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EDITOR'S PREFACE

The COVID-19 pandemic has precipitated and accelerated the use of the Internet to bring the celebration of liturgies and sacraments into the confines of homes and quarantine facilities. And yet, how valid and efficacious are these for online participants? The Catholic Church still requires a person's *physical presence* for the celebration of a sacrament to be valid and efficacious for them. Leo-Martin Angelo R. Ocampo's essay, "Cybergrace in Cyberspace? An Argument for Online Liturgies in Light of COVID-19," explores the issue with foresight into what may happen to the celebration of the sacraments when the virtual world becomes more and more real and the real world becomes more and more virtual.

The ethos of the contemporary world is being shaped to a large extent by what social media promotes: a rugged individualism in which the *ego* is king, where everything else revolves around the self. The result is a world of monads with no sense of social responsibility or even loyalty to one's family. This makes the breakdown of family and social life one of its dire consequences. Umberto Bresciani's essay, "What is the *Dizigui?"*, introduces a work of Confucian literature which may provide a remedy and antidote to individualism. He explains how the *Dizigui*, a wisdom poem that instructs young people on how they should behave toward parents, teachers, and others, has been used successfully in Taiwan and China as a pedagogical tool in values education. Through it, young children are formed to become respectful of others as well as responsible members of society.

Another problem confronting society today is the degradation of the world's biosphere and ecosystems. Economic development has been

pursued relentlessly to the detriment of the environment that supports human life and biodiversity. Thus, in response to the ecological crisis, the 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil formulated a set of policies meant to conserve the earth's resources for the benefit of present and future generations, distribute wealth equitably, and reconcile economic growth with the environment's capacity for regeneration. Abundio R. Babor, however, in his essay titled "A Bucket Half Empty: A Critique of the Notion of Sustainable Development as a Paradigm for Environmental Sustainability," discusses the inadequacies of these policies in protecting and conserving the earth's non-renewable resources. He argues that the unbridled exploitation of these finite resources necessarily degrades the world's biosphere and ecosystems.

HIV infections are spreading quickly in the Philippines in addition to COVID-19. According to the statistics provided in James McTavish's essay, "Fast and Furious: The HIV Epidemic in the Philippines," cumulative data from 1984 to 2019 show that 69,512 people are infected with HIV, 65,162 of whom are males. McTavish also notes that "while heterosexual sex was the dominant mode of transmission from 1984 to 2006, the group now most at risk of transmitting HIV is the so-called MSM—males who have sex with other males" (p. 100). What is particularly alarming, moreover, is that most of the reported HIV cases are among young men and even adolescents. According to McTavish, a cultural factor that may explain this is the high degree of acceptance of homosexuality in the country. The HIV epidemic thus poses a great challenge for the local Church to explain effectively its moral teachings regarding homosexuality, particularly the important distinction that needs to be made between homosexual *orientation*, which may not be the fault of a person, and homosexual *acts*, which are sinful.

Pope Francis once said that "realities are more important than ideas" (*Evangelii Gaudium* [EG]). This statement is emblematic of the inductive approach he takes when he theologizes and writes his encyclicals, apostolic exhortations, and pastoral letters. It explains, for instance, why in *Laudato Si'* he discusses first the evidence provided by science and then reflects on it in the light of Gospel values and Church teaching. James H. Kroeger's essay, "Pope Francis and Missionary

Signs: Exploring the Vision of *Evangelii Gaudium*," detects a similar inductive approach in *Evangelii Gaudium* under the rubric of scrutinizing the "signs of the times." First used by Pope John XXIII in 1961 to convoke the Second Vatican Council, the term has since become a *locus theologicus* in many Church teachings. According to Kroeger, scrutinizing the "signs of the times" involves sociological analysis and theological reflection. Indeed, what Francis envisions is the genuine discernment of God's will in events that are happening in contemporary society, "the approach of a missionary disciple" (EG 50).

The 500th anniversary celebration of Christianity in the Philippines provides an opportunity to give thanks to the Spanish missionaries who brought the Christian faith to our shores. The faith they sowed, however, still needs to be nourished and nurtured for it to mature and bear fruit in works of love and justice. This is the lesson we can learn from Moses Jarvis R. Catan's essay, "The Semantic Metamorphosis of 'Evangelization': Formulating a Definition of Evangelization Based on Action, Content, and Result," for the task of inculcating the Gospel's values among our people is still sorely wanting even after five centuries of Christianity. Secularization and the loss of faith, especially among the youth today, prompt our Church to embark on a New Evangelization in which the laity plays an important role and where innovative approaches and creative tools of evangelization are called for.

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J.

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CYBERGRACE IN CYBERSPACE?

An Argument for Online Liturgies in Light of COVID-19

Leo-Martin Angelo R. Ocampo

Many places around the world were placed under quarantine to mitigate the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. Entire communities went into lockdown, big gatherings were prohibited, and, as a corollary effect, many of the faithful were unable to go to church and participate in the Eucharist—even on the days covered by the precept of obligation—as well as in other sacraments and liturgical celebrations.

In response to this concern, many bishops granted dispensation from the precept of obligation, thereby freeing the faithful from their religious duty to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation for the specified period. At the same time, dioceses and parishes, including the Holy See, no less, harnessed the power of the Internet as an avenue for people to continue to have virtual access to the Eucharist and many other forms of liturgical and common prayer, all without breaking quarantine or transgressing social distancing protocols.

The question, nevertheless, of how valid or efficacious these online liturgies are has been raised, and whether and in what way these can really nurture souls. It is not something that can be dismissed outright as "ridiculous" inasmuch as it involves the kind of spiritual

nourishment being offered to the faithful.[1] As Ridgeway puts it, "can ministers bless the Lord's Table over Zoom? The worldwide pandemic provides all-new context for this theologically untested—and for some unthinkable—question."[2] This paper thus attempts to take another look into the question of online liturgies in light of the COVID-19 experience.

Sacraments Online?

From simple websites to social media accounts that keep the faithful not only informed but also connected, many religious organizations, including the Catholic Church, have been quite enterprising in their use of the Internet as a communicative and connective tool. Most of these use cases, however, are still confined to Web 1.0 (informative, read-only sites) and Web 2.0 (social networks). Many have yet to adopt Web 3.0 (intuitive, user-sensitive Web) and even 4.0 (integrative Web) modalities that are becoming more and more commonplace.[3]

This trend seems to be true particularly when it comes to the Catholic Church's use of the Internet for liturgy, which is limited for the most part to streaming videos of liturgical celebrations with little to no interactivity—very Web 1.0 or, at the most, 2.0. It is a far cry from the emerging Web 4.0 where we see an increasing fusion and interpenetration of the online and the offline. As a point of comparison,

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[1]See P. Esmaquel II, "Replays of Masses Not 'Invalid' Amid Pandemic, says Bishop David," *Rappler* (May 24, 2020).

[2]C. Ridgeway, "Online Communion Can Still Be Sacramental," *Christianity Today* (March 27, 2020).

[3]See my previous articles for a discussion of these stages in the development of the Internet, along with illustrative examples of religious uses of the Internet for each of the stages: "How to Communicate in the Age of Web 4.0?: Challenges and Possibilities for Religions in Asia," *Religion and Social Communication* 14:2 (2016): 106–121; "Digital Expressions, Experiences and Challenges of and for Religions in Asia," *Religion and Social Communication* 16:2 (2018): 105–123; "Internet and Social Media: Bridge or Barrier for a Culture of Communion?" *Landas* 32:2 (2018): 33–59. See also F.-J. Eilers, *Communicating in Ministry and Mission*, 4th ed. (Manila: Logos Publications, 2018), 210–212.

I have cited in a previous article the practice of virtual *pujas* among some Hindus where devotees pray to and view the deity live online, give their offerings online, and receive the *prasad* or blessed object that is shipped to them afterwards. We are also even beginning to see the age of cybersanghas and online ummahs in Buddhist and Islamic circles.

The Catholic Church, meanwhile, is quite absolute in its official stance regarding the status of its liturgical celebrations being streamed online, especially when it comes to the sacraments. It is clear and unequivocal in declaring that "there are no sacraments on the Internet; and even the religious experiences possible there by the grace of God are insufficient apart from real-world interaction with other persons of faith."[4] Based on this teaching, and contrary to the belief of many Catholics during the pandemic, watching a Eucharist over the Internet (as well as doing so through television or radio), even in real time, does not actually count as liturgical participation in the strict sense.

Technically speaking, watching an online Mass is not the same as attending Mass and does not satisfy the obligation to do so, whether in the case of the pandemic or even that of the sick and other similar cases. In the case of the pandemic, there is no more obligation to fulfill not only where a dispensation from the precept of obligation has been granted but also because the pandemic itself and the imposed quarantine have rendered assistance in a Eucharistic celebration practically impossible, as is foreseen in Canon 1248 §2. With regard to the sick, the very same canon applies—they are deemed, as affirmed twice by the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), "*excused* for a serious reason" because of their condition.[5] As Pope simply puts it, "It doesn't have to 'count' since you don't have an obligation to meet in the first place."[6]

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[4]Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *The Church and Internet* (February 22, 2002), no. 9.

[5]See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993), nos. 2181 and 2183 (emphasis added). Hereafter referred to as CCC.

[6]C. Pope, "Does TV Mass 'count'?" *Our Sunday Visitor* (January 4, 2017).

In fact, attending the remote broadcast of a Eucharistic celebration, whether through the radio, television, or Internet, is not even included in what Canon 1248 §2 and CCC 2183 suggest as compensatory substitutes in circumstances such as these, namely,

> that the faithful take part in a liturgy of the word if such a liturgy is celebrated in a parish church or other sacred place according to the prescripts of the diocesan bishop or that they devote themselves to prayer for a suitable time alone, as a family, or, as the occasion permits, in groups of families.[7]

In this light, meditating on the Gospel of the day or praying the Rosary might be better alternatives to watching an online Mass because of their live and dynamic nature. Nevertheless, some argue that watching online Masses, even replays, can have certain spiritual benefits. Diwa says:

> This is a great help to grow in prayer and desire for the Holy Eucharist. It's not a question of "blessing" but of participating in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ vs. watching a recording of it some other time. Both are genuine sources of spiritual nourishments in this difficult time.[8]

The question of whether or not there can be sacraments online becomes even clearer with regard to the possibility of online absolution. The Archbishop of Jakarta, Ignatius Cardinal Suharyo Hardjoatmodjo, gave such an absolution on January 30, 2020 which was streamed live on the YouTube channel of Indonesia's Catholic TV station, HidupTV,[9] and which stirred an uproar among some Catholics who perceived the anomaly. At least two parishes here in the Philippines also posted a similar endeavor on their Facebook accounts to impart online absolution during the COVID-19 crisis; they eventually took

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[7]See *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983), Canon 1248 §2 and CCC 2183.

[8]As quoted in Esmaquel, "Replays of Masses Not 'Invalid' Amid Pandemic, says Bishop David."

[9]See the report of M. Hariyadi, "Absolusi Umum dari Uskup KAJ: Senin, 30 Maret 2020," *Sesawi.net* (March 30, 2020).

their posts down and did not proceed as planned, presumably after being corrected.[10]

The *Note from the Apostolic Penitentiary on the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Current Pandemic* underlines the necessity on the part of the penitent of physically hearing the words of absolution by explicitly urging the use of voice amplification to the fullest extent possible. The same document, moreover, recalls the longstanding doctrine, as an ultimate recourse in cases where absolution cannot be physically imparted, that

> perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present able to express) and accompanied by *votum confessionis*, that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones.[11]

Nowhere in the documents of the Church is online absolution foreseen as a possibility.

The Pope himself, who presided in what was perhaps the most iconic online liturgy of the entire pandemic in his Extraordinary *Urbi et Orbi* Blessing last March 27, 2020, warned afterwards of a fundamental deficiency in such online liturgies, which is the lack of community. He elaborates:

> I say this because someone made me reflect on the danger brought about by this moment that we are experiencing, this pandemic that has made all of us communicate, through the media, through the means of communication, even in matters of religion. Even in this Mass, we are all communicating, but we are not together, spiritually together. The people present here are very few. But there are many people attending: we are together, but not together. Even when it comes to the Sacrament that you are receiving today, the Eucharist; the people who are connected with us only have Spiritual Communion. And this isn't

[10]See "Philippines parish cancels planned 'online general absolution'," *Catholic News Agency* (April 2, 2020).

[11]*Note from the Apostolic Penitentiary on the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the Current Pandemic* (Rome: Holy See Press Office, March 19, 2020).

> the Church: this is the Church in a difficult situation, which the Lord permits, but the ideal of the Church is always with the people and with the Sacraments—always.[12]

Here we see how the current Pontiff himself remains very much in line with the ambivalent if not negative stance of the Church toward online liturgies. His former spokesperson even remembers how he declined the request, made around the beginning of his papacy, to have his daily Masses streamed online in the interest of preserving the simplicity and spontaneity of the liturgical celebration, which he feared might be compromised by the intrusion of cameras. It was not until the lockdown during the pandemic that he agreed to have them livestreamed.[13] Indeed, at the end of the same homily, the Pope also picked up the words of another bishop who told him:

> Be careful not to make the Church "viral," not to make the sacraments "viral," not to make the people of God "viral." The Church, the sacraments, the people of God are concrete. It is true that at this moment we must relate with the Lord in this way, but we need to get out of the tunnel, not stay there. And this is the familiarity of the apostles: not Gnostic, not "viral," not selfish for each of them, but a concrete familiarity in the people.

There seems to be a dichotomy in this line of thinking between what is real, which is equated with what is concrete, and what is not, under which falls the virtual. The problem with this kind of view is that the Church and the Pope (which is so unlike him) seem to be out of touch

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[12]Dico questo perché qualcuno mi ha fatto riflettere sul pericolo che questo momento che stiamo vivendo, questa pandemia che ha fatto che tutti ci comunicassimo anche religiosamente attraverso i media, attraverso i mezzi di comunicazione, anche questa Messa, siamo tutti comunicanti, ma non insieme, spiritualmente insieme. Il popolo è piccolo. C'è un grande popolo: stiamo insieme, ma non insieme. Anche il Sacramento: oggi ce l'avete, l'Eucaristia, ma la gente che è collegata con noi, soltanto la comunione spirituale. E questa non è la Chiesa: questa è la Chiesa di una situazione difficile, che il Signore permette, ma l'ideale della Chiesa è sempre con il popolo e con i sacramenti. Sempre. (Francesco, "La familiarità con il Signore" [homily] [April 17, 2020])

[13]F. Lombardi, "Piazza piena e Piazza vuota," *Vatican News* (April 15, 2020).

with the experience of many ordinary people today, the findings of recent research, and the sense of some contemporary religious thinkers.

Our Context: An Emerging POPC World

It is no secret that many Filipinos nowadays spend most of their time online. In a 2019 survey conducted by We Are Social and Hootsuite, the Philippines continues to rank first among the world's countries with the heaviest Internet users, averaging ten hours and two minutes a day.[14] More and more people today do many if not most of their daily activities online, such as working, studying, shopping, playing, etc., a phenomenon aptly described by the newly-coined phrase "permanently online, permanently connected" (POPC). For people living in a POPC world, the virtual is real. Indeed, we may even go on to say that virtual—even more than face-to-face (FTF)—reality will soon be the new reality as digital natives overtake digital migrants and the gap between online and offline is gradually blurred with the advent of Web 4.0. What was once a matter of science fiction is fast becoming our day-to-day experience.

The reality of virtual reality is also affirmed by the findings of recent research. In terms of quality of human interaction, for instance, one study found that POPC not only allows individuals to connect with each other "on a disclosive, personal level that can be deeply satisfying and very meaningful" but also raises not only the quantity but also the quality of what is being shared since individuals are more likely to share content that they perceive as meaningful, moving, or awe-inspiring.[15]

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[14]See S. Kemp, *Digital 2019: Essential Insights into How People Around the World Use the Internet, Mobile Devices, Social Media, and E-commerce* (We are Social & Hootsuite, 2019).

[15]See S. Trepte & M. Oliver, "Getting the Best Out of POPC While Keeping the Risks in Mind: The Calculus of Meaningfulness and Privacy," in P. Vorderer, D. Hefner, L. Reinecke, & C. Klimmt, eds., *Permanently Online, Permanently Connected: Living and Communicating in a POPC World* (New York & London: Routledge, 2018), 110.

Internet-mediated communication is not necessarily shallower; rather, and as is the case with any other media, its depth or lack thereof is not inherent but dependent on its user. In fact, it has been discovered that online relationships are not necessarily less deep or intimate than FTF ones, and that even the simplest "relationship maintenance behaviors" done through social media—such as liking posts or posting short updates about one's day—can build relationships in a very real way.[16] The Internet as such is capable of fostering intimacy not only among those who are miles apart and have no other means of connection but even among those who may see each other often and yet have become even more regularly and substantially connected because of it. During the pandemic, for instance, we saw how people were still able to express their concern for each other, show their solidarity in social issues, and share what they had with those in greater need through online means, all despite their inability to interact, assemble physically, or reach out in person.

In the religious domain, Lytle calls attention to how some faith communities, "unable to presume that a physically gathered community will remain the norm," have begun to explore the possibility, even prior to the situation created by the pandemic, of having virtual churches and "creating immersive worlds so that individuals will always have a space to gather." According to her, these churches regard this as "a natural evolution of ways to respond to Jesus' command to proclaim the gospel to all nations," extending it to the digital frontier.[17] For instance, I have mentioned *FunCity*[18] in a previous article, the German virtual city on the Internet where a Catholic parish named Saint Bonifatius has been shepherding souls online since 1998. In addition to a staff of nine pastoral workers who cater to online parishioners, it also has a functioning library, oratory, and virtual monastery where people can drop prayer requests for cloistered religious who will read and

[16]S. Utz, "POPC and Social Relationships," in Vorderer, Hefner, Reinecke, & Klimmt, eds., *Permanently Online, Permanently Connected*, 141–143.

[17]J. Lytle, *Faith Formation 4.0: Introducing an Ecology of Faith in a Digital Age* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2013), 76.

[18]One may visit the website of *FunCity* at http://funama.de/.

respond to them. Nevertheless, they are able to render all of these but not the sacraments.

Hayes already cautioned faith communities as early as 2007 that "we cannot afford to *not* be immersed in technology as a church. A first point of reference is that Google has become the first place people search for *anything*."[19] If faith communities want people to find them and God through them, being truly present online has become indispensable. In light of this, we need to heed the counsel of Gould against maintaining too sharp a distinction between "real" and "virtual." According to her, we need to acknowledge the fact that "online communities of faith are *real* to members who have come to rely on them for inspiration and support.…"[20] She elaborates concerning these communities:

> Some communities are extensions of already existing physical communities. Others are entirely virtual—created, gathered, developed, and sustained exclusively online. Still others are communities where the boundaries between what is "real" (i.e. physical) and what is virtual (i.e. online) are permeable.
>
> When social media was first developed and everyone got a glimmer about how it might be used, distinctions between real and virtual worlds were helpful. Not anymore. Turns out virtual community is real community. This is also true for the world of being and doing church online.

While the ubiquity of the Internet in human life and society has been criticized several times by the Church and especially by the present Pontiff,[21] it is a historical product that has become irreversible and inevitable nonetheless. Besides, it may not necessarily be evil in itself. The pandemic and the situation it has created have revealed

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[19]M. Hayes, *Googling God: The Religious Landscape of People in their 20s and 30s* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2007), 144.

[20]M. Gould, *The Social Media Gospel: Sharing the Good News in New Ways*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 30.

[21]See, for instance, Francis, *Laudato Si'* [On Care for Our Common Home] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), no. 47 and Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* [On the Call to Holiness in Today's World] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2018), no. 167.

even more possibilities for how we can use the Internet creatively for various endeavors and in ways that most of us have not previously imagined, or which were being accessed only by a few. Various aspects of our life and society had to shift to online modalities, including our worship, in a matter of days or weeks, and since the transition was very abrupt and took us out of what is familiar, it was not always easy or welcome. Yet the shift had already been happening—and has already happened—in many sectors of society even before the pandemic, and many of these changes are likely to become part of the "new normal" long after this crisis is over.

Our experience during the pandemic is already a glimpse of how even more pervasive digital technology is going to become in the coming years. Horsfield aptly describes what Murray calls the "spatial affordance"[22] of the Internet when he says that "mediated communication has taken on the characteristics of an enveloping technological and symbolic environment *within which life is lived*."[23] As virtual reality becomes the new reality, cyberspace also becomes the new space where people are. Campbell and Garner advise that

> the digital environment is not going away in the foreseeable future. Rather, with the proliferation of augmented reality, mobile media, and internet, it promises to grow and become interconnected with our physical environment and to give rise to *distinct digital places or neighborhoods for people*.[24]

With a similar sense of the Internet as a kind of space, John Paul II once called it the "New Areopagus"[25] or new marketplace where people

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[22]See J. Murray, *Inventing the Medium: Principles of Interaction Design as a Cultural Practice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 51–87.

[23]P. Horsfield, *From Jesus to the Internet: A History of Christianity and Media* (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 264–265 (emphasis added).

[24]H. Campbell & S. Garner, *Networked Theology: Negotiating Faith in Digital Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 93 (emphasis added).

[25]John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* [On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990), no. 37.

today converge and the best and worst of the world can be found. Yet most people today do not simply congregate on the Internet; they practically live and do almost everything there. Benedict XVI appears to have sensed the future more accurately somehow when he described the World Wide Web as the "digital continent"[26] way back in 2010—merely a decade later, it is now the largest continent in the world with almost four billion citizens. The words of Paul VI to the members and *periti* of the Consilium for the execution of the Constitution on the Liturgy in 1970 now appear to be prophetic:

> The instruments of social communication are everywhere in today's society and their even wider use is foreseen in the coming years. The Church cannot forget this but instead must consider the fact that people are so affected by them that audiovisual education is more effective than education through oral or written communication. Therefore, these means must be dealt with not only because they can be of assistance in catechetics, especially in communities not having priests, but also because it is no longer possible to disregard them.[27]

Can the Church continue to insist that there are no sacraments in a POPC world and that the faith communities found therein are not real communities? Is God not online? Cannot God's grace flow online?

The Importance of the Community in Liturgy

Based on the Pontiff's comments, the first major objection to online liturgy stems from the apparent absence of the gathered community. This is one of the major tenets of the Vatican II reform which underlined the active participation of the assembly. However,

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[26]Benedict XVI, *The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word* (44th World Communications Day message) (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2010); see also his 43rd World Communications Day message, *New Technologies, New Relationships: Promoting a Culture of Respect, Dialogue and Friendship* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009).

[27]Paul VI, Address to the members and periti of the Consilium on the occasion of its final plenary meeting (April 10, 1970), *AAS* 62 (1970): 272–274.

what is at stake here is not only our liturgical theology but also our ecclesiology, our self-understanding as God's priestly people. In view of this, Mickens loathes that most clergy[28] hardly thought of other liturgical solutions during the lockdown period "outside of having Father continue to say Mass for the laypeople." He expounds:

> But, regrettably, a number of pre-Vatican II notions about the Eucharist have remained even after the reform. Some are based on the concepts of form and matter, which can end up making the celebration of the sacraments minimalistic and legalistic. For example, when a validly ordained presbyter licitly confects the elements of bread and wine by using the proper formula (words of institution and invocation of the Holy Spirit), and then consumes those elements, it is considered a valid Eucharist. The presence of the assembly may be desirable, but it's not necessary. The practice of priests celebrating "private" Masses by themselves or with the assistance of an altar boy is not a relic of the Middle Ages. It is something that continues to this very day. This is a reductive view of the sacrament. And it is clericalist.[29]

We recall that the Latin word for Church, *ecclesia*, comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which is formed out of two words—*ek* (out of) and *kaleo* (call)—and means "called out of" or "gathered." Prior to its Christian usage, it referred to citizen assemblies in Greece that were convoked to vote on matters affecting their welfare and loosely denoted any kind of gathering such as a crowd or mob. It was also used in the Septuagint to render the Hebrew theological term *qahal* or sacred assembly of the Lord.[30]

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[28]To be fair, some clergy were also very creative in their approach. The Archdiocese of Manila, for example, prepared and disseminated a guide to celebrating the Paschal Triduum as a family at home, highlighting beautifully the role of the family as domestic Church.

[29]R. Mickens, "Cardinal Sarah Set to Retire: What if a Layman Took His Place?" *La Croix* (May 8, 2020).

[30]For a more detailed discussion of *ekklesia* in its historical context, see R. Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), 27–31.

In this light, togetherness, gathering, and even physically "going out" to be with one another may be seen as intrinsically tied to the notion of constituting the Church as the Lord's assembly. For instance, M. Francis identifies gathering as the first of the four basic elements that constitute *qahal*[31] and considers "the restoration of the active assembly" to be "the single most important accomplishment of the liturgical reform promoted by the Second Vatican Council."[32] He further specifies that "as a kind of sacrament, the assembly 'as the epiphany of the Church' is never an abstraction but takes place at a particular time and in a particular place."[33] Similarly, Militello defines *ekklesia* as "the assembly actually gathered here and now, in the immediacy of a space and a time that are experiential and experienced."[34] The importance of this physical gathering of the assembly is reflected in the liturgy itself as, for instance, in the very first rubric of the Order of the Mass: "When the people are gathered…."[35] More than just giving the cue for beginning the celebration, this points to the indispensable role of the gathered community in the liturgy.

Nevertheless, unlike the Greek political *ekklesia*, which is only such when they are formally convened, or the informal Greek *ekklesia*, which becomes such de facto when they are together, the Christian notion of *ecclesia*, which is more akin to the Hebrew *qahal*, refers to a gathering that is first and foremost ontological and theological and not just formal or factual. Thus, whenever Paul uses the word *ekklesia* in a formal context, as when greeting the community in his epistles, it almost always appears

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[31]M. Francis, "The Liturgical Assembly," in A. Chupungco, ed., *Handbook for Liturgical Studies* Vol. II: *Fundamental Liturgy* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2004), 132.

[32]Francis, "The Liturgical Assembly," 129.

[33]Francis, "The Liturgical Assembly," 140.

[34]C. Militello, "A Theology of Liturgical Space," in A. Chupungco, ed., *Handbook for Liturgical Studies* Vol. V: *Liturgical Time and Space* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 398.

[35]*The Roman Missal* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), 513.

in the form *Ecclesia Dei*, a programmatic phrase that encapsulates his understanding of *ecclesia*. As Roloff says, "Here, the gen. 'of God' is not merely an addendum defining more precisely the term *church*, but is indeed an integral part of a fixed theological formulation."[36]

The gathering of the Church happens on a level that is much deeper than the physical. More properly, it pertains to the gathering of humanity called through, with, and in Jesus Christ, into his fellowship with the Father in the Holy Spirit.[37] In this way, the *ecclesia* continues to be gathered even when it is not in a physical gathering, assembled even when not in temporal assembly. As the Second Vatican Council describes, in this gathering "He planned to assemble in the Holy Church all those who would believe in Christ."[38] It is an assembly of the Church according to the plan of God that takes place not only in space and time but also in eternity.

In this light, the Church is able to affirm that every liturgical act is an act of the entire Church therein assembled, even if not physically. Chupungco reminds us that "as official worship, the liturgy is never exclusive and never private."[39] The example he invokes here is the mandate of the General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, which entrusts to priests the duty of reciting the hours, the official prayer of the Church, even in the absence of the faithful "to ensure at least in their persons the regular carrying out of the duty of the entire community."[40] This is not being clericalist; rather, it simply affirms that the entire Church participates in the act of even just one person

[36]J. Roloff, "Ecclesia," in H. Balz & G. Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 411.

[37]Cf. 1 Cor. 1:9.

[38]Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium* [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church] (November 21, 1964), no. 2.

[39]A. Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2010), 67.

[40]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 67. Cf. *General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1971), no. 28.

who is doing such in the name of the Church. As the Council affirms, every liturgical act is always and inherently an act of full public worship done by the whole Mystical Body of Christ, that is, by Christ the Head in union with his members.[41]

This view, which is very much in line with Paul's corporate or "Body of Christ" ecclesiology, does not disparage active participation; rather, it widens our understanding of the way by which we truly participate in the liturgy even when not actively doing so. Indeed, our faith in the communion of saints also leads us to believe that the whole Church is with us in every liturgy. All the saints in heaven and souls in purgatory are "tuned in" or connected with the entire Church on earth around the world and not just with the physical assembly. This means liturgy without community is theologically impossible. At the same time, this corporate or, we may even say, network vision of the Church can serve as one of the bases for understanding how an online liturgy can connect us in a real mystical way.

