquy; and *contemplatio* was the gift of unitive love that the *Exercises* call *consolación*.

How singular was Ignatius in his usage is modified by Simon Tugwell's argument that "in late medieval writing the connotations of the word contemplatio were not stable. It was used with a variety of meanings, including 'meditation.'"

Expounding on the context of the SPEX, O'Reilly writes:

> When Ignatius was starting to compose the *Exercises* in the 1520s, Spanish society was feeling the impact of a widespread and ardent movement of religious reform, made up of various strands, two of which were prominent. First, the Erasmians, whose following was strong in the court of Charles V (1500–58; r.1519–54) and the university of Alcalá de Henares, where the *Enchiridion* of Erasmus (1466–1536) was published to popular acclaim in 1525. Second, the *alumbrados* (or illuminists), who divided into two distinct and antagonistic groups: the *recogidos*, associated with the reformed Franciscans in Castile, and the *dexados*, whose center was the household of Diego López de Pacheco (1456–1529), the marqués de Villena in Escalona. The teachings of the latter group, the *dexados*, were condemned by the Spanish Inquisition in 1525 (Ibid., 220).

These strands converged at "a common cause in the renewal of the Spanish church." One common concern was the

> renewal of prayer among Christians in the world. The Erasmians, for whom the externals of Christian worship mattered less than the interior life, encouraged a piety based on Scripture and the imitation of Christ, and their enthusiasm for interiority and mental prayer was shared, in turn, by both wings of the *alumbrados*, though with a difference: unlike the Erasmians, the illuminists drew inspiration, in different ways, from the monastic tradition, and its teachings on contemplation (Ibid., 220-221).

The question arises: Was Ignatius involved in Erasmism? In the early 20th century, Ignatius'

> writings and other documents revealed that in Alcalá and Salamanca he had contacts and friends who moved in reform circles, and his apostolate was considered suspect by the Inquisition, which investigated his activities several times. In his history of the *Exercises* in Ignatius's lifetime, published in 1946, Ignacio Iparraguirre (1911–73) answered "no": Ignatius was an independent spirit, with a strong sense of

> orthodoxy as the later sixteenth century defined it, and his spirituality was not influenced by either Erasmus or the illuminists (Ibid., 221).

"Karl Rahner (1904–84), William Peters (1911–88), and Leo Bakker, whose reflections on the matter were published between 1956 and 1970," and Veale added what Dominican critics said of Ignatius, the SPEX, and the Society. Veale

> drew attention to the writings of two Spanish Dominicans, Melchor Cano (c. 1509–60) and Tomás de Pedroche (d.1569), who alleged in the late 1540s and early 1550s that the *Exercises* were indeed illuminist, and he noted that Pedroche, in particular, had "accurately pinpointed those places in the text that are mystical" (Ibid.).

O'Reilly elaborates further on the critique of Cano, appending a transcription of Cano's text in the British Library, in *Part III Reception, Chapter 10 Melchor Cano and the Spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola: The Censura y parecer contra el Instituto de los Padres Jesuitas.*

Cano, a theologian and elected provincial at a 1557 chapter of Dominicans in Segovia, was a staunch and articulate critic of illuminism practiced by the alumbrados and dexados, condemned for their teaching by the Inquisition of Toledo in 1525. He wrote a lengthy critique of the catechism of Bartolomé de Carranza (1503-76), alleged *dexado*, and between 1556 and 1558 wrote "a number of letters in which he affirmed that the Society was a heretical force whose Exercises were undermining church and state, but he declined to set out fully his reasons for his conviction, stating more than once that they were not 'para carta'" (Ibid., 228). In a letter, he said that he had intended to bring up the matter with Pope Paul IV (1476-1559; r. 1555-59) and was putting his views into writing for the Pope.

Unlike his predecessor, Paul IV was "implacably hostile to the new order" and had rescinded Paul III's exemption of the Jesuits from the common recitation of the Divine Office in choir. Failing to have his election as provincial ratified, Cano journeyed to Rome in 1559 to attend the Dominicans' general chapter scheduled for 29 May. He hoped to have his election ratified in Rome and, taking the opportunity, have an audience with the pope. But Paul IV died on 18

August, without Cano having an audience. A year later, Cano died in Toledo on 30 September 1560.

Cano's critique range from personal, his critique of Ignatius, after a brief but unpleasant encounter, and his Jesuit followers; theological and spiritual; legal and practical.

Personal

The Jesuits singled out in Cano's *Censura* were "Iñigo, Salmerón, Laynez, Torres, and Fabio [Favre]." The Censura singles out "the mission of Pierre Favre (1506-46) to Germany (see Censura fol. 96^{r}), the behavior of Diego de Lainez and Alonso Salmerón (1515-85) at Trent (see fol. 96^{r}) … [the Society's] association with the sisters founded by the Countess of Guastalda (see fol. 97^{r-v}) and the sexual license of some Jesuits (see fol. 100^{v})" (Ibid., 232). Cano claimed that this experiment "ended in sexual license (fols. 97^{v}, 100^{v}). Jesuits, he adds, take certain substances to control their sexual passions, and these give them a pale, deathly look (fol. 100^{r-v}). Such failures in chastity are a further legacy of the *dexados* who, beginning with a love of prayer, fell first into error and then into sexual sin" (Ibid., 244).

Cano affirmed that if the Society was God's work, then its founder must be holy. He doubted Ignatius holiness because first, he stated that Ignatius was on the run from the Inquisition who had suspected him of being an alumbrado. Second, Cano had met Ignatius and "found him wanting in integrity." On one occasion, Ignatius told him that he was persecuted in Spain and spoke of the divine revelations he received. On another occasion, Ignatius introduced him to a Jesuit noted for holiness, but when summoned at a meal to meet Cano, he seemed to Cano to be "unorthodox, though he could also tell he was either simple or unwell" (Ibid., 237). These encounters left an impression on Cano that Ignatius was vain and a poor judge of character. Further encounters with Ignatius made Cano conclude that "he was ignorant of divine and human law, and imprudent and indiscreet as well as vain" (Ibid., 238-239).

Theological and spiritual

> [Cano] first … deplored the fact that they [Jesuits] offered everyone the same spirituality of a contemplative kind, irrespective of different temperaments and callings. Augustine, he writes, distinguished between different types of sanctity corresponding to the various humors, but the Society is not so discriminating (Ibid., 239).

Cano, further, believed that "it was not feasible to combine the active and contemplative lives, and he was concerned that people who tried to do so might neglect the works proper to their vocation." Furthermore, he said the SPEX had the effect of turning "soldiers into women, and caballeros into hens, not lions" (Ibid.).

Cano's "second reservation about the Exercises was prompted by the importance he considered they accorded to affective spiritual experience. The person taking them … is given to understand that during the retreat he will experience the work of grace in his soul and be granted consolations … such a promise … is presumption, an attempt to force the hand of God" (Ibid., 241).

Cano in addition criticized the SPEX for its prescription that the retreatant speak to the director about prayer experiences. He found this a distraction during prayer time and an expression of vanity when talking with the director. He likewise had reservations about the teaching on indifference.

Legal

Cano questioned the legal status (its nature and extent of approval) of the Society, since Paul III (1468-1549; r. 1534-49) had approved the "Institute" or a "Vision and Mission Statement" of the Society and not its constitution, and therefore was "a break with precedent: neither the Franciscans nor the Dominicans were approved until the pope had examined its rules" (Ibid., 243). Ignatius was, in fact, working on the Jesuit Constitution all through his life and was not satisfied with it when he died.

Practical

That the Jesuits did not have choir in common and were not bound by a monastic routine of periods of prayer, work, and rest and that they freely went in and out of the house made Cano fear that the Society had thrown out all the safeguards that made religious life viable as an instrument of holiness. They had also abandoned the practice of corporal penance. These structures had been put in place by centuries of experience, knowing that frail human nature needed them against the onslaught of worldliness as these had "always expressed and safeguarded the virtue of piety" (Ibid., 244).

Cano warned that if the Jesuits "are not stopped they will damage both the church and the state, and bring about in Spain the calamities caused in Germany by the Protestants" (Ibid., 245).

Cano's critique was exaggerated such that even some Dominicans in Spain, let alone the Jesuits, challenged him. But Ignatius did leave room for such criticism. In 1526, he was investigated at Alcala and his confessor Manuel Miona (c. 1477-1567) moved in illuminist circles but as O'Reilly observes:

> On the other hand, there is no indication that Ignatius himself belonged to the group that formed round Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz (1488–1555) and Isabel de la Cruz, and in important ways his teachings differed radically from theirs. The *Exercises*, for instance, offer a training in mental prayer and reveal a concern to interiorize the Christian life, both characteristics of the *alumbrados*, but they do not oppose mental to vocal prayer, nor do they criticize external forms of church worship, and they give a central place to the Passion of Christ, a devotion that the *dexados* deplored (Ibid., 245).

The rest of the presentation will cite four chapters in O'Reilly because they complete or amplify what has already been discussed. The chapters discuss:

- the origins of the SPEX and its sources, obscured by Ribadeneyra's official biography (Part 1: Context, the religious milieu that elicited opposing responses (chapter 1);

- Martin Luther versus Ignatius (2);
- Erasmus and Ignatius (3) and
- the books Ignatius read (Part 2: Sources, chapter 5).

Part I: Contexts

1. Ignatius Loyola and the Counter-Reformation: The Hagiographic Tradition

The official biography of Ignatius Loyola (Naples, 1572) was written by one of his first companions, Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1527-1611) and by Pierro Maffei (1533-1603), the first published in Rome in 1585. These biographies, written after the Council of Trent (1543-63) and marked by the irreparable split between the Catholics and Protestants, present Ignatius as a larger than life Counter-Reformation figure par excellence.

At this point, the Reformation's "Five Solas" did away with the principal Catholic milestones by rejecting Papal authority and unwritten Church tradition. By insisting that faith alone saves, not good works, Protestantism took aim at Catholicism's teaching and system of indulgences, and its need for a sacramental system of grace. Reducing the sacraments to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the "real presence" in the Eucharist was denied, making it a symbolic act, no doubt important. In answer, Trent issued a series of "Anathemas" or condemnations.

The battlelines were set. Into this fray, Ribadeneyra presents Ignatius as the providentially sent "soldier-saint," by God to battle the devil in the form of Martin Luther and the Protestants. Ignatius formed an army of like-minded soldiers, the *Compañía de Jesus*, armed with its spiritual weapons of conversion, especially through the SPEX (Ibid., also 39).

This trope had a long life, repeated again and again in Jesuit writing: "One book that popularized the image throughout Catholic Europe was the *Exercicio de perfección* by the Spanish Jesuit Alonso Rodríguez (1532–1617), first published in Seville in 1609" (Ibid., 7). This book was staple reading in Jesuit novitiates worldwide up to the 1960s.

No image illustrates this trope more graphically than the marble figure of *Faith Overcoming Heresy* in the altar of St. Ignatius in Il Gesù, Rome, in which a female figure brandishes a cross as figures of heresy fall, fearing the power of the cross. A mischievous cherub gleefully tears pages marked with the names of Luther and other reformers.

O'Reilly speculates that a later Ignatius may have conceived his mission in Counter-reformation terms, but an earlier Ignatius, described in the *Autobiography*, presented a person struggling to understand his life and mission in the context of a reforming, late medieval Spain.

So, a different Ignatius emerges from the earliest accounts of his formative years. These provide most of the information we possess about the period between his conversion in 1521 and the founding of the Society of Jesus in 1540. From these, it is clear that in this period, when the Protestant Reform was erupting in German-speaking lands and overflowing into France and the Italian Peninsula, it was not Ignatius's main concern to stem the tide of schism.

Between the years 1521 of Ignatius' conversion and 1527, when he left Spain, Lutheran ideas began infiltrating Spain, but Ignatius' own spiritual journey saw him combating the accusation that he was sympathetic to Erasmianism and the illuminists. In 1526 and 1527, he was investigated six times.

In Paris, Ignatius hardly mentioned the religious upheavals erupting in Europe, his concern was "study and the gathering of friends who wished to share his apostolic way of life" (Ibid., 9). At this point, he was convinced that he was called to Jerusalem and encouraged his companions to do likewise. The reform he aspired to, together with his companions, was not to combat Protestantism but to kindle an interior reformation of life from which other reforms would flourish.

2. *Ignatius Loyola and Martin Luther: The Origins of the Spiritual Exercises in Spain*

While it is asserted, and rightly so, that the Protestant Reformation was triggered by the scandal of selling Papal indulgences in Germany,

especially by the campaign of the Dominican John Tetzel, it does not explain why Martin Luther's private "Tower experience" found a widespread and popular following.

O'Reilly provides a context to understand the tormented soul of Luther, a devout Augustinian, who, notwithstanding his serious devotion to follow his vocation as a vowed religious, felt deeply that he was damned and nothing he did could assure him.

O'Reilley paints a picture of popular religiosity during the late Middle Ages under which Luther and his contemporaries struggled. Citing the French historian, Lucien Febvre (1878-1956), O'Reilly points to the Protestant Reformation's reason for popular success:

> Its essential characteristic was its success in finding for the troubles of conscience that afflicted a large part of Christendom (its success in offering people who seemed to have been awaiting it for years, and who adopted it with a haste and a hunger that are significant) a solution that really fitted the needs and the spiritual state of restless masses, anxious for a religion that was simple, clear, and fully efficacious (Ibid., 42).

Luther's teaching "sola fide," faith alone in Jesus, independent of works, responded to a popular and widespread "troubles of conscience," which had to do with

> The anxiety about salvation that plagued him [Luther] was not uniquely his but shared by many of his contemporaries. The reasons for this are not easy to discern, but they appear to be connected with the impact on religious practice of the tenets of nominalist theology. One of these, enunciated by Gabriel Biel (1420–95), stated that "to those who do what lies within them, God will not deny grace": in other words, the gift of salvation will be granted to those who have done everything in their power to prepare for it. But another tenet affirmed that there exists no necessary connection between the law of God and the aspirations of human nature. "On the level of popular religion," as Anthony Levi observed, "the result was great moral tension" (Ibid., 43).

As a consequence,

> the tension gave rise, not surprisingly, to a "religion of works," which found expression in pious devotions that entailed repeated acts. Some

> involved vocal prayer (the rosary, the Angelus, reciting psalms), others harsh penance (flagellation, fasting, habitual mortification), others again focused on the multiple and extreme sufferings of Christ by which the Father's justice had been placated" (Ibid., 43-44).

Luther found solace in St. Paul's Rom 3:23 "for we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law," amplified further by St. Augustine's thoughts on justification.

