Landas

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

God invites us not just to learn the truth of his Word but to inculcate it as well, thereby entailing that we let his Word penetrate both our minds *and* our hearts. We do this through the power of our imagination—when reading the Gospel, for instance, our imagination enables us to enter the world of the text, to transport ourselves, as it were, to the time and place of Jesus, to encounter him and the other characters in the story, to be touched by the dramatic scene, and to be drawn to participate in it.

Francis D. Alvarez, S.J. ("Ignatian Contemplation in the Classroom: Fostering Imagination in Graduate Scripture Study") gives practical advice on how to use contemplative or imaginative prayer to enhance the study of Scripture, thereby making it not only informative but also transformative. Following the steps of Ignatian contemplation, he explains the value of "composition of place": the pray-er imagines what the bodily senses may see, hear, smell, touch, etc. in order to stir up the emotions and "affections." "The point of these bodily and emotional preludes," Alvarez points out, "is to facilitate an encounter with the God we desire to know" (p. 10). Such a personal encounter is the heart of contemplative prayer and is entirely a grace from God. The pray-er then reflects after the exercise on what he has experienced, and interprets it with the help of a spiritual guide.

Albert E. Alejo, S.J., Manuel V. Francisco, S.J., and Jojo M. Fung, S.J. ("War on Drugs: A Prophetic Mission of Resisting Evil") offer a critique of the highly controversial anti-

illegal drug campaign of the Philippine government, particularly the alleged "extra-judicial killing" (EJK) of drug pushers. The authors propose morality- and faith-based pathways through which truth and justice can be served. These are: 1) institutional outcry, 2) critique in the light of Church social doctrine, and 3) personal conversion to social revolution. The latter involves mediating the action of God's Spirit of Truth, manifesting justice and mercy, and inculcating resilience that comes from God's irresistible enticement. Thus, by condemning EJK and offering safe haven for the truth-tellers, the Church can be truly prophetic. It can bring about the radical conversion and integral liberation of society.

Norlan H. Julia, S.J. ("Aloysius Pieris's Asian Liberation Theology and Its Challenges to the Church's Mission in Asia") reexamines Aloysius Pieris's Asian liberation theology as well as its implications for the Church's identity and her mission to evangelize Asia. Pieris's theology seeks to remedy the dichotomies which he observes in the Church between liturgy, spirituality, and secular involvement, for the separation of these mutually inclusive dimensions of Christian life has resulted in a spiritual crisis, one that needs to be resolved by integrating them in liberative teaching and praxis. In Pieris's view, *Christian life*—which is the primary locus of sanctification and salvation—should be the source and summit of liturgical celebrations. Theology, then, is at the service of Christian life and so therefore must always be contextual. In the Asian milieu, this means it must come to grips with systemic poverty and multi-religiosity: "In Pieris's view, the only way the Church in Asia can be transformed into being an Asian Church is by undergoing a *double baptism*. It must be immersed, first, into the waters of Asian religiosity, and secondly, into the cross of Asian poverty" (p. 63). Julia concludes his essay by appraising the strengths and limitations of Pieris's theology and discussing his contribution to ecclesiology and missiology in the Asian context.

James H. Kroeger, M.M. ("2018 Synod of Bishops on the Youth: An Overview") studies the preparatory document

(*Instrumentum laboris*) of the 2018 Synod of Bishops on the Youth—its background, structure, and various themes presented in each section. His essay serves as a primer especially for the youth who are urged to contribute their ideas and sentiments to the Synod. In a letter he addressed to young people on the occasion of the presentation of the preparatory document, Pope Francis invites them to "go, to set out towards a future which is unknown but one which will surely lead to fulfillment, a future towards which He Himself accompanies you...." The Pope also assures them that "the Church also wishes to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith; even your doubts and your criticism. Make your voice heard, let it resonate in communities and let it be heard by your shepherds of souls." The preparatory document which the Pope is entrusting to young people will thus be their "compass" on this synodal journey.

Timoteo J. M. Ofrasio, S.J. ("Inculturation of the Liturgical Year in the Philippines") draws attention to the Second Vatican Council's directive that

> the liturgical year is to be revised so that the traditional customs and discipline of the sacred seasons shall be preserved or restored to suit the conditions of modern times. Their specific character is to be retained so that they duly nourish the piety of the faithful who celebrate the mysteries of Christian redemption and, above all, the paschal mystery.... (*Sacrosanctum concilium* 107)

Thus, while some may think that there is no official attempt at inculturation, Ofrasio's survey shows that "*de facto* inculturation of the liturgical year has been taking place even before the liturgical restoration of Vatican II, and continues to develop to this day" (p. 87–88). Yet, he says,

> much still has to be done, foremost among which is a serious evaluation and study of the observances ... [and] an effective catechesis of Filipino Catholics to purify them of superstitious elements and the inevitable encroachment of commercialism and materialism. (p. 100)

Reynaldo D. Raluto ("The Intersection of Historical Injustices and Ecological Destruction in Asia: Enriching Catholic Social Teaching on Indigenous Peoples") explains the close link between the historical injustices suffered by indigenous peoples (IPs) and the destruction of their habitat. Unfortunately, while their sad plight calls her to protect them and the ecosystem that supports them, the Church has not sufficiently addressed the problems of indigenous peoples in both her teaching and pastoral work. Raluto therefore says that it "is a moral imperative for Christians to bring the issues of disenfranchised IPs to the mainstream of public discussion" (p. 129). Hence, to enrich the scope and praxis of Catholic social teaching on IPs, Raluto recommends 1) defense of their human rights, 2) liberative evangelization of their cultures, 3) reparation for the historical injustices committed against them, 4) appropriation of their ecological worldview, and 5) recognition of the value of the ecofeminist perspective.

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J. ("Israel's Defilement and God's Withdrawal in Hosea 5:3–7") discusses an interesting example of how the eighth century prophet Hosea employs the ancient notion of religious impurity (*ṭāmēʾ*) to explain to his contemporaries why God has abandoned his earthly sanctuary, thereby rendering the people's cultic attempt at reconciliation with him meaningless and ineffective. We thus find in Hosea's oracle the notion that God can abandon his shrine because of the defilement of the people. This may have presaged the later priestly theology of *sancta contamination* that is the reason for the annual ritual cleansing of the Temple during Yom Kippur. However, in keeping with the prophetic tradition, Hosea emphasizes religious and moral offenses as the reason for Israel's defilement, the disastrous consequence of which affects both the land and its people.

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J.

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IGNATIAN CONTEMPLATION IN THE CLASSROOM

Fostering Imagination in Graduate Scripture Study

Francis D. Alvarez, S.J.

I still remember my first graduate course in Scripture. It was on the synoptic Gospels, and after an introductory session, we dove right in and discussed discipleship in Mark. We began by asking, "How does Mark present the disciples?" Our inquiry soon led us to wonder, "What does Jesus envision for his disciples—for us, today?" This question opened up Scripture for me. It was as if something like scales fell from my eyes; I felt I was reading Scripture for the very first time. Since then, I have taken many more Scripture courses. But as my knowledge about Scripture increased, my enthusiasm gradually decreased. I have read answers upon answers from commentaries and Bible dictionaries—pressed down, shaken together, and still overflowing—but my own questions have slowed down to a trickle. Like the members of the church in Ephesus addressed in the Book of Revelation, I had lost my former love. I felt what those belonging to the church in Laodicea were accused of: being lukewarm, neither hot nor cold.

It is a strange consolation—if it can be called that—to know that I am not alone in this predicament. In his many years of teaching in Christian seminaries, D. A. Carson, a Reformed Evangelical pastor and professor of the New Testament, has observed a common phenomenon among his students and paints this as a portrait of a young man he

names Ernest Christian: convinced by his prayer experiences and confirmed in his dream to pursue full-time Christian ministry by his congregation, Ernest heads off to study the Bible. He starts working towards a master's degree, eager to prepare to be a minister of the Word. But, after six months in the seminary memorizing Greek morphology and sifting through details like the itinerary of Paul's second missionary journey, Ernest is not that earnest anymore in his desire to learn about Scripture. He now knows how to write exegetical papers, but somehow, after doing his lexical study, his syntactical diagram, his survey of critical opinions, and his evaluation of conflicting evidence, the Bible does not feel as alive to him as it once did. The fault, he knows, is not in his professors who are all knowledgeable and godly believers. So what has parched what once was a wellspring for his faith?[1]

How do we recover passion in graduate Scripture study? When the Bible as taught in the classroom becomes nothing more than a valley of dry bones, what can breathe life into it again? The key I present in this article is imagination.

Paul Ricoeur, writing on the Bible and imagination, asks:

> Is not the imagination, by common consent, a faculty of free invention, therefore something not governed by rules, something wild and untamed? What is more, is it not condemned to wandering about the internal spaces of what we conventionally call the mental kingdom, and does it not therefore lack any referential import, being entirely disconnected from what is really real? As for the Bible, is it not a closed book, one whose meaning is fixed forever and therefore the enemy of any radically original creation of meaning? Does it not claim to give rise to an existential and ontological commitment, one hostile to any imaginative drifting from here to there?[2]

In answer to these questions, Ricoeur defines imagination first "as a rule-governed form of invention or, in other terms, as a norm-governed

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[1]Donald Arthur Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 23.

[2]Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*, ed. Mark I. Wallace (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 144.

productivity" and secondly "as the power of redescribing reality."[3] As for the Bible, Ricoeur asserts that reading is "a dynamic activity that is not confined to repeating significations fixed forever," and that reading a text such as Scripture involves "a creative operation unceasingly employed in decontextualizing its meaning and recontextualizing it in today's *Sitz-im-Leben*."[4]

In the next pages, I present Ignatian contemplation as a way of praying with our imagination that, far from just fantasizing, is a norm-governed productivity, an engagement with Scripture that redescribes reality, and a dynamic activity that enables the Bible to speak to us today. After a brief introduction to St. Ignatius and his *Spiritual Exercises*, I describe how Jesuit novices are prepared for and then guided through the experience of contemplation during the thirty-day retreat structured by Ignatius. I then propose a way to incorporate elements of this process into classroom teaching and conclude with some reflections on imagination based on insights from Ignatian contemplation.

This article is written for Scripture professors in Christian graduate institutions that are strongly rooted in their confessional character. In these schools, majority of the students are often being prepared for ministry. The focus, therefore, is not in forming exegetes but pastors who can help others read the Bible.

St. Ignatius, the *Spiritual Exercises*, and Contemplation

Ignatius (1491–1556) was a Basque noble from Loyola in Spain. His military and courtly career was cut short when, in 1521, his right leg was shattered by a cannonball during the battle of Pamplona. While recuperating in the family castle, Ignatius underwent a religious conversion. After his leg healed, he lived as a hermit in a cave in

[3]Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, 144.

[4]Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, 145.

Manresa for several months. During this time, he experienced mystical insights and felt that God was teaching him "just as a schoolmaster treats a child."[5] Ignatius thought of himself as a *peregrino*, a pilgrim, and what he learned in Manresa he used to journey with others through exercises meant to prepare people to rid themselves of their disordered attachments and devote themselves to God. This process was later published as a series of practical notes for other retreat-guides and was called the *Spiritual Exercises* (SpEx).

Ignatius is best known as the founder of the Society of Jesus or the Jesuits. Central to the formation of all Jesuits is the full experience of the *Spiritual Exercises* over thirty days. In the beginning, however, the *Exercises* were meant for a broader spectrum of Christians—lay, religious, and priests. Thus, while the ideal form of the *Exercises* is a month-long retreat, there are modifications to give them in a shortened version or in the midst of daily life.

One way of praying that is utilized in the *Exercises* is contemplation. Contrasted with more discursive styles of reflection that mainly involve thinking through things, contemplation is more imaginative and leads the pray-er to immerse himself or herself in a scene from the Bible. As a method, contemplation consists of entering faith memories recorded in Scripture in such a way as to experience oneself as present in Biblical episodes. God, Jesus, and other characters are met as real persons "face to face."

How can using the imagination in this way already be considered prayer and not just an exercise of fantasy? Essential to an imaginative contemplation of Scripture is the belief that the Bible is the Word of God. The events contemplated belong not only to the past but to the present of every believer. In contemplating Scripture, a believer in honest search of the Divine encounters God who continues to reach out to us, drawing us into union with God's self and sharing God's

[5]Ignatius of Loyola, *The Autobiography of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. Joseph O'Callaghan (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992), 37.

vision and desires for the world with us.[6] This will be made clearer when examples of contemplations are presented below.

How are Jesuit novices prepared for and guided through the *Spiritual Exercises*?

Remote Preparation

It should be expected that preparation for a thirty-day retreat would include workshops on the what, the why, and the how of prayer. But aside from these, there are also modules on the historical-critical aspects of the Bible and primers on revelation and Christology. While some might think that these can possibly be a distraction in prayer, Jerome Nadal, Ignatius's closest collaborator in the early days of the Society of Jesus, described Ignatius as making use of "books and the whole of theological reasoning, at least when he decided to put together those *Exercises*, so that all the books, theologians, all the sacred writings, could confirm what he had taken more from divine inspiration than from books."[7]

During Ignatius's time, there were two currents of thought, each with its own tendency to become one-sided: evangelical humanism (or what Ignatius called positive theology) and scholastic theology. With which movement did Ignatius side? He wrote,

> We should praise both positive theology and scholastic theology. For as it is more characteristic of the positive doctors, such as St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and St. Gregory, to move the heart to love and serve God in all things, so it is more characteristic of the scholastics like St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, the Master of the Sentences, etc., to define

[6]Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: Text and Commentary: A Handbook for Retreat Directors*, Iñigo Texts Series Vol. 4 (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 90.

[7]Jerome Nadal, as quoted by Helmut Gabel, "Ignatian Contemplation and Modern Biblical Studies," *The Way* 44:2 (April 2005): 45.

> or explain for our times what is necessary for salvation, and for the more effective refutation and exposure of every error and fallacy. (SpEx 363)

This is an excellent example of the *Tantum-Quantum* principle in the *Exercises:* to use all things in so far as they help us towards our end.

For Ignatius, intellectual reflection and rational thinking are not foreign to spiritual experience. In fact, official Catholic teaching also promotes the use of historical-critical methods in reading and praying with Scripture. *Dei Verbum* (DV), drawing a parallelism with the mystery of the Incarnation, provides the theological rationale for giving importance to the fruits of Biblical scholarship: "For the words of God, expressed in human language, have been made like human discourse, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when he took on himself the flesh of human weakness, became like human beings" (DV 13). Scripture is God's words through human words, and so we must study these human words with all our human faculties. Historical-critical methods[8] are indispensable tools in reading Scripture.

Filipino Biblical scholar and bishop Pablo David, in a course on the role of imagination in Biblical interpretation, couches imaginative reading in terms of interpolative reading: interpolation is "connecting the dots" and finding upward, downward, or sideward trends. But before you can connect the dots, the dots must first be found and

[8]Included under the umbrella of historical-critical methods are: textual criticism (gathering ancient witnesses in Hebrew, Greek, and other Near Eastern languages, comparing these manuscripts, and discerning the earliest form we can reconstruct); historical philology (establishing the meaning and use of a word in particular contexts); form criticism (attending to the distinctive literary form or genre of the text); source criticism (seeking what the Biblical author may have integrated into his composition); redaction criticism (finding out how and why a Biblical editor arranged his sources the way he did and the point he was making in doing so); rhetorical criticism (focusing on the use of language and structure to get the readers' attention or persuade them to do something); literary criticism (studying the characters, plots, narrative points of view, and other elements of the story); and all other methods which seek to determine the contexts and most probable original meaning of texts. While not all of these are tackled in the preparation for the *Spiritual Exercises*, Jesuit novices are at least made aware of the varied ways of dealing with Scripture.

taken seriously.[9] These "dots," in Ricoeur's terms, are the norms or rules that govern the imagination.

Historical-critical methods help us see more clearly some of the dots in the text, which can also serve to make our imagination more vivid. For example, archaeological studies of the Jerusalem temple can give us a better picture of Jesus turning over the tables of the money changers and driving out those selling animals for sacrifice. But historical-critical dots are not the only dots we need to connect—as Scripture scholar Luke Timothy Johnson urges, we cannot just be preoccupied with the world that produced the Bible. We must enter the world that the Bible produces.[10] And this world that Scripture invites us to enter includes ourselves.

Part of the remote preparation for the *Exercises* is devoted to psycho-spiritual sessions to help the novices process possible issues involving family and relationships, sexuality, and personal vocation. No one today can deny that a reader's context and preconceptions affect his or her interpretation. We cannot completely take away the subjective element in reading anything—nor should we try to, especially in reading Scripture. But we must always seek to be more humbly aware of where we are coming from and what our assumptions may be. Many times, too, it is precisely in the act of wrestling with a text that these assumptions come to light. A novice may ask, "If I have difficulty imagining God as a father, is it because of something in my family history? If so, what can I do then to retrieve or re-conceive this central image of God?" These psycho-spiritual realities are part of the dots which govern our imagination, dots which we need to connect.

Shortly before the thirty-day retreat begins for the Jesuit novices, films on the stories of the Bible are made available for their viewing.

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[9]Minerva Generalao, "Viewing Last Supper through Imagination," *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (April 2, 2015), http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/682948/viewing-last-supper-through-imagination (accessed April 20, 2015).

[10]Luke Timothy Johnson, "Imagining the World Scripture Imagines," *Modern Theology* 14:2 (April 1, 1998): 165.

These movies and their portrayals of well-known narratives play their part in triggering the imagination. Whether we agree with their depictions or not, they make us more aware of how Scripture invites imagination and needs the reader to flesh out its narratives. As the last verse of the fourth Gospel states, "There are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John 21:25). We know that Jesus taught, healed, and prayed. But what did he do in between? We are familiar with his parables, but *how* did he tell them? With a glint of humor in his eye? With sarcasm dripping heavily in his tone? What if the seven woes attributed to Jesus in Matthew 23 were not said with anger but with genuine sadness?

Immediate Preparation

During the thirty-day retreat, each Jesuit novice is assigned a spiritual director who, like Ignatius the pilgrim, journeys with him, lays out the prayer points and Scriptural texts he should consider, and helps him discern whether or not it is time to move on to the next set of points and texts or to stay longer with the present ones. Once the Bible texts are given, the novice is expected to familiarize himself with the passage. The texts themselves and their actual contents should be the first "dots" or "rules" that must be considered by the imagination.

The night before or even shortly before praying, the novice should have already read the passage more than once and allowed it "to sink in." More theoretical questions (e.g., "What is the point of this pericope in the broader setting of the chapter and the book?") are better addressed during this stage to avoid their possibly sidetracking or intruding during prayer time. Jesuit religious historian and spiritual director Philip Sheldrake, from his many years of directing retreats, advises that during the actual prayer period, the texts should only be on the side.[11] Scripture is not the focus of Ignatian contemplation; the Bible is only a door that will hopefully open to an encounter.

[11]Philip Sheldrake, "Imagination and Prayer," *The Way* 24:2 (April 1984), 96.

Ignatius suggests that retreatants, immediately before prayer, mark the beginning of the session with a mental act and bodily ritual: "A step or two before the place where I have to contemplate or meditate, I will stand for the space of an *Our Father* and, with my mind raised up, consider how God our Lord is looking at me … I will then make a genuflection or some other act of humility" (SpEx 75).

The Experience of Contemplation

All Ignatian contemplations begin with a preparatory prayer "to ask God our Lord for grace that all [one's] intentions, actions, and operations may be directed purely to the service and praise of his Divine Majesty" (SpEx 46).

Part of the preparation is a "composition of place." An example from the contemplation of the Nativity of Christ tells us what Ignatius would want the exercitant to do:

> Here this will be to see with the eyes of the imagination the road from Nazareth to Bethlehem, considering the length and the breadth of it, whether it is a flat road or goes through valleys or over hills; and similarly to observe the place or grotto of the nativity, to see how big or small it is, how high, and what is in it. (SpEx 112)

In other contemplations, aside from seeing the persons (SpEx 106), Ignatius encourages the retreatant to listen to what the characters in the episode are saying and how they talk (SpEx 107), and to be immersed in the scene by imagining the smells and tastes (SpEx 124) and what sensations may be brought to touch (SpEx 125). The purpose of imagining what the body may sense is to stir up the emotions. In Ignatian contemplation, the pray-er must use not only his or her understanding but must also wrestle with emotions, "inner feeling," and "affections" (SpEx 2–3). For example, in contemplating Jesus's prayer and agony after the Last Supper, after composing the place and seeing with the eyes of the imagination Jesus sweating blood (Luke 22:39–44), the exercitant is directed to ask for the grace of "grief with Christ in grief, to be broken with Christ broken, for tears and interior suffering on account of the great suffering that Christ endured for me" (SpEx 203).

Neuroscience has shown that by imagining bodily expressions of emotions (e.g., facial expressions, posture, and vocal intonations—and even sweating blood), we are able to comprehend the emotions of others. These emotions do not remain in the abstract but are also embodied or felt in the body of the one imagining. These embodied emotions then produce emotional states. In other words, by imagining the physical signs of the emotions of others, our bodies are able to feel what they are feeling, and we come closer to empathizing with others. Moreover, these emotions mediate cognitive responses involved in recognition or identification, evaluation, and memory.[12] The body has a way of "knowing," and emotions, too, are a way of "knowing" which affects what the mind comes to know.

Physical senses and feelings are effective ways to trigger the imaginative process, but they also serve a greater purpose. Knowing through our bodies and knowing through our emotions (two ways of knowing which cannot easily or clearly be separated and even distinguished) are not supposed to end only in sentimentalism or the acquisition of new thoughts and ideas. The point of these bodily and emotional preludes—and the point of Ignatian contemplation, as mentioned before—is to facilitate an encounter with the God we desire to know.

Sheldrake shares the contemplation experience of one retreatant (not a Jesuit novice):[13]

> She was contemplating the incident of Peter walking on the water (Matthew 14:22–33). At the start, she had no difficulty in imagining herself in a boat, as she had sailed when she was younger. She was familiar with the frustration and fear of fighting against a strong wind and current. This helped her to "get inside" the scene. (Here we see how bodily memories can help the imagination.) Jesus was there, and she,

[12]See Paula M. Niedenthal, Lawrence W. Barsalou, François Ric, & Silvia Krauth-Gruber, "Embodiment in the Acquisition and Use of Emotion Knowledge," in Lisa Feldman Barrett, Paula M. Niedenthal, & Piotr Winkielman, eds., *Emotion and Consciousness* (New York: Guilford Press, 2005), 21–44.

[13]Sheldrake, "Imagination and Prayer," 92.

> like Peter, had a strong desire to join him on the water. However, she also felt unable to get out of the boat. Though she tried, she could not imagine herself stepping out of the boat and so the prayer, according to her, "went wrong at that point." Why did she feel that the contemplation had broken down? Up until then, she could identify with the actual events in the Gospel, but when she could not get out of the boat, the story took an unexpected turn. She said to Jesus, "I cannot get out of this boat." She felt Jesus asking her why, and she had to admit that [she] was scared[:] "I can sail, but I can't swim very well." She then felt that Jesus was asking her whether she thought that he would make her do something beyond her capacity. Her answer: "Yes, you would … you often have." This experience led the person to spend the remainder of the prayer sitting and talking to Christ about the fact that she did not really trust him because she did not know him well enough.

It would help us to understand contemplation better by noting a few observations. First, the retreatant was not just a spectator in the story; she was fully involved. Though she identified with Peter, the experience was not just a retelling of Peter's story but an unfolding of her own, which included her present context and all her concerns—conscious and unconscious. While bodily sensations were strong in the beginning, they gradually faded. These can help one enter into contemplation, but they are not the point of the prayer, and are only one aspect of the imagination. She did not hear Jesus speaking to her. She "felt" Jesus asking her things and conversing with her. This is the purpose of imaginative contemplation: an encounter with the Lord that engages our deepest realities. But did the prayer go wrong because it did not follow the text of the Gospel? The experience was still set in the general parameters of the passage, but from the "dots" and "rules" of the text, there was a shift to more relevant "dots" and "rules"—the retreatant's most pressing needs, which she may also not have been aware of or at least not been able to articulate until that time. As Sheldrake writes, "Imaginative contemplation, when it works, takes on a life of its own—and [this] life is that of the person praying."[14]

But what if something happens in contemplation that is, from the Christian point of view, obviously wrong? Sheldrake recounts the

[14]Sheldrake, "Imagination and Prayer," 93.

experience of another retreatant who, in prayer, "felt" Jesus tell him, "I am not going to start loving you, until you learn how to love me."[15] While what happens in contemplation always has validity and truth, this must still be evaluated and interpreted. This will be tackled below after we discuss the final step of every contemplation.

The end of the contemplation is not just an appendage to the prayer but its culmination.[16] Underlining the importance of encounter, Ignatius directs the exercitant to make a colloquy with God. "A colloquy, properly so called, means speaking as one friend speaks with another, or a servant with a master" (SpEx 54).

Processing the Experience

"After finishing the exercise, I will either sit down or walk around for a quarter of an hour while I see how things have gone for me during the contemplation …" (SpEx 77). This is when the exercitant can do some journaling about the contemplation experience and interpret it. This "review of prayer" is a transitional space of processing which would have been inappropriate during the prayer itself.[17] During prayer, the exercitant should try to lose herself or himself in the experience and not yet be concerned about its meaning or interpretation, which is essential to the experience but which must be dealt with only subsequently.

Post-prayer interpretation is also a work of the imagination. Interpretation is a way of seeing things that seeks to grasp them and make meaning out of them. And making meanings is one step towards what Ricoeur speaks of as redescribing reality. For example, a tragic accident involving the loss of limbs and mobility can be interpreted as the end of someone's life. Later on, however, that same person can interpret his or her loss as the impetus for discovering new things about

[15]Sheldrake, "Imagination and Prayer," 94.

[16]Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 53.

[17]Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 68.

himself or herself and the beginning of a new life. The undeniable fact of the accident is given new meaning, and with this new meaning, reality is redescribed.

"I am not going to start loving you, until you learn how to love me." Christian tradition does not support this image of God, and what Christian tradition says is included in the "dots" and "norms" imagination or interpretation must take into account. Perhaps what the retreatant felt Jesus was telling him was a reflection of a hurtful experience festering in the retreatant's memories. There is still something true in his contemplation; it is true because it is what the retreatant feels. But it is a truth that must undergo interpretation, and hopefully, reality will be redescribed in a way that is more life-giving.

There are good and there are better interpretations. For these latter, we must be open to interpretations and input coming from others. The retreat director, in this case, must clarify Christian tradition and help the retreatant discern the meaning of his prayer experience.

At the end of each day of contemplation, Ignatius suggests the prayer that has come to be called the application of the senses. The exercitant is supposed to go through the contemplations of that day and just remember and relish the bodily sensations he or she experienced. It is an exercise of relishing and intensifying what was experienced, feeling the emotions connected with these bodily senses again (as discussed above), and dwelling on them.

Part of the processing of the entire thirty-day retreat are multiple sessions at the end of the *Exercises* for the novices to share their most important contemplations or those that they still have to figure out. These become opportunities for the Jesuits to hear other interpretations of similar experiences and to challenge or further deepen their own.

How can we integrate Ignatian contemplation in classroom teaching?

What may have been unexpected in the preparation for the *Exercises*—the turn to historical-critical methods—is, of course, very

much expected in and should be the bulk of the classroom experience of graduate Scripture study. What I propose to include in classroom teaching is the element of prayer and encounter.

Before each class, students should be assigned a passage (the shorter the better) that will be discussed during that session. They should then be expected to familiarize themselves with it and its context and perhaps read one commentary about it. At the start of each meeting, the teacher can begin with a simple ritual similar to what Ignatius suggests above to briefly consider God looking at the class. It can be as simple as the teacher saying, "Let us open our Bibles and prepare to listen to God," and then pausing for a few moments with heads bowed. This ritual already begins and emphasizes the encounter.

A student can then be asked to read the passage slowly. If, for example, the class is on the passion of Jesus, the passage can be John 18:15–18, the first time Peter denies Jesus. After a few moments of silence, the teacher can ask the students to focus on one part of the passage that is open to bodily sensations (it would be good if this part of the passage can be connected to an important point in the discussion for that day). In our sample passage, this can be the charcoal fire that Peter stood close to in order to warm himself. Let this detail be the entry point to the contemplation. The students can then be asked to place and imagine themselves in the scene, and to engage their bodily senses as they do so. After a few minutes, the teacher can end the short contemplation by asking the students, "What feelings have been aroused in you during this short prayer experience?" along with an important follow-up question, "What do you think God is communicating to you through these feelings and through what you just imagined?"

"What do you feel?" is a question rarely asked in graduate Scripture study, and this may be a reason for dryness in reading the Bible. Adam Zeman, a cognitive neurologist from the University of Exeter Medical School, used state-of-the-art functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) technology to map the way the brain responds to poetry and prose. He scanned and compared the brains of volunteers

while they read two types of material: literal prose such as an extract from a heating installation manual, and more poetic writings such as evocative passages from novels and sonnets. He found that more emotionally charged texts aroused areas on the right side of the brain which had previously been shown to give rise to the sensation of having "shivers down the spine." This response was also seen in volunteers listening to and being emotionally moved by music.[18]

If poetry and music are processed in what is usually the non-dominant right side of the brain, while materials like heating installation manuals are processed by the dominant and analytical left side,[19] does this mean that dryness in reading Biblical texts comes from analyzing them too much and depending on just the left side of our brains? How can we go beyond treating Scripture like a heating installation manual? An attention to emotions may help us involve the right side of the brain. We must remind ourselves again, though, that the point here is not just to be moved to feel but to dispose ourselves more to an encounter.

Regarding the feelings and personal concerns which may be brought to light by Ignatian contemplation, we cannot expect the teacher to do any psycho-spiritual processing during class, but it is valid to ask: Should not a Christian graduate institution preparing future pastors ensure that there are venues and opportunities such as spiritual direction, counseling, or genogram or enneagram workshops for the students to know themselves more deeply?

About the retreat director, Ignatius writes:

> Someone who gives to another a way and a plan for meditating and contemplating must provide a faithful account of the history to be meditated or contemplated, but in such a way as to run over salient

[18]Rick Nauert, "Poetry: Music to the Mind," *PsychCentral* (October 10, 2013), http://psychcentral.com/news/2013/10/10/poetry-music-to-the-mind/60555.html (accessed March 15, 2015).

[19]See Solomon Snyder, "Seeking God in the Brain—Efforts to Localize Higher Brain Function," *New England Journal of Medicine* 358:1 (January 2008): 6–7.