In view of this, it would be helpful perhaps to speak more about connection rather than congregation in the liturgy, whether it be online or offline. Being the gathered priestly people of God means more than just being together physically. Indeed, we can look at how people are able to connect in a real way despite the limitation of not being able to congregate physically.

Such may actually be the wisdom behind the Church's strong preference for broadcasting and viewing liturgies *dum peraguntur* or "while they are performed."[42] It is providential that the technology available today already enables the virtual gathering and interaction of people from different locations and across time zones through online

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[41]See Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* [Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy] (December 4, 1963), no. 7. Hereafter referred to as SC.

[42]See, for instance, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Guidelines for Televising the Liturgy* (updated January 2014). See also the two decrees issued by the Vatican during the pandemic through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments: *Decree: In Time of Covid-19* (March 19, 2020) and *Decree: In Time of Covid-19 (II)* (March 25, 2020).

meeting apps like Zoom or Google Meet. And while the Ridgeway proposal of a "Zoom Mass" with each participant having bread and wine in front of the screen may be too far out,[43] distributing roles and encouraging people to sing and respond will surely make a celebration more dynamic, interactive, and participative as compared to mere broadcasts or livestreams that may accommodate more people and yet are more likely to reduce them to an audience. This is also far better than "canned" Masses and replays that are prone to be treated like products available for consumption at one's convenience.

The Importance of the Body in the Liturgy

The second major hurdle in this problematic concerns the essential place occupied by the human body in the liturgy, which cannot be overstated. Chupungco explains:

> Salvation history took place in the human body of the Incarnate Word. Obviously, the liturgy, which extends the presence of salvation history, takes place also in the human body. The human body is an essential component of the liturgy, just as the body of Christ was the instrument of his work of salvation.[44]

Presence is always required in the liturgy because of this incarnational principle. In the case of marriage by proxy, for instance, Canon 1104 §1 insists on the presence of both contracting parties, whether personally or by proxy. In effect, no sacrament is celebrated *in absentia*. As Chupungco expounds, "the Holy Spirit consecrates, forgives, and heals through the minister's contact with the human body. Tertullian's axiom is always worth remembering: *caro, salutis cardo*."[45] Indeed, even the Order of Christian Funerals always foresees the presence of the body or at least of the cremated remains in the various rites that accompany it on its final journey. Without the body

[43]See Ridgeway, "Online Communion Can Still Be Sacramental."

[44]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 49.

[45]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 49.

present, the rite cannot be called a funeral liturgy, only a liturgy for the deceased.

However, beyond mere physical presence being a juridical requirement for the validity of a liturgical act, Chan avers that the liturgy as public worship of the Church "requires the active participation of the faithful."[46] In exploring the psychosociological dimension of the liturgy, Pinkus likewise underscores the importance of the body as indispensable to rite, asserting that

> only through the body does rite express and effect the transformation of the person.… It is in the body that rite inscribes the premonition of the victory over death; it is in the body that it inscribes the sign of a supernatural identity.[47]

Maggiani concurs by describing the body as the "arch-symbol"[48] through and by which symbols are understood and take effect.

The body, moreover, is also the subject of the liturgy and not just its object. Catella avers that "one celebrates with the 'live body,' that is, one celebrates with the totality of one's own being and one's own doing situated in time and space."[49] According to her, these "liturgical gestures are not some sort of instrumental extensions of the human; they are human bodiliness that approaches, sees, touches, perceives, expresses, 'does' the mystery of salvation."[50]

However, Chupungco himself does not limit being present to physical presence alone. He recognizes that

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[46]A. Chan, "Participation in the Liturgy," in Chupungco, ed., *Handbook for Liturgical Studies* Vol. II: *Fundamental Liturgy*, 151.

[47]L. Pinkus, "The Psychosociological Aspect of the Liturgy," in Chupungco, ed., *Handbook for Liturgical Studies* Vol. II: *Fundamental Liturgy*, 181–182.

[48]S. Maggiani, "The Language of Liturgy," in Chupungco, ed., *Handbook for Liturgical Studies* Vol. II: *Fundamental Liturgy*, 237.

[49]A. Catella, "Theology of the Liturgy," in Chupungco, ed., *Handbook for Liturgical Studies* Vol. II: *Fundamental Liturgy*, 24.

[50]Catella, "Theology of the Liturgy," 27.

> there are several ways a person, event, or thing can be present besides being physically at hand. A loved one can be present in the heart of the lover; an event can be present in the memory of those who experienced it; and a thing can be present in the mind or intellect. Such presences, though not physical, are real, because they exist as a matter of fact in the heart, memory, or intellect. They are not tangible, but it does not mean that they are false and nonexistent.[51]

In a similar vein, Benedict XVI highlights the mediation of earthly signs during this time between redemption and the eschaton.[52] These signs include the gestures exerted by the human body as a form of active participation during the liturgy. Nevertheless, he qualifies that our external actions in the liturgy are "quite secondary" and that *doing* must actually stop when we come to the heart of the matter: *oratio*. For him, "it must be plainly evident that the *oratio* is the heart of the matter, but that it is important precisely because it provides a space for the *actio* of God."[53]

Here Benedict XVI is actually speaking of the Eucharistic Prayer, during which the impression may be had that the people are just "watching" the priest. He argues that in this part of the Eucharistic celebration, the people are engaged in the most essential *actio* of the liturgy, which is *oratio* or prayer, even in the apparent lack of words and actions. In fact, the active participation of the one receiving a sacrament, such as in the anointing of the sick, is not always possible and yet we celebrate it nonetheless. We see this beautifully, for instance, in the heart of the liturgy of Holy Orders, where the ordinandi simply submit to the actions of the celebrant as he prays and lays his hands over them.

As regards the role of the body in the liturgy, Benedict XVI explains, first of all, that it is passive before it can become active—to be "laid hold of by the Logos and for the Logos"[54] so as to be impelled

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[51]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 146.

[52]See Benedict XVI, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 53–61.

[53]Benedict XVI, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 174.

[54]See Benedict XVI, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 174.

to service—*leitourgia*—in everyday life while "the true liturgical action is the deed of God."[55] Yet according to him, liturgical gestures still provide a manner of training (*askesis*) for the body that allows a person "to be shaped and used by God."[56] In light of this, he views silence in the liturgy, which can be misconstrued by some as inaction, to be paramount: "something happens inwardly that corresponds to what is going on outwardly—we are disposing ourselves, preparing the way, placing ourselves before the Lord, asking him to make us ready for transformation."[57]

In a similar vein, Smolarski attaches great importance to liturgical gestures, objects, and words, which he describes as "foundational elements" or "building blocks" of the liturgy.[58] He also highlights the role of the senses,[59] of ritual,[60] and of the interaction between the minister and the assembly, saying that "this person-to-person interaction occurs at the center of the sacramental experience."[61] However, he also notes that "in this interactional model of the liturgy, the foremost role is *to be* a member of the assembly."[62] Presence, therefore, is the fundamental participation, if not being itself, over and above other ritual actions and interactions.

In view of this, it might be helpful to speak more about presence rather than proximity in the liturgy, whether online or offline. As Ridgeway suggests, this issue of online liturgies occasioned by the

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[55]Benedict XVI, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 174.

[56]Benedict XVI, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 176.

[57]Benedict XVI, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 211.

[58]See D. Smolarski, *Sacred Mysteries: Sacramental Principles and Liturgical Practice* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1995), 17.

[59]See Smolarski, *Sacred Mysteries*, 28–29.

[60]See Smolarski, *Sacred Mysteries*, 30–32.

[61]Smolarski, *Sacred Mysteries*, 21.

[62]Smolarski, *Sacred Mysteries*, 22 (emphasis added).

pandemic may be the time to reassess our understanding of presence and take it beyond the confines of physicality.[63] Unlike Ridgeway, however, the question will be framed here not in terms of presence vs. physicality but rather presence vs. proximity, particularly since online presence, as will be argued, can also have real physical elements. Indeed, just as one can be proximate or "physically present" while not actually so, it has become possible to be remote or "physically absent" while actually present through online means. It is important, moreover, to see that the human body is only one of the many elements that the liturgy involves and that active participation is not limited to the physical. As Chupungco says,

> The liturgy engages the entire person: mind, heart, soul, spirit and body. Worship in spirit and trust is a performative act that involves the participation of the mind that understands, the heart that ponders, the soul that is nourished, the spirit that soars and the body that performs the action. The liturgy is thus an activity that is spiritual and physical, intellectual and emotional, heavenly and earthly.[64]

All these can be important keys to a better understanding of what appears to be passivity during online participation in the sacraments, namely, that this is a manner of placing ourselves before the Lord—or "orienting" ourselves to Christ, in Benedictine parlance, allowing God to work in us which is the supreme liturgical action. When this is adequately explained, the faithful will have a deeper understanding of what it means to "watch" the online Mass—that it is a way of watching the Lord and with the Lord.

> I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
> and in his word I hope;
> my soul waits for the Lord
> more than watchmen for the morning,
> more than watchmen for the morning. (Ps 130: 5–6)[65]

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[63]Ridgeway, "Online Communion Can Still Be Sacramental."

[64]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 34.

[65]Scripture is replete with many passages where "watching" is considered to be a form of prayer, even a very intimate one. See, for instance, Ps. 5:3; 59:9; Mt. 26:38; and Mk. 14:34.

At the same time, there are also ways to make remote liturgies more dynamic and participatory in line with the Vatican II principle of *participatio actuosa*. Many guidelines and suggestions, for instance, were issued to help people participate better online during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the preparation of the physical space to help dispose participants to prayer or even the observance of proper attire as well as proper posture. This demonstrates that online participation also has physical and corporeal dimensions. People who may seem to be just "watching" online are using their eyes to see what is being shown onscreen, their ears to hear the sounds through the speaker, perhaps their vocal chords to respond and sing, their minds to understand and make meaning of what is happening, and their hearts to worship God, most especially in the silence. These may also be considered as legitimate forms of bodily contact and participation, even if relatively limited.

The Importance of the Cosmos in Liturgy

The third major obstacle in this issue is the indispensable role of the cosmos and of the cosmic elements involved in the celebration of liturgy, especially the sacraments. Even prior to the Incarnation and especially because of it, all liturgy has always had creation or what John Paul II calls "the altar of the world"[66] as its rightful setting. As Francis says in *Laudato Si'*, "the Sacraments are a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to become a means of mediating supernatural life. Through our worship of God, we are invited to embrace the world on a different plane."[67]

The emphasis on the cosmic dimension of the liturgy seems to explain the bias of even the most progressive liturgists toward elements that are considered to be "natural" as opposed to those that are considered "artificial" or involve the use of technology. In *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, particularly in the section devoted to "Mass Media

[66]John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* [On the Eucharist in Its Relationship to the Church] (April 17, 2003), 438.

[67]Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 235.

and the Liturgy" where he offers some practical points to consider when broadcasting liturgies, Chupungco quotes a 1967 *Consilium* editorial titled "Mécanique et Liturgie" in its unabashed disdain for "artificial devices":

> No electrical candle will ever have the value of the living flame of wax or oil being visibly consumed as an offering to the Lord. The illumination of the Church with the candles of the congregation at the Easter Vigil is a rite simple yet full of meaning, bringing to mind both the resurrection and the faith. How ridiculous it would become if candles were exchanged for flashlights.[68]

Following this line of thought, sacramental and liturgical celebrations can be properly facilitated only in the context of the created cosmos—which is offline—and not in an online virtual setting, which is obviously made by human hands. Paradigms seem to be evolving, however, no matter how slowly—earlier in the same book, Chupungco also asked: "But if we regard modern technology as one of God's greatest gifts to mankind, can we simply ignore or dismiss its entry into the domain of liturgical worship?"[69] Musing even further, such as on the possibility of digital devices eventually replacing printed liturgical books, he admits: "I still have to make up my mind whether information technology is so helplessly secular that it cannot have a place in liturgical action."[70] In fact, the Constitution on the Liturgy itself does not discriminate whether something is natural or artificial, saying that "the liturgy means that there is hardly any proper use of material things that cannot be directed towards human sanctification and the praise of God."[71]

In light of this, not only can digital devices be properly considered as part of the same cosmos and incorporated into liturgical worship but perhaps cyberspace can be recognized as a real space as well, and

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[68]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 245.

[69]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 13.

[70]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 13.

[71]SC 61.

be fittingly adopted as proper for the liturgy. We would thus find in the digital continent not just the new marketplace but also the new basilica by sacralizing an otherwise secular realm and harnessing the capability of digital technology to not only facilitate a true liturgical encounter but also become the locus for it.

As to whether cyberspace can be a new venue for the liturgy and especially the Eucharist, the entire history of the liturgy bears witness to its many migrations—from the Upper Room to the domestic churches, from the basilicas and baroque retables to the freestanding modern altars that we have today. What has remained constant, however, is the ability of the liturgy to change and adapt to various circumstances without losing the essence of the saving history that it commemorates and makes present. As Chupungco says, "the manner of holding the liturgical feast is subject to the circumstances of culture, history, and the theological climate in the Church."[72] This becomes increasingly urgent in an emerging Web 4.0 environment where we see not only the gradual compenetration of our online and offline worlds but also the growing predominance of online over offline, with more and more people spending more and more time on the Internet. Indeed, as Campbell and Garner warn us, we run the risk of living in a world devoid of God, "for if we see no place for God in our online activity and life, so too the online world loses its capacity as a site for the sacred and encounters with God."[73]

In view of this, it would be helpful, perhaps, to speak more of mediation rather than of medium in the liturgy, whether it be online or offline. Sacramentality, after all, has not always been limited to the liturgical signs involved in the celebration of the seven sacraments. In the famous Leonine formula "Quod itaque Redemptoris nostri conspicuum fuit, in sacramenta transivit,"[74] Leo the Great refers not

[72]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 166.

[73]Campbell & Garner, *Networked Theology*, 91.

[74]"What was visible in our Savior has passed on in the sacraments" (Leo the Great, *Sermo LXXIV. De Ascensione Domini II*, c. 2, in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia*

only to the seven ritual sacraments but to all acts of goodness and holiness that Christians perform which manifest the presence of Christ in and through them. What appears to be integral in the word "sacrament," therefore, is mediation, or the fact that God is capable of making use of matter as God's instrument despite even the matter itself. As such, it is not so much a question of the matter itself but of God's mediation, which is wholly gratuitous and able to make use of even the lowliest things for its purpose. Chupungco says:

> A place is holy not because it has blessed walls, not because it has a sanctuary and an altar, not because it has a cross and sacred images. A place is holy because Christ dwells there. A school gymnasium, an open park, a space in a shopping mall or airport or prison compound can become holy when Christ finds a place there.… In a word, the presence of Christ in liturgical celebrations explains why there is no space that cannot be considered suitable for worship.[75]

Chupungco also explains that the Eucharist can be celebrated in a place not because the latter was previously made sacred; rather, "it is the presence of Christ in his body the Church that confers holiness to the space. It is the Eucharist celebrated there that sanctifies the place."[76] It is baseless therefore to distinguish between places as either sacred or profane, or as suitable or unsuitable for worship, because any place, even the most profane and seemingly unsuitable, is a potential locus for encountering God. Chupungco provides a compelling analogy:

> If the Incarnate Word was laid in a manger and made the manger a powerful symbol of his presence among us, there is no reason why we should put up an impregnable wall that separates the sacred from the profane. If the Savior celebrated the most sacred act of worship on the most profane instrument of execution on the abominable hill of Calvary, there is no reason why we should despise the poverty and secular character of a place as venue for our worship.[77]

Latina Vol. 54 [Paris], 398).

[75]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 155–156.

[76]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 159.

[77]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 161.

Could this not be said of cyberspace as well, which, in effect, becomes sacralized by the very fact that the people of God pray and gather there, that the Eucharist is celebrated there, even in its apparent poverty and secularity?

Brantly Millegan, a well-known digital evangelizer himself and the founder of ChurchPOP, a very successful online Catholic evangelization initiative, believes nonetheless that everything in the world as well as in the Church can go online except for the sacraments. According to him, the sacraments will never go online precisely because of the need for contact with the cosmos, which does not have a virtual substitute:

> Think of everything that can be done online these days. You can make a living, pay your taxes, order just about anything you need (including food), keep up with friends and family, get an academic degree, etc. But there's one thing that we will never be able to do online: the sacraments. Even if the world became a voluntary matrix, where everyone only interacted in a virtual realm, the sacraments would still require us to be physically present to receive them. You must be actually baptized, physically, with real water.[78]

The sacramental effect, which is produced by grace but mediated by cosmic signs, is as real as it is symbolic. This is why sacramental symbols and direct contact with them are requisite for the validity and efficacy of a sacrament. There can be no baptism without water, no anointing without oil, no Eucharist without bread and wine, and so on; indeed, as Chupungco says, "through *bodily* contact with the sacramental bread, water, and oil recipients enter or deepen their relationship with the Divine Persons."[79] Even those sacraments that do not include tangible elements in their core ritual still involve palpable gestures: marriage necessitates that consent be exchanged, ordination calls for the laying on of hands, and reconciliation requires that the words of absolution be heard. Every full liturgical celebration, therefore, always takes the shape of a mediated encounter with the Lord by way of direct contact with these sacred signs. As Ambrose said in the fourth

[78]See D. Sockey, "There's One Thing That We Will Never Be Able to Do Online: The Sacraments," *National Catholic Register* (April 13, 2015).

[79]Chupungco, *What, Then, is Liturgy?*, 171 (emphasis added).

century, "Christ, you have shown yourself to me face to face. In your sacraments, I encounter you."[80] The Constitution on the Liturgy affirms as well, in similar fashion, that "in the liturgy, human sanctification is signified by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which corresponds with each of these signs."[81]

Here is where the poverty and deficiency of any remote liturgy compared to our traditional way of celebrating become most apparent and appear insurmountable. You just cannot pour water, anoint with oil, or consume bread and wine online. As such, the normative and full manner of celebrating the sacraments will likely and rightfully remain offline and in direct contact with these cosmic signs.

The Church, however, seems to allow for an exemption from this norm by admitting the possibility of baptism by blood and by desire, although she actually states that such a baptism "brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament."[82] Aquinas takes this further by floating the possibility of also receiving the effects of the Eucharist by desire. He says that

> the effect of the sacrament can be secured by every [person] if [he or she] receive it in desire, though not in reality. Consequently, just as some are baptized with the Baptism of desire, through their desire of baptism, before being baptized in the Baptism of water; so likewise some eat this sacrament spiritually ere they receive it sacramentally.… Nevertheless sacramental eating is not without avail, because the actual receiving of the sacrament produces more fully the effect of the sacrament than does the desire thereof, as stated above of Baptism.[83]

Aquinas, while making a very clear distinction between receiving the Eucharist "sacramentally" and receiving it "spiritually" ("though not in reality"), is convinced of the possibility of securing the effect of the

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[80]Ambrose, *Apologia David* (Centre Traditio Litterarum Occidentalium, 2010), 12.

[81]SC 7.

[82]See CCC 1258.

[83]T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Pars III, Q. 80, A. 1, ad. 3.

sacrament by way of spiritual reception. At the same time, however, he insists on the importance and even superiority of sacramental reception by asserting that the "actual receiving of the sacrament produces *more fully* the effect of the sacrament than does the desire thereof" (emphasis added), recalling once again the parallel with baptism by desire which is not the same as sacramental baptism. Nevertheless, he opens a way of obtaining at least the effect of the sacrament, even if not the sacrament itself, in the absence of physical reception.

Similarly, even while the Church maintains that there are no sacraments online, it is good to note that it does not totally discount the potential of religious broadcasts, nor does it ignore their importance. The Constitution on the Liturgy itself, for instance, directs that "radio and television broadcasts of sacred rites must be marked by discretion and dignity.… This is especially important when the service to be broadcast is the Mass."[84] This particular concern of the Council that broadcast liturgies, especially Masses, "should be marked with such care and dignity" was reiterated in the 1967 Instructions *Eucharisticum Mysterium* and *Musicam Sacram*.[85] We may thus regard such an emphasis on applying special care in the preparation of liturgical and Eucharistic broadcasts as the Council's tacit acknowledgement of the peculiar importance of these remote celebrations, especially given their reach. In fact, the Church requires that seminarians learn to use media and develop their communication skills as a matter "of high importance in the reformed liturgy."[86]

The 1971 pastoral instruction *Communio et Progressio* also underlines the value of religious broadcasts, including transmissions of liturgical celebrations. In addition to their educative and informative value,

[84]SC 20.

[85]See, from the Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Eucharisticum Mysterium* [Instruction on Eucharistic Worship], *AAS* 59 (1967): 539–573, no. 22 and *Musicam Sacram* [Instruction on Music in the Liturgy], *AAS* 59 (1967): 300–320, no. 8.

[86]Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *In Synodo Episcopali* [Basic Plan for Priestly Formation], *AAS* 62 (1970): 321–384.

this document also mentions their capacity to maintain a connection especially with old and sick members who cannot go to church. It also acknowledges their potential for forging new relationships with the so-called "unchurched" seekers who engage and can be engaged through these modern technologies, as well as their ability to reach people even in places where the Church is not able to operate. In this way, the aforementioned text highlights not only the catechetical or devotional value of these broadcasts but also their ecclesial and missionary import:

> Religious programmes that utilize all the resources of radio and television enrich people's religious life and create new bonds between the faithful. They help in religious education and in the Church's active commitment in the world. They are bonds of union for those who cannot share physically in the life of the Church because of their sickness or old age. In addition they create new relationships between the faithful and those people—and today they are legion—who have no affiliation with any Church and yet subconsciously seek spiritual nourishment. They carry the message of the Gospel to countries where the Church is not. The Church cannot afford to ignore such opportunities. On the contrary, she will make the fullest use of any fresh opportunities that the improvement of those instruments may disclose.[87]

It is interesting to note that the original Latin text of the quotation above seems to say something more than what the English translation does. "Iis etiam prosunt, qui ita aegri sunt aetateve provecti ut *impediantur* quominus vitae ipsius Ecclesiae *sint directo participes*" (emphasis added)[88] is rendered, quite liberally, in English as "They are bonds of union for those who cannot share physically in the life of the Church because of their sickness or old age" but can also be rendered more literally as "These are also for (the benefit of) those who, being sick or advanced in years, are *prevented from direct participation* in the life of the Church" (emphasis added). Indeed, as the Italian version puts it, "Sono inoltre di aiuto agli ammalati e alle persone anziane che *non*

[87]See Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Communio et Progressio* [On the Means of Social Communication] (May 23, 1971), no. 150.

[88]See the Latin version in *AAS* 63 (1971): 645.

possono partecipare direttamente alla vita della Chiesa" (emphasis added).[89] Here the phrase "prevented from direct participation" seems to allow some latitude in interpretation—it can be seen, on the one hand, as implicitly derogating participation through broadcast to being merely "indirect," as opposed and subordinated to "direct" participation, while, on the other, as explicitly acknowledging that indirect participation is also truly participation, albeit relatively less direct.

The benefits of religious broadcasts as listed in this 1971 document have been exponentially magnified given the kind of technology available on the Internet today and its wider penetration. Such was the experience during this pandemic as reported by Gisotti, the vice-editorial director of Vatican media, who shared that papal liturgies broadcast online during the quarantine period effectively reached out not only to believers but "even [to] agnostics and non-believers," as gleaned from feedback sent by viewers themselves. Almost 5.5 million users registered more than 14.5 million views of these papal liturgies on the Vatican News website between April 5 and 13 (2020) alone. According to Gisotti, "many people, not just the Catholic faithful, were able to follow and '*encounter*' the Holy Father and, through him, the Word of God thanks to this technology and especially to streaming services and social media."[90]

On May 20, 2020, Vatican News shared a short video clip on its Facebook page which showed people from all over the world following the Pope's daily Mass online during the pandemic. The caption read: "Messages and videos have poured in from around the world to thank Pope Francis for accompanying the faithful with his live-streamed daily Masses during these difficult months of COVID-19 lockdown."[91]

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[89]See the Italian version at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_23051971_communio_it.html.

[90]As quoted by C. Glatz, "Vatican registers huge growth, engagement online for Holy Week, Easter," *Crux* (April 14, 2020) (emphasis added).

[91]See "Catholics thank Pope for Live-streamed Masses," *Vatican News* Facebook page (May 20, 2020).

The Pope's daily Mass, according to another report, has been able to attract a live Internet audience of as many as 6,000 people,[92] a figure that rises easily to about half a million for Italy alone if one includes television broadcasts. To provide some perspective, Lamb notes that "the 500,000 figure is high, given [that] the capacity for those attending an open-air Mass in the perimeter of St. Peter's Square is around 60,000 people. Exceptional events, such as the canonisation of John Paul II and John XXIII, attracted 500,000."[93] This kind of feedback and its corresponding figures give us a sense of ordinary people's "reception," or what is termed in theology as *sensus fidelium*, of these online liturgies.

We can see from this, then, that while contact with the cosmic elements of the liturgy is the ordinary route by which God communicates sacramental grace, God's action in our souls is not altogether impeded by the absence of this contact even in the sacramental context. The hierarchy itself recognizes the importance and efficacy of liturgical and sacramental broadcasts, and the faithful themselves experience them to be effective and helpful. This should lead us, therefore, to be more affirming rather than dismissive when considering online liturgies.

Rupture or Continuity?

It is obviously an impossible task to look into the Gospels or even the whole of the Scriptures for what these have to say about the modern reality of the Internet, which was born only fifty years ago in 1959. Nonetheless, we can perhaps consider some passages as paradigm cases, along with some analogues from tradition and official texts, and one final sample of what seems to be the *sensus fidelium* in order to gauge whether a more benign consideration of online liturgies is in harmony with what we believe.

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[92]See E. Allen, "As Coronavirus Spreads, So Does Pope's 'Virtual Parish'," *Crux* (March 17, 2020).

[93]See C. Lamb, "Half a Million Tune into Pope's Daily Mass," *The Tablet* (March 19, 2020).

The main Biblical text proposed for consideration is the account of the healing of the centurion's servant (Mt. 8:5–13 and Lk. 7:1–10). What is rather unique about this narrative of Jesus performing a healing miracle is the fact that the sick person who needed healing was not physically present in front of Jesus. This becomes the occasion for the centurion's display of prodigious faith, he who believed that Jesus could still perform the healing despite the distance. As the centurion declared in his famous prayer, the one thing necessary was the word of Jesus expressing his will: "only say the word" (Mt. 8:8; Lk. 7:7).

This account appears to show that physical presence is not an indispensable requirement for God's power to operate, nor is distance an insuperable barrier to grace. In fact, it appears to be inconsequential, for as Matthew emphasized, there was no "lag" between the words of Jesus and the healing of the centurion's servant which took place "at that very moment" (Mt. 8:13). John, too, in a very similar account involving a royal official and his son (Jn. 4:46–54), emphasizes the synchronicity of Jesus's word and the actual healing, both of which occurred as if "in real time" despite physical distance. We also have another distance healing account in Mark (7:24–30), the story of the Syrophoenician mother who begged Jesus to heal her possessed daughter who was back at home (the story is also found in Mt. 15:21–25).

Jesus himself, moreover, seems to point to presence beyond physical proximity. In commissioning his disciples before his ascension into heaven, he assures them of his continual presence even as he was about to leave: "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt. 28:20). Paul also seems to refer to a similar kind of presence in 1 Cor. 5:3, where he describes himself as "absent in body" but "present in spirit," something he also does in Col. 2:5. One may also refer to the witness of the Psalmist who found the presence of God even in the most unlikely place, such as in darkness, to see that God can be present anywhere and is, in fact, present everywhere (Ps. 139:7–12).

As for tradition, we also have, in addition to our belief in the communion of saints that we experience especially in the liturgy, an account of remote participation in a Eucharistic celebration by St. Clare of Assisi, who was chosen by Pius XII to be the patroness of

television in 1957 in view of this particular event. As the story goes, Clare was too ill one Christmas night to attend the Midnight Mass as she so ardently desired, and so the Holy Spirit projected the liturgical celebration on the wall of her room such that she was able to see, hear, and participate in it from her bed "as if she was present in person."[94] Indeed, this miraculous event may be considered not only as the first radio or television broadcast but also as the first live stream in history, pioneered by no less than God.