> His insight in this matter was fundamentally orthodox, the recovery of a doctrine, expressed forcefully by St. Augustine, that had become obscured. It seemed to Luther's critics, however, that he broke with tradition, and specifically with St. Augustine, in one respect: by claiming that the good works of the Christian are without merit, indeed sinful (Ibid., 44).

While Luther jettisoned all good works, including the Sacraments, Ignatius did not do so. Although he did not use the term "justification," Ignatius reframed medieval religiosity, in particular, the understanding of the Passion.

Experiencing a spiritual crisis at Manresa that made him contemplate suicide, prompted by Ignatius' sense of being condemned and still occupied by the thought of great external and heroic deeds, expressed in heroic austerities and excessive physical penance, living on alms, fasting for days, sleeping on the floor, breaking his sleep to pray and taking the discipline three times a week, in slow steps, Ignatius came to an equilibrium that balanced faith and deeds.

This is reflected in the SPEX, where the "ideals of chivalry, and the chivalric romances that they inspired, became a permanent part of his imaginative life" (Ibid., 50). He dreamt of doing great deeds but in the meditation on sin of the First Week, the exercitant is "encouraged to see himself as a knight in the presence of his king and the royal court: aware that he has greatly offended his lord, who has bestowed on him many gifts and privileges, he is confounded and ashamed" (SPEX 74). In front of the crucified, the exercitant, overcome by boundless love and beneficence, aspires to a "heroism…the natural expression of gratitude and love." Thus:

> The two movements in the *Exercises* of divine self-giving in Christ and grateful self-offering on the part of the meditator are complemented by a third: the action of God in the soul, disposing the meditator to serve him in a way that accords with His will. These come together at the end of the retreat when the meditator ponders everything that God has given him and prays, "You gave it all to me; to you, Lord, I return it. All is yours, dispose of it entirely as you will" [SPEX 234] (Ibid., 50).

The SPEX's creative answer to the anxiety about salvation pervading the late Middle Ages, without going to the Lutheran extreme of jettisoning "good works," opened the SPEX to longevity.

> The *Exercises* survived to become, in the late sixteenth century, a complex presence: on the one hand, a means of addressing the spiritual issues that had troubled Luther; on the other, a weapon bestowed on the Counter-Reformation church for which Ribadeneyra and his fellow Jesuits praised God (Ibid., 55).

3. Saint Ignatius Loyola and Spanish Erasmianism

Between 1491, the year of Ignatius' birth and his departure from Spain in 1527, a popular interest in methods of mental prayer grew, attested by the publication in Castilian of a number of devotional books. Also indigenous forms spirituality emerged. "This development passed through three important stages before 1530" (Ibid, 57). First, a devotion to the Passion flourished related to anxiety about personal salvation, discussed in chapter 2. Second: "About 1520…a distinct form of spirituality appeared. It has received the generic name illuminism, but it included at least two different teachings on prayer, *dejamiento* and *recogimiento."* Both

> appear to have agreed is condemnation of contemporary devotion to the Passion. Neither group favored making the humanity of Christ a central part of meditation: the *dejados* tended to prefer reflection on the gifts of God, the *recogidos* contemplation of Christ's divinity. Both favored prayer that did not involve much use of the imagination or of discursive thought, and in each case the form of prayer practiced involved openness to the work of grace in the soul (Ibid., 56-57).

And third, "in the mid-1520s when the writings of Erasmus (1466–1536) became a matter of controversy," when a Spanish

translation of his *Enchiridion militis christiani* was published in Alcalá de Henares in 1526.

Ignatius was raised in years of popular devotion to the Passion, and when he was a student at Alcalá, "his friends included Miguel Eguía (1495–1544), printer of the *Enchiridion*." Because the *Enchiridion* was favored by the illuminists, Ignatius and his apostolate were investigated in Alcalá and later in Salamanca.

While parallels have been drawn in some places between the *Enchiridion* and the SPEX, especially in the "Principle and Foundation," and

> According to Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1527–1611), he was advised to read it for its spiritual content and to improve his Latin while a student in Barcelona: that is, between 1524 and 1526. He did so, but noticed after a while that it cooled his devotion and ardor; and when this happened several times he abandoned it. After this, he looked on it and the other writings of Erasmus with suspicion and dislike (Ibid., 58).

Ignatius preferred the *Imitation of Christ* to Erasmus.

The Erasmians had five critical objections to the late medieval devotion to the Passion, namely: 1st "an inordinate importance given to the humanity of Christ and wanted more attention to be fixed on the article of faith that he was God as well as man"; 2nd "related to the first, was that the devotion did not inspire compunction"; 3rd "the devotion did not result in resolutions to avoid vice and practice virtue, and so had no influence on morals"; 4th "the devotion did not inspire hope, thanksgiving, and joy, but was wearisome and sad" and 5th "excessive rigidity in the method [of prayer]" (Ibid., 63-65).

Ignatius on his own, independent of Erasmus, had solved the shortcomings of the medieval devotion to the Passion. O' Reilly wrote:

> Ignatius, … may be said to have prolonged medieval devotion to the life and death of Christ by making it central to his *Exercises*; but in doing so he reformed it of the defects it had acquired in his day that the illuminists and Erasmians criticized. In view of this, it is surely misleading to suppose that he was opposed to Erasmus in his attitude to

> the devotion. The evidence suggests that he would have agreed with him in condemning its distortion by hypocrisy and superstition" (Ibid., 68).

And further on: "Ignatius did not just prolong meditation on the Passion, but made it a means of interiorizing and Christianizing the spiritual life and therefore of countering the obsession with good works prevalent among his contemporaries" (Ibid., 65).

4. *The Spiritual Exercises and Illuminism in Spain: Dominican Critics of the Early Society of Jesus*

Some Dominicans were critics of Ignatius, the SPEX and the Society of Jesus. Melchor Cano's critique is further developed in *Chapter 10* as previously discussed. The roots and sources of three thematic characteristics of the SPEX are discussed in *6 The Origins of the Rules for Discernment*, *7 Consolation without a Preceding Cause, 8 Fear and Love in the Spiritual Exercises.* Part 3: Reception shows the impact of the SPEX, *11 Saint Teresa and Her First Jesuit Confessors,* and *12 The Spiritual Exercises and the Diario espiritual of St. Ignatius* on Ignatius on use of the discernment of spirits as he was deliberating on the statutes of poverty that would allow Jesuit churches to have a fixed income for its upkeep and operations.

Part II: Sources. 5 Early Printed Books in Spain and the Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola

The role of the movable type printing press, invented by the German Johannes Gutenberg in the late 1400s, has been credited as facilitating the spread of information, thus contributing to the Reformation.

In this chapter, O'Reilly discusses the books Ignatius read: the romance of *Amadis di Galle*, Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi* and Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*. He cites a common chivalric thread running through these works. Amadis de Galle is as much a romance as it is a hagiography of a knight.

As indicated in Chapter 1 (see above), Ignatius composed the SPEX in a rudimentary form by 1522-23, but "the draft was refined and extended over the years that followed, reaching its final state *c.*1541." At this early stage, Ignatius did not know Latin, the academic language, as he had not yet enrolled in university, nor did he have the language requisite for such a task. His citations of Scripture were thus based on the Spanish books he had read and had at hand at Loyola. "The books that he read, and that shaped his text, were all early printed works of devotion" (Ibid., 110).

The books Ignatius read while convalescing at Loyola had

> features in common, and their contents to some extent overlap. The Flos sanctorum includes the main events of Christ's life, arranged according to the feasts of the liturgical year, while the Vita Christi incorporates into its account of the Gospel the lives of the apostles and other saints. When they use similar or identical material, it is often drawn from a common source, the Meditationes vitæ Christi attributed to St. Bonaventure (1317-74), which was available in Spanish also at the time in two editions (Ibid., 113).

Both texts placed the Passion in high prominence as would the SPEX where Christ's "Passion … is a recurring theme" (Ibid.).

Several influences of Ludolph on the SPEX appeared in Ignatius' roll out of the "mysteries" of the life of Christ "in certain details Ignatius adds to the New Testament accounts," namely: in SPEX 111, 112, 114, 219, 273, 310 and 344 (Ibid., 116).

> In many cases, these additions are found also in both Ludolph and Voragine, but Ludolph is the main influence: often the coincidence of words and phrases, as well as images and ideas, is striking. Some details, however, go back to Voragine alone. He affirms, for example, that a maid was present at the birth of Christ, a notion that Ludolph rejects but that Ignatius nonetheless accepts, and he supplies the phrase that Ignatius uses throughout the *Exercises* to describe the Devil, "enemigo de natura humana" (it occurs in *La vida de Sancto Onofre*) (Exx. 7, 10, 135, 136, 325, 326, 327, 334). These traces are remarkable because the section in which many of them are found, *Los misterios de la vida de nuestro Señor* (Exx. 261–312), is thought to have been finalized between 1537 and 1539. The late date shows how faithful Ignatius remained to the

> lessons he learned in Loyola, and how deeply he interiorized the books he read there (Ibid., 117).

From Ludolph came a three-fold structure of "reading, meditation, and prayer, the main stages into which the late Middle Ages divided the monastic practice of *lectio divina*." To Ignatius' *consolación* (consolation) may be paralleled Ludolph's "other terms of union: sweetness (*suavidad*), savoring (*sabor*), unction (*uncion*), joy (*alegria*, *gozo*), delight (*deleyte*), consolation (*consolacion*)" (Ibid., 119).

Although Ludolph worked with the traditional senses of Scripture, rooted in the exegetical method of the Church Fathers, Ignatius did not seem to follow this schema but worked with a simplified schema of literal and spiritual, or "the letter of the sacred text and its spirit," as Erasmus put it (Ibid., 120).

A favorite work of Ignatius was the *Imitation of Christ,* and from this work came the emphasis on "the presence in prayer of Christ, whom the reader is invited to follow and serve" (Ibid., 136). Like the *Vita Christi*, the *Imitation* elevates the Passion in prominence in which Jesus is "described in chivalric terms as captain, leader, and king and whose sufferings the reader is summoned to share" (Ibid., 136).

Finally, a note on Ignatius' vigil at arms at Montserrat. His actions came straight out of a chivalric tradition celebrated in romances, like *Amadis di Galle*. A knight pledges his fealty to a lady of a higher status. To this lady, the knight undertakes a vigil of offering. This Ignatius does at Montserrat. The unattainable lady is the Virgin Mary, symbolized by the *Moreneta* at Montserrat. After turning over his sword and dagger to the abbot of the Benedictine Abbey, who hangs it among other "ex votos" at the altar of the Virgin, Ignatius, who had given his noble clothes to a beggar, puts on the rough robes of a pilgrim and with staff in hand begins his vigil on the eve of the Feast of the Assumption (15 August 1522).

The remaining chapters expound more fully several points raised earlier.

Summary

The genesis of Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* (SPEX) is intimately tied to his conversion and subsequent journey as a spiritual pilgrim, which brought him to Montserrat and Manresa. In Manresa, he spent time as a recluse in prayer, going out of his cave shelter to attend liturgies, to beg for his sustenance and to assist at the local hospital. At banks of the River Cardoner, he received an enlightenment that made him understand spiritual matters in a profound way.

As his chroniclers narrate, the substance and structure of the SPEX were written down in 1522 and 1523, but Ignatius continued to revise and restructure the SPEX until 1541, and later in 1546, when the SPEX was being prepared for Papal approval. The Latin version of the SPEX (1546 manuscript in ARSI) gained Papal approval in 1548. This Papal approval of the SPEX ratified the *Compañía de Jesus*, founded on the principles and experience of the SPEX, whose Institute was approved in 1540 by Paul III, the same pontiff who approved the SPEX.

Between 1521, his conversion, and 1527, when he left Spain for Paris, Ignatius was not adept at Latin, the academic language of his days. Thus, his acquaintance with the Gospels, cited in the "Mysteries of the Life of Christ" (SPEX 261-312) came through secondary sources, namely, the popular *Vita Christi* of the Carthusian, Ludolph of Saxony and the *Legenda Aurea* (Lives of Saints) by the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine. Thomas a'Kempis' *Imitatio Christi* (formerly attributed to Jean Gerson, and referred to as Gerson by Ignatius) also informed Ignatius understanding of Christ. Through these sources, in particular Ludolph, Ignatius was placed in touch with Patristic writings. The *Vita* and the *Legenda* overlap in subject matter at some points and both share with the romances, like *Amadis di Galle*, that Ignatius was fond of, the figure of the chivalrous knight on a quest to do great deeds for the honor of a highborn lady, who because of her exalted status was unreachable as an object of romance.

The roots of the SPEX in the popular religious works of its time show that the SPEX growing out of popular religiosity. In addition,

the centrality of the Passion, a recurring theme of the SPEX, and the concern about salvation are rooted in late medieval popular religiosity. Despairing those repetitive acts, like novenas, pilgrimages, vocal prayer could guarantee salvation, Martin Luther's adage that "faith alone [in Jesus] saves" brought many to the Protestant cause. The more intellectual were drawn to Eramus of Rotterdam's teaching of moral moderation; while others, in Spain, were drawn to contemplation according to the teaching of the illuminists (*alumbrados*), who believed that they were guided by the Spirit and could not err on the path to salvation.

While Ignatius and consequently the SPEX were suspected and investigated for being sympathetic to Luther and Erasmus and for being illuminist, Ignatius was exonerated of all charges. And while owing much to the popular religiosity of his time and its call for reform, Ignatius forged his own way of renewal, which answered the popular anxiety about salvation while remaining faithful to the Catholic tradition in particular its teaching about faith and good works, and the sacramental system that animated that Faith.

Concluding Reflection: Popular religion, religiosity and piety

The SPEX was born and developed in the context of Spain undergoing reform and facing the legacy of late medieval popular religiosity. If the "popular religion, popular religiosity, and popular piety" are taken primarily as socio-cultural categories, these terms are entirely appropriate and illumine the dynamics, which make a religion truly global or universal. Catholicism sociologically cannot be truly "universal," as the term Catholic implies, unless it embraces the popular. In fact, popular religiosity, as Pope Francis astutely remarks, is a historical manifestation and inculturation of Catholicism.

But when the qualifier "popular" takes a theological turn, when "popular" is the polar opposite of "institutional" or "mainstream," then the term "popular religion" takes on an evaluative and judgmental slant, and this casts "popular religion" in opposition to institutional religion and therefore suspect. Short of anathematizing "popular"

as heterodox, which is most probably avoided because it may be construed as politically incorrect, the continued endowment of the term with a theological evaluative connotation, far from clarifying, leads to confusion.