> points with only brief or summary explanations. For if the other begins contemplating with a true historical foundation, and then goes over this history and reflects on it personally, he or she may by themselves come upon things which throw further light on it or which more fully bring home its meaning. Whether this arises out of the person's own reasoning or from the enlightenment of divine grace, more gratification and spiritual fruit is to be found than if the giver of the exercises had explained and developed the meaning of the history at length. (SpEx 2)

The graduate Scripture professor should, of course, say more than the retreat director especially in providing an account of the text from a historical-critical perspective, but the caution for both remain. Saying too much and leaving nothing for the exercitant to discover for himself or herself impedes not only the contemplative process but the whole process of learning as well. The director's job is to point out a vein which the exercitant can mine for himself or herself.[20] The teacher's task is similar. More than just about student-centered learning and the teacher being a guide-on-the-side rather than a sage-on-a-stage, what should also be stressed here is the fact that even with volumes and volumes of scholarly research published, there is still much to be said about Scripture. There are good and not-so-good commentaries, but there has been no final word yet about the Bible. Nor will there ever be in this world. The teacher must not give the impression that in saying much, everything can be said. Open-endedness is an invitation to mystery and can be an incentive for the imagination.

Another reason for the open-ended quality of Scripture is because it continues to speak to our circumstances today. The teacher must always endeavor to show students how the Bible, though ancient in its history, still addresses the present world. Here we have a reminder that will also serve those giving and those undergoing the *Exercises*. There is a danger that Ignatian contemplation can end up only being about *my* feelings, *my* desires, and *my* relationship with God. These are actually part of the disordered attachments the *Exercises* seek to free us from. Ignatian spirituality is always looking outside of oneself to

[20]Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 4.

the world where God continues to labor. The needs of the world are also part of the "dots" and "norms" the imagination must consider.

During the class discussion, the teacher can show video clips from different films portraying the scene just contemplated. Philip Yancey has discovered this to be an effective way for students to be exposed to different depictions and to compare a director's vision with their own. Discerning a filmmaker's preconceptions about a certain scene can also help students be more aware of their own silent assumptions.[21] Sharing in small groups after viewing these clips or after strategic points in the discussion can open students to even more possible interpretations as well as reveal their own "prejudices" (in the Gadamerian understanding of that term).

To end the class, a short exercise of dwelling can be done. Similar to the prayer of the application of the senses described above, the students can be asked to focus on one bodily sensation or feeling from their contemplation or from an insight from any part of the session and just savor it. A colloquy with God can then serve as the culmination of the class.

While the point of the colloquy is encounter, it can have an added benefit: a 2009 study conducted by Gabriel Trionfi and Elaine Reese found that children with imaginary friends create richer narratives. The children, they observed, could also better relate their past and present experiences to the stories.[22] Imaginary conversation—imaginary not in the sense that our dialogue partners do not exist but in the sense that these involve the faculty of the imagination—can enhance our ability to contemplate.

Graduate Scripture classes depreciate too often into activities of mere "informational" rather than "formational" reading. Biblical

[21]Jessi Strong, "Philip Yancey: A Journey of Grace," *Bible Study Magazine* 7:2 (January–February 2015), 14.

[22]See Gabriel Trionfi & Elaine Reese, "A Good Story: Children with Imaginary Companions Create Richer Narratives," *Child Development* 80:4 (July–August 2009): 1301–1313.

scholar Robert Mulholland makes this distinction, and his description of these two ways of reading is summarized in the table below:[23]

Informational Reading	Formational Reading
covers as much material as possible as quickly as possible	focuses on smaller portions
linear, moving from the first element to the next	non-linear, concerned with depth; comfortable with multiple layers of meaning (even if they are paradoxical)
aims to master the text and gain control of interpretation	the text masters the reader who makes himself or herself vulnerable to the text; a disposition of receiving and responding
the text is an object; we must maintain our distance	the text is a subject; we relate with it
analytical, critical, judgmental	open, indwelling, loving
problem solving	diving into mystery

While there are aspects of "informational" reading which are helpful and important, Ignatian contemplation incorporated in graduate Scripture study balances these aspects with a more "formational" intention. Making space for dwelling in the text, though this certainly takes up time, ensures we do not just engage in "consumerist reading."[24] Knowing Scripture is not just about gaining new ideas and insights. To know Scripture is to have a deep appreciation of it. The goal should not

[23]Robert Mulholland, *Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1985), 30.

[24]See David I. Smith, "Reading Practices and Christian Pedagogy: Enacting Charity with Texts," in David I. Smith & James K. A. Smith, eds., *Teaching and Christian Practices: Reshaping Faith and Learning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011), 44. See also Paul Griffiths, *Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

just be familiarity but intimacy with the Word of God—and ultimately, intimacy with God and the people through whom we meet God.

To integrate Ignatian contemplation in the classroom is to raise graduate Scripture study to a communal practice. Social theorist Pierre Bourdieu invokes the notion of *habitus* in making sense of the power of communal practices. *Habitus* is a system of

> durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.[25]

Habitus is internalized as "second nature," functions as "accumulated capital," and is akin to a "practical sense," know-how, and an acquired and embodied rhythm.[26] In forming future pastors, inculcating this *habitus* is more important than dispensing facts and opinions which are easier to forget. This *habitus* may also be what these future pastors can best impart to the people they will serve in the future.

There is a trend in Scripture study that has sometimes led to an "over-historicization" of the Bible: finding the original text, the original context, and the original intention of the author. In this obsession with "originals," what is many times left out is a consideration of the original way of engaging Scripture. If we take the general lack of literacy and the great expense of producing texts into account, it is very easy to imagine communities gathered together around one manuscript being read out loud by one member. There are many clues in Scripture that tell us these texts were read in worship (open the Psalter and this becomes clear)—in prayer settings. Scripture was originally experienced in communal prayer. Perhaps it is time to retrieve this type of communal practice in the study of the Bible.

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[25]Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 53.

[26]Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 56, 66.

Integrating Ignatian contemplation in the classroom may be considered part of a student-centered pedagogy. From the point of view of Biblical scholarship, Ignatian contemplation may be considered part of reader-response criticism. But we cannot just end with this pole. Methods of studying Scripture are usually classified under approaches which focus on the writer or redactor, the text, and/or the reader. There is a fourth focus that must be considered: the Biblical reality which God invites us to enter. It is a reality that is communicated in the text, made vivid by historical-critical methods and communal practices, and addresses our own personal realities as well as the world's. It is a reality that is found in an encounter which takes place in the inventive and interpretative imagination.

On Imagination

Philosopher and theologian Garrett Green locates the imagination in the heart as it is understood in the Bible—the seat of intellectual and emotional functions.[27] To bolster this assertion, Green points to a verse that also addresses what we have been reflecting about: in Deuteronomy 30:14, the Word of God dwells in the human heart. Co-opting Paul Ricoeur's famous maxim "the symbol gives rise to thought," what thoughts arise when we replace "heart" with the word "imagination" in the verses below?

> Because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. (Rom. 10:9–10)

> I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness

[27]See Garrett Green, *Imagining God: Theology and the Religious Imagination* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1998), 108–113.

> of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. (Eph. 1:17–19)
>
> Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. (Prov. 4:23)

The use of "heart" for imagination has another advantage. The heart is a bodily organ. This can remind us that to foster the imagination in reading Scripture, we must involve not only our thoughts and feelings but also, as we have seen above, our body and what it senses.

In conceiving of the imagination as "rule-governed invention" (or "norm-governed productivity") and "the power of redescribing reality," Ricoeur highlights the creativity of the imagination. Ignatian contemplation though is not a *creatio ex nihilo*, a creation out of nothing. We start with texts—the text of Scripture and the text of our lives. There are "rules" that guide our engagement with the text: the fruits of historical-critical study, the interpretations of others, the traditions we take on, and so on. We cannot just imagine anything that we want and expect it to be made real. Imagination "encounters limits to its own free play when confronted with the irreducible otherness of the other."[28] Imagination is still answerable and responsible to the other. To foster the imagination in reading Scripture, we must see it as an encounter and a response: a response to the text, to the deep realities inside us, to the undeniable realities of the world outside us, and to the God who invites us to redescribe these realities with God.

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[28]Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Modernity: Toward a Hermeneutic Imagination* (New Jersey: Humanity Books, 1995), 101.

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WAR ON DRUGS

A Prophetic Mission of Resisting Evil

Albert E. Alejo, S.J.
Manuel V. Francisco, S.J.
Jojo M. Fung, S.J.

Dissenting Lamentation

"I do not agree with such killing. There are so many 'ninja' cops around in civilian clothes at the administrative office who kill cops for their involvement in shabu," a provincial administrator retorted in disgust. A taxi driver remarked in desperation, "It really is too much. People are being killed everyday. Just today I have seen 4–5 bodies lying on the streets. These are youngsters."[1] A middle class white collar professional lamented, "I voted for him but now I realized it was a mistake." Some theologians are asking, "Why is there no moral outcry in the Philippines over the extrajudicial killings (EJK)?" One former religious superior used a striking phrase regarding the EJK: "in this unhappy time."

Deplorable Local Scenario

These are laments coming from the grassroots over the killings in nationwide police buy-bust operations such as Oplan Tokhang,

[1]"Talagang sobra na ito. Araw-araw may taong pinapatay. Ngayong araw lang, may nakita akong 4–5 bangkay sa kalye. Mga bata pa sila" (from a conversation with a cab driver [Quezon City: September 28, 2016]).

Oplan Galugad, etc. Many of the victims are allegedly killed in a shootout between the police and drug suspects when the latter are caught in the act of engaging in illegal activities, but most people believe or suspect that they are victims of EJK perpetrated by the police. The victims also include individuals assassinated by motorcycle-riding gunmen. Those abducted and killed by unidentified assailants are usually discovered away from the crime scene. Illegal drugs are often recovered from the victims, and their bodies bear labels tagging them as a "drug pusher," "drug user," or "drug addict." Their faces and bodies bear not only gunshot and stab wounds but also marks of torture; their arms or legs, or both, are also usually bound, and their bodies wrapped in tape.[2]

Most of the victims are from low-income families, like Francisco who was brutally gunned down on August 23, 2016 by unidentified assailants riding on a motorcycle in Barangay Rosario, Pasig City. According to his sister Marites, age 40 and who surrendered to the police, Francisco earned only a despicable fraction of the drug money, just enough to buy rice for his wife and three children—including a 4-month old baby.[3] Marites wished that her brother were arrested and shamed—like those top officials in the police, in politics, and in the judiciary who were named in public by President Duterte—instead of being assassinated.

Gun violence is relentless. In a video report produced by the BBC, Jonathan Head discloses that women are part of the hit team because they can get close to their targets without arousing suspicion as a man would. The BBC program, aired on September 27, 2016, shows a woman whose conscience got the better of her and who wanted out.

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[2]There is more wisdom precisely in *not* calling it a "war." See Mags Z. Maglana, "Why we should not call it a drug war?" *Sunstar Philippines* (September 09, 2017), available at http://www.sunstar.com.ph/davao/opinion/2017/09/09/maglana-why-we-should-not-call-it-drug-war-563108.

[3]"Basta ang importante sa kanya, makabili siya ng bigas," Marites said.

But her husband warned her that she would be killed.[4] Maria (not her real name) confesses to carrying out contract killings allegedly as part of Mr. Duterte's brutal campaign against illegal drugs. She claims to have killed five people, shooting them all in the head and bringing her victims to six after the first job she did two years ago. Maria's husband is also a contract killer for the police; together, they earn up to PhP 20,000 per hit, which is shared between three or four others whose roles Head does not describe in the report.

As of March 2017, nationwide killing had reached about 7,000 according to Human Rights Watch.[5] The 2012 National Household Survey estimated that there are 1.3 million drug users nationwide while 8,629 out of 42,065 (20%) of *barangays* are drug infested according to the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency.[6] "The *Philippine Daily Inquirer's* 'Kill List' of victims of extrajudicial killings in the anti-drug campaign shows the overwhelming majority are from poor neighborhoods and of modest means, suggesting the war on drugs is actually a war against the poor."[7] Little is disclosed to the public regarding how the war on drugs tackles the drug cartels—such as the Filipino-Chinese drug syndicates who engage in bulk smuggling and manufacturing with their

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[4]"Philippines Drugs War: The Woman Who Kills Dealers for a Living," *BBC News* (August 26, 2016), http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37172002 (accessed Sept. 27, 2016), featuring the video "Inside Manila's Drug War: Female Assassin's Story." See also *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (Sept. 2, 2016).

[5]"Philippines: Police Deceit in 'Drug War' Killings," Human Rights Watch blog (March 2, 2017), https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/02/philippines-police-deceit-drug-war-killings (accessed April 3, 2017).

[6]Dennis Carcamo, "PDEA: 92% of Metro Manila Barangays Drug-affected," *The Philippine Star / Philstar Global* (February 19, 2015), https://www.philstar.com/nation/2015/02/19/1425462/pdea-92-metro-manila-barangays-drug-affected (accessed Sept. 26, 2016).

[7]Mark R. Thompson, "Duterte's bloody democracy," *Nikkei Asian Review*, http://asia.nikkei.com/Viewpoints/Viewpoints/Mark-R.-Thompson-Duterte-s-bloody-democracy (accessed Sept. 27, 2016).

clandestine laboratories and warehouses, the African drug syndicates that smuggle via couriers (usually women) in and out of the country, and the Mexican Sinaloa drug cartel that supplies raw materials or finished products to Filipino-Chinese distributors.[8]

Dissenting laments appear to be growing and forming rivulets that are converging into diverse oases. A movement against EJK will soon emerge from the people whose collective memory of the *People Power Revolution* is still vivid and fresh.

International Concern and Diplomatic Furor

The international community has expressed concern over the indiscriminate killing in the Philippines. President Duterte has allegedly called "on people to kill drug dealers" for "he values public safety over human rights."[9] This is clear from his State of the Nation Address: "Double your efforts. Triple them, if need be. We will not stop until the last drug lord, the last financier, and the last pusher have surrendered or [been] put behind bars—or below the ground, if they so wish."[10] Since President Duterte assumed office on July 30, 2016, his anti-drug campaign "has cost nearly 1,900 lives in the first seven

[8]Revised PowerPoint presentation of Fr. Manoling Francisco, S.J., originally delivered at Loyola School of Theology (Quezon City: Sept. 14, 2016).

[9]Cliff Venzon, "Duterte wants ASEAN war on drugs," *Nikkei Asian Review*, https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Duterte-wants-ASEAN-war-on-drugs (accessed Sept. 27, 2016). See also Minoru Satake, "Duterte's tirade dampens alliance with US on South China Sea," *Nikkei Asian Review*, http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Duterte-s-tirade-dampens-alliance-with-US-on-South-China-Sea (accessed Sept. 27, 2016) and Tomomi Kikuchi, "Duterte pitches 'Mindanao corridor' to bolster ASEAN development," *Nikkei Asian Review*, http://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Duterte-pitches-new-Midanao-corridor-to-bolster-ASEAN-development (accessed Sept. 27, 2016).

[10]Rodrigo Duterte, State of the Nation Address (July 25, 2016).

weeks alone of his presidency," lives of those on suspicion of "either using or trafficking drugs."[11]

Due to this bloody democracy, "the United Nations, international non-governmental organizations, the foreign media, and Western governments have criticized the extrajudicial killings as a violation of basic human rights." Duterte in turn "accused the United Nations of meddling with domestic affairs" and "has threatened to take the Philippines out of the U.N. if it continues to criticize the killings."[12]

Before the ASEAN Summit in Laos from September 6–8, 2016, former U.S. President Barack Obama "had earlier indicated that he would voice concern over human rights issues surrounding Duterte's campaign against people linked to illegal drugs that has resulted in over 2,400 deaths." Duterte cautioned the U.S.: "You must be respectful. Do not just throw questions and statements," and he feistily remarked that Obama "must understand the problem first before we talk about human rights." Duterte then insulted Obama by calling him a "son of a whore" in Tagalog. President Obama subsequently canceled his meeting with Duterte through the diplomatic channels, after which President Duterte swiftly expressed regrets that his comments inadvertently "came across as a personal attack on the US President." In defiance, Duterte averred at the ASEAN Summit: "We shall not be cowed, we will press on" and urged ASEAN to "act together in concert" on such threats to ensure that the region can continue with its economic achievements.[13]

There are multiple concerns in the Philippines. Foremost is the moral question, "Does the end identified as 'public safety' through the war on drugs justify the extrajudicial means?" Should it be condoned even though Duterte claimed that "the nature of a number of deaths

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[11]Duterte, State of the Nation Address. See also Kikuchi, "Duterte pitches 'Mindanao corridor' to bolster ASEAN development."

[12]See Kikuchi, "Duterte pitches 'Mindanao corridor' to bolster ASEAN development."

[13]Kikuchi, "Duterte pitches 'Mindanao corridor' to bolster ASEAN development."

[implies] internecine, or organizational killings within the drug trade"[14] and Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia stated that it is a legitimate means, amounting to self-defence, toward an end labelled as a war on drugs?

The second concern is that the use of the term "war" by the Duterte administration has justified the use of force with its ensuing collateral damage that sacrifices innocent non-combatants, their livestock, and their properties. The third question: is mere supply reduction of illegal drugs effective?[15] Supply reduction is all the more suspect given that the U.S. and drug-ridden countries in Latin America like Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Uruguay are also considering demand reduction as a more viable approach to drugs.[16] Last of all, should not the war be multi-pronged, more directed towards unemployment and underemployment, malnourishment, housing backlog, insufficient public schools and health centers, corruption, human trafficking, encroachment on the country's territorial waters, and local and global terrorism?

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[14]See *Manila Bulletin* (Aug. 19, 2016).

[15]"In 2017, for example, the US is proposing to spend more on demand reduction than supply reduction for the very first time since their drug war started.… Similarly, a number of governments in historically drug-ridden countries in Latin America—including Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Uruguay—are also rethinking their approach to drugs" (JC Punongbayan, "War on drugs? Other countries focus on demand, not supply," *Rappler* [Sept. 10, 2016], https://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/145699-war-on-drugs-other-countries-focus-demand-not-supply [accessed Sept. 27, 2016]).

[16]Supply reduction only increases the market price of drugs. Several empirical studies have shown that it will not make a significant dent in the quantity of drugs demanded by the market. Estimates vary, but a 2006 study co-written by Nobel Prize winner Gary Becker found that, on average, for every increase in the price of drugs (say, 10%), drug purchases tend to decrease only by half that magnitude (in this case, 5%). See Lila Ramos Shahani, "Illegal Drugs: Is Tougher Enforcement the Best Solution?" *Philstar* (May 30, 2016).

Jesuit Dissension

As Jesuit priests, our dissension is rooted in a call from an official communiqué of the Jesuit Provincial, Fr. Antonio F. Moreno, S.J., dated August 19, 2016, entitled "A Call for a Discerned Response to the 'War' on Drugs."[17] This call arises out of a painful awareness that "the drug problem in our country is deep and complex." This menace, the provincial averred, "has broken and ruined the lives of many people." The menace is systemic due to the "weak judicial system, the inadequate witness-protection program and corrupt bureaucratic practices [which] have undermined the rule of law." The provincial insightfully concluded that, as a result, "the key perpetrators of crime are often not brought to the bar of justice." The communiqué further deplored "the loss of lives without due process." The death count is mounting with each passing day. "The drive to eliminate drugs has wittingly or unwittingly created more widows and orphans whose lives, like the victims of drugs, are forced to endure deep trauma and pain." At the same time, the communiqué insightfully forewarned that "a dangerous culture of impunity and unaccountability is seeping into our social fabric whereby an irresponsible 'end justifies the means' mentality is disturbingly tolerated."[18]

This effort at theological reflection on the "war" on drugs is thus a joint response to the clarion call of the Jesuit Provincial of the Philippines.

> I therefore ask Jesuit communities, institutions and ministries to look closely at this matter and discuss it together with our mission partners so as to consider appropriate collective actions. *Some Jesuit institutions and ministries have already been studying and reflecting on the issue, and proposing lines of action in response to extra-judicial killings. I commend them for their initiative and concern.*… I ask our government leaders too to hear not only the

[17]Tony Moreno, "A Call for a Discerned Response to the 'War' on Drugs," Office of the Provincial, Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus (August 19, 2016).

[18]Moreno, "A Call for a Discerned Response to the 'War' on Drugs."

> cries of drug victims and their families, but to restore the rule of law and heed the longings of those who have lost loved ones.[19]

This clarion call enjoins us Jesuits to "theologize" on this thorny menace in the interstitial space of suffering and struggle for an abundance of life in our nation.

A Theological Reflection Regarding the "War" on Drugs

The theological pronouncements of the local churches in the Philippines are part of the moral outcry. This is articulated in the first section below. The subsequent section will be a theological critique of the "war on drugs" in the light of Catholic social doctrine. The last section will be a reflection in faith on the nexus between conversion and social revolution in light of the conversion of Paul and the resultant Pauline movement that subverted the Greco-Roman world.

Local Institutional Outcry

The Christian Churches, the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines, the United Methodist Church, and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) have registered their moral outcry.

Theologizing on this state-condoned drug-war, Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle was quick to point out that all forms of killings should be denounced: "Many are worried about extrajudicial killings, it's only right. But I hope we should be worried too about abortion, why are few speaking out on it, that's also killing. Unfair labor practice is also killing the dignity of the worker." He also referred to other forms of "killing" like wasting food and forcing poor people to pick it up from

[19]Moreno, "A Call for a Discerned Response to the 'War' on Drugs" (italics added). The Loyola School of Theology is one such institution that held a theological hour on September 14, 2016. Fr. Manoling Francisco, S.J., took the lead in offering a PowerPoint presentation that culminated in a time for personal reflection, sharing, and collective prayer.

the trash and feed it to their families. "That is also killing children who have nothing to eat," he remarked, and added that each and every life should be held sacred. "I know the killings are a big issue now. Guilty or not, life should be taken care of and respected. And if one is guilty, he should be given a chance to change."[20]

In the 113th plenary session of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines held on July 9, 2016, Archbishop Socrates B. Villegas, D.D., of Lingayan-Dagupan called on the CBCP

> to stand up against what is morally wrong and uphold the Church's teachings even if it means going to the "wilderness".… [T]he right is right and the wrong is wrong.… [W]e will not withdraw from the mission of the Lord. We will stand and defend every person's life and dignity.… We will shield the weak from harm, we will protect the confused from error.[21]

On August 25, 2016, he called for prayer to heal the "wounds and divisions" afflicting the country, and explained that "our first armor is prayer. So let us pray even more," making additional reference to a "prayer for [the] healing of the nation" which asks for unity, solution to crimes and corruption, and compassion for those who died "in the present purge." He interjected, saying that the "killings continue to rise. The divisions seem to widen even more. The indifference to the violations of the Commandments of God is spreading. We must not give up."[22]

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[20]Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle's interview on Radio Veritas Asia (August 28, 2016), quoted in Micaiah Bilger, "Catholic Archbishop: 'Why Are Only a Few Speaking against Abortion? It's Also a Form of Murder,'" *LifeNews.com* (August 31, 2016), http://www.lifenews.com/2016/08/31/catholic-archbishop-why-are-only-a-few-speaking-against-abortion-its-also-a-form-of-murder/ (accessed April 3, 2017).

[21]R. Lagarde, "CBCP head: 'We will resist the moral wrong,'" *CBCP News* (July 9, 2016), http://www.cbcpnews.com/cbcpnews/?p=80398 (accessed April 3, 2017).

[22]Socrates B. Villegas, "The Church in Wilderness," Message at the Opening of the 113th CBCP Plenary Assembly (Pope Pius XII Catholic

Earlier on, the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP) issued a much more comprehensive statement:

> We express our full support for the government's serious crusade against the problem of illegal drugs in our country. We admire the leadership that the President has taken in this campaign and the determination of the people under him in working to rid our society of such menace. Nevertheless, we are alarmed at the continued extrajudicial killings, which seem to go unchecked, without trial or investigation. We are alarmed at the silence of the government, groups, and majority of the people in the face of these killings. *Ubi boni tacent malum prosperat*. Evil prospers where good men are silent. Is this lack of public outcry a tacit approval of what is happening? Is it fear that prevents people from speaking out? Whatever the reason, this problem, if it remains unchecked, leads to a culture of impunity. We demand that the concerned government agencies continue apprehending those involved in drug trafficking but avoiding extrajudicial killings, and pursue and apprehend vigilantes who carry out such illegal actions.
>
> As men and women of consecrated life, we commit ourselves to the following:
>
> 1. For our communities, parishes, apostolates and educational institutions to study, reflect on and act on these unabated killings.
> 2. To care for the violated, the orphaned and the widowed through counseling, sharing and integration with Gospel values.
> 3. To stand with people of other faiths and other beliefs in the inviolability and sacredness of life. In the Year of Mercy, let our humanity and compassion reach those who are the least and the powerless.
> 4. To recognize that the drug problem is a complex and deeply emotional issue that needs to be addressed holistically, with great understanding and compassion for both victim and perpetrator for we are all dehumanized by this culture of death.
> 5. To recognize and support the need for reforms in the criminal justice system and the need for rehabilitation for drug dependents. We need to weed out the corrupt in our security

Center, Manila: July 9, 2016), http://www.cbcpnews.com/cbcpnews/?p=80371 (accessed March 30, 2016).

forces as well as in the prosecution service as well as the judiciary. The drug menace is an intricate web of corruption and patronage that feeds on the insatiable desire of people for profit.

6. To hold Masses and prayer vigils for peace and justice in the affected communities.

7. For the bells to toll at a designated hour in solidarity with the poor and in upholding the sacredness of life.

Noteworthy too is the statement of the Manila Episcopal Area of the United Methodist Church that supports the establishment and development of a just and humane society where peace, justice, and love reign. The statement further extrapolated:

> We fully reject all careless, callous or discriminatory enforcement of the law … we further support measures designed to remove the social conditions that lead to crime, and we encourage continued positive interaction between law enforcement and members of the community at large.
>
> We denounce retributive justice and uphold restorative justice that seeks to hold the offender accountable to the victim and to the disrupted community. Through God's transforming power, restorative justice seeks to repair the damage, right the wrong and bring healing to all involved, including the victim, the offender, the families and the community. The Church is transformed when it responds to the claim of discipleship by becoming an agent of healing and systemic change.[23]

The CBCP subsequently released a pastoral statement entitled "For I find no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies—Oracle of the Lord God (Ezekiel 18:32)" on January 30, 2017, signed by Villegas, President of the CBCP.[24] Although the Catholic Church has taken a

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[23]Marvyn N. Benaning, "Another Religious Group Supports Peace Talks," *Business Mirror* (August 23, 2016), https://businessmirror.com.ph/another-religious-group-supports-peace-talks/ (accessed March 27, 2017), quoting Bishop Rodolfo A. Juan of the Manila Episcopal Area of the United Methodist Church.

[24]See Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, "For I find no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies—oracle of the Lord God (Ezekiel 18:32)," *CBCP News* (January 30, 2017), http://www.cbcpnews.com/cbcpnews/?p=91162 (accessed March 27, 2017).

beating due to the President's relentless maligning of not a few of the bishops, the opening paragraph demonstrated the Church's resilient mission of resistance:

> We, your bishops, are deeply concerned due to many deaths and killings in the campaign against prohibited drugs. This traffic in illegal drugs needs to be stopped and overcome. But the solution does not lie in the killing of suspected drug users and pushers. We are concerned not only for those who have been killed. The situation of the families of those killed is also cause for concern. Their lives have only become worse. An additional cause of concern is the reign of terror in many places of the poor. Many are killed not because of drugs. Those who kill them are not brought to account. An even greater cause of concern is the indifference of many to this kind of wrong. It is considered as normal, and, even worse, something that (according to them) needs to be done.

The CBCP spoke of the need for change that is guided by truth and justice. The truths enunciated by the CBCP are unequivocal:

1. The life of every person comes from God. It is he who gives it, and it is he alone who can take it back. Not even the government has a right to kill life because it is only God's steward and not the owner of life.

2. The opportunity to change is never lost in every person. This is because God is merciful, as our Holy Father Pope Francis repeatedly teaches. We just finished celebrating the Jubilee Year of Mercy, and the World Apostolic Congress on Mercy. These events deepened our awareness that the Lord Jesus Christ offered his own life for sinners, to redeem them and give them a new future.

3. To destroy one's own life and the life of another is a grave sin and does evil to society. The use of drugs is a sign that a person no longer values his own life, and endangers the lives of others. We must all work together to solve the drug problem and work for the rehabilitation of drug addicts.

4. Every person has a right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. Society has ways and processes to catch, prove guilty and punish perpetrators of crimes. This process must be followed, especially by agents of the law.

5. Any action that harms another (seriously) is a grave sin. To push drugs is a grave sin as is killing (except in self-defense). We cannot correct a wrong by doing another wrong. A good purpose is not a justification for using evil means. It is good to remove the drug problem, but to kill in order to achieve this is also wrong.

6. The deep root of the drug problem and criminality is the poverty of the majority, the destruction of the family and corruption in society. The step we have to take is to overcome poverty, especially through the giving of permanent work and sufficient wages to workers. Let us strengthen and carry forward the unity and love of the family members. Let us not allow any law that destroys the unity of families. We must also give priority to reforming rogue policemen and corrupt judges. The excessively slow adjudication of court cases is one big reason for the spread of criminality. Often it is the poor who suffer from this system. We also call upon elected politicians to serve the common good of the people and not their own interests.

7. To consent and to keep silent in front of evil is to be an accomplice to it. If we neglect the drug addicts and pushers we have become part of the drug problem. If we consent [to] or allow the killing of suspected drug addicts, we shall also be responsible for their deaths.

It is most heartening to note that the CBCP unequivocally affirms its resilient mission of resistance:

> We in the Church will continue to speak against evil even as we acknowledge and repent of our own shortcomings. We will do this even if it will bring persecution upon us because we are all brothers and sisters responsible for each other. We will help drug addicts so that they may be healed and start a new life. We will stand in solidarity and care for those left behind by those who have been killed and for the victims of drug addicts. Let us renew our efforts to strengthen families.
>
> Those of us who are leaders in the Church should strive to push forward or continue programs that will uplift the poor, like livelihood, education and health programs. Above all we will live up to—we all will live up to—becoming a Church of the Poor.

> Let us not allow fear to reign and keep us silent. Let us put into practice not only our native inner strength but the strength that comes from our Christian faith. Our Lord Jesus promised us: "You will have affliction in this world, but take courage, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).[25]

Critique in the Light of Catholic Social Doctrine

In light of the surreptitious climate of fear, the statist violence meted out in the name of a "war on drugs" has to be denounced for what it is. Catholic social doctrine denounces such a militaristic mindset in no uncertain terms. "War is a scourge" and "a war of aggression is intrinsically immoral"[26] for reasons that this "war" has failed to satisfy all four criteria: "(a) the damage … must be lasting, grave, and certain; (b) all other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective; (c) there must be serious prospects of success; (d) the use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated."[27] A case in point is related to the second criterion, that demand reduction has not been considered or implemented thus far.