It has also been the custom of the Church to extend the plenary indulgence attached to the *Urbi et Orbi* blessing imparted by the Pope to those who join remotely through radio and television. In fact, it was on the occasion of the first *Urbi et Orbi* of the then newly-elected Pope Francis that Cardinal Tauran added "the new means of social communication" as a way by which the faithful could obtain the indulgence by following the events in St. Peter's Square through the Internet. These "new means of social communication" have been used since on such occasions and some other events besides as another way to obtain indulgences. Such may be regarded, then, as tacit affirmations of the fact that grace can flow through cyberspace.

In terms of Church documents, it is also impossible to go very far back. Aside from the conciliar and post-conciliar texts already mentioned, which have a benign stance toward remote liturgies, two recent decrees from the Congregation for Divine Worship also appear to have an appreciative disposition. The first decree on the pandemic, "In Time of Covid-19," affirms that "in this occasion, the means of live (not recorded) televisual or internet broadcasts are helpful."[95] This

[94]"comme si elle était présente en personne" (see Pius XII, *Lettre Apostolique Proclamant Ste. Claire Patronne Céleste de la Télévision* [Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, February 14, 1957]).

[95]Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Decree: In Time of Covid-19*. At the same time, however, it is important to note the deliberate inclusion of a limiting clause in the very same sentence: "in this occasion." Moreover, the document does not go on to elaborate as to what degree and in what manner these broadcasts are helpful.

is repeated once again in the follow-up decree issued six days later, which instructs that

> the faithful should be informed of the beginning times of the celebrations so that they can prayerfully unite themselves in their homes. Means of live (not recorded) telematic broadcasts can be of help. In any event it remains important to dedicate an adequate time to prayer, giving importance above all to the *Liturgia Horarum*.[96]

Lastly, we turn to an articulation of what may represent the *sensus fidelium* regarding this issue. This is taken from the first of a series of articles titled "Diario della crisi" (Diary of the Crisis), which were edited by the Pope's former spokesman, Federico Lombardi, S.J., who describes how Francis's online congregations during the crisis represent the unity of believers around the Lord's table even when they are not together physically. In the article curiously titled "Piazza piena e Piazza vuota" (Full Square and Empty Square), he tells how the Pope, who loves to look at his audiences in the eye, has learned to look at them through the camera instead because of the quarantines that separated him from his flock during the pandemic. Lombardi says that the Pope's words, even though mediated by technology, "remain *equally* effective in reaching the heart."[97] Indeed, he takes this a step further by claiming that in the apparent vacuum of the massive square, with only Francis and a few assistants present, "the assembly is no longer physically present but *it is there and is truly united*, through the person of the celebrant, with the Lord who died and rose again."[98] Lombardi points as well to the source of this presence and unity:

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[96]Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Decree: In Time of Covid-19 (II)*. Note that the text expressly points out the need to supplement participation in online liturgies with other forms of offline prayer, especially the liturgy of the hours.

[97]"Ora lo sguardo e la voce sono mediati dalla tecnologia, ma riescono *ugualmente* a raggiungere il cuore" (Lombardi, "Piazza piena e Piazza vuota" [emphasis added]).

[98]"L'assemblea non è più presente fisicamente, ma c'è ed è realmente unita, attraverso la persona del celebrante, intorno al Signore che muore e risorge" (Lombardi, "Piazza piena e Piazza vuota").

> Now we have seen the Piazza absolutely empty, but the largest assembly, the one not physically but spiritually present, was there, and perhaps even more numerous and intensely united than on other occasions. The Pope can only be in St. Peter's Square, as in the chapel of Santa Marta, but the Church, the universal assembly of the faithful, is *real and united in the strongest sense* (fortissimamente reale e unita) by very deep bonds rooted in faith and in the human heart.[99]

Aside from a bond "rooted in faith and in the human heart," Lombardi also points to the presence of the Spirit as the one who "holds together the 'Mystical body' of Christ" scattered at the moment but also mysteriously gathered, "a spiritual reality precisely, which manifests itself when the assembly is physically gathered and present, but which is not tied and limited to physical presence, and paradoxically experienced these days in a stronger and more evident way"[100] despite the apparent emptiness of the square. All this, indeed, by way of an online liturgy.

Conclusion

While we need to admit real limitations in the case of online liturgies in terms of their communal, physical, and cosmic dimensions, the matter need not be framed in rigid binary terms as to whether sacraments celebrated online are valid or invalid, effective or ineffective, existent or non-existent. It must be acknowledged that online liturgies, impoverished as they may be compared to offline celebrations which

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[99]"Ora abbiamo visto la Piazza assolutamente vuota, ma l'assemblea più larga, quella non presente fisicamente ma spiritualmente c'è stata, e forse anche più numerosa e intensamente unita che in altre occasioni. Il Papa può essere solo in Piazza San Pietro, come nella Cappella di Santa Marta, ma la Chiesa, l'assemblea universale dei fedeli è fortissimamente reale e unita da vincoli profondissimi radicati nella fede e nel cuore umano." (Lombardi, "Piazza piena e Piazza vuota" [emphasis added])

[100]"Una realtà spirituale appunto, che si manifesta quando l'assemblea è fisicamente riunita e presente, ma che non è legata e limitata alla presenza fisica, e paradossalmente in questi giorni si può sperimentare in modo più forte ed evidente" (Lombardi, "Piazza piena e Piazza vuota").

remain to be the norm, are still able to involve the community, engage the body, and impart a palpable experience of God whose presence transcends the cosmos itself.

This has real implications that go beyond the pandemic. For instance, will and should online Masses become more regular in the "new normal"? This would open the way for those who cannot participate physically in the Eucharist, including the sick and many others, to do so more confidently, especially if the available means to make such remote participation more dynamic and interactive are harnessed and the question of its efficacy is clarified. It may not be a bad idea, for example, to follow the online puja model, with participation in a live Mass through a conferencing application followed by communion from the same celebration brought to homebound participants afterwards whenever possible. Unfortunately, if we are simply to revert to the old practice here in the Philippines and in many other places, this would mean a return to "canned" or pre-recorded Masses usually broadcast only on television (and in the wee hours of morning or night!) and not available online.

Once again, while the proposal of a "Zoom Mass" where each participant has bread and wine in front of the screen to be consecrated remotely may be too extreme,[101] we can be more cognizant perhaps of the real—even if limited—efficacy and validity of online liturgies. For instance, if we begin to conceive of grace as more of a presence or relationship rather than as a thing, as Osborne suggests,[102] it would become easier to understand how online contact can actually "work" grace, that is, make presence felt and foster the relationship. This can also be a new key to understanding the efficacy of the sacraments not only in the traditional sense of their particular effects but as a holy and holy-making presence or relationship.[103] Another possible way is to consider an online Mass as a sacrament in Leo the Great's broader

[101]See Ridgeway, "Online Communion Can Still Be Sacramental."

[102]See K. Osborne, *Sacramental Theology: A General Introduction* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1988), 63.

[103]See Osborne, *Sacramental Theology*, 132.

sense whereby the shared prayer of Christians, animated by their faith, makes the presence of Christ felt online in an effective way.

This would also be a good time to revisit our understanding of the real presence of Christ in the liturgy and especially the Eucharist, which, as the Constitution on Liturgy tells us, is not limited to the sacramental species but also dwells in the Word, in the presider, and in the gathered assembly.[104] In this way, we may be able to affirm the real presence of Christ in an online Eucharist even though the sacred species are found in only one of the locations. To waste this very opportune moment might be just a tad short of doubting the omnipotence of God and stifling the creativity of the Holy Spirit, who may be showing this new path to us today.

Please allow me now to end on a very personal if not phenomenological note. Last May 17, 2020, we had an online Mass via Zoom with some contemporaries from the College Department of San Jose Seminary. The presider led us from Pampanga while the first reading was proclaimed from Makati, the psalm from Quezon City, the second reading from Muntinlupa, and the Gospel from Manila. A priest gave the homily from Makati, and a new deacon, ordained only during the pandemic, led the intercessions afterwards from Florida in the United States. When he prayed "for all of us gathered here today," I felt a real sense of communion with my brothers, along with the wives and children of some of them, from different parts of the country and the world. During the Eucharistic Prayer, when the presider said, "Listen graciously to the prayers of this family, whom you have summoned before you," I felt that the Lord willed and worked this online gathering, that He himself was the one who had gathered us. There was no bread or wine but there was communion, and although I knew in my mind that technically a Mass was being celebrated only in Pampanga and that the rest of us were all just watching, I could not help but believe deep within my heart: This is the Eucharist. This is the Church. Jesus was online.

[104]See SC 7.

Landas 33:2 (2019) 37–56

WHAT IS THE *DIZIGUI*?

Umberto Bresciani

As its title indicates, the *Dizigui* (弟子規, *Rules for the Disciple* or *Standards for Students*) is a Confucian book of rules of behavior for a disciple (a young person or child) instructing him or her on how to behave toward his or her own teacher and others. It is a very short text—1080 Chinese characters altogether—written in poetic lines (360 lines) of three characters each, thereby imitating another celebrated Chinese educational primer, the *Sanzijing* (*Three Character Classic*). The lines are enriched by rhymes (every two make up a rhyme), making the text quite easy for children to memorize and recite.

Data about the author and time of writing of the *Dizigui* are rather vague. Everyone agrees that it came into existence during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), with the most common tradition being that its author was a certain Li Yuxiu (ar. 1647–1729), a scholar who did not succeed in achieving the *jinshi* (the highest degree) in the government civil service examination and subsequently made a living by teaching and writing educational materials. He wrote the *Dizigui* around the time of the Kangxi Emperor (reigned 1661–1722), although with the title *Xunmengwen* (訓蒙文, "Elementary Text on Compliance"). It was published in book form toward the end of the eighteenth century, after a revision by a scholar named Jia Youren (賈仁, 1724–1784) who renamed it *Dizigui*.

Another theory supported by some scholars is that the work saw the light only after the Opium War (1840–1842) and became widely popular during the last half-century of the Qing Empire. In 1893, the scholar Zhou Baozhang (周保璋) noted in one of his books that the ancient classic *Sanzijing* could be forgotten after the publication of the *Dizigui*.

The *Dizigui* was a primer for learning how to read and write as well as the basics of human ethical behavior. It was similar in nature to other primers of the Confucian tradition—the *Sanzijing* (*Three Character Classic*), the *Qianziwen* (*Thousand Character Classic*), and the *Baijiaxing* (*Hundred Family Surnames*)—and was compiled based on an essay on children's education written by the Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi (1130–1200) entitled *Tongmeng xu zhi* (童蒙须知, "What Small Kids Should Know"). The essay described how children should learn good behavior in different social contexts: how to dress, speak, and walk; how to clean their rooms and keep their things in order; and how to learn to read and write. It was divided into four sections, closely following a saying from the *Analects* of Confucius:

> At home, a young man must respect his parents; abroad, he must respect his elders. He should talk little, but with good faith; love all people, but associate with the virtuous. Having done this, if he still has energy to spare, let him study literature.[1]

The wording of the *Dizigui* appears in several places to have been drawn from the *Book of Rites* (*Liji*), especially the chapter called *Quli*, while a large part of the material comes from the aforementioned essay by Zhu Xi.

The *Dizigui* has a very brief general preamble or outline, almost identical in wording to the passage from the *Analects* just mentioned. Seven chapters then follow:

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[1]Confucius, *The Analects*, ed. M. Nylan, trans. S. Leys (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014), I, 6 (hereafter referred to as *Analects*). Although the translator mentions "literature" in the last sentence, the original word (*wen*文) has a broader meaning, referring to any cultural activity.

- Chapter 1: Filial piety toward parents
- Chapter 2: Respect toward one's elder brothers
- Chapter 3: Be cautious in my daily life
- Chapter 4: Learning to be trustworthy
- Chapter 5: Love all living beings
- Chapter 6: Be close to and learn from people of virtue and compassion
- Chapter 7: How to study and learn to improve one's cultural and spiritual life.

Each of these chapters is a development of the content of the short sentences contained in the outline, words that come from the mouth of Confucius himself. Of the 113 rules altogether listed in the work, 24 are concerned with filial piety, 13 with brotherly love/respect, 24 with caution in one's daily life routine, 15 with trustworthiness in dealing with people, 21 with love toward all people, 4 with staying close to virtuous and benevolent persons, and 12 with guidelines for learning.

It is a fact that the *Dizigui* was quite popular in China during the second half of the nineteenth century, even though just at the level of the countryside. Toward the end of that century, the local government in numerous areas of China made the *Dizigui* a mandatory textbook in public and private elementary schools, and it was widely read. The literati did not appreciate it, however, considering its style too elementary, its content too low, and its ethical rules too simplistic. According to some scholars, the book had been written not for children but for illiterate country people; it was first read in places like temples and tea houses.

When the Chinese soon realized, however, that their country was "the sick man of Asia," unable to stand up against any foreign power, a growing wave of anti-Confucianism began to spread, reaching a climax in the May 4th Movement of 1919. They figured that their weakness and backwardness was all the fault of their Confucian cultural tradition. Everything Confucian, including the *Dizigui*, was gradually discarded.

After the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, the situation became even more serious for all kinds of Confucian reading

materials; only outside of China were there people still reading and studying Confucian books. There were several earnest scholars in particular in Hong Kong and Taiwan—the so-called New Confucian philosophers—who worked hard at fathoming Confucian doctrines, and who in time developed a rediscovery and revival of the ancient philosophy-religion. Their efforts gave birth to the so-called New Confucian Movement.

Around 1990, Taiwanese scholar Wang Caigui (1949–), a disciple of Mou Zongsan (one of the leading New Confucians [1909–1996]), launched a movement in Taiwan for teaching children to memorize the Confucian classics, just as was customary in all respected families in previous centuries. The movement started from scratch by organizing voluntary classes outside the school schedule, usually on Saturday afternoons, when the interested parents would bring their children to a borrowed classroom and have them memorize passages from the classics, together with some poetry and other sayings, while playing games.

Having never been considered as a classic in the past, the *Dizigui* was not among the original materials meant for memorization, although it was soon included under the encouragement of enthusiastic supporters of the movement, including Buddhists and the followers of the Yiguandao and Tiandijiao religions. The activity of *dujing* ("classics memorization") described above was quite successful in Taiwan and was soon extended to China where it became a large movement, embraced enthusiastically by many volunteer teachers and involving tens of millions of children. The teaching materials of the movement, which included the *Dizigui*, were also better organized in China, enjoying the contribution of well-prepared anthologies such as the one compiled by the scholar Jiang Qing (1953–).[2]

[2]A well-known figure in Chinese intellectual circles, Jiang Qing is the leader of "political Confucianism." He advocates a return to a Confucian China modeled after the ancient classic, the *Gongyang Commentary* to the Chunqiu (the Spring and Autumn Annals compiled by Confucius). In 2004, Jiang Qing compiled an eight-volume anthology of classical texts deemed worthy of memorization for Wang Caigui's memorization movement.

Nowadays, the miniscule booklet known by the name *Dizigui* is back to topical in contemporary China a century after its disappearance; indeed, we are observant, after the year 2000, to a "*Dizigui* fever." According to recent research on the renaissance of popular Confucianism, a Buddhist monk by the name of Master Jingkong brought about the revival of the *Dizigui* in China.[3] Born in Lujiang County in Anhui Province in 1927, Master Jingkong was exiled to Taiwan in 1949, ordained a Buddhist master in 1959, and worked hard for decades as a talented preacher to spread a modernized version of Buddhism in Taiwan before extending his activities to Chinese communities in foreign countries including the United States, Malaysia, and Australia. He finally started to work in China in the 1990s through preaching and the free distribution of books and icons, wisely exploiting the most advanced communication technologies available at the time.

Among the materials Master Jingkong promoted was the *Dizigui*. He was convinced that such a book was extremely precious as a concrete realization of the highest ideals of Buddhism, even though its content was Confucian. He argued that Chinese culture had a unifying thread which was concentrated in three books, one for each of the three doctrines (Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism), and that in his view, the *Dizigui* was the book representative of Confucianism, more worthwhile than all the traditional classics and entire libraries because it concerned practice in actual daily life. In fact, he considered this little tract as more worthy than any Buddhist book because it dealt with filial piety, which for him is the most basic condition for genuine Buddhist practice. He regarded the rules contained in the *Dizigui* as the fundamental commandments of Buddhism and deemed education in religion to be far more important than rituals and prayers.

Numerous other people in China continued Jingkong's propagandizing efforts, printing countless copies of the *Dizigui* and

[3]See the book edited by S. Billioud, *The Varieties of Confucian Experience: Documenting a Grassroots Revival of Tradition*, Religion in Christian Societies Series Vol. 14 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018). The research in it about the *Dizigui* is by distinguished sociologist Ji Zhe, who teaches at the Sorbonne in Paris.

distributing them everywhere the way *shanshu* have been traditionally distributed.[4] Master Jingkong was a big fan of the *dujing* movement in Taiwan, and even in China he not only supported it but was also instrumental in including the *Dizigui* among the memorization materials for children.

The spread of the *Dizigui* throughout China gained momentum beginning in 2004, when the movement for memorizing the classics started to take firm hold. Master Jingkong's Buddhist educational activities were also successful in his native town of Lujiang, Jiangxi, and were imitated in numerous other places. In 2006, a public welfare network was established for the purpose of teaching, promoting, and spreading the *Dizigui* (see www.dizigui.cn) as well as for supplying all kinds of teaching materials. In 2008, and again in 2010, a special serial program on CCTV was teaching and explaining the *Dizigui*, reaching virtually all corners of the country. By 2009, Xi Jinping, then the president of the Central Party School and expected to be China's next president, specifically named the text as recommended reading for party cadres. A professor at the Central Communist Party School, which trains Chinese officials, wrote a book called *Everybody Should Study Dizigui*, and party organizations in far-flung corners of the country convened study sessions on the text.[5]

In China today, therefore, the *Dizigui* has become a kind of basic universal handbook of correct behavior not just for children and students but for every person. It is often quoted in schools as well as in offices or factories, and "has been used by enterprises for training and selecting employees, by local governments as a text included in 'socialist spiritual civilization' propaganda, and massively within the prison system as a tool for correcting criminals' attitudes."[6] When

[4]The *shanshu* are books handed out free of charge at the entrances of temples or of other public places for the edification of the people. This is done in the belief that whoever prints and gives out such books acquires merit for oneself.

[5]See R. Lu, "China's Neo-Confucianism," *Tea Leaf Nation* (January 7, 2014).

[6]Z. Ji, "Making a Virtue of Piety: *Dizigui* and the Discursive Practice of Jingkong's Network," in Billioud, ed., *The Varieties of Confucian Experience*, 61–89.

passing by a school, one would not be surprised to hear a class of pupils reciting the *Dizigui* or even the whole student body, sometimes in the thousands, chanting aloud its lines on the school lawn. As a matter of fact, when China's State Council issued guidelines in 2017 covering achievements in research, education, protection, inheritance, innovation, and exchanges related to traditional culture for the next few years, one of the items therein indicated that the Qing Dynasty book *Dizigui* should be included in the curriculum of elementary schools.

I hereby enclose the text of the *Dizigui* in its entirety—one outline and seven chapters—and follow it with further comments and criticism.

The *Dizigui*[7]

Outline

Dizigui, or "Standards for Being a Good Student and Child," is a book that was taught by Chinese saints and sages of the ancient past.[8] The book first teaches us how to be dutiful to our parents and how to be respectful and loving to our siblings.[9] It then teaches us how to be

[7]While there are over a dozen different extant editions of the *Dizigui* from the nineteenth century, their content is substantially the same as they show only slight variations of a few single characters among them. Here this author adopts the fluent English translation kindly made available by the Pure Land Learning College Association Inc. (Australia) on their website (http://www.purelandcollege.org.au/). It is not stated, however, from which original edition the translation was made. In the translation used here, there is a subtitle "Guide to a Happy Life" after *Dizigui* which is not present in the original text. This author supposes that it was added by Master Jingkong to stress how observing the rules listed below leads one to live a happy life.

[8]The Chinese "saints and sages of the ancient past" include the sage kings of remote antiquity (Yao, Shun, Yu the Great, King Tang, Zhou Gong) as well as Confucius and Mencius.

[9]The word *ti* used here means fraternal love. In the Confucian tradition, older siblings are supposed to love and help younger siblings; younger siblings, in turn, are expected to love and respect older siblings. This attitude is supposed to be

cautious with all people, matters, and objects in our daily lives; how to be a trustworthy person; and to believe in the teachings of the ancient saints and sages. Furthermore, it teaches us to love all equally, and to be close to and learn from people of virtue and compassion. Only when we have accomplished all the above can we then study further and learn literature and art to improve the quality of our cultural and spiritual lives.

Chapter 1: At Home, Be Dutiful to My Parents[10]

When my parents call me, I will answer them right away. When they ask me to do something, I will do it quickly. When my parents instruct me, I will listen respectfully. When my parents reproach me, I will obey and accept their scolding. I will try hard to change and improve myself, to start anew.

In the winter, I will keep my parents warm; in the summer, I will keep my parents cool. I will always greet my parents in the morning to show them that I care. At night I will always make sure my parents rest well. Before going out, I must tell my parents where I am going, for parents are always concerned about their children. After returning home, I must go and see my parents to let them know I am back, so they do not worry about me. I will maintain a permanent place to stay and lead a routine life. I will persist in whatever I do and will not change my aspirations at will.

A matter might be trivial, but if it is wrong to do it or unfair to another person, I must not do it thinking it will bear little or no consequence. If I do [it], I am not being a dutiful child because my parents would not want to see me doing things that are irrational or

extended to all people of the same generation, since for Confucius "within the four seas all men are brothers" (*Analects* XII, 5).

[10]Filial piety has always been the foremost virtue in traditional Chinese ethics. There is the ancient saying that "among the many (a hundred) good deeds, filial piety is the first [Baishan xiao wei xian]."

illegal. Even though an object might be small, I will not keep it a secret from my parents. If I do, I will hurt my parents' feelings.[11]

If whatever pleases my parents is fair and reasonable, I will try my best to attain it for them.[12] If something displeases my parents, if within reason,[13] I will cautiously keep it away from them. When my body is hurt, my parents will be worried. If my virtues are compromised, my parents will feel ashamed.[14] When I have loving parents, it is not difficult to be dutiful to them. But if I can be dutiful to parents who hate me, only then will I meet the standards of the saints and sages for being a dutiful child.[15]

When my parents do wrong, I will urge them to change. I will do it with a kind facial expression and a warm gentle voice. If they do not accept my advice, I will wait until they are in a happier mood before I attempt to dissuade them again, followed by crying, if necessary, to make them understand. If they end up whipping me,[16] I will not hold a grudge against them. When my parents are ill, I will taste the medicine

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[11]Parents will be saddened by the actions of a child who behaves secretively. If the child behaves in such a way while still young, they will probably twist the law, obtain bribes, and be a curse to country and people when they grow up.

[12]On the contrary, if what pleases my parents is illegitimate or unreasonable, I should tactfully dissuade them and provide reasons why they should not have it. The lack of this point is one of the criticisms most frequently brought forward by present-day Confucian scholars.

[13]The correct Confucian tradition is that I should lead my parents to the proper view and understanding of things.

[14]If a child is sick, his or her parents will feel worried; if a child behaves badly, his or her parents will feel ashamed.

[15]The model for this is the ancient emperor Shun, who was originally a commoner and extremely filial despite his father and stepbrother treating him badly, even to the point of trying to kill him.

[16]In ancient China, parents were allowed to discipline a child when he or she does something wrong. If a child refused to be disciplined, the parents had the right to ask the authorities to have the child executed.

first before giving it to them.[17] I will take care of them night and day and stay by their bedside. During the first three years of mourning after my parents have passed away, I will remember them with gratitude and feel sad often for not being able to repay them for their kindness in raising me. During this period I will arrange my home to reflect my grief and sorrow. I will also avoid festivities and indulgence in food and alcoholic drinks. I will observe proper etiquette[18] in arranging my parents' funerals. I will hold the memorial ceremony and commemorate my parents' anniversaries with utmost sincerity. I will serve my departed parents as if they were still alive.

Chapter 2: Standards for a Younger Brother When Away from Home[19]

If I am the older sibling, I will befriend the younger ones. If I am the younger sibling, I will respect and love the older ones. Only when I can maintain harmonious relationships with my siblings am I being dutiful to my parents.[20] When I value my familial ties more than property and belongings, no resentment will come between me and my siblings. When I am careful with words and hold back hurtful comments, my feelings of anger naturally die out.

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[17]The ancient Chinese took herbal medicines boiled in water. The child would be required to check the medicine first—whether it was too hot, too cold, or too bitter—before giving it to his or her parents.

[18]The details of funeral rites are contained in the *Book of Rites* (*Liji*) and updated in later books on ritual, especially in the *Family Rituals of Master Zhu* (*Zhuzi jiali*) as compiled by Zhu Xi.

[19]In this context, "away from home" simply means "when the elder or younger [sibling] is outside the presence of his [or her] parents." Commentators explain how parents in ancient China would live in a different room from their children. Here the first chapter concerns "ru," i.e., entering in the presence of one's parents (it was translated above as "at home"). This present chapter says *chu*, meaning out of the presence of one's parents.

[20]Parents are happy when their children get along with each other. This is one way children can show that they are dutiful to their parents.

Whether I am drinking, eating, walking, or sitting, I will let the elders go first; the younger ones should follow. When an elder is asking for someone, I will get that person for [them] right away. If I cannot find that person, I will immediately report back, and put myself at the elder's service instead. When I address an elder, I should not call [them] by [their] given name.[21] This is in accord with ancient Chinese etiquette. In front of an elder, I will never show off. If I meet an elder I know on the street, I will promptly clasp my hands and greet [them] with a bow. If [they do] not speak to me, I will step back and respectfully stand aside. Should I be riding a horse and spot an elder I know walking, I will dismount and pay respect to the elder. If I am riding in a carriage,[22] I will stop, get out of the carriage, and ask if I can give the elder a ride. If I meet an elder passing by, I will stand aside and wait respectfully. I will not leave until the elder disappears from my sight. When an elder is standing, I will not sit. After an elder sits down, I sit only when I am told to do so. Before an elder, I will speak softly. But if my voice is too low and hard to hear, it is not appropriate. When meeting an elder, I will walk briskly towards [them]; when leaving, I will not exit in haste. When answering a question, I will look at the person who is asking me the question.

I will serve my uncles [and aunts] as if I am serving my parents. I will treat my cousins as if they are my own siblings.

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[21]In ancient China, a male person had at least two names. The first was the "given name" which his parents provided when he was born. His friends would then give a second name when he reached the age of 20, at a "Ceremony of the Hat (or *Capping Ceremony*)" given in his honor to announce his coming-of-age. Only his parents called him by his "given name" after that; out of respect, everyone else, including the emperor, could only call him by his second name. The only exception was if he committed a crime, for he would be called by his "given name" during sentencing.

[22]In ancient China, most people used horses or carriages as their means of transportation.

Chapter 3: Be Cautious in My Daily Life

I will get up each morning before my parents [do]; at night, I will go to bed only after my parents have gone to sleep. When I realize that time is passing me by and cannot be turned back, and that I am getting older year by year, I will especially treasure the present moment.[23] When I get up in the morning, I will wash my face and brush my teeth. After using the toilet, I will always wash my hands.

I must wear my hat straight,[24] and make sure the hooks of my clothes are tied.[25] My socks and shoes should also be worn neatly and correctly. I will always place my hat and clothes away in their proper places. I will not carelessly throw my clothes around, for that will get them dirty. It is more important that my clothes are clean, rather than how extravagant they are. I will wear only what is suitable for my station. At home, I will wear clothes according to my family traditions and customs. When it comes to eating and drinking, I will not pick and choose my food. I will only eat the right amount; I will not over-eat. I am still young, I must not drink alcohol. When I am drunk, my behavior will turn ugly.

I will always walk composed, with light and even steps. I will always stand up straight and tall. My bows will always be deep, with hands held in front and arms rounded. I will always pay my respect with reverence.[26] I will not step on doorsills or stand leaning on one leg. I will not sit with my legs apart or sprawled out. I will not rock the lower part of my body while standing or sitting down.

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[23]There is an old Chinese proverb: "A unit of time is as precious as a unit of gold, but you cannot buy back one unit of time with one unit of gold." It means that time is really very precious as no amount of money can buy time.

[24]When a male wore a hat in ancient China, it meant he had attained the age of an adult.

[25]In ancient China, people used hooks in place of buttons. These had to be tied when dressed.

[26]In ancient China, people showed respect to others by bowing, holding one hand open over the other closed in a fist, or prostrating themselves on the ground.