If "popular religion, popular religiosity, and popular piety" remain as essentially socio-cultural, it clarifies the dynamics of all world religions that reach out to a large percentage of the human race. It is the phenomenon that in all world religions there is the institutional center of control and a periphery that is barely reached by the center. While the center holds the religion together, it is often at the periphery that new things arise anew because it is at the periphery that the Church meets a world awaiting the Gospel, and it is at the periphery the Church finds its mission and becomes truly CATHOLIC.

Appendix

Terence O'Reilly, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Contexts, Sources, Reception.*

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF *ECCLESIA IN ASIA* AND ITS IMPACT ON CONTEMPORARY ASIAN THEOLOGY OF RELIGIONS

Salvador G. Agualada Jr., C.M.F.

Abstract. The recent 25th anniversary of *Ecclesia in Asia* last November 6, 2024 underscores the need for a critical evaluation of its impact and relevance, hence the timeliness and necessity of this article. This article begins with the observation that *Ecclesia in Asia* primarily reflects the papal perspective rather than a genuine dialogue with Asian Churches, contrary to John Paul II's assertion that the document is the fruit of his "encounter in dialogue" with Asian bishops. Additionally, it highlights the document's neglect of crucial issues raised by the 1998 Synod of Bishops for Asia, especially the salvific significance of other religions, despite the FABC's long-standing commitment to their role in God's plan of salvation. Moreover, it criticizes the document's limited scope, which fails to recognize that the diverse cultural, religious, and social contexts of Asian Churches necessitate a variety of theological and pastoral approaches, as well as a unique vision of Asian Christianity adapted to local needs. In conclusion, it examines the specific methodologies of evangelization employed by Asian Churches, arguing that the question is never about the "who" and the "what" but always about the "how" of the local Churches' evangelizing mission in the continent.

Keywords. Vatican II, Synod of Bishops for Asia, *Ecclesia in Asia*, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, Evangelizing Mission, Salvific Character of Other Religions

I. Introduction

The Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Asia, convoked by Pope John Paul II from April 18 to May 14, 1998 in Rome, which culminated in the publication of the landmark Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia*, was one of the five continental Synods summoned by the Holy Father as the Catholic Church prepared for the Great Jubilee at the turn of the third millennium (cf. *EA* 2, 3).[1] In this Synod, considered, "[i]n addition to the FABC," as "perhaps the major landmark in the history of Asian Catholicism's reception of Vatican II,"[2] and universally hailed in fact as having "marked the coming of age of the Asian Churches,"[3] the Churches of Asia were recognized as having "made great contributions in the field of a theology of religions for the whole Church."[4] The Pope himself acknowledged quite profusely in the Introduction of *Ecclesia in Asia* (cf. *EA* 2, 3, and 4), not just the Asian Churches' labors for the growth of "the Asian roots of Christianity" (*EA* 4) in the continent, but also their indispensable contribution to universal reflection on the question of the theology of religions.

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[1] *Ecclesia in Asia* was issued by Pope John Paul II on November 6, 1999, in New Delhi, India. Its 25th anniversary was commemorated by the Catholic Church on November 6, 2024. Hence, a critical examination of this document, which this article aims at, is timely and necessary.

[2] Peter C. Phan, "Reception of and Trajectories for Vatican II," in *50 Years On. Probing the Riches of Vatican II,* ed. D. Schultenover (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 306.

[3] Peter C. Phan, "Preface," in *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), xi.

[4] G. Evers, "The Specific Contribution of Asian Theologians towards a Theology of Religions," in *Reaping a Harvest from the Asian Soil. Towards an Asian Theology*, ed. V. Tirimanna (Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 2011), 80.

While it is true that *Ecclesia in Asia*, the same as the rest of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations of other continents, is addressed by the Holy Father to the whole Church, it is nevertheless primarily directed to Asian Churches whose concrete situations, theological questions, and pastoral needs the Synod must have reflected upon. *Ecclesia in Asia* is *for* and should be *about* the Churches of Asia. As "the Magna Carta for the evangelization of Asia in the Third Millennium,"[5] it is an Apostolic Exhortation that was supposed to have dealt with the situations of Asia and how the Churches of Asia could and must respond to the missiological issues and pastoral challenges of the continent. In fact, in the document, the Pope declares that the actual convocation of the Asian Synod was an "encounter in dialogue of the Bishops and the Successor of Peter" (*EA* 3), and that through the document, he wishes "to share with the Church in Asia and throughout the world the fruits of the Special Assembly" (*EA* 4). After acknowledging that the Asian situations were "examined in detail during the Synod by those who have daily contact with the extremely diversified realities of such an immense continent," which can only refer to the Asian bishops and theologians present in the Synod, the Pope asserts that the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation itself "is, in synthesis, the result of the Synod Fathers' reflections" (*EA* 5).

Yet, among some theologians, there is a sense that *Ecclesia in Asia* is an "unfinished business" because of their observation that the "voice" that we find in the document corresponds only to the "voice" of the Pope but not also to the "voices" of the Asian bishop-participants and the questions, issues and concerns that they brought to the Asian Synod.[6] In his Preface to *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, Peter Phan observes: "Several of these theologians have pointed out that the

[5] Cited by E. Chia, "Of Fork and Spoon or Fingers and Chopsticks: Interreligious Dialogue in *Ecclesia in Asia*," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 37:3 (2000): 243.

[6] Cf. Phan, "Preface," x. Cf. J. Prior, "Unfinished Encounter: A Note on the Voice and Tone of *Ecclesia in Asia*," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 37:3 (2000): 256-271; Chia, "Of Fork and Spoon," 242-255; Phan, "*Ecclesia in Asia*: Challenges for Asian Christianity," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 37:3 (2000): 215-232.

voices of the Asian bishops who spoke at the synod and their concerns are not the same as those of the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* that purports [precisely] 'to share with the Church in Asia and throughout the world the fruits of the Special Assembly' (*EA* 4)."[7] For Edmund Chia, that the Synod for Asia truly became an "encounter in dialogue" between the Asian bishops and the Pope and that therefore the document, *Ecclesia in Asia*, can be considered "fruits" of such a fraternal dialogue is only "from the Pope's point of view" and is not shared by the Asian bishops.[8] John Prior, the liaison with the English-speaking press covering the Synod for Asia, in an article whose very title itself suggests that the Synod was an "unfinished encounter" between the Pope and the Asian bishops, concludes that *Ecclesia in Asia* is "a papal document," meaning, that it is "the Pope's response to the voice of the Asian Bishops"—which constitutes just "one side of the synodal encounter"[9]—rather than, as Chia expects, "the voice of the Pope in *dialogue* with the voice of the bishops of Asia."[10] For Michael Amaladoss, *Ecclesia in Asia* is "a document for Asia... [and]... not an Asian document"; "[i]t is not the voice of Asia... [for]... [t]he tone and style are very un-Asian."[11]

This paper will inquire whether these observations have a basis by examining *Ecclesia in Asia* and the documents of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences vis-à-vis the question of how the Asian Churches should carry out their evangelizing mission in Asia. We will analyze especially the character and tone of *Ecclesia in Asia* and compare it with the Final Statement of the Seventh FABC Plenary Assembly convened on January 3-12, 2000 and "regarded as the first

[7] Phan, "Preface," x.

[8] Chia, "Of Fork and Spoon," 244.

[9] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 257-258.

[10] Chia, "Of Fork and Spoon," 244; emphasis mine.

[11] M. Amaladoss, "*Ecclesia in Asia* Affirms Tradition," *Asia Focus* 15:44 (November 26, 1999): 3.

Asian Churches' response to *Ecclesia in Asia*."[12] Given the FABC's longstanding recognition of the salvific value of other religions, we will briefly examine the document's lack of explicit affirmation on this point. Moreover, we will examine the document's omission of Proposition 4 from the *Propositiones*, a Proposition that highlights the diversity of ecclesial contexts in Asia. Finally, we will consider the reality that in Asian Christianity, the question is never about the "who" and the "what" but always about the "how" of the local Churches' evangelizing mission in the continent.

II. The "Unfinished" Character of *Ecclesia in Asia* Vis-à-vis the Asian Churches' Theology of Religions

A. The Character and Tone of *Ecclesia in Asia*: Interpreting the Document's "Voice" Contextually

First, we examine the "sources" of *Ecclesia in Asia* by looking at its "footnotes." By providing references, "footnotes" are extremely important not only because they show *who* and *what* ideas influence the author in the formation of his insights and the development of his discourse but also because of the support they normally provide to claims and assertions made by the author in the text. In his brief discussion of the "sources" of the document, Prior, in his article, "Unfinished Encounter: A Note on the Voice and Tone of *Ecclesia in Asia*," observes that out of 240 footnotes, "[s]ome 145 of them, or 60.4%, refer to documents from the Synod of Asia" which include the *Lineamenta* (cited three times), the *Instrumentum Laboris* (cited twice), the *Nuntius* (cited once), the *Relatio Ante Disceptationem* (cited seven times), the *Relatio Post Disceptationem* (cited thirteen times), and the *Propositiones* (cited 119 times, or 49.6% of all the footnotes).[13] For Prior, all these citations came from synodal documents, which "were all drawn up by committees appointed by the Vatican."[14] John Paul II, according to Prior, "quotes himself 68 times" from his various Encyclicals,

[13] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 256.

[14] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 256.

Apostolic Exhortations, Apostolic Letters, and Papal Addresses, which constitute 28.3% of the document's footnotes.[15] The rest of the 11.3% footnotes came from other sources: Paul VI (cited five times), Leo XIII (cited once), St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* (cited once), St. John Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew* (cited once), the Roman Missal (cited twice), the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (cited twice), the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (cited once), and the Second Vatican Council (cited fifteen times).

It is true that the Pope initially acknowledges the work and contribution of the FABC in the document when he affirms in the Introduction that "[e]arlier meetings of Asian Bishops had contributed to preparing the Synod and making possible an atmosphere of intense ecclesial and fraternal communion... [particularly]... the past Plenary Assemblies and Seminars sponsored by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences and its offices" (*EA* 3). Yet, in truth,

> [i]n *Ecclesia in Asia* there is not a single direct reference to any intervention by an individual bishop, nor to interventions by bishops in the name of their conferences. *There are no direct references to regional episcopal bodies such as the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)* or the Council of Oriental Catholic Patriarchs (CPCO).[16]

While it is true that the *Propositiones* were quoted 119 times (49.6%), Prior and Chia suggest that this document cannot be considered the "voice" of the Asian bishops because as a document that "needed to be kept secret," there is no way to verify "the disparity between the draft proposals from the bishops' groups and the resultant recommendations" made by a committee appointed by the Vatican.[17] Prior explains:

> While the *Lineamenta*, *Instrumentum Laboris* and *Nuntius* have been circulated in ecclesial circles, the major source—the *Elenchus Finalis Propositionum*—is *sub secreto*. Only participating bishops received a copy

[15] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 256.

[16] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 257; emphasis mine.

[17] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 257; Chia, "Of Fork and Spoon," 244.

> which they duly voted on, recommendation by recommendation. The booklet was then handed back to the Synodical Secretariat. Nobody outside Rome has a way of checking this source.[18]

For Prior, to hear the "voices" of the Asian bishop-participants, one must go back to the 191 interventions made during the first seven days of the Asian Synod. And out of these 191 interventions, 76.3 %[19] of them can be clustered around four main themes: the need for Asian Churches to engage in dialogue with other religious traditions (22.5%); the need for Churches in the continent to become authentically Asian through their ongoing dialogue with various cultures (21.4%); the need for Asian Churches to dialogue with the poor in the context of the continent's massive poverty (17.2%); and the need for the Asian Churches to become truly Churches of the laity (15.2%).[20] The first three themes have to do with the triple dialogue with cultures, religions, and the poor, which have been the predominant concerns of Asian bishops and theologians since the First FABC Plenary Assembly in 1974. Together with the Asian Church's desire to be a Church of the laity, these three interrelated ecclesiological concerns have been the FABC's preoccupations for the last 30 years. Yet, even the effort to return to the Asian bishops' interventions during the first week of the Synod is not an easy task because "[p]articipating bishops received only a brief summary of their interventions, not the complete text," which, like the *Propositiones*, is "the property of the Synodical secretariat."[21]

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[18] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 256-257.

[19] To understand why the Asian bishops' interventions constituted only 76.3% of the total number of interventions, we must remember that the interventions during these first seven days of the Synod came not only from the bishops of Asia but also from curial officials and auditors (Cf. Tagle, "The Synod for Asia as Event," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 35 [1998] 3 & 4, 368). This means that the interventions of the curial officials and auditors comprised 23.70% of the total interventions in the Synod. The "report" that highlighted the concerns raised by the bishops, curial officials, and the auditors was called the *Relatio Post Disceptationem*.

[20] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 258-259.

[21] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 257.

And even if one could go back to these interventions, the fact is that, as shown in the "footnotes" of *Ecclesia in Asia*, the interventions of the Asian bishops, *together* with those of curial officials and of the auditors, which eventually became the *Relatio Post Disceptationem*, were cited *only* thirteen times by the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation.

Indeed, it is a tragedy for a papal document that purports to offer a manual for the Churches' evangelization in Asia not to have incorporated the insights and ideas of the FABC, considering that the Asian bishops had not brought anything new to the Asian Synod's discussions and deliberations, which they had not previously reflected upon for the last 30 years. *Ecclesia in Asia* has not utilized what should have been the main source of its theological reflections and insights in a document that proposes to help Asian Churches enter into a new millennium of their evangelizing presence in the continent—the collective reflections of Asian bishops, priests, religious, lay, and theologians in the FABC documents.

For Luis Antonio Tagle, when examining what the Asian bishops in the Synod of Bishops for Asia had brought to the attention of the universal Church gathered in the Synod, we can say that compared with the FABC's previous statements and considerations since its inception in 1972, there was nothing new in what the Asian bishops individually and as a group articulated during the Synod. After identifying the fifteen points of agreement out of the total fifty-nine (or sixty-one) points that the Synod for Asia submitted to Pope John Paul II, Tagle asserts that "[t]here's nothing new here" when the Propositions are seen in comparison with the FABC teachings through the years, "except maybe the reaffirmation of these things."[22] Phan echoes this observation. To the question that he himself asks and answers—"Has the Exhortation said anything new and important for the Churches of Asia that either had not been said before by these Churches themselves or could not have been said except thanks to the work of the Synod itself?"—"the answer is frankly no."[23] For Phan, among the seven thematic sections

[22] Tagle, "The Synod for Asia as Event," 371.