In this climate of fear and impunity, the security of the most vulnerable and the centrality of the human person need to be all the more re-emphasized. Every civilian or citizen has the right to political security, a right to be promoted by the political authority or the government of the day. In no. 384, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (CSDC) alerts us that the "human person is the foundation and purpose of political life" and that the "political community originates in the nature of persons, whose conscience 'reveals to them and enjoins them to obey'" the precept that EJK is detrimental to the

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[25]Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, "For I find no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies—oracle of the Lord God (Ezekiel 18:32)."

[26]*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), nos. 497 and 500. Hereafter referred to as *CSDC*.

[27]These are the traditional elements of the so-called doctrine of "just war" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2309).

common good of the political community.[28] Drug-related killings without due process of law is an inhumane state of lawlessness that has to be condemned because the Church "sees in men and women, in every person, the living image of God himself. This image finds, and must always find anew, an ever deeper and fuller unfolding of itself in the mystery of Christ, the Perfect Image of God, the One who reveals God to man and man to himself."[29]

> Those killed in the war on drugs are the poor who are not
>
> a shapeless multitude, an inert mass to be manipulated and exploited, but a group of persons, each of whom—"at [her/his] proper place and in [her/his] own way"—is able to form [her/his] own opinion on public matters and has the freedom to express [her/his] own political sentiments and to bring them to bear positively on the common good.

In addition, those "who belong to a political community, although *organically* united among themselves as a people, maintain an irrepressible *autonomy* at the level of personal existence and of the goals to be pursued." The goal to be pursued is fullness of life in God.[30]

By and large, the institutional moral outcry (see section above on "Local Institutional Outcry") is a verdict on the EJK as unjust. A political order is deemed to be just only when such state-condoned policy flows from just laws or policies that "correspond to the dignity of the human person and to what is required by right reason and therefore is derived from the eternal law."[31] Otherwise, "a law that is contrary to reason … is called an unjust law" and "it ceases to be law and becomes instead an act of violence." Aggressive pursuance of EJK that totally disregards the growing moral outcry has to be forewarned that public authority "must always be exercised within the

[28] *CSDC*, no. 384.

[29] *CSDC*, no. 105.

[30] *CSDC*, no. 385 (italics in original).

[31] *CSDC*, no. 398.

limits of morality."[32] As such, any failure on the part of the political authority to uphold the common good forfeits "its proper purpose and so delegitimizes itself."[33] In the face of further delegitimization of political authority, the Church's social doctrine posits that citizens reserve the prerogative "in replacing them when they do not fulfill their functions satisfactorily."[34]

The prayer for the nation will continue so that the elected are given the opportunity "to share fully in the destiny of the people and to seek solutions to social problems." The elected are challenged to "put power into practice as service"[35] that restores the "respect for the rule of law," promotes "a legally binding code of conduct in the South China Sea, emergency response and disaster management, protection for migrant workers, [security for all trafficked persons], peace and reconciliation efforts," and the combating of terrorism.[36]

Pathway from Personal Conversion to Social Revolution

In a political climate when the conversion of perpetrators and their truth-telling were systematically discounted, what does the episode of Paul's conversion and his missionary movement inform us about the nexus between personal conversion and the emerging social revolution? First, let us consider the personal conversion of Paul and then the social revolution generated by the Pauline missionary movement that subverted the Greco-Roman world.

Action of God's Spirit of Truth. Any conversion of the perpetrators of violence has to be attributed to God's grace. God's Spirit (John 14:26)

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[32]*CSDC*, no. 394.

[33]*CSDC*, no. 398.

[34]*CSDC*, no. 395.

[35]*CSDC*, no. 410.

[36]Venzon, "Duterte wants ASEAN war on drugs."

of Truth awakens a blunt conscience that is numbed by the relentless homi-/genocide of fellow humans portrayed as the enemies of the Temple-State.

Saul perpetrated violence by making threats (compare Acts 4:17, 29), arresting the believers of the Way (Acts 9:2; 22:4; 26:10) and condoning their executions (Acts 8:1; 26:10).[37] His mission in Damascus was mandated from the top, licensed with the authority of the chief priests[38] of the Temple State "to arrest all who call on [the Lord's] name" (Acts 9:14). As he was travelling and approaching Damascus (Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:12), God countervailed Saul's zeal to execute what he thought was a divine mandate to persecute the Church.

"Paul never refers to his own experience as a 'conversion' and in his letters, there is no clear mention of a trip to Damascus and no narrative detailing what took place, as there is in Acts."[39] But his encounter with Christ alluded to in Gal. 1:13–17 and Phil. 3:4–7 was so radical that Paul experienced "a change of commitment, values and identity that was sudden and unexpected."[40] In fact, "all he was, all that he had achieved, all that of which he was justly proud and in which he could rightly boast, he now counted as 'refuse'.… Whatever happened to Paul radically reversed the scale of his values and made his vision of all things utterly new."[41] Luke, in his second account (Acts 22:3–11), offers a contrastive portrayal of God's irresistible power vis-à-vis Paul's helplessness, an experience that the OT prophets attest to, with

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[37]See also Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts*: *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 368.

[38]Annas and Caiaphas, according to Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), 329.

[39]Marcel Uwineza, "The Conversion of St. Paul," *Thinking Faith* (January 25, 2011), http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20110125_1.htm (accessed March 20, 2017).

[40]Uwineza, "The Conversion of St. Paul."

[41]See Stanley B. Marrow, *Paul: His Letters and His Theology: An Introduction to Paul's Epistles* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 35–36.

Jeremiah's life as exemplifying "God's action upon him as enticement (Jer. 20:7)." Luke's third account (Acts 26:12–18) extrapolates the encounter as Paul's prophetic call for the Gentile mission, "to open the eyes that are blind … I will turn the darkness before them into light (Acts 26:18 & Is. 42:6–7, 16)."[42]

Like Saul, Edgar Matobato and Arthur Lascañas claimed that they were former members of the death squad in Davao who were mandated from the "top." But God who "*is present in the intimacy*" of their "*being … mind, conscience and heart*" encountered them with his Truth and Light, exposing the lies and darkness in their hearts. This inner light of God led to their conversion—an experience deemed ordinary yet profound and overwhelming.[43] In Lascañas's case, Archbishop Villegas remarked, "He asked for mercy, confessing his sins. He knew his soul was clean and he was ready to die or get killed. He didn't care. He was touched by mercy. He was not Superman but he received Super Love. He sobbed. He rose up ready to soar the skies."[44] Both Matobato and Lascañas experienced a radical reversal of their scale of values. The conversion overwhelmed them to the extent that Lascañas unequivocably avowed, "This is to follow what God wants. This is also because of my fear of God. This is also because of love for our country and because of my own conscience. Because of this, my loyalty to Mayor Rodrigo Roa Duterte will now end."[45] They decided to "tell it all" to close confidantes from the Church in closed-door sessions. The conversion

[42]Uwineza, "The Conversion of St. Paul."

[43]See John Paul II, *Dominum et Vivificantem* (May 18, 1986), par. 53. Cf. also Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions* III, 6, 11: CCL 27, 33.

[44]Paterno Esmaquel II, "Archbishop Villegas backs Matobato, Lascañas," *Rappler* (March 23, 2017), https://www.rappler.com/nation/165050-archbishop-villegas-edgar-matobato-arthur-lascanas-lent (accessed April 24, 2017), citing the meditation of Archbishop Villegas for the season of Lent 2017 entitled "Edgar and Art and God's Mercy."

[45]Bea Cupin, "SPOC3 Arthur Lascañas: 'Blind obedience' ends now," *Rappler* (February 21, 2017), http://www.rappler.com/nation/162057-arthur-lascanas-profile-davao-duterte (accessed April 24, 2017).

was so overwhelming that they were willing to go public at great risk to their lives and the safety of their respective families.[46] Truth-telling in public hearings is a prophetic mission intended to lift the darkness that shrouds this nation and to open the eyes that are blind to the hideous murder/genocide.

Mediated Action of God's Spirit of Truth. The conversion of Paul is occasioned by the mediated action of God's Spirit of Truth through the agency of Ananias (Acts 9:1–20; 26:9–21; Gal. 1:11–24; Matt. 10:16–22; Ps. 67). God made possible the mediation in a dual and simultaneous vision in which God called Ananias and Saul. God summoned Ananias (Acts 9:10–11) to go and attend to Saul while Saul had a vision of Ananias "coming in and laying hands on him to give him back his sight" (Acts 9:12). After the healing, Paul's prophetic mission involved an extended period of suffering as he responded to the call "to bring my name before the Gentiles, kings and the people of Israel" and "be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 9:16, 18). Saul destroyed the Church by "going from house to house; he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison" (Acts 8:3).

In the case of Oplan Tokhang, God's mediation is made possible through a double agency of the Church and the perpetrators-turned-truth-tellers. The truth-tellers seek out the Church because she mediates the agency of God's merciful embrace. In the safe haven, the naked and ugly truth is laid bare. In his Lenten message, Archbishop Villegas remarked,

> In the safe house, he did not only get safety. He met the Divine Mercy. He knew he was loved but he was not sure if his sins could still be forgiven. He was assured by the priest of God, "Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin." Edgar had found himself, his real self. Edgar rose [up] to repair his harm. He could not bring the dead back to life but he wanted to stop more murders. He told the truth.[47]

[46]Cupin, "SPOC3 Arthur Lascañas: 'Blind obedience' ends now."

[47]See Esmaquel II, "Archbishop Villegas backs Matobato, Lascañas."

Truth-telling has radically dented the "walls of lies-upon-lies" perpetuated by the "brick upon brick of dark-truths." These "dark-truths" have been unshackled and surfaced, thus exposing the "buried truths" of those minced and muted.

The resulting radical reorientation and inner transformation of the truth-tellers may be unverifiable in a judicial hearing. But the conversion experience is undeniable and the community of faith readily recognizes and admits it as "credible evidence." For this reason, Archbishop Villegas, in his Lenten message on Good Friday, publicly attested that "Edgar and Art are true stories of conversion. They want to pay for the murders they got paid for."[48] The confessions witnessed, transcribed, and attested to by the Church should be regarded as admissible evidences in the Senate hearings.

Manifesting Justice and Mercy. The Spirit of Truth is the Spirit of justice and mercy. Personal conversion calls for restorative justice which demands "some compensation to victims for what they have lost."[49] It involves decisions such as audacious truth-telling in public that carries "great symbolic and ritual import, because they not only address the past but also say something about the kind of future a society wants." In other words, truth-telling must effect structural justice that "entails the building of a just society as humanly as possible where the rule of law, independence of the judiciary, political structures of good governance, agencies for human rights and modes of economic development are legally in place and constitutionally guaranteed."[50]

Mercy enjoins that truth-telling brings about restorative and structural justice as means to end the senselessness of violence. Furthermore, justice calls for the trusting "abandonment of oneself to

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[48]Esmaquel II, "Archbishop Villegas backs Matobato, Lascañas."

[49]Robert Schreiter, "Entering the Healing Circle: The Practice of Reconciliation," in Stephen Bevans, Eleanor Doidge, & Robert Schreiter, eds., *The Healing Circle: Essays in Cross-Cultural Mission* (Chicago: CCGM, 2000), 183.

[50]Schreiter, "Entering the Healing Circle: The Practice of Reconciliation," 183.

God's will" rather than blind servitude to the crassitude of the gun.[51] In this abandonment, the repentant sinners find themselves welcomed and forgiven in the bosom of a merciful God who abounds in love for all sinners. This mercy is well expressed by the prophet Hosea, "I desire love and not sacrifice" (6:6), and the evangelist Matthew, "'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mt. 9:13). In other words, justice demands that "anyone who makes a mistake must pay the price." This should be an expression of "the beginning of conversion, not its end, because one begins to feel the tenderness and mercy of God … [who] does not deny justice" but "rather envelopes it and surpasses it with an even greater event in which we experience love as the foundation of true justice."[52]

Mercy dictates the bold denunciation of wrongdoing the way Pope Francis did with corruption, calling it "a grave sin, an evil, a sinful hardening of the heart that replaces God with the illusion that money is a form of power"; it is certainly "a work of darkness, fed by suspicion and intrigue." Furthermore, corruption "threatens the very foundations of personal and social life," and "its tyrannical greed shatters the plans of the weak and tramples upon the poorest of the poor." The Church thus needs to exercise a prophetic mission of resistance which requires "prudence, vigilance, loyalty, [and] transparency, together with the courage to denounce" any corrupt practices that gravely affect the poor since they are most "deprived of their property, their dignity, their feelings, and even their very lives."[53]

A social revolution of resilience: irresistible and uncontainable. The agency that facilitates the baring of "dark-truths," albeit invisible, is a felt agency of God's irresistible enticement, attested to by the prophets and Paul himself. In the lives of Matobato and Lascañas, this divine

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[51]Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus* (April 11, 2015), no. 20. Available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.html.

[52]*Misericordiae Vultus* 21.

[53]*Misericordiae Vultus* 19.

irresistible enticement is uncontainable and inadvertently spills over into truth-telling that becomes a rivulet which erodes and dents an invincible wall of secrecy.

This irresistible power occasioned Paul to generate a social revolution through a resilient and emergent movement that succeeded that of Jesus. The early movement, Doran averred, was imbued with "a sense of marginality, of alienation" for the Christians were "a *vocal* minority."[54] The Pauline movement accorded equal standing and the possibility of patronage to both women and men—free, freed, or slaves, a praxis that subverted the patriarchal Greco-Roman authorities and the Roman religion.[55] Furthermore, egalitarian associations "stood in conflict with the Greco-Roman society just as the Jesus movement did with respect to that of Palestine."[56]

Will truth-telling, engendered by personal conversion, generate a social revolution? If the conversion of Paul is any indicator, conversion must accomplish God's greater purpose for it to be a prophetic light, truth, and voice to the nations. As Gamaliel notes, "if their purpose or endeavor is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God" (Acts 5:39, 40). If history is any lesson to go by for the future of this nation, this much is guaranteed. In the bygone era of the Marcos dictatorship, truth-telling—assisted by the mediatory agency of civil society, the Church, other faiths, NGOs, POs, and CBOs—has led to the EDSA Revolution and the burgeoning of grassroots democracy or the peoples' movements. Truth empowers people and brings about the collapse of the dictatorship and the downfall of corrupt Presidents.

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[54]Robert Doran, *Birth of a Worldview: Early Christianity in Its Jewish and Pagan Context* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 10.

[55]See Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *A Feminist Theological Construction of Christian Origins: In Memory of Her* (New York, NY: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1994), 182–187.

[56]Fiorenza, *A Feminist Theological Construction of Christian Origins: In Memory of Her*, 181–183.

Prophetic Mission

The war on drugs and EJK will continue unabated unless the Church, led by the CBCP, builds her network with other faiths and organizations in civil society to exercise a concerted and nationwide prophetic mission. This prophetic mission is the very medium that conveys the power of God's Spirit of Truth.

The power of God's Spirit of Truth enjoins the Church to provide "a safe social space where the perpetrator can uncover past deeds and explore how they are to be understood."[57] Schreiter averred that

> those safe spaces are also essential for the victim [in] looking at the past. The fear of recounting past trauma is, for victims, a fear that the trauma will reoccur. Having a safe space to explore that trauma is essential for the healing of the victim. The perpetrator needs a safe space as well.[58]

At the same time, the Church needs to mediate God's mercy to the repentant sinner by celebrating forgiveness. This calls for a ritual that involves acknowledgement of guilt, sorrow for sin, and a commitment not to do wrong again. There must be resolve to "'undo' in some measure the wrongdoing of the past, to show public repentance, and [to] begin to convince the offended community of the right intentions of the erstwhile wrongdoer in order to repair the bonds of sundered trust."[59] Physical separation of the offender in safe houses for a given period of time, away from the community, may be necessary to refine and deepen his conversion experience.

Finally, the Church and all religious leaders need to acknowledge the divine power at work in personal conversion that serves as the religious basis of truth-telling. They need to use their religious authority and

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[57]Robert Schreiter, "The Challenge of Healing Perpetrators," paper delivered at "Theology, Conflict, and Peacebuilding: An Intercontinental Conversation" (Adamson University, Manila: December 13, 2014).

[58]Schreiter, "The Challenge of Healing Perpetrators."

[59]Schreiter, "The Challenge of Healing Perpetrators," 13.

institutions to support the truth-tellers. Ecclesial, religious, and civil society leaders have been the seedbed of the EDSA revolution. Such revolution is only possible if civil society and citizenry rise up against unjust and unethical governance that thrives in systematic denial of the dignity and security of those most vulnerable to statist violence.

Conclusion

The moral outcry of the Church, civil society, and the international community is an indictment of the tyranny of EJK in this "war" on drugs. At the same time, it issues a clarion call for the government to consider the "demand reduction" strategy for dealing with illegal drugs as a more viable option than the current militaristic "supply reduction" strategy that is violence prone and proven to be ineffective in the U.S. and Latin America. The denunciation of EJK is also complemented by a nationwide prayer-petition for a more wholistic approach to the drug menace while upholding the rule of law, national sovereignty, security and dignity for the marginalized, and a clean and green government and country.

In addition, the Church perceives this EJK menace as a sign of the time which beckons the Church to be truly prophetic by offering a safe haven for the truth-tellers. The ecclesial and Jesuit effort at theologizing on the war on drugs takes account of the citizenry's moral outcry in the light of the pastoral teachings of the Church and Catholic social doctrines. This theological reflection further provides the pathway from pastoral actions to prophetic mission, and from radical conversion to integral liberation. At the same time, this Jesuit response is part of the collaborative mission of the Church to be placed, like Ananias, in the liberating pathways of the many truth-tellers like Matobato and Lascañas.[60]

[60]See Christine O. Avendaño & Nikko Dizon, "On 58th birthday, De Lima willing to bargain with Duterte over EJKs," *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (August 27, 2017), http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/925979/leila-de-lima-58th-birthday-ejks-war-on-drugs-rodrigo-duterte (accessed September 10, 2017).

May God's Spirit of Truth, at work in truth-telling, engender in us a resilient spirit of hope, justice, peace, mercy, and solace. At the same time, may God's Spirit of Life increase the democratic space where there is dignity, security, and sustainable livelihood for the poor and the earth community.

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ALOYSIUS PIERIS'S ASIAN LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND ITS CHALLENGES TO THE CHURCH'S MISSION IN ASIA

Norlan H. Julia, S.J.

This research study aims to revisit the Asian liberation theology of Aloysius Pieris and the challenges it poses to the Church's identity and mission in Asia. Pieris offers an appropriate paradigm towards the strengthening of the Asian Church's vision of itself and its understanding of its mission in present day Asia. Pieris's key ideas which comprise his brand of Asian liberation theology seek to remedy the dichotomies and dualisms in Christian life and doctrine which he observes in Asia. He tries to reconceptualize traditional doctrines from an Asian liberative perspective and presents them as a challenge to the Asian Church to meet the demands of discipleship in Asia. The research also looks at the strengths and limitations of Pieris's theology and assesses his contribution to Asian theology and to the rethinking of the Church's understanding of itself and its mission in the Asian context.

Pieris, the Jesuit Theologian and Apostle to the Poor

Pieris entered the Society of Jesus in 1953 and went through the usual stages of Jesuit formation. He did his theological studies in Naples (1962–1966) at the time when the Second Vatican Council was in session. Then, from 1968–1971, Pieris pursued a doctoral degree in

Buddhism at the University of Sri Lanka, where his dissertation was on the Buddhist ethical psychology of consciousness (*viññāṇa*). While doing academic research, Pieris also undertook Buddhist meditation exercises under the guidance of a Buddhist monk. This marked the beginning of his immersion into the Buddhist heart. He experienced being led into the Unknown, beyond the conceptual boundaries about God, Christ, and the Church. It was thus that he discovered the core of Asian spirituality: inner freedom from greed and absolute freedom through total detachment.[1]

Convinced that his specific mission as a Jesuit was to engage in Buddhist-Christian dialogue, he founded the Tulana Research Center for Encounter and Dialogue in Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, in 1974. This center is appropriately named Tulana from the Sanskrit root "tul" which means balancing, weighing. In Ignatian terms, this would be known as discernment.

Since the time of its inception, Tulana has served, as envisioned by Pieris himself, as a center of informal, organized, and intimate encounters. It is informal because anyone is welcome to drop in the center, regardless of religious affiliation. Organized encounters refer to popular or academic seminars and workshops, and intimate encounters refer to spiritual direction and meditation sessions held in the center for both Buddhists and Christians. As a research center, Tulana has been a venue for the study of classical Indology, contextual (Asian) Buddhist studies, and theological reflection. Here, Pieris facilitates workshops for Buddhist and Christian university students and rural teachers wherein they reflect on their personal and social issues with the aid of cross-Scripture reading. These workshops and exercises aim at attaining interior liberation and social emancipation. [2]

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[1]See D. Georg Evers, "A Self-Portrait of Aloysius Pieris, SJ," in Robert Crusz et al., eds., *Encounters with the Word: Essays to Honor Aloysius Pieris on his 70th Birthday* (Colombo: Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue, 2004), 643–670.

[2]Even Tulana's physical set-up reflects the identity and vision of the center. Visitors to Tulana will be greeted by impressive art works crafted by Buddhist artists who participate in the encounters held in the center, with some of the

Paul Knitter, who wrote the foreword to Pieris's *Fire and Water: Basic Issues in Asian Buddhism and Christianity*, once visited Tulana Center and confessed to having been amazed and excited by what he saw Pieris and the Tulana Center were doing. He observed Pieris constantly and seamlessly moving between the worlds of scholarly discipline on the one hand and of responding to the concrete needs of the poor on the other.[3] As an Asian liberation theologian, Pieris's credibility lies not only, or not so much, in his academic expertise in both Buddhism and Christianity and in his capacity to facilitate dialogue between these two religions, but also in the unassuming simplicity of his person and his passionate concern for the liberation of young students unjustly condemned to poverty by circumstances not of their own making. For Pieris, love for Jesus and love for the poor are inseparable. That is why he regrets the disjunction between the Christian faith as professed and ritualized and its anemic and sometimes oppressive practice by the Catholic Church, especially in Asia. It is to his critique of these dichotomies that we now turn.

Dichotomies in Christian Life and Spirituality

Pieris credits the Second Vatican Council for bringing together three elements of Christian life which have been compartmentalized for centuries, namely, liturgy, spirituality, and secular commitment. However, like a case of "new wine in old wineskins" (Mt. 9:16–17), the new perspectives introduced by the Council continued to be expressed in old formulas. Hence, Pieris speaks of the triple dichotomy of a) liturgy vs. spirituality; b) spirituality vs. secular involvement; and

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artworks based on Christian themes. See Evers, "A Self-Portrait of Aloysius Pieris, SJ," 652, 658–660.

[3]See Paul Knitter's foreword in Aloysius Pieris, *Fire and Water: Basic Issues in Asian Buddhism and Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996), xv–xvi. See also the eulogy written by Carlo Fonseka for Aloysius Pieris (May 30, 2014) at http://www.island.lk/index.php?page_cat=article-details&page=article-details&code_title=104199 (accessed April 12, 2017).

c) secular involvement vs. liturgy.[4] In each of these bipolarities, Pieris points to where the problem lies.

In the first set, liturgy vs. spirituality, Pieris laments the wasted opportunity for a real liturgical renewal triggered by Vatican II. When the Council declared liturgy as "source and summit" (*fons et culmen*) of Christian life,[5] the Council tried to effect an integration between spirituality and liturgy. But in Pieris's view, what happened in the aftermath of the Council was a mere change of *rite*, not change of *life*. The liturgical reform was limited to the external aspects of the liturgy such as the physical set-up of churches, translating texts, simplifying vestments, and composing new prayers. These, in his view, do not sufficiently reflect the spirit of the Council.[6] Hence, the integration of liturgy and spirituality failed to materialize. In the second set of polarities, spirituality vs. secular involvement, higher value was given to contemplation as a spiritual activity, a direct encounter with God in prayer. Action took on a secondary and subordinate value compared to contemplation. As regards the third dichotomy between secular involvement and liturgy, Pieris argues that in making the liturgy the "source and summit of Christian life," "the Roman church has devalued the most crucial dimension of spirituality—*liturgy of life*, which is the matrix of all sacramental expressions, for it is the context of a living encounter with God in Christ."[7] The liturgy of life has been subordinated to and made to participate in the symbolic presence of Christ in the institutional Church and liturgy.[8]

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[4]Aloysius Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd, 1988), 3.

[5]Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (1963), 7.

[6]Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, 4–5.

[7]Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, 5.

[8]Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, 11–12. Pieris understands this emphasis on Church liturgy as the overextended influence of pre-Vatican monastic-hierarchical perspectives that persisted even after the Council.

In Pieris's assessment, the separation of these "mutually inclusive dimensions of one authentic Christian life" results in a spiritual crisis which can be resolved only by introducing a healthy synthesis of these elements via the liberative perspective. Hence, for each dichotomy, he proposes a shift of focus. First, he suggests that the *liturgy of life* be made the "source and summit" of Christian life. Consequently, the liturgy of the official Church would originate from and culminate in the *liturgy of life*, which is the primary guarantee of salvation/sanctification.

Secondly, Pieris responds to the contemplation-action dichotomy in which contemplation triggers, sustains, and validates action. Pieris holds that, in fact,

> contemplation and action receive their authenticity not from each other, but from the cross that stands wherever altars are built to mammon on the graves of God's poor. True spirituality is founded on self-transcendence—self-abnegation that grows into self-fulfillment (Mt. 16:25) in and through the *Other*; not only the Other who hides in one's own self waiting to be sought through prayer, but also this same Other who hides in others as the victim-judge of human injustice (Mt. 25:35–36) waiting to be served through action.[9]

The third and crucial focal point to which Pieris directs his readers is Jesus, the man. For Pieris, this is the basis of the foregoing shifts. The recognition of the ultimate value of human life as a worthy sacrifice to God is based on the discovery that "Jesus did not give his life in a liturgical solemnity … he remained faithful to God and to men and gave his life for his own in a secular combination of circumstances."[10] Liberation theology's centering on the cross is also founded on this emphasis on the humanity of Jesus, whose identity, vision, passion, and death were shaped by the concrete circumstances of his historical

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[9]Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, 10. Pieris asserts that "without self-abnegation, both prayer and action are delusions, a self-centered introversion parading as interiority and restless extroversion parading as political commitment" (9).

[10]Edward Schillebeeckx, *God, the Future of Man* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968), 98–103.

context.[11] Pieris believes that "a theology that is non-liberational could produce 'devotions', but a liberation theology stimulates commitments to Jesus who is God-become-our neighbor."[12] Pieris holds that only a particular type of Christology can truly respond to the needs of the poor and yet intensely religious peoples of Asia.

Foreign Christ, Problematic Christology

Pieris begins his Christological exploration with the question: "Does Christ have a place in Asia?" The answers, he says, depend on which Christ one is talking about. If one is referring to the "Euro-ecclesiastical Christ of the official Church" or the "non-Western Christ of Intellectuals," then one realizes that these Christs have no place in Asia. One simply has to look at history as the most compelling evidence.[13] After two millennia, only a negligible minority of Asians are Christianized and the majority are adherents of various other faiths. The "Euro-ecclesiastical Christ," he points out, came to Asia via the colonizers' sword as it did in Latin America and non-Islamized parts of Africa and Oceania. With the exception of the Philippines and other small portions of the population in other Asian countries, this "Euro-ecclesiastical Christ" failed to strike deep roots in Asia. Pieris

[11]Jose Ignacio Faus, a Spanish liberation theologian, holds that the appeal to a Christ without Jesus, a face-less Christ, is

> to deny the basic affirmation of the early confessions of faith: "the Christ is Jesus," "the Lord is Jesus"; the face of Jesus is what gives content to the categories of power and messiahship, not the other way around.… If Jesus is forgotten, the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:30) is deprived of a face and tacitly replaced by the wisdom of earthly power.

See Jose Ignacio Gonzalez Faus, "A Crisis of Credibility in Christianity," *Concilium* 2005/3, 40–41.

[12]Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, 13.

[13]Pieris, *Fire and Water*, 65.

attributes this failure to the "helicopter theory of religious expansion" adopted by this colonial Christ.[14]

The "non-Western Christ of Intellectuals," on the other hand, is a product of "inreligionization," the process by which "a metacosmic religion (Christianity) develops a new Asian identity within the idiom and ethos of another metacosmic religion (Buddhism)." Pieris uses the "Buddhist Christ" of the Nestorian community in China (635–845 CE) and the "Gnostic Christ" of Hindu renaissance as examples of this type of Christ. Whether through inreligionization or inculturation,[15] what these strategies do is simply to clothe the Western Christ in the dress of the native religions. Moreover, these Christs are merely conceived by Hindu and Christian scholars most of whom come from the high caste or elite of society. Hence, they, too, are foreign to the majority of Asians who are poor.[16]

Furthermore, Pieris sees an obstacle not only in finding a place for Christ in Asia or in determining which type of Christ is suitable for Asia, but also in reaching consensus within the Catholic Church regarding Asian Christology. Here he is referring to the Western patriarchy's insistence on the Chalcedonian formulation as absolutely essential to our faith on the grounds that said formula allegedly

[14]Pieris, *Fire and Water,* 66–67. In this "helicopter theory of religious expansion," the metacosmic religion like Christianity (which presupposes a transcendental being/horizon who is the source of mankind's salvation) lands on the cosmic religions (which revere nature and its forces, sometimes personified as gods or goddesses who govern the world) and either gradually or abruptly discards the cosmic beliefs and replaces them with the new beliefs and practices. This was how it worked in the Philippines but not in other Asian countries in which some other helicopters (religions or faiths) have landed, for there can be only one dominant faith, and the others will be the minority religions.

[15]For Pieris's critique of the concept and practice of inculturation, see Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, 38–40. He holds that inculturation happens naturally; it cannot be induced artificially because it is the result of immersion in the people's lives rather than the conscious target of a program of action.

[16]Pieris, *Fire and Water*, 67–69.

defines the "uniqueness of Christ."[17] For Pieris, Chalcedon was *trying* to stay *within its own particular paradigm:* that there was no confusion or separation of humanity and divinity in Jesus's one person. Pieris contends that the Chalcedonian formula is misleading because "Chalcedon's idiom is so particular and culturally restricted that it is not only incomprehensible but also positively counter-productive in Asia because its most faithful translation into many an Asian language ends up saying the exact opposite of what the council Fathers intended to say."[18] Pieris therefore seeks to find another way of moving theological reflection forward, especially in the context of Asia, through the tools of liberation theology.

Love: God's Name, God's Covenant, God's Kingdom

To formulate a Christology that is appropriate to the Asian context permeated by religiosity and poverty, Pieris thinks that using *sutras* rather than dogmas is the best way to express who Jesus is to Asians. *Sutra* is a form of Indic literature, a handy device used to summarize writings with terse clarity through a linguistic medium, at once mnemonic and euphonic. Its purpose is to help ordinary people remember important truths with ease and reflect over them in depth.[19] Pieris summarizes

[17]Aloysius Pieris, "The Christhood of Jesus and the Discipleship of Mary," *Logos* 39/3 (2000): 14–15.