I will always lift the curtain slowly,[27] and quietly. I must leave myself ample space when I turn so I will not bump into a corner. I will hold empty containers carefully as if they were full.[28] I will enter empty rooms as if they were occupied.[29] I will avoid doing things in a hurry, as doing things in haste will lead to many mistakes. I should not be afraid of difficult tasks, and I will not become careless when a job is too easy. I will keep away from rowdy places. I will not ask about things that are abnormal or unusual.

When I am about to enter a main entrance, I must first ask if someone is inside. Before entering a room, I must first make myself heard, so that those inside know someone is approaching. If someone asks who I am, I must give my name. To answer "It is me" or "Me" is not sufficient. Before borrowing things from others, I must ask for permission. If I do not ask, it is stealing. When borrowing things from others, I will return them promptly. Later, if I have an urgent need, I will not have a problem borrowing from them again.

Chapter 4: Be Trustworthy

When I speak, honesty is important. Deceitful words and lies must not be tolerated. Rather than talking too much, it is better to speak less. I will speak only the truth; I will not twist the facts. Cunning words, foul language, and philistine habits must be avoided at all costs.

What I have not seen with my own eyes, I will not readily tell to others. What I do not know for sure, I will not easily pass on to others. If I am asked to do something that is inappropriate or bad, I must not agree to it. If I do, I will be doubly wrong. I must speak clearly and to the point. I must not talk too fast or mumble. Some like to talk about

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[27]In ancient China, curtains were made of bamboo strips woven together. These were used to shelter a room from view.

[28]Even if a container is empty, one should treat it with respect and handle it with care out of reverence for both living and non-living things.

[29]In ancient China, a virtuous man always behaved properly, regardless of whether he was alone or with others.

the good points of others, while some like to talk about the faults of others. If it is none of my business, I will not get involved.

When I see others do good deeds, I must think about following their example. Even though my own achievements are still far behind those of others, I am getting closer. When I see others do wrong, I must immediately reflect upon myself. If I have made the same mistake, I will correct it. If not, I will take extra care to not make the same mistake.

When my morals, conduct, knowledge, and skills seem not as good as those of others, I will encourage myself to be better. If the clothes I wear, and the food I eat and drink, are not as good as those of others, I should not be concerned.

If criticism makes me angry and compliments make me happy, bad company will come my way and good friends will shy away. If I am uneasy about compliments and appreciative of criticism, then sincere, understanding, and virtuous people will gradually come close to me.

If any mistake I make is inadvertent, it is merely a mistake. If it is done on purpose, however, it is an evil act. If I correct my mistake and do not repeat it, I no longer own the mistake. If I try to cover it up, I will be doubly wrong.

Chapter 5: Love All Equally

Human beings, regardless of nationality, race, or religion—everyone—should be loved equally. We are all sheltered by the same sky and we all live on the same planet Earth.

A person of high ideals and morals is highly respected. What people value is not based on outside appearance. A person's outstanding abilities will naturally endow [them] with a good reputation. Admiration from others does not come from boasting or praising oneself.

If I am a very capable person, I should use my capabilities for the benefit of others. Other people's competence should never be slandered. I will not flatter the rich, or despise the poor. I will not ignore old friends, only taking delight in new ones. When a person is

busy, I will not bother [them] with matters. When a person's mind is not at ease, I will not bother [them] with words.

If a person has a shortcoming, I will not expose it. If a person has a secret, I will not tell others. When people are being praised and approved of, they will be encouraged to try even harder. Spreading rumors about the wrongdoings of others is a wrongdoing in itself. When the harm done has reached the extreme, misfortunes will surely follow. When I encourage another to do good, both of our virtues are built up. If I do not tell another of his faults, we are both wrong.

Whether I take or give, I need to know the difference between the two. It is better to give more and take less. What I ask others to do, I must first ask myself if I would be willing to do. If it is not something I would be willing to do, I will not ask others to do it. I must repay the kindness of others and let go of my resentments. I will spend less time holding grudges and more time paying back the kindness of others.

When I am directing maids and servants, I will act honorably and properly. I will also treat them kindly and generously. If I use my influence to make them submissive, their hearts will not be with me. If I can convince them with sound reasoning, they will have nothing to object to.

Chapter 6: Be Close to and Learn from People of Virtue and Compassion

We are all human, but we are not the same. Most of us are ordinary; only a very few have great virtues and high moral principles. A truly virtuous person is greatly respected by others. [They] will not be afraid to speak the truth and [they] will not fawn on others. If I can be close to and learn from people of great virtue and compassion, I will benefit immensely. My virtues will grow daily and my wrongdoings will lessen day by day. If I choose not to be close to and learn from people of great virtue, I will suffer a great loss. People without virtue will get close to me and nothing I attempt will succeed.

Chapter 7: After All the Above are Accomplished, I Should Study Further and Learn Literature and Art to Improve My Cultural and Spiritual Life

If I do not actively practice what I have learned but continue to study on the surface, even though my knowledge is increasing, it is only superficial. What kind of person will I be? If I do apply my knowledge diligently, but stop studying, I will only do things based on my own opinion, thinking it is correct. In fact, what I know is not the truth.

There are methods [for studying] correctly. [These] involve concentration in three areas: my mind, my eyes, and my mouth. To believe in what I read is equally important. When I begin to read a book, I will not think about another. If I have not completed the book, I will not start another. I will give myself lots of time to study, and I will study hard. If I devote enough time and effort, I will thoroughly understand.[30] If I have a question, I will make a note of it. I will ask the person who has the knowledge for the right answer. I will keep my room neat, my walls uncluttered and clean, my desk tidy, and my brush and ink stone properly placed.[31] If my ink block is ground unevenly, it shows I have a poor state of mind. When words are written carelessly, showing no respect, this shows [that] my state of mind has not been well. My books should be classified, placed on the bookshelves, and in their proper places. After I finish reading a book, I will put it back where it belongs. Even if I am in a hurry, I still must neatly roll up and bind the open bamboo scroll I have been reading. All missing or damaged pages ought to be immediately repaired. If it is not a book on the teachings of the saints and sages, it should be discarded and not even looked at. Such books can block my intelligence and wisdom, and will undermine my aspirations and sense of direction. Neither be harsh on myself, nor give up on myself. To be a person of high ideals, moral standards, and virtue is something we can all attain in time.

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[30]If I do not understand part of a book that I am reading, I should read it again and again, even if for a thousand times. Its meaning will come to me in time.

[31]People in traditional China wrote with a brush and ink, which was made at that instant by grinding an ink stick on the ink stone and adding water.

Further Comments and Criticisms

Numerous scholars have written essays debating the *Dizigui* after it had become widely popular once again in recent decades. Many extol its educational value, especially in this world of ours, where "children are listened to, instead of the other way around."[32] According to the sociologist Ji Zhe, the *Dizigui* almost came to be sanctified nowadays, in the promotional activity of Jingkong and others, as a "classic" of the whole of "Chinese culture."[33] Yet while it is true that the pamphlet is an austere code of behavior, numerous Confucian scholars deem it overvalued. They have written in criticism of the book and affirm that it is not an epitome of Chinese culture, that it is just a popular pamphlet containing some traditional Confucian rules of basic behavior and nothing more, suitable only for children or illiterate peasants. It is not on par, therefore, with the *Sanzijing*, which is much more ancient (by several centuries) and loftier in content. The *Sanzijing*, however, has more of the aura of a classic, although it was never considered to be one, with many scholars already looking down on it in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Other Confucian scholars go further in their criticism, denouncing the *Dizigui*'s content as a betrayal of true Confucian doctrine and claiming that it offers a form of "bastardized Confucianism." Why is this so?

Many Chinese intellectuals in the twentieth century debated and wrote about traditional Confucian ethics, striving to point out its weaknesses and faults. They condemned Confucianism as it was lived out during the last centuries of the imperial age, mainly for imposing total subservience to the authority of parents and the state and "rendering the people dormant." They see the old Confucianism in facing the *Dizigui*, the one they dislike, as well as a return to the condemned past. Thus, after a century of reflection, these New Confucians had made an enormous effort at outlining the original Confucian ethical project, one that was free from any deformation and accretion.

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[32]From the introduction to the English translation of the *Dizigui.*

[33]Ji, "Making a Virtue of Piety," 62.

An examination of numerous websites reveals that their criticism is constantly aimed at Chapter One, which discusses filial behavior toward parents. They object to the passive attitude of obedience and conformity that is depicted as standard Confucian behavior. Following are the points that they find most at odds with the actual teachings of Confucius:

1. Obeying the orders of one's parents immediately, without asking questions ("When your parents call you, you should answer without delay. When your parents ask you to do something, you should act immediately as your parents say.")

2. Accepting one's parents unconditionally ("When your parents instruct you, you must listen to them respectfully. When your parents reprimand you, you must take their rebukes obediently.")

3. Giving ownership of oneself to one's parents ("A matter might be trivial, but if it is wrong to do it or unfair to another person, I must not do it thinking it will bear little or no consequence. If I do, I am not being a dutiful child.…")

4. Indulging one's parents ("You should try your best to get fully prepared for what your parents like, and you should carefully get rid of what your parents dislike."). Critics observe that if one does as one's parents please, what is the point of giving them the right advice, something Confucius advocated for?

5. Accepting physical abuse from one's parents ("If your parents do not accept your remonstrations, remonstrate with them again in a happy way. We may follow up with wailing or sobbing, and we should not feel resentful towards them if we are whipped by them."). Critics argue that those who have read actual Confucian classics can immediately spot the distortions in the *Dizigui*. The teachings of Confucius clearly state

> that one should always react rationally and run away from parental abuse.

Regarding abuse in general, there is the Confucian saying that one should "recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness" (*Analects* XIV, 34), i.e., one should let parents know plain and clear that they did wrong. As for parental abuse, there is a related story in the ancient book *Kongzi jiayu* ("Words from the School of Confucius") that tells of the disciple Zengzi.

While still in his youthful years, Zengzi was working in his vegetable garden one day when he accidentally cut the root of some melon plants. His father, Zeng Xi, was so angry that he hit his son on the back with a big rod, rendering him unconscious for a while. After Zengzi woke up, he approached his father with no ill feelings, saying, "I offended you, father, and you disciplined me hard. Did you injure yourself?" When he returned to his own room, he took out his lute and sang so that his father could be assured that he was fine.

Upon hearing this story, Confucius was furious. He told his other disciples: "If Zengzi comes, do not let him in!" Zengzi was puzzled and sent someone else to ask the Master what he did wrong. The Master said,

> Didn't you know that when Shun [an ancient sage king] was serving his father, he would always be available when the father needed his help, but he could not be found when his father wanted to kill him? A mild spank is fine for misconduct, but one should run away when facing a big rod. In this way Shun's father could not find a chance to commit the crime of becoming a cruel father and Shun did not become an un-filial son. The way Zengzi served his father today was to wait there for his father to burst his anger, as if he would not run away even when facing death! Had he really died, he would have led his father into a terrible crime. What could be more un-filial than this?[34]

A few words can be said in defense of the *Dizigui*. First of all, the style it is written in is a serious limitation; it is, after all, a list of rules

[34]P. Ni, *Confucius: The Man and the Way of Gongfu* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 71.

meant for children or illiterate individuals. Its three-character verses enriched by rhymes make it easy to memorize on the one hand but present a serious constraint to the expression of thought on the other, allowing only for a succession of lapidary sentences. The possibility of having alternative readings is quite high given such a configuration of the text, although this is tempered, fortunately, by the fact that in traditional China most rules come from passages of the *Analects* or from other places that everybody knew by heart. Nevertheless, such a skeletal expression of thoughts needs to be enriched by the flesh of explanations. This is why all websites dealing with the *Dizigui* mention "teaching" it to students, which involves two simultaneous activities, namely, line-by-line memorization by the students and detailed explanations by their teacher.

There is obviously little to no room for explanations, clarifications, and distinctions in the *Dizigui*, written as it is in lapidary lines and meant for children or the illiterate. The blame should therefore be discounted. Moreover, it is even possible to find similar cases in other religions. Take the Catholic catechism in use before the Second Vatican Council, for instance—the *Catechism of Saint Pius the Tenth* was actually a summary of Catholic doctrine made by the same pope (Pius X), who drafted it when he was bishop of Mantua, Italy to meet the catechetical need of a diocese of poor children coming from illiterate peasant families. He presented Catholic doctrine by means of a list of extremely simple questions and answers, and yet his booklet was eventually made the standard of doctrine for the entire Catholic Church when he later happened to become pope. It remained so for half a century until everyone by the time of Vatican II was decrying its oversimplified content. It was eventually discarded.

A century of historical vicissitudes had almost totally eradicated Confucian values from the minds of the Chinese. In a short span of only a few years, however, and despite its shortcomings, the *Dizigui* had become an effective means of restoring awareness of these values—filial piety, respect for others, trustworthiness, diligence in learning, etc.—among the Chinese masses. There is no doubt that its spread has accomplished a great feat indeed.

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A BUCKET HALF EMPTY

A Critique of the Notion of Sustainable Development as a Paradigm for Environmental Sustainability

Abundio R. Babor, M.S.C.

An awareness of the worsening state of the environment and of the adverse impacts of environmental problems on the global community and ecosystem has challenged world leaders in recent times to find a workable solution to the environmental crisis. In the wide-ranging environmental, socio-political, and economic discourse that followed, the idea of sustainable development has since emerged as the primary consideration.

Sustainable development was proposed at the Earth Summit[1] held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil as the overarching philosophy of the concerted effort to address environmental degradation. The summit reflected a global consensus at the highest levels of government, along with an explicit recognition of the indispensable roles of various sectors of society in implementing sustainable development. World leaders adopted the principle of sustainable development found in *Our Common Future*,[2] the report of the World Commission on Environment and

[1]Pope Francis mentioned the importance of this summit in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*. See Francis, *Laudato Si'* [On Care for Our Common Home] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), no. 167.

[2]WCED [World Commission on Environment and Development], *Our Common Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 43–65.

Development (WCED), also known as the Brundtland Commission, which expressed the need for intensive collaboration among nations in addressing the global environmental crisis. The report served as a blueprint and agenda for future action in tackling environmental issues.

Sustainable development, broadly speaking, encompasses three policy areas. The first is *economic growth*, which emphasizes the necessity of creating methods to sustain development based on sustained economic growth. The second, *social equality*, seeks to alleviate poverty and aims to address the inequitable distribution of wealth in society as well as the ever-growing gap between classes of peoples. The third, *environmental protection*, promotes the reconciliation of development with the regenerative capacity of the environment.[3]

The reconciliation of the goals of economic development and social stability with the environmental limits of our planet over the long term is the foundational principle of sustainable development. It is appealing indeed, purportedly offering the global community a new vision of economic growth and development that supposedly strikes a balance between economic goals, social needs, and environmental protection.

The concept of sustainable development, however, does not offer a change of paradigm in the development discourse. As clearly emphasized in *Our Common Future*, the task of sustainable development is to "make way for a new era of economic growth."[4] In other words, the new era will still be marked, like in most theories of development, by economic progress.

In this conversation, we argue that sustainable development is inadequate (if not inherently problematic) as a paradigm for environmental sustainability. Using Catholic social teaching as a tool for analysis, we contend that the concept is like a bucket half empty as its framework lacks the moral foundations necessary for a sustainable environment.

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[3]R. Goodland & G. Ledec, "Neoclassical Economics and Principles of Sustainable Development," in L. Pojman, ed., *Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application*, 3rd ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001), 486–487.

[4]WCED, *Our Common Future*, 49.

The Notion of Sustainable Development: A Short Historical Review

To understand how the concept of sustainable development came about, we have to go back to the year 1962 when Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* was first published. Many considered the book's release as the starting point of the global community's heightened awareness of the extent of the environmental crisis and the turning point in our understanding of the interconnections between the environment, the economy, and social well-being. Research in the fields of epidemiology, ecology, and toxicology had confirmed that agricultural pesticides were destroying ecosystems rapidly, resulting in widespread damage not only to different organisms but to human health as well.[5]

A conference spearheaded by UNESCO, the Intergovernmental Conference for Rational Use and Conservation of the Biosphere, was then organized in 1968, in which the concept of sustainable development emerged during the deliberations. In that same year, Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* was published in which he argued for and established the interplay between the environment, resource exploitation, and human population.[6] An environmental group called Friends of the Earth was then organized in the following year; their focus was directed toward the prevention of environmental degradation, nurturance of biodiversity, and education of citizens on how to participate in decision-making processes concerning the environment. Then, in 1971, another environmental group was launched; called Greenpeace, it began an aggressive agenda to protect the environment by spearheading non-violent protests and interventions.[7]

The concept of sustainable development became a prominent item once again in the deliberations of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in 1972 in Stockholm, Sweden.

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[5]R. Carson, "Silent Spring," in Pojman, ed., *Environmental Ethics*, 409–417.

[6]P. Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York: Sierra Club/Ballantine Books, 1968).

[7]S. Dutch, ed., *Encyclopedia of Global Warming* Vol. 1 (Pasadena: Salem Press, 2010), 524.

Significant in that year as well was the Club of Rome's publication of *The Limits to Growth*, in which they predicted dire consequences arising from the environmental problem if economic growth was not slowed down.[8] Usage of the phrase "sustainable development" then gained much wider acceptance later on with the publication in 1980 of *World Conservation Strategy: Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development* by the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, and the World Wildlife Fund.

In 1983, U.N. Secretary General Javier Felipe Ricardo Pérez de Cuéllar asked Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland to lead a United Nations commission that would tackle the ideas developed in Stockholm.[9] The commission, named the Brundtland Commission,[10] came up in 1987 with the report titled *Our Common Future*, which defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[11]

The publication of *Our Common Future*, along with the work of the WCED, laid the groundwork for the convening of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the consequent adoption of *Agenda 21* (prescriptions for implementing sustainable development),[12] the *Rio Declaration* (a commitment to put into practice the principles of

[8]D. Mebratu, "Sustainability and Sustainable Development: Historical and Conceptual Review," *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 18:6 (1998): 501.

[9]The Stockholm conference was mandated by the United Nations to develop tools for environmental assessment and management in view of sustainable development. It was held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 5–16, 1972.

[10]Mebratu, "Sustainability and Sustainable Development," 501.

[11]WCED, *Our Common Future*, 43.

[12]United Nations, *Agenda 21* (Rio de Janeiro: United Nations Conference on Environment & Development, 1992).

sustainable development),[13] and the establishment of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

Core Principles of Sustainable Development

The WCED's *Our Common Future* report formulated the following General Principles, Rights, and Responsibilities of States for the promotion of sustainable development and resolution of environmental disputes through peaceful settlement:

1. All human beings have the fundamental right to an environment adequate for their health and well being.[14]
2. States shall conserve and use the environment and natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations.
3. States shall maintain ecosystems and ecological processes essential for the functioning of the biosphere, shall preserve biological diversity, and shall observe the principle of optimum sustainable yield in the use of living natural resources and ecosystems.
4. States shall establish adequate environmental protection standards and monitor changes in and publish relevant data on environmental quality and resource use.
5. States shall make or require prior environmental assessments of proposed activities which may significantly affect the environment or use of a natural resource.
6. States shall inform in a timely manner all persons likely to be significantly affected by a planned activity and to grant them equal access and due process in administrative and judicial proceedings.

[13]United Nations, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (Rio de Janeiro: United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992).

[14]Francis in *Laudato Si'* recognized this as one of the most important principles mentioned in the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (Principle 1). See Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 167.

> 7. States shall ensure that conservation is treated as an integral part of the planning and implementation of development activities and provide assistance to other States, especially to developing countries, in support of environmental protection and sustainable development.
>
> …
>
> 22. States shall settle environmental disputes by peaceful means. If mutual agreement on a solution or on other dispute settlement arrangements is not reached within 18 months, the dispute shall be submitted to conciliation and, if unresolved thereafter, to arbitration or judicial settlement at the request of any of the concerned States.[15]

Taken together as a whole, these principles emphasize the rights of future generations to a healthy environment. They are also intertwined with the present protection of the earth's ecosystem, which is tied to the environmental problems facing humanity that involve interrelated issues like climate change, pollution, the deterioration and depletion of natural resources, and biotechnology, among others. These principles as such refer to the obligations of states to protect, preserve, and, insofar as possible, restore the health and integrity of ecosystems, thereby ensuring the proper functioning of essential ecological processes and life support systems while at the same time disseminating information on activities or measures that are likely to have environmental impact and involve other states in relevant decision-making processes.

Global partnership is therefore stressed as a fundamental requirement for achieving sustainable development. While the spirit of these principles recognizes that all states have the sovereign right to utilize their resources to meet their sustainable development needs as well as the responsibility to develop and implement a national plan for the protection and preservation of the environment within the levels of their national jurisdiction, they must ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause potential or actual

[15]WCED, *Our Common Future*, 349–351. While there are other principles enumerated in the document, the aforementioned are considered to be the core principles for the purpose of this study.

harm to the environment of other states or areas beyond the limits of their national jurisdiction.

As a framework, sustainable development covers a vast array of issues such as water quality, biodiversity, the revitalization of growth with sustainability, urbanization (issues concerning waste, pollution, etc.), deforestation and desertification, the management of chemicals and industrial wastes, legal disputes, the participation and responsibility of peoples, etc. What is immediately noticeable in the WCED report, however, is the strong emphasis on the importance of continuous economic growth.[16] Everything concerning the environment and its sustainability is predicated on economic growth framed within the context of the dominant economic system of neoliberalism[17] and

[16]WCED, *Our Common Future*, 49.

[17]Neoliberalism is a complicated idea. On a basic level, it is considered to be a paradigm for economic theory and policy-making where power and wealth are concentrated to an ever-increasing degree, as a result of the practical implementation of an economic and political ideology, within transnational corporations and the market. It is a revival of the economic theories of Adam Smith, who in 1776 argued in his famous book, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, that rational self-interest and competition can lead to economic prosperity. Smith developed "laissez-faire" economics in which there is only minimum governmental interference in the economic affairs of both individuals and society.

Neoliberalism has since become, up until the present time, the broad economic model around the world characterized by open markets and relatively barrier-free domestic and international trade. Its definition, however, is best given by David Harvey in his book *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.* He says:

> Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and

free-market capitalism, with the core principles clearly stressing that economic growth will direct policy toward a more efficient use of the environment and hence toward a more sustainable world economy. Furthermore, it does not provide a profound analysis of power despite the fact that decision-making processes are crucial in implementing sustainable development.

The Focus on Economic Growth: A Problematic Focal Point

It is rather puzzling that the notion of "development" has been attached to the concept of "sustainability."[18] By putting the two terms together, it is assumed that the vision of sustained economic growth is compatible with the "responsible" use of the environment for long-term ends. We have seen, however, that economic forces have stimulated the mass consumption of non-renewable resources which continues to create problems for the environment. The idea of

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> to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist, then they must be created, by state action, if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit. (D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], 2)

See also E. Arndt, "Neuliberalismus und Wirklichkeit—Neue Wege und alte Dogmen," *Gewerkschaftlicher Monatshefte* 5 (1954): 137–142; J. Waldron, "Theoretical Foundations of Liberalism," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 37:147 (1987): 127–150.

[18]H. Daly commented that sustainable development as a concept is an oxymoron. He argues that the pervading notion of development in contemporary times is incompatible with sustainability. Cf. H. Daly, *Beyond Growth: The Economics of Sustainable Development* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1996), 8.

sustainable development, to say the least, is a dubious one, an attempt to justify the continuation of a way of life that has led to the present environmental crisis.

Economic growth, considered intrinsic to the quest for sustainable development, necessarily involves environmental degradation. All materials, both renewable and non-renewable, are in finite supply, and yet the emphasis on economic growth promotes a "high standard of living" which entails excessive resource consumption. It is, quite literally, costing the environment—every second that an electric light or appliance is kept on contributes to environmental degradation. Unbridled economic growth and the maintenance of a high standard of living as exemplified especially in Western culture are irreconcilable with the preservation of the existing ecosystem.

The preoccupation with economic growth and the pursuit of financial gain also relegate human persons and the environment to being mere factors of production and profit. The framework of sustainable development is thus morally flawed. Reducing human persons and the environment to means to an end, to accumulate profit, is a serious moral issue. The search for profit, therefore, should not be the primary pursuit or ultimate goal.

Development as Integral Human Development

Taking into consideration Catholic social teaching, from *Rerum Novarum* to the recent social encyclicals,[19] the Church has always emphasized Christian values—such as respect for the dignity of the human person, equality in the social order, the promotion of human rights and social justice, and the protection of the common good especially with regards to the environment—over and above economic development and material gain.

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[19]G. Baum, "An Ethical Critique of Capitalism: Contributions of Modern Catholic Social Teaching," in C. Curran & R. McCormick, eds., *John Paul II and Moral Theology*, Readings in Moral Theology No. 10 (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 245.

Catholic social teaching introduced the important idea of "integral human development," which calls into question the equation of development with the maximization of economic growth. In fact, as Catholic social teaching contends, attempting to maximize economic growth alone may undermine other central elements of authentic human flourishing. Development should instead seek to foster the well-being of the entire human person. It is a broader or more integral understanding of development that requires attention be given to all aspects of human life.

Integral human development promotes the good not only of every person but also of the *whole* person in the moral, cultural, economic, political, social, and spiritual spheres. This idea was introduced in Pope Paul VI's 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio:*

> The development we speak of here cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic, it must be well rounded; it must foster the development of each person and of the whole person.[20]

The anthropological locus of integral human development according to Catholic social teaching is thereby incompatible with sustainable development's focus on economic progress where material gain and profit are the main driving forces. In Catholic social teaching, the welfare of the human person takes precedence over economic development alone. This is why it consistently defends "every person and … the whole person" from any threat of dehumanization and injustice.

Catholic Social Teaching

In order to understand Catholic social teaching better on this particular point, we expound briefly on each social encyclical's core ideas on development. These encyclicals are presented here in chronological order to show the gradual evolution of the concept of

[20]Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* [On the Development of Peoples] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1967), no. 14.

"integral human development" and how it has been shaped by the context in which these encyclicals were issued.

1. Rerum Novarum

Although the idea of integral human development was not mentioned in it, Catholic social teaching's promotion of the good of "every person and of the whole person" is generally viewed to have begun with Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. It contained important ideas and themes that would provide the foundation for the Catholic Church's approach to modern social issues,[21] and has therefore received a highly exalted status in Catholic social teaching as a consequence of its groundbreaking content. Pope John XXIII, for example, asserted that *Rerum Novarum* painstakingly outlined the fundamental principles of Catholic social teaching; he wrote: "Here for the first time was a complete synthesis of social principles, formulated with such historical insight as to be of permanent value to Christendom. It is rightly regarded as a compendium of Catholic social and economic teaching."[22]

The encyclical strongly criticized the undesirable conditions of workers in the industrial communities. Leo XIII argued that there are three key factors underlying economic life: "workers, productive property and the state."[23] While personal morality and the teachings of the Church were for him the keys to solving social problems, he was also aware at the same time that there may be situations in which the teachings of the Church would not be heeded. In these cases, he said, the state has a duty to intervene to protect the common good.

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[21]The modern tradition of papal encyclicals was begun by Pope Benedict XIV in 1740. For an overview of the major themes of the pre-Leonine encyclicals, see M. Schuck, *That They Be One: The Social Teaching of the Papal Encyclicals 1740–1989* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1991).

[22]John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* [On Christianity and Social Progress] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1961), no. 15.

[23]P. Henriot, E. DeBerri, & M. Schultheis, *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1987), 7.

Rejecting the *laissez-faire* attitude prominent at the time, Leo XIII argued that "whenever the general interest or any particular class suffers, or is threatened with harm, which can in no other way be met or prevented, the public authority must step in to deal with it."[24] He said, above all, that the state has an obligation to protect the rights of the poor and of workers:

> Rights must be religiously respected wherever they exist, and it is the duty of the public authority to prevent and to punish injury, and to protect every one in the possession of [their] own. Still, when there is question of defending the rights of individuals, the poor and badly off have a claim to especial consideration. The richer class have many ways of shielding themselves, and stand less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back upon, and must chiefly depend upon the assistance of the State. And it is for this reason that wage-earners, since they mostly belong in the mass of the needy, should be specially cared for and protected by the government.[25]

In its defense of workers and affirmation of an important (but limited) role of the state in economic life, *Rerum Novarum* provided key themes that would later become foundational for Catholic social teaching and have great impact on subsequent ecclesial reflections on development.