[23] Phan, "*Ecclesia in Asia*: Challenges for Asian Christianity," 217.

of *Ecclesia in Asia*, excluding the introductory section on the Asian context, "what the Exhortation says on the other six themes has already been said, powerfully and in great detail, by the various documents of the FABC."[24]

Yet, for Tagle, if the Synod of Bishops was truly an event, it was because of "the birth of something new" in the Synod: "[T]hese concerns were elevated from the level of the FABC and the National Episcopal Conference to that of the Universal Church."[25] Tagle adds that "[i]f they become part of the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, they will not only be addressed to the Church of Asia but the Universal Church."[26] In commenting on Tagle's observation, Phan affirms that the new thing about the Synod for Asia was not what the Asian bishops said but *how* they said it and that they said it to the whole Church gathered at the Synod:

> What they said had been said, at length and with power and depth, for almost thirty years, ever since the founding of the FABC in 1972, in its numerous plenary assemblies and in the documents of its several institutes. But at the Synod, they said it again, *to the whole Church*, and with surpassing *boldness* and refreshing *candor*, with what the New Testament calls *parrhésia*[27].

If *Ecclesia in Asia* does not live up to its intended image as an "encounter in dialogue" between the Pope and the Asian bishops because it is largely the "Pope's voice" and not really a "dialogue," how then do we discover the voice of the bishops "at the other end

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[24] Phan, "*Ecclesia in Asia*: Challenges for Asian Christianity," 217. Referring to the *Elenchus Finalis Propositionem* of the 1998 Synod of Bishops for Asia which "were accepted by the bishops with virtual unanimity," Prior remarks: "Most could have been written 30 years ago" (Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 257).

[25] Tagle, "The Synod for Asia as Event," 371.

[26] Tagle, "The Synod for Asia as Event," 371; ID., "The Challenges of Mission in Asia: A View from the Asian Synod," in *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, ed., Peter C. Phan (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 219-220; cf. Phan, "*Ecclesia in Asia*: Challenges for Asian Christianity," 217.

[27] Phan, "*Ecclesia in Asia*: Challenges for Asian Christianity," 217.

of the line," at the other "end of the telephone conversation," to use Prior's expressions?[28] According to Prior, "[f]or the voice of the Asian Bishops we have to look elsewhere."[29] For Chia, "to listen to the other end of the conversation," we need to turn to "none other than Asia itself," listening not only to "the voice of the bishops of Asia but also [to] the voice of theologians and others who work and live in Asia."[30] This means re-visiting the Asian Churches' thoughts and insights as contained in the FABC documents and in the reflections of Asian bishops and theologians who theologized within the context of Asia for the last thirty years.

For Chia, in our quest for this Asian "voice," we need to listen specifically to the voice of the Seventh FABC Plenary Assembly held less than two months after the New Delhi proclamation of *Ecclesia in Asia*. Its Final Statement is considered "the actual voice of the bishops of Asia and not one which went through the filter of the Pope, as is *Ecclesia in Asia*," in which "one gets to hear the other side of the telephone line."[31] Taking both *Ecclesia in Asia* and FABC VII's document together will facilitate our deeper understanding of the "encounter in dialogue" between the Pope and the Asian bishops that was supposed to have taken place during the Synod,[32] or, to put a completion to what Chia calls an "unfinished business," or to what Prior labels as an "unfinished encounter."[33] Indeed, because *Ecclesia in Asia* provides us with the voice of the Pope while the FABC's and the Synod's interventions offer us the voices of the bishops of Asia,

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[28] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 258.

[29] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 258.

[30] Chia, "Of Fork and Spoon," 245.

[31] Chia, "Of Fork and Spoon," 249.

[32] Chia, "Of Fork and Spoon," 249.

[33] Chia, "The 'Absence of Jesus' in the VII FABC Plenary Assembly," *VJTR* 63 (1999) 892; Cf. Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 256-271.

these two voices need to be unified to achieve a genuine "encounter in dialogue" between the Pope and the Asian bishops.[34]

Looking at the Seventh FABC Plenary Assembly, we observe that while its Final Statement cites *Ecclesia in Asia* about fifteen times, "it also quotes quite lavishly from other FABC documents, which *Ecclesia in Asia* does not," making the Assembly Statement "certainly more Asian than is *Ecclesia in Asia*," and it "is [thus] more representative of Asian views."[35] While the core ideas of the Asian bishops, as articulated in the Synod for Asia and FABC VII, have remained consistent, nevertheless their understanding and expression of these ideas have deepened over time as the bishops "keep searching for the deeper challenges of renewal—its meaning and scope in our life and mission in Asia."[36] The statement of FABC VII was significant not so much for the fresh and original themes it tackled, which were minimal, but for the strong resolve of the Asian bishops to continue on the ecclesial path the FABC had been taking for many years.[37]

As a matter of fact, for FABC VII, the eight movements that constitute an Asian vision of a renewed Church have been "a concerted series of movements towards a renewed Church... [in]... [t]he thirty-year history of the FABC."[38] That these eight movements have been "the vision of a renewed Church that the FABC has developed over the past thirty years," a vision which the bishops of Asia claim to be "still valid today," is evident when we look at where the earliest articulations of these movements originated—from the previous assemblies of the Asian bishops for the past thirty years since their first historic meeting

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[34] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 266.

[35] Chia, "Of Fork and Spoon," 249.

[36] FABC VII, in FAPA III, 4.

[37] T. C. Fox, "True to their Mission, Polite toward Rome," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 37:3 (2000): 288.

[38] FABC VII, in FAPA III, 3.

in Manila, Philippines in 1970.[39] Even just a cursory inspection of these eight movements reveals right away the assembly's sense of continuity with, and its indebtedness to, those assemblies that came before it. Indeed, while "[t]he Asian bishops cited *Ecclesia in Asia* in their final draft document," they did so "but only when it suited their purposes."[40]

B. The Absence of An Explicit Recognition of the Salvific Character of Other Religions in *Ecclesia in Asia*

Secondly, we observe the puzzling omission of an explicit affirmation of the salvific significance of other religions in *Ecclesia in Asia*, notwithstanding the robust advocacy for this principle by Asian bishops and theologians in the 1998 Synod for Asia. According to Phan, "[w]ith regard to interreligious dialogue, many Asian episcopal conferences call for not only a respectful dialogue with non-Christians, but also an explicit recognition of the salvific value of non-Christian religions, not as independent from or parallel to Christ, but in relation to him."[41] On the part of the Indian bishops, they argue that the preaching of the living memory of Christ to the Asian peoples must be in ways that are respectful of their histories and traditions. This suggests that while "[t]he language of the Church's proclamation must be clear… it may not be such that it seems to deny the authentic action of God in other cultures and religions," and that while "Christ is indeed the source and cause of all salvation for all peoples… this fact does not exclude the possibility of God mysteriously employing other cooperating channels, as John Paul II allows,"[42] referring to *Redemptoris Missio*, 5. Hence, while they affirm the uniqueness and universality of Christ's saving mediation, understood in terms of Christ as the sacrament, as "the definitive symbol of God's salvation for all humanity," such a Christian conviction "does not mean that there cannot be other symbols, valid in their own ways, which the Christian sees as related to the definitive symbol, Jesus Christ."[43] They conclude: "[F]or hundreds of millions

[39] FABC VII, in FAPA III, 3-4.

[40] Fox, "True to their Mission, Polite toward Rome," 287.

[43] Cited by Phan, "Responses of Asian Episcopal Conferences," 22.

of our fellow human beings, salvation is seen as being channeled to them not in spite of but through and in their various sociocultural and religious traditions. We cannot, therefore, deny a priori a salvific role for these non-Christian religions."[44] Similarly, after arguing for the need to re-examine the significance and role of traditional religions in Korea, the Korean bishops affirm that "[t]hey [their religions] too play a part in the salvific economy of God," an "understanding [that] is essential for the inculturation of the Gospel."[45] For the Filipino bishops, "[w]hile firmly and courageously confessing the truth, any treatment of the uniqueness of Jesus should avoid any triumphalism and superior attitude vis-à-vis the other great religions of Asia."[46]

Even if the Asian Churches' call for this unequivocal acknowledgment of the salvific status of the other Asian religions was made in 1998 as they responded to the Synod's *Lineamenta*, it must be noted, as Tagle argues, that it was not the first time that the Asian bishops and theologians had put forward this argument. It has been a consistent assertion of the Asian Churches in the FABC assemblies, conferences, and workshops since 1974.[47] If Vatican II has argued that salvation is available to every human being, although in ways known to God alone (cf. *LG* 16, *AG* 7, and *GS* 22), for Asian bishops and theologians, it is in and through the religious traditions of the world that God's saving grace reaches adherents of other faiths. Ruben C. Mendoza, in his article, "Religious Pluralism and Turn to the Spirit," sums up the FABC's reasoning in this way:

> The FABC firmly believes in the universal salvific will of God, a grace that is freely offered to every person, including peoples of other faiths. At the same time, it recognizes the existential reality that many peoples of other faiths who come into contact with Jesus Christ and the Church in Asia do not become Christians but remain in their own traditions to which they adhere devoutly. For the FABC this situation is not merely

[44] Cited by Phan, "Responses of Asian Episcopal Conferences," 22.

[45] Phan, "Responses of Asian Episcopal Conferences," 32.

[46] Phan, "Responses of Asian Episcopal Conferences," 40.

[47] Tagle, "The Synod for Asia as Event," 370-371.

> a sociological reality but is indicative of God's plan for these believers, a reflection of the mysterious and unfathomable grace of salvation. While the FABC does not specify the means that God gives to every person for her or his redemption, it seems that a concrete way in which other believers do participate in God's life is through their own religious traditions. In other words, other religious traditions have salvific value.[48]

Yet, *Ecclesia in Asia* does not include any statement that recognizes *explicitly* the role of other religions in the salvation of their members. Indeed, in spite of the Asian bishops' and theologians' calling for the explicit recognition of the salvific value of non-Christian religions in Asia, *Ecclesia in Asia* does not take up the issue and is silent about it. Such a non-recognition of the saving import of other religions contributes to the derailment of interreligious dialogue and the situation of *impasse* in Asia because of its tremendous impact on the character and structure of "dialogue" between Christians and adherents of other religions.[49]

C. The Absence of Reference to "Proposition 4" on the Diversity of Asian Ecclesial Contexts in *Ecclesia in Asia*

Thirdly, we analyze a significant recommendation from the *Propositiones* that was omitted from *Ecclesia in Asia*, which, for the Asian bishops, is a crucial Synodal Proposition as it seriously speaks of the varied and diverse contexts and situations of the Churches of Asia. Proposition 4—the proposition in question—argues:

> There is a rich variety of Churches by reason of origin, rite, and establishment. The communion of the Church in Asia is a unity in diversity. All these Churches live under different cultural, social, religious, and political contexts with all their related problems, difficulties, restrictions, and even persecution. They are faced with different

[48] R. C. Mendoza, "Religious Pluralism and Turn to the Spirit: FABC's and Gavin D'Costa's Theology of Religions," *Journal of Dharma* 35:1 (2010): 26.

[49] Cf. A. Mong, *Dialogue Derailed: Joseph Ratzinger's War Against Pluralist Theology*, Eugene (OR) 2015; F. Wilfred, "Dialogue Gasping for Breath? Towards New Frontiers in Inter-Religious Dialogue," *Vidyajyoti* (1987): 449-466.

situations in their life and witness.[50]

By establishing the contexts and ecclesial realities of Asia, this Proposition acknowledges that the Asian Churches are indeed as varied and diverse as the immense world of Asia itself "by reason of origin, rite and establishment." This is the reason why we cannot speak of *Church of Asia* (or Asian Church) but of *Churches of Asia* (or Asian Churches). What the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation fails to recognize and tries to "bury" in the grave of oblivion, the Seventh FABC Plenary Assembly affirms and "resuscitates" in its document: "The local churches in Asia present a splendid variety in their origin, historical, socio-political and cultural situations, ecclesial identity and growth. Obviously, the pastoral challenges facing the Church in Asia are equally diverse."[51]

In Asia, owing to its immensely complex socio-cultural, economic, political, and religious situations characterized by overwhelming diversities and pluralisms, it is extremely difficult to come up with accurate observations that are true and applicable to all, if not to many, Asian countries[52]. Because the Asian Churches live under extremely divergent circumstances with all their attendant theological issues and concerns and are confronted with distinct pastoral problems and challenges in their life and mission, Proposition 4 argues that "[o] pportunities for and methods of evangelization vary from country to country. Hence no uniform pattern of proclamation, inculturation, or dialogue is applicable to all the Churches in Asia."[53]

However, in spite of the obviousness of what Proposition 4 holds—which is simply "the pluriform nature of Asian Churches"—it is sadly, according to Prior, "one of the eight recommendations

[50] Synod of Bishops for Asia, "The Synod's Propositions," in *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, ed., Phan, 142.

[51] FABC VII, in FAPA III, 8.

[52] FABC-OE, no. 2, in FAPA I, 335.

[53] Synod of Bishops for Asia, "The Synod's Propositions," 142.

nowhere referred to in *Ecclesia in Asia*."[54] The recognition of this bewildering diversity of contexts and situations confronting the various Churches of Asia logically demands the acceptance of distinct manners of evangelization, of doing theology, and of proclaiming Christ in Asia. As the Indian bishops assert in their response to the *Lineamenta*: "[A] common methodology and faith expression for preaching the Gospel to the Asian people cannot be formulated. Rather, each Asian country should develop by careful discernment its own methodologies according to its pastoral needs."[55] And if we stretch the implications of this argument, the conclusion is that the way Christ is preached in Europe, in Africa, or in Latin America will be different from the way Christ is preached not only in Asia as a whole but also in its many diverse places, countries, and regions. As Proposition 7, another important Proposition not included in the final document, admits, the proclamation of Jesus Christ as the only Savior of the world presents problems and difficulties in the context of Asia's plurality of religions, since their adherents also believe in the revelatory and salvific character of their own religions. Hence, this Proposition encourages Asian theologians "to pursue their work of developing an inculturated theology that responds to Asian realities," which is "to be carried out with courage, in faithfulness to the Scriptures and to the Church's tradition, in sincere adherence to the Magisterium."[56]

Indeed, if the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation does not recognize this multi-contextual character of the Churches of Asia, no wonder it insists on a kind and method of proclamation that seems almost the same throughout the world and seems nearly the same everywhere because it does not take into consideration the context of theologizing, of doing theology. It is oblivious to the truth that if "[t]heology is unavoidably contextual," and if "the context is not

[54] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 260. The footnotes of *Ecclesia in Asia* reveal that the other seven Propositions not included in the document are Propositions 2, 7, 9, 10, 26, 37, and 46.

[55] Cited by Phan, "Responses of the Asian Episcopal Conferences," 22.