[18]Pieris refers the reader to his article, "Christologies in Asia: A Reply to Felipe Gomez," *Voices from the Third World* 11/2 (1989): 155–172.

[19]Pieris, "The Christhood of Jesus," 8–9. Pieris explains that while Christian dogmas are "disciplinarily prescriptive, irreformably definitive and meant to represent doctrinal purity, *sutras* are pedagogically descriptive and inspiringly evocative." *Sutras* are not revealed forms; they are human constructs too, like dogmas. But, unlike dogmas which are used as universally normative formulations and instruments of control despite their cultural limitation, *sutras* are more "evocative than declarative; not an instrument of control, but an invitation to faith, hope and love."

the substance of the Christian message and understanding of God and Christ in three *sutras*:[20]

1. Love is God's own Self as well as God's own Word to us.
2. God's Word is a Word of Promise: "Love God and your neighbor and I shall give you eternal life."
3. God's Word to us which invites us to express our hope through salvific action manifesting our love is Jesus, both eliciting and embodying our love of God and neighbor.

Departing from Western philosophy's speculative techniques on God's identity, Pieris looks to the Scriptures to state and articulate the first *sutra:* God is Love (1 John 4:8). Love is God's Self. Love is the way God communicates to His people. Love is the way He is known and experienced by Asians. They do not know him as the Prime Mover or the Uncaused Cause or the *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* of Western philosophers. Furthermore, this Word is better rendered by the Hebrew *dā ḇār* rather than the Greek *logos*, since the former denotes the creative dynamism of the divine breath of life (Gen. 1:3; John. 1:3) while the latter is a spiritless rational principle. This *dā ḇār* model, according to Pieris, impels commitment to the same creative and life-giving action. Hence, this is the model used by liberation theologians.[21]

The second *sutra* develops the first by saying that this Word of God addressed to humans is a Word of Promise, a Covenant entered into by God and to which She binds herself with her covenant partner.[22] Pieris points out that in the Scriptures, love (*ḥeseḏ*) is often associated with fidelity (*ʾĕmeṯ*) whenever it is used to refer to God (Exod. 34:6;

[20]See Pieris, "The Christhood of Jesus," 9–12 for Pieris's detailed explanation of these *sutras*.

[21]Pieris, "The Christhood of Jesus," 11.

[22]Pieris freely shifts from using masculine to feminine pronouns in referring to God. This shows his sensitivity to the concerns of feminists regarding the dominant androcentric imaging of God. That we shall also do here to faithfully present not only the content but also the style of Pieris.

Ps. 103:8). Hence, God's love is concretely expressed in Her fidelity to the covenant. Moreover, God's covenant partners in the Scriptures are the poor and the oppressed, as the Hebrew slaves in Egypt were.[23] God promised to liberate them from their bondage and to bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey (Exod. 3:7–12). God manifests His love in concrete acts. And having expressed his love for them, he invited them to do the same to their neighbor (Exod. 20:1–17). These, therefore, are the key elements in Pieris's theology of God: Love-Covenant-Poor-Action.

The third *sutra* captures Pieris's Christology in one simple statement. He takes the assertions of the first two *sutras* and links them to Jesus. According to Pieris, to say that Jesus is the "Word" (dāḇār) of God is to say that Jesus is God's covenant with us, specifically with the poor who are oppressed and victimized by injustice as well as the poor who embraced poverty in response to Jesus's call to follow Him (Mark 10:21). The event of the "Word becoming flesh" means God's becoming one with humanity, entering into solidarity with us. "Jesus Christ is the Triune God entering into solidarity with our flesh to redeem it into a body fully transfigured by the spirit."[24] In Jesus, therefore, the poor encounter a God who is recognizably like them in all their suffering and brokenness. And it is on the Cross where Jesus's broken body hangs in stark poverty and helplessness that He is exalted as the Son of God (Mark 15:39). Jesus's exaltation on the Cross as the Suffering Son of God is the key to his uniqueness as the Christ.

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[23]Pieris develops this theme in his book, *God's Reign for God's Poor: A Return to the Jesus Formula*, 2nd rev. ed. (Sri Lanka: Logos Publishing, 1998).

[24]Pieris, "The Christhood of Jesus," 64. Pieris lays out the different understanding of the Trinity from the Asian perspective that results in this type of Christology. While in Greek philosophy the body is the individuating factor and the spirit is the uniting factor, in the Hebrew notion of the human person the spirit is the individuating factor and the body is the uniting nature. Citing A. T. Robinson, "the body is the symbol not of individuality, but of solidarity which binds each individual, divinely unique as she/he is, in inescapable relatedness with the whole of human nature and history and the cosmic order." See J. Robinson, *In the End, God* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 95–100.

For Pieris, "the cross reveals that the great end-time battle had already begun when the God-mammon conflict which coincides with the God-Poor covenant was enfleshed as Jesus, the man of Contradiction and Confrontation."[25] The Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus is one that subverts the values of mammon: priority is given to the marginalized (women and children) and outcasts (sinners and tax-collectors), a healing hand is extended to the untouchables (lepers and paralytics), detachment from sources of security (families and riches) is required, and losing one's life is the only way to gain it. Hence, Jesus's proclamation kindles hope in the hearts of the poor who receive it with joy. These poor are those who are poor either by circumstance and/or by option.[26] However, Jesus's words and deeds are bad news for the mammon-worshippers who could lose the perks and privileges, as well as the authority and advantages, which they obtained at the expense of the poor.

Hence, the Kingdom of God is one where God, indeed, not mammon, is the ruler. It is a Kingdom where the poor, God's covenant partner, shape the rules and direct the life of those who come under it. God's ultimate plan for the poor whom he liberated from the bondage of mammon is that "these slaves form an alternative society marked by a just stewardship *sans* absolute ownership [of the means of production] and based on a new kind of economics, a non-pyramidal society, ruled by the Jubilee provisions (Lev. 25)."[27] Hence, Pieris holds that the liberation from poverty of the poor by force of circumstance and

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[25]By the term "mammon," Pieris refers to "God's rival in our life (which) is not only my little ego, but anything, even a good thing, which claims my absolute allegiance: language, race, class, gender, sex, market, land and so on. Such deities are manifestations of mammon who challenges the God of freedom." See Pieris, *God's Reign for God's Poor*, 39, 47.

[26]Pieris, *God's Reign for God's Poor*, 18–19. Pieris also responds (p. 21) to the charge leveled at liberation theologians of "romanticizing the poor." He clarifies that the poor are not holy because they are poor. In fact, they, too, are sinners. But they are God's chosen covenant partner because they are poor.

[27]Pieris, *God's Reign for God's Poor*, 51.

from greedy acquisitiveness of the poor by option is aimed at social transformation. In the Kingdom of God, love for God is expressed in concrete acts of love for neighbor. It is this foundational principle that Jesus elicits and embodies.

Proclaiming Jesus in Religious and Poor Asia

Based on the foregoing alternative Christology, Pieris thinks that the proper exhortation to the Church in Asia is not "Asia, open your doors to Christ,"[28] but "Church, open your heart and your possessions to the poor, for what you do to them, you do to me; I am they." This means, however, that the Church will also have to re-conceive itself according to a "third world"[29] ecclesiology. In this way, the Church will become an *Asian* Church and cease to be a local version or branch in Asia of a Eurocentric colonial Church.

The first distinguishing mark of this *Asian* Church is the central place and the teaching authority accorded to the poor. This is what Pieris calls the *magisterium of the poor*, which, in this Church of Asia, is that which must guide the *ministerium* of the theologians and bishops.[30] The poor, the vicars of Christ, are the authoritative teachers who have much to teach the hierarchs and scholars because they, as God's

[28]John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, 4.4. See also in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 92/6 (June 5, 2000), 449–528.

[29]Pieris notes that "third world" carries that more nuanced (French) connotation of "a new or an alternative world" rather than simply the numeral 3 denoting the number itself or the position in a sequence. See Pieris, *Fire and Water*, 80–84.

[30]Pieris, "The Christhood of Jesus," 33. Pieris notes that in the early Church, the theologians and community leaders were poor but that a divergence happened later on. Hence, "these two *ministeria* cannot be treated as magisterial until they regain their authority and earn back their credibility through their solidarity with the 2 categories of poor whom God has chosen as co-partners in his liberation praxis and educators of the nations in Yahweh's ways."

Covenant partners, are the addressees and proclaimers of this Good News. The Scriptures are read authentically from their perspective.[31]

Hence, in Pieris's view, the only way the Church in Asia can be transformed into being an Asian Church is by undergoing a *double baptism*. It must be immersed, first, into the waters of Asian religiosity, and secondly, into the cross of Asian poverty. Imitating Jesus's humility in submitting to John's baptism (Mt. 1:13–15) and his solidarity with the poor of Israel, the Church must also be humble enough to identify with the poor of Asia.[32] To immerse itself in the waters of Asian religiosity, the Church in Asia must be baptized, rather than baptize the pre-Christian religions as was the goal of (Western) missionaries and missiologists. It means being

> baptized in the twofold liberative tradition of monks and peasants in Asia. Like its own Master, let it sit at the feet of the Asian gurus not as *ecclesia docens*, but *ecclesia discens*, lost among the "religious poor" of Asia, among the *anawim* who go to their gurus in search of the Kingdom of holiness, justice and peace.[33]

Religiosity and poverty: these are two realities that define Asia. These are the realities the Church must deal with. The strong affinity that Asians feel with nature, their belief in a Being who is interested and involved in daily life constitutes their religiosity. Pieris refers to this religiosity as an ecological-cosmic spirituality, something which earlier Christian missionaries dismissed as pagan animism. It would take Vatican II to recognize the positive aspects of this cosmic spirituality and to declare that these must be acknowledged, preserved, and promoted.[34]

The other baptism the Church must enter into is the Calvary of Asian poverty. The Church must embrace poverty as the source of

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[31]Pieris, "The Christhood of Jesus," 31–32.

[32]Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, 46–50.

[33]Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, 47.

[34]Paul VI, *Nostra Aetate* (1965), 2.

authority as was the case with John the Baptist and Jesus (Mt. 3:4; 4:1–11; 8:20). This shows that only those who are radically poor are qualified and have the authority to preach the Kingdom, and only the poor are disposed to receive it. Jesus's mission of proclaiming the Kingdom was a prophetic mission, "a mission of the poor, to the poor, by the poor, for the poor.… And it was this mission that was consummated on the Cross—a cross that the money-polluted religiosity of his day planted on Calvary … (Lk. 23:1–23). This is where the journey, begun at Jordan, ended."[35]

If the Church's task in Asia is to be baptized rather that to baptize, then a new understanding of the missionary mandate "to make disciples of nations" is needed. In Pieris's mind, the majority of poor Asians who are non-Christians "are not rivals in a conversion race, but partners in a common mission … (they are) co-agents of liberation, guides in the path of righteousness, discoverers and announcers of the Saving Truth."[36] And it is in the basic human communities (BHCs) that Christians and non-Christians converge to embark on the common search for this Saving Truth and work together in the *praxis* for liberation. The BHCs appropriate the story of Jesus as an Asian drama of liberation; the Christians in the BHCs witness to their conviction that "Jesus of Nazareth whom they follow is the living Christ whom they serve

[35]Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, 49.

[36]Pieris, "The Christhood of Jesus," 32. From the perspective of the BHCs, the apostolic authority of the official Church depends on its continuity with Jesus of Nazareth; but this continuity is broken if the Church is not one continuous body with the Asian Christ. Hence, BHCs "provide the channel through which it can re-establish this link and regain its lost authority, thus also loosening the chains of euro-ecclesiastical feudalism" (Pieris, *Fire and Water*, 77). "To evangelize, to baptize, to make disciples of nations does not consist in converting a nation to the Christian religion, but to engage in the battle to demolish national idols who thrive on human slavery. Evangelization is a common struggle of the adherents of all religions and of no religion" (Pieris, *God's Reign for God's Poor*, 39).

here in Asia."[37] Here, "scriptures and social praxis combine in eliciting a liberative Word…, they 'actualize' God's Word in their historical context and also in the liberation struggle of various oppressed groups such as the *dalits*, *minjung* and women."[38] The BHCs, as envisioned by Pieris, embody the Asian Church, a community of Asia's religious poor who look not to the West for validation and authentication, but find in and among themselves, in their poverty and religiosity, the stamp of being God's liberative community.

Pieris's Contribution to Asian Theology and Missiology

In response to Rahner's advice that attention be paid not to the conciliar texts of Vatican II but to its spirit, Pieris undertakes what he understands to be the task left by the Council to the Church: the task to develop a "new language" that will express the new perspectives introduced by the Council. By this, both Rahner and Pieris have in mind new theological models, new ecclesiastical structures, new

[37]Pieris, *Fire and Water*, 77. Pieris adds that

> Jesus needs their [the non-Christians'] collaboration to arrive with them at the fullness of Christhood. Jesus cannot be Christ without them … for although Jesus is totally Christ, he is not the totality of Christ, for the whole of Christ is not Jesus. Jesus is as yet in the process of reaching total Christhood, not without gathering his covenant partners. Jesus is not to be merely conceived as a person in the sense of an "individual substance of a rational nature" combining divinity and humanity in himself, but to be encountered as a "corporate person" who is one flesh and blood with all these little ones; the One that is ever engaged in the process of saving, gathering, integrating everyone and everything into the plenitude of Christ.

[38]Pieris, *Fire and Water*, 91. In Chapter 8 of *Fire and Water* (pp. 78–96), Pieris lays out his critique of the social teachings of the Catholic Church, the aim of which, he says, is to see an autonomous (local, Asian) approach to the social question, not a deductive process of applying a supposedly universal papal social teaching to local needs (83).

ministerial forms, new pastoral approaches and lifestyles.[39] Pieris asserts that "the reception of Vatican II will not be complete without the emergence of this new language with all its rich variation giving rise to healthy pluralism."[40] Hence, his work consists precisely in creating this new language with brave audacity and provocative inventiveness.

Pieris's theological project is an instance of Asians taking up the challenge of Vatican II and advancing further the transition from a Eurocentric Church to a world-Church, an Asian Church. This Church no longer thinks in Western categories and prays in Western styles. It now allows for the use of Asian language and idioms, of which there is a rich variety, in expressing the one faith in Jesus Christ. Hence, Pieris sets aside the Chalcedonian formulation (not its content) which he dismisses as incomprehensible and irrelevant to Asian sensibilities and realities. Instead, he articulates the core of the Christian message *via* a "Covenant Christology" which employs concrete, dynamic, and commitment-driving categories of covenant, love, the cross, and the poor. By urging a liberative reading of the Scriptures and steady focus on the person, lifestyle, and core teaching of the human Jesus, Pieris unrolls the heavy stone of dogmatic formulations which for centuries have prevented the life-giving and liberating Good News from inspiring and moving Asian Christians to respond to the love-command. Inspired and impelled by this newfound theological language, Asian Christians find the courage to reject mammon, to embrace evangelical poverty, and to work with peoples of other faiths towards the liberation of the poor, or, in other words, towards the realization of the Kingdom of God.

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[39]Karl Rahner, "The Abiding Significance of the Second Vatican Council," in *Theological Investigations* Vol. 20 (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 90–102. Cf. Declan Marmion, "Karl Rahner, Vatican II, and the Shape of the Church," *Theological Studies* 78:1 (2017): 25–48.

[40]Pieris, however, laments how the initiatives toward the development of this new language have been frustrated by the ecclesiastical officials who treat Vatican II as a council of *reform* rather than a council of *renewal*. See Pieris, *God's Reign for God's Poor*, 15. For the distinction between "reform" and "renewal," see Aloysius Pieris, "Vatican II: A 'Crisigenic' Council with an Unwritten Agenda," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 42/1–2 (2005): 7–25, in 13, 21–23.

Pieris's work reflects not only the new theological language encouraged by the Council but also the new theological method that it inaugurated. Asian theology starts, not with established dogmas and norms, but with the real situation of people. Pieris's theology witnesses to the "Church turning to the world." In fact, what he envisions is a Church "returning," "descending" to the world, immersing itself in the world of Asian religiosity and poverty, unafraid to lose itself among the religious and poor of Asia. This is what makes Pieris's theology both exciting and dangerous. It is exciting for those who are willing to embark on this promising journey of double discovery: that of unearthing the treasures hidden in the fertile soil of Asian religiosity and poverty, and that of unraveling the substance of the Christian message mummified by the yoke of Western dogmatism and ecclesiastical control. It is alarming for and will be labeled unorthodox by those whose concern is the doctrinal purity and hegemonic expansion of the Christian Church. But Pieris is convinced that his "execution of the Council's unwritten agenda … is not in the form of schismatic defiance, but an exercise of faith in the Spirit that summoned Vatican II and an act of fidelity to its crisigenic decisions."[41]

Pieris shares the vision and method articulated and utilized by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) ever since its inception in 1970, when, following Paul VI's visit to Manila in 1970, a group of bishops met and decided it would benefit them and their local Churches to build and maintain contacts with their neighboring local Churches and collaborate in realizing the challenges posed by Vatican II.[42] In their various statements and initiatives, one sees the

[41]Pieris also holds that "the commitment to maintain that momentum of renewal on the frontiers of the Church is exactly what fidelity to the Council as well as reception of the Council means for us today. The center, which tends to fall back on the reform model, must be constantly challenged to respect the renewalist agenda of the Council." See Pieris, "Vatican II," 22.

[42]In 1974, the FABC met in a first plenary assembly in Taiwan. For an account of the beginnings and of the FABC, see Catalino Arevalo, "The Time of the Heirs" and Felix Wilfred, "The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC): Orientations, Challenges and Impact," both in Gaudencio Rosales & Catalino Arevalo, eds., *For All the Peoples of Asia* [*FAPA*] Vol. 1: *Federation*

efforts of the bishops to move the Asian Church towards the vision of *Gaudium et Spes:* a Church in touch with and immersed in the joys and hopes, dreams and anxieties of its people, especially the poor. Felix Wilfred summarizes the orientation of the FABC in the word "*dialogue*." For him, dialogue

> frees the Church from becoming a self-centered community, and links it with the people in all areas and dimensions of their lives. According to the bishops, dialogue in Asia needs to be pursued in three inter-related spheres: Asian religions, Asian cultures, and the immense multitude of the poor.[43]

Even as the bishops were still discussing how and with whom to dialogue, Pieris was already engaged in liberative dialogue with the religious poor, particularly in his native Sri Lanka.

Critique of Pieris's Thought

Pieris describes the renewal movement in the Church as a source of tension between center (the Vatican, the official Church) and periphery (the local Churches, basic communities), especially if the center takes the periphery-initiated and periphery-executed renewal as institutional reform.[44] The novelty as well as the radicality of Pieris's theology lies not only in being able to reformulate in simple but meaningful and dynamic affirmations the core of the Christian message, but also in turning over their heads traditional Catholic concepts such as the liturgy, *magisterium*, and mission. This is understandable since Pieris's purpose is to restore to the poor their rightful place in the household of God and to have their voice heard in the ongoing conversations to develop a truly Asian theology. The imperative of dialogue with religions in Asia is the other determining factor in his theology.

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of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 1970–1991 (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1997), xv–xxii, xxiii–xxx.

[43]Wilfred, "Orientations," xxiv–xxv. Cf. FABC I, pars. 9–24, in *FAPA* 1, 14–16.

[44]Pieris, "Vatican II," 21.

Pieris admits that he is not interested in engaging the religious elite (hierarchy) for they are a propertied class and they do not understand the language of God's reign, and therefore are unqualified for interreligious dialogue on behalf of the poor.[45] I think, however, that such a generalized dismissal of the hierarchy is both unfair and unfruitful. It is unfair because, as a general statement, it fails to recognize many well-meaning Asian bishops and priests like the late Jaime Cardinal Sin (Philippines), Korea's Cardinal Kim, AT Thomas (Hazaribag), and Neri Satur (Philippines) who are sincerely striving to live and minister precisely according to the liberative challenge of the Gospel. It is unfruitful because it immediately closes the door to the possibility of an intra-ecclesial dialogue in which Pieris's alternative theology can be openly discussed and perhaps adopted. This is one area that needs to be developed or clarified in Pieris's thought: the precise role of the institutional Church, the hierarchy, if there is any. This, in turn, will clarify the ecclesiological framework[46] upon which his theology stands and determine whether or not a continuity exists between his ecclesiology and Vatican II's to whose spirit he professes fidelity. Nonetheless, Pieris's attitude towards the hierarchy should also invite the bishops to an honest self-criticism as regards the consistency between their preaching and their lifestyle, keeping in mind the burden of an image of foreignness and elitism that Christianity continues to carry in Asia.

To undertake a thorough evaluation of Pieris's thought will require another study, but if I may single out a principle against which a thorny debate may ensue, that would be the principle of communion with all.[47] Congar accords to the *magisterium* of the hierarchy the task

[45]Pieris, *God's Reign for God's Poor*, 76.

[46]Yves Congar holds that "reforms" must be established on a solidly constructed ecclesiology, for a good ecclesiology is one of the best guarantees for a reform of the Church. See Yves Congar, "Vraie et fausse reforme dans l'Eglise," *Unam Sanctam* 20 (Paris: Cerf, 1950), 10, 252.

[47]Congar, "Vraie et fausse reforme," 601. Congar names four principles: primacy of charity and pastoral sensitivity, remaining within the communion of all, patience/respect for delays, and return to the principle of Tradition. For a

of recognizing the legitimacy of reform initiatives coming from the periphery, for it is they who are the guardians of communion.[48] Pieris, on the other hand, assigns magisterial authority to the poor and ministerial tasks to the bishops and priests. Giving voice to the poor and urging the hierarchs to listen is certainly in accord with Gospel teaching and is an imperative in Asia. But how will communion be safeguarded? The inevitable conflict between center and periphery, and tension between traditional and creative doctrinal formulations and missionary methods must not rupture the communion of the Church, otherwise the resulting divisions and separation will negate the very message of communion with God and humanity that the Church seeks to proclaim and embody. This is a continuing puzzle that Pieris and Catholic theologians need to deal with. But still, the priority and preference that Pieris accords the poor as the primary subject in his theology and praxis challenges the Asian Church to live and act according to the spirit of the Beatitudes. It calls the Church to take the side of the poor and rally with them against the forces of Mammon.

Nicholas Lash also offers the criterion of "mutual recognition" as a way of maintaining a healthy tension between the universality of faith and the particularity of its expression. He asserts that if "each 'abbreviated statement' of faith … is to be a *Christian* creed … it must be offered as, and be capable of being accepted by others as, a different version of the same story, not a different story."[49] To my mind, Pieris's proposed "Covenant Christology" as an alternative to the Chalcedonian formulation is easily recognizable and acceptable as the substance of the Christian message, since it stands on the solid witness of the Scriptures and tradition and finds an echo in the hearts of believers. However, Pieris's decentralization of the Eucharist as a

summary of these principles, see Gabriel Flynn, *Yves Congar's Vision of the Church in a World of Unbelief* (England: Ashgate, 2004), 187–198.

[48]Congar, "Vraie et fausse reforme," 272, 275–277.

[49]Nicholas Lash, "Theologies at the Service of a Common Tradition," *Concilium* 171 (1984), 80.

secondary element in Christian community life may be a more difficult proposal to accept. Nevertheless, the recent Vatican directives on the liberal use of the Tridentine liturgy[50] and the implementation of strict translations of the liturgical prayers[51] confirm Pieris's view that the liturgical renewal envisioned by Vatican II failed to materialize and is now being undone. The rites as we have it reflect Roman style and control; the lives of Christians do not reflect the spirit of the Eucharist. Again, this poses a challenge to the Asian Church whether it will allow itself to be time-warped back to pre-Vatican II mentalities and disciplines or continue its pilgrimage towards the Kingdom along the road which, though uncertain and tortuous, more closely resembles the road to Calvary.

Pieris's theology does raise many questions and provokes thinking among Church leaders and theologians. As Rahner has said, the proper mission of the theologian is not simply to repeat and analyze the *magisterium's* teachings, but to question the Church's confession of faith from his changing social context. The theologian must possess a "creative restlessness" within the Church by which he/she becomes the catalyst for its reconciliation.[52] He/she must be a "facilitator of mutual recognition, at the service of the Church's quest for catholicity … to discover, sustain, deepen common life, common conviction, common hope."[53]

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[50]Benedict XVI, *Summorum Pontificum* (July 7, 2007), http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20070707_summorum-pontificum.html (accessed April 12, 2017).

[51]Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Liturgiam Authenticam* (London: Catholic International Society, 2001).

[52]See Richard Lennan, *The Ecclesiology of Karl Rahner* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 195, citing Karl Rahner, *Grace in Freedom*, trans. Hilda Graef (London: Burns and Oates, 1969), 69.

[53]Lash, "Theologies at the Service of a Common Tradition," 82.

Asian Theology and the Church's Mission Beyond Pieris

Many of Pieris's writings on Vatican II basically lament how the singular opportunity for genuine reform in the Church was wasted. Vatican II would have been the chance to correct the abuses and scandals that befell the Church since the schism of 1054. Pieris, for example, notes how the Western Patriarchate in Rome lost contact with the other four Eastern Patriarchates (Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria).[54] Unlike most prophets, however, Pieris is still around to see, write about, and rejoice at the fulfillment of his dream to see the reforms of Vatican II being pushed forward, here by his fellow Jesuit-turned-Pope, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, now Pope Francis. One only has to read *Evangelii Gaudium* to see how Francis's vision for the Church squares with Pieris's dream for a Church that is more in touch with the poor in the peripheries rather than turned in towards itself. Francis's determined efforts to implement reforms in the Vatican and among the hierarchy would have also delighted Pieris who pleaded for a new way of looking at the role of the *magisterium* vis-à-vis the contextual realities of Asia. As Andres Torres Queiruga affirms,

> the new pontificate is endeavouring to reclaim the original intention of the Council, calling for a new synthesis with the problems of the world and accentuating evangelical values on behalf of the poor, the marginalized and the needy. Theology, without abandoning its practical course, now has the chance to renew study of the great truths of the faith, to make them meaningful and effective in the present situation.[55]

The last few years have seen a remarkable growth in Asian theological reflection and in the Asian Church's recognition of the necessity of pursuing the triple dialogue among the poor, the cultures,

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[54]Aloysius Pieris, *Providential Timeliness of Vatican II: A Long-overdue Halt to a Scandalous Millennium?* (Kelaniya: Tulana Jubilee Publications, 2013).

[55]Andres Torres Queiruga, "The Task of Theology After Postconciliar Restoration," in Maria Clara Bingemer, Luiz Carlos Susin, & Felix Wilfred, eds., *Journeys of Liberation: Joys and Hopes for the Future*, Concilium 2016/1 (London: SCM Press, 2016), 29–42.

and the religions of Asia. This has given rise to various streams of other Asian liberative theologies, namely, for example, *minjung*, *dalit*, indigenous, and feminist theologies, among others.[56] Of these, we might highlight two areas which have received greater attention these past years. These are migration theology and the concern for the integrity of creation.

In his survey of the Asian context, Peter Phan echoes the Asian bishops' observation that diversity and poverty are two of the main characteristics of the Asian context. However, he also points out that migration is a new reality which calls for serious concern from Asian contextual theology and the Church's missionary effort. Migration bears out two defining features which challenge Asian theologians and the Asian Church: the senses of instability and homelessness confronting migrants.[57] In view of this, Peter Phan proposes a theology of migration which builds on analytic, hermeneutic, and practical mediations. This theology of migration seeks to attain a deeper understanding of the Christian faith from the perspective of migration. He asserts that "migrantness" is a mark of the Church and of Christianity itself.[58] In addition to religiosity and poverty as defining features of Asia according to Pieris, we can add the reality of migration as another facet of Asia. Hence, the challenge confronting the Asian Church is how to proclaim Jesus to religious, poor, and migrant Asians.

Pope Francis's landmark encyclical *Laudato Si'* has brought to the attention of the world the urgency of listening to the cry of the earth. He considers the ecological disaster afflicting the planet a global emergency that needs the most urgent possible solution. For him, we human beings are responsible for this and we ourselves could

[56]Jonathan Tan, "Asian Liberative Theologies," in Miguel de la Torre, ed., *Introducing Liberative Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 47–67.

[57]Peter C. Phan, "Reception of and Trajectories for Vatican II in Asia," *Theological Studies* 74 (2013): 302–320, esp. 305–309.

[58]Peter C. Phan, "*Deus Migrator*—God the Migrant: Migration of Theology and Theology of Migration," *Theological Studies* 77:4 (2016): 845–868.

and should act together to halt the progressive destruction of the earth and restore it to its original beauty and grandeur. Francis calls not only for scientific interventions but, essentially, for care for our common home.[59]

In the crucial points which Francis raises in *Laudato Si'*, one hears an echo of Pieris's insights. For instance, one is reminded of Pieris's warning against the seductive and destructive power of mammon in Francis's critique of the distorted anthropocentrism by which the human being determines the value of creatures in reference to himself.[60] Furthermore, in the Pope's call for a rediscovery of the relationship of communion with each creature and all of creation and a rejection of the paradigm of domination, one could find a similar tone in Pieris's call for a double baptism into the waters of Asia's religiosity and poverty.

Putting together these insights, I propose that Asian liberation theology needs to engage these new realities of migration and ecological crisis. It has to articulate the meaning of the faith and find ways to bring about the liberation of migrants and of the earth in accord with the Gospel of Christ. Finally, Pieris's insight on the kenosis of Christ on the Cross by which he triumphed over the violence inflicted on him by his enemies is a powerful inspiration against the temptation of many Asians to subscribe to and approve of the violence around them. Our current experience in the Philippines of allegedly state-sanctioned violence against suspected drug users and pushers, many of them poor, challenges us to respond to the cries of families who have lost their loved ones in the President's ruthless war against drugs. Similarly, we are also challenged to speak out more strongly against the violence inflicted upon the earth as seen in the way mining is conducted in the country.

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[59]See Francis, *Laudato Si'*, available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/ papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html (accessed April 12, 2017).

[60]Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 69.

Pieris's original and bold insights into the liberative thought of Buddhism and the redemptive power of Christianity continue to offer impetus in addressing the ever-complex and ever-changing realities of Asia. What is most significant, however, in his theology are not only his ideas but his very person, how he has lived his theology to the admiration of his students and colleagues. Indeed, he has immersed himself in the waters of religiosity and poverty. This is the greater challenge for Asian liberation theologians and for the Asian Churches: to continue allowing themselves to be baptized and crucified, and in the process, to disappear somehow, so that more and more, the power of the Cross and of Love would be revealed.

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2018 SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON THE YOUTH

An Overview

James H. Kroeger, M.M.