2. Quadragesimo Anno

This encyclical, issued in 1931 by Pope Pius XI in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, was concerned mainly with workers' conditions in the modern industrial societies of Western Europe and North America. Much of *Quadragesimo Anno* consisted of a reaffirmation of the teachings of *Rerum Novarum;* highlighted especially were the rights of workers, the duty of the state to protect

[24]Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* [On Capital and Labor] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1891), no. 36.

[25]Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, no. 37.

the poor, and the serious flaws of both socialism and then-existing forms of capitalism.

Several new or heightened emphases, however, were also present in Pius XI's encyclical. Writing in response to the alarming concentration of wealth and power in the socio-economic realm, for example, Pius XI called for the reestablishment of a social order based on the principle of subsidiarity, which placed responsibility as close as possible to the people.[26] Those who form associations and who are most directly affected by the decisions or policies of their companies should have an important role in the decision-making process, and should be interfered with only to support them in their needs and help coordinate their activities with those of the rest of society, all with a view toward fostering the common good. Thus, even though Pius XI placed a strong emphasis on social harmony, he nonetheless affirmed a stronger role for workers' associations in actively defending workers' rights. He spoke of these associations as a means of self-protection against oppression by the more powerful.

Pius XI also argued that socialism is fundamentally flawed because, "wholly ignoring and indifferent to [the] sublime end of both [human persons] and society, [it] affirms that human association has been instituted for the sake of material advantage alone."[27] Socialists fail to recognize the natural orientation of human persons toward God. At the same time, he contended that unrestrained capitalism has led to economic dictatorship, creating a situation in which immense power and despotic economic domination is concentrated in the hands of a few while the multitudes suffer. Unregulated competition, he said, permits the survival only of those who are the strongest. This also means that those who fight most relentlessly are often those who heed the dictates of conscience. Pius XI thereby suggested a genuine and sincere return to the teaching of the Gospel as a solution to social ills.

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[26]Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* [On Reconstruction of the Social Order] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1931), no. 80.

[27]Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, no. 118.

3. Mater et Magistra

John XXIII, in his encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (1961), reflected on the changes that had taken place in the world since the issuance of *Quadragesimo Anno* thirty years earlier. He focused especially on the industrialized nations, highlighting the rapid development of science and technology, increased availability of consumer goods, and creation of the social welfare state in some nations. Reflecting on the rising faith in Keynesian[28] economic ideas in the industrialized world, John XXIII asserted that what was happening provided additional reasons for why it is within the power of public authorities, to a greater extent than ever before, to reduce imbalances, keep fluctuations in the economy within bounds, and provide effective measures for avoiding mass unemployment. He demanded those in authority "to increase the degree and scope of their activities in the economic sphere, and to devise ways and means and set the necessary machinery in motion for the attainment of this end."[29] Where appropriate activity of the state is lacking or defective, John XXIII argued, commonwealths are apt

[28]John Maynard Keynes was a British economist whose ideas fundamentally affected the theory and practice of modern economics. Widely considered to be the most influential economist of the 20th century, he built on and greatly refined his earlier work on the causes of business cycles, and his ideas are the basis for the school of thought known as Keynesian economics, along with its various offshoots. In the 1930s, he spearheaded a revolution in economic thinking, overturning the older ideas of neoclassical economics which held that free markets would automatically provide full employment over the short to medium term as long as workers were flexible in their wage demands. He was also credited with demolishing old notions such as "that wage earners were maximizers" or "that unemployment was voluntary," and advocated the use of fiscal and monetary measures to mitigate the adverse effects of economic recessions and depressions. Keynes's ideas concerning economic policy were adopted by leading Western economies following the outbreak of World War II, and while Keynes himself died in 1946, the success of Keynesian economics during the 1950s and 1960s resulted in almost all capitalist governments adopting its policy recommendations. Cf. J. Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* (San Diego: A Harvest Book, 1964), 27–56.

[29]John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, no. 54.

to experience incurable disorders and the exploitation of the weak by the unscrupulous strong.

John XXIII also strongly pointed out that workers should always be treated with dignity. It would still be unjust for the human dignity of workers to be compromised even if an economic order is able to produce vast amounts of goods and distribute such in conformity with the norms of justice and equity. What is ultimately important, John XXIII emphasized, is the fostering of spiritual and moral values; otherwise, human ingenuity will foster destruction instead of the enhancement of human dignity.

4. Pacem in Terris

The central theme of *Pacem in Terris*, the encyclical issued by John XXIII in 1963, was an appeal to respect the common good, along with an array of social, economic, political, and religious rights and corresponding obligations that were viewed as the basis of world peace. John XXIII emphasized the fundamental importance of social and economic rights, including the right to food, shelter, medical care, and necessary social services.[30] All these rights, he said, are grounded in the God-given dignity and social nature of the human person and that at their core is the right to employment with decent working conditions and a just wage. Indeed, John XXIII even stressed that society and state must guarantee that the basic needs of persons are met even if they are unable to work.

John XXIII, furthermore, vigorously warned about the abuses that accompanied aid given by highly industrialized nations to poor countries as this strongly promoted the idea of economic development at the expense of human, religious, and cultural values. He wrote:

> Truth further demands an attitude of unruffled impartiality in the use of the many aids to the promotion and spread of mutual understanding between nations which modern scientific progress has made available. This does not mean that people should be prevented from drawing

[30]John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* [On Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1963), no. 11.

> particular attention to the virtues of their own way of life, but it does mean the utter rejection of ways of disseminating information which violate the principles of truth and justice, and injure the reputation of another nation.[31]

It can never be repeated sufficiently, he asserted, that aid must be given with the greatest respect for the liberty of the countries being developed, with respect for the moral and ethnic characteristics peculiar to each, and without any intention of political domination.

5. Gaudium et Spes

The Second Vatican Council issued *Gaudium et Spes* in 1965 and took up the task of "scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel."[32] This document shared many of the major themes of John XXIII's social encyclicals; areas of overlap, for example, include similar understandings of the innate dignity and social nature of the human person and of the important role of the state in overseeing and managing modern economic life. While the document expressed a generally optimistic view of the potential contribution of "progress" based on advances in science and technology, it considered development in critical terms[33] and warned against materialistic consumerism and the neglect of the spiritual and social dimensions of life.[34]

Gaudium et Spes was critical as well in its assessment of the international economic order. It argued that numerous reforms of the global economy were needed, and that the primary purpose of such should be to remove as quickly as possible the immense economic

[31]John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, no. 90.

[32]Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes* [Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World] (Vatican City: 1965), no. 4.

[33]*Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 64–66.

[34]*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 66.

inequalities that existed not only between countries but also between regions and groups within countries:

> To satisfy the demands of justice and equity, strenuous efforts must be made … to remove as quickly as possible the immense economic inequalities, which now exist and in many cases are growing and which are connected with individual and social discrimination.[35]

The document was clear in its serious assessment of the global economy. It placed a heightened emphasis on equality and stressed that the goods of creation are intended by God to be shared equitably by all. It also began a deeper exploration of the far-reaching practical implications of this principle of the "universal destination of created goods,"[36] which it stated places limits on the right to private property. This has implications for lifestyle choices, particularly as the Council argued that all persons have the responsibility to meet the needs of the poor by sharing not only from one's superfluous wealth but also in ways that would require a simplification of one's lifestyle.

6. Populorum Progressio

While Paul VI's 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio* introduced the concept of "integral human development" as a critique of the notion of development[37] prevailing at that time, the notion itself was derived in large part from the pioneering thought of French economist

[35]*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 66.

[36]*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 69.

[37]The economist Barbara Ward notes that development economists in the 1960s had been blinded by the euphoria of economic growth and uncritical optimism concerning modernization and the workings of capitalism. What resulted from that kind of development became more painfully clear: worsened conditions for many of the poor, social upheaval, ecological damage, etc. Cf. B. Ward, "Looking Back on *Populorum Progressio*," in R. McCormick & C. Curran, eds., *Official Catholic Social Teaching*, Readings in Moral Theology No. 5 (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 130.

L.J. Lebret.[38] Paul VI argued that development cannot be confined simply to the economic realm; for him, "neither individuals nor nations should regard the possession of more and more goods as the ultimate objective … [for the] exclusive pursuit of material possessions prevents [one's] growth as a human being and stands in opposition to [one's] true grandeur."[39] The ultimate goal of development should be "full-bodied humanism"[40] and should lead to the process of becoming more human and more open to transcendent values: "True humanism points the way toward God and acknowledges the task to which we are called, the task which offers us the real meaning of human life."[41]

In the encyclical, Paul VI argued that various structural factors in the international economic system served to perpetuate the poverty of disadvantaged peoples in developing countries and widen the economic gap between rich and poor nations. In his analysis of these structural factors, he referred especially to colonialism's creation of a system in which the economies of many poor countries were made to depend on the export of one or two agricultural crops or other natural resources. Paul VI thus reiterated the Second Vatican Council's strong emphasis on the fact that the goods of the earth are intended for all.[42]

7. Octogesima Adveniens

Published in 1971, *Octogesima Adveniens* is the second social encyclical of Paul VI. In it, he asserted the need for local communities to engage in social analysis and apply the principles of Catholic social

[38]Lebret played an important role in the drafting of *Populorum Progressio*. He is described as an "eminent specialist" on development issues. For a discussion of Lebret's work, see the chapter titled "L. J. Lebret: Pioneer of Development Ethics" in D. Goulet, *A New Moral Order: Studies in Development Ethics and Liberation Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 1974), 84–96.

[39]Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, no. 19.

[40]Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, no. 42.

[41]Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, no. 42.

[42]Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, no. 22.

teaching to their own varying social conditions.[43] Paul VI was especially critical of the impact of transnational corporations on global economic, political, and social life:

> We can see new economic powers emerging, the multinational enterprise, which by the concentration and flexibility of their means can conduct autonomous strategies which are largely independent of the national political powers and therefore not subject to control from the point of view of the common good. By extending their activities, these private organizations can lead to a new and abusive form of economic domination on the social, cultural and even political level. The excessive concentration of means and powers that Pope Pius XI already condemned on the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* is taking on a new and very real image.[44]

It is important to note as well that the mention of ecological issues as an important concern in Catholic social teaching appears for the first time in this encyclical: "[Human persons are] suddenly becoming aware," Paul VI states, "that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature [they risk] destroying it and becoming in [their] turn the victim of this degradation.… This is a wide-ranging social problem which concerns the entire human family."[45]

8. Justice in the World

The 1971 Synod of Bishops in Rome produced the document *Justice in the World* which reaffirmed and deepened the critical and structural analysis that previous encyclicals brought into the discussion of development. In it, the bishops stressed the inadequacy of models of development centered upon the maximization of economic growth and criticized the detrimental impacts of these approaches on many important dimensions of human life, including spirituality and

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[43]Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens* [On the Occasion of the Eightieth Anniversary of the Encyclical "Rerum Novarum"] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1971), no. 33.

[44]Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 44.

[45]Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 21.

communal cohesion. The Synod also reiterated concerns about the negative ecological impacts of these growth-focused models:

> Furthermore, such is the demand for resources and energy by the richer nations, whether capitalist or socialist, and such are the effects of dumping by them in the atmosphere and the sea that irreparable damage would be done to the essential elements of life on earth, such as air and water, if their high rates of consumption and pollution, which are constantly on the increase, were extended to the whole of humanity.[46]

The document rejected trickle-down theories of development, and the bishops argued that much greater stress needed to be placed on the just distribution of wealth. They asserted that moral appeals without concrete efforts to modify social structures are inadequate, emphasizing the objective obstacles that social structures place in the way of the conversion of hearts.[47] The document thus heightened the need for a critical and structural analysis of injustice. It emphasized the component of justice in Christian faith and in the institutional life of the Church, and placed greater stress on ecological issues.

9. Evangelii Nuntiandi

Issued by Paul VI in 1975, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* emphasized working for social justice as one of the essential components of development and of the Church's evangelizing task. Evangelization, Paul VI declared, "involves an explicit message, adapted to the different situations constantly being realized, about the rights and duties of every human being … about international life, peace, justice and development—a message especially energetic today about liberation."[48]

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[46]World Synod of Catholic Bishops, *Justice in the World* (1971), no. 11. Available at https://www.cctwincities.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Justicia-in-Mundo.pdf.

[47]*Justice in the World*, no. 16.

[48]Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1975), no. 29.

What is important to note in this encyclical is its mention of "small communities" (*communautés de base*). Commenting for the first time in papal teaching about such communities, Paul VI affirmed their value and importance as "[places] of evangelization, for the benefit of the bigger communities, especially the individual Churches."[49] It is hoped that these basic ecclesial communities "will correspond to their most fundamental vocation: as hearers of the Gospel which is proclaimed to them[,] and [that as] privileged beneficiaries of evangelization, they will soon become proclaimers of the Gospel themselves."[50] At the same time, however, Paul VI strongly cautioned that such communities must always have a firm spiritual basis, remain in communion with the Church's Magisterium, and not become sectarian.[51]

10. Laborem Exercens

In his first social encyclical which was issued in 1981, Pope John Paul II proclaimed the necessity of respecting the subjective dimension of work and the priority of labor over capital, arguing that human dignity must not be degraded for the sake of power or profit.[52] Grounded in an assertion that work is an essential feature of human dignity as well as a sharing with God in the task of creation, he takes a very positive view of the issue of work, seeing it, along with respect for human dignity and the rights of workers, as being "a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question, if we try to see that question really from the point of view of [humanity's] good."[53]

In light of his concern for the dignity and rights of workers, John Paul II strongly criticized both the liberal capitalism of the West

[49]Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 58.

[50]Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 58.

[51]Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 58.

[52]John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* [On Human Work] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1981), no. 12.

[53]John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, no. 3.

and the so-called socialist systems of the East. Indeed, he would refer to these socialist systems in a later encyclical as being, in reality, forms of state capitalism given their unacceptable treatment of workers.[54] According to him, any system in which the worker is treated as an instrument of production, "whatever the programme or name under which it occurs, should rightly be called 'capitalism'."[55]

11. Sollicitudo Rei Socialis

The critique of the pervading dominance of erroneous and morally dubious theories of development was one of the strongest points in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, the second social encyclical of John Paul II, issued in 1987 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*. In it, he reflected on what had taken place in the world over the previous twenty years with regard to the quest for development, and presented a rather negative portrait overall of the prevailing situation, asserting that the plight of the world's poor had become notably worse during the preceding two decades. He devoted much attention to exploring what had gone wrong, noting that the hope for development, which was nurtured by so many, had not been fulfilled and had remained an illusion.[56] Indeed, it is important to point out that flawed models of development have to be corrected as these consistently place central emphasis on economic growth to the neglect of many other crucial factors, such as concerns for social, spiritual, and ecological well-being.[57] The policies of both East and West, as John Paul II argued, have been characterized by the quest for power and profit.

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[54]This criticism was cited in John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* [On the Hundreth Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1991), no. 35.

[55]John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, no. 7.

[56]John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* [For the Twentieth Anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987), no. 16.

[57]John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 15.

12. Centesimus Annus

Development has become more problematic where indifference has become its feature. This was the stinging critique brought forward by John Paul II's 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, where he asserted that the human inadequacies of capitalism and the resulting domination of things over people were far from disappearing.[58] He highlighted in particular the reality that many people, perhaps the majority, live in conditions characterized by marginalization and exploitation while a wealthy minority lives in a state of equally unacceptable convenience characterized by crass materialism, wastefulness, apathy, alienation, and a lack of spiritual values.[59] A lot of individuals, according to him, "are still living in conditions of great material and moral poverty."[60]

John Paul II stressed that genuine development will require "sacrificing the positions of income and of power enjoyed by the more developed economies."[61] He strongly emphasized the necessity of changes in lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and established structures of power that govern societies today.[62] The encyclical also highlighted the need for adequate interventions and guidance on the part of the global community, along with a greater sharing of wealth through unconditioned development aid, debt relief, and other redistributive measures.[63] Equally worrying, moreover, and as John Paul II explains, is the "anthropological error"[64] that leads to the destruction of the environment.

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[58]John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 35.

[59]John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 19.

[60]John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 42.

[61]John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 52.

[62]John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 58.

[63]John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 52.

[64]This idea was later developed by Francis. See Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 116.

> Man, who discovers his capacity to transform and in a certain sense create the world through his own work, forgets that this is always based on God's prior and original gift of the things that are. Man thinks that he can make arbitrary use of the earth, subjecting it without restraint to his will, as though it did not have its own requisites and a prior God-given purpose.… Instead of carrying out his role as a co-operator with God in the work of creation, man sets himself up in place of God and thus ends up provoking a rebellion on the part of nature, which is more tyrannized than governed by him.[65]

13. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

This rather expansive document, published in 2004 by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (PCJP), encompasses principles and themes brought out by the preceding social encyclicals. To understand its unprecedented nature, one must recall that the contents of the previous social encyclicals were articulated over the past century with respect to particular occasions or social circumstances. The *Compendium* is an attempt to integrate these principles and themes in a systematic and definitive way into the structure and scope of the entire body of social teaching.

The document is organized into three parts. Part One reviews the background of the theological doctrines pertinent to Catholic social teaching, focusing on God's activity in the created order and mission of the Church, before setting forth four foundational principles for reflection: the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity. An elaborate discourse is devoted to human dignity, clearly the most important of these, while the remaining sections discuss the other three principles. Part Two applies the criteria for judgment, with chapter-length treatments of seven key aspects or institutions of human society: the family, human work, the economy, civil society, the international community, the environment, and military conflict. Part Three provides church leaders and the lay faithful with guidance for social action. A short concluding chapter

[65]John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 37.

then ends with a restatement of the ideal of Catholic social teaching, which is to build a "civilization of love."[66]

What is most significant in the PCJP document is its dedication of an entire chapter to environmental issues.[67] It encourages Christians to view the environment with an affirmative attitude, avoid a gloom-and-doom mentality, and recognize God's presence in nature. It calls to mind the opening of the book of Genesis, in which the human person is placed as the summit of creation and is entrusted by God with its care. It stipulates that "the relationship of [the human person] with the world is a constitutive part of his [or her] human identity. This relationship is in turn the result of another still deeper relationship between [the human person] and God."[68]

The *Compendium* stresses further that we should "look to the future with hope, sustained by the promise and the covenant that God continually renews,"[69] noting that in the Old Testament we see how Israel lived its faith in an environment that was seen as a gift from God, and that in the New Testament we realize how Jesus makes use of the natural elements in some of his miracles to remind the disciples of his Father's providence. In his death and resurrection, "Jesus inaugurates a new world in which everything is subjected to him (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20–28) and he creates anew those relationships of order and harmony that sin had destroyed."[70]

The PCJP document also affirms that progress made by science and technology that serves the purpose of uplifting human lives is in accord with God's will. It is not saying that the Church is opposed to

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[66]Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), no. 580.

[67]See Chapter Ten, titled "Safeguarding the Environment," in *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 451–487.

[68]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 452.

[69]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 451.

[70]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 454.

scientific progress, which is a part of God-given human creativity; what it is stressing is the truth that "a central point of reference for every scientific and technological application is respect for men and women, which must also be accompanied by a necessary attitude of respect for other living creatures."[71] The use of the earth, therefore, should not be arbitrary and needs to be inspired by a spirit of cooperation with God. To forget this is to reduce the environment to "mechanistic terms," accompanied oftentimes by the false idea that its resources are unlimited, and see development in a purely materialistic dimension, in which first place is "given to doing and having rather than to being, [which] causes serious forms of human alienation."[72]

The document, nevertheless, also warns about going to the other extreme of attributing absolute value to the environment. It points out that an eco-centric or bio-centric vision of the environment falls into the error of putting all living beings on the same level, thereby ignoring the qualitative difference between human persons and other creatures. The document insists that the key to avoiding such a mistake is to maintain a transcendent vision,[73] as we are more likely to act responsibly toward the environment when we remember God's role in creation. Christian culture, the document explains, considers creatures as gifts from God to be nurtured and safeguarded. Caring for the environment thus falls within the responsibility of ensuring the common good, in which creation is destined for all: "Responsibility for the environment, the common heritage of [humankind], extends not only to present needs but also to those of the future.… This is a responsibility that present generations have towards those of the future.…"[74]

Concerning biotechnology, the *Compendium* acknowledges the possibilities it offers as a source of hope but also that these raise alarms as well. While the Christian view of creation in principle allows for

[71]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 459.

[72]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 462.

[73]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 463–464.

[74]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 467.

human intervention in nature as the latter is not some sort of sacred object that must be left alone, the ability to do so is nevertheless a gift that needs to be used responsibly. The modification of the properties of living beings must be accompanied by a careful evaluation of the benefits and risks of such actions. Biotechnology needs to be guided by the same ethical criteria that should orient our actions in the social and political spheres while also taking into account duties of justice and solidarity.[75]

In the application of the principles of justice and solidarity to biotechnology, the PCJP document asks that "equitable commercial exchange, without the burden of unjust stipulations … be facilitated." It is indispensable to promote the development of the most disadvantaged nations, in particular through "the exchange of scientific and technological knowledge and the transfer of technologies to developing countries."[76]

In pursuing the principle of the common good and the sharing of the earth's resources, the *Compendium* reminds us that God created the goods of the earth for the use of all, that these "must be shared equitably, in accordance with justice and charity."[77] Emphasizing that environmental concerns are often connected to poverty, the document explains that the poor are unable to cope with problems such as the erosion of farm land due to economic and technological limitations. Many of them also live in urban slums affected by pollution. The *Compendium* thus stresses that "in such cases hunger and poverty make it virtually impossible to avoid an intense and excessive exploitation of the environment."[78] Yet the answer to the problem, it insists, is not in policies of population control that do not respect the dignity of the human person; rather, it argues that population growth is "fully

[75]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 472–473.

[76]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 475.

[77]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 481.

[78]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 482.

compatible with an integral and shared development."[79] Development must be integral so that it can ensure the authentic good of all.

The PCJP document also appeals for the adoption of appropriate lifestyles to save the environment, stressing that the virtues of sobriety, temperance, and self-discipline must be practiced at the individual and community level.[80] This means we need to break the mentality that is based on mere consumption and develop an awareness of the ecological consequences of our choices.

Ultimately, the *Compendium* urges that one's actions toward the environment—as a Christian endowed with moral responsibility—must be characterized by gratitude and appreciation.[81] It contends that one should always remember that the world reveals the mystery of God who created and sustains it. Rediscovering this profound meaning of nature not only helps one to discover God but also motivates one to act responsibly toward the environment.

14. Caritas in Veritate

Pope Benedict XVI presented his view on integral human development and its significance for the realization of love in truth in his 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*. As a critique of the materialistic view of development, he argued that "development requires a transcendent vision of the person."[82] The theological stress in this encyclical is therefore very manifest; indeed, Benedict XVI argued that the idea of development "needs God: without [God], development is either denied, or entrusted exclusively to [humanity], who falls into the trap of thinking [they] can bring about [their] own salvation, and

[79]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 483.

[80]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 486.

[81]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 487.

[82]Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* [On Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009), no. 11.

ends up promoting a dehumanized form of development."[83] The tone of the arguments is clearly in line with Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio*, particularly as Benedict XVI referred to the "development of the whole person and of all the person," just as Paul VI formulated it.

Caritas in Veritate also reiterated the need for a holistic approach to the complex ecological problems that the present generation is facing today. It states that

> our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself [or herself] and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other. Herein lies a grave contradiction in our mentality and practice today: one which demeans the person, disrupts the environment[,] and damages society.[84]

What is underlined thus in these arguments is a strong critique of the dominant paradigm of development which compartmentalizes everything and treats the human person, society, and the environment as entities that are subservient to economic growth and development.

15. Laudato Si'

While previous magisterial documents[85] had already taken the importance of environmental discourse into consideration, none have done so as comprehensively and as exhaustively as has *Laudato Si'*. Issued by Pope Francis in 2015, this social encyclical is the first Church document by far that treats the issue of the environment systematically. Through it, Francis has expanded the conversation by

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[83]Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 11.

[84]Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 51. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* sharply points this out as well: "Care for the environment represents a challenge for all of humanity. It is a matter of a common and universal duty, that of respecting a common good" (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 466).

[85]Francis continues the environmental teachings of his predecessors in *Laudato Si'*, especially nos. 3–6.

inviting everyone, regardless of creed, race, language, etc., into an open and honest dialogue in light of humanity's shared responsibility to care for the earth as our common home.[86]

While the encyclical does not take a critical evaluation of the sustainable development model, it asserts that "authentic human development has a moral character … [that it] presumes full respect for the human person, [and that] it must also be concerned for the world around us.…"[87] The encyclical notes that humanity's fascination with the technocratic paradigm, which promises unlimited growth, is worrisome, with the paradigm's fundamental problem being that it "is based on the lie that there is an infinite supply of the earth's goods, [which] leads to the planet being squeezed dry beyond every limit."[88] Francis therefore suggests that

> since everything is closely interrelated, and today's problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis … we now consider some elements of an *integral ecology*, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions.[89]

The environmental, economic, social, and cultural ecologies must be taken together as interconnected parts of the whole.[90] It means that "strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature."[91]

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[86]Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 13.

[87]Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 5.

[88]Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 106.

[89]Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 137.

[90]Francis, *Laudato Si'*, nos. 138–146.

[91]Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 139.

Key Themes of Catholic Social Teaching as Points of Critique for the Concept of Sustainable Development

Catholic social teaching has raised important points in particular that are relevant to the critique of the sustainable development model. The following key themes establish, in summary, how the model is inadequate as a paradigm for environmental sustainability.

1. The only true development is integral human development, which for Catholic social teaching is holistic, i.e., having moral, economic, social, cultural, spiritual, and environmental components, and consists of all things that enable persons to become more fully human. Sustainable development has at best only three-fold foci: economic growth, social equality, and environmental protection.

2. Simply equating development with economic growth is morally unacceptable. The commercialization of almost every aspect of life, of the human person, of the environment, and of social structures is not in line with the principles of Christian morality. It is morally flawed since human persons, the environment, and society are to be treated as subjects of development, not its objects. The propensity for economic growth undermines the essential moral, social, and religious values of life; indeed, while it is crucial that the basic material needs of all are met, great emphasis must be placed on "being more" and not on simply "having more."

3. All nations, whether rich or poor, need integral human development, for one of its central principles is that the goods of the earth are intended for all. The universal destination of goods implies, in a world in which many people lack the basic necessities of life, that

there is a need for simpler and more austere lifestyles on the part of those who possess more than what is truly necessary. Individual and collective consciences should be formed to nurture the value of fostering the common good, particularly so that all communities can achieve the conditions necessary for people to reach their full potential and become the kinds of persons God intends them to be (1 Cor. 12:7).

4. Working for integral human development is a moral and religious responsibility given that God is concerned with the integral well-being of each human person.

5. Human persons need to be the subjects of development, not its objects. Sustainable development that focuses only on economic growth tends to reduce human persons, especially powerless workers and the poor, to instruments for making profit.

6. Without authentic integral human development, genuine peace in global and local communities cannot be achieved. The focus of sustainable development on material well-being, social equity, and environmental protection is not enough, for peace can be achieved only if there is also social justice.

The key insight of Catholic social teaching that constitutes the central tenet of the Christian view of integral human development is synthesized in John 10:10: "I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Life in abundance with Jesus means that there is no deprivation in its moral, economic, social, cultural, spiritual, and environmental aspects. Jesus warned about the dangers of attachment to wealth and the heedless acquisition of material possessions (Lk. 12:15), preached the blessings that come to the poor (Lk. 6:20), and said that we will have to render an account for all that has been entrusted to us (Mt. 25:14ff). He urges us in this manner to have a different way of living based not on a lifestyle of consumption, which sustainable development espouses, but on the prudent use of the goods of this planet which God has entrusted to us.

Conclusion

While the notion of sustainable development seems to be an appealing paradigm for addressing the environmental crisis, it is problematic, inadequate, and falls short of its intended goal. Its provenance in the economic model of development makes its framework of sustaining the environment ultimately hollow, a bucket half-empty. It is clear indeed, from a moral point of view, that sustainable development has a conceptual problem, for at the core of its concept is profit, which would rule supreme at the expense of the environment.

The environmental crisis is also a moral crisis,[92] not just a socio-economic and environmental one. What makes the concept of sustainable development tricky, therefore, is the fact that it was conceived with the economic agenda as its framework. It still sees the "possibility for a new era of economic growth," along with an emphasis on "policies that sustain and expand the environmental resource base."[93] It is this aspect—the obsession with economic growth—that makes the concept of sustainable development ultimately unable to address the issue of environmental sustainability.

With its idea of "integral human development" providing a stinging critique against the reduction of development to mere maximization of economic profit, Catholic social teaching provides much insight into the harmful aspects of economic growth as has been conventionally pursued. It argues that development should seek instead to foster the total well-being of the human person. This means that greater attention must be given to the moral and spiritual aspects of human life.