[56] Synod of Bishops for Asia, "The Synod's Propositions," 143, 142-143.

simply the venue in which theology is done but provides resources for theology as well as the lens through which the Christian doctrines are interpreted,"[57] then *Ecclesia in Asia* must have employed the different sociopolitical, cultural, and religious contexts of Asia as sources of new and fresh theological insights for the Churches of Asia.[58] The document, "Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church," is right in warning us, then, that if the Churches of Asia do not discover their own identity and do not become Asian in their way of thinking, praying, living, and communicating their experience of Christ to others, they will have no future.[59]

D. The Question of Asian Churches: Not the "Who" But the "How" in Their Evangelizing Mission in the Continent

Fourthly, we explore the implications of the Asian bishops' emphasis on contextual theology and its divergence from Rome's approaches to evangelization.

Let us develop this argument little by little. As regards the Christological content of *Ecclesia in Asia*, we need to recall the words of John Paul II that while "[t]he Synod was an occasion to recognize the ancient religious traditions and civilization, the profound philosophies and the wisdom which have made Asia what it is today (*EA* 4), the Pope nevertheless hoped that the Synod might, quoting his Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* 30, "illustrate and explain more fully the truth that Christ is the one Mediator between God and man and the sole Redeemer of the world, to be clearly distinguished from the founders of other great religions" (*EA* 2).

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[57] Peter C. Phan, *The Joy of Religious Pluralism: A Personal Journey* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017), 101.

[58] See Michael Amaladoss, "Asian Theological Trends," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia*, ed. F. Wilfred (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 106–107, which partly discusses contextual theology, especially the contextual nature of Asian theology.

[59] FABC, no. 14, in FAPA I, 70.

We can see this explicitly in Chapter 2 of *Ecclesia in Asia*, a chapter devoted to meditation on "Jesus the Savior: A Gift to Asia," which commences with the declaration that "Jesus Christ, true God and true man," is "the one and only Savior of all peoples" (*EA* 10). Amaladoss considers this faith-affirmation "a summary of the document's image of Jesus… [and]… a very clear statement of the Vatican's view on Jesus as the unique and therefore the universal mediator of salvation for all human beings."[60] All of the exhortation's teachings about Jesus are grounded in this central affirmation of faith: "In "the fullness of time" (*Gal* 4:4), he sent his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ the Savior, who took flesh as an Asian!" (*EA* 1); "'Behold the Savior of the World is born to us,' born in Asia!" (*EA* 2); "the Synod was an ardent affirmation of faith in Jesus Christ the Savior" (*EA* 4); "The Jesus whom we proclaim as the only Savior walked the earth as the God-Man" (*EA* 11). For the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, "[s]alvation can be found in the person of the Son of God made man and the mission entrusted to him alone as the Son, a mission of service and love for the life of all" (*EA* 13). Pope John Paul II, therefore, does not mince his words when, in a section specifically dealing with "the uniqueness and universality of salvation in Jesus," he boldly concludes Chapter 2's meditation on Jesus Christ as Savior in this way:

> We believe that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is the one Savior because he alone—the Son—accomplished the Father's universal plan of salvation. As the definitive manifestation of the mystery of the Father's love for all, Jesus is indeed unique, and "it is precisely this uniqueness of Christ which gives him an absolute and universal significance, whereby, while belonging to history, he remains history's centre and goal" (*EA* 14).

For the Holy Father, the proclamation of Jesus Christ as such is "the Church's unique contribution to the peoples of the continent" (*EA* 10); it is, in fact, "the greatest gift which the Church can offer to Asia" (*EA* 10), "the supreme service which the Church can offer to

[60] M. Amaladoss, "The Image of Jesus in the *Church in Asia*," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 37:3 (2000): 233-234.

the peoples of Asia" (20).[61] It is a gift received from God and a gift that must be shared with others: "Sharing the truth of Jesus Christ with others is the solemn duty of all who have received the gift of faith" (*EA* 10).

Because of John Paul II's manifestly strong Christological convictions in *Ecclesia in Asia*, we, therefore, find in the document expressions addressed to Asian Catholics like: "preaching... the saving Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ must be your absolute priority" (*EA* 2); "proclaim with vigor in word and deed that *Jesus Christ is the Savior*" (*EA* 9); "[t]he disciples of Jesus in Asia must... be unstinting in their efforts to fulfill the mission they have received from the Lord... [and must share]... with the multitude of Asia's peoples the immense gift which she herself has received—the love of Jesus the Savior" (*EA* 50). For the Apostolic Exhortation, the crucial issue in the "new evangelization" of the Asian continent, and that which constitutes the greatest concern of the Churches of Asia at the turn of the new millennium, is the proclamation of Jesus Christ. It is a concern that necessitates not just "an explicit, complete proclamation of Christ" but also "a correct formulation of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior."[62] The Holy Father opens *Ecclesia in Asia* with a fervent hope that—quoting his address delivered at the Sixth FABC Plenary Assembly in Manila, Philippines in 1995— "just as in the first millennium the Cross was planted on the soil of Europe, and in the second on that of the Americas and Africa, we can pray that in the Third Christian Millennium a great harvest of faith will be reaped in this vast and vital continent" (*EA* 1).

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[61] This has been Vatican's insistence as early as in the *Lineamenta*, for the Synod for Asia to focus on the proclamation of Jesus, Savior of the world, as the Church's gift to the peoples of Asia. In fact, for Edmund Chia, the *Lineamenta* even suggested in an entire chapter entitled "'Jesus Christ: God's Good News of Salvation to all' that Jesus Christ is 'The Church's Gift to Asia' (Chap. IV), *as if the Church possessed Jesus or as if Jesus was given by some agent outside Asia to Asia*" (E. Chia, "The 'Absence of Jesus,'" 895; emphasis mine).

[62] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 259.

And, if *Ecclesia in Asia* is a manual for evangelization in Asia, the Pope looks at the Church's evangelizing mission in Asia as "a providential opportunity for the Church in Asia... to make a renewed commitment to the mission of making Jesus Christ better known to all" (*EA* 2), "the joyful, patient and progressive preaching of the saving Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ" (*EA* 2), the full illustration and explanation of "the truth that Christ is the one Mediator between God and man and the sole Redeemer of the world" (*EA* 2). Indeed, the Apostolic Exhortation "is a strong affirmation of the need for a new drive for evangelizing Asia and expresses a fervent hope that Asia will turn to Christ in the third millennium."[63] For *Ecclesia in Asia*, this thrust of the "new evangelization," in "the earth's largest continent… [which]… is home to nearly two-thirds of the world's population" (*EA* 6), is imperative. This is not only because "after two millennia, a major part of the human family does not acknowledge Christ" (*EA* 29), but also and particularly because Jesus Christ, "the Savior of the world, born in Asia, has until now remained largely unknown to the people of the continent" (*EA* 2). Indeed, as a result of a Synod that has for its purpose the rekindling of evangelization in Asia, "*Ecclesia in Asia* [simply] repeated [Pope John Paul II's] directive that Asian bishops evangelize primarily by proclaiming Christ as the unique savior of the world."[64]

Phan observes that during the preparatory phase of the Synod, the Asian bishops were never consulted about the theme—"Jesus Christ the Savior and his Mission of Love and Service in Asia"—which, for Cardinal Jan Schotte, the General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, was supposed to highlight "the centrality of the Person of Christ, his mission as Mediator and One and Only Savior in God's Eternal Plan of Salvation," thereby making "the Church in Asia and all Her members... better prepared to fulfill Christ's Evangelizing Mission of love and

[63] Amaladoss, "*Ecclesia in Asia* Affirms Tradition," 3.

[64] Fox, "True to their Mission, Polite toward Rome," 286.

service in Asia."[65] Yet, for Phan, "[t]his imposition of Christology with its claim of Jesus as the 'mediator and one and only savior' on the Asian Synod's agenda and conceiving it as the panacea for what may ail the Asian churches constitute, to judge from all the documents of the FABC, a massive misdiagnosis of the situation of Asian Christianity."[66] On his part, Amaladoss expects that after having correctly said that "[t]he Synod Fathers noted that proclaiming Jesus as the only Savior can present particular difficulties in their cultures, given that many Asian religions teach divine self-manifestations as mediating salvation" (*EA* 10), *Ecclesia in Asia* "would take into account this reality and would reflect on its own faith affirmation in this new context."[67] Instead, in the Apostolic Exhortation on the Church in Asia, "what we have is *an affirmation of faith that could have been made anywhere in the world at any time*, not only in what it says positively about Jesus and his significance, but also in what it says about other religions."[68] For the Indian bishops, it is actually "[a] deficiency of our present Christology… that it sometimes uses exclusive language, which deals with only one part of the great mystery of Christ—as though valid for all times and places."[69] For Amaladoss, in another article, this problem arises because Western theology "ignores its own contextual sources as irrelevant," because it claims that it is "independent of all context and so universally valid," and because "even when the Western theologians acknowledge that there is a context for their reflections, they claim it to be universal."[70]

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[65] Cited by Phan, "'Reception' or 'Subversion' of Vatican II by the Asian Churches?: A New Way of Being Church in Asia," in *Vatican II: Forty Years Later*, ed., W. Madges (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 41.

[66] Phan, "'Reception' or 'Subversion' of Vatican II," 41.

[67] Amaladoss, "The Image of Jesus," 235.

[68] Amaladoss, "The Image of Jesus," 235; emphasis mine.

[69] Cited by Phan, "Responses of the Asian Episcopal Conferences," 21.

[70] Amaladoss, "The Mystery of Christ and Other Religions: An Indian Perspective," *VJTR*, 63 (1999): 327.

Thomas Fox, who was present at the Seventh FABC General Assembly, expressed a similar sentiment: "Privately many bishops here expressed frustration with Rome's seeming inability to understand their 'Asian' mindset and the circumstances in which their churches operate."[71] In another article, Fox narrates that after addressing the participants at FABC VII on the first day of the gathering, Cardinal Josef Tomko—Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and Rome's representative in the Asian bishops' assembly—was asked by the bishops what he meant by "weak Christology" when he said (presumably in his address) that they should not allow such a Christology in Asia. In the words of Fox, Tomko "replied [that] a weak Christology would be one that portrayed Jesus as simply a wise person or prophet—but not the Son of God." When "[h]e was pressed to say if he had encountered such a Christology in their midst... [h]e replied he had not."[72] The Seventh FABC Plenary Assembly introduces its Final Statement with the Asian bishops' "dream of sharing our faith in Jesus... in Jesus through whom God saves;" it concludes with a quotation from *Ecclesia in Asia* expressing the same faith: "[T]he Church in Asia joyfully makes her pilgrim way into the Third Millennium. Her only joy is that which comes from sharing with the multitude of Asia's peoples the immense gift which she herself has received—the love of Jesus the Savior" (*EA* 50).[73]

Likewise, for Fox, such an approach to evangelization, with an over-emphasis on the proclamation of Jesus Christ without much consideration of the unique contexts and the difficult situations of the Asian Churches in the continent, is exactly what the Asian bishops were hesitant to embrace. While the bishops of Asia "did not openly reject the pope's exhortation," they nonetheless expressed "the need to evangelize by witnessing to the gospels and by entering into dialogue with followers of the other Asian religions."[74] John Paul II himself

[71] Fox, "True to their Mission, Polite toward Rome," 286.

[72] Fox, "True to their Mission, Polite toward Rome," 289.

[73] FABC VII, in FAPA III, 2.15.

[74] Fox, "True to their Mission, Polite toward Rome," 286.

admits that the proclamation of Jesus in the Asian context is "fraught with philosophical, cultural and theological difficulties, especially in light of the beliefs of Asia's great religions, deeply intertwined with cultural values and specific world views," problems that are compounded by the fact that "Jesus is often perceived as foreign to Asia," regarded in fact as "a Western rather than an Asian figure" (*EA* 20). The Pope, therefore, proposes in the presentation of Jesus Christ as the only Savior a *gradual* "pedagogy" that introduces non-Christians to the full appropriation of his mystery, the use of different approaches in the initial and continuing proclamation of Jesus to religious others, and the use of narrative methods to complement ontological categories employed in the proclamation (*EA* 20).

This proposal of the Pope must have been the result of the insights of the "smaller discussion groups" into which the Asian bishops were divided after their initial speeches in the first week of the Asian Synod. Gerard O'Connell, who collated the insights of the small groups in his brief article, observed that some synodal bishops felt that "to present Jesus as the only savior 'immediately'… 'would not be prudent,'" and that "the uniqueness of Jesus, though theologically correct, may not be the best place to start"; they suggested that Jesus "should be presented [first] as a perfect human being" who is "'not distant' from Asian realities."[75] For the Asian bishops—something that they asserted so strongly in their responses to the *Lineamenta*—"dialogue with other religions comes first and that it is the means to effective proclamation."[76] In fact, for the Japanese bishops, "[i]f we stress too much that 'Jesus Christ is the One and Only Saviour,' we can have no dialogue, common living, or solidarity with other religions."[77] Indeed, if we start our evangelization by saying that only Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and that others will not achieve salvation unless they become Christians, they will immediately close their doors to us and we will not be able to enter into any conversation with them.

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[75] G. O'Connell, "Doing It the Asian Way," *The Tablet* (16 May 1998): 647.

[76] Cited by Chia, "The 'Absence of Jesus,'" 896.

[77] Cited by Chia, "Responses of the Asian Episcopal Conferences," 30.

In the First Consensus Paper of the 1979 International Congress on Mission, entitled, "Towards a Theology of Mission for Asia Today," the participants declared that "[t]he primary task of the Church is to present effectively through personal witness, lifestyle, concern for others, commitment, joyful hope, the meaning of human existence as revealed in Jesus Christ."[78] Only when Asian Churches go through a serious process of renewal, proclaiming Jesus through life-witness, radical service to the poor, and living a life characterized by the primacy of God, can they become authentically Church and genuinely Asian—something that "comes out clearly in the work of the FABC over the past 30 years and is vindicated by the many synodical interventions."[79] The Asian bishops, in FABC VII, also declare that in the process of renewal—which involves all the Church's sectors, "[w]hat counts inestimably more is our ecclesial identity and the quality of our witness as servants and disciples of Jesus and the Kingdom of God for the peoples of Asia."[80] In fact, "[w]e could easily trace the source of many conversions to the living witness of genuine Christians, be they clerical or lay."[81] Our brothers and sisters of other faiths "will recognize the Gospel that we announce when they see in our life the transparency of the message of Jesus and the inspiring and healing figure of men and women immersed in God."[82] In their most unambiguous pronouncement on the preeminence of the component of witnessing as a mode of proclaiming Christ to Asians, the Asian bishops affirm: "The most effective means of evangelization and service in the name of Christ has always been and continues to be the witness of life," which "has to become the way of the Gospel for persons, institutions and the whole Church community."[83]

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[78] International Congress on Mission, no. 15, in FAPA I, 138.