In January 2017, Pope Francis wrote to young people encouraging them to help the Church prepare for the 2018 Synod. Francis said he chose the topic "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment" because "I wanted you to be the center of attention, because you are in my heart." He also said that the preparatory document (released on January 13, 2017) was entrusted to the youth "as your 'compass' on this synodal journey."[1]

Employing the paradigm of God's call, which is "a compelling invitation, a challenge" to Abraham to "go" and set out for the future, Francis noted: "I invite you to hear God's voice resounding in your heart through the breath of the Holy Spirit.… Have you heard this voice? Have you felt this urge to undertake this journey?" Francis notes that the Church "wishes to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith; even your doubts and your criticism.… My brother bishops and I want even more to 'work with you for your joy' (2 Cor. 1:24). I

[1]Francis, *Letter to Young People on the Occasion of the Presentation of the Preparatory Document of the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops* (Jan. 13, 2017), available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170113_lettera-giovani-doc-sinodo.html.

entrust you to Mary of Nazareth.…"[2] In short, Francis humbly admits that the Church may not have all the answers, but she sincerely wishes to hear the voice of the youth and be engaged with them.

Surprise Initiative. On the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi (October 4, 2017), Pope Francis at the conclusion of his general weekly audience invited young people (both Christian and the followers of other faiths) to a "pre-synod meeting" to be held on March 19–24, 2018 in Rome. Francis sees this gathering as an opportunity for the Church "to listen to the hopes and concerns of young men and women." He said: "Through this journey, the Church wants to listen to the voices, the sensibilities, the faith as well as the doubts and criticisms of young people."[3]

The General Secretariat of the Synod said that the Pope's initiative "will allow young people to express their expectations and desires as well as their uncertainties and concerns in the complex affairs of today's world," and noted that the young people attending this March 2018 meeting (seven months prior to the opening of the Synod) "will represent bishops' conferences, the Eastern Catholic Churches, men and women in consecrated life and seminarians.…" It will also include "representatives from other Christian communities and other religions" as well as "experts in the fields of education, culture, sports and arts, who 'are involved in helping young people discern their choices in life.'"[4] Young people from the "extreme existential peripheries" will also be present.[5]

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[2]Francis, *Letter to Young People.*

[3]Junno Arocho Esteves, "Pope announces pre-synod meeting to listen to youths' hopes, doubts," *Catholic News Service* (Oct. 4, 2017), http://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2017/pope-announces-pre-synod-meeting-to-listen-to-youths-hopes-doubts.cfm.

[4]Esteves, "Pope announces pre-synod meeting to listen to youths' hopes, doubts."

[5]Elise Harris, "Pope announces pre-synod meeting with youth as participants," *Catholic News Agency* (Oct. 4, 2017), https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-announces-pre-synod-meeting-with-youth-as-participants-96002.

This special gathering in Rome "is meant to [complement] and 'enrich' the consultation" process that has already begun "with the publication of the Synod's preparatory document and a questionnaire available for youth to [accomplish] online [described below]." The dates for this worldwide meeting were intentionally selected "to coincide with the celebration of the 2018 diocesan World Youth Day event," which has the theme "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."[6] The event concludes on Palm Sunday with Mass celebrated by the Pope. Francis has repeatedly insisted: "We need to listen to young people."[7]

Background to the Preparatory Document of the 2018 Synod. The youth are seen as those persons ranging from 16 to 29 years of age.[8] Moreover, it is clear that discussions will have to be adapted to different local situations and circumstances. The preparatory document has been sent out widely throughout the Church; it "'begins the Synod's phase of consultation of the entire People of God,' to gather information on the current condition of the young … so as to be able to carry out an adequate discernment with a view to the drafting of the *Instrumentum Laboris* [working document for the synod]."[9] It should be noted that "joy and love" are frequently mentioned in the document, providing

[6]Harris, "Pope announces pre-synod meeting with youth as participants."

[7]"Pope Francis: Audience: Pre-synodal Meeting with Young People from Across the World from 19 to 24 March 2018: 'We need to listen to young people!'" (Oct. 4, 2017), https://agensir.it/quotidiano/2017/10/4/pope-francis-audience-pre-synodal-meeting-with-young-people-from-across-the-world-from-19-to-24-march-2018-we-need-to-listen-to-young-people/

[8]"Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment" [Preparatory Document for the 2018 Synod on the Youth], available at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20170113_documento-preparatorio-xv_en.html. All quotations in this article come from this document unless cited otherwise.

[9]"Presentation of the Preparatory Document of the Synod on 'Youth, faith and vocational discernment'" (Jan. 13, 2017), available at https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2017/01/13/170113c.html.

clear links to *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Amoris Laetitia*. There are also references to *Laudato Si'* and *Lumen Fidei*. One notes that all of Francis's previous major writings are mentioned in this preparatory document, though the insights of *Evangelii Gaudium* feature most prominently.

Structure of the Document. The complete document, including the questionnaire, reaches twenty-one printed pages. Following the *Introduction*, one finds three chapters: **I.** *Young People in Today's World;* **II.** *Faith, Discernment, Vocation;* and **III.** *Pastoral Activity*. The detailed *Questionnaire* is an integral part of the document, deemed essential for the synodal process to be grounded and effective. In a broad sense, this writer believes that the document reflects the time-tested "See, Judge, Act" approach; each of the three chapters corresponds to one of the three moments of seeing, judging, and acting.

Introductory Section of the Document. "Proclaiming the Joy of the Gospel is the mission entrusted by the Lord to His Church." To better accomplish this mission, one must look to the Synod on the New Evangelization and *Evangelii Gaudium* as well as the two synods on the family and *Amoris Laetitia*. In the 2018 synod, the Church seeks "to examine herself on how she can lead young people to recognize and accept the call." The Church knows "the strength and beauty of young people, [namely] the ability to rejoice at the beginning of undertakings, to give oneself totally without [looking] back, to pick oneself up and begin again in search of new conquests."

The Gospel image of John the Apostle can serve "both [as] an example of a young person who chooses to follow Jesus and 'the disciple Jesus loved' (Jn. 13:23; 19:26; 21:7)." Again and again, the Gospels narrate Jesus's invitation to "Come and See" (John 1:35–39, 43–47). Consult also John 13:21–26, 33–38 [Last Supper]; 19:25–27 [Foot of the Cross]; 20:1–10 [Visit to the Tomb]; and 21:1–14 [Jesus's Appearance and the Miraculous Catch of Fish].

> John's example can be of assistance in understanding that the vocational experience is a gradual process of inner discernment and growth in the faith, which leads to discovering the fullness of the joy of life and love, making a gift of oneself, and participating in the proclamation of the Good News.

Chapter One: Young People in Today's World. This chapter does not intend to be "a comprehensive analysis of society or the young people's world." There is a "multiplicity of worlds when speaking of young people" (e.g., demographics, history, religious traditions, gender, perceptions of reality, forms of domination/freedom, stages of life, the reality of migrants and refugees, etc.). Local adaptation is therefore always necessary to address the specific circumstances of various regions and peoples.

1. A Rapidly Changing World. Rapid change and transformation appear to be "the main characteristic[s] of contemporary societies and cultures." This often produces uncertainty and increased vulnerability. Many challenges have emerged: "the overwhelming increase in the number of refugees and migrants," "economic globalization," the "throw-away culture," and societies becoming "increasingly multi-cultural and multi-religious." Thus, "the situation is seen as a sign of our times." Here one recalls the insight of Vatican II in *Gaudium et Spes:* to carry out her task of evangelization, "the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel" (*Gaudium et Spes* 4).

2. New Generation. Social changes affect young people's "aspirations, needs, feelings and manner of relating to others." There is also the challenge of "multi-culturalism." Some characteristic features shaping today's young are: a) *Belonging and Participation;* b) *Personal and Institutional Points of Reference;* and c) the *Hyper-Connected Generation*. The Church's "pastoral activity" therefore needs readjustment.

The document goes on to mention the many concrete challenges facing this new generation:

> young people experiencing poverty and exclusion; those who grow up without parents or family, or are unable to go to school; children and young boys and girls who live on the street[s] in many suburbs; the young who are unemployed, displaced persons and migrants; those who are victims of exploitation, trafficking and slavery; children and young people forcefully recruited in criminal gangs or as guerrilla fighters; and child brides or girls forced to marry against their will.

How can the Church reach out to these disadvantaged persons, seeking their inclusion in the broader society?

3. Young People and Choices. Many youth see their horizon as consisting of "options which can always be reversed rather than definitive choices." They say: "Today I choose this, tomorrow we'll see."

Francis asks:

> How can we reawaken the greatness and the courage of comprehensive choices, of the impulses of the heart in order to face academic and emotional challenges? The phrase I use very often is: take a risk! Take a risk. Whoever does not risk does not walk. "But what if I make a mistake?" Blessed be the Lord! You will make more mistakes if you remain still.

The document also sees the positive aspects of the situation of the youth today: "The search for ways to reawaken courage and the impulses of the heart must necessarily take into account that the person of Jesus and the Good News proclaimed by Him continue to fascinate many young people."

Chapter Two: Faith, Discernment, Vocation. Through every phase of this 2018 Synod, "the Church wants again to state her desire to encounter, accompany and care for every young person, without exception." For the Church, this means "accompanying them [the youth] and walking beside them on this journey as they deal with the weaknesses and difficulties in their lives, and especially supporting them in the exercise of freedom which is still being formed." This author notes that a pivotal concept found in this document and in the Church's ministry with the youth is *accompaniment*, of which one may assert is a primary mode of all youth ministry.

Francis proposes that the Church follow the example of Saint Joseph, "a strong and courageous man, a working man," because "in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love."

1. Faith and Vocation. "Faith is seeing things as Jesus does … [and] is the source of vocational discernment; … [it enables one to make] concrete and consistent choices in life." Faith is "both a gift from on high and a response to feeling oneself chosen and loved. Faith 'is no refuge for the fainthearted, but something which enhances our lives. It makes us aware of a magnificent calling, the vocation of love.'" Thus, we "gradually become aware of God's plan of profound love for each" of us.

Our dialogue with God takes place in our consciences. "As taught by the Second Vatican Council, conscience 'is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths' (*Gaudium et Spes* 16). Conscience is therefore an inviolable place where a promising invitation is present." It is in the depth of one's conscience that an individual hears and responds to God's call.

2. The Gift of Discernment. A key focus of the Synod is "vocational discernment, that is, the process by which a person makes fundamental choices, in dialogue with the Lord and listening to the voice of the Spirit, starting with the choice of one's state in life.… The Spirit speaks and acts through the happenings in the life of each person."

Three verbs are used in *Evangelii Gaudium* (51) to describe discernment: *recognize* (one's concrete situation), *interpret* (one's desires and inner movements), and *choose* (in authentic freedom and personal responsibility); all these are to be done in "coherency with one's life." Indeed, "promoting truly free and responsible choices … remains the goal of every serious pastoral vocational programme."

3. Paths toward Vocation and Mission. Vocational discernment "is not accomplished in a single act; … [it] is a long process unfolding over time, during which one continues to monitor the signs used by the Lord to indicate … a vocation that is very personal and unique."

> Time is fundamental in verifying the effectiveness of a decision made.… Accepting the mission [vocation] implies the willingness to risk one's life and to travel the way of the cross, in the footsteps of Jesus.… Only by giving up being selfishly occupied with one's needs does a person

> become open to accommodate God's plan.… Consequently, contact with poverty, vulnerability and need are of great importance on the road to vocational discernment.

A fundamental question needs to be asked: is the person willing to become "imbued with the 'smell of the sheep'"?

4. Accompaniment.

> Three basic beliefs underlie the process of discernment.… The first is that the Spirit of God works in the heart of every man and woman.… The second belief is that the human heart, because of its weakness and sin, is normally divided.… The third belief is that every way of life imposes a choice, because a person cannot remain indefinitely in an undetermined state.

To guide the process of discernment and choice, "the Church's spiritual tradition emphasizes the importance of personal accompaniment." Such *accompaniment* "demands the constant refinement of one's sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit and leads to discovering a resource and richness in a person's individual character." Here the Church is to follow Jesus's pattern in accompanying the young in their vocational discernment; the Church "accepts her call to collaborate in the joy of young people.…"

Chapter Three: Pastoral Activity. The purpose of this third chapter is "to focus on how earnestly to respond to the challenge of pastoral care and vocational discernment, taking into consideration those involved in this task, the places where this guidance takes place and the resources which are available." The discernment process needs to be tailored to the needs and experiences of the diverse local Churches around the world.

1. Walking with Young People.

> Accompanying young people requires going beyond a preconceived framework, encountering young people where they are, adapting to their times and pace of life and taking them seriously.… In this regard, Pope Francis said: "Vocational pastoral ministry is learning the style of Jesus, who passes through the places of daily life, stops without being hurried and, by looking at our brothers with mercy, leads them to encounter God the Father."

Accompanying the young demands three actions: a) *going out* from any Church framework in which individuals sense restrictions and limitations; b) *seeing* and appreciating the "joys, hopes, sadness and anxieties" of the young; and c) *calling* and inviting the young to "newness of life."

2. Agents. A variety of persons are needed to guide the young who are "not objects but agents" of their own future. Who are these agents who can guide the young in their life's journey? They are: a) *Young People Themselves* who give shining testimony of a faith-centered life; b) *A Responsible Community* that seeks to form the new generations; and c) *People of Reference* who provide credible witness, e.g. parents, family, shepherds of souls, teachers and educators.

3. Pivotal Places. Simply stated, these are places and occasions for personal interaction with the young; some examples can be listed as follows: daily life, World Youth Days, parishes, Church schools, volunteer activities, associations, ecclesial movements, and the digital world, among others.

4. Resources. The document provides a list of possible resources to be used in fostering youth engagement; these include: engagement through pastoral opportunities; educative, evangelizing paths; and silence, contemplation, and prayer.

5. Mary of Nazareth. The 2018 synodal process "is entrusted to Mary," who

> in every stage of her existence accepted the Word, and preserved it, pondering [on] it in her heart.… Each young person can discover in Mary's life the way to listen, the courage that faith generates, the depths of discernment and dedication to service.… Mary opened her heart to "Here I am," and thus began the Gospel journey.

Questionnaire. The document concludes with a questionnaire composed of three parts: 1) Gathering Statistics; 2) Evaluating the Situation (here one finds special questions according to geographical areas); and 3) Sharing Activities. The detailed questions elicit depth reflection, and clear instructions assist respondents. The data gathered will facilitate the drafting of the working document (*instrumentum laboris*)

to be used at the actual synod itself. Although not explicitly stated, it is the view of this author that the three-fold structure of the questionnaire is once again built upon the helpful "see-judge-act" methodology.

Conclusion. One may recall the forthright words of Pope Francis in determining the topic of the 2018 Synod to be focused on the youth. He addresses the youth, noting that the Church "wishes to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith; even your doubts and your criticism.… My brother bishops and I want even more to 'work with you for your joy' (2 Cor. 1:24)." Francis says that he wants the youth to be "the center of attention, because you are in my heart.… I entrust you to Mary of Nazareth."[10]

[10]Francis, *Letter to Young People*.

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INCULTURATION OF THE LITURGICAL YEAR IN THE PHILIPPINES

Timoteo J. M. Ofrasio, S.J.

> The liturgical year is to be revised so that the traditional customs and discipline of the sacred seasons shall be preserved or restored to suit the conditions of modern times; their specific character is to be retained, so that they duly nourish the piety of the faithful who celebrate the mysteries of Christian redemption and, above all, the paschal mystery. (*Sacrosanctum concilium* 107)

Apropos of this decree from *Sacrosanctum concilium*, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments published the *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* on December 17, 2001. In this directory, the Congregation wished to highlight that other forms of piety among the Christian people should not be overlooked, nor should their useful contribution to living in unity with Christ in the Church be forgotten.[1]

Both the directory and SC 107 are important bases for inculturating the liturgical year in the Philippines, which at present seems to be an element in the Church that has remained untouched by inculturation—or has it? There is no official attempt at inculturation from the viewpoint of the episcopal commission, yet *de facto* inculturation of

[1] *Sacrosanctum concilium* 12 & 13.

the liturgical year has been taking place even before the liturgical restoration of Vatican II, and continues to develop to this day.

A survey of the liturgical year as observed in the Church in the Philippines reveals how much popular piety, so close to Filipino religiosity, has profoundly influenced its inculturation. Indeed, popular piety is so intertwined with Filipino life that the profound interpenetration of culture and religiosity has transformed the observance of the liturgical year in the Philippine Church without much effort or pain. To help us understand such *de facto* inculturation, this article will provide a description of practices observed in the Philippines throughout the liturgical year.

Advent Season

Misa de Gallo or *Simbanggabi*

Christmas season in the Philippines traditionally begins with Advent, nine days before the Solemnity of the Birth of the Lord is celebrated. This preparation takes the form of nine dawn Masses at four o'clock in the morning starting on December 16. Known as the *Misa de Gallo* (Rooster's Mass) or *Misa de Aguinaldo* (Gift Mass)[2] in the traditional Spanish and in Filipino as *Simbang Gabi* (or Night Mass), this novena of Masses is the most important Filipino tradition at Christmastime.

Many of the faithful consider these nine dawn Masses as an occasion to obtain special graces. Going to Mass this early for nine consecutive days is meant to show their devotion and faith as well as heighten anticipation for the Nativity of Jesus. In traditional Filipino belief, however, completing the novena is also supposed to mean that God will grant the devotee's special wish or favor.

[2]Lilia Borlongan-Álvarez, "Misa de Gallo or Misa de Aguinaldo—What's the Difference?" *Manila Bulletin* (December 24, 2014).

After attending Mass, Filipino families partake of traditional Philippine Christmastime delicacies either during breakfast at home or immediately outside the church where they are sold. Vendors offer a wealth of native delicacies, including *bibingka* (a rice flour- and egg-based cake cooked using coals on top of and under the pastry), *puto bumbong* (a purple sticky rice delicacy steamed in bamboo tubes with brown sugar and shredded dried coconut meat serving as condiments), *salabat* (hot ginger tea), and *tsokolate* (thick Spanish cocoa).

Christmas Season

Panunuluyan

On Christmas Eve, Catholic devotees in various Philippine provinces reenact the journey of Joseph and the pregnant Blessed Virgin Mary in search of lodging for the soon-to-be-born Jesus Christ. This is the *Panunuluyan* (also called *Pananawagan* and *Pananapatan*) which traces its origin from the Mexican practice of the *Posadas*.

This street pageant is performed after dark, with the actors portraying Saint Joseph and the Virgin going to pre-designated houses. They chant a traditional folksong that is meant to wake up the owner of the house and ask for lodging. The owners turn them away, however, doing so also through song. Finally, Joseph and Mary make their way to the parish church where a simulated manger has been set up. The birth of Jesus is celebrated at midnight, or close to it, with the solemn *Misa de Aguinaldo*, the first of the three Masses of Christmas.

Noche Buena

For Filipinos, the Vigil of Christmas (*Bisperas ng Pasko*) on December 24th is celebrated with the Midnight Mass, which is followed immediately after with the much-anticipated *Noche Buena*, the traditional Christmas Eve feast. Family members dine together at midnight on traditional fare that includes *queso de bola* ("ball of cheese,"

usually of the edam variety), *tsokolate*, and *jamón* (ham). Some would also open presents at this time.

Christmas Day

Christmas Day in the Philippines is primarily a family affair, with Filipinos visiting members of the extended family, preferably in the morning and notably the elders, in order to pay their respects. Called *pagmamano*, the age-old tradition of giving respect in the Philippines is done by touching one's forehead to the elder's hand while saying "mano po." The elder in turn blesses the person who has paid respect. *Aguinaldo* (gift) in the form of crisp, fresh-from-the-bank bills are then given (mostly to younger children) after the *pagmamano*.

A Christmas lunch usually follows after the *pagmamano*. This lunch is heavily dependent upon financial status—wealthier families tend to prepare grand and glorious feasts that consist of *jamon*, *queso de bola*, *lechon* (whole roast pig), and other Filipino delicacies while others choose to cook simpler meals (which are still special nonetheless). The exchange of gifts then occurs typically after lunch, with godparents expected to give gifts or *aguinaldo* to their godchildren. Finally, when evening comes, families usually settle into conversation while listening to their favorite carols, with some opting to have a glorious Christmas feast for dinner.

New Year's Eve

On December 31, the seventh day of the Christmas Octave or New Year's Eve (*Bisperas ng Bagong Taon*), Filipino families gather for the *media noche* or midnight meal—a feast that is also supposed to symbolize their hopes for a prosperous New Year. Many Filipinos also see firecrackers as the traditional means to greet the New Year in spite of the yearly ban on them, for the loud noises and sounds of merrymaking are meant not only to celebrate the coming of the New Year but also to supposedly drive away evil spirits (albeit safer methods of merrymaking include banging on pots and pans and blowing on car horns). Other folk beliefs include encouraging children to jump at

the stroke of midnight so that they will grow tall, displaying round-shaped fruits and wearing clothes with dots and other circular designs to symbolize desire for a better life (represented by the round shape or circular design, an allusion to money), eating twelve grapes at midnight for good luck in the twelve months of the coming year, and opening windows and doors during the first day of the new year to let the good luck in. Although common in the Philippines, most of these beliefs are of Chinese provenance.

Decorations

A Filipino Christmas would not be complete without the traditional Christmas symbols and decorations commonly found throughout the country. Christmas lights, for instance, are strung about in festoons that serve as the tail of the Star of Bethlehem in the crèche, locally called *belén* (Spanish for Bethlehem); these are shaped like stars, Christmas trees, angels, and in a large variety of other ways, with some even going as far as draping the entire façade of the house in lights. Aside from Western decorations like Santa Claus, Christmas trees, tinsel, and so forth, the Philippines has its own ways of celebrating the Christmas season indeed.

Paról

Though not strictly a custom, Filipino homes and buildings are adorned every Christmas season with beautiful star-shaped lanterns called *paról* (Spanish *faról*, meaning lantern or lamp). What to Filipinos is the Christmas tree to Americans, the *paról* represents the Star of Bethlehem that guided the Magi in their search for the newborn Child. It is an iconic and beloved symbol of the holiday.

The earliest *paróls* were traditionally made from bamboo sticks and crepe, lacquered, or Japanese rice paper (*papel de Japón*), and were illuminated with a candle or coconut oil-lamp. Later versions were then crafted out of a wider variety of materials, including cellophane, plastic, rope, and *capiz* shell. Present day *paról* can also take many

different shapes and forms, the most basic of which is a 5-pointed star with a "tail" attached to each of the bottom two tips. Others come in variations with 4, 8, and 10 points, along with rarer ones that have 6 or 16 points, and so on.

Belén

Another traditional Filipino Christmas symbol is the *belén*, a crèche or tableau depicting the Nativity scene. It shows the infant Jesus in the manger surrounded by the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, the shepherds, their flock, the Magi, some stable animals, and angels. Although of Italian-Franciscan origin, it has been thoroughly inculturated in the Philippines and has become part of Filipino Christmas celebrations ever since. *Beléns* are set up in churches, homes, schools, and even in office buildings. They can be extravagant as well, using various materials for the figures and Christmas lights, *paróls*, and painted backgrounds for the scenery.

Caroling

Just like the *belén*, caroling is not specifically native to the Philippines but has been adopted nevertheless as part of the Filipino Christmas celebration. Children in small groups go from house to house singing Christmas carols while using makeshift instruments such as empty cans and tambourines made with metal bottle caps strung on a piece of wire. With the traditional chant of *namamasko po!*, these carolers wait expectantly for the homeowners to reward them with coins or candies.

Caroling in more recent times has also become a fund-raising activity. Church choirs or youth groups spend weeks rehearsing Christmas carols then draw up a schedule of visits to wealthy patrons in their homes or even to corporate offices (often coinciding with the office Christmas party). These are, in effect, mini Christmas concerts where excellent performances are amply rewarded with an envelope of cash or checks. Unlike traditional children's caroling, however, the performers donate the earnings to their group's projects rather than partake of it themselves.

Lenten Season

Pasyón

The *Pasyón* (from the Spanish *Pasión*) is a narrative of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ woven into a poem with stanzas of five lines that have eight syllables each. This form of the Passion narrative is popular in the Philippines and has been given the nomenclature *Pabasa* (Tagalog for "to cause to be read"). Performed during the Lenten season, sometimes during Holy Week, it is a form of religious expression, meditation, and reflection which is normally chanted at home, at a small chapel called *visita*, or at a makeshift open air altar. The chanting is carried out continuously throughout the day and night until the entire narrative is completed, with chanters taking turns while refreshments are served for them and for anyone who drops by.

First published in either 1703 or 1704, the original text of the *Pasyón* was called *Ang Mahal na Pasión ni JesuCristong Panginoon Natin na Tola* (literally, "The Poem of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ") by its author, the priest Gaspar Aquino de Belén. The more popular version, however, is the *Casaysayan nang Pasiong Mahal ni Jesucristong Panginoon Natin na Sucat Ipag-alab nang Puso nang Sinomang Babasa* ("The History of the Passion of Jesus Christ Our Lord that Will Set Afire the Heart of Whosoever Reads It").

Senakulo

The *Senakulo* (from the Spanish *cenaculo*) is a Lenten play that depicts events from the Old and New Testaments related to the life, sufferings, and death of Christ. Presented for at least eight nights (from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday), it is traditionally performed on an open-air proscenium-type stage with painted cloth or paper backdrops called *telón*. Women and men who have taken a vow before the Lord to play a particular character in return for the granting of favors, e.g., the healing of sickness or in atonement for sins, usually serve as performers. Such roles may be passed on to willing family members, and some even have

the privilege of being buried in the vestment they wore as *senakulistas* upon their death, particularly for those who played the roles of Christ and the Blessed Virgin.

Biblical characters in the play are garbed in traditional vestments as seen on church statues; hence, for example, the actor playing Christ is vested in a velvet maroon tunic with gold embroidery, and wears a dyed abaca wig with a metal crown of thorns on his head along with the *potencia*—three metal rays rising from the top of the wig (as seen in many church images of the Suffering Christ). The character of the Blessed Virgin is dressed in a gold-embroidered dark blue tunic and black mantle *cum* veil, and wears a long, dyed abaca wig as well as a metal sunburst halo that frames her face (as seen in images of the Mater Dolorosa). These and other "holy" characters chant their lines and walk in measured steps to the tune of slow music, whereas the *Romanos* and *Judíos*, the "enemies" of Christ, speak in aggressive tones and march around in *paso doble* steps to the beat of marshal music from a live brass band. The ingenious use of stage backdrops and fireworks also provides further delight and entertainment to the audience, especially the children, while at the same time providing catechesis and subjects for reflection concerning the Lenten season.

Street *senakulo*, on the other hand, is a form of penance where the passion play characters walk in a procession. Locals act as Roman soldiers, pounding on doors to search for Jesus in their menacingly painted masks and armors. Most anticipated among the episodes of the play are the judgment of Jesus, the Crucifixion, and His Seven Last Words. Spectators, ranging from devotees to the merely curious, line the route of the procession, eager to witness the reenactments. Some use this as an opportunity to reflect on the life of Jesus; others treat it as a chance to spend time with family and friends.

Semana Santa

In this predominantly Roman Catholic country, Holy Week, *Semana Santa*, or *Mahal na Araw* is one of the most important religious observances. Beginning on Holy Thursday and up until Black Saturday, most businesses shut down operations while local television and radio

stations across the nation either put on religious-themed shows, play religious or subdued music, or stay off the air completely. Starting at noon on Good Friday, some television channels and radio stations broadcast live reflections on the Seven Last Words of Jesus from major churches and cathedrals throughout the country.

Holy Wednesday

In many parishes that can afford it, a tradition followed on Holy Wednesday is the staging of a candle-lit procession of both antique and recent-vintage statues that depict episodes of the Passion of the Lord, beginning with the Last Supper all the way to the Deposition from the Cross. These images, many of them family heirlooms that date back to the Spanish colonial period, are mounted on sumptuously-decorated and well-lit carriages or *carrozas*. Some of the more antique ones have ivory faces and hands; others feature movable hands and heads. Indeed, such processions can rival even those that are held in Sevilla and Málaga in Spain, or in Guatemala in Central America.

Paschal Triduum

Maundy Thursday

A common and widespread practice in the Philippines after the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday is the *Visita Iglesia*, the local adaptation of the Roman practice of visiting the seven Roman basilicas. Families and friends troop to seven various churches to visit the reposed Blessed Sacrament, pray the *Via Crucis*, or go to Confession.

Good Friday

Good Friday is a day marked mainly with somber tones and subdued behavior: the busiest of thoroughfares and highways mostly become deserted and relatively free of vehicles; penitential processions of flagellants and cross bearers (although not approved by the Church

because of health-risk factors) take place alongside official Church services in the afternoon. The faithful in practically all churches gather around the image of the Crucified to kiss its feet, an extension of the Veneration of the Cross of the mid-afternoon service. In many parishes, the procession of the *Santo Entierro* (the Dead Christ) and the *Mater Dolorosa* takes place at sundown. Similar to the Holy Wednesday procession, here the images of saints—the apostles and holy women—who followed Christ in his Passion are carried along the principal thoroughfares. Not surprisingly, the image of the Dead Christ is the one that attracts the most number of devotees to follow it.

Easter Sunday

Easter morning is marked with joyous celebration, beginning with the dawn ceremony called the *Salubong* or *Encuentro* (meeting) of the Risen Christ and His Sorrowful Mother. Their images borne in procession move away from the parish church in opposite directions, the men bearing the image of the Risen Christ in a well-lit carriage and the women bearing that of the Virgin draped in a mourning veil. The two groups then converge at the town square or a designated place where little girls dressed as angels and with flower baskets in their hands await them on a makeshift tower or scaffold. After the greeting of the parish priest, the images are made to face each other and a little girl sings the *Regina caeli*. She then lifts the mourning veil from the Virgin's face while the other girls take up the *Alleluia* and shower the images with flowers from their baskets. The priest then incenses the images and says the concluding prayer, after which the choir sings the *Gloria in excelsis* as the processions move back to the church for the first Mass of Easter Sunday.

Easter Season

Santa Cruz and *Flores de Mayo*

Two Marian devotions are observed simultaneously in the Philippines during the month of May: one is the procession of the *Santa Cruz de Mayo* or *Santacruzan* which celebrates the May 3rd feast of the Finding of the True Cross by Saint Helena, mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine; the other is the *Flores de Mayo*, a month-long devotion that consists of a daily offering of flowers to the Virgin and which culminates in a crowning of her image and a procession in her honor at the end of the month.

Although conceived of as a celebration of the finding of the Cross, the *Santacruzan* has a Marian flavor because the young women who take part in this procession, called *zagalas*, assume either the roles of Biblical women in the Old Testament who are deemed figures of the Blessed Virgin Mary (hence they carry titles such as *Reyna Judit* or *Reyna Ester*) or the embodiment of Christian virtues (with titles such as *Reyna Fe*, *Reyna Esperanza*, and *Reyna Caridad* [faith, hope, and charity]). The woman who carries the title of *Reyna Elena*, however, walks just before the carriage of the Virgin and is considered the most important figure in this procession, which may take place anytime in the month of May and not necessarily under the auspices of the parish church.