At the core of Christian life lies the two-fold commandment of love of God and of neighbor (Lk. 10:27). The environmental crisis challenges us to love God by loving God's creation, not by abusing it,

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[92]John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation* (Message for the 1990 World Day of Peace) (January 1, 1990).

[93]WCED, *Our Common Future*, 1.

and to love our neighbor, particularly those future generations who will bear the brunt of this ecological disaster.[94] Indeed, environmentalists have long linked the modern environmental crisis to a crisis of the human spirit, to that of the heart and soul. We no longer experience our belongingness to nature in a way that would make us willing to change our lifestyles in order to sustain the future of our world. St. John Paul II calls it a moral crisis,[95] and rightly so. What we need to do is address the roots of the problem. We have to find ways to shift our core values and paradigm of development so that we can have a meaningful and fulfilling relationship with the environment.

[94]Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 160.

[95]John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation*, nos. 5 and 13.

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FAST AND FURIOUS

The HIV Epidemic in the Philippines

James McTavish, F.M.V.D.

The Philippines has become the country with the fastest growing HIV epidemic in Asia and the Pacific. The prevalence and rate of transmission was described as "low and slow" from 1984–2004 and "hidden and growing" from 2005–2009; now it is characterized as "fast and furious." We currently have around 37 new cases of HIV every day, which approximates to over 1,100 new cases every month.[1]

In this essay, we will give some background on HIV and AIDS and analyze some elements of the rising epidemic. We will then look at the call to chastity as the definitive and essential weapon for halting and even reversing the epidemic, especially among males having sex with males.

Before we proceed, it will be helpful to define some terms:

- HIV is an abbreviation for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It is classified as a retrovirus, and there is

[1]UNAIDS, "Cities in Philippines Pledge to Lower HIV Infections and Improve their Track Record" (August 14, 2018). See also Department of Health, "Philippines Addresses Rising Trend in New HIV Infections" (undated press release).

currently no cure for those infected with it, although medicines can keep disease progression at bay. HIV is the virus that eventually causes AIDS.

- AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. It is *acquired* through various modes of transmission, causes *immunodeficiency* as the immune system of the patient becomes deficient, and is a *syndrome* as a plethora of diseases can arise due to the patient's weakened immune state.

How is HIV Transmitted?[2]

There are three ways HIV can be transmitted:

1. through sexual contact, which could be either heterosexual or homosexual;
2. from mother to child, either during pregnancy, delivery, or breastfeeding; and
3. through blood, such as sharing HIV-infected needles among injecting drug users (IDU) or through receiving an infected blood transfusion (which is relatively rare nowadays). It can also be transmitted through a needle stick injury or from tattooing.[3]

The primary mode of transmission, therefore, is through the transfusion of an infected bodily fluid—either seminal or vaginal fluid, blood, or breast milk. HIV is not transmitted through coughing, sneezing, mosquito bites, swimming in the same pool, using the same toilet bowl, kissing, hugging, eating at the same table or from the same plate, or drinking from the same glass with an HIV-positive individual.

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[2]Information on HIV and AIDS can be found on websites such as https://www.hiv.gov/ and https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/default.html.

[3]If the equipment used is not properly sterilized.

What Happens When a Person Contracts HIV?

HIV attacks the immune system and gradually weakens it. The patient will not have any symptoms at first while the immune system is still able to function; indeed, it can take 5–10 years for any symptoms to develop. As the infection spreads, however, the immune system will be progressively weakened, leaving the patient vulnerable to many types of infections and some cancers.

The clinical stages are noted as follows:[4]

- Stage 1: asymptomatic, with generalized swelling of lymph glands;
- Stage 2: moderate unexplained weight loss, with increased infections such as herpes zoster;
- Stage 3: severe unexplained weight loss, with chronic diarrhea and/or prolonged fever; and
- Stage 4: multisystem infections such as tuberculosis affecting brain, lungs, skin, blood, etc.

How Can HIV/AIDS Transmission/Infection be Prevented?

A useful mnemonic for the prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission and infection is ABCDE:

- abstinence from sex outside marriage,
- being faithful to one's spouse (both spouses must be mutually faithful),
- conscience and correct choices,
- do not use drugs, and
- education.

[4]The HIV clinical staging system of the World Health Organization (WHO) provides a more detailed outline. See WHO, *Annex 1: WHO Clinical Staging of HIV Disease in Adults, Adolescents and Children* (Geneva: World Health Organization).

Global Facts About HIV

Since the start of the global epidemic, 74.9 million people around the world have become infected with HIV and 32 million of them have died from AIDS-related illnesses.[5] As of 2018, there were approximately 38 million people living with HIV worldwide. Yet while many countries have reported a stabilization or even a decrease in the number of their HIV cases between 2001 and 2009, nine actually registered more than a 25% increase in the number of their cases. One of these was the Philippines.[6]

HIV and the Philippines: The State of the Nation

The data is best reported in a table format as follows:

General Data and Reported Modes of HIV Transmission in the Philippines*				
	July 2019		Cumulative Data from 1984 to July 2019**	
Total Reported Cases	1,111		69,512	
Male	1,048		65,162	
Female	63		4,339	
Method of Transmission	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sexual contact	1,037	62	62,457	4,015
Male-female sex	84	62	7,071	4,015

[5]UNAIDS, *Global HIV & AIDS Statistics—2019 Fact Sheet* (Geneva: UNAIDS).

[6]UNAIDS, *Global Report: UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2012* (Geneva: UNAIDS, 2012), 11. See also UNAIDS, *Global Report: UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2010* (Geneva: UNAIDS, 2010), 34.

General Data and Reported Modes of HIV Transmission in the Philippines* (cont.)				
	July 2019		Cumulative Data from 1984 to July 2019**	
Method of Transmission	Male	Female	Male	Female
Male-male sex	699	-	35,919	-
Sex w/ males & females	254	-	19,467	-
Blood/Blood products	0	0	5	15
Sharing of needles	9	0	2,102	129
Needlestick injury	0	0	2	1
Mother to child	1	1	101	89
No data	1	0	495	90

*See the HIV and AIDS Data Hub for Asia Pacific website, particularly https://www.aidsdatahub.org/taxonomy/term/213, for the latest data on HIV/AIDS in the Philippines. The data in this table is for July 2019.
**No data available on sex for eleven (11) cases.

Breakdown of Data for the Philippines

From 1984 until July 2019, there were 69,512 documented cases of HIV in the Philippines.[7] Of these, 96% (66,472) were infected through sexual contact and 3.2% (2,231) through needle-sharing among injecting drug users. Mother-to-child transmission occurred in 0.3% (190) of cases, and there were 20 cases of HIV contraction through the reception of contaminated blood transfusions. It is extremely rare, therefore, to contract HIV from an infected blood transfusion.

[7]The preceding table shows, however, that the actual number of HIV cases is at least three to four times higher. The major reason for this is that many people who engage in high-risk behaviors do not get tested, perhaps out of fear.

The predominant mode of transmission (96% of the cases) is through sexual contact—either homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual. While heterosexual sex was the dominant mode of transmission from 1984 to 2006, the group now most at risk of transmitting HIV is the so-called MSM—males who have sex with other males (or men who have sex with men).[8]

MSM: Men Who Have Sex with Men

In 2012, the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet* ran a series of articles on HIV in men who have sex with men. These described MSM as follows:

> Men who have sex with men (MSM) is a term introduced in 1992 to attempt to capture a range of male-male sexual behaviours and avoid characterization of the men engaging in these behaviours by sexual orientation (homosexual, bisexual, heterosexual, or gay) or gender identity (male, female, transgender, queer). MSM includes gay-identified men, heterosexually identified men who have sex with men, bisexual men, male sex workers who can have any orientation, men engaging in these behaviours in all male settings, such as prisons, and the rich and wide array of traditional identities and terms for these men across cultures and subcultures.[9]

The MSM demographic in the Philippines is comprised of males particularly in the 15–34 year-old age group. In July 2019, this mode of transmission accounted for 92% of all new cases of sexually transmitted HIV in the country. What is particularly worrying, moreover, is that many of the MSM cases occur in the youth. Of the 1,111 new cases of HIV recorded in July 2019, 314 (31%) were among male youth aged 15–24; of these, 233 involved male-male sex (homosexual) and

[8]In the medical literature, "MSM" stands for "men who have sex with other men." However, seeing as many cases occur in those under 18 years of age, it can also be understood as "males who have sex with other males."

[9]C. Beyrer, S. Baral, F. Van Griensven, S. Goodreau, S. Chariyalertsak, A. Wirtz, & R. Brookmeyer, "Global Epidemiology of HIV Infection in Men Who Have Sex with Men," *The Lancet* 380:9839 (2012): 368.

81 involved sex with both males and females (bisexual). In July 2019, there were also 51 newly-diagnosed cases involving adolescents (aged 10–19)—37 through male-to-male sex and 14 through sex with both males and females.

Cultural Factors Encouraging MSM

The HIV epidemic both in the Philippines and globally[10] is driven by high rates of transmission among MSM; indeed, the risk of acquiring HIV is 22 times higher among men who have sex with men. It would thus be helpful to examine cultural attitudes that fan the flames of the epidemic.

Homosexuality is largely accepted here in the Philippines. For instance, one only has to watch television for a few moments to verify that there is a massive representation of LGBT+ characters in Filipino media. Some of the most influential local TV and media stars are openly gay and flaunt it. The overriding attitude toward homosexual behavior is light-heartedness, joking, and that it is a source of fun. This, however, is in stark contradiction to the staggering rates of HIV infection in males having sex with other males as presented above, which are no laughing matter.

Labeling is also commonplace in Filipino culture whereby a young boy, even at five or six years old, is already labeled as gay with terms such as "bakla" (Tagalog) or "bayut" (Cebuano). I first encountered this in a poor neighborhood where I lived with my community in Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao, while studying theology at the nearby seminary of St. John Vianney. When a group of children came to our house with their parents to pray the rosary, they were calling one young boy of around six years old "bayut." I inquired as to what it meant and was told that it means one is gay. I was very much surprised by such labeling of this young child who was years away from puberty and sexual maturation. If he grows up being

[10]J. McTavish, "Chastity and Homosexuality: Combating the Scourge of HIV and AIDS," *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 14:4 (Winter 2014): 637–645.

called "gay" every day, it will not be a surprise if he self-identifies as a homosexual when he is older.

Moral Evaluation

The evaluation of homosexual behavior presents a special challenge in our world of today as "there are many forces in our society that promote a view of sexuality in general, and of homosexuality in particular, not in accord with God's purpose and plan for human sexuality."[11] Even many "Catholic" groups present homosexuality as completely harmless, if not a good thing, representing a legitimate sexual alternative, and that the teaching of the Catholic Church is oppressive and unscientific. Such groups promote the fundamental freedom of the person to live according to their sexual orientation, an orientation they claim "they were born with."[12] However, Joseph Ratzinger, then Prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, wrote that the Church's teaching concerning homosexuality "does not limit but rather defends personal freedom and dignity realistically and authentically understood."[13]

Orientation vs. Act

There is a difference between the homosexual orientation and the homosexual act. A person may have a homosexual orientation

[11]United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care" (November 14, 2006), 1.

[12]There is no credible scientific research that supports such an erroneous claim. In the nature vs. nurture debate regarding the genesis of homosexuality, it is understood that one is not born that way (nature) but rather becomes that way (nurture).

[13]Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons" (October 1, 1986), n. 7.

through no fault of their own and strive to live a chaste life; here the homosexual orientation or inclination is obviously not sinful in itself. The homosexual act, however, is objectively sinful. It is always disordered as it is not open to life, and it does not respect the complementarity of the sexes. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) states that

> tradition has always declared that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered. They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.[14]

However, it should be borne in mind that "responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, habit, inordinate attachments, and other psychological or social factors."[15]

"Go in" vs. "Coming out"

Too lightly are young people encouraged to "come out" and express their homosexuality. More helpful advice would be to "go in" and seek the deeper reasons for a lack of harmony in the healthy maturation of sexual identity. I believe that most males who I see engaging in effeminate behavior do not experience deep-seated same-sex attraction. They are confused, more often than not, about their sexual identity, or are experimenting, following fads and trends. Pope Francis in *Christus Vivit* notes that

> young people are aware that the body and sexuality have an essential importance for their lives and for their process of growth in identity. Yet in a world that constantly exalts sexuality, maintaining a healthy relationship with one's body and a serene affective life is not easy.[16]

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[14]*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993), 2357. Hereafter referred to as CCC.

[15]CCC 1735.

[16]Francis, *Christus Vivit* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2019), 81.

It is commonly believed that the Pope's only comment regarding homosexuality is "Who am I to judge?" However, this fragment does not accurately express his statement and needs to be read in context to be understood properly. During his flight back to Rome following World Youth Day 2013 in Rio de Janeiro, Francis told the press, "If a person is gay and seeks God and has good will, who am I to judge him?"[17]

To invite a young person to "come out" may be inviting them to embrace a homosexual lifestyle that is dangerous both morally and medically. The health risks of homosexual acts, which are well documented though scarcely mentioned in the public debate, can be characterized as follows:

- increased risk of infections—not only HIV but also human papillomavirus (HPV), viral hepatitis B and C, gonorrhea, syphilis, and all sexually transmitted infections/diseases (STI/STD);
- increased risk of cancer—anal cancer, Kaposi's sarcoma, and HPV-related malignancy;
- higher incidence of physical injuries—anal trauma, hemorrhoids, anal fissures, and retained foreign bodies;
- mental health disorders—increased suicidal tendency, depression, and anxiety; and
- increased rates of substance abuse including drugs and alcohol.[18]

Being aware of the real dangers helps us understand why the Church labors to save homosexuals from "a way of life which constantly threatens to destroy them."[19]

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[17]"'If a Gay Person Seeks God, Who Am I to Judge Him?' Says Pope Francis," *Catholic Herald* (July 29, 2013).

[18]See J. Diggs, Jr., *The Health Risks of Gay Sex* (Corporate Resource Council, 2002).

[19]CDF, "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons," n. 12.

The False Promise of Condoms

While a UNAIDS Global Report boldly and uncritically announces that "condom use is a critical element of combination prevention and one of the most efficient technologies available to reduce the sexual transmission of HIV,"[20] abstinence from the sexual act is actually the most proven method for reducing HIV transmission risk in MSM. This is 100% effective, yet in the aforementioned UNAIDS report the word "abstinence" is not even mentioned once; indeed, Matthew Hanley and Jokin de Irala state that

> it is noteworthy that public health entities seek to modify some lifestyle choices but not others. The consumption of tobacco, cholesterol-laden diets, sedentary lifestyles, and reckless driving are all considered behaviors that require modification, but sexual behavior associated with disease and other adverse consequences is not.[21]

This is why even as early as 1993, in a pastoral letter on AIDS entitled "In the Compassion of Jesus," the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) declared that

> the moral dimension of the problem of HIV-AIDS urges us to take a sharply negative view of the condom-distribution approach to the problem. We believe that this approach is simplistic and evasive. It leads to a false sense of complacency on the part of the State, creating an impression that an adequate solution has been arrived at. On the contrary, it simply evades and neglects the heart of the solution, namely, the formation of authentic sexual values.
>
> Moreover, it seeks to escape the consequences of immoral behavior without intending to change the questionable behavior itself. The "safe-sex" proposal would be tantamount to condoning promiscuity and sexual permissiveness and to fostering indifference to the moral demand as long as negative social and pathological consequences can be avoided.[22]

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[20]UNAIDS, *Global Report: UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2012*, 19.

[21]M. Hanley & J. de Irala, *Affirming Love, Avoiding AIDS: What Africa Can Teach the West* (Philadelphia: National Catholic Bioethics Center, 2010), 25.

[22]Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), "In the Compassion of Jesus: A Pastoral Letter on AIDS" (January 23, 1993).

While many blame the Catholic Church in the Philippines for its lack of support for condom initiatives, a 2001 report from the U.S. Agency for International Development in the country clearly stated that "it is highly unlikely that the church's position constrains condom use among high risk groups. It is difficult to conceive of a sex worker engaged in this activity who refuses to use a condom because of religious proscription."[23] Yet even if condoms were to eliminate part of the risk of HIV transmission, their benefit would soon be offset with repeated use because of what is known as cumulative risk,[24] which is perceived intuitively in everyday experiences even if it is not mathematically calculated. Suppose there is a 1% risk of death when crossing a busy road. The chances of dying if one were to cross one hundred times does not remain at 1% overall; intuitively, the risk of death increases the more one crosses the busy road. In this example, the cumulative risk for crossing the street one hundred times would be 63%. As such, if we take the risk of HIV transmission from unprotected sex to be 1% and the condom reduces that risk by 85%, the risk of transmission would be reduced to 0.15% for each episode but the cumulative risk would be 14% for one hundred exposures, 31% for two hundred and fifty exposures, and 53% with five hundred exposures. Thus, even if condoms decrease the risk of infection in a single event, they are less effective the more one engages in risky behavior; indeed, the CBCP succinctly and correctly states that "given its high failure rate, the condom cannot really put a stop to AIDS."[25]

[23]U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), *Final Evaluation of the AIDS Surveillance and Education Project* (Manila: USAID, 2001), 23.

[24]See E. Green, *Rethinking AIDS Prevention: Learning from Successes in Developing Countries* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 110–111.

[25]CBCP, "On the Government's Revitalized Promotion of Condoms" (March 2, 2010).

Who is My Neighbor?

The most recent CBCP pastoral letter on AIDS, "Who is My Neighbor?" (July 2011), reminded us that

> every local parish must establish itself as a privileged place where education about HIV and AIDS is disseminated and persons most vulnerable to the virus or living with or affected by the virus receive Jesus' healing love through the physical, emotional and spiritual support of the members.
>
> Church workers, seminarians and the clergy must be equipped with basic knowledge about HIV & AIDS and complementary pastoral counseling skills … to bring hope, healing and reconciliation to those vulnerable to the virus, those infected and affected by HIV, through the sacraments and pastoral care.[26]

The same document also reiterates the

> call on the rest of the flock to be in solidarity with those living with and affected by HIV and AIDS. They are our sisters and brothers. They are our neighbors. They are the human face of Jesus in our modern time. To love them is to love God.[27]

In this light, and with a desire to make our love for neighbor concrete, we propose in this final section the lived virtue of chastity as the definitive response to the rising HIV epidemic in the Philippines (and elsewhere). The call to chastity needs to resound strongly, particularly with MSM given that demographic's tendency for high levels of promiscuity.

Promiscuity as a Driving Factor

The issue of promiscuity as a principal driving factor of the epidemic is rarely discussed in the literature on HIV transmission. One study involving 1,500 homosexual men and women, for example,

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[26]CBCP, "Who is My Neighbor? A Pastoral Letter on AIDS" (July 11, 2011).

[27]CBCP, "Who is My Neighbor?"

concluded that 45% of white male homosexuals had sex with five hundred or more partners, with 28% having a thousand or more.[28] In a discussion I had on this point last year with three gay Filipino men who used to live very promiscuous lives, I learned that one had had 100 same-sex sexual partners, the other 250, and the third, 750.[29] I also asked one of them if there was any truth in the notion of a gay man finding a partner and being faithful to him, of "getting married" and being faithful for the next ten years. One of their replies was enlightening: "Father, how boring that would be!" Thankfully, all three have embraced the virtue of chastity and have now found that much longed-for peace and fulfillment.

A Call to Chastity

All baptized persons, whether homosexual or heterosexual, are called to chastity.[30] The CCC teaches us that "homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection."[31] It emphasizes that homosexual persons are "called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties

[28]A. Bell & M. Weinberg, *Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity among Men and Women* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 308.

[29]Readers who may be shocked by these figures may simply not be well-informed about the extent of highly promiscuous behavior in MSM circles. Such information is often covered up.

[30]Chastity is different from celibacy. Chastity for a priest or religious, for example, involves celibacy (no sexual relationships) while for a married couple it includes the physical dimension of their love. All are called to chastity according to their state of life; only some (e.g., priests and religious) are called to celibacy.

[31]CCC 2359.

they may encounter from their condition."[32] We are also reminded that the homosexual inclination "constitutes for most of them a trial."[33]

The best way to be convinced of the beauty of chastity is to live it out; after all, as the saying goes, "you cannot counsel what you yourself don't live." As the Book of Sirach reminds us, "do not fall into the grip of passion, or you may be torn apart as by a bull.… Evil passion destroys those who have it, and makes them the laughingstock of their enemies" (6:2, 4). Our dear friend St. Alphonsus Liguori also writes:

> It is especially to be remarked, that we cannot resist the impure temptations of the flesh, without recommending ourselves to God when we are tempted. This foe is so terrible that, when he fights with us, he, as it were, takes away all light; he makes us forget all our meditations, all our good resolutions; he also makes us also disregard the truths of faith, and even almost lose the fear of the divine punishments. For he conspires with our natural inclinations, which drive us with the greatest violence to the indulgence of sensual pleasures. Who in such a moment does not have recourse to God is lost. The only defence against this temptation is prayer.[34]

A Support Group like Courage

Referral to a support group can be considered. One example is Courage,[35] a ministry within the Catholic Church for persons struggling with SSA (same-sex attraction). It is present in over half of the dioceses in the United States and in three dioceses in the Philippines.

Courage promotes five goals:

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[32]CCC 2358.

[33]CCC 2358.

[34]See A. Liguori, *Alphonsus Liguori: The Redeeming Love of Christ: Selected Spiritual Writings*, ed. J. Oppitz (New York: New City Press, 1992), 70–71.

[35]See the Courage website at https://couragerc.org.

1. Chastity—to live chaste lives in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on homosexuality.
2. Prayer and dedication—to dedicate one's life to Christ through service to others, spiritual reading, prayer, meditation, individual spiritual direction, frequent attendance at Mass, and the frequent reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist.
3. Fellowship—to foster a spirit of fellowship in which all may share their thoughts and experiences, thereby ensuring that no one will have to face the problems of homosexuality alone.
4. Support—to be mindful of the truth that chaste friendships are not only possible but also necessary in a chaste Christian life, and in doing so provide encouragement to one another in forming and sustaining them.
5. Good example—to live lives that may serve as good examples for others.

Spiritual Accompaniment

Spiritual direction is also of great benefit in helping persons with SSA approach this Christian perfection. As noted by the late Rev. John Harvey, the founder of Courage,

> it is by regular spiritual direction, moreover, that the person with SSA can formulate and begin to live this plan of life. Very often, people with SSA have already experienced the loneliness and incompleteness of either of the two patterns of homosexual activity, namely, promiscuity or a steady same-sex relationship. Dissatisfied with these experiences, they are ready to listen to the sympathetic proposal of a new approach, difficult though that new way may seem on the surface. The spiritual

> director's task is to show the [person] … with SSA that it is possible to live a chaste and happy life without being isolated from society.[36]

Evangelization of Society

All initiatives geared toward helping individuals need to be marked with a commensurate effort to evangelize society. Some particulars that can be focused on are as follows:

- the formation of seminarians and young religious on factors thought to be involved in the genesis of homosexuality, primarily to give them pastoral tools for dealing with the overwhelming number of youth in the Philippines who are confused about their sexual orientation;
- a more cautious and critical reception of the Western tenets of sexual morality (foreign imports are fine for basketball but not when it comes to moral values);
- a clearer presentation of Catholic teaching in the area of same-sex attraction;
- more targeted campaigns that warn of the risks of HIV transmission among MSM rather than simply generic information campaigns on the general risks of HIV/AIDS;
- more active roles for Catholics in countering the massive exposure of LGBT+ in Filipino media which has a confusing effect on and deleterious consequences for the healthy development and maturation of the sexuality of the youth;

[36] J. Harvey, *Same Sex Attraction: Catholic Teaching and Pastoral Practice*, ed. G. O'Donnell (New Haven, CT: Knights of Columbus Supreme Council, 2007), 23–24.

- the updating of formation for priests and clergy who are often unclear about Catholic teaching on factors that drive the HIV epidemic in the Philippines;
- more research efforts geared toward elucidating factors that drive homosexual behavior in the Philippines, starting with better baseline data on the prevalence of same-sex attraction and behavior in the country, and understanding the role of pornography, especially exposure to gay pornography, as a possible contributing factor in increasing sexual promiscuity among MSM;
- listening to the sociological impact on young males of having large numbers of fathers absent and working abroad as overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), and seeing if this influences their masculine identity;
- efforts to reverse the current "light" attitude toward homosexuality and increase general awareness of the risks involved when males have sex with other males; and
- the opening of more chapters of Courage to help women and men experiencing same-sex attraction live chaste lives.

Conclusion

The HIV epidemic in the Philippines is driven largely by homosexual promiscuity. This is a medical fact, and the hard data is proof of it—92% of all new cases of sexually transmitted HIV in the Philippines (as of July 2019) occurred among MSM. A more targeted and directed pastoral care approach is therefore needed, for while it is true that we are all at risk and that no one is exempt, the danger of a general approach to AIDS awareness, a campaign addressed to all, is that it weakens and waters down the message so that it does not reach the MSM group who needs to hear it the most.

The evangelization of cultural attitudes toward males having sex with males is very much needed as well. While the topic of homosexuality generally elicits much merriment, there is nothing enjoyable in presiding over a funeral Mass of a yet another gay man (usually in his late 20s or early 30s) who died of "pneumonia" (often a euphemism for AIDS-related illness). We need to reflect on how we evangelize, bearing in mind that the Church states that homosexual persons "must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided."[37]

The HIV epidemic in the Philippines shows no signs of abating; instead, it continues to grow at a fast and furious rate. New cases of HIV among MSMs are skyrocketing and going through the roof, and they will continue to do so until the issue and the causative factors behind it are more honestly and directly confronted.

[37]CCC 2358. The most vitriolic intimidation I know of in the Philippine setting has not been discrimination against homosexual persons but rather the aggressive attempts by members of the MSM demographic (and those who support gay culture) to silence gay men who try to speak out and share how they are now living chastely and are happier (and healthier) for it.

Landas 33:2 (2019) 111–126

POPE FRANCIS AND MISSIONARY SIGNS

Exploring the Vision of *Evangelii Gaudium*

James H. Kroeger, M.M.

The Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis's lengthy apostolic exhortation of 51,000 words presented in five chapters, specifically focuses on the "proclamation of the Gospel in today's world." The Pope recalls that the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in 2012 sought to be attentive to "the promptings of the Holy Spirit who helps us together to read the signs of the times" (*Evangelii Gaudium* [EG] 14). Quoting Paul VI, he exhorts all communities to an "ever watchful scrutiny of the signs of the times" (51) and that one must continually "read [them]" (108) to engage in missionary evangelization today. One may validly assert thus that Francis is situating his missionary reflections within the framework of the imperative to always discern the signs of God.

For Francis, this task of examining current realities in the light of Christian faith is a "grave responsibility" (51). He proposes using an "evangelical discernment" which is "the approach of a missionary disciple" who is guided by "the light and strength of the Holy Spirit" (50). While he admits that "it is not the task of the Pope to offer a detailed and complete analysis of contemporary reality," Christian faith does demand "recognizing and discerning spirits" and ultimately "choosing movements of the spirit of good and rejecting those of the spirit of evil" (51).

This presentation seeks to examine how Francis can be considered as employing a type of "signs of the times" methodology in *Evangelii Gaudium*, especially as he presents his insights in Chapter Two (sections 50–109) which bears the title "Amid the Crisis of Communal Commitment." For a more holistic presentation, however, this author will first provide some background perspectives related to the use of a "signs of the times" approach in recent decades, particularly as it emerged in the context of the Second Vatican Council.

A Vatican II Pope. It is remarkable that five popes took an active role in Vatican II: John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI. As manifested in *Evangelii Gaudium*, however, Francis, who is the first pope in many decades who was not actually present at the deliberations of the Council, is clearly imbued with its perspectives, in addition to having canonized three of its popes (John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II). He frequently quotes from several Vatican II documents, generously employs copious references to both *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* (GS), and asserts that "it is important to draw out the pastoral consequences of the Council's teaching" (38) for fulfilling the Church's mission of evangelization in the world today.

Francis directly quotes the words of John XXIII's opening address to the Council in two places (41, 84), recalling at length the latter's clear disagreement with the "prophets of doom" (84). He also notes that the Church, even "fifty years after the Second Vatican Council," does not adopt a "naïve optimism" but this does "not mean that we are any less trusting in the Spirit or less generous" (84).