[79] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 261-262.

[80] FABC VII, in FAPA III, 5.

[81] FABC VII, in FAPA III, 12.

[82] FABC VII, in FAPA III, 13.

[83] FABC VII, in FAPA III, 12-13.

According to Chia, it is, therefore, in the manner of articulating the Asian vision of Christianity, and not in its content, that the Asian Churches depart from Rome, that "it is not so much the *who* or the *why* of mission that is in dispute as is the *how* of mission or the methodology for theological reflection."[84] Cardinal Paul Shan, bishop of Kaohsiung, Taiwan, expressed it more concretely: "[T]he big question presently confronting us, given the religious and cultural context of Asia, is not why we should proclaim the Good News of Christ's Salvation but HOW."[85]

In fact, as early as 1978, the First Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate held in the Philippines argued that, given "the legacy of millions still to be introduced to Christ," it "sought in faith for new ways of communicating the Good News."[86] In a 1988 All-Asian Conference on Evangelization held in South Korea, the participants strove "to search for fresh ways to announce and share the Good News of God's Kingdom in Jesus Christ with our Asian brothers and sisters."[87] Like the rest of the universal Church, the *who* and the *what* to proclaim to Asians has always been a "constant" for the Asian Churches—it is Jesus Christ and his Gospel. It is on the *how*, the manner of proclaiming Jesus Christ in Asia, that they differ because of the unique situations of religious pluralism in the continent. Asia requires a different way of doing theology because of its unique multi-religious context, a way of theologizing that inevitably gives birth to a distinct, contextualized theology. As Prior observes:

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[84] Chia, "Of Fork and Spoon," 242-243. A clarification is in order here. By "content" (a word that appears in Chia's statement referred to in this sentence), Chia *specifically* refers to the "who" and the "what" of evangelization—meaning, Jesus Christ and the Gospel, as we see in the ensuing discussion. This needs to be clarified because the Asian vision of Christianity *does* depart from Rome in content as regards its position that other religions are ways of salvation for their members.

[85] Cited by Chia, "Of Fork and Spoon," 242; word in capitals in the original.

[86] BIMA I, no. 4, in FAPA I, 94.

[87] BIMA I, no. 2, in FAPA I, 291.

> Looking again at the 191 interventions, and remembering the informal conversations during the Synodal coffee breaks, I can say with absolute certainty that not a single Asian bishop would disagree with the *who* of mission, with the subject of proclamation. The faith we live is Christic, the ongoing practice of the Asian Churches is a faithful following of the Incarnate Word; on this the integrity of our mission is founded. The key issue that the bishops grapple with is the *how* of mission.[88]

Somewhat related to this fundamental difference between the Pope's *Ecclesia in Asia* and the Asian bishops' interventions both in the Asian Synod and in the FABC assemblies is the question of the "foreignness" of Christianity and the Churches in Asia. In the Apostolic Exhortation, the Pope "sees the crux of the matter as doctrinal (Christocentrism)," whereas, for the Asian bishops, the problem is not with Jesus Christ "but the presence of a foreign Church burdened by a colonial past."[89] *Ecclesia in Asia* should have explored the reasons why Jesus, born in Asia, "has until now remained largely unknown to the people of the continent" (*EA* 2)—reasons such as "the absence of an appropriate adaptation to local cultures, and perhaps above all a lack of preparedness to encounter the great religions of Asia" (*EA* 9). However, the document simply calls for "a renewed commitment to the mission of making Jesus Christ better known to all" (*EA* 2), as if the failure of Christianity to take root on Asian soil in the previous centuries was due to the dearth of Christian commitment to proclaiming Christ to the peoples of Asia. As regards the second reason, the Indian bishops admit that "a basic reason behind the failure of Christian mission efforts in the East [is that] the spiritual and mystical elements of Asian religions have been practically ignored."[90]

Initially, *Ecclesia in Asia* shows positive signs that it will consider this matter by reflecting on the Christian faith "in relation to the context in which it has to be proclaimed and professed in Asia today" (*EA* 4) and by insisting that the Church's evangelizing mission in

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[88] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 259.

[89] Prior, "Unfinished Encounter," 261.

[90] Cited at Phan, "Responses of the Asian Episcopal Conferences," 19.

Asia is conditioned not only by the Asian Church's understanding of itself as Christ's community of disciples gathered around its pastors but also by "the social, political, religious, cultural and economic realities of Asia" (*EA* 5). Indeed, the Synod for Asia should have allowed more voice and participation to "those who [really] have daily contact with the extremely diversified realities of such an immense continent" (*EA* 5); its post-synodal document should have reflected faithfully their deepest questions, issues, and concerns. Yet, *Ecclesia in Asia* fails miserably in the most elementary requirement for coming up with an accurate discernment of one of the ills that afflicts Asian Christianity—its lack of Asianness. For while it is correct in perceiving that "despite her centuries-long presence and her many apostolic endeavors, the Church in many places *was* still considered as foreign to Asia and indeed *was* often associated in people's minds with the colonial powers" (*EA* 9; emphasis mine), it—as Phan sadly observes—"uses the past tense and fails to recognize that the foreignness of Christianity in Asia and the perception of its association with colonialism are *present* realities, and this not simply 'in many places' but in all parts of Asia."[91] This lack of Asianness is one of the bitter ironies of Asian Christianity: Christianity was born in Asia, moved westward until it arrived in Europe, and returned to its birthplace as a foreign religion, imported to Asia by its Western colonizers.[92]

Indeed, even if Christianity was born in Asia, for Felix Wilfred, "foreignness is one thing which characterizes all the local Churches in Asia," and this is not simply due to Christianity's foreign origins or because Christianity professes a different faith.

> The main reason why Christianity has been viewed as alien is because the local Churches in the countries of Asia have, by and large, kept themselves aloof from the mainstream of the life of the people, their history, struggles and dreams. They have failed to identify themselves

[91] Phan, "*Ecclesia in Asia*: Challenges for Asian Christianity," 218.

[92] Phan, "A Prophetic Church in the Service of the Reign of God: Dimensions of an Asian Ecclesiology», in *Reaping a Harvest from the Asian Soil. Towards an Asian Theology*, ed., V. Tirimanna (Bangalore, 2011), 193-194.

> with the people, even though in terms of charity many praiseworthy services have been rendered.[93]

For the 1991 FABC-Office of Evangelization document, the Church, as a social institution, is seen as a foreign entity in its colonial beginnings, while other religions are deeply rooted in Asian cultures and traditions. And this is because

> [t]he Church remains foreign in its lifestyle, in its institutional structure, in its worship, in its western-trained leadership and its theology. Christian rituals remain formal, neither spontaneous nor particularly Asian. There is a gap between leaders and ordinary believers in the Church: *a fortiori* with members of other faiths. The Church has created a powerful priestly class with little lay participation. Seminary formation often alienates the seminarian from the people. Biblical, systematic and historical theology as taught are often unpastoral and unAsian.[94]

III. Conclusion

This paper delves deeper into Pope John Paul II's *Ecclesia in Asia*, identifying key theological and missiological omissions that leave the document incomplete.

First of all, we underlined the incomplete character of *Ecclesia in Asia*, arguing that it primarily reflects the papal perspective rather than a genuine dialogue with the Asian bishops. Furthermore, we noted the document's failure to adequately address key issues raised by the Asian bishops in the 1998 Synod for Asia, including the salvific significance of other religions. In spite of the FABC's long-standing regard for the place and role of the Asian religions in God's universal plan of salvation, the document deliberately sidesteps the issue of the salvific import of other religions, thereby undermining the Church's efforts to engage in meaningful interreligious dialogue. Additionally,

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[93] F. Wilfred, "The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC): Orientations, Challenges and Impact," in *For All the Peoples of Asia. Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences: Documents from 1970-1991*, I, eds., C. G. Arevalo and G. Rosales (Quezon City, 1992), xxiv.

[94] FABC-OE, no. 13, in FAPA I, 337.

we highlighted the document's limited scope, particularly its failure to acknowledge the diverse contexts of Asian Churches and their unique approaches to evangelization. The unique cultural, religious, and social contexts of Asian Churches demand a diverse range of theological and pastoral responses and a unique way of implementing a vision of Asian Christianity tailored to the specific needs of each local Church. Lastly, we indicated that the point of divergence between the Roman Magisterium and the Asian bishops as regards the Asian Churches' mission is not on the "who" and the "what" but on the "how" of evangelization.

The Synod of Bishops was established by Pope Paul VI on September 15, 1965 as the Second Vatican Council was drawing to a close to promote episcopal collegiality. Canon 343 clearly states: "The function of the synod of Bishops is to discuss the matters proposed to it and set forth recommendations. It is not its function to settle matters or to draw up decrees, unless the Roman Pontiff has given it deliberative powers in certain cases; in this event, it rests with the Roman Pontiff to ratify the decisions of the synod."[95] That the Pope, from a canonical point of view, ends up not incorporating in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation all or many of the Propositions submitted to him by a Synod is still within the purview of his papal authority. The question, however, is: Why, *if* this happens, bother convoking a Synod if the Pope, at the end of a synodal process, chooses not to listen to the voices of his brother-bishops who are more knowledgeable about the context and situations of the Churches in a particular continent than he and those whom he delegates to draft the conclusions of a Synod?

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[95] The Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland, *The Code of Canon Law* (London: 1983), 59.

Homecoming, *Pedro Calungsod: Patron for the Filipino Youth*, *A Critical Re-appraisal of Karl Rahner's Theory of the "Anonymous Christian,"* and *Our Longing for Home*, as well as several articles. While currently serving as President of Saint Anthony Mary Claret College and Dean of the Institute for Consecrated Life in Asia, he teaches Systematic Theology at Loyola School of Theology and Institute for Consecrated Life in Asia, both in Quezon City, Philippines.

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THE GOSPEL OF HOPE: EXPLORING THE THEOLOGICAL CORE OF THE JUBILEE YEAR 2025

Ramil del Rosario Marcos

Abstract. The Catholic world celebrates another Holy Year in 2025, which promises to be a time of immense grace and conversion. The special motto assigned for this jubilee is "Pilgrims of Hope," in accord with the intention of Pope Francis to connect the celebration of the jubilee with the strengthening of hope in every human heart as the world moves away from traumas of the Covid-19 pandemic and from the catastrophes that occurred at the tail-end of this crisis. This calls for a renewed focus on the theme of Christian hope, which although one of the three theological virtues, is the least discussed or explored in theology. Thankfully, there is no need for a distant search since from the beginning of his ministry, Pope Francis has provided the Church with his own reflections and ruminations based on hope. This paper delves primarily on the presentation of hope in the Pope's weekly addresses from 2016-2017, to discover his theology of hope and his understanding of its relevance for the individual, for the community of the Church and for the whole world. During the pandemic when the Pope successfully conveyed his role as a universal religious leader with a compassionate concern for all, it was certainly his thoughts on hope that greatly enabled him in encouraging people to survive trials through the power of faith in a loving God and in the goodness and selflessness of ordinary people. Now that the task of rebuilding has begun, the theme of Christian hope can spur people to the pursuit

of human development inspired by the Kingdom of God where hope abounds because it is anchored on the promise of the Father, is purified by the love from the Cross, and is driven confidently by the wind of the Spirit.

Keywords. Theological virtue; theology of hope; biblical hope; pandemic; Jurgen Moltmann

Introduction

In one of his monumental homilies, Pope Francis invited Catholics and people of goodwill everywhere to become heralds of hope.[1] Speaking to the crowds gathered for the inauguration Mass of his pontificate, he drew lessons from the life, virtues and challenges of St Joseph, whose feast day coincided with that historical event. Turning to the second reading of the liturgy, he reflected on Romans 4:18, where Saint Paul spoke of Abraham, who *"hoping against hope, believed."* The Pope acknowledged the darkness of the times and the call for everyone to become "men and women who bring hope to others."[2] Breaking through dark clouds, hope in God can help to protect creation and every person in a spirit of tenderness and love. Clearly the Pope considered this hope primarily as a theological virtue because it was "set against the horizon of God" and "built on the rock which is God."[3]

Faithful to his magisterial function, Pope Francis returned to the theme of Christian hope in a series of addresses given at the regular Wednesday General Audiences from 2016 to 2017. In presenting an extended catechesis on Hope, the Pope revealed the signature style of

[1] Brian Carpenter, "Pope Francis and the Virtue of Hope," Working to Beat Hell Blog, April 3, 2013, available at https://www.workingtobeathell.org/pope-francis-and-the-virtue-of-hope/ (accessed on February 15, 2024).

[2] Pope Francis, "Homily at the Mass for the Beginning of Petrine Ministry," March 19, 2023, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130319_omelia-inizio-pontificato.html (accessed on March 1, 2024).

[3] Pope Francis, "Homily at the Mass for the Beginning of Petrine Ministry."

his pastoral theology: giving lessons from Scriptures and explaining it in a lively, concrete, and practical way that addresses the concerns of his audience. He provided anecdotes from his own experiences and occasionally veered from prepared texts to interject spontaneous and practical thoughts and counsel. Church and secular media paid scant attention to these series of speeches on the Christian virtue of hope; very few took time to comment on its contents or on the Pope's enthusiasm for his chosen theme. Perhaps even Pope Francis did not foresee how the theme was preparing him to confront and address a looming, worldwide menace that was coming in just a few years, a formidable challenge that he, the most recognizable and universal religious leader, would be called to accompany the people of the world in its battle against the Covid 19 pandemic. Was his early appeal to hope, together with his motto of mercy, providentially preparing him to reanimate and resurrect the spirits of all in the world who would be susceptible to resignation and despair?

Hardly recovering from the pandemic, conflicts between nations aggravated into wars, persecutions of religious, racial, and migrant minorities resurfaced, ecological and economic problems escalated, and incidences of mental health issues increased everywhere. In 2022, Pope Francis set his eyes on the Ordinary Jubilee or Holy Year celebrated in the Catholic world every twenty-five years. In his letter to the Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization (Evangelization Section), Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the Pope situated the coming jubilee within the context of the worldwide experience of a pandemic and of the rising tide of universal hardships, poverty and unforeseen vicissitudes in people's personal and social lives even as the medical scourge receded.[4] To this end, Pope Francis chose as the theme of the Jubilee Year 2025, **Pilgrims of Hope**, with the aim of rejuvenating the spiritual lives of people through conversion, not merely personal, but towards a social and ecological transformation. In preparation, he

[4] Pope Francis, "Letter to Msgr. Fisichella for the Jubilee 2025," February 11, 2022, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/rancesco/en/letters/2022/documents/20220211-fisichella-giubileo2025.html (accessed on February 1, 2024).

mandated 2024 to be observed as the **Year of Prayer**, a fitting prelude to the resurgence of hope during the Holy Year.