Flores de Mayo, on the other hand, is a manifestly Marian devotion. Following the daily prayers and offering of flowers, a grand procession is held at the end of the month in which young women, also called *zagalas*, carry titles of the Blessed Virgin as listed in the Litany of Loreto. They usually wear long white gowns and a sash identifying the particular title or virtue of the Virgin which each one represents. The image of the Virgin, crowned earlier in the church, is borne by devotees at the back of the procession.

Ordinary Time

All Souls' Day

Considered public holidays in the Philippines, November 1 and 2 are observed as days for remembering the dead, just as in other Christian countries. Called *Todos los Santos* (All Saints') or *Undas*, these days are very important for Filipinos (second only to Christmas and Holy Week) and are more for family reunions. Feverish preparations begin at cemeteries and memorial parks in the weeks and days prior—tombs are cleaned or repainted; plants and shrubs are pruned and trimmed. The faithful then troop to these places after early morning Mass to spend the day of remembrance with their beloved departed. They usually bring candles and flowers, sometimes even food, to place at the graves, and some even sleep overnight at the cemeteries.

One tradition that is fast disappearing, however, is the neighborhood serenade called *pangangaluluwa* where people masquerading as "holy souls" beg for alms. Instead, the American tradition of "trick or treating" has become more popular in recent years especially in some subdivisions and well-to-do neighborhoods.

Fiestas

Fiestas (festivals or feasts, usually in honor of a patron saint) are celebrated all year round in the Philippines. They make up a tradition originating from the lowland Christian culture of the Spanish colonial era, one enhanced by three hundred years of cultural contact with Mexico through which Spain ruled the Philippines prior to Mexican independence in the early 19th century. Practically each town and village has its own patron—either the Blessed Virgin in one of her many titles or one of the many other saints—along with its own church or chapel. The patronal feast is celebrated with aplomb—there is usually food galore along with street decorations, cultural shows, trade exhibits, competitions, parades, and even street dancing as of late, not to mention the liturgical celebration in the parish church and

the candlelit procession of the image of the patron saint. Most notable among *fiestas* celebrated are the following:

The Black Nazarene

Although the Black Nazarene is not the patron of Quiapo (St. John the Baptist is), the incredibly large number of devotees of Christ under this title makes the *fiesta* of the Black Nazarene, celebrated annually on January 9, the *de facto fiesta* of this district in Manila.

Affectionately called *Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno* by devotees, the Black Nazarene is a life-sized and dark-colored wooden statue of Jesus carrying his cross. It was brought to Manila by Augustinian Recollect friars from Mexico in the 17th century during the time of the galleon trade between Manila and Acapulco. Most of its devotees believe the image to be miraculous—many of them, mostly simple and poor, flock to the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene every Friday throughout the year to make their novena to the Suffering Lord for favors requested and to thank him for those granted.

Santo Niño de Cebú

The *Santo Niño de Cebú* (Holy Child of Cebu) is an image of the Child Jesus similar to the Infant Jesus of Prague. It was historically a gift of the explorer Don Fernando Magallanes, who "discovered" the Philippines in the 16th century, to Rajah Humabon and Hara Amihan after they were baptized Carlos and Juana, respectively, in 1521.

The *Santo Niño* has been the patron of Cebu for more than four centuries and continues to be celebrated at the annual *Sinulog*, the principal festival of Cebú which takes place on the third Sunday of January. Other towns and provinces also celebrate the feast, notably Pandacan and Tondo in Manila and Kalibo in Aklan, along with many parishes all over the country. The *Santo Niño* has an immense number of devotees across the nation, and most Filipino homes, offices, and business establishments have an image of the Holy Child on the premises.

Conclusion

It is needless to say that much still has to be done, foremost among which is a serious evaluation and study of the observances described above, along with an effective catechesis of Filipino Catholics to purify them of superstitious elements and the inevitable encroachment of commercialism and materialism. This will be a formidable task, especially given the fact that many of these observances have been taken out of their religious context and are viewed purely as social events with merely a vague touch of religiosity.

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THE INTERSECTION OF HISTORICAL INJUSTICES AND ECOLOGICAL DESTRUCTION IN ASIA

Enriching Catholic Social Teaching on Indigenous Peoples

Reynaldo D. Raluto

Introduction

Filipinos are gratefully excited to celebrate in 2021 the fifth centenary of the coming of Christianity to their country, for although Christianity was born in Asia, it only arrived on Philippine soil in 1521. For this reason, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has decided to "embark on a nine-year spiritual journey that will culminate with the great jubilee of 2021,"[1] and offered a list of nine pastoral priorities that correspond to the nine-year program of the Philippine Church between 2012 and 2021. This article, however, deals with the urgent issue of indigenous peoples, a theme that is unfortunately missing from the CBCP's list.

Indigenous peoples (IPs) refer in general to "those with a social or cultural identity distinct from the dominant or mainstream society, which makes them vulnerable to being disadvantaged in the processes

[1]Jose Palma, "Live Christ, Share Christ: Looking Forward to Our Five Hundredth," CBCP Pastoral Exhortation on the Era of New Evangelization (July 23, 2012), available at http://cbcpwebsite.com/2010s/2012/newevangelizatio.html (accessed August 5, 2012).

of development."[2] In the Philippine context, moreover, they include not only the original occupants of a place but also those who had settled there long before the arrival of Spanish colonizers in the second half of the 16th century.[3] Muslim Filipinos who had been in Mindanao since before Hispanic colonization, therefore, may also be considered IPs. Non-Islamized and non-Christianized IPs, on the other hand, are commonly called *Lumad*, a Cebuano-Visayan term that emerged in 1983 which literally means "native" of the place or one who is "born of the earth." All in all, the 2010 census reveals that there are around 14 million IPs in the Philippines, 61% of whom reside in Mindanao.[4] It is unfortunate, then, that IPs today are not only the *least* in terms of demography but also the *last* in matters of development priorities.[5] In the Asian context, for instance, historical injustices against the IPs are intimately connected with the ecological destruction of their homelands.

Such urgent issues are, sadly enough, not addressed and discussed in many textbooks on Catholic social teaching. The main reason for

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[2]Raymundo Rovillos & Daisy Morales, "Defining Indigenous Peoples," in *Indigenous Peoples/Ethnic Minorities and Poverty Reduction: Philippines* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 2002), 3.

[3]There were 5 Spanish expeditions sent—that of Loaisa (1525), Cabot (1526), Saavedra (1527), Villalobos (1542), and Legazpi (1564), but the process of colonization only started with Legazpi in 1565 when he conquered Cebu. Cf. Rudy Rodil, "The Resistance and Struggle of the Tribal Peoples of Mindanao 1903–1935," *Mindanao Focus Journal* 29 (1990): 33–59, here at 37–39.

[4]See NSO's Household-Based Statistics, available at http://www.census.gov.ph/data/indexes %20etc/index2.htm (accessed January 27, 2011).

[5]See ICL Research Team, "Tribal Filipinos' Issues in Mindanao Context," in ICL Research Team, *A Report on Tribal Minorities in Mindanao* (Manila: Regal Printing Company, 1979), 9–18; see also the declaration of the Tribal Leaders' Conference to Re-examine IP Rights on Ancestral Domains, "What about Us?" in Carolyn Arguillas, Romulo Bueza, & Jamil Matalam, eds., *Bangsamoro: Documents and Materials* Vol. 2: *Speeches, News and Commentaries on the Annexes of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro* (Davao City: Ateneo de Davao University Publication Office, 2014), 101–104, here at 101.

this, perhaps, is the lack of adequate theological discussions and Church teachings on these issues. The present article thus attempts to fill in this lacuna, beginning with a hard look at the process of colonization and the subsequent historical injustices done to non-Christians in the name of evangelization. It will then offer an analysis and theological reflection on how colonialism has adversely affected IP culture and the natural ecosystems of their homelands. Lastly, it will highlight some principles found in Catholic social teaching that need to be explicitly developed by both theologians and the ecclesial magisterium.

The Coupling of Colonization and Evangelization in Asia

Medieval ecclesiological theory considered the pope to be a world monarch and vicar of Christ who was entrusted with a mission to bring the Gospel to the whole world. It was a regalist perspective that permeated bulls[6] and other papal teachings at that time. For this reason, Nicholas V (1447–1455) was called on to settle the dispute between Spain and Portugal over ownership of the Canary Islands. This prompted him to issue the papal bull *Romanus Pontifex* (January 8, 1455), which "legitimated Portuguese expansion around the Western coast of Africa from Capes Bojador and Nam through the whole of the Guinea coast and beyond into the southern regions to Antarctica."[7] With this papal intervention, the kingdom of Portugal legitimized its

[6]The term *bull* refers to the lead seal, *bulla*, that was attached to the document to authenticate the pope's official and formal decree. Papal bulls have been issued and used since the sixth century to establish a religious order, clarify doctrine, ratify other documents, found a university, and convoke a general council, among others. See Stephanie Mann, "What is a Papal Bull? Understanding Differences in Papal Decrees and Documents," *The Catholic Answer* (September 2016), https://www.osv.com/Magazines/TheCatholicAnswer/Article/TabId/652/ArtMID/13618/ArticleID/20552/What-Is-a-Papal-Bull.aspx (accessed November 4, 2017).

[7]Michael Stogre, *That the World May Believe: The Development of Papal Social Thought on Aboriginal Rights* (Ontario: Éditions Paulines, 1992), 65.

territorial discovery and overseas expansion outside Europe in the name of propagating the Christian faith.

When further discoveries created the same conflicts as those in the Canaries and West Africa, the Spanish Crown requested Alexander VI (1492–1503) to confirm Spanish possession of these newly discovered islands. In response, the Pope issued the papal bull *Inter caetera* (May 4, 1493)—also popularly known as "bull of donation" or "bull of demarcation"—that eventually excluded "Portugal from the [Spanish] field of discoveries."[8] This bull, together with subsequent extraordinary papal grants, "vested in the Spanish sovereigns the right and duty of sending missionaries to the lands newly discovered by Columbus."[9] This bull also allowed Spain to take the westward route while Portugal moved in the eastward direction.[10]

Such collaboration between the Holy See and the Spanish Crown in the task of colonization has been known as the *patronato real de las Indias*. The support provided by the State to the missionary activities of the Church became the theological justification for colonizing the newly discovered territories—the Spanish Crown could rule their colonies as long as it promoted the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

European colonizers thus came in fairly large numbers to Southeast Asia (SEA) between 1500 and 1900.

> The Portuguese had been successful in establishing in areas such as Malacca, Ambon, Solor, Flores, and Timor, but in the end the latter

[8]Charles-Martial de Witte, "Les Bulles Pontificales et L'expansion Portugaise au XV^{e} siècle," quoted in Stogre, *That the World May Believe*, 70.

[9]Horacio de la Costa, *Asia and the Philippines* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1967), 39–40.

[10]The Philippine archipelago was supposedly within the assigned domain of the Portuguese but, perhaps due to their inaccurate knowledge of geography at that time, it turned out that Spain's claim over the Philippines prevailed. The Philippine islands thus became a colony of Spain. On this account, see Teodoro Agoncillo & Oscar Alfonso, *A Short History of the Filipino People* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1960), 71.

> island was the only place in SEA that they could retain.… The British ruled Burma and Malaya, the French held sway over Indo-China, the Dutch had become masters of most of Indonesia, and the Spaniards of the Philippines. In fact, the only large area not under European dominance around 1900 was Siam, now Thailand.[11]

Northern Americans had already started to trade with SEA around 1800, but they did not establish their presence in Sumatra and the Philippines until 1900.

The Historical Injustices Against Non-Christians during the Colonial Period

Etymologically, the term "colonization" is derived from the Latin *colere*, which means "to cultivate or to tend" the land. It can thus be analogically applied to mean "cultivating" the people and their natural environment. In the Philippine experience, however, colonization has been closely associated with oppression and exploitation. This section therefore highlights three main historical injustices suffered by the IPs during the rule of foreign colonizers.

Denial of the Rights to *Dominium*

There was a debate in the thirteenth century as to whether or not non-Christian peoples, who were considered "infidels," have political and property rights or what medieval authors called *dominium*. The canon lawyers were interested in the question, "If it is licit, why is it licit?"[12] On this issue, the arguments of two well-known canonists,

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[11]Peter Boomgaard, "Environmental Impact of the European Presence in Southeast Asia, 17th–19th Centuries," http://www.raco.cat/index.php/illesimperis/article/viewFile/69206/89354 (accessed May 3, 2017), 21–35, here at 26.

[12]Innocent IV, *Commentaria doctissima in Quinque Libros Decretalium* (Frankfurt/Main: Minerva, 1968), 3.34.8, p. 429; English translation from James Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels: The Church and the Non-Christian World 1250–1550* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 6.

Innocent IV (1243–1254) and his student, Henry of Segusio (1200–1271)—better known as Hostiensis, provided the legal framework for the debate. Innocent IV argued on the one hand that "lordship, possession, and jurisdiction can belong to infidels licitly and without sin, for these things were made not only for the faithful but for every rational creature," adding that it "is not licit for the pope or the faithful to take away from infidels their belongings or their lordships or jurisdictions because they possess them without sin."[13] Furthermore, he maintained that *dominium* is a basic human right common to all and cannot be lost. Hostiensis, on the other hand, denied that infidels possessed *dominium* because "with the coming of Christ, every office and all governmental authority and all lordship and jurisdiction was taken from every infidel lawfully and with just cause, and granted to the faithful.…"[14] This implies that "those who did not acknowledge [Jesus Christ] automatically lost their rights"[15] to own property and to exercise *dominium*. The majority of canonists agreed with Innocent IV, but the Hostiensian position prevailed in history as it "lent itself more readily to [the] simplification of issues and [the] rationalization of the growth of empires."[16] This largely explains the historical injustice suffered by non-Christians during the colonial period—they were dispossessed of their ancestral and tribal domain and became marginalized from mainstream society as a result.

In the Philippines, the denial of the political right to *dominium* also caused a lot of agrarian injustices due to the imposition of the Spanish

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[13]Innocent IV, *Commentaria doctissima in Quinque Libros Decretalium*, 3.34.8, p. 430; English translation from Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church & State, 1050–1300* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), 155.

[14]Hostiensis, *Lectura in Quinque Libros Decretalium* Vol. 2 (Torino: Bottega D'Erasmo, 1965), 3.34.8., p. 128a; English translation from Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels*, 16.

[15]Olive Dickason, "Concepts of Sovereignty at the Time of First Contacts," in Leslie Green & Olive Dickason, *The Law of Nations and the New World* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1989), 242.

[16]Dickason, "Concepts of Sovereignty at the Time of First Contacts," 242.

concept of *realengas* (i.e., crown lands) based on the feudal Regalian Doctrine, which legally justified the colonizers' control and claim of all lands, territories, and other valuable possessions in their colonies. Regalian Doctrine did not recognize the customary tribal rights of indigenous Filipinos over property[17]—it unevenly awarded lands to the natives on the condition that if they fail to occupy their assigned space, it would revert to the Spanish Crown.[18] As a result, many became landless and squatters in their own land.[19]

Reduction to Slavery

Another historical injustice suffered by IPs during the colonial period was slavery. In the Middle Ages, and especially during the Christian crusade against the Muslims, it was considered legitimate for the victors of "just war" to despoil the losers, and to sell the vanquished into slavery.[20] In this context, it was legitimate for Christian Europe to repossess formerly Christian lands occupied by Muslims. Indeed, Nicholas V (1447–1455) extended the just war theory to the non-Muslim world—he instructed the Portuguese colonizers to

> invade, search out, capture, vanquish and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions,

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[17]See Owen Lynch, Jr., "Native Title, Private Right and Tribal Land Law: An Introductory Survey," *Philippine Law Journal* 57 (1982): 268–306.

[18]This was codified in the Maura Law of 1894, the last Spanish land law promulgated in the Philippines. Cited in Lynch, "Native Title, Private Right and Tribal Land Law," 274.

[19]See James Putzel, *A Captive Land: The Politics of Agrarian Reform in the Philippines* (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1992), 46.

[20]See John Francis Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church: The History of Catholic Teaching Concerning the Moral Legitimacy of the Institution of Slavery* (London / Chichester: Barry Rose Publishers, 1975), 52–68.

> and all moveable and unmovable goods whatsoever, held and possessed by them, and to *reduce their persons to perpetual slavery*.…[21]

"[The colonizers] killed in order to take possession of the land, and *reduced [the natives] … to slavery in order to exploit their work*. At the same time, they began to develop a racist theory in order to justify their actions."[22] Such racial ideology for many European colonizers presumed that non-European and non-Christian races were less human and fit only for slavery. They doubted the full humanity of IPs and underestimated their capacity to receive the Christian faith. It was thus the European elites in particular who arguably "became the engines of colonial exploitation" as they hailed the superior achievements of the Enlightenment[23] (the Catholic Church today humbly acknowledges that the Christian colonizers, especially the companion soldiers and traders of the great navigators between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, were not free of racial prejudices).

While it is true, then, that Spanish colonizers did not introduce chattel slavery in the Philippines,[24] native Filipinos were victims nevertheless of painful religious and cultural oppression under the colonial government. For one thing, they were forced to abandon their animistic beliefs[25] which the Spaniards considered to be based

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[21]Nicholas V, *Romanus Pontifex* (January 8, 1455), in Frances Gardiner Davenport, ed., *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies to 1648* Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1967), 13–26, here at 23 (emphasis mine).

[22]Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society* (Vatican City: Polyglot Press, 1988), no. 3 (emphasis mine).

[23]Georges De Schrijver, "European Colonialism and the Legacy of Enlightenment," *Hapag* 3 (2006): 205–223, here at 208.

[24]A certain form of bondage already existed in pre-Hispanic Philippines, but it was not chattel slavery in which the persons were treated as personal property (chattel) of the owner. It was more of dependency and debt peonage based on certain customary laws of the natives. See William Henry Scott, *Slavery in the Spanish Philippines* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 1991).

[25]On this account, see de la Costa, *Asia and the Philippines*, 8.

on "superstitions and errors of the devil."[26] To resist the forceful evangelization, indigenous Filipinos had to flee to the remote mountains to practice their ancestral culture and religion. They bore the indelible scars of painful memories and social stigma brought about by colonization.

Low View of Women

It has been claimed that pre-colonial Filipino women enjoyed a status of relative gender equality with men. "Tribal laws recognized their social and political rights. They could own and inherit property. They could engage in trade and industry. Insults and other crimes against them were punishable by death or slavery. They were allowed to rule."[27] Indeed, gender equality is implied in a popular Filipino creation myth where the first man and woman simultaneously came out of a bamboo stalk.

Western colonizers, in contrast, have a low regard for women. As such, "the idea and practice of gender inequality that we talk about today were introduced by the colonizers … [and] were not part of our indigenous tradition."[28] The Western Europeans inherited Christianity's patriarchal anthropology which was rooted in Greek and Jewish sources.[29] Greek anthropology views women as inferior to men; the former are symbolized in Greek dualistic philosophy "as analogous to the lower realm of matter or body, *to be ruled* by or

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[26]See "Patente librado por el Vic.° Gral. Fr. Pedro de Herrera al P. Fr. Andrés de Urdaneta y demás religioso que con el Sr. Legaspi pasaron a las Islas Filipinas desde N.ª España"; as quoted in John Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 2nd ed. (Quezon City: Ateneo De Manila University Press, 1987), 13.

[27]Gregorio F. Zaide, *Early Philippine History and Culture* (Manila: G. F. Zaide, 1937).

[28]Felipe Landa Jocano, *Filipino Prehistory: Rediscovering Precolonial Heritage* (Metro Manila: Punlad Research House, 1998), 104–105.

[29]Here the term *Western* refers to "those civilisations whose major ideas and attitudes derive from Greek and Hebrew sources" (John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974], 11).

shunned by [the] transcendent mind" which is the male.[30] Similarly, ancient Jewish society also considered women as inferior to men in all things—the second story of creation in Genesis, for example, has been narrowly interpreted from the patriarchal perspective to legitimize the *de facto* subjugation of woman to man. As such, many Western colonizers not only had a low view on women but also developed a misogynist attitude.[31] Women were thus made to believe that their primary vocation on earth is to be mothers whose role is limited mainly to the domestic sphere.

As expected, then, indigenous Filipino women suffered more than male Filipinos at the hands of oppressive Western colonizers. They were demoted to a lower status and modeled after Spanish women who played a secondary position in Iberian patriarchal society.[32] To Hispanicize these native women, the colonizers had to reconfigure them according to the Hispanic model of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which partially emphasized the sublime ideal of a "good" woman: chaste, obedient, docile, humble, passive, and timid.[33] The Spanish

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[30]Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), 79 (emphasis mine).

[31]For example, John Chrysostom (347–407 A.D.) had this to say: "Among all beasts, none is found so harmful as women." Quoted in Pamela Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and the Church's Response* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 52. Tertullian (155–245 A.D.) also wrote: "Do you know that you are Eve?.… You are the devil's gateway.… How easily you destroyed man, the image of God.…" Quoted in Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (Boston: Beacon, 1985), 87.

[32]On this discussion, see Rachel Bundang, "Scars ARE History: Colonialism, Written on the Body," in Nantawan Boonprasat-Lewis & Marie Fortune, eds., *Remembering Conquest: Feminist/Womanist Perspectives on Religion, Colonization, and Sexual Violence* (New York: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 1999), 58.

[33]On this discussion, see Janet D'Urso, "The Social Construction of Woman: Western Mythic and Religious Stereotypes," *Hecate* 1 (1975): 23–30, here at 23–24; see also Christina Blanc-Szanton, "Collision of Cultures: Historical Reformulations of Gender in the Lowland Visayas, Philippines," in Jane Monnig Atkinson, ed., *Power and Difference: Gender in Island Southeast Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 345–383.

colonizers did not fairly present Mary's prophetic and *revolutionary* image as depicted in her *Magnificat*, which powerfully "stresses the social justice implications of the choice of the mother of the foretold Messiah from among the poorer class of a colonised people."[34] This project of "re-feminizing" the indigenous Filipina was then further reinforced by the glorification of a "Maria Clara" type of woman: sweet, shy, docile, subservient, and pious.[35] Such a colonial strategy had therefore successfully *reconstructed* the image of an indigenous Filipina into that of a subordinate status, making her highly vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation by the colonizers, including the Spanish friars.[36]

The Colonization of Nature and Its Impact on Asian Indigenous Peoples

The ecological impact of colonization on the natural environment is a less-explored area in the prevailing historical and environmental research. Current studies fail to take into account the intimate link between social oppression and ecological exploitation.

It must be said at the outset that not all forms of colonization have destructive effects on people. For this reason, Paul VI invites us to "acknowledge the qualities and achievement of colonizers" even as he challenges us to critically recognize "the damage done by a certain type of colonialism and its consequences."[37] Thus, without romanticizing

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[34]Carolyn Brewer, *Shamanism, Catholicism and Gender Relations in Colonial Philippines, 1521–1685* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 46; cf. Luke 1:46–55.

[35]María Clara is the mestiza heroine in *Noli Me Tángere*, a novel by José Rizal, the national hero of the Republic of the Philippines. Her name and character has since become a byword for the ideal woman in Filipino culture.

[36]On this account, see Leonila Bermisa, "Facing the Reality of Clergy Sexual Misconduct in the Church: A Step toward Justice and Healing," in Agnes Brazal & Andrea Lizares Si, eds., *Body and Sexuality: Theological-Pastoral Perspectives of Women in Asia* (Quezon City: Ateneo De Manila University Press, 2007), 216–233, here at 219.

[37]Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (Boston, MA: Daughters of St. Paul, 1967), no. 7.

indigenous practices, this section highlights the impact of colonialism on ecological destruction.

A Glance at the Ecological Worldview of Asian Indigenous Peoples

Before exploring the damaging effects of colonialism on IPs and ecology, it is instructive to have a glance at the indigenous ecological worldview. It has been claimed that the pre-colonial way of life of Southeast Asian countries as a whole was essentially animistic, owing to the influence of Indic Hinduism.[38] They believed in an inaccessible supreme deity[39] who created everything as well as in the existence of lesser deities or spirits who dwell everywhere and are accessible to human beings. These lesser spiritual divinities may be further classified into three groups: the spirits of nature, of the seasons, and of life's phases. Among these three, the spirits of nature played a privileged role as they were invoked for the peoples' continued existence.

As religious animists, the pre-Hispanic Filipinos "worshipped in caves, in forests, inside houses of the chiefs and in many other places"[40] where they believed the spiritual divinities might dwell. It was also common, like the ancient Egyptians and Assyrians in many of their own religious practices, for Asian religious animists to render divine respect to the sun, moon, rainbow, rivers, plants, caves, mountains, trees, certain animals, and the spirits of their outstanding ancestors.[41] In the end, all these forms of worship nurtured their love and reverence for nature.

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[38]See de la Costa, *Asia and the Philippines*, 8.

[39]See Francisco Demetrio, *Myths and Symbols: Philippines* (Manila: Navotas Press, 1981), 33, 36.

[40]Felipe Landa Jocano, *Philippine Prehistory: An Anthropological Overview of the Beginnings of Filipino Society and Culture* (Quezon City: Philippine Center for Advanced Studies, University of the Philippines System, 1975), 228.

[41]See John Leddy Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565–1700* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), 24.

IPs today still continue to recognize nature as the dwelling place of spirits and other *enchanted* beings which have the capacity to influence people's lives.[42] They perceive the world as "alive, dynamic, and can be related to in a meaningful way to ensure well-being."[43] They treat nature not as objects but as part of the ethos of human propriety and reciprocity. Such a worldview is encapsulated in "folk beliefs in environmental spirits"[44] and in the enchantment of nature which evoke ecological consciousness and move individuals to sacralize the whole of the natural world.

This recognition of the sublime presence of *environmental spirits* moves IPs to respect certain designated spaces and times in nature. They believe that they "share their physical environment not only with animals but also with members of the supernatural world."[45] In fact, IPs do not only look at nature as their common dwelling place but also consider their lives as deeply interwoven in the very fabric of nature. In the words of a *Talaandig Datu*, "the earth is our flesh, the water is our blood, the trees are our bones, the vines are our veins, the sun is our torch and sight, the air is our breath and strength, the sound is our language, the cosmic energy and the spirits are our soul."[46] This

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[42]See Demetrio, *Myths and Symbols: Philippines*, 324.

[43]Edmundo Pacifico Guzman, *Creation as God's Kaloób: Towards an Ecological Theology of Creation in the Lowland Filipino Socio-Cultural Context*, Ph.D. dissertation (K.U. Leuven: Faculty of Theology, 1995), 371.

[44]Guzman, *Creation as God's Kaloób*, 304–307. As Guzman explained, "environmental spirits" refer to the so-called "beings-who-are-not-like-persons" such as "the *duwende* (dwarf or elf), *engkanto* (spirits in nature), and the *engkantado* and *engkantada* (fairy or enchanted being)" who deserve respect as they are believed to be dwelling among us within the natural environment.

[45]Raul Pertierra, *Religion, Politics, and Rationality in a Philippine Community* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1988), 132.

[46]Quoted in Albert Alejo, "Pakigduyog sa mga Lumad: Identity and Solidarity of Indigenous Peoples in Mindanao," public lecture (Cagayan de Oro: St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, September 27, 2012).

mystical experience of being one with nature makes them realize that the destruction of nature is tantamount to self-destruction.

Western Colonialism and Its Contribution to the Ecological Crisis in Asia

This sub-section identifies at least six negative contributions of Western colonialism to the present ecological destruction in Asia. The first one is the anthropocentric interpretation of the divine mandate to exercise *dominion* over other creatures and to *subdue* the earth.[47] Western Christianity has been accused of narrowly interpreting this Biblical command to promote a dominion theology that considers human beings as masters of other creatures. Accordingly, it falsely assumes that "no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes."[48] The European colonizers thus used this Biblical mandate to justify their forceful conquest of IPs in foreign lands on the eve of the modern period,[49] after which the modern paradigm of conquest was extended to conquering the wildness of nature. Indeed, as a religion that has been used to justify the exploitative practices of anthropocentrism, Western Christianity "bears a huge burden of guilt for environmental deterioration."[50]

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[47]Genesis 1:28.

[48]Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203–1207; republished in Ian Barbour, ed., *Western Man and Environmental Ethics: Attitudes Toward Nature and Technology* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1973), 18–30, here at 25.

[49]See Richard Eburne, *A Plaine Path-way to Plantations* (London, 1624), 16–18; cited in Peter Harrison, "'Fill the Earth and Subdue It': Biblical Warrants for Colonization in Seventeenth Century England," *Journal of Religious History* 29:1 (2005): 3–24, here at 10.

[50]White, "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," 27. For a critique of White's sweeping accusation, see Ben Minteer & Robert Manning, "An Appraisal of the Critique of Anthropocentrism and Three Lesser Known Themes in Lynn White's 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,'" *Organization & Environment* 18:2 (June 2005): 163–176.

A second contribution is the use of modern science to eradicate indigenous belief in the sacredness of nature. Asian IPs commonly regarded the forest as sacred and some trees as inviolable. The presence of European colonizers had contributed to "the disappearance of these taboos"[51] owing to the spread of Enlightenment ideas in Southeast Asia. For instance, let us call to mind that the well-known proponent of the Enlightenment, Francis Bacon (1561–1626), regarded nature like a slave-woman who must be subjugated and pressed into delivering her secrets.[52] Bacon did not consider this aggressive attitude toward nature as sacrilegious or against the will of the Creator since, from his perspective, science has a license "to crack the creator's code, and that it is within God's purpose that people should do so."[53] Such was used accordingly by European colonizers to exploit forests in foreign lands.[54]

The third contribution is the introduction of agrarian capitalism, which emerged in England around the 16th century as a consequence of the "class struggle between peasants and lords" that eventually dissolved feudalism.[55] This agrarian system did not reach Asia until the nineteenth century when "large tracts of climax forest were cut

[51]Boomgaard, "Environmental Impact of the European Presence in Southeast Asia," 30.

[52]Francis Bacon, *The Masculine Birth of Time* (1603); cited in Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 170.

[53]Cited in Robin Attfield, *Environmental Philosophy: Principles and Prospects* (Aldershot, UK: Avebury, 1995), 14.

[54]See Eburne, *A Plaine Path-way to Plantations*, 16–18; cited in Harrison, "'Fill the Earth and Subdue It,'" 10.