Francis also frequently uses texts from Paul VI. He quotes *Ecclesiam Suam* twice, Paul VI's first encyclical which was written in 1964 during the Council (26, 51). One also finds at least a dozen quotes from *Evangelii Nuntiandi* ([EN], e.g., 10, 12, 146 [2x], 150, 151, 154 [3x], 156, 158, 176, 181). Francis also directly cites Paul VI's 1975 apostolic exhortation *Gaudete in Domino*, a document that obviously influenced the writing of *Evangelii Gaudium*, in the first two quotes of the latter. One recognizes, moreover, that Francis is remarkably conversant with the popes, documents, and theological themes of Vatican II even without presenting a full documentation of the writings of John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

Historical Background of a "Signs of the Times" Methodology. The Second Vatican Council was convoked by John XXIII in the apostolic constitution *Humanae Salutis*, dated December 25, 1961. He first used the expression "signs of the times" in this document, and here one finds the beginnings of a new direction in theological methodology. Indeed, John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* has a section concluding every chapter which is entitled (by its editors) "Signs of the Times." In this his last encyclical, the pope enumerates three major signs as important characteristics of our age: the evolving roles of (1) laborers and (2) women and (3) the "new" nations that were formerly colonies.

It is without a doubt that the impetus given by John XXIII to this inductive method of theologizing on life's events and empirical reality is one of his innovations. As a result, this methodology sees the "signs of the times" as a valid *locus theologicus*, although methodological precision must be provided for its use within contemporary theology. The method is found at the basis of some Council documents, the best known passage being from *Gaudium et Spes:* "The Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel" (4). Priests are to cooperate closely with the laity "so that together with them they will be able to recognize the signs of the times" (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* 9), and the laity must promote solidarity among all peoples as one of the key "signs of our times" (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* 14). The Council also encourages "all the Catholic faithful to recognize the signs of the times and take an active and intelligent part in the work of ecumenism" (*Unitatis Redintegratio* 4). Other passages that manifest an understanding of God's work in human history are *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 43 and *Gaudium et Spes* 11, 42, and 44.

It is interesting to note that the Second Vatican Council created a special sub-commission (*de signis temporum*) in 1964 to assist it with crafting a descriptive definition and explanation of what was meant by the signs of the times. In the first draft of their document written principally by Fr. Bernard Häring, the commission members planned to use the expression *vox enim temporis, vox Dei est* (the voice of the time is the voice of God). They later softened this expression and attempted an explanation, asserting that one may discern the visible

presence and action of God in the great signs of the times that are present within the human community. As one perceives God's action directing humanity toward the fulfillment of God's designs, one can discern God's purposes being made manifest to humanity in these great movements and aspirations, including great secular movements that occur in history.

An insightful discourse on the signs of the times can be found in the address of Paul VI for his general audience on April 16, 1969.[1] There the pope provides abundant clarity of direction on the proper use of the signs of the times as a theological methodology, noting that the expression itself has taken on "a current use and a deep, very wide and interesting meaning" and that it is "the theological interpretation of contemporary history." Francis would resonate with these insights on how a genuine discernment of current events is necessarily associated with the Church's evangelizing mission in the contemporary world.

Brief Clarification of Terms and Method. The *biblical* expression "signs of the times" (Mt 16:2-4) originates from Jesus's reference to the messianic signs present in his life. He invites the Jews to open their perception to these signs and see the fulfillment of God's prophecy to God's people regarding the coming of the Messiah.

The *theological* meaning of the signs of the times is somewhat different; indeed, the scriptural reference quoted above does not appear in the official text of *Gaudium et Spes* 4 out of respect for exegetical accuracy. Paul VI, in speaking of the "signs of the times" (April 16, 1969), notes that the expression only has a "remote evangelical reminiscence." Nevertheless, while all these clarifications provide precision, they in no way jeopardize the valid use of the signs of the times as a *locus theologicus*.

Successfully interpreting contemporary history in a theological light demands methodological precision in using the theology of the signs of the times. What, then, is the correct procedure to follow for this form of theologizing (an approach that will be helpful in understanding

[1] *L'Osservatore Romano* (English) 2:17 (April 24, 1969): 1, 12.

Evangelii Gaudium)? According to the Vatican II sub-commission that dealt with the proper understanding of this approach, the signs of the times must be seen as operating on a double plane, that is, on the levels of the *sociological* and the *theological*.

There is a dual reality that is present within the sociological level itself. First, the signs of the times emerge from great changes in science and technology, transport and communications, medicine, computerization, etc. Society becomes more complex in its organization, the world becomes more economically interdependent, humanity finds itself living in a "global village," and the march of history seems to have been sped up. These are simply some of the great changes taking place in the modern world, a lining up of the "sheer facts" that make up the first dimension of the *socio-historical* level.

The second aspect of the sociological level has to do with an investigation of these changes using the behavioral and social sciences. This is carried out to determine *what effects* all these developments have on human consciousness and social life. How does such rapid and all-pervasive change affect human minds, human hearts, and human life? What impact results from change—the impact on human awareness, knowledge, sensibility, aspirations and desires, and so on? The signs of the times are *not* the mere facts alone; these are, as it were, only the *materia ex qua*, the matter from which the signs of the times arise. The "signs" are more properly the human desires and questions that arise because of the avalanche of change. In short, what is the "human impact" of these events on humanity's total environment? As Paul VI noted in his address, the world becomes a book for us. The Church must give a close reading of this book to see how all of humanity has been affected—and what implications are present for her mission of evangelization.

However, while sociological thematization is essential to this methodological approach, it is incomplete by itself. In describing the "method to follow," Paul VI remarks:

> We willingly admit that sociology is a science of great merit in itself and for the purpose that interests us, that is, the search for a higher and

> indicative meaning of the facts themselves. But sociology cannot be an independent moral criterion, nor can it replace theology.

The method necessarily moves to the *theological* level. *Gaudium et Spes* 4 insists that it is the task of the Church to *scrutinize* the signs of the times (*sociological* level) and *interpret* them in the light of the Gospel (*theological* level). Empirical and historical thematizations of reality must be discerned through the lens of Christian faith and Gospel values.

This discernment on the theological plane is accomplished by a reflection on the direction in which these signs point. Are they leading human history to be a fulfillment of God's plans for humanity? Are they (in Paul VI's words) events that "spontaneously meet higher plans, which we know to be Christian and divine (such as the pursuit of unity, of peace, of justice)?" Do they suggest "a simultaneous step forward of the kingdom of God in the human kingdom?" Are they a clear manifestation (as John XXIII spoke of in his *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* opening speech at Vatican II and which Francis also quotes in EG 84) that

> divine Providence is leading us to a new order of human relations which, by human effort and even beyond all expectations, are directed to the fulfillment of God's superior and inscrutable designs, in which everything, even human setbacks, leads to the greater good of the Church?

This is clearly the *theological* level where the reflection of faith enters to see just how precisely these developments are furthering or hindering the designs of God.

This "theology of the signs of the times" is obviously not a methodology that is independent of the ecclesial community. Yet while Paul VI acknowledges the role of all Christians and the reality of the *sensus fidei* (see also EG 119, 198), he asserts nevertheless that "the assistance of the hierarchical magisterium will always be provident and decisive," especially when "the ambiguity of the interpretation deserves to be solved either in the certainty of truth or to the benefit of the common good." The necessity of the Church's role, therefore, arises from the fact that this approach deals with "signs" which by their nature need interpretation. She is the privileged place for the discernment of

the signs of the times because the Spirit is present within her, leading her to the fullness of truth (cf. Jn 16:13).

Schematic Presentation of the "Signs of the Times" Theological Method. Readers may find it helpful at this juncture in the presentation to view the "signs of the times" theological method in the form of a visual schema. The pivotal "signs" quote from *Gaudium et Spes* 4 will thus be integrated into the following overview.

A. On the *sociological-historical* level, one must:

1. *investigate* empirical reality (data and its context) and
2. *thematize* it (the "human impact" of this reality or environment).

This first task (**A**) is seen as a "scrutiny of the signs of the times"; the second task (**B**) is the "interpretation in the light of the Gospel" (cf. GS 4).

B. On the *pastoral-theological-missiological* level, one must offer a "faith-evaluation" of the "signs" which necessarily incorporates the following:

1. the Word of God/Holy Scripture,
2. Christian Faith and Tradition,
3. the *sensus fidei* of the believing community,
4. the specific guidance of the hierarchical magisterium,
5. the reality of sin (personal and social) within the world,
6. the centrality of the person of Christ, and
7. the role of the Holy Spirit.

This brief schematic overview can serve as a kind of concluding synthesis to the theory and theological bases of the "signs of the times method" whereby the Church seeks to be deeply engaged with the realities of the contemporary world for a more effective preaching of the Gospel. In light of these helpful clarifications, therefore, on the "signs of the times" inductive approach to theological reflection, the presentation now moves back to Francis and *Evangelii Gaudium*.

Francis's View of the Church's Task. In several places throughout *Evangelii Gaudium*, Francis expresses his insights on the imperatives facing the Church as she practices an "ever watchful scrutiny of the signs of the times" (51). He admits that the Church would not be "well served by a purely sociological analysis which would aim to embrace all of reality" (50) and that it is "not the task of the Pope to offer a detailed and complete analysis of contemporary reality" (51). This, however, does not militate against the "grave responsibility" (51) of the Church to be deeply engaged in understanding and serving both contemporary society and humanity. What Francis envisions is a genuine "evangelical discernment" that is "the approach of a missionary disciple" (50).

> We need to distinguish clearly what might be a fruit of the kingdom from what runs counter to God's plan. This involves not only recognizing and discerning spirits, but also—and this is decisive—choosing movements of the spirit of good and rejecting those of the spirit of evil. (51)

In this discernment process, he notes: "I take for granted the different analyses which other documents of the universal magisterium have offered, as well as those proposed by the regional and national conferences of bishops" (51). He thus employs a world-wide perspective in his discerning of the signs of the times, citing favorably numerous insights from conferences of bishops around the world (e.g., those in Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States, France, Congo, Oceania, India, Brazil, the Philippines, etc.), and humbly admits that 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" (16). "It is up to the Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country" (184), to read effectively the signs for their own location and local Church.

Francis is also clearly aware of "today's vast and rapid cultural changes that demand we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness" (41). Once again, he quotes John XXIII's opening speech to the Second Vatican Council: "The deposit of faith is one thing … the way it is expressed is another" (41). Francis goes on to assert that the Church will realize, in her "ongoing discernment" of current signs and trends, that some

customs and practices "may be beautiful, but [that] they no longer serve as means of communicating the Gospel. We should not be afraid to re-examine them" (43). A commitment to discerning the signs of the times will help the Church realize that she "has rules or precepts which may have been quite effective in their time, but no longer have the same usefulness for directing and shaping people's lives" (43).

The open vision and perspective of Francis in discerning concrete events of history and their impact on people lead him indeed to many helpful insights. "When properly understood, cultural diversity is not a threat to Church unity" (117); in fact, "the faith and life of the Church [can] be expressed in legitimate forms appropriate for each culture" (118). The pope appreciates "the challenge of an inculturated preaching" (143) for an effective communication of the Gospel; indeed, such "signs-sensitive" preaching actually becomes "an exercise in evangelical discernment" (154).

Francis's desire to link the concrete reality of people's lives with the values of the Gospel is also manifested in one of his lengthy quotes of Paul VI: "We know that 'evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of [the human person's] concrete life, both personal and social'" (EG 181). He then takes this perspective and applies it to the human family "with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses" (183).

The pope then notes, in a later section:

> I intend to concentrate on two great issues which strike me as fundamental at this time in history. I will treat them more fully because I believe that they will shape the future of humanity. These issues are first, the inclusion of the poor in society, and second, peace and social dialogue. (185)

To address these signs, he enunciates four principles which he believes are foundational for "building a people in peace, justice and fraternity" (221-237).

The foregoing citations from *Evangelii Gaudium* are, in the opinion of this author, an affirmation that Francis is deeply involved in a "faith-

reading" of the signs of the times (although his actual use of "signs of the times" terminology only appears three times in his text: 14, 51, and 108). The pope is humble in his pastoral approach, admitting that "the Church does not have solutions for every particular issue" (241), and states his objective clearly:

> Starting from certain social issues of great importance for the future of humanity, I have tried to make explicit once again the inescapable social dimension of the Gospel message and to encourage all Christians to demonstrate it by their words, attitudes and deeds. (258)

Francis thus invites all Christians to engage the ever-changing world as "Spirit-filled evangelizers" who are "full of fervor, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love and attraction" (261).

A Brief List of Signs. As one navigates through *Evangelii Gaudium*, the great panorama of subjects that Francis treats emerges. More than just a catalogue of topics, these many areas may be considered as "signs" which the Church must attentively address as she embarks upon "a new chapter of evangelization" (1). Here is a brief sampling of such areas, among many others, as noted by the pope:

> health care, education and communications (52),
> a "throw away" culture (53),
> an impersonal economy (55),
> widespread corruption and self-serving tax evasion (56),
> inordinate consumption (60),
> attacks on religious freedom (61),
> human trafficking, the narcotics trade, the abuse and exploitation of minors, the abandonment of the elderly and the infirm (75), [and] heightened individualism (78).

Francis is not overwhelmed by current realities. He asserts that

> the evils of our world—and those of the Church—must not be excuses for diminishing our commitment and our fervor. Let us look upon them as challenges which can help us to grow.… Challenges exist to be overcome! Let us be realists, but without losing our joy, our boldness and our hope-filled commitment. (84, 109)

Evangelii Gaudium provides, time and again, a profound faith-perspective that assists Christians in their reading of the "signs" and

living out of their commitment as missionary disciples. As Francis boldly states, "in our time humanity is experiencing a turning-point in its history" (52). "Seeing reality with the eyes of faith, we cannot fail to acknowledge what the Holy Spirit is sowing" (68). The Church is to recognize that

> the changes taking place in these great spaces and the culture which they create are a privileged locus of the new evangelization.… What is called for is an evangelization capable of shedding light on these new ways of relating to God, to others and to the world around us, and inspiring essential values. (73-74)

In the "new world" in which we live, Christians must "realize that a uniform and rigid program of evangelization is not suited to this complex reality" (75).

Challenges, however, exist not only in the external world; they are also present within the Church. As Francis notes,

> one can observe in many agents of evangelization, even though they pray, a heightened individualism, a crisis of identity, and a cooling of fervor. These are three evils which fuel one another.… They end up stifling the joy of mission.… It pains me greatly to discover how some Christian communities, and even consecrated persons, can tolerate different forms of enmity, division, calumny, defamation, vendetta, jealously.… Whom are we going to evangelize if this is the way we act? (78-79, 100)

Creative Responses to Challenging Signs. To assist Christians in addressing profound challenges both within and outside the Church, Francis presents an innovative list of eight "no" statements and seven "yes" exhortations. Employing a kind of *via negativa*, he alerts us to factors that could diminish the Church's effectivity in the world today, bluntly saying

> no to an economy of exclusion (53-54),
> no to the new idolatry of money (55-56),
> no to a financial system which rules rather than serves (57-58),
> no to the inequality which spawns violence (59-60),
> no to selfishness and spiritual sloth (81-83),
> no to sterile pessimism (84-86),
> no to spiritual worldliness (93-97), [and]
> no to warring among ourselves (98-101).

He also exhorts us to be vigilant and not to let ourselves be "robbed" of pivotal dimensions of the Christian life:

> Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary enthusiasm! (80)
> Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the joy of evangelization! (83)
> Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope! (86)
> Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community! (92)
> Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the Gospel! (97)
> Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the ideal of fraternal love! (101)
> Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigor! (109)

These "no" statements and "yes" exhortations clearly show that Francis is neither naïve nor unrealistic in his efforts to promote the new evangelization within the Church. He is simply reflecting the realism needed to read the "signs" for a more effective missionary evangelization, and affirms that

> in spite of everything, Saint Paul's exhortation is directed to each of us: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom 12:21). And again: "Let us not grow weary in doing what is right" (Gal 6:9). (101)

Asian Echoes in *Evangelii Gaudium.* This author has been (by God's grace and mercy) an "Asian missioner" (Philippines and Bangladesh) for five decades. It is from this perspective that he can affirm that Francis's exhortation has found wide acceptance and resonance in the Asian context. In addition, moreover, to his very personal style of writing and heartfelt appeal for a joyful and enthusiastic commitment to evangelization, the pope has also recognized the dedicated work and insights of the local Churches of Asia. He quotes *Ecclesia in Asia* six times in particular (see footnotes 58, 77, 78, 95, 99, and 134 of *Evangelii Gaudium*), and in these places he speaks about

> the stability of the family … the explicit proclamation of Jesus as Lord … joyful, patient and progressive preaching … [that] faith cannot be constricted to the limits of understanding and expression of any one culture … [that] the Holy Spirit is the principal agent [of evangelization] … [and] a pedagogy which will introduce people step by step to the full appropriation of the mystery. (62, 110, 118, 122, 171)

On another—and perhaps even more profound—level, Francis's inductive approach to reading the "signs" as a pivotal means of discerning the Church's mission of evangelization is characteristically Asian. In the context of Asia, the Church's mission is seen as emerging *concretely* and *pastorally* from life's realities, which are considered as the locus of doing theology. A type of "ground up" or "emerging from below" pastoral-missionary praxis has prospered ever since the 1970 meeting of 180 Asian bishops with Paul VI in Manila, and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), which emerged from that meeting, promotes a unique pastoral methodology to facilitate the growth of inculturated and missionary local Churches. The FABC has evolved a unique approach of pastoral engagement; their four-stage "Asian" approach is termed the "AsIPA method"—the Asian Integral Pastoral Approach.

AsIPA begins with *exposure-immersion*, or what may also be called "entering into a dialogue-of-life." Exposure-immersion follows the basic principle of the Incarnation—local Christians seek to share the daily lives of their neighbors and communities and read the "signs of the times." The second stage of *social analysis* follows in which communities try to evaluate the social, economic, political, cultural, and religious systems in society. They observe and analyze events and trends, discerning the impact of rapid social change on human lives, and evaluate the signs of contemporary times, events of history, and the needs and aspirations of peoples and communities.

Asians have also seen the necessity of integrating social analysis (stage two) with the *contemplative dimension* of integral evangelization (stage three). This third stage of faith reflection emerges from Asia's religio-cultural heritage. Through this contemplation, people discover God's presence and activity within social realities, discerning not only negative and enslaving social aspects but also the positive and prophetic aspects of life that can inspire genuine God-awareness and spirituality. This stage in the total process has proven very beneficial; for example, it enables the poor (who are a central focus for Francis) to make their unique contribution to the Church and society. The AsIPA method thus brings prayer and spirituality into the mission of evangelization.

The third stage of ongoing spiritual-theological reflection issues into the fourth stage called *pastoral planning*, which seeks to translate the previous three stages into actual and realizable mission plans of action. Concrete and inculturated programs of evangelization are ultimately necessary, and they are best conceived, in the perspective of the FABC, through this Asian process (AsIPA) that actively reads the "signs" and discerns what the Lord of history is challenging the Church to be and do. In this process, Francis and the FABC are truly kindred spirits indeed!

Joy, the Pivotal Sign of Missionary Disciples. The obvious focus on joy in *Evangelii Gaudium* is manifested in the sheer number of times that terms such as joy, joyful, and joyfully are repeated (nearly a hundred). Francis has mined the treasures found in the two interrelated apostolic exhortations written by Paul VI in 1975: *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the Modern World) and *Gaudete in Domino* (On Christian Joy). The lack of joy and hope is an obstacle to effective evangelization; indeed, *both* popes constantly assert that the Gospel will not be heard at all by contemporary humanity if it is not heard from "joyful evangelizers." In the introduction of *Evangelii Gaudium* (10), Francis extensively quotes the sentiments of Paul VI who believed that joy would enable the world of our time "to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ" (EN 80).

The success of the "new evangelization" requires "renewed evangelizers." Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin once wrote: "Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God." Joy is convincing; joy evangelizes. All the daunting "signs of the times" and complex dimensions of the "new evangelization" will not overwhelm those whose lives have been transformed by a joyful encounter with the Risen Lord. With heartfelt emotion, Francis writes:

> I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ.… I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day.… I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy. (3, 1)

Missionary disciples must listen frequently to the admonition of St. Paul: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near" (Phil 4:4). Be transformed by joy. Surrender to the "Lord of Joy" for he is *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring!* Respond to the invitation of Pope Francis! Become a joyful herald of the new evangelization!

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THE SEMANTIC METAMORPHOSIS OF "EVANGELIZATION"

Formulating a Definition of Evangelization Based on Action, Content, and Result

Moses Jarvis R. Catan

From Mission to New Evangelization: A Historical Overview

As may be observed in both the Old and New Testaments, the term "evangelization" has Biblical roots. J. Kroeger states that

> etymologically, the English term "evangelization" is traced to the concept of the Gospel, translated back to its form in Latin (evangelium) or Greek (εὐαγγέλιον), reduced to its root "evangel," augmented by the suffixes "-ize" (connoting action or causality) and "-ation" (signifying a process). The result is the long word "evangelization" which means the process of making the Gospel known.[1]

The Catholic Church has practiced this Biblical notion of evangelization (albeit employing other terminology) throughout its lengthy history. A. Dulles, in his concise tracing of Catholic evangelization, points out the following historical markers:

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[1]J. Kroeger, *Human Promotion as an Integral Dimension of the Church's Mission of Evangelization: A Philippine Experience and Perspective since Vatican II—1965–1984* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1985), 14.

1) the occurrence of the verb "evangelize" (εὐαγγελίζω), which means to proclaim good news, in the Septuagint, particularly in the historical books, Psalms, and Deutero-Isaiah;

2) its frequent appearance in the New Testament, particularly in Luke, Acts, and the Pauline writings;

3) the systematic involvement of the Catholic Church in evangelization throughout its existence, from the early stages of the Christian Church to the early Middle Ages, when monks evangelized most of Europe, and the discovery of the New World in the 15th century, which spread the faith to the Americas, Africa, and Asia;

4) the crisis of evangelization that happened during the Counter-Reformation, when Catholic teaching leaned toward ecclesiastical and domestic concerns while Protestants focused on evangelical activity;

5) the Church's increasing preoccupation, through time, with pastoral care and the defense of doctrines while Catholic missionary activity continued minimally within some orders and societies; and

6) the eventual reentry of evangelization terminology into Catholic thought by the middle of the twentieth century, from religious educators who promoted kerygmatic theology to John XXIII's evangelistic initiatives toward the Second Vatican Council.[2]

As for exactly when the term "evangelization" began to circulate, a variety of theories exist. The Oxford English Dictionary traces the use of the word "evangelize" to as early as 1382 CE in John Wycliffe's translation of Isaiah 40:9.[3] R. Fisichella posits the probability that

[2]A. Dulles, *Evangelization for the Third Millennium* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009), 1–5.

[3]"Thou that euangelisist to Sion" (Isa. 40:9). See s.v. "evangelize," in J. Murray, H. Bradley, W. Craigie, & C. Onions, eds., *The Oxford English Dictionary* Vol. 3

it was Erasmus of Rotterdam who first used the word in Catholic terminology—also in the late fourteenth century—albeit as a derogatory term associated with "Lutheran fanaticism."[4] The negative association of the verb "to evangelize," which was deemed "too" Protestant, eventually led to its cessation from Catholic usage from the time of the Council of Trent. The word "mission" was considered the more appropriate one for Catholic terminology,[5] with other preferred terms being "missionary activity, the propagation of the faith, and the planting or extension of the Church."[6]

J. Gorski surmises, however, that the noun "evangelization" was actually coined during the 18th century when Protestants began to rediscover the value of missionary activity.[7] Even as the Catholic Church tended to its wounds from the Reformation and shifted its focus to fixing its own backyard, Protestant churches did not send missionaries to the New World for up to two centuries after the deaths of Luther and Calvin for a variety of reasons.[8] The first organized

(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). The term can also be traced to the late fourteenth century, directly from the ecclesiastical Latin *evangelizare* and from the Old French *evangeliser*, meaning "to spread or preach the Gospel."

[4]R. Fisichella, *The New Evangelization: Responding to the Challenge of Indifference* (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2012), 17–18.

[5]Fisichella, *The New Evangelization*, 18.

[6]A. Dulles, *Church and Society: The Laurence J. McGinley Lectures, 1988–2007* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 87.

[7]J. Gorski, *From "Mission" to "New Evangelization": The Origins of a Challenging Concept* (New York: Maryknoll Missionary Vocations, 2015). See also J. Gorski, "From 'Mission' to 'Evangelization': The Latin American Origins of a Challenging Concept," in P. Grogan & K. Kim, eds., *The New Evangelization: Faith, People, Context and Practice* (London/New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015), 31–44.

[8]Catholic missions dominated from 1500 to 1700 CE such that they "won more converts in the pagan world than [they] lost to Protestantism in Europe." Among the reasons for the dearth of Protestant missions were: 1) the theology taught by the reformers, namely, that the Great Commission was pertinent only to the ancient Apostles and that predestination assured the conversion of the heathen

Protestant missionary projects began in the early eighteenth century, attributed mainly to the Danish-Alle and Moravian missions. This rediscovery of mission, coupled with the Evangelical Awakening under John Wesley and George Whitefield (also in the eighteenth century), eventually snowballed into zealous efforts for both theological and actual missionary activity on a global scale.[9] It is in this context that the modern term "evangelization" was developed.[10]

The mainstream use of evangelization terminology in Catholic circles was eventually observed during Vatican II and the 1974 Synod of Bishops. This does not mean, however, that the concept of evangelization was new to the Church; rather, it was more of a transition from the traditional terminology of mission to the language of evangelization. As Kroeger stresses, "the *idea* is not new to the Catholic Church, but the wide use of the *term* is of recent years."[11] Nevertheless,

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even without human intervention; 2) the small membership within Protestant churches because of the war against Rome and the Counter-Reformation; 3) the isolation of Protestant Europe from the lands of the New World; and 4) the absence of religious orders, which were vital for the early world missions, from the Protestant churches. See J. Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission: A Panoramic View of Missions from Pentecost to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982), 73–75.

[9]Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission*, 75–82. This is a very general description of the Protestant development of missions particularly because a synthesis of overall Protestant missionary thought is difficult, due mainly to numerous de-centralized Protestant activities and the independence of established Protestant churches. See J. Comby, *How to Understand the History of Christian Mission* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 139–140.

[10]A. Dulles also notes the contribution of Protestant theologians, particularly K. Barth, to this development. See Dulles, *Church and Society*, 88.

[11]Kroeger emphasizes the Biblical roots of the term "evangelization" and that its foundational essence has always been in Catholic thinking:

> The Gospel is centered on the person of Jesus Christ; evangelization is the revealing and unfolding of the mystery of Christ; it proclaims and manifests the richness of the love of the Lord. Thus, evangelization as the proclamation of the good news of Jesus is a foundational concept

the use of such terminology in Vatican II marked a profound shift in the Catholic Church's missionary focus. In the documents of Vatican I (1869–1870), the words "evangelize" or "evangelization" were absent and the term "gospel" was employed only once. In Vatican II almost a century afterwards (1962–1965), the word "gospel" was used 157 times, the verb "evangelize" 18 times, and the noun "evangelization" 31 times.[12] Evangelization terminology suddenly became part of the Catholic mainstream seemingly out of nowhere, especially given that it used to be considered the exclusive domain of Protestants.[13]

True to form, the Catholic Church used its intellectual and theological resources to develop the notion of evangelization even further. From John XXIII's simple hope in 1961 to "bring the modern world into contact with the vivifying and perennial energies of the gospel"[14] to Paul VI's revolutionary thrust toward "a new period of evangelization"[15] in 1975, the term "evangelization" became both buzzword and battle cry of the Church as it approached the new millennium. Indeed, a flurry of Church documents dealing with evangelization—from papal pronouncements to statements by continental synods—was produced in the decades following Vatican II.

> of the Christian faith; yet, its specific terminological usage in Catholic circles was only recently popularized by Vatican II and the 1974 Synod of Bishops. (Kroeger, *Human Promotion as an Integral Dimension of the Church's Mission of Evangelization*, 15)

[12]"The Task of the Latin American Bishop" (taken from John Paul II's address to the Episcopal Conference of Latin America [CELAM] on March 9, 1983), in R. Martin & P. Williamson, eds., *John Paul II and the New Evangelization: How You Can Bring the Good News to Others* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995), 26.

[13]Dulles states that for a majority of Catholics, "the very term has for them a Protestant ring" (Dulles, *Church and Society*, 87).