What is Pope Francis' understanding of hope and why is he offering this as a gift to the world today? How does his thinking on hope converge or diverge from the approaches made by others before him? What would be his special contribution to a specifically Catholic theology of Hope? This paper's modest aim is to discover from the aforementioned catechetical series on Hope, as well as from other papal messages, the Pope's own understanding of this theological virtue and its relevance to men and women of the world today. In the Extraordinary Jubilee on Mercy, the first jubilee proclaimed by Pope Francis, a wealth of teachings, reflections and actions based on God's attribute of mercy emerged from his heart and mind.[5] This present endeavor might prove helpful in providing people with a resource to focus their contemplation on a topic rarely explored, amplified, or tested even in ecclesial circles,[6] and in the process reveal the Pope's rich theological and pastoral legacy to a people emerging from the traumas of history and waiting in hope for healing, peace, and solidarity.

What is Christian Hope?

Traditionally, hope has been understood together with faith and love as a theological virtue, one of the three things that last (cf, 1 Cor. 13:13), "the modalities which describe Christian existence. As such, these virtues, grounded in the grace of the Spirit, express what never

[5] See Ramil Marcos, "The Theology of Mercy in the Life and Teachings of Pope Francis," *Landas* 34:1 (2020): 105-134.

[6] In the history of theology, it was often the case that it was easier to describe faith and charity than to describe hope, and so hope has been kept in soft focus as a junior partner of the the other two virtues; its conceptual development not equally and enthusiastically pursued. See David Eliott, "Hope in Theology," in *Historical and Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Hope*, ebook, ed. Steven van den Heuvel (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2020), 121.

changes in Christian anthropology."[7] Theological virtues, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 1840, "dispose Christians to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity. They have God as their origin, their motive, and their object – God known by faith, God hoped in and God loved for his own sake."[8] Succinctly, the Church's Catechism describes hope as the virtue by which "we desire, and with steadfast trust await from God, eternal life and the graces to merit it."[9]

Pope Francis teaches that hope is primarily founded in God, and thus, a theological virtue.[10] While there is such a thing as natural hope, the human affect behind the will to live,[11] the virtue of which he speaks does not originate in humanity's power, because its provenance is beyond sight. However, through the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, this hope has become visible, reliable, and comprehensible, truly a gift through God's initiative. In Jesus then, God walks with his children in their present journey of life in a way that gives them confidence and peace, without necessarily having no difficulties along the way. Jesus gives human beings the capacity to always be on the move, to undertake a journey that finds its destination in the arms of the Father who offers salvation. This is what the Letter to the Romans (8:24) means when it declares that "in this hope, we were saved." Believers are saved in hope when their interior lives become a constant journey, not a static compartment, towards openness to God who reveals himself in Jesus.

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[7] Michael Scanlon, "Hope" in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, eds. Joseph Komonchak, et al. (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2011), 492-3.

[8] *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Definitive Edition* (Makati: Word and Life Publications, 1997). Henceforth, this will be referred to as *CCC*.

[9] *CCC* no. 1843.

[10] Pope Francis, "Christ's Birth is the Source of Hope," December 21, 2016, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2016/documents/papa-francesco 20161221_udienza-generale.html (accessed on Feb. 17, 2024).

[11] Scanlon, "Hope," 493.

Hope is based, not on the clarity and comfort of present things, but on the allure and cogency of a promise. Through the prophets, God repeatedly assured the people of Israel that he was near, that he never abandoned them, that he was coming to liberate them. In the midst of their exile, God's **Here I am**, revealed his closeness and his plan for salvation, proclaimed by the prophet as an invitation to which the people joyfully responded.[12] In situations that elicit despair, "when everything seems finished, when, faced with many negative realities, and faith becomes demanding, and there comes the temptation which says that nothing makes sense anymore,"[13] hope comes when people long for God who assures them that he is coming to bring consolation and freedom. Despair is crushed by the knowledge that evil and suffering will not last and that God is among his beloved. The Lord beckons the people to behold not an impenetrable wall of impossibility but a horizon of hope. In the Incarnation of his Son, God fulfilled his message and realized his promise.

Hope is easily and readily grasped by simple, ordinary people. Pope Francis stressed that "hope is the virtue of the little ones."[14] The mighty and the great have no use for mere promises for they possess resources upon which to rely in life. In the Old Testament, during the exile, when people lost their homeland, their dignity and liberty, perhaps many also lost their faith in the God they thought abandoned and neglected them. But those who continued to trust in God's promises retained their capacity to smile because "only hope brings a smile."[15]

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[12] Pope Francis, "Christian Hope – Isaiah 52," December 14, 2016, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20161214_udienza-generale.html (accessed on February 2, 2024).

[13] Pope Francis, "Christian Hope – Isaiah 52."

[14] Pope Francis, "Christian Hope – Isaiah 40," December 7, 2016, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20161207_udienza-generale.html (accessed on March 1, 2024).

[15] Pope Francis, "Christian Hope – Isaiah 40."

These little ones encountered the glory of God through exiles, deserts, loneliness, desperation and suffering for they allowed themselves to be taught by hope. In the New Testament, at the dawning of hope, Mary became the Mother of hope because her heart was full of faith enlivened by hope. Joseph gave the name "Jesus" to God's Child, the name that gave hope to all humankind that salvation from sin and death has come. The shepherds in Bethlehem, too represented the little ones who did not cling to material certainties or on their personal power, but instead hoped in the God of salvation.[16] These little ones have found their journey in life to be full of joy, of the readiness to do good, and the capacity to smile in the midst of trials and tribulations.

While hope is a basic human need, the force behind the will to survive, to press towards the future, and to assume a positive attitude in life, Pope Francis cautions against false hopes.[17] Moments come when instead of trusting in God, people seek for tangible and concrete assurances around them. They find these in the "ephemeral consolations" and false security of money, power, worldliness, and harmful ideologies, including what seems to be harmless soothsayers or fortune tellers who sell "false hopes." False hope can be bought, but real hope is gratuitous hope, freely given to those who fully and totally trust in God.[18] False hopes also come in the form of idols, not only the physical ones, but also the mental idols people conjure in their minds – obsession with wealth, power, success, vanity, beauty, or health. All these lead to death and to people in the church, these pursuits can lead to illusions, to worldliness. In the end, false hope disappoints but real hope does not disappoint, for God is not an idol, and thus, cannot disappoint.[19]

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[16] Pope Francis, "Christ's Birth is the Source of Hope."

[17] Pope Francis, "The False Hopes of Idols," January 11, 2017, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170111_udienza-generale.html (accessed on February 28, 2024).

[18] Pope Francis, "The False Hopes of Idols."

[19] Pope Francis, "The False Hopes of Idols."

A Biblical Panorama of Hope

The catechesis on Christian Hope started on December 7, 2016 and lasted until October 25, 2017, with a total of 38 addresses to the faithful. Pope Francis started each discourse by offering a biblical basis for the day's lesson, and while explaining the idea of hope conveyed by the scriptural verse or verses, elaborated on its meaning while also supporting his talk with practical spiritual or moral applications to daily life, in the homiletic fashion he is best known for. In what follows, this paper attempts to provide a synthesis of this wide-ranging discussion on hope by presenting select themes that best represent the major segments of his reflections. While not being exhaustive, the following themes unravel a theology of hope that traverses both Old and New Testament insights on Hope with its significance and meaning for the mission of the Church today.

A. Foreshadowing Hope: Old Testament Witnesses

Abraham's Irrational Hope

Abraham was the first Old Testament witness that Pope Francis extolled in his teaching series. Acknowledged as our father in faith, this patriarch is also rightly our father in hope.[20] This is what Romans 8 expressed when it described how Abraham "hoped against hope" itself. Abraham possessed what might be called an "irrational hope." Prodded by God's call, he left his homeland and became an outsider in search of the land the Lord will appoint to him. He also believed in what was an unlikely potential, having a son although his wife Sara's womb was all but dead to future life.

When the promised land materialized, Abraham was consumed with longing for the yet unfulfilled pledge. He was filled with despair at the thought of an impossible heir. Against a fitting backdrop of night, Abraham experienced the darkness of disappointment, discouragement, and impossibility. He then turned to prayer,

[20] Pope Francis, "Abraham, Father in Faith and Hope," in *Catechesis on Hope*, ebook, Pope Francis (Opus Dei Information Service, 2017), 15-17.

discovering what Pope Francis suggests as a valid form of prayer – the prayer of lament, the prayer of complaint. For faith does not mean merely accepting things in silence. Hope does not mean conveniently being sheltered from perplexities and doubts. Trusting in God also means struggling with God, standing before him without pretenses, and courageously baring to him everything, including our bitterness. While Abraham thus conveyed his sentiments, God responded but in a yet another promise, showing him the stars as a guarantee. Abraham who asked for more hope, took this sight of the stars as the sign of God's fidelity to him and to his future descendants.[21]

Rachel's Tearful Hope

There was a "crying lady" in Jeremiah's prophecy (31: 15) and it was none other than Rachel, wife of Jacob and mother of their two sons Joseph and Benjamin. In the biblical account, Rachel sacrificed her life at the birth of her youngest, Benjamin. Now, the prophet portrayed her as being alive at Ramah, crying for her lost children, the people of Israel, who were gathered there as deportees into exile. Her refusal to be comforted conveyed the pain and bitterness of her loss, her compassion for the plight of her beloved people.

There is hope in empathy, in sensitivity and in solidarity with those who suffer. This maternal grief is what prompted God to answer with another promise of hope. Pope Francis observes that mysteriously, tears generate and sow hope, for they are "the seeds of hope."[22] Jeremiah's text on Rachel's vicarious suffering for others found its way in Matthew's Gospel (2: 16-18), and pointed to the massacre of the holy innocents who symbolized the Innocent Lamb who one day would die for all humanity on the Cross. If Rachel wailed for the people, the Lord Jesus will not only weep but will enter into humanity's wounded

[21] Pope Francis, "Abraham, Father in Faith and Hope."

[22] Pope Francis, "Rachel Is Weeping for Her Children," January 4, 2017, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170104_udienza-generale.html (accessed on February 7, 2024).

state, sacrifice himself for all, and thus, give the "definitive Word" of consolation.[23] He will not shed only tears, but every drop of his blood for the world's redemption. Imbibing the same attitude of sharing in others' pains and expressing solidarity with them will enable people today to offer even a little hope to others.

Jonah's Praying Hope

The familiar story of the reluctant prophet Jonah elucidates the relationship between hope and prayer.[24] He was sent on a dangerous mission to a periphery, Nineveh, soon to be destroyed for its lack of faith. During a threatening tempest at sea, after having tried to pray to their gods, the pagan mariners with Jonah challenged him to pray to his God. After exhausting their energies on false gods, they learned to recognize the true God Jonah worshipped. When Jonah voluntarily threw himself at sea to save the crew, these pagans even more openly adhered to the true God. Finally, in Nineveh, Jonah's preaching resonated in the hearts of the population, who he successfully inspired to pray for forgiveness.

Pope Francis reflects here on the imminent danger of death or life-threatening situations, where people find hope through the act of prayer. Even the desire to be spared, when turned into supplication, is not simply self-seeking, but a genuine acknowledgement of frailty and helplessness. God, the loving and merciful Father, obligingly responds to the prayer of his children who beg for salvation in the face of peril or extinction. Even death can be a "surprising occasion to know hope and encounter the Lord."[25] In the darkest of situations, trusting prayer is needed, as it leads forward in hope. God answers the prayer for hope with more hope.

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[23] Pope Francis, "Rachel Is Weeping for Her Children."

[24] Pope Francis, "Jonah: Hope and Prayer," January 18, 2017, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170118_udienza-generale.html (accessed on February 10, 2024).

[25] Pope Francis, "Jonah: Hope and Prayer."

Judith's Intrepid Hope

The Book of Judith touches on a perilous drama, when a Judean city was under siege from a powerful enemy army, and the people were contemplating surrender (Jud 7: 25-26). The end was inevitable and recourse to faith in God was all but useless, at least in the collective consciousness of the fearful Jews. The people could only foresee defeat, death and enslavement. The leader of the people decided to resist for five more days, giving God the chance to intervene miraculously in their favor. But this was a ruse; a weak hope that did not expect a positive outcome but only the worst. Calling on God but not believing he would come to save, there was no hope left among the people.[26]

Surprisingly it was a woman, Judith, a widow of great wisdom and beauty, who revived faith in the hearts of the people, who infused courageous hope to defy their coward hearts. She reproached the people for putting God to the test and instead insisted on total confidence in his love and power. Unfazed at looking like a fool, the strong woman broke down the narrow horizons that put limits on God because of fear and lack of trust. If they truly trusted God, the people needed to pray hard and work hard to achieve their victory. This heroine devised a clever plan to kill the enemy leader and lead God's people to freedom.

B. Fulfillment of Hope: Jesus Christ, the Living Hope

The Incarnate Son, the Source of Hope

While all the Old Testament witnesses encountered a hope that sustained them and accompanied them in the pilgrimage of life, yet their hope is one that awaited fulfillment and completion. God has given the world a foretaste of a gift even more sublime, excellent, and perfect, the one pointed out by St. Paul as "no eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared

[26] Pope Francis, "Judith," January 25, 2017, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170125_udienza-generale.html (accessed on February 10, 2024).

for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2: 9). In the mystery of God made human, the promise of God is fulfilled. God in Jesus drew near to his people by divesting himself of his divinity to inaugurate among all men and women, now his brothers and sisters, the plan he envisioned for them. The Lord Jesus came to give a "new hope" to God's people, the hope of eternal life.[27] At his birth, the choir of angels intoned a heavenly tune, signaling that the hope Jesus brought leads to praise and gratitude to God who "initiates a Kingdom of love, justice, and peace."[28]

In his 2016 Midnight Mass homily, Pope Francis described the mystery of the Incarnation as the "mystery of hope and of sadness." There was a "taste of sadness" in that the love manifested that night would not be accepted by all. But there was more, importantly, the "taste of hope." Here was a God who brought light but did not blind people's eyes, who delivered love but did not coerce anyone to accept it, who delivered bread to eat without demanding anything in return. He came to feed and to serve, to give and save.[29] Such hope was immediately noticed and understood by the representatives of those who lived in the margins, who knew their lives were limited by sin and poverty.