[55]On this account, see Robert Brenner, "Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe," *Past & Present* 70 (1976): 30–75; see also Robert Brenner, "The Agrarian Roots of European Capitalism," *Past & Present* 97 (1982): 16–113.

to make way for plantations."[56] It is shown in "industrially pursued large-scale agriculture" which has been criticized for exhausting "the natural power of the soil" and exploiting workers[57] due to "compulsions of accumulation, profit maximization," and unlimited growth.[58] IPs expectedly suffered its worst effects as capitalists deceivingly grabbed their ancestral lands and forced them to flee to the remote mountains where they could continue their traditional way of farming.[59]

Fourth on this list is the unsustainable exploitation of forests. It has been claimed that 90% of Southeast Asia around 1500 was covered by forest; as of 2004, however, "less than half (41.3–44.2%) of the original forests of Southeast Asia remain."[60] Indeed, in some countries like Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam, old-growth forests have nearly vanished, "comprising just 6.7% of their original forest area."[61]

Analysts point out that the major causes of deforestation in Asia are attributable to unsustainable practices such as the conversion of forested land for agricultural use.[62] This exploitative practice began in the Philippines

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[56]Boomgaard, "Environmental Impact of the European Presence in Southeast Asia," 26; see Rene Ofreneo, *Capitalism in Philippine Agriculture* (Quezon City: Foundation for Nationalist Studies, 1980).

[57]Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* Vol. 3 (1894), trans. David Fernbach (London: Peguin Books, 1991), 950.

[58]Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism: A Longer View* (New York: Verso, 2002), 146.

[59]On this account, see Karl Gaspar, *The Lumad's Struggle in the Face of Globalization* (Davao City, Philippines: Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao, 2000).

[60]Navjot Sodhi, Lian Pin Koh, Barry Brook, & Peter K. L. Ng, "Southeast Asian Biodiversity: An Impending Disaster," *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 19:12 (December 2004): 654–660, here at 656.

[61]William Laurance, "Forest Destruction in Tropical Asia," *Current Science* 93:11 (December 10, 2007): 1544–1550, here at 1548.

[62]Sodhi et al., "Southeast Asian Biodiversity," 656.

> when the [Spanish colonizers, after establishing] their foothold in the country in the 16th century […] also started felling trees to build ships for the Galleon Trade, churches, fortresses, and [the] large houses of elite Spanish families.… Transforming forested land into agricultural land was necessarily part of establishing a missionary settlement and pioneering colonization, which began during the late 17th and 18th centuries.[63]

Thus, after 333 years of Spanish rule, the original forest cover of the Philippines had declined by twenty percent, and would decline further by another twenty percent when the North Americans assumed the colonization of the country for 46 years afterwards. Sadly enough, the subsequent post-colonial government continues to uphold this extractive practice up to the present day.

The fifth negative contribution is the introduction of European crops, including foreign tree species, in large-scale monocrop plantations which not only changed the Southeast Asian landscape but also proved to be an ecologically unsustainable practice. This is really the *colonization* of nature in the ecological sense of a dominant foreign species invading the habitat of indigenous and endemic ones.[64] The European colonizers introduced tobacco, coffee, tea, cacao, rubber, sugar cane, and oil palms to Asian soil beginning around 1500, and although these were not originally from Europe but from other continents, they "made their appearance as 'European' crops in the eighteenth century."[65] Such large-scale agricultural monocropping

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[63]Reynaldo Raluto, *Poverty and Ecology at the Crossroads: Towards an Ecological Theology of Liberation in the Philippine Context* (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2015), 25; cf. Marshall McLennan, "Changing Human Ecology on the Central Luzon Plain: Nueva Ecija, 1705–1939," in Alfred McCoy & Ed De Jesus, eds., *Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1982), 57–58.

[64]See "Colonization," in Michael Allaby, ed., *A Dictionary of Ecology*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 92.

[65]Boomgaard, "Environmental Impact of the European Presence in Southeast Asia," 31.

was made possible by the presence of logged-over areas,[66] and foreign plant species still dominate today in large-scale industrial plantations, effectively invading the country's own endemic flora. Propagating imported tree species en masse was also not ecologically appropriate: "Touted as fast growing, nine foreign exotics dominated government replanting programs for decades. But they lacked the resiliency of the native trees after typhoons or droughts."[67] It is sad to note, then, that many of our endemic trees are now considered endangered species.

The sixth and last colonial contribution to ecological destruction are the European-induced population growth-rates. History shows that between 1500 and 1800, the population growth-rates in Southeast Asia were 0.2% per annum at the most. It is surprising then that there was an extraordinary multiplication of the population from little more than 30 million in 1800 to around 80 million in 1900. How can this explosion be explained? There are two dominant theories so far to account for this population growth. One is the lower death-rate due to the progress of medicine introduced by Europeans.[68] The other is that more improved agriculture could feed a larger population.[69] In any case, global population growth, together with the unsustainable consumption and extravagant lifestyle of affluent countries, is rightly seen nowadays as one of the main causes of environmental degradation[70] as it places

[66]See Robin Broad & John Cavanagh, *Plundering Paradise: The Struggle for the Environment in the Philippines* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 46.

[67]Juan Mercado, "U-turn at dead ends," *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (August 5, 2013), available at http://opinion.inquirer.net/58179/u-turn-at-dead-ends (accessed August 6, 2013).

[68]See N. G. Owen, "Toward a History of Health in Southeast Asia," in N. G. Owen, ed., *Death and Disease in Southeast Asia: Explorations in Social, Medical and Demographic History* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987), 3–30, here at 9.

[69]Boomgaard, "Environmental Impact of the European Presence in Southeast Asia," 31.

[70]See Catherine Keller, "Chosen Personas and the Green Ecumenacy: A Possible Christian Response to the Population Apocalypse," in David Hallman, ed.,

severe stress on natural resources, including water, agricultural land, timber, fuel-wood, and other forest products. Population growth also unjustly forces the poor to dwell in more ecologically vulnerable areas and displaces many IPs from their ancestral domains.

Pointers for Enriching Catholic Social Teaching on Indigenous Peoples

The main thrust of this section is to show that the plight of the IPs is a theological and moral issue that deserves a privileged place in Catholic social teaching. IPs are certainly among the poorest in society. They merit to be accorded preferential treatment and Christian love. In this regard, we shall highlight five principles of Catholic social teaching and apply them to the plight and urgent areas of concern of the IPs.

Defending the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples

We have seen that during the colonial period, the Church's concern for the human rights of IPs was deemed as secondary to her mission to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples. Prior to Leo XIII (1878–1903), the human rights and proper treatment of IPs were simply taken for granted as practical and necessary conditions for evangelization and reception of the Gospel.[71] Human rights questions were not yet considered back then as issues in their own right.

Historically, the question of whether or not IPs were human beings emerged in the papacy of Paul III (1534–1539) who strongly affirmed their true humanity and advocated that they should "not be reduced to slavery" and that they "must be invited to the said faith of Christ by preaching of the word of God and by the example of a

Ecotheology: Voices from South and North (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 300–311, here at 303.

[71]On this account, see Stogre, *That the World May Believe*, 95–96.

good life."[72] Building on this teaching, John Paul II affirmed that every human person has inalienable rights "irrespective of racial, ethnic, cultural or national, or religious belief." He also acknowledged "the fundamental unity of the human race [that] takes its origin from the one God, the creator."[73]

In defense of the full humanity of IPs, John Paul II recognized their fundamental rights "to exist," "to preserve and develop their own culture," "to have contact with groups having a common cultural and historical heritage," and "to religious freedom."[74] Acknowledging these basic human rights, therefore, is a necessary condition for protecting and promoting human dignity. Nevertheless, in John XXIII's view, "minority ethnic rights are relativized by, and subordinated to, the universal common good of humanity, and the common destiny of the goods of the world."[75] One may hope, then, that this ecclesial teaching may be communicated respectfully in a dialogical manner.

Promoting Indigenous Peoples' Right to Self-determination and Religious Freedom

The right of IPs to self-determination should be highlighted as one of the most frequently violated rights in history. Innocent IV argued that it is not licit for anyone to deprive some human beings of their right to self-government simply because the latter happen to be

[72]Paul III, *Veritas Ipsa* (June 2, 1537); Latin text available in Francisco Javier Hernáez, ed., *Colección de Bulas, breves y otros documentos relativos a la iglesia de América y Filipinas* Vol. 1 (Vaduz, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1964), 102–103; English translation from Stogre, *That the World May Believe*, 84–85.

[73]John Paul II, "1989 World Day of Peace Message: To Build Peace, Respect Minorities," *Origins* 18 (December 29, 1988): 466–469, here at 467; available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19881208_xxii-world-day-for-peace.html (accessed May 20, 2017).

[74]John Paul II, "1989 World Day of Peace Message: To Build Peace, Respect Minorities," 468.

[75]Stogre, *That the World May Believe*, 144.

non-Christians.[76] Leo XIII in turn clearly explained that the right to self-determination demands recognition that IPs are "[masters of their] own person, that they could live together under their own laws, and that they could acquire and hold property for themselves."[77] Along this line, John XXIII gladly welcomed the processes of decolonization and overcoming inferiority as concrete manifestations of self-determination. It is a positive sign of the time for him that "no one wants to feel subject to political powers located outside his own country or ethnic group."[78] The main challenge of the present generation, therefore, is to bring awareness of these rights down to the level of grassroots IP communities.

It should be noted that in understanding the meaning of the IPs' right to self-determination, the Church magisterium tries to avoid two extremes. On the one hand, the IPs should not "be relegated to reservations as if they were to live there forever, trapped in the past."[79] On the other hand, they should not "be forced to assimilate without any concern for their right to maintain their own identity."[80] To maintain this dialectic, the Church believes that certain "forms of coexistence can be found" and that it is possible to maintain the identity of IPs "within the greater whole to which they belong with all due rights." In any case, she teaches that "the greater or lesser degree of their integration into the surrounding society must be made on the basis of a free choice."[81] As both an individual and a collective right, self-determination concretely means that each member of a minority

[76]Innocent IV, *Commentaria doctissima in Quinque Libros Decretalium*, 3.34.8; English translation from Tierney, *The Crisis of Church & State*, 155.

[77]Leo XIII, *In Plurimis* (May 5, 1888), in Claudia Carlen, ed., *The Papal Encyclicals* Vol. 3 (Wilmington, NC: McGrath Publishing Comoany, 1981), 165.

[78]John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* (April 11, 1963) (Boston, MA: Daughters of St. Paul, 1963), nos. 42–43.

[79]Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Church and Racism*, 18.

[80]Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Church and Racism*, 18.

[81]Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Church and Racism*, 19.

group is "to respect the decisions of each one, even if someone were to decide to adopt the majority culture."[82]

The foregoing discussion also leads to the other equally important right to religious freedom. The ideal missionary strategy preferred by the Church since the time of Paul III was to evangelize the non-Christians "by preaching the word of God and by the example of good and holy living."[83] To reaffirm this, Vatican II declared that "the human person has a right to religious freedom.… Freedom of this kind means that all men [sic] should be immune from coercion … [and that] nobody is forced to act against his convictions in religious matters in private or in public, alone or in associations with others."[84] In an Asian context, this summons Christians to dialogue with believers of other religions by "listening to what they are expressing in and through their lives of the goodness of the Almighty. It is clear that dialogue is not for conversion."[85]

Embracing the Liberative Evangelization of Cultures

The Biblical mandate to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19) has been traditionally interpreted to mean bringing

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[82]John Paul II, "1989 World Day of Peace Message: To Build Peace, Respect Minorities," 469.

[83]Paul III, *Sublimis Deus* (May 29, 1537); Latin text and English translation from Francis Augustus MacNutt, *Bartholomew de las Casas: His Life, His Apostolate, and His Writings* (New York & London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), 426–431.

[84]Second Vatican Council, *Dignitatis Humanae* 2, in Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988).

[85]Faith Encounters in Social Action (FEISA), "Understanding Christian-Muslim Dialogue in South East Asia" (Kuala Lumpur: July 16–20, 2001), in Franz-Josef Eilers, ed., *For All the Peoples of Asia: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 2002–2006* Vol. IV (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2007), 77–88, here at 86.

the Gospel to all human beings, including those outside the fold of the Church. Vatican II affirms that human response to God by faith "ought to be free" and that "nobody is to be forced to embrace the faith against his will."[86] It is therefore instructive to show at this juncture the three shifting approaches to evangelization throughout history. The first is the colonial approach to evangelization, which tends to forcefully *convert* IPs to Christianity and to closely *conform* their ways of life to the Western cultures of the colonizers. Critiques of this approach emphasize that the "gospel" brought about by the European colonizers was not a "pure" gospel but rather an inculturated one. The colonial approach to evangelization, therefore, turned out mainly to be an "implantation and extension of a European version of the Christian faith."[87]

The second and third approaches emerged with the shift to a pluralistic empirical notion of culture in Vatican II,[88] and can be seen today as competing approaches to evangelization. One pertains to "restorationist Catholic culture"[89] which basically promotes a defensive and suspicious attitude toward non-Christian cultures, including both indigenous and modern ones. This approach recognizes the "seeds of the Word"[90] present in other cultures and religions but treats such as only to be integrated into the fold of the Catholic substratum. It

[86]*Dignitatis Humanae* 10.

[87]Stogre, *That the World May Believe*, 104.

[88]Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes* 58 and also 52; in Flannery, *Vatican Council II*, Vol. 1.

[89]See Georges De Schrijver, "*Gaudium et Spes* on the Church's Dialogue with Contemporary Society and Culture: A Seedbed for the Divergent Options Adopted in Medellín, Puebla, and Santo Domingo," in Mathijs Lamberigts & Leo Kenis, eds., *Vatican II and Its Legacy* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 289–327, here at 312.

[90]See *Gaudium et Spes* 92, *Ad Gentes* 11, *Lumen Gentium* 16, and *Nostra Aetate* 2, among others. For a good commentary on the recognition of the "seed of the Word," see Jacques Dupuis, "The Church, the Reign of God, and the 'Others,'" *FABC Papers* 67 (1993): 1–30, here at 22.

tends to absorb *only* what it judges to be holy, lovable, and good in other cultures while maintaining a suspicious and defensive posture toward the non-Christian elements. Using its particular standards, the restorationist seeks to purify and correct the values of the *other* that are judged to be incongruent with Christian culture.

On the other hand, there is the liberative approach that proposes to free IPs from colonial mentality by recognizing that their local cultures, as well as their humanity, are not at all inferior to Western ones.[91] Moreover, this approach also enables IPs to creatively express their own cultures that have allowed them to survive as a people for millennia. Along this line, Leonardo Boff presupposes that all cultures—as creative responses to God's proposal of communion, life, and fullness[92]—are "already impregnated with revelation, gospel, and God."[93] This liberative approach thus creates a space where indigenous cultures could make their "own assimilation of the gospel, with the same right and freedom as the Jewish, Greco-Roman, and Germanic cultures did so."[94] Like any other culture, indigenous ones are seen as equally capable of delivering *good news* and expressing Kingdom values. The Christian faith can thus be enriched and catechized by the "gospel" of other cultures and religions. IPs, therefore, should not be treated as passive objects of evangelization but as potential "evangelizers of their own culture and society."[95] It is

[91]See Virgilio Elizondo, "Culture, the Option for the Poor, and Liberation," in Daniel Groody, ed., *The Option for the Poor in Christian Theology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007): 157–168, here at 161. For Elizondo, "no one culture is superior or inferior to other cultures; all cultures are simply particular expressions of being human" (161).

[92]Leonardo Boff, *Good News to the Poor: A New Evangelization*, trans. Robert Barr (Tunbridge Wells, UK: Burns and Oates, 1992), 21.

[93]Boff, *Good News to the Poor*, 34.

[94]Boff, *Good News to the Poor*, 34.

[95]John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia* 35.

thus hoped that the Church magisterium would be able to recognize the validity of the liberative approach.

Retrieving the Practice of Reparation for the Sins against Indigenous Peoples

The Church's consciousness of the historical injustices against IPs is evident in her commendable attempts to rectify them. We can cite two examples from history. One was the imposition of severe ecclesiastical sanctions (i.e., excommunication *latae sententiae* reserved to the Holy See) on those who enslaved IPs or despoiled them of their property.[96] Although this ecclesiastical sanction was nullified in 1538, Urban VIII decidedly reinstated it in 1639[97] and Benedict XIV reconfirmed it in 1741.[98] This largely explains why slavery had significantly ceased to be a major problem for most European states (except in some mission lands) by the 19th century.[99]

The other commendable example was the restitution in the sixteenth century for damages done to IPs. Bartolomé de las Casas (1474–1566) requested Pius V (1566–1572) to decree that those who had enriched themselves unjustly by collaborating with the conquistadors and *encomenderos* must be ordered to "make restitution for all the gold, silver, and precious stones which they [had] acquired."[100] This principle

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[96]See Paul III, *Pastorale Officium* (May 29, 1537); Latin text available in Hernáez, *Colección de Bulas*, 1: 101–102; English translation from Bartolomé de las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians*, ed. & trans. Stafford Poole (DeKalb, IL: Northen Illinois University Press, 1974), 102.

[97]See Urban VIII, *Commissum Nobis* (April 22, 1639), in Hernáez, *Colección de Bulas*, 1: 110.

[98]See Benedict XIV, *Immensa Pastorum* (December 20, 1741), in Hernáez, *Colección de Bulas*, 1: 113.

[99]See Stogre, *That the World May Believe*, 126.

[100]Bartolomé de las Casas, *Doctrina* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, 1972), 165.

of reparation was also applied in the Philippines when Gregory XIV (1590–1591) instructed the Archbishop of Manila to oversee and adjudicate the process of restitution for damages done by the Spaniards, headed by Miguel López de Legazpi who bombarded the helpless settlement in Cebu that resisted the colonization.[101]

Recent popes also encouraged minorities to take an active role in claiming their own rights. John XXIII, for instance, proposed that those who have been discriminated against in the past have "the duty to claim those rights as marks of … dignity, while all others have the obligation to acknowledge those rights and respect them."[102] This liberative approach has encouraged the victims of injustices to help themselves and not simply depend on paternalistic initiatives.

A very important recent development of papal social thought can be discerned in John Paul II's humble gesture of asking for the forgiveness of IPs. He apologized in *Ecclesia in Oceania*, saying that

> the past cannot be undone, but [that] honest recognition of past injustices can lead to measures and attitudes which will help to rectify the damaging effects for both the indigenous community and the wider society. The Church expresses deep regret and asks forgiveness where her children have been or still are party to these wrongs.[103]

We know, however, that asking for forgiveness is not enough. There should be reparation to satisfy the requirements of justice and healing.

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[101]See Gregory XIV, *Cum Sicuti* (April 18, 1591), in Hernáez, *Colección de Bulas*, 1: 108–109; see also José Arcilla, *An Introduction to Philippine History*, 3rd ed. (Quezon City: Ateneo De Manila University Press, 1984), 14.

[102]John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* 44.

[103]John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Oceania* (November 22, 2001), no. 28, available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20011122_ecclesia-in-oceania.html (accessed June 7, 2017).

Learning from the Ecological Perspectives of Indigenous Peoples and Women

The ecological perspectives of IPs and women arguably remain very relevant despite current advances in ecological science. IPs are known for their special relationship with the ancestral land—the land of their birth where their ancestors grew up, raised their families, and were buried. It is sacred for them because this is the place "where the spirits of their ancestors roam [and] … help them take care of the land."[104] The spirit guides those that dwell in this land, which is not simply the soil but includes all natural resources, bodies of water, airspace, and minerals under the earth. IPs would not survive in a land "where no birds soar, … where no trees, flowers, and crops grow, where no beasts run free. What use has a piece of land if it cannot feed its people?"[105] A depleted environment, therefore, destroys the indigenous culture and human dignity of its inhabitants.

John Paul II was the first pope to officially recognize the intimate connection between IPs and their land. It was clear to him that when "indigenous peoples are deprived of their land, they lose a vital element of their way of life and actually run the risk of disappearing as a people."[106] IPs identify themselves with their ancestral land

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[104]Stuart Schlegel, *Tiruray Subsistence: From Shifting Cultivation to Plow Agriculture* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979), 135.

[105]Quoted in TRICOM, SNV, ICCO, & AFRIM, *Defending the Land: Lumad and Moro Peoples' Struggle for Ancestral Domain in Mindanao* (Davao City, Philippines: TRICOM, SNV, ICCO, & AFRIM, 1998), 8–9.

[106]John Paul II, "1989 World Day of Peace Message: To Build Peace, Respect Minorities," here at 468. For a similar perspective, see the following works of Filipino anthropologists: Francisco Claver, "The Social Marginalization of Tribal Peoples and Their Contribution to Ecological Health," in *FABC Papers* 80 (1995), available at http://www.fabc.org/fabc%20papers/fabc_paper_80.pdf; Karl Gaspar, *Manobo Dreams in Arakan: A People's Struggle to Keep Their Homeland* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2011); and Albert Alejo, *Generating Energies in Mount Apo: Cultural Politics in a Contested Environment* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000).

so intimately that separation from it would naturally lead to the destruction of their culture and eventually to their extinction. As such, John Paul II rightly links tribal peoples' land rights with the right to life.

In *Laudato Si'*, Francis speaks of the "cultural ecology" of IPs to counteract the unsustainable practices of modern societies. He wants us to learn from IPs who treat land not as a commodity but as "a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values."[107] He laments that the global trend of modern cultures forces IPs "to abandon their homelands to make room for agricultural or mining projects which are undertaken without regard for the degradation of nature and culture."[108] A concrete way to defend IPs, therefore, is to join them in their struggle for agrarian justice and help them cope with the negative effects of modern cultures.

Finally, the ecofeminist view needs to be creatively integrated into Catholic social teaching. Ecofeminism seeks to bring together the "concern for the domination of women and other subjugated groups with concern for the exploitation of the Earth."[109] Mistreatment of women and abuse of nature are correlated as they both suffer from the oppressive practices in patriarchal and anthropocentric society—recall, for instance, that indigenous women "are the first to suffer the consequences of injustice and environmental destruction."[110] It is thus significant that Francis invites us to treat Earth "like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us."[111] The expression "Mother Earth" is a metaphorical way of saying that Earth sustains and nourishes the living species whose

[107]Francis, *Laudato Si'* (May 24, 2015), no. 146.

[108]Francis, *Laudato Si'* 146.

[109]Mary Judith Ress, *Ecofeminism in Latin America* (New York: Orbis, 2006), 77.

[110]Greta Gaard & Lori Gruen, "Ecofeminism: Toward Global Justice and Planetary Health," in Andrew Light & Holmes Rolston III, eds., *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 276–293, here at 280.

[111]Francis, *Laudato Si'* 1.

existence absolutely depends on her providence. Sadly, though, Mother Earth, "burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor."[112] We can no longer separate the cry of poor women from the cry of the Earth.

Conclusion

We have shown in this article the intimate connection between historical injustices suffered by IPs and the destruction of natural ecosystems. Both are products of the same oppressive forces of colonization. IPs, and especially their women, suffer the most from the effects of ecological destruction. Their persistent cry of oppression calls us to broaden the scope of our preferential option and work for the poor to include protecting both IPs and the ecosystem that supports them. We therefore need to address ecological issues as integral components of Catholic social teaching. It is a challenge that theologians and members of the Church's magisterium must face.

We also pointed out limitations in how the magisterium and theologians treated historical injustices suffered by IPs. Nevertheless, this lacuna should not be used as an excuse to omit the topics on IPs from the standard course syllabus on Catholic social teaching. The marginalization of IPs in both the intellectual ministry and pastoral advocacies must be overcome. Indeed, it is a moral imperative for Christians to bring the issues of disenfranchised IPs to the mainstream of public discussion.

Finally, this article also proposed to enrich the scope and praxis of Catholic social teaching on IPs. It highlighted the defense of their human rights, the promotion of the liberative evangelization of cultures, the reparation for sins against IPs, the creative appropriation of the IPs' ecological worldview, and the recognition of the value of the ecofeminist perspective. As we have shown, these elements are not totally missing in Catholic social teaching; they simply need to be sufficiently developed and appropriated.

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[112]Francis, *Laudato Si'* 2.

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ISRAEL'S DEFILEMENT AND GOD'S WITHDRAWAL IN HOSEA 5:3–7

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J.

Introduction

The notion that God can abandon his sanctuary because of defilement is ancient. It is the principal reason why the people and the Temple need to be ritually purified during the annual feast of Yom Kippur (Lev. 16). According to such rites, the priest must bathe and put on special garments before he enters the holy place to ensure that he does not pollute it. Then, after offering a bull sacrifice for himself and his family, the priest offers a ***ḥaṭṭā't*** sacrifice to "make atonement for the sanctuary, because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel …" (Lev. 16:16). This cleansing of the holy place once every year is meant to safeguard God's abiding presence among his people.

The origin of the Yom Kippur is obscure. The feast is found only in a few places in the Hebrew Bible: Lev. 16:1–34, 23:26–32, and Num. 29:7–11.[1] All the references are from the priestly source and are considered by some scholars to be retrojections to the time of Israel's wilderness sojourn. The feast is not on Ezekiel's list of holidays to be observed when the Temple is rebuilt (Ezk. 45), and neither does

[1]The purification rite in Exod. 30:10 may just pertain to the cleansing of the altar. Lev. 25:9 refers to the day of atonement at the beginning of the jubilee year.

Zechariah include it among the fasting days to be observed by those returning from exile (Zech. 8:19). The feast is also notably absent in passages where we would expect it to be mentioned, e.g., in accounts of activities during the month of Tishri (1 Kgs. 8; 2 Chr. 7; Ezra 3) and in lists of Israelite festivals (2 Chr. 8:13, Ezk. 45). For this reason, scholars generally regard the feast as having developed only in the Second Temple period.

It is remarkable then that Hosea, who prophesied in the second half of the 8th century BCE, may have anticipated at least the priestly teaching on defilement of the holy place, and God's withdrawal as a consequence of such. Indeed, the oracle in Hos. 5:3–7 gives witness to an early notion of sancta contamination that may have contributed to the development of the Yom Kippur.

Exegesis

Hosea's oracle may actually start with Hos. 5:1, which is addressed to the authorities in Israel such as the priests (הכהנים) and the house of the king (בית המלך);[2] whether Hosea may have a specific group in mind with בית ישׂראל is not clear.[3] However, it is obvious from v. 3 onwards that the whole nation (note Ephraim/Israel in vv. 3 and 5), and not just its leaders, is the target of his prophetic condemnation.

Contributing further to the obscurity of Hos. 5:1–2 are the cryptic references to a "snare of Mizpah" (פח … למצפה) and "a net spread upon Tabor" (רשׁת פרוּשׂה על-תבור). Mizpah and Tabor may be cultic places,

[2]Despite the obscurity of the passage, K. Elliger claims that Hos. 5:1–2 is a well-structured unit, separate from Hos. 5:3–7 ("Eine verkannte Kunstform bei Hosea [Zur Einheit von Hos 5:1f.]," *ZAW* 69 [1957]: 151–160). Ehud Ben Zvi's study of the structure of the chapter, however, takes vv. 1–7 as a unit (*Hosea*, FOTL [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005], 121).

[3]Because of its parallelism with "priests" and "house of the king," בית ישׂראל may refer to a more restricted group (of civil servants? aristocracy?) according to Horacio Simian-Yofre (*El desierto de los dioses: Teología e historia en el libro de Oseas* [Córdoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 1993], 36). On the other hand, it may also represent the nation Ephraim/Israel which stands accused in vv. 3–7.

but the nature of their offense is far from certain.[4] Verse 2 contains two unusual words that are interpreted variously: a) שחטה, unattested elsewhere, is thought to be a biform of שחת ("pit"), or a feminine noun derived from the verb שחט ("to slaughter"); b) שטים, also a *hapax legomenon*, may be the place called שטים ("Shittim") in Num. 25:1, or a noun coming from the verb שוט ("to swerve or fall away") which is then rendered as "acts of rebellion." In any case, v. 2 ends with an announcement of punishment: "I am chastisement for them all" (אני מוסר לכלם) is a more forceful way of saying "I will chastise them all" in Hebrew.

Hos. 5:3–7 is a more lucid text. It is for the most part a prophetic speech except for v. 3, which can be construed as a quotation of a divine saying.

אני ידעתי אפרים	3	I know Ephraim
וישׂראל לא־נכחד ממני		and Israel is not hidden from me;
כי עתה הזנית אפרים		For now, O Ephraim, you have played the whore,
נטמא ישׂראל׃		Israel is defiled.

The statement "I know Ephraim and Israel is not hidden from me" implies that God judges the nation on the basis of the people's internal motives and attitudes.[5] God or the prophet must have seen the disparity between Israel's external action and its inner disposition. Ephraim/Israel is personified here,[6] and so the verb ידע involves knowing a

[4]Gale A. Yee suggests that these places are singled out "not for their historical or cultic importance, but because they are wordplays on different kinds of traps: 'snare' (פח) at Mizpah, 'net spread' (רשׁת פרוּשׂה) upon Tabor, a 'pit' (שׁחטה) dug deep at Shittim" ("Hosea," in *The New Interpreter's Bible* Vol. VII: *Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature, Daniel, & The Twelve Prophets* [Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996], 244). Along a similar line of thought, Gert Kwakkel argues that Hos. 5:1–2 makes use of wordplays, ambiguities, and shifts of meaning as a rhetorical strategy ("Paronomasia, Ambiguities and Shifts in Hos 5:1–2," *VT* 61 [2011]: 603–615). See also Yair Mazor, "Hosea 5.1–3: Between Compositional Rhetoric and Rhetorical Composition," *JSOT* 14:45 (1989): 115–126.

[5]Knowledge here involves some element of judgment. 1 Sam. 2:3 calls YHWH "the God of knowledge (אל דעות) by whom actions are weighed (נתכנו)." Similarly: Job 23:10; 31:6; Prov. 24:12; Jer. 12:3.

[6]Compare the singular "you" in v. 3 with the plural "they" in v. 4.

person intimately, understanding his thoughts and actions (Ps. 94:11; 139:1f) and discerning where his heart is (Ps. 44:21f; Prov. 24:12). לא־נכחד is a figure of speech pointing to the impossibility of hiding behind pretension, dissimulation, or external appearance. The same transparency before the Lord is also acknowledged by the psalmist: "O God, you know (ידעת) my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden (לא־נכחדו) from you" (Ps. 69:6).

In v. 3cd, God or the prophet goes on to describe what he actually knows about the people: "for now, O Ephraim, you have played the whore (כי עתה הזנית אפרים)."[7] The conjunction כי ("for/because") introduces the reason for the defilement that is declared in v. 3d. At the same time, it establishes a logical connection with the previous statement, for it demonstrates the knowledge that is claimed in v. 3ab. It can also be an emphatic particle in Hebrew and can be translated into English by the adverb "indeed" or "really": "Indeed, O Ephraim, you have now played the harlot." The adverb עתה ("now") points to the present state of affairs of the nation.