[14]John XXIII, *Humanae Salutis*, in W. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: America Press, 1966), 703.

[15]Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* [Evangelization in the Modern World] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1975), no. 2. Hereafter referred to as EN.

John Paul II eventually introduced another term in 1979—"new evangelization."[16] He emphasized that while the content of evangelization remained the same, this renewed impetus in the spreading of the Gospel was a "new proclamation" directed specifically toward "the new millennium, in these new times, these new conditions of life."[17] It was to be a renewal of evangelization characterized by newness in "its ardor, its methods, and its expressions."[18]

In his detailed tracing of the development of the concept of the new evangelization—from John Paul II's first use of the term to subsequent discussions of it in various Church Synods—S. Canilang ultimately distills the modern Church's evangelizing mission into three distinct yet interdependent areas: 1) *missio ad gentes*, 2) pastoral work, and 3) new evangelization. *Missio ad gentes* covers all evangelizing activity intended for peoples, cultures, and contexts that know neither Christ nor the Gospel as well as areas with a glaring lack of Christian communities. Pastoral work, on the other hand, is directed toward thriving Christian communities that are marked as having adequate ecclesial structures, a vibrant communal life of faith, and commitment to the universal mission. Lastly, new evangelization is oriented toward areas where the Christian faith had previously taken root and yet where people have lost "a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel."[19]

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[16]John Paul II popularized the term "new evangelization" and brought it to mainstream awareness, although he was influenced by Monsignor Luigi Giussani, founder of *Comunione e Liberazione*, who stressed the need of Western culture for a "new evangelization" or a new determination to preach Christ to the world. See R. Barron & J. Allen, Jr., *To Light a Fire on the Earth* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2017), 115–116.

[17]John Paul II, "The Cross of Nowa Huta: A New Seed of Evangelization," *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Weekly Edition (July 16, 1979): 11.

[18]"The Task of the Latin American Bishop," 28.

[19]S. Canilang, *The New Evangelization: The Development of the Concept and Its Comprehensive Meaning* (Quezon City: ICLA Publications, 2013), 81.

It can be observed at this point that the semantic metamorphosis from "mission" to "evangelization" to "new evangelization" was not due simply to changes in Catholic jargon; indeed, such language shifts signaled profound changes in missionary focus. For Dulles, "all of this constitutes a remarkable shift in the Catholic tradition," one which he calls a significant "evangelical turn."[20] The thrust of Catholic missionary efforts in the Middle Ages, focused as these were on converting nonbelievers and bringing them into the confines of the hierarchical Church, was not evangelical. By the time of Vatican II, however, evangelization itself became the thrust, incorporated within the institutional, sacramental, and social dimensions of the Church. It was directed by John Paul II's call for a "new evangelization," toward "a new quality of evangelization and methods attuned to the sensibility of our times."[21]

R. Cantalamessa, in mapping out the movement of the Church toward the modern notion of the new evangelization, incisively identifies four "great waves of evangelization" in Church history. The identification of these waves clearly shows the various contexts in which mission and evangelization flourished, and Cantalamessa uses them as a springboard for discussing mistakes to avoid and examples to imitate in the contemporary pursuit of a new evangelization. These periods of increased or renewed missionary activity are condensed in Table 1.

It may be observed, in summary, that the Church's understanding of evangelization evolved over time due to shifting historical contexts. There was the initial post-Easter proclamation of the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ, which was spread by individual Christians who organized Christian communities throughout the Greco-Roman world. With the collapse of the Roman Empire and the discovery of the New World in later centuries, this initial proclamation became missionary activity in the form of civilizing, educating, and catechizing other peoples and converting them to the Christian faith. Its goal then was propagation, expansion, and instruction. Meantime, in the Old World, missionary activity became "less evangelical and more ecclesiastical" as

[20]Dulles, *Church and Society*, 97.

[21]See a summary of this evangelical turn in Dulles, *Church and Society*, 96–100.

the Catholic Church, in the face of opposition during the Reformation, "became more preoccupied with the instruction and pastoral care of her own members than with reaching out to new audiences."[22] The faith became "rather static" as Western Europe was divided into Catholic and Protestant states.[23]

Wave	Period	Objective	Protagonists
First	1st to 3rd centuries	conversion of large parts of the Roman empire	bishops; personal initiatives
Second	4th to 9th centuries	conversion and civilizing of the pagan world; re-evangelization of Europe after the barbarian invasions	monks
Third	16th century	conversion of the inhabitants of the New World	friars; religious orders
Fourth	current era	re-evangelization of the secularized, post-Christian Western world	laity

Table 1: Four Waves of Increased Missionary Activity in the Church[24]

By the time of Vatican II, however, evangelization had germinated within Catholic language and marked a return to its Biblical, evangelical, and kerygmatic roots such that it once again focused on the "confident proclamation of the basic message of God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ."[25] A "new evangelization" was then heralded by John Paul II in anticipation of the celebration of five hundred years

[22]Dulles, *Evangelization for the Third Millennium*, 2.

[23]"The Task of the Latin American Bishop," 26.

[24]Summarized from R. Cantalamessa, *Navigating the New Evangelization* (Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2014), 1–47.

[25]Dulles, *Evangelization for the Third Millennium*, 3.

since the first evangelization of the Americas as well as of the second millennium since the Incarnation.[26] It called for emulation of the commitment and generosity of the pioneers of evangelization but in new ways, methods, and expressions, and its goal was to reach out not only to formerly Christian areas where large groups of Christians no longer identified themselves as active members of the Church but also to the entire secularized culture the Church finds herself immersed in.[27]

We can thus see the notion of evangelization coming full circle—from the *evangelion* being proclaimed at the beginning of Church history, to missionary activity marked by conversion and expansion, to the notion of evangelization as a return to our kerygmatic and evangelical roots, and now to the new evangelization that seeks to evangelize with new fervor, methods, and expressions.

Key Church Documents on Evangelization

After understanding its provenance and evolution, the next step is to examine key Church documents that deal with the term "evangelization" (see Table 2).

Date	Title	Description	Importance
Nov. 21, 1964	*Lumen Gentium* [Light of the Nations]	Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (promulgated by Paul VI)	defines the nature, mission, and identity of the Catholic Church in relation to the modern setting; calls on the laity to sanctify the world and bring Christianity into their temporal affairs

[26]Dulles, *Church and Society*, 90–96.

[27]Cantalamessa, *Navigating the New Evangelization*, 42. The XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops states that "the new evangelization is primarily addressed to those who have drifted from the Church in traditionally Christian countries." See the preface of *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith* (*Lineamenta*, XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops) (Vatican City: The General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops and Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2011).

Date	Title	Description	Importance
Nov. 18, 1965	*Apostolicam Actuositatem* [Apostolic Activity]	Vatican II Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity	recognizes the importance of the laity in the life and mission of the Church; recognizes the diversity of the lay apostolate; identifies fields and forms of the lay apostolate; encourages laypersons in their Christian service
Dec. 7, 1965	*Ad Gentes* [To the Nations]	Vatican II Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church	treatise on matters regarding mission work and activity; stresses the need for dialogue with culture as well as cooperation among various agencies and denominations
Dec. 7, 1965	*Gaudium et Spes* [Joys and Hopes]	Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (promulgated by Paul VI)	emphasizes the Church's need to be completely immersed in human affairs; emphasizes the role of the Church within the world rather than being concerned only with spiritual matters
Dec. 7, 1965	*Presbyterorum Ordinis* [Order of Priests]	Vatican II Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests	defines the roles and duties of priests in the modern world; although concerned mostly with ministerial details regarding the priesthood, it integrates the Eucharist in the work of evangelization and calls on priests to learn the methods of evangelization
Dec. 8, 1975	*Evangelii Nuntiandi* [Evangelization in the Modern World]	Apostolic Exhortation (Paul VI)	deals comprehensively with the subject of Catholic evangelization; stresses the role of every Christian—not just ministers and the religious—in spreading the Good News; highlights important matters concerning evangelization: theological bases, holistic approaches, content, methods, beneficiaries, etc.

Date	Title	Description	Importance
Dec. 30, 1988	*Christifidelis Laici* [The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People]	Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation (John Paul II)	points out the gift and responsibility of the laity in the mission of the Church; summarizes Church teaching on lay involvement in human society
Dec. 7, 1990	*Redemptoris Missio* [The Mission of the Redeemer]	Encyclical (John Paul II)	points out the urgency and need for missionary activity; a call to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization
Oct. 11, 1992	*Catechism of the Catholic Church*	Catechism (promulgated by John Paul II in *Fidei Depositum*)	gives a summary of the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church; contains several references to the Church's mission as well as on evangelization and evangelical instinct
1999–2003	*Ecclesia in Africa; Ecclesia in America; Ecclesia in Asia; Ecclesia in Oceania; Ecclesia in Europa*	Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations (John Paul II)	deals with the topic of the new evangelization in preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000; addresses the question of evangelization within the contexts and needs of each continent
Jan. 6, 2001	*Novo Millennio Ineunte* [At the Beginning of the New Millennium]	Apostolic Letter (John Paul II)	outlines the priorities of the Church for the third millennium; as the summons for a new evangelization is repeated, it calls for a deepening spirituality based on prayer, contemplation, and holiness
Oct. 16, 2003	*Pastores Gregis* [Shepherds of the Flock]	Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation (John Paul II)	outlines the duties of bishops at the beginning of a new millennium; reminds bishops of their primary ministry of evangelization
Dec. 3, 2007	Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization	Doctrinal Note (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith)	clarifies the relationship between missionary activity and respect for the religious freedom of all peoples; deals with the anthropological, ecclesiological, and ecumenical implications of evangelization

Date	Title	Description	Importance
Oct. 11, 2011	*Porta Fidei* [Door of Faith]	Apostolic Letter "Motu Proprio Data" (Benedict XVI)	stresses the importance of the new evangelization during the opening of the Year of Faith; emphasizes the importance and necessity of having a living faith before transmitting it to others
2011–2012	*Lineamenta* and *Instrumentum Laboris* [LIL] (The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith) [NETCF]	Working documents of the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops	comprehensive treatise on the new evangelization; calls for engagement with cultural, economic, social, and religious spheres of human activity; deals with the urgent issues of secularization, migration, and globalization
Nov. 24, 2013	*Evangelii Gaudium* [The Joy of the Gospel]	Apostolic Exhortation (Francis)	focuses on the social dimension of evangelization; touches on many areas and contexts that need to be engaged with in the primary mission of evangelization

Table 2: Major Catholic Documents on Evangelization[28]

A review of Vatican II documents reveals several definitions for evangelization. *Lumen Gentium* (LG) states that

> this evangelization, that is, this announcing of Christ by a living testimony as well as by the spoken word, takes on a specific quality and a special force in that it is carried out in the ordinary surroundings of the world.[29]

[28]The inventory begins with Vatican II documents due to the semantic reason that the word "evangelization" was popularized only during Vatican II and not because the Church was uninvolved in the proclamation of the Good News before then. See EN 2.

[29]Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium* [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church], in A. Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2011), no. 35.

In *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (AA), the evangelization and sanctification of human persons are treated jointly as the apostolate of the laity. Descriptions include "the penetration and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel," "the formation of a Christian conscience among [the laity] so that they can infuse the spirit of the Gospel into various communities and departments of life," and "to engage in conversation with others, believers, or non-believers, in order to manifest Christ's message to all peoples."[30] In *Ad Gentes* (AG), the words "mission" and "evangelization" become interchangeable:

> "Missions" is the term usually given to those particular undertakings by which the heralds of the Gospel, sent out by the Church and going forth into the whole world, carry out the task of preaching the Gospel and planting the Church among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ.… The proper purpose of this missionary activity is evangelization, and the planting of the Church among those peoples and groups where it has not yet taken root.[31]

From a simple understanding of evangelization as the spreading of the Gospel,[32] AG expands the term to include the incorporation of believers into the ecclesial life:

> The chief means of the planting referred to is the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To preach this Gospel the Lord sent forth His disciples into the whole world, that being reborn by the word of God (cf. 1 Peter 1:23), [humankind] might be joined to the Church through baptism—that Church which, as the body of the Word Incarnate, is nourished and lives by the word of God and by the eucharistic bread (cf. Acts 2:43).[33]

It also directs lay people to cooperate with the work of evangelization "as witnesses and at the same time as living instruments" whereby

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[30]Paul VI, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* [Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity], in Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II*, nos. 2, 20, and 31.

[31]*Ad Gentes* [Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church], in Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II*, no. 6. Hereafter referred to as AG.

[32]AG 35.

[33]AG 6.

"they share in [the Church's] saving mission."[34] This cooperation is described, especially in the context of areas already considered to be Christian, in particular activities of evangelization, such as

> by nurturing in themselves and in others a knowledge and love of the missions; by stimulating vocations in their own family, in Catholic associations, and in the schools; [and] by offering subsidies of every kind, that they may offer to others that gift of Faith which they have received gratis.[35]

In *Gaudium et Spes*, where the Church's relationship with the secular world is the main theme, respectful and culturally appropriate evangelization is stressed:

> For, from the beginning of her history she has learned to express the message of Christ with the help of the ideas and terminology of various philosophers, and has tried to clarify it with their wisdom, too. Her purpose has been to adapt the Gospel to the grasp of all as well as to the needs of the learned, insofar as such was appropriate. Indeed this accommodated preaching of the revealed word ought to remain the law of all evangelization.[36]

In *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (PO), the sacramental life of the Church is integrated with the notion of evangelization even though most of the document is focused on the life and vocation of the priesthood. In a crescendo of emphasis, PO first points out that all the sacraments, apostolates, and ministries of the Church are "tied together with the Eucharist and are directed toward it" before stating that "the Eucharist shows itself as the source and the apex of the whole work of preaching the Gospel."[37] Here is where the sacramental life of the Church and the work of evangelization are profoundly linked within Catholic thought.

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[34]AG 41.

[35]AG 41.

[36]Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes* [Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World], in Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II*, no. 44.

[37]Paul VI, *Presbyterorum Ordinis* [Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests], in Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II*, no. 5.

Considered to be the primary ecclesial document on evangelization after Vatican II and, in Francis's opinion, "the greatest pastoral document that has ever been written to this day,"[38] *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN), surprisingly enough, has no singular definition for evangelization. The closest it gets to one is in the following statement about the Church:

> She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection.[39]

This multi-pronged description is not without reason—*Evangelii Nuntiandi* acknowledges early on that "it is impossible to grasp the concept of evangelization" through any simple definition, stating that

> any partial and fragmentary definition which attempts to render the reality of evangelization in all its richness, complexity and dynamism does so only at the risk of impoverishing it and even of distorting it. It is impossible to grasp the concept of evangelization unless one tries to keep in view all its essential claims.[40]

The many descriptions of evangelization in EN, mentioned in sections 17 through 24, give more of an umbrella explanation that shows the wide scope of the subject. These are, among others,

1) "bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity" (18);
2) "transforming humanity from within and making it new" (18);
3) seeking to convert, "through the divine power of the message [the Church proclaims,] both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in

[38]Francis, Address to Participants in the Pilgrimage from the Diocese of Brescia (Vatican Basilica: June 22, 2013).

[39]EN 14.

[40]EN 17.

which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs" (18);

4) "upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, [humankind's] criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration, and models of life which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation" (19);

5) letting humankind's culture and cultures have an encounter with the proclaimed Gospel (20);

6) proclaiming the Gospel through wordless witness or the "silent proclamation of the Good News" (21);

7) "a clear and unequivocal proclamation of the Lord Jesus" whereby the name, teaching, life, promises, kingdom, and mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are proclaimed (22);

8) a proclamation that reaches full development, resulting in entry into the ecclesial community that is expressed through sacramental acts (23);

9) acceptance of the Word for one to eventually evangelize others as well (24); and

10) "a complex process made up of varied elements: the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative." (24)[41]

The wide scope of descriptions points to several directions and to different levels, although Kroeger points insightfully to the first definition—"bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity" (18)—as possibly the best among them all, given that it aptly covers everything that needs to be addressed by evangelization. "All the strata of humanity," Kroeger observes, is a statement that encompasses every human dimension that needs to be reached, such as the physical and

[41]EN 17–24.

spiritual needs of a person, social development and human liberation, and entire cultures and demographic sectors.[42]

Apart from the activity of evangelizing itself, the content of evangelization is also given importance in EN. The document identifies the primary elements of evangelization, which consist of "the essential content, the living substance, which cannot be modified or ignored without seriously diluting the nature of evangelization itself," and its secondary elements, "whose presentation depends greatly on changing circumstances."[43] Thus, while the indispensable content of evangelization is the living Gospel of Jesus Christ, the presentation of this content is adaptable and flexible in various contexts and epochs.

It would be helpful at this point to go deeper behind the scenes in the making of EN, particularly as there are concise insights from those who crafted the documents for the study and discussion groups in preparation for the 1974 Synod. Given the many meanings of the word "evangelization" and for the sake of clarity, the definition chosen for the working group was evangelization "as the activity whereby the Church proclaims the Gospel so that faith may be aroused, may unfold and may grow."[44]

In *Redemptoris Missio* (RM), John Paul II uses the words "evangelize" and "evangelization" eighty-two times but without providing a concise definition. Many descriptions related to missionary activity are

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[42]J. Kroeger, interview with author (Quezon City: February 9, 2018).

[43]EN 25.

[44]"Guidelines for the Preparation of the Roman Synod, 1974" [GPRS], in *Evangelization in Asia Today: Part One* (Quezon City: Cardinal Bea Institute/Loyola School of Theology, 1974), 1–2. The guidelines reveal three possible definitions: 1) every activity whereby the world is transformed in any way in accordance with the will of God and of the Creator and Redeemer; 2) the priestly, prophetic, and royal activity whereby the Church is built up according to Christ's intention; and 3) the activity whereby the Gospel is proclaimed and explained, thereby awakening living faith in non-Christians and fostering it in Christians (e.g., through missionary preaching, catechetics, homiletics, etc.). A slightly modified version of the third definition is adopted by the guidelines.

expounded upon in the document, and witnessing and proclamation are frequently emphasized. RM's tackling of evangelization vis-à-vis its roots in the Biblical tradition, its fundamental elements, and its thrust on the integral development of the whole person is also a valuable insight.

Possibly the simplest description of evangelization in RM lies in its conclusion where John Paul II makes the following statement: "Today, as never before, the Church has the opportunity of bringing the Gospel, by witness and word, to all people and nations."[45] This formula may be clear and helpful in describing the missionary mandate of the Church, that evangelization is "the bringing of the Gospel, by witness and word, to all people and nations." An analogous definition may be found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), which was also released during the pontificate of John Paul II: "Lay people also fulfill their prophetic mission by evangelization, 'that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life.'"[46]

Just as in RM, the CCC's description of evangelization contains three elements: 1) the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ 2) by word and 3) by witness or testimony of life. While RM calls on the faithful to evangelize "all people and nations," the CCC challenges laypersons to evangelize those they encounter in their daily lives. RM, however, delves even deeper into evangelization and explores its roots in the Biblical tradition. It incisively examines the content of evangelization by pointing to the original evangelistic proclamation of Peter and Paul in six missionary discourses found in the Acts of the Apostles (2:22–29; 3:12–26; 4:9–12; 5:29–32; 10:34–43; and 13:16–41). Described as "model speeches," the common denominator of these discourses is that they "proclaim Jesus and invite those listening to

[45]John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* [On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate] (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990), no. 92. Hereafter referred to as RM.

[46]*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Manila: Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines and Word & Life Publications / Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), nos. 219 and 905.

'be converted,' that is, to accept Jesus in faith and to let themselves be transformed in him by the Spirit."[47] Here we find two important elements of those who are evangelized: being brought to conversion and accepting Jesus in faith.

It is important to note at this point that RM repeatedly stresses the notion of holistic evangelization which addresses the needs of the whole person. For example, it connects evangelization with human development in the following statements:

1) "Jesus came to bring integral salvation, one which embraces the whole person and all [humankind]…." (11)

2) "The evangelical witness which the world finds most appealing is that of concern for people, and of charity toward the poor, the weak and those who suffer.… A commitment to peace, justice, human rights and human promotion is also a witness to the Gospel when it is a sign of concern for persons and is directed toward integral human development." (42)

3) "The mission ad gentes is still being carried out today, for the most part in the southern regions of the world, where action on behalf of integral development and liberation from all forms of oppression is most urgently needed. The Church has always been able to generate among the peoples she evangelizes a drive toward progress." (58)

4) "*Missionary activity* brings light and an impulse toward true development, while a new evangelization ought to create among the wealthy a realization that the time has arrived for them to become true brothers and sisters of the poor through the conversion of all to an 'integral development' open to the Absolute." (59)[48]

[47]RM 24.

[48]RM 92.

In an assessment of RM, Kroeger states that "the document speaks of mission, evangelization, and salvation in a holistic fashion" and that this direction toward integral evangelization reflects the trajectory of both Catholic missiological thinking and magisterial teaching.[49]

Thirty-seven years after *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith* was crafted as an *Instrumentum Laboris* (IL) for the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops.[50] Several key terms that may describe the Church's understanding of evangelization, this time coined the "new evangelization," appear therein. Mentioned across several pages, these descriptions of evangelization, among others, are as follows:

1) Its goal is, "as always, the transmission of the Christian faith" accomplished by "proclaiming and bearing witness to the Christian life through the catechumenate, catechesis and works of charity" (iv).

2) It is directed primarily to those who, "despite being baptized, have drifted from the Church and Christian practice … so that they can rediscover the beauty of their Christian faith and the joy of a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus in the Church and the community of the faithful" (v).

3) "Transmitting the faith means to create in every place and time the conditions which lead" to a "true encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ"; "the goal of all evangelization is to create the possibility for this encounter, which is, at one and the same time, intimate, personal, public and communal" (11).

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[49]J. Kroeger, "Saint John Paul II and *Redemptoris Missio*," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 52:1 (2015): 28–29.

[50]*The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith* (*Instrumentum Laboris*, XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops) (Vatican City: The General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops and Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012). Hereafter referred to as IL.

4) Evangelization is "intricately bound together" with conversion and the call to holiness (14).

5) "The transmission of the faith is the goal of evangelization which, according to the divine plan, is to bring all people through Christ to the Father in the Spirit" (17).[51]

All these descriptions from LG to IL are listed herein to stress, once again, that there is no singular definition for evangelization. For the Catholic Church, it is a complex and multi-faceted enterprise that must be treated holistically and integrally. Nevertheless, the most concise description may probably be from Francis's 2013 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG). While there is no explicit definition of evangelization in this document, the subtitle "Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Francis to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World"[52] may already contain a simple definition of evangelization—that it is in essence the proclamation of the Gospel in today's world. It is arguable that the Church, with its comprehensive and wide-scale appreciation of the subject, could settle for this apparently clear and concise definition, brief and seemingly limited as it may be.

Kroeger's identification of five principal elements under the label "integral evangelization" would be helpful at this point. In his comprehensive studies of Church documents on evangelization, particularly AG, EN, and RM, he stresses that an overview of the many facets of evangelization yields five principal elements, namely,

1) *Presence and witness.* This "initial act of evangelization" is the basic faith-witness of Christians in their daily activities whereby one's life becomes the template that shows how the Christian faith is lived.

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[51]IL iv, v, 11, 14, and 17.

[52]Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* [On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World] (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013).

2) *Commitment to social development and human liberation*. This "service of humanity" is the product of one's faith convictions such that it results in "serving the most unfortunate, witnessing to justice, [and] defending the integrity of creation" and impacts all areas of social concern "ranging from peace-building, education, and health services to promoting family life and good government."

3) *Interreligious dialogue*. Given that most Christians are immersed in pluralistic and diverse cultures especially in the Church in Asia, one's evangelizing activity takes on an interreligious dimension such that the Christian shares the faith through the dialogues of daily life, deeds of service, religious experts, and faith experience.[53]

4) *Explicit Gospel proclamation and catechesis*. This "telling of the Jesus story" is the clear and comprehensible manner by which the Christian shares the faith through witness and testimony. This comes in the form of teaching, preaching, catechesis, and personal communication.

5) *Liturgical life, prayer, and contemplation*. This "God-experience" is the fuel that illumines and powers evangelization. It is likewise the direction which the evangelizer points to such that others are drawn into the communal and sacramental dimension of the life of faith.[54]

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[53]The four forms of dialogues are summarized in the 1991 document *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (#42) by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

[54]J. Kroeger, "Exploring the Insights of Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 51:3 (2014): 257–260. See also Kroeger, "Saint John Paul II and *Redemptoris Missio*," 34–38.

Putting the Pieces Together: Action, Content, and Result

The quest for a definition of evangelization in Church documents has yielded many descriptions thus far. It would be helpful for the sake of clarity to distill these into the following categories: 1) actions or activities that describe evangelization, 2) the content of evangelization, and 3) its desired results. Grouping the manifold descriptions into these three areas may yield patterns and commonalities that may help in extracting a workable definition of evangelization.

Source	Action	Content	Result
LG 35	announcing Christ by living testimony as well as by spoken word	Christ	
AA 2		the spirit of the Gospel	the penetration and perfection of the temporal order
AA 20		the spirit of the Gospel	the formation of Christian conscience
AA 31	engaging in conversation with others; manifesting Christ's message to all persons	the message of Christ	
AG 6	preaching the Gospel; planting the Church	the Gospel	
AG 6	preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ	the Gospel of Jesus Christ	that men and women be reborn by the Word of God; that men and women might be joined to the Church through baptism
AG 41	sharing in the Church's saving mission		love of the missions; stimulation of vocations; sharing the gift of faith with others

Source	Action	Content	Result
GS 44	adapting the Gospel to the grasp of all; accommodating preaching	the Gospel	
PO 5	preaching the Gospel	the Gospel	unity with the sacramental life of the Church; partaking of the Eucharist
EN 14	preaching and teaching; being a channel of grace; reconciling sinners with God; perpetuating Christ's sacrifice in the Mass	Christ	
EN 18	bringing the Good News to all strata of humanity	the Good News	transformation of humanity from within and making it new
EN 18	proclaiming the message	the Gospel	conversion of the personal and collective consciences of peoples
EN 19	preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas	the Gospel	upsetting of humankind's criteria of judgment
EN 20	proclaiming the Gospel	the Gospel	regeneration of culture through an encounter with the Gospel
EN 21	silent proclamation	Christ; the Gospel	stirring of questions about the faith among peoples

Source	Action	Content	Result
EN 22	clear and unequivocal proclamation of the Lord Jesus	the Lord Jesus, whereby the name, teaching, life, promises, kingdom, and mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are proclaimed	
EN 23	proclamation	the Gospel	adherence to the kingdom; entrance into the Church; entrance into the ecclesial community
EN 24			the person evangelized goes on to evangelize others
GPRS	the Church proclaiming the Gospel	the Gospel	that faith may be aroused, unfold, and grow
CCC	proclaiming Christ by word and the testimony of life	the Gospel	
RM 92	bringing the Gospel by witness and by word	the Gospel	
RM 24	proclaiming Jesus	Jesus	conversion; acceptance of Jesus in faith and transformation in him by the Spirit

Source	Action	Content	Result
RM 22–23	proclamation; witness	the Gospel; Jesus Christ	profession of faith in Jesus as the Christ, transformed by the Gospel; experience of complete liberation from sin and evil; life of communion in God and with one another
NETCF (LIL)	proclaiming; bearing witness; creating the conditions that lead to a true encounter and relationship with Jesus Christ	the faith; Jesus Christ	transmission of the faith; rediscovery of the beauty of the Christian faith and the joy of a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus in the Church and in the community; conversion
EG	proclamation	the Gospel	

Table 3: Descriptions Categorized by Action, Content, and Result

Commonalities among the actions, contents, and results in Table 3 give a clearer picture of what evangelization is according to official Catholic documents. Evangelization in action is chiefly about proclamation by word and witness. Its content is principally about Jesus Christ and the Gospel, and its desired fruits are mainly conversion and transformation. All other descriptions of evangelization filter down to these fundamental elements.[55] Thus, by harnessing the action-content-results template, the following definition may be derived from official Catholic documents: Evangelization is, in its deepest essence, the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through word and witness to help bring about conversion and transformation.

[55]It is understandable, given the wide range of vocabulary available to the English language, that several words may be deemed appropriate for describing the action, content, and results of evangelization. In pursuing a comprehensible definition and a possible simple root to its complex facets, this investigation posits all the descriptions—in terms of action, content, and results—that may be distilled into the fundamental elements of evangelization.

CONTRIBUTORS

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