The Crucified Lord, Hope in the Power of Love

In his ministry, Jesus attracted the attention of many and the loyalty of faithful disciples. Standing as witnesses to his wonders and learning from his powerful lessons, these men and women found new hope for their lives, for their future. They projected their lofty expectations of a Davidic Messiah on Jesus. However, in just a few short years, all these earthly hopes, weak and selfish, collapsed at the

[27] Pope Francis, "Christ's Birth is the Source of Hope."

[28] Pope Francis, "Christ's Birth is the Source of Hope."

[29] Pope Francis, "Midnight Mass Homily," December 24, 2016, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20161224_omelia-natale.html (accessed on February 2, 2024).

foot of the Cross, perhaps, part of the divine plan to sift and purify the motives of the disciples. With their hopes dashed, a new kind of hope emerged.

Like a tiny grain of wheat that fell on the ground and died before it could bear fruit (Jn. 12: 24), from the Cross of Christ sprung a hope that will never disappear and will last for eternity. The seed of hope was watered, cultivated, and nourished by Jesus' love on the Cross. This love that carried Jesus from the Passion to the Resurrection, was the love that "hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor 13:7), the love that is the life of God, has renewed everything that it touched."[30] On the Cross, hope is reborn and renewed so that humanity may cross from darkness into light, from sinfulness to forgiveness, from disappointment to hope. Unlike fragile earthly hopes, the Crucified Lord offers a new hope fortified by love and therefore capable of overcoming obstacles, of defying even death and sin. Those who accepted the dynamics of the Cross, and learned to be simple and humble like Jesus, became "seeds of hope" to their neighbors, bearers of love that is empowered by hope.[31]

The Risen Christ, Hope of the World

Contrary to the suppositions of the people and the disciples themselves, the hope with which Jesus inaugurated the Kingdom of God on earth did not crumble under the weight of the Cross. And though the Cross gloriously revealed the ineffable divine love infused by hope, this wooden emblem could not contain the explosion of a more glorious mystery. The Resurrection of the Crucified One crystallized the essential message, the very heart, of the Christian faith.

[30] Pope Francis, "General Audience," April 12, 2017, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170412_udienza-generale.html (accessed on February, 3, 2024).

[31] Pope Francis, "General Audience," April 12, 2017.

The Easter event forms the central affirmation of our creed![32] Pope Francis clearly identifies and insists on the Resurrection proclamation – that Christ has died and was buried, that he rose again and appeared to his followers, that he is alive forever! – as the Christological nucleus of the original kerygma.[33]

The Resurrection of Jesus intensified hope in the hearts of the believers. Death was no longer to be feared (1 Cor. 15:55). Humanity's search for God is surpassed by God's original search for us. Grace flows into hearts that are capable of being amazed at the encounter with the Risen One. From this ensue the confident smile and the enthusiasm for proclamation that each Christian must possess in his life. The kerygma, the original proclamation with its simplicity and vitality, was also what Pope Francis recommends as the starting point of every evangelization in the Church today.[34]

C. Furthering Hope: The Church's Mission Today

Homo Viator

Medieval thinkers used the term "*homo viator*" to explain the Christian's onward mobility as a wayfarer, as a pilgrim "on the way" (*in via*) journeying towards the heavenly homeland (*patria*).[35] Pope Francis describes each member of the People of God, as "*homo viator, spe erectus*," always on the move, but also upright (*erectus*) because he or

[32] Pope Francis, "General Audience," April 19, 2017, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170419_udienza-generale.html (accessed on March 5, 2024).

[33] See Raniero Cantalamessa, "The Year of Faith and the Catechism of the Catholic Church," December 7, 2012 in Father Raniero Cantalamessa Website, available at http://www.cantalamessa.org/?p=1876&lang=en (accessed on March 1, 2024).

[34] See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (Pasay City, Philippines: Paulines, 2013), nos. 160-175.

[35] David Eliott, 123.

she walks in hope.[36] When the Lord Jesus gave the disciples the Great Commission to proclaim the Good News, he ended the exhortation with the promise redolent with hope: "I am with you always, to the end of the world" (Mt. 28:20).

Every person has a migratory spirit that carries him or her on a journey in life that is fraught with challenges and hardships along the way. But for Christians, the journey is not a lonely trek because the Lord does not only precede him but accompanies him at every step. This mysterious presence of God, through trials, darkness, and need, manifests in Divine Providence.[37] Christian hope is symbolized by an anchor (Heb. 6: 18-19) because it is not vague or uncertain or unreal. It is based on the firm promise made by Christ and on what he has already accomplished. The assurance of Jesus enables his people to walk upright as they journey in hope.

The Holy Spirit and Hope

While the Church's confidence in God is symbolized by an anchor that signifies the stability of the Lord's promise of his abiding presence and help, another helpful image of hope is the sail of a ship, representing movement, advancement, and driving force.[38] Hope is like a sail, and the wind that propels it to uncharted waters or to safe harbor is the power of the Holy Spirit.[39] "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope" (Rom. 15: 13). The Holy Spirit

[36] Pope Francis, "General Audience," April 26, 2017, Vatican Archives, available athttps://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170426_udienza-generale.html (accessed on February 29, 2024).

[37] Pope Francis, "General Audience," April 26, 2017.

[38] Pope Francis, "General Audience," May 31, 2017, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170531_udienza-generale.html_(accessed on February 15, 2022).

[39] Pope Francis, "General Audience," May 31, 2017.

enables Christian hope to abound, especially in situations when it is easier to give up, when the temptation to be sedentary and immobile is great. The Holy Spirit makes hope possible by reminding people that they are God's children and heirs of a "hope that does not disappoint" (Rom. 5:5).

The Holy Spirit encourages Christians to break from self-enclosure and timidity and to be like him – other paracletes – willing to comfort and protect the weak, the poor, the castaway. In other words, the Holy Spirit transforms men and women from recipients "abounding" in hope to "sowers of hope" in others, in the world, and in the whole of creation.[40]

Models of Hope

If there are prophetic witnesses of hope in the Old Testament, Pope Francis offers models of hope for today's Christians in the persons of the saints and martyrs, and in particular the two women of hope, the two Mary's. First, he invites us to look at Mary, the mother of Jesus, the mother of Hope.[41] Mary's hope spanned the whole of her life, in her humble acceptance of the uncertainties of life as a young unwed mother, as a grieving mother at the foot of the Cross, and as a mother to the gathered disciples waiting for the promised Holy Spirit. In the story of Jesus, she appears with hardly a dialogue, and quietly disappears. Then when she seemed to be lost in oblivion, she reappears in her usual silence and reassuring presence. She has perfected her hope through listening to God for "there is a great connection between hope and listening."[42]

[40] Pope Francis, "General Audience," May 31, 2017.

[41] Pope Francis, "General Audience," May 10, 2017, Vatican Archives, available athttps://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170510_udienza-generale.html (accessed on March 1, 2024).

[42] Pope Francis, "General Audience," May 10, 2017.

Second, the Pope points to the example of Mary Magdalene who he calls the "apostle of the new and greatest hope."[43] Mary Magdalene was a person prone to disappointments for she lived her early life at the mercy of evil. She carried a baggage of failures and experienced so much suffering that many people today can identify with her struggles. But her misery turned into a revolution of love, forgiveness, and change. In the end, Mary Magdalene was privileged to bear the joy of the Resurrection and as a woman apostle, spread the Good News even to the other apostles themselves. Her life is a testament to the possibility that we too, "can be saints because the Lord created us; he is the One who helps us."[44]

Pope Francis' catechetical presentation of hope shows that for him, the horizon within which to grasp this virtue is God himself. The Heavenly Father is the source of hope.[45] Hope is born out of a loving Father's invitation to trust his plan and vision for the life of the individual and for the world as seen in the hope of Abraham. Hope, like faith and charity, are firmly anchored on faith in Jesus' death and resurrection and therefore sealed with a love that is genuine, sincere, and eternal. Hope becomes alive in the heart of a person who invites the Holy Spirit, who provides abundant hope, to rule his life for "as long as there is hope, there is life" and he who "needs hope in order to live needs the Holy Spirit in order to hope."[46]

Pope Francis believes that understanding and possessing hope is vital to every person in the world today because there are enemies

[43] Pope Francis, "General Audience," May 17, 2017, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170517_udienza-generale.html (accessed on February 17, 2022).

[44] Pope Francis, "General Audience," June 21, 2017, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170621_udienza-generale.html (accessed on February 15, 2022).

[45] Pope Francis, "General Audience," June 21, 2017,

[46] Pope Francis, "General Audience," May 31, 2017.

around us that seek to destroy it. A difficult present with its many trials can crush hope. A reluctance to encounter others and invite them to share the journey together is a sign of lack of hope. Complacency and self-satisfaction with one's achievements, wealth, and comfort close the doors to the desire for change and vigilant waiting for God's action in one's life, in others and in the world. Despair is an enemy of hope.[47] But with hope, ordinary Christians can be missionaries in words, conduct and testimony of daily life.[48] They learn the value of patience, the necessary condition of hope especially, in the midst of suffering.[49] All these lessons would prove providentially necessary and relevant in the trying years ahead marked by the surprise of a pandemic and, once it is over, of the trauma from its aftermath.

Hope for a Changing World

After having been first detected in China in late 2019, the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic in March the following year.[50] What followed was a series of strict national lockdowns as countries closed their borders

[47] Pope Francis, "General Audience," September 27, 2017, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170927_udienza-generale.html (accessed on March 1, 2024).

[48] Pope Francis, "General Audience," October 4, 2017, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20171004_udienza-generale.html (accessed on March 1, 2024).

[49] Pope Francis, "General Audience," October 11, 2017, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20171011_udienza-generale.html (accessed on March 1, 2024).

[50] Edison Macusi, John Kenny Rafon, and Erna Macusi, "Impact of COVID-19 and Closed Fishing Season on Commercial Fishers of Davao Gulf, Mindanao, Philippines," in National Center for Biotechnology Information Website (December 9, 2021), available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9759402/ (accessed on March 1, 2024).

and controlled the mobility of their populations. However, what was happening worldwide was immediately visible in both conventional and social media. Who could easily forget the long lines of frenzied shoppers, overcrowded hospitals, shut-down factories and offices, the long lines of rushed funeral and crematory services, and the upsurge in online services of institutions, including churches, which were lumped together with the so-called non-essentials?

An extraordinary event happened in Rome's St. Peter Square in the evening of March 27, 2020.[51] It was extraordinary because the religious service was Pope Francis' most striking response to the global crisis by means of a sacred ritual.[52] It was also extraordinary in the sense that he performed it alone in the vast silence of an empty patio; a solitary figure in white, praying before images of a miraculous Crucifix and an icon of Mary, *Salus Populi Romani*, for the healing of the world. He gave a Eucharistic Benediction to all people of good will and delivered a poignant address that moved even sceptics and critics to admiration and respect.[53] In his speech that night, and in succeeding public as well as private messages, the Pope intended to first, suggest guidelines for "rebuilding a better world that might be born from this crisis of humanity."[54] Secondly, Pope Francis wanted to sow the seeds of hope

[51] Cindy Wooden, Covid-19 Is not God's Judgment, but a Call to Live Differently, Pope Says," National Catholic Reporter Website (March 27, 2020), available at https://www.ncronline.org/vatican/covid-19-not-gods-judgment-call-live-differently-pope-says (accessed on March 1, 2024).

[52] Paul Elie, "Pope Francis and the Coronavirus Pandemic During the Easter Holy Week," The New Yorker (April 10, 2020), available at https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/pope-francis-and-the-coronavirus-pandemic-during-the-easter-holy-week (accessed on March 1, 2024).

[53] Victor Manuel Pérez-Martinez, "The Message of Pope Francis in Time of Pandemic: Engagement and Sentiment on Twitter," *Church, Communication and Culture* 7:1 (2022), in Taylor and Francis Online website (May 10. 2022), available at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23753234.2022.2040372 (accessed on March 1, 2024).

[54] Michael Czerny, "Preface," Pope Francis, *Life After Pandemic* ebook (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2020), 3.

in God, with whom "life never dies."[55] He sought to strengthen the faith of people in the Risen Christ as he exhorted them to believe that "we have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love."[56]

The Jubilee Year 2025 comes two years since the declaration of the official end of the pandemic,[57] and thus the task of rising from its ashes has already begun in many sectors of society. Reeling from the socio-economic, political and health setbacks the pandemic left in its tracks, there are fresh challenges that the Church and the rest of the world need to confront. For Pope Francis, this is the right time to push for a momentum of hope and not forget the lessons the pandemic taught the world.

In his interview book with Austin Ivereigh, *Let us Dream*, the Pope discussed the promising channels of hope he sees in the future: the involvement of women, the growing sense of solidarity, support for human dignity, care for creation and for every person.[58] Pope Benedict XVI has written an excellent encyclical on hope, *Spe Salvi*[59], but the leading theologian of hope Jurgen Moltmann found Benedict's vision

[55] Czerny, "Preface," Pope Francis, Life After Pandemic ebook.

[56] Pope Francis, "Extraordinary Moment of Prayer," March 27, 2020, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/urbi/documents/papa-francesco_20200327_urbi-et-orbi-epidemia.html (accessed on March 1, 2024).

[57] Jennier Rigby and Bhanvi Satija, WHO Declares End to Covid Global Health Emergency," *Reuters* website (May 8, 2023) available at https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/covid-is-no-longer-global-health-emergency-who-2023-05-05/ (accessed on March 1, 2024).

[58] See Pope Francis and Austin Ivereigh, *Let Us Dream* ebook (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2020).

[59] Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, November 30, 2007, Vatican Archives, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi.html (accessed March 6, 2024).

and audience limited and parochial, and even forgetful of the spirit of Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes*.[60] Pope Francis has not elaborated a new systematic theology of hope, yet his pastoral vision of hope extends from every Christian believer to every person alive in the planet, from human life to every form of created reality. While not mentioning *Gaudium et Spes*, he is clearly treading along its line of reasoning. Pope Francis includes in his vision of hope the dream of human solidarity in the process of the development of an international community imbued with the values of the Kingdom. For him, hope is not a passive expectation of a glorious end from the hand of God but an active pursuit of the improvement of this world guided by the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This will certainly be the unique contribution of Pope Francis in the area of the theology of hope: proclaiming hope by teaching and exhorting people to discover it, but also leading people to rebuild their lives and the world with a robust and fulfilled hope in the God who does not disappoint, in the God who comes to save all.

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[60] Jurgen Moltmann, "Horizons of Hope: A Critique of Spe Salvi," *The Christian Century* website (May 20, 2008), available at https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2008-05/horizons-hope (accessed on March 1, 2024).


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