Harlotry is a standard description of apostasy in the Bible,[8] especially in Hosea.[9] The prophet depicts Israel as a promiscuous wife (Hos. 1:2 אשת זנונים) and the Israelites as children of harlotry (Hos. 1:2 ילדי זנונים, 2:6 בני זנונים), for the land has fornicated away from YHWH (Hos. 1:2 כי־זנה תזנה הארץ מאחרי יהוה). Indeed, the people have

[7]It is not unusual to find *hip'il* verbs being used with a simple *qal* sense, as is the case here of הזנית (also Hos. 4:10.18). The subject of this verb is the nation which is alternately depicted as a person (singular in vv. 3 and 5a) and as a people (plural in vv. 4, 5bc, 6, 7). Attempts to identify the subject with the leaders in v. 1 do not satisfactorily explain why הזנית is singular (so too is the object of ענה בפניו in v. 5).

[8]As a figure of religious apostasy: see זנונים in 2 Kgs. 9:22; Ezk. 23:11, 29; זנח in Num. 14:33; Jer. 3:2, 9; 13:27; Ezk. 43:7, 9; זנה in Exod. 34:16, 2 Chr. 21:11, 13; Jer. 2:20; Ezk. 16:35.

[9]The *qal* form of the verb זנה appears 6x in Hosea (2:7; 3:3; 4:13.14.15; 9:1), the *hip'il* form 4x (4:10.18; 5:3). The noun זנונים occurs 6x (1:2 [2x]; 2:4.6; 4:12; 5:4) and זנות 2x (4:11; 6:10).

abandoned him to practice prostitution (Hos. 4:10 יהוה עזבו לשמר זנות־כי־את). They hanker for a harlot's hire (Hos. 2:14; 9:1 אתנה), and did this in utter rebellion against their God (Hos. 4:12 ויזנו מתחת אלהיהם).[10] As such, since God has a covenant relationship with Israel analogous to that of husband and wife, her apostasy can also be dubbed as adultery (Hos. 2:4 נאפופים; cf. נאף in 3:1; 4:2.13; 7:4). She has forgotten her true husband and has gone after her lovers (Hos. 2:15 ותלך אחרי מאהביה; cf. 2:9), i.e., they have worshipped other gods (cf. Hos. 3:1 אלהים־אחרים הם פנים אל).

In relation to this, religious practices such as divination from a tree or a staff and sacrifices on mountain tops, upon hills, and under the oak, poplar, and terebinth are all traced to the spirit of harlotry (Hos. 4:12; 5:4 רוח זנונים; cf. 4:19) which has led the people astray. The promiscuous spirit has weakened the moral fiber of the nation, resulting in the infidelity of the women (Hos. 4:13de וכלותיכם תנאפנה בנותיכם תזנינה; cf. 4:14ab)[11] and the cultic aberration of the men who make offerings and sacrifices with the sacred prostitutes (Hos. 4:14cde הם עם־הזנות יפרדו ועם־הקדשות יזבחו).[12]

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[10]The preposition מתחת ("from under") has the connotation of subversion (cf. 2 Kgs. 8:20.22).

[11]"Daughters" and "brides" are synecdoche for all women. There is no evidence for the charge that brides were placed under *paterna potestas* of the fathers-in-law, or that virgins performed sexual intercourse with strangers in the name of a goddess as alleged by Hans W. Wolff (*Hosea*, trans. Gary Stansell, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974], 86–89), Leonhard Rost ("Erwägungen zu Hos 4:13f," in Walter Baumgartner, ed., *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet* [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1950], 451–460), Wilhelm Rudolph, ("Präparierte Jungfrauen?" *ZAW* 75 [1963]: 65–73), and Hans Klein ("Natur und Recht: Israels Umgang mit dem Hochzeitsbrauchtum seiner Welt," *TZ* 37 [1981]: 3–18).

[12]Such a custom was common in the ancient Near East and is attested to in the OT (Gen. 38:21.22; Deut. 23:17); the Code of Hammurabi #110, #127, #178–82; and the Middle Assyrian Laws #40 (translation from Theophile J. Meek, "The Code of Hammurabi," in James Bennett Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East* 3rd ed. [New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969], here at 170–174, 183). See also William F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion*

As a consequence for their apostasy, the prophet dissuades the people from going on a pilgrimage to Gilgal and Bethel and swearing "as YHWH lives" (Hos. 4:15). To do so would be a great hypocrisy, for how can the Lord nourish a stubborn people (Hos. 4:16 סרר)?[13] They have become joined to idols (Hos. 4:17 חבור עצבים) and a band of drunkards given to debauchery (Hos. 4:18 סר סבאם הזנה הזנו). Indeed, a whorish spirit has wrapped them in its wings (Hos. 4:19 צרר רוח אותה בכנפיה).[14]

V. 3d "Israel is defiled" (נטמא ישׂראל)—in this condemnation of the nation, Hosea thus employs the religious concept of impurity (טמא) that marks a person or a thing as unworthy of approaching God particularly in cult.[15] An unclean person contaminates everything he comes in contact with, including the holy, and so he cannot enter a shrine, go up to the altar, and offer a sacrifice.[16] Sin also pollutes both

of Israel (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins, 1956), 75f, 158f; Ephraim A. Speiser, *Genesis*, AB 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 299, n. 21; and Marvin Pope, *Song of Songs*, AB 7c (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 214–229. The existence of sacred prostitution in Israel during Hosea's time is doubted, however, by Christa Schäfer-Lichtenberger ("JHWH, Hosea und die drei Frauen im Hoseabuch," *EvT* 55:2 [1995]: 114–140).

[13]The injunction not to enter Bethel and Gilgal is probably addressed not just to Judahites but to all the people (note the plural verb in v. 16 in contrast to the singular verb in v. 15).

[14]Instead of "wind" (NRSV, NKJV, NJB, NIV), רוח refers to the "spirit of harlotry" mentioned in 4:12 and 5:4. The third person feminine singular object-pronoun (אותה) represents the totality of Israel/Ephraim which is depicted as a stubborn heifer (4:16).

[15]Richard E. Averbeck, "טמא," in W. A. VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 365–376.

[16]See Lev. 7:19–21; 22:3–7; Num. 18:11.13. The non-P literature also has many attestations to the notion (e.g., 1 Sam. 21:4–7; Deut. 12:15.22; 15:22; Hag. 2:14). Sacrificial rites and cultic feasts demand the purity of both the officiating priests and the lay participants (1 Sam. 16:5; 20:26; Joel 2:16; Ezra 6:20–21; Neh. 12:30.45; 2 Chr. 5:11; 29:34; 30:3.15.17–20; 35:6).

land and people (Hos. 5:3; 6:10)[17] such that, as an act of cleansing or punishment, the people may be destroyed or exiled (Hos. 9:17)[18] and the land may languish unproductively (Hos. 2:11f; 4:3; 5:7; 9:16).[19]

The sources of defilement range from those that are quite innocuous (e.g., Hos. 9:3–4 unclean food, mourners' bread) to those that arise from serious sin (e.g., Hos. 6:10 whoredom). Hosea traces the nation's impurity to its source in the moral degradation of the people, particularly through their association with idols and prostitutes (Hos. 4:11–19; 5:3–4; 6:10)[20] and contact with implements of idolatry (Hos. 4:12–13; 8:15f).[21]

לא יתנו מעלליהם	4	Their deeds do not permit (them)
לשוב אל־אלהיהם		to return to their God.
כי רוח זנונים בקרבם		For the spirit of whoredom is within them;
ואת־יהוה לא ידעו׃		and they do not know the Lord.

In v. 4ab ("Their deeds do not permit them to return to their God"), מעללים (deeds) is a general term designating, here as elsewhere in Hosea (4:9; 9:15; 12:3), not just the sexual immorality and idolatry mentioned in the previous chapter but all the wrongdoings of the people as well, including "swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery" (Hos. 4:2). The rest of the statement refers to the futile attempt of the people to achieve reconciliation with God.[22] The verb שוב is the word

[17]See also 2 Sam. 22:25, 27 (= Ps. 18:27); Mic. 2:10; 6:11; Jer. 33:4–9; Ezk. 14:11; 20:38.43; 22:2–14; 24:11–13; 36:25–32; 37:23; 39:23–24; Isa. 64:4–11.

[18]Mic. 2:10; Ezk. 20:38; 22:2–14.24.31; 24:11–13; 39:23–24; Isa. 64:4–11.

[19]See also Gen. 3:17; Isa. 24:5–7; Jer. 12:4. Cf. Michael de Roche, "The Reversal of Creation in Hosea," *VT* 31 (1981): 400–409.

[20]Cf. Ezk. 16:20.23; 36:17. According to Jacob Milgrom, the eighth-century prophets never used טמא for idolatry because the state-sponsored Baal cult was no longer an issue at that time; the defilement in Hos. 5:3 and 6:10 has to do more with drunkenness and harlotry (*Leviticus 17–22*, AB 3a [New York: Doubleday, 2000], 1384).

[21]Cf. Isa. 30:22; Ezk. 7:19–21; Deut. 7:5.25; Lev. 19:31; 20:2–5.

[22]Marvin A. Sweeney thinks that Hosea is describing here an attempt at reconciliation after divorce (*The Twelve Prophets* Vol. 1: *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah,*

for repentance in the Bible. Of the twenty-two occurrences of this word in Hosea, it is used eight times for repentance (3:5; 5:4; 6:1; 7:10; 11:5; 12:5; 14:2, 3). The context suggests some form of a penitential rite involving the sacrifice of animals (Hos. 5:6 "flocks and herds") like the one mentioned in Mic. 6:6–8 ("Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?").[23] The penitential rites in Hos. 6:1–6 ("burnt offerings") and Hos. 14:2–4 (MT פרים "calves") also presuppose animal sacrifice. Hosea declares that such cultic ritual is ineffective because the people are not in the proper disposition to approach God; they are defiled.

V. 4c "For the spirit of whoredom is within them" (רוח זנונים בקרבם כי) explains why the people are incapable of returning to God. ***Rûaḥ*** refers to the internal disposition of the people that manifests itself in their attitude and actions (e.g., Exod. 6:9; 1 Chr. 5:26; Jer. 51:11). Hence, ***rûaḥ zənûnîm*** refers to the inclination toward promiscuity in both literal (real) and metaphorical (religious) senses. It is this lust for sex and idols that has led the people astray (Hos. 4:12 תעה).[24]

Jonah, Berit Olam [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000], 56–57). The vocabulary and imagery, however, pertain more to cultic sacrifice: e.g., "defiled" (v. 3), "with their flocks and herds … they shall seek the Lord" (v. 6).

[23]It is reasonable to assume that penitential rites involving animal sacrifice already existed in Hosea's time (cf. Hos. 6:1–6; 14:2–4; Mic. 6:6–7). The fact that much of P's sacrificial vocabulary is not attested to in pre-exilic writings or used in an entirely different fashion does not prove that sacrifices of expiation were not practiced before the exile. In fact, the study of R. J. Thompson has shown that expiation and atonement were already operative concepts in sacrifice outside of P (*Penitence and Sacrifice in Early Israel Outside the Levitical Law* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963], 61–62, 76–77, 180–181, 212–214, 245). Furthermore, Moshe Weinfeld offers many other examples of expiatory sacrifices from the ancient world ("Social and Cultic Institutions in the Priestly Source Against Their ANE Background," in *Proceedings of the VIII World Congress of Jewish Studies* [Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982], 105–106).

[24]The verb תעה has an ethical sense (Isa. 3:12; 9:15; Amos 2:4; Mic. 3:5).

Is Hosea using here the language and imagery of spirit-possession[25] (cf. Hos. 9:7 איש הרוח "a person possessed by a spirit")? Is he portraying the people as possessed by an evil or unclean spirit that makes them lustful and lascivious?[26] The use of ***rûaḥ*** here as an indwelling spirit is unlikely—Hosea emphasizes human sin (note the stress on מעללים in Hos. 5:4a), not some evil spirit, as the reason for the inability to turn back to God.[27]

A further impediment to reconciliation is that "they do not know YHWH" (Hos. 5:4d את־יהוה לא ידעו). Ignorance of God is another stereotyped idiom for apostasy in the Bible.[28] Those who do not know God "rebel against him" and "prophesy by Baal" (Jer. 2:8 בעל נבא … פּשׁע; cf. Isa. 1:2–3), "abandon him" (Hos. 4:10–11; Isa. 1:3–4 עזב), "despise him" (Isa. 1:4 נאץ), "forget him" (Hos. 4:6 שׁכח), and "sin against him" and "disdain him" (1 Sam. 2:12–30 בזה … חטא). Isaiah speaks of Israel's apostasy in the following manner: "The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not understand. Ah, sinful nation, people laden with iniquity …" (Isa. 1:3–4).

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[25]Friedrich Nötscher, *Zwölfprophetenbuch: oder Kleine Propheten*, Echter Bible (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1948), 17. בקרבם can mean either "in their midst" or "inside them." The evil spirit may have been used on the analogy of the spirit of God that is said to possess the prophets (Num. 11:17.25.26.29; 1 Sam. 10:6.10; 19:20.23) or people who live by YHWH's statutes (Ezk. 36:25–28).

[26]Cf. Zech. 13:2 רוח הטמאה (unclean spirit). On the nondemonic character of impurity in the Bible, see David Pearson Wright, "Unclean and Clean (OT)," in David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary* Vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 739.

[27]According to A. A. Macintosh, the "spirit of harlotry" refers to the *Zeitgeist*, i.e., the mode of thoughts and behaviors prevalent among the people as a whole (*Hosea*, ICC [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997], 184).

[28]G. Johannes Botterweck, "ידע *yāda'*," in G. Johannes Botterweck & Helmer Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. 5, trans. J. T. Willis (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 469.

Note that ignorance of God manifests itself in disregard for the religious and moral precepts that are expressions of the divine will, e.g., the priest who rejected knowledge is said to have forgotten the Lord's *tôrāh* (Hos. 4:6 שכח תורת אלהים). Hence, it is equated with various offenses like "fornication" (Hos. 5:4 זנונים); "swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery" (Hos. 4:2 אלה וכחש ורצח וגנב ונאף); "ungodliness" (Job. 18:21 עול); and "treachery, falsehood, supplanting, slander, deception" (Jer. 9:1–4 בגדים, שקר, עקב, רכיל, תלל).

That is not all, however. In some intances, Hosea seems to explain the lack of knowledge of God as forgetfulness of YHWH's goodness and providence toward Israel in the past: "She did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished upon her silver and gold that they used for Baal" (Hos. 2:10). Indeed, the prophet sometimes uses the very word *forgetfulness* (שכח) in his accusations (Hos. 2:15; 4:6; 8:14; 13:6). Such ignorance attains poignancy especially with regard to the event of the Exodus in which YHWH's love for Israel is portrayed with parental tenderness: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. The more I called them, the more they went from me.… Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them" (Hos. 11:1–3). Knowledge of God, therefore, presupposes a certain respect for the sacred historical traditions of Israel.

ועָנה גאון־ישׂראל בפניו	5 The pride of Israel has testified to his face;
וישׂראל ואפרים יכשׁלו בעונם	Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in their iniquity;
כשׁל גם־יהודה עמם׃	Judah also shall stumble with them.

When applied to nations, the word גאון (LXX ὕβρις) in v. 5a ("Israel's pride testifies to his face") has the usual negative sense of smugness, presumption, conceit, etc. (Amos 6:8; 8:7; Isa. 13:19; 16:6; Jer. 13:9).[29] Most commentaries would explain the entire verse as follows: that there is no way Israel can hide his arrogance because it

[29]Pride here can reflect "a nationalistic arrogance, a heedless sense of self-importance, and a related stubbornness of will," according to J. Andrew Dearman (*The Book of Hosea*, NICOT [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010], 174). It is "the undisturbed confidence which Israel places in the cultic activity mentioned in

shows; it is a smack in the eye, a slap on his face (ענה … בפנים).[30] The word גאון, however, can also have a positive meaning which the nation can be proud of, e.g., its wealth, its city (Amos 6:8; cf. Isa. 13:19), its patrimony (Isa. 4:2; cf. Psa. 47:4; Jer. 13:9), etc.[31] It may thus have an ironic sense here, for Hosea may have meant exactly the opposite: "Israel's decrepit state testifies to his face!" (cf. Hos. 7:10).

When applied to nations, the verb כשׁל ("to stumble, totter") in v. 5b ("Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in their iniquity")[32] is a figure of military setback or political overthrow (Hos. 14:2; Jer. 6:15=8:12; 2 Chr. 25:8; 28:23).[33] Their downfall will be the result of their iniquity (בעונם); indeed, the *niphal* verb יכּשלו has a medio-reflexive sense that further stresses the people's responsibility for their own misfortune.

The originality of v. 5c ("Judah also shall stumble with them") is contested, for while the repetition of the verb *kšl* may be part of Hebrew rhetoric, the use of גם ("again") probably betrays the hand of the redactor.[34]

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the next verse," according to James L. Mays (*Hosea*, OTL [London: SCM Press, 1969], 84).

[30]The expression ענה ב need not indicate here a lawsuit genre since it is used even outside of a legal context. The longer idiom ענה בפנים (Hos. 7:10; Job 16:8) speaks specifically of being confronted ("to his face") by a self-evident truth.

[31]There is no attestation of גאון referring to a patron god of a city or nation.

[32]The subjects "Israel and Ephraim" seem strange because the two names are equivalent in Hosea. Douglas K. Stuart's appositive translation ("Israel, i.e., Ephraim") does not really remove the awkwardness of the verse because the name Israel already appears in parallel with Ephraim in v. 5b (*Hosea-Jonah*, WBC 31 [Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987], 93). Besides, v. 5b has an unusual four stress-count in contrast to v. 5a and v. 5c which have only three.

[33]When applied to individuals, כשׁל can mean to suffer misfortune, injury, or death (Hos. 4:5; Prov. 4:16; 24:17) or to transgress (Hos. 14:9; Prov. 4:12).

[34]Wolff, *Hosea*, 70–71, n. *c* and *n*.

בצאנם ובבקרם ילכו	6	With their flocks and herds they shall go
לבקש את־יהוה		to seek the Lord,
ולא ימצאו		but they shall not find (him);
חלץ מהם׃		he has withdrawn from them.

In v. 6ab ("With their flocks and herds they shall go to seek the Lord"), the Israelites appear to be reaching out to God (externally at least). They continue, as was their custom, to offer animal sacrifices in their sanctuaries and on high places. Indeed, the verb בקש ("to seek") commonly designates a cultic act with God as its object.[35] Sometimes it has the meaning of "ask, implore, pray" (Psa. 27:8; Exod. 33:7), although in general the word does not specify the manner in which the cultic act is performed.[36] The context of Hos. 5:6, however, clearly indicates the offering of sacrifice—בצאן ובבקר can mean either *associatively* ("with flocks and herds") or *instrumentally* ("by means of flocks and herds"), i.e., through animal sacrifice. The image that is evoked thus is either of people bringing animals for sacrifice to the shrine or of the actual rite of sacrifice: "by means of flocks and herds [*sc.* sacrifices] they seek the Lord."[37]

The purpose of the sacrifice is further clarified by Hos. 5:4 ("to return to their God") whose syntactic structure interestingly enough is mimicked by Hos. 5:6 ("to seek the Lord"): both have a verbal idiom consisting of an auxiliary in the imperfect followed by a ל-infinitive.

לא יתנו	do not allow (them)
לשוב אל־אלהיהם	to return to their God. [5:4]

[35]E.g., Exod. 33:7; 2 Chr. 11:16; 20:4; 30:19; Jer. 50:4; Zech. 8:21–22; etc. The idiom "seek the face of God/YHWH" (… בקש פני) in particular has a strong cultic connotation: e.g., Hos. 5:1; Ps. 27:8; 105:4; 1 Chr. 16:11; 2 Chr. 7:14.

[36]Siegfried Wagner, "בקש *biqqēš*," in G. Johannes Botterweck & Helmer Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. 2, trans. J. T. Willis (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975/77), 231.

[37]Commentators generally favor reading the preposition ב of בצאנם ובבקרם as *bêth accompagnis* because of the verb הלך ("to go"); but ילכו לבקש is an idiom that need not describe an actual movement to a shrine. The people may already be offering the sacrifice there!

ילכו	they go
לבקש את־יהוה	to seek Yahweh. [5:6]

In fact, not only the syntax but the thoughts too are parallel. The word-pairs are either synthetic or synonymous (בקש // שוב; הלך // נתן; יהוה // אלהים).[38] The parallelism may indicate that the two verses refer to the same activity; in other words, one verse explains the other—the people's attempt to seek reconciliation with God (שוב) is described further as a ritual act (בקש) involving animal sacrifices (בצאן ובבקר). Such an attempt fails, we are told, because the people are "defiled" (Hos. 5:3d) and "their deeds do not allow them to return to their God" (Hos. 5:4ab); God thus recoils from them (Hos. 5:6).[39]

Hosea continues to use the concept and imagery of cultic impurity in v. 6cd ("They shall not find [him], he has withdrawn from them"). The sins committed by the nation pollute not only the people but also the place of sacrifice such that God eventually avoids the people and abandons the earthly sanctuary.[40] As a result, the empty ritual has become a seeking merely of the shrine rather than of God—in the words of Amos 5:4, "Seek me and live, but do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal.…"

ביהוה בגדו	7	They have dealt faithlessly with the Lord;
כי־בנים זרים ילדו		for they have borne alien children.
עתה יאכלם חדש		Now the new moon shall devour them
את־חלקיהם׃		with their fields.

In the concluding statement of Hos. 5:7, Hosea once again takes up the symbolism of harlotry in depicting the ruptured relationship between God and Israel (cf. Hos. 1): "They have dealt faithlessly with

[38] בקש also stands in parallel with שוב in Hos. 5:5 and 7:10.

[39] In Hos. 5:15, God issues a threat to return to his heavenly sanctuary: "I will return again to my place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face. In their distress they will beg my favor."

[40] See Hos. 5:14–15; Deut. 31:17–18; 32:20; Ezk. 8:6 for motifs of the absent God. On the priestly theology of sancta contamination and God's departure from the temple, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16*, AB 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 976–985, esp. 982.

the Lord; for they have borne illegitimate children."[41] Moreover, in accord with ancient Canaanite belief,[42] the consequence of the estrangement with God affects not only the people but also the land: "Now the new moon shall devour them with their parcels of land (עתה יאכלם חדש את־חלקיהם)."[43] Whatever explanations are given for this enigmatic saying, all agree on its punitive import:[44] both the land and its people shall languish as a consequence of the infidelity of Israel/Ephraim.

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[41]In Jer. 3:20, בגד is used for a wife's infidelity to her husband; זרים refers to those outside the family or clan (Deut. 25:5; Lev. 22:12; 1 Kgs. 3:18).

[42]See e.g., Aqhat C, col i, lines 18–19; col ii, lines 61–74 (translation from Harold L. Ginsberg, "The Tale of Aqhat," in James Bennett Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East* 3rd ed. [New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969], 153). The same belief is reflected in Gen. 3:15; 2 Sam. 21:2; Isa. 24:5–7; and Jer. 12:4. For the interpretation of the relevant passages in Aqhat, see Simon B. Parker, *The Pre-Biblical Narrative Tradition*, SBL Resources for Biblical Study 24 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 122, 131.

[43]A. A. Macintosh takes the more fundamental meaning of חדש and paraphrases it to mean "a renewal of circumstances" or "a time of misfortune" on the basis of a similar usage in Jer. 2:24 (*Hosea*, 189–190). According to Daniel J. Simundson, "it may refer to festivals that, rather than pleasing God, only add to Israel's guilt and guarantee their destruction" (*Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah,* AOTC [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005], 55). See also Thomas Edward McComiskey, ed., *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary* Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 79. Francis Andersen and David Noel Freedman revocalize ***ḥodeš*** to ***hādāš*** and interpret this as "a threat of YHWH to give up on Israel and to fulfill his purpose with a new people" (*Hosea*, AB 24 [Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1980], 397).

[44]1) Some commentators change חדש "new moon" to חסיל "locust" or משחית "destroyer"; 2) Stuart reads יאכל עם חדש as "a new people shall devour…"; 3) Rudolph tries to make sense of the MT in this fashion: in a single month (חדש) both people and fields shall be destroyed.

Conclusion

Hos. 5:3–7 provides an interesting example of how the eighth century prophet Hosea employs the ancient notion of religious impurity *(ṭāmēʾ)* to explain to his contemporaries why God has abandoned his earthly sanctuary, thereby rendering their cultic attempt at reconciliation with him meaningless and ineffective. We thus find in Hosea's oracle the notion that God can abandon his shrine because of the defilement of his people, a notion that may have presaged the later priestly theology of sancta contamination. In keeping with the prophetic tradition, however, Hosea emphasizes religious and moral offenses as the reason for Israel's defilement, with its disastrous consequence affecting both the land and its people.

A century and a half later, Ezekiel's vision of the abominations of the Temple (Ezk. 8:1–18) convinced him that God had already forsaken it and was now with the exiles in Babylon (Ezk. 11:16). Therefore, as a provision for the future Temple that was going to be built, Ezekiel gives an instruction regarding a temple purification rite similar to those of the Day of Atonement: "Thus says the Lord GOD: In the first month, on the first day of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish, and purify the sanctuary …" (Ezk. 45:18–20).[45] This instruction may have provided the initial impetus for the later development of Yom Kippur. The later priestly prescription of offering a goat as the ***ḥaṭṭāʾṯ*** sacrifice to atone for the sins of the people and to cleanse the Temple of defilement in the annual observance of Yom Kippur (Lev. 4:1–5:13; 16:3–20.30; Num. 6:6–8) may have evolved in the Second Temple period to ensure God's enduring presence in his Temple, among his people.

[45]Ezk. 45:10–20 also attests to a temple purification rite similar to those of the Day of Atonement.

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CONTRIBUTORS

Albert E. Alejo, S.J., is Assistant Professor of Sociology, Anthropology, and Systematic Theology at Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University. He obtained his doctorate in Social Anthropology from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. His book *Ehemplo: Spirituality of Shared Integrity in Philippine Church and Society* was published by the Institute of Spirituality in Asia (Quezon City). Aside from researching and writing on various social issues, he also writes Tagalog poetry, and has translated and published a number of mystical poems in *Nabighani: Mga Saling Tula ng Kapwa Nilikha* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publications, 2015).

Francis D. Alvarez, S.J., is Assistant Professor at Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University. He finished his STL and PhD at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, having written his dissertation under the direction of the late Fr. Daniel Harrington, S.J. His scholarly interest is in studying how Scripture can be used more effectively in religious education. He also writes a Sunday column—"God's Word Today"—in the *Philippine Star*.

Manuel V. Francisco, S.J., obtained his licentiate and doctorate in theology from Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Aside from teaching courses as an Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University, he is often invited to give public lectures, retreats, and recollections to various groups. He is also a well-known liturgical songwriter, a co-founder of Bukas Palad Music Ministry, and the Executive Director of Tanging Yaman Foundation which is engaged in relief efforts and home building for victims of war and natural calamities.

Jojo M. Fung, S.J., hails from Sabah, Malaysia, and is faculty member of both Loyola School of Theology and the East Asian Pastoral Institute. He obtained his Master in Social Anthropology from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London; licentiate in Sacred Theology from the Jesuit School of Theology & Graduate

Theological Union, Berkeley; and doctorate in Contextual Theology from the Association of Theological Colleges, Chicago. As director of Sacred Springs: Dialogue Institute of Spirituality and Sustainability, research fellow at the Research & Training Center for Religio-Cultural Communities (RTRC), and coordinator of the Jesuit Companions in Indigenous Ministry (JCIM), he conducts courses and research on issues related to indigenous peoples. His latest book is *A Shamanic Theology of Sacred Sustainability: Asian Church in Dialogue with Shamans for Liberative Struggle* (2014).

Norlan H. Julia, S.J., obtained his bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology from Loyola School of Theology and masters in Theological Studies from Ateneo de Manila University. From 2009–2013, he took up doctoral studies in Heythrop College, London. After earning his doctorate and completing his Jesuit formation in 2014, he has since been reassigned to St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Cagayan de Oro City where he is currently the rector and a professor of fundamental and systematic theology.

James H. Kroeger, M.M., has served mission in Asia (Philippines and Bangladesh) since 1970, working in parishes and serving mostly in the education-formation apostolate of seminarians, catechists, and lay leaders. He currently teaches Christology, Ecclesiology, Missiology, and "Asian Theology" at Loyola School of Theology, East Asian Pastoral Institute, and Mother of Life Catechetical Center in Metro Manila. He has written extensively on Asian (FABC) and Philippine theology, mission, interfaith dialogue, and the Second Vatican Council. His recent books include *Exploring the Priesthood with Pope Francis* (Manila: St. Paul's Publications), *Telling the San Jose Story: Historical Perspectives* (Manila: San Jose Seminary Alumni Association), *Asia's Dynamic Local Churches* (Manila: Claretian Publications), *Becoming Missionary Disciples* (Manila: PMS), *A Vatican II Journey: Fifty Milestones* and *Walking in the Light of Faith* (Manila: St. Paul's Publications), and *The Gift of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books).

Timoteo J. M. Ofrasio, S.J., earned his licentiate and doctorate from the Pontifical Liturgical Institute of St. Anselm in Rome, Italy in 1990, and spent fourteen years (with six of them also as rector) as formator and professor at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Cagayan de Oro City. He was also Regional Secretary for East Asia and the Pacific at the Jesuit General Headquarters in Rome, as well as parish priest at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Camarín, Caloocan City. He currently teaches Liturgy and Sacraments at Loyola School of Theology, and his published works include "Liturgy and the Eucharist in Light of the New Evangelization" (*Landas* 29:2 [2015]); "Music for the Solemnities and Feasts of the Lord in Ordinary Time" (*Landas* 29:1 [2015]); "On the Reformed Mass of Vatican II and Benedict XVI's Letter *Motu Proprio Summorum Pontificum*" (*Landas* 23:1 [2009]); and "The Baptistery and the Baptismal Font: Symbolism and Pastoral Relevance" (*Landas* 6:1 [1992]).

Reynaldo D. Raluto is a priest from the Diocese of Malaybalay as well as the current Academic Dean and a theology professor at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Cagayan de Oro City. He earned his doctorate in theology from the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium and his main scholarly interest is on the ecological perspective of liberation theology in the Philippine context. He has published a number of scholarly essays on ecology in addition to his book, *Poverty and Ecology at the Crossroads: Towards an Ecological Theology of Liberation in the Philippine Context* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2015).

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J., is a professor and the former Dean of Loyola School of Theology, Ateneo de Manila University. He obtained his licentiate in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute and his doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Gregorian University in Rome. He teaches various courses on the Hebrew Bible as well as Biblical Hermeneutics, Textual Criticism and Research Methods, History of Ancient Israel, and Biblical Hebrew. He has also published a number of scholarly essays on the eighth century prophetic literature of Israel, and is a founding member and trustee of the Catholic Biblical Association of the Philippines. He is currently the editor of *Landas